

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

### **Purpose:**

We shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship, and expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

### **Key moments from the previous year:**

The conference year has been very busy and rewarding, we show up, take action and get it done. We stressed that our membership is open to any woman who wants to inspire, influence, and impact her community to uplift the marginalized.

The Legislative Days for 2023 were virtual presenting four workshops; Healthcare, Predatory Lending, Mass Incarceration, and Just Energy. We learned ways to advocate for the less fortunate.

We continue to meet our \$10,000 challenge to the Legacy Endowment Fund and have contributed \$112, 947.57 over the last 9 years.

We awarded 5 Presidential Scholarships to assist your ladies with their higher education.

The 2023 Mission Trip was a journey to remember for all the ladies. Visiting Brooks-Howell, Bethlehem Centers, and Scarritt Bennett Center gave us a full view of what our mission dollars are doing for so many.

Our Spiritual Growth Event via Zoom was held April 22, 2023, with over 200 attendees. New Life UMC in the Walterboro District was the host, and the speaker was Rev. Scarlett Hester, Pastor of Bluffton UMC. The theme was "Finding Hope" using Jeremiah 29:11 for the scripture.

The Come Together Be Together Event via Zoom was hosted by the Columbia District on May 20, 2023, with 183 persons registered. The theme was "Get Hope Be Hope" with four workshops to choose from. The keynote speaker was Rev. Mary Johnson.

Mission U was held on July 20-22, 2023, at Spartanburg Methodist College with 130 registered and 16 youth attending. The adults and youth enjoyed their classes.

### **Objectives for the coming year:**

We will stand united and continue our legacy and mission with women, children and youth now and in the future. We are committed to helping all people thrive by providing opportunities for community advancement.

Our Social Action emphasis this year is Climate Justice, Predatory Lending, and Breaking the School to Prison Pipeline. Our workshops will focus on what is happening and what we can do to make a difference in these areas.

We are engaged in a Book Study entitled "So You Want to Talk About Race" led by Barbara Brooks and Jane Crawford via zoom.

The Charter for Racial Justice Committee is stressing the importance of Social Justice for all. We applied for funds offered by National to host our Charter for Racial + Environmental Justice Event on June 22, 2024. We are engaging the youth and teaming up with organizations who can provide information and resources to help save our planet and our vulnerable communities.

We are preparing for our Mission Trip and SEJ Quadrennial Conference in Chattanooga, Tennessee, April 18-21, 2024. We believe TOGETHER we can do more. TOGETHER we can be more. TOGETHER the power of love in action can change the world.

With separation, redistricting and regionalization, our pledges and donations are a main focus for us. We are faithful to our goals for Social Action, Racial Justice, Educational and Spiritual Opportunities, and Leadership Training. As a Sisterhood, we are up to the challenge of service and the work required.

**Action(s) required from the 2024 Annual Conference:**

**If you take away nothing from this report, know this:**

We held our 51st South Carolina Conference United Women in Faith Annual Meeting October 20-21, 2023, at St Johns UMC in Aiken, South Carolina. We had over 200 persons attending, and enjoyed an uplifting message from Rev. Shirley Peterson Gordon, Executive Director and Campus Minister for the Orangeburg Wesley Foundation, serving South Carolina State University and Claflin University. Our theme was Unity in Christ - Ephesians 4:2-3. We paid tribute and dedicated the program book in memory of past UMW Conference President Imogene Steele, who passed away on October 17, 2023.

Our 4 mission projects are in need of your support, prayers and contributions. Due to inflations and community needs, the budgets are stretched at this time.

Rev. Kathy James, Epworth Director of Church Relations, was our guest speaker for Officers Training. We watch a number of videos about the many programs and events happening to help children and families.

**Narrative:**

United Women in Faith announced on June 1, 2023, that Sally Vonner was elected to the position of General secretary and Chief Executive Officer. Ms. Vonner joined the organization's staff in 2010 as Assistant General Secretary of Membership and Leadership Development. She became the Transformation Officer in 2018 with the reorganization. She stated her primary focus is to continue and expand the mission and reach of United Women in Faith and is committed to lead with faith and trust in God. She was installed on July 29, 2023. We are moving forward under her leadership.

We have a lot to be proud of and our mission and purpose remain the same as we embrace a sisterhood of United Women in Faith who are happy to be members of the organization of faith, hope and love in action. Rev. James Friday did a Leadership Training Event that told us "Leadership Worth Looking For Believing In Listening to and Following".

Respectfully submitted:

Clarice Blakeney, SC Conference President 2023-2024  
cblakeney@shtc.net, (H) 843-680-4076 (C) 843-680-4076

Vice-President Kathy Roys, Secretary - Ann Alexander,  
Treasurer- Janice Eaddy, Communications - Wanda Chandler-Flowers  
Secretary of Program Resources - Shirley Crosby  
Education & Interpretation - Beth Addis  
Membership Nurture and Outreach - Angela Allen  
Social Action - Patricia Armstrong  
Spiritual Growth - Vickie Harvey  
Chair of Committee on Nominations - Azilee Dickey  
Dean of Mission - Betty Swinton