



A MESSAGE FROM MARGARET

SPRING, SPRING, SPRING! Can you smell the fresh breeze through my open window? Ahhh!

Easter this year was especially meaningful to me with the sunrise service outside followed by a fellowship breakfast and then our worship service. We were so blessed with music brought by the choir, “Amazing Love, How Can It Be” and “Because He Lives” with the entire congregation joining in. The love of the message shared by our pastor and the joy and love of the children and families attending.

The weather was beautiful. I am writing this from my daughter’s home in Lakewood Ranch, FL and am still enjoying God’s beauty all around. I needed a spring clean of my spirit.

I love the freshness of spring each year. I walk taller, feel healthier, enjoy more color in my face and a boost in my energy. Everything about spring breathes of life and newness. At home, I can’t get enough of our church’s children running coatless around the yard, exploring each square foot as if it were brand-new. I can’t help but lift my face to thank Jesus for the smile He gave me through His wonderful creation of springtime.

I guess that’s why I love Isaiah 42:10, which draws a picture of a world reveling in the joy of praising God. It’s amazing how God—the Ancient of Days, the Omega, the One Who Was and Is and Is to Come—is Lord not only of our past, but also of our future. He is Lord of all that will be new as he makes it beautiful in his time. (See Ecclesiastes 3:11.)

Imagine the newness experienced by people whose lives spanned the time before Jesus’ birth until after His death. The people who believed in Him back then felt not only the longing for the Messiah but also the new joy that He arrived at last! If springlike praise has faded in your heart, ask Jesus to plant in you fresh seeds of joy.

Margaret Fisher, Red River District President

mfisher0844@gmail.com



Devotional: Hooray for Gardening!

You can't go into a gift store these days without running smack into all kinds of gardening paraphernalia. Stepping-stones that say, "Wish," "Imagine," or "Wonder." Little signs that announce, "Garden angel" or "Mother's garden." Birdhouses of every description—a boarding home advertising "Cheap, cheap rent," Italian bird-restaurants, log cabin respites for ol' fisher birds, and many other creative habitations.

Gardening fever is upon us. It appears everyone is a gardener, even if they live in an apartment. Even if they have eleven green thumbs. Even if they wouldn't pull weeds for a million dollars. Even if they don't know the difference between a spade and a rake. Even if they hate vegetables and bugs, are allergic to bees, or have spring allergies. Suddenly everyone is a gardening maniac.

Are you like me? Well, there are certain things anybody can plant—sweet P's in a straight row, for instance: prayer, patience, peace, passion. But it's not enough for a gardener to love flowers. He or she also must hate weeds. As good plants grow, you pinch off bitter ones like panic, paranoia, and passivity. And by the way, while gardening, we need to squash pride. And please, lettuce love one another at all times.

We're all gardeners of the heart. Gardeners—because some ancient longing is built into us for the good, sweet earth. There is something evocative about the setting where Adam first met Eve. These two lovers walked with their Creator in the still of the evening as the Lord hit heaven's dimmer switch. There, at twilight, among the scent of roses and jasmine and apple blossoms, they savored a fellowship we can only dream about.

And wouldn't you love to have been in that garden outside Jerusalem over two thousand years ago! The trees were budding, the flowers bursting through the ground. That morning as the sun was rising, Jesus wore His new body for the first time. In the hazy light of dawn He was mistaken for the gardener by a woman who had watched Him die. Surely she never forgot that wonderful encounter in the garden.



Devotional: Hooray for Gardening!

Begin now to cultivate your half acre of love. All it takes is a few seeds no larger than grains of sand. Jesus said if you have faith no bigger than the size of a mustard seed, “nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20). Today I meet people whose lives flower with the results of tiny deeds of goodness planted year after year. The rest of us harvest the fruit from their lives. Often they haven’t got a clue as to how God is using them. They weather storms and droughts and bugs and pestilence, just being faithful. They know that the blossom of a good deed fades with time but that the lasting perfume is the joy you receive from doing it.

Gardeners live by the signs of the seasons and know there is a time for everything, “a time to plant and a time to uproot” (Eccl. 3:2). They know there is a season for every color and taste. They know the brook would lose its song if God removed the rocks. They know rainbows promise enough rain and sunshine to grow everything in abundance.

Why the gardening mania? We crave the sweet serenity of greens and golds and deep brown earth. Fellowship with God began in a garden, and we long for that time and place. Leaves quivering in the wind, blossoms nodding, grass ruffled by a breeze, remind us of our real home and the peaceful destiny awaiting us. When I cheer up with my geraniums, smile at my pansies, laugh with my petunias, they teach me about God’s greenhouse bursting with joy.

For now, I’ll take seedlings on loan from heaven and share the growth. Mint in the pot out my back door perks up any afternoon tea; I can invite a neighbor to share it. Bunches of parsley from the window box to flavor our stew. Any pasta-loving family member will relish fresh basil and rosemary. We can pick tomatoes for a great salad to share at meal time or with a neighbor.

Gardening burns calories, lowers risk of heart attack, slows soil erosion, and provides shelter for a host of microlife. So hooray for gardening! Get your gloves muddy, your face tanned, and your knees crinkled here on earth. Nurture faith and love. Keep believing in the harvest. God will make something beautiful out of your effort and energy.

The most beautiful gardens bloom in the heart!

Margaret Fisher, Red River District President
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April 2024

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Red River District Spiritual Growth Event and Unit Officer Training

Thirty-one members of the Red River District met on Saturday, March 16, 2024 at St. Bethlehem United Methodist Church for a spiritual growth event and to train Red River District unit officers. The women who attended enjoyed a delicious breakfast provided by the women of the St. Bethlehem UWF unit.



Red River President Margaret Fisher announced the following:

1. There are three vacancies on the district leadership team
 - Education & Interpretation Coordinator
 - Spiritual Growth Coordinator
 - One member of the Nominations Committee (Mary Williams was voted in for this position.)



Red River District Spiritual Growth Event and Unit Officer Training

2. The revised page 11 of the 2024 Handbook was made available for pickup for attendees.
3. The district review of last summer's Mission u presentation will occur at Hilldale UMC on May 18, 2024.
4. Social Action Conference Event So You Want to Talk about Race
There will be a presentation by the author about this book at the John Wesley UMC in Nashville on Saturday, March 23rd.
5. Southeast Jurisdictional Meeting in Chattanooga, TN April 19-21. The registration deadline is April 19, 2024.

The Reverend Mary Kate Meyers was the speaker for the event. She talked about her work reviving the Wesley Foundation at Austin Peay State University. An offering of \$368 for this ministry was collected.

The Reverend Corrie Alexander-Willette, pastor of St. Bethlehem UMC, gave the homily and led the group in Holy Communion and in a remembrance of their baptism.



Farewell to Margaret Cornell

Bellevue United Women in Faith says goodbye to Margaret Cornell

Margaret and Gary Cornell have been a part of our church family since 2004. Gary was a retired minister from the New England Conference. They have been very active in our church. Gary passed away on October 23, 2023. Over the last 4 years Margaret and I worked very closely to get our UWF unit back up and meeting after COVID. She was co-president with me for two years and then took back over the communications role. This year she worked with a mall committee to set up program meetings for this year.



Margaret has decided to move to upstate New York to be closer to her daughter. She moves on April 15, 2024. We are very thankful for all she has done for our church and our UWF. We will miss her but wish her well and are happy for her that she will be near her daughter.

God Bless you Margaret.

Sheila Allen, President of Bellevue UWF
sheilafallen57@gmail.com



Women's Retreat at Beersheba Springs

May 3-5, 2024

Walk with the Shepherd, Find Rest for Your Soul: A journey of faith and renewal for Women

Join us May 3rd – 5th as Rev. Dr. Birgitte Thaarup French leads us through a transformative journey where we invite you to step away from the busyness of life, connect with other women, and experience the restorative power of walking hand in hand with the Shepherd. Our theme is drawn from the comforting words of Psalm 23 and the relationship of the Shepherd with the lambs.

Why Attend? Amid life's demands, this retreat offers a sacred space to pause, reflect, and recharge. "Walk with the Shepherd, Find Rest for Your Soul" is more than an event; it's an invitation to rediscover the peace that comes from walking in faith and to find rest for your soul in the loving embrace of the Shepherd.

Speaker : The Rev. Dr. Birgitte Thaarup French or "Pastor Bee" is a lifelong United Methodist who grew up as a "PK" in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1983 she became a medical missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries and served for 13 years in Congo, Algeria, and Kenya. She received her MDiv from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University and her DM from Memphis Theological Seminary.

Pastor Bee has served several churches in the N.GA and Memphis conferences. She currently serves as senior pastor at Colonial Park UMC in Memphis. She is also the Dean of TWK Licensing School, is a Resident in Ministry mentor, an adjunct professor at MTS, and serves on the Exec. Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministers.

More Information: <https://www.beershebaassembly.org/event/womens-retreat/>

The retreat includes 2 nights and 5 meals, lodging, and programming. Lodging options include Single Occupancy, Double Occupancy, Vintage Lodging, and a commuter rate. Rates vary: \$105 – \$245



District United Women in Faith Mission u Study

May 18, 2024

Living the Kin-dom

Exploring the Lord's Prayer as a Spiritual Practice for Social Transformation

The Lord's Prayer plays a significant role in every Churchgoing/church-involved person's religious practice. In most churches, this prayer is prayed every Sunday.

Mission u for 2023 explores the Lord's Prayer as it is recorded in Matthew 6:9-13 and invites you to take a deeper look at the prayer and the role it plays in your faith Journey. From there, the study moves from personal to communal application. How does the Lord's Prayer help us to live in the Kin-dom? Hopefully, this curriculum will empower us to use what we learn to become a reflection of God's love to the world.

Will you join us?

Where: Hilldale UMC, 1751 Madison St., Clarksville, TN 37043

When: May 18, 2024

Time: Registration and gathering – 8:30 – 9:15 am

Welcome and devotion: 9:15 – 9:30 am

Leader: Joyce Clark, former UMW Director and TN Conf. President

Class: 9:30am – 12:30pm with a break

Lunch: 12:30 pm – Donations accepted

(Bring your Bible, pen/pencil and paper)



2024 Mission U

Date: July 11 – 13, 2024

Location: Scarritt Bennett Center, Nashville, TN

Theme: THE KIN-DOM IS AMONG YOU

Drawing Closer to God and Each Other

Adult Curriculum

Welcome Home by Neomi Fletcher uses the image of home to explore how living in close proximity to the kin-dom is like making a home with God. Participants are invited to develop practices for building healthy, welcoming communities as a result of being anchored in the abiding love of God.

Youth Curriculum

Cultivating Symbiosis: The Nature of God's Kin-dom by Nica Sy. In Creation, we see the power of symbiosis, or interdependent relationship. The youth curriculum explores the idea of symbiosis between our relationships with one another and our relationship with God. By drawing closer to one another and our world, we draw closer to the kin-dom.

Children Curriculum

Me in the Kin-dom by Kathy Cook. The children's curriculum uses the Lord's Prayer as a lens to help us see that we are all members of the family of God. Children will begin to understand that the kin-dom is living with Christ and one another on earth as in heaven.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO CONSIDER WHEN REGISTERING

The registration form is on page 12 of this newsletter. Registration is open now through June 3, 2024. To assure access for meals, rooms, and study books, be sure to register soon!

- Scarritt Bennett does not have elevators in the lodging buildings. If you are unable to use stairs, please indicate in the space provided on the application form and a first floor room will be secured for you. (Note: There are elevators in the building where classes are held.)



2024 Mission U

- We are pleased to offer a study for children (ages 6-11) and youth (ages 12-17). During non-class time, the children and youth should be with their accompanying adult.
- Please carefully review the lodging options and their sleeping arrangements for children/youth. Children/youth in a room of their own will be suitemates with their accompanying adult. The 2 rooms are separated by a bathroom that they will both share. Most rooms have a twin bed. Scarritt Bennett has a limited number of rooms with a standard double bed. A child/youth can share a double bedroom with their accompanying adult.

2024 MISSION project – Edgehill UMC – 1502 Edgehill Ave., Nashville, TN. More information to come on the specifics of this project.

BIOS OF MISSION U STUDY LEADERS – 2024 (As submitted by individual leaders)

ADULT CLASSES

REV. DR. CHRIS HAYNES is an elder in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference UMC. He has pastored churches in middle and west Tennessee since 1999. He has an M.Div. from Vanderbilt University and a Ph.D. in Sociology of Religion from Drew University. He currently serves as lead pastor at Christ United

Methodist Church in Franklin, TN. In his free time, Chris enjoys visiting national parks and hopes to hike the Appalachian Trail one day.

HOLLY NEAL is a life long Methodist and her membership is at Fairfield Glade UMC in Crossville TN. She has served in many roles in her local church - over 25 years as a youth volunteer and youth Sunday School teacher. She served as the District Director of Lay Servant Ministries, the District Lay Leader, Tennessee Conference Lay Leader (2012 - 2021) and is a Certified Lay Minister (2011-present). She is a third generation Woman's Society of Christian Service/UMW/United Women in Faith member providing leadership in her local unit, district and now as the TWK UWF Spiritual Growth Coordinator. Holly is looking forward to exploring together the good news of the kin-dom (reign of God) and the heart of Jesus and what fresh vision it offers us as we seek to be in mission today.



2024 Mission U

REV. DR. BIRGITTE THAARUP FRENCH. Pastor Bee is a lifelong United Methodist, she grew up as a PK (Pastor's Kid) in Copenhagen, Denmark. In 1983 she became a medical missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries and for the next 13 years she served in Zaire, (now Congo,) Algeria and Kenya. Moving to Atlanta in 1997 Pastor Bee received her Master of Divinity from Candler School of Theology at Emory University, and a Doctor of Ministry from Memphis Theological Seminary.

Pastor Bee has served several churches in the N.GA and Memphis annual conferences. She currently serves at Colonial Park UMC in Memphis, and as Dean of the conference Licensing School. She serves on the Executive Committee of the Board of Ordained Ministries and as a RIM mentor. She leads women's retreats, and is an adjunct professor at Memphis Theological Seminary teaching, Theology and Practice of Worship. She is married to Niels French and together they have two children, Fletcher lives in Chattanooga with Casey, and daughter Hanna lives with Jeppe in Aalborg, Denmark. In her free time Pastor Bee reads mysteries, loves to cook a good meal, bake bread and knit. Her favorite scripture is from 1John 4:7- 9 Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him.

BETH ADAMS is a life long Methodist though not always a member of the Methodist Church. Her membership is in the First United Methodist Church in Martin, Tennessee. Beth is very blessed to enjoy retirement, 'grandmothering' and volunteering. One great blessing is 'subbing' as a Certified Lay Speaker which pushes her in thought and study. She is very grateful to be able to learn new things – learning to put siding on a house recently - and from amazing young pastoral leadership in her church as well as the experience Wesley values – that the mystery of God is to be glorified (and that man's 'understanding' may be often overrated. personal not pastoral interpretation). Following a work career of 25 years in community services for folks who dealt with differences and ending with 17 years as a special education teacher, volunteering opportunities are readily available even in her small community of Dresden. She is married with three grown children, five grandchildren and three greatgrandchildren.



2024 Mission U

CHILDREN'S CLASS

Primary Study Leader: LaSonia Scantling – I am a longtime member of Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church. I am one of the coordinators of the children's ministry. I am over the dance ministry and also part of the worship team. I am truly passionate about working with a children's ministry that this gives me joy of working with them teaching a children's church. I also work full time at Vanderbilt Children's for almost 30 years on the Pediatric Operating Room. A mother of two and four beautiful grandchildren. I have taught Mission u for the past five years we had children involved and also the exercise session of the conference. God has truly blessed me and he continues to bless me to do what I do. I often tell others to always be grateful and positive in everything you do. I'm truly proud to be a child of God.

Assistant Leader: TaHandshea Scantling – Bio to come

YOUTH CLASS

Primary Study Leader: Caroline Martin- I am Caroline Baldrige- Martin. I am a United Women in Faith legacy. I have been a member since I was a little girl. I helped my mother and aunt with mission projects and feeding the sick and shut in.

I am a member of Key Memorial United Methodist Church in Murfreesboro TN. where I have served as the Children and Youth Coordinator. I currently serve as National Director of United Women In Faith. I had the pleasure of serving on the Tennessee Conference United Methodist Women a total of eight years as Secretary, Education & Interpretation, Communication Coordinator, Dean & Assistant Dean of Mission u. I LOVE United Women in Faith because of the fellowship with women from all over the world and it has help me to grow in my Faith journey.

In my free time, I like to make prayer beads, prayer bracelets, paint and crochet. I have two children, Charles and Kandice. I am very excited about this year's Mission u Because It will be my first year as a youth study leader. I can't wait to see everyone in July.



2024 Mission U

Assistant Leader: Jerlean Bass is a native Tennessean, born in Brownsville and raised in Jackson, TN. Jerlean attended Tennessee State University where she received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration. As a career field, she chose the banking industry and currently works as a Senior Loan Quality Control Specialist. Jerlean is an active member of Gordon Memorial United Methodist Church and has held several leadership roles within the church, such as Sunday School Superintendent, Christian Education Chairperson, and most recently Homecoming Chairperson. Jerlean also works with the Usher, Finance, Greeters, Hands or Hope, and BMCR ministries.

Jerlean has been active in United Methodist Women, now known as United Women in Faith, since first joining Gordon Memorial. She has held offices on the local and conference levels. On the conference level, she has served as Assistant Dean, Dean of School of Mission (currently Mission U), Secretary and Vice President and locally has been Treasurer and Link Chairperson.

Jerlean enjoys traveling, cooking, all types of music and meeting new people but above all else, she is a child of God. She walks and talks with God daily and cannot do anything without his guidance. Her guiding like in her walk with Christ is Psalm 23.



2024 Mission U

SCHEDULE

<u>DAY/TME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
Thursday, July 13		
1:00-3:00 PM	Mission u team & Study Leaders (Meeting and set up)	Laskey Hall
3:00-4:00 PM	Hands on Mission project	Edgehill UMC
3:00-5:30 PM	Registration open	Laskey Hall Lobby
3:00 PM	Dorm check in	Laskey Hall Registration
4:15-5:00 PM	Opening Worship Practice	Laskey Great Hall
5:30-6:30 PM	Dinner	Susie Gray Dining Hall
6:45-7:30 PM	Plenary Practice	Laskey Great Hall
6:45-8:00 PM	Fellowship, Games, Crafts	Laskey-Room TBD
8:15-8:45 PM	Vesper Service	Wightman Chapel
Friday, July 14		
7:30-8:30 AM	Breakfast	Susie Gray Dining Hall
7:30-9 AM	Registration	Laskey Hall Lobby
8:45-9:30 AM	Opening Worship & Introductions	Laskey Great Hall
9:30-11:30 AM	First Class Session*	See Room assignments below
11:30 AM-12:30 PM	Lunch	Susie Gray Hall
12:45-3:30 PM	Second/Third Class Session With 15 min. break-leader discretion	Same as previous session
3:30-4:00 PM	District Group Photos	See sheet w/details
4:00-5:00 PM	Plenary	Laskey Great Hall
5:00-5:30 PM	District Group Photos	See sheet w/details
5:30-6:30 PM	Dinner	Susie Gray Hall
6:45-7:30 PM	Closing Worship Practice	Laskey Great Hall
6:45-8:00 PM	Fellowship, Games, Crafts	Laskey-Room TBD
8:15-8:45 PM	Vesper Service	Laskey Great Hall
Saturday, July 15 (Attendees mush check out of dorm by 10:30 AM)		
7:30-8:30 AM	Breakfast	Susie Gray Dining Hall
9:00-11:00 AM	Final Class Session	Same as previous sessions
11:15 AM-12:15 PM	Closing Worship w/Offering & Communion	Laskey Great Hall
12:30-1:30 PM	Mission u Team & Study Leaders Meeting, clean up and wrap up	Laskey
*CLASS ROOM ASSIGNMENTS		
ADULT CLASSES	Rev. Chris Haynes -Laskey Great Hall	Holly Neal – Laskey Room B
	Beth Adams - Laskey Room C	Rev. Birgitte French – Laskey Room A
CHILDREN' CLASS	LaSonia Scantling & TaHandshea Scantling - Laskey Kreitner Room	
YOUTH CLASS	Carolyn Martin & Jerlean Bass – Laskey Clyde & Mary Room	
GAMES & CRAFTS	Games: Laskey Rooms A & B Crafts: Laskey Room C	

The offering taken during the closing worship will go to Mission Giving.



TWK CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH – MISSION u 2024

Scarritt Bennett Center – 1027 18th Avenue S. Nashville, TN 37212

July 11-13, 2024

Registration deadline is **June 3, 2024** - To assure housing, meals and study books

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Church _____ District _____

Male

Female

Clergy

Laity

Study Leader

First-time attendee Yes No

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone – day _____ Night _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

Are you Staying at Scarritt Bennett Or Commuting Or Virtual

Suitemate (separate room/shared bathroom) _____

Do you require a first-floor room Yes No

Special needs-Allergies, Medical Concerns, Health and/or Dietary needs: _____

Make choice of adult study leader - 1st and 2nd choice – filled in order of registration date received

____ Beth Adams _____ Rev. Dr. Chris Haynes _____ Holly Neal _____ Rev. Dr. Birgitte French

Please indicate children or youth leader

LaSonia Scantling Children (6-11 yrs) Caroline Martin-Youth (12-17 yrs)

REGISTRATION FEES: (All registration fees include the study book)

2 nights, 5 meals(Thurs dinner thru Sat Breakfast) \$175

1 night, 4 meals (Fri breakfast thru Sat. breakfast) \$140

Commuters - 4 meals (Fri breakfast thru Sat breakfast) \$ 85

Virtual - includes study book \$ 35

Children/Youth in their own room \$ 75

Children/Youth sharing room/bed with accompanying adult \$ 50

(See cover page of registration form for children/youth rooming options.)

Mail registration and check, payable to TWK Conference United Women of Faith, Mission u,

to: Delores Smith, Registrar, 808 S. College St Trenton TN 38382, 731-487-0084

smithumw@gmail.com - mail no later than June 3 (Send only this page of

registration.)



Red River District Calendar of Events 2024

Date	Event	Location
16-Mar	Spiritual Day Apart and officers update	Bethlehem UMC
1-Apr	Pledge Remittance due to District treasurer	
Apr 19 - 21	SEJ Quadrennial Event	Chattanooga, TN
May 3-5	Women's Retreat	Beersheba Springs, TN
18-May	District Mission u event	Hillsdale UMC
1-Jun	Pledge Remittance due to District treasurer	
June 17-19	TWK Annual Conference	Murfreesboro First
July 11-13	Mission u	Scarritt Bennett Center
17-Aug	Intergenerational meeting and/or Social Action Officers executive meeting	Gordon Memorial
17-Aug	District Reports due to Conference Officers	
1-Sep	Pledge Remittance due to District treasurer	
Sept 6-8	Women's Fall Retreat	Lakeshore Retreat Center
28-Sep	Conference Annual Meeting	McKenzie First
19-Oct	Red River District Annual Meeting	Bethlehem UMC
2-Nov	Officer training for District Executive team for 2025	TBD
1-Dec	Pledge Remittance due to District treasurer	

