



# The Compass

Newsletter of the Greater Southwest District United Women in Faith

## ***A note from your President...***

**February 2025 Edition**

Here we are in the middle of the winter solstice and yes, the days are growing longer, minute by minute. It's nice to have daylight until 6:00 p.m.! I'm anxious for the longer daylight hours and warmer weather so I can start poking around in my gardens,

We had our District team meeting this month and we've put together an exciting program for our "Soul Care Spiritual Growth Retreat". The registration form is in this newsletter, so be sure to share it with the women in your unit, your church, and others, encouraging them to come to the event.

At our District meeting, many things were discussed, among them our District budget. We are behind in our pledge to mission, so are asking all the units to consider a challenge among the membership to increase your pledge by 10%. Also in this newsletter are fund raising ideas to share with your members.

It's several weeks away from our Soul Care Retreat, so plenty of time to gather together a group to attend. It will be nice to see folks again .... it's been a while since our District Annual last fall.

Be safe, keep warm and be blessed!

Cheryl Proctor  
President, Greater Southwest District  
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## ***Start planning now to "Show Your Stuff"***

We are looking for units to "Show Your Stuff" at the June Evening of Mission event. What does that mean? It could be a picture of your Unit members. It could be a card table display of a sample of a mission project you have done.

A rummage sale      A funeral luncheon      Knitting project

A trip to Community House in Grand Rapids      Tutoring students

Cards sent to homebound church and family      Food pantry drive      A letter writing campaign

**Make a sign with your name on it.**

**Brag a bit. Share ideas.**

## ***Greetings from the Secretary of Program Resources...***

United Women in Faith's reading program is designed to help women of faith to achieve five key goals: lean into our spiritual growth, strengthen our leadership skills, equip ourselves for local and global mission, take faithful action for the common good, and build community in ways large and small. The books are current and cover a wide variety of topics. Participation in one of the reading program plans at any of the four levels, or even reading just one or two books can help you grow. And anyone, anywhere, can participate, whether you are a member of United Women in Faith already or just getting to know us. This year's bonus books, along with the other offerings in our 2025 Reading Program, are a powerful launching point for both personal reflection and meaningful conversation.

This year we would like to recognize any woman who reads one, two, three or four books from the reading program list. Just send your name, number and names of the books you have read and/or what plan you have done. Send your information to Jan Hedgcock, 303 Calhoun Street, Union City, MI 49094 or email to [hsspedteach@yahoo.com](mailto:hsspedteach@yahoo.com). Jan can also be reached by phone at (517) 741-3245 or cell (269) 251-5169.

I hope everyone will participate by reading a book. The book *Overcome Your Fears and Embrace the Life You Were Made For* by Britt Baron is very good. Also the book *All Will Be Well: Learning to Trust God's Love* by Lucy Finn Borgo is a very good read.



### **Are you out there?**

Forget any ole survey! All we want to know is if you have a UNIT "out there".

The Greater Southwest District has become so large. With the pandemic and the disaffiliations, plus the name change, we have lost contact with so many of you. We want to support your unit any way we can. What can we do for your unit? Tell us about your missions and activities so that we may share with other units. We need to hear about those women in leadership making a difference. Superintendent Dean Prentice grouped our churches into 12 branches. Have you had contact with the other units in your branch? Are you planning a group meeting or project to get to know your neighbor units? As the UWF purpose states – *United Women in Faith shall be a community of women*. Let's be creative, supportive, and expand our missions together. Please drop me an email with your unit name and contact person information today. Thanks.

Cindy Thiele, Membership, Nurture and Outreach

[cindahthiele@gmail.com](mailto:cindahthiele@gmail.com)

## ***Happy New Year from the Greater Southwest District Treasurer...***

The year 2024 held both good news and not so good news. The number of units who were able to send pledges decreased from 21 to 17. This was due to a variety of reasons. Some units are no longer active because of membership numbers, some were affected by disaffiliation and some just had a difficult year and hope to be active again. Even with a 25% decrease in participation, our pledge total only decreased by 11%, which in my opinion is a big win! Nine units increased their level of giving anywhere from 2% to 120%. I'd like to recognize all of them.

- ◆ Allegan
- ◆ Bangor-Simpson
- ◆ Climax
- ◆ Ganges
- ◆ Hartford
- ◆ Hopkins
- ◆ Niles New Journey
- ◆ Union City
- ◆ Vicksburg

At the District celebration we were all challenged to increase giving in 2025 by 10%. I'd like to add my encouragement to meet that challenge this year. In a time when federal aid to women and children, not only in our country but around the world, is uncertain, United Women in Faith can step up and work to fill that void and provide support around the world. My hope and prayer for 2025:

Those units that have struggled or been inactive can once again become viable and successful.

That the new units who joined when we were reorganized will become active with Greater Southwest District and

That United Women in Faith will continue to be a light for those who are hurting all around the world.

**2025 Pledge for Greater Southwest District of Michigan - \$35,000**

Mary Howard, Treasurer  
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(269) 757-3011      maryhowa@att.net

## **UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH – FUNDRAISING IDEAS**

**Bag and Basket Booth:** Sell baskets, handbags, gift boxes, tote bags, shopping bags, knitting bags, coin purses, cosmetic cases, book covers, hampers – everything used to hold and carry articles. Encourage members to assemble bags with items inside to sell in a booth at local craft fairs or events during the year.

**Bake Sales:** Tried and true fundraiser that can be held anytime of the year at any local or church event.

**Balloon Popping:** Each member who is giving or turns in a pledge form gets to choose a balloon with a prize written on a slip of paper inside. Prizes can be anything or your choosing including small UWF giveaways, inspirational bookmarks, gift cards to local businesses, etc.

**Book/Media Sale:** Ask for donations of gently used items. Set up a booth at local events or in your church with items for sale. Donate leftovers to local libraries or shelters.

**Chili Cook-off:** Ask members to cook a favorite chili recipe and have a cook off. Charge for tasting and voting with the chili raising the most money designated as the winner. Or ask a panel of “experts” to choose the winner after all the tasting is done.

**Cutest Pet Contest:** Everyone loves their pets! Place pictures of pets by jars and encourage donations to vote for the cutest. Whichever draws the most donations wins. This could be a church-wide contest that spans a month. Also, reverse donations by subtracting paper money donations from the total of change in a jar.

**Decorating Contest:** During a holiday season (can be any holiday) invite church families to “buy a table” to decorate in your church community space. During the month church members vote for their favorite table by putting donations in jars.

**Sell something:** There are many opportunities now on social media to hold a sale for your unit. Everything from Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Pizza or any other product can be set up as a sale party for your church and friends. A percentage of the sales would go toward your unit as the “host” of the party.

**M&M/Jellybean Jar:** The classic guessing game fundraiser. Buy a guess for \$1. The person who guesses closest wins the jar. Again, this can be a church wide game that continues for a month. No limit on the number of guesses.

**Monday Night Football:** Ask a church or UWF member to host a tailgate at his/her home during football season. Charge \$10 to attend and serve hotdogs, wings, chips, etc. This is also just a fun way to gather together as a church family.

**Penny Wars:** Place a secure bucket in a prominent area in the church or community space where people can drop loose change. Decorate the container for a specific mission or with information about missions supported by UWF. Smaller churches can limit it to one container, larger churches can have families or groups (men vs. women, kids vs. adults) compete for raising the most money.

**Quilt Auction:** Do you have a quilter in your unit? Auction a donated quilt or decorated dish towels. This is another event that could be set up at a community event or as a silent auction.

**Silent Auction:** Expand the quilt auction to include other white elephant items, the gift baskets from the first suggestion on this list, gift cards from local businesses, food items, etc.

**Sucker Pull:** Quick and easy fundraiser for the church or community event such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Mark some suckers for prizes (ask for donations) and sell chances to pull a sucker.

**Talent Show:** Host a church or community talent show and charge for admittance.

**Other Ideas:*****Fundraising Ideas continued...***

Baby Picture Guessing Game  
Board Game Tournament  
Car Wash  
Craft Bazaar  
Dunk Tank  
Fun Run  
Halloween Costume Contest  
Ice Cream Social  
Lunch and a Movie  
Lunch Box Auction  
Pie Throwing Contest  
Root Beer Float Sale  
Walk a Thon

*Many of these ideas can be adapted for large or small churches and units. Use your imagination and find things that work for you. Pick several and change your fundraiser each month or quarter. Contact other units and ask what works for them. The traditional bazaar and pasty sales are becoming more difficult, especially for smaller units or older members so look for ways to make it easier for all to participate. Most importantly:*

***HAVE FUN TOGETHER!***

***Happy New Year from your Education and Interpretation Coordinator...***

I hope this newsletter finds you happy, healthy and holy! If your Unit chose to complete the 2024 Mission Today Unit Objectives form (found in November's newsletter), please send it to me as soon as possible. Our Conference E & I Coordinator, Judy Huynh, is having us look at the Mission Objectives Form and find ways to possibly enhance and make changes to the form. If you have any suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me with your ideas.

If your unit is looking for a way to expand your mission learning, consider using the Daily Prayer Guide, Response Magazine or the Program Book at your gatherings. All of these items can be ordered on [umfaithresources.org](http://umfaithresources.org).

Stay warm and keep praying!

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Presented by Greater Southwest District of  
United Women in Faith

**Saturday, March 29, 2025**  
Allegan United Methodist Church

- 9:30 a.m.      Gathering time and refreshments  
10:00 a.m.      Introductions  
10:15 a.m.      Opening devotional: "Soul Care"  
10:30 a.m.      "Soul Care - What Does It Mean?"  
11:15 a.m.      Allegan Bell Choir Quartet  
                    *Our offering will go to our Pledge to Mission*  
11:30 a.m.      Lunch  
12:15 a.m.      Braiding Sweetgrass: Learning/Crafting/Reflection

*Please bring donations of non-perishable food items for Allegan Food Pantry*

**REGISTRATION IS \$15.00**

**RESERVATIONS DUE BY MARCH 19, 2025**

*Registration for Soul Care Spiritual Growth Retreat is due by March 19, 2025*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Church \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Free childcare provided, please bring a sack lunch. Child(ren) must be pre-registered.

Name(s) & Age(s): \_\_\_\_\_

**REGISTER WITH CINDY THIELE at [cindahthiele@gmail.com](mailto:cindahthiele@gmail.com) (enter "Soul Care" in the subject line)**

**Or: Snail mail to: Cindy Thiele, 319 River Street, Allegan, MI 49010 - (269) 673-4514**

You may pay at the registration table upon arrival by cash or check payable to GSW UWF.

Questions? Please call Cindy at (269) 673-4514.



# **Greater Southwest District United Women in Faith Officers for 2025**

## **OFFICERS**

### **President**

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## **MISSION COORDINATORS**

### **Spiritual Growth Coordinator**

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### **Education & Interpretation Coordinator**

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### **Membership Nurture & Outreach Coordinator**

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### **Social Action Coordinator**

Open

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**The PURPOSE of United Women in Faith:**

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

**IMPORTANT 2025 DATES**

- **Soul Care Spiritual Growth Retreat, March 29 \* Allegan UMC**
  - **Mission Night, June 19 \* TBD**
  - **Mission u, July 17 — 19 \* Mt. Pleasant First UMC**
  - **Greater Southwest District UWF Annual Meeting  
September 27 \* Schoolcraft UMC**
- **Conference Leadership Training for District Officers  
October 17 \* Clio Bethany UMC**
  - **Conference UWF Annual Celebration  
October 18 \* Clio Bethany UMC**