



A MESSAGE FROM MARGARET

THE BUTTERFLY

As told in the book *Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World*:

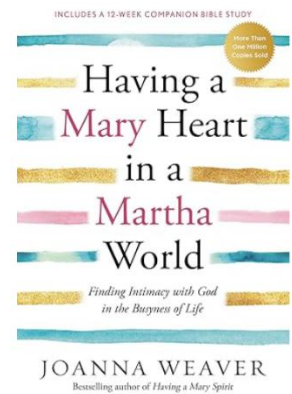
Joanie Burnside performed a monologue one palm Sunday at Mount Hermon, a Christian conference center. The pre-Easter service at Mount Hermon is always poignant. Joanie's presentation that year as presented in the book "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World" by Joanna Weaver reminds me of not only what Jesus did, but what he longs to do in you and me. You see, Jesus didn't come to make bad people better. He came to transform us into something entirely new.

Some of you may have attended Beersheba in 2017 when I used the book "Having a Mary Heart in a Martha World" as our theme as Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator and presented "The Butterfly" as my closing worship service. I have done this presentation a couple of other times since then at our church and want to say that I am not usually a performer, but this monologue meant so much to me and I want to share it again with you. If you haven't read the book by Joanna Weaver, I suggest you read it now.

Imagine me as an old woman, center stage, clothed in a dark coat and carrying a dingy laundry-type bag over her shoulder. She clings tightly to an out-of-date purse. Dirty rags cover her feet. Stooped and bent over a cane, the old woman's face is twisted with suspicion, her voice sharp and brittle as she begins her story.

Listen closely. Now and then, I hear Martha speaking. Now and then, I hear me.

"I've come to tell you the story of a butterfly," the woman begins. Her only props are the clothes that she wears and a simple wooden cross that stands behind her. "She started out as all others, a lowly caterpillar, one who would have grown but never changed. Her life would have become old, ugly, and embittered had it not been for the grace of the Creator.



“This is what she would have become,” the old woman says, pointing at her twisted, decrepit form.

“Here was her scarf, which covered her head, her precious brain, her above-average intelligence. The universities and degrees were hers to obtain, to flaunt and impress...to shrink others down to her size.

“The hair, the crown that should have been, was merely a reflection of the anxieties that riddled her life, for she was prematurely gray. She worried about everything—her future, her past, her mistakes, her dreams.

“Her teeth...” The old woman bites down for emphasis. “The guardians of her mouth, one of her most vicious weapons, were ever ready to bite, to cut others to the quick with sarcasm and barbs. For out of the overflow of the heart speaks the tongue. Sometimes it was as seemingly innocent as gossip, other times judgment, and at times, outright lies as she assassinated the characters of others.

“Her purse was her security, for it housed her beloved checkbook. She was born into affluence, and as long as there was money in the bank to protect her, she was safe. No one could touch her, no one could reach her. She walled herself in with material goods—none of them evil in and of themselves, but all of them evil when worshiped and adored instead of him.

“She used her cane like a finger, to point accusingly at the sins of herself that she saw in others. It became a wonderful crutch, this overdeveloped superego, for whenever she felt bad about herself, she could easily find bad in the lives of others around her.

“Her shoes covered one of her saddest features, her feet. Those poor, beaten stubs. She had spent a lifetime wandering aimlessly. She had no purpose, no one to follow, nowhere to go. Each day meant only another twenty-four hours of hopelessness.”

The woman shifts a large sack she carries on her shoulder, then points at it. “Here was her burden, the sin she bore that weighted her down, every year getting heavier and heavier. She stuffed those sins in her sack, hoping no one else would notice what was so obvious to all. Her life had become grotesque with the weight, her sins disfiguring the beauty she was meant to be.

Pantomiming the movement, the woman takes a small, stony heart out of her chest and holds it between two fingers. “It was hard and unrelenting, not letting any love in...not letting any love out...protected from intruders by her head, her mouth, her purse, and her cane.

“Then one day this woman met some friends who had lives of sweet purity. They offered her the Living Water, and when she could bear the thirst no longer, she took a taste...just a taste, mind you, for she wasn’t ready to really drink yet. But that taste was so sweet, and it made her thirst beyond compare. She took, and drank, and that Living Water filled her and satisfied her from her crown to her toes.”



The face of the woman onstage now glows with the memory of that water and the new life she's received. Piece by piece she begins to remove the unnecessary articles of clothing that once bound her.

"The scarf was removed and her knowledge used for his glory. Her thoughts became his thoughts as she surrendered to his Spirit." The woman unties the scarf and drops it to the floor.

"The hair, once gray with concern was made new again, for the joy that was his was now hers." The woman ruffles her hair with glee.

"The mouth that had cut down others now began to build them up, to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...to seek ways to soothe hurts rather than cause them.

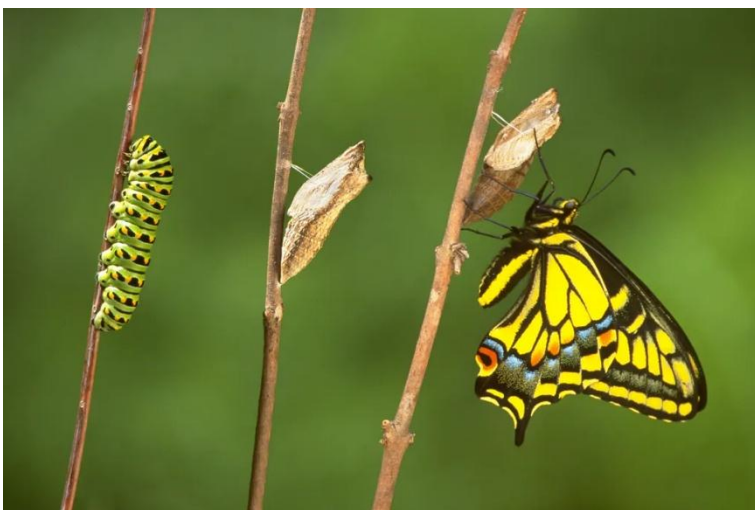
"The purse became a tool, as a sheath is to a sword. It carried something of great power. Her moneys were used to advance his kingdom rather than protect her own," the woman says as she lifts the purse for all to see.

"The cane was no longer needed as her urge to judge faded in the light of his grace. She gave it to others that needed to be held up, as she sought to come alongside and bear others' burdens.

"Aaaah..." The woman pauses, smiling as she shakes her finger. "And her feet? At first they began to walk, then run, skip, leap, and dance with joy, for finally she had a reason to live. A Master to follow. A path that he prepared specifically for her. Such joy she'd never known.

"The burden of her sins he took," the woman says, her voice becoming stronger and younger sounding. Her posture straightens as she drapes her things over the Cross. "How, she would never really understand, other than he said that he'd died for the right to do so.

"Her heart of stone was transformed into a new, vital, living heart." With trembling hands she lifts the small, imaginary heart heavenward, receiving a large, beating one in exchange. With her face uplifted, her eyes filled with wonder, the woman pantomimes the act of placing the new heart inside her chest.



"Create in me a clean heart, O God," she whispers, "and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10, KJV).

The words are soft, pleading, and thankful as they drift across the quiet auditorium. The moment is holy as David's prayer echoes through each one of us.

"Thank you for hearing my tale," the woman says finally. Her voice is low and tender as she unbuttons her coat. "For as you see...I am the butterfly."



She sheds the cloak, revealing a splendid purple leotard with flowing multicolored wings. Sparkling and shimmering in the morning light, the costume is beautiful. Exquisite.

With arms extended, the woman exits reborn. Floating, dancing, skipping. Leaving all her earthly garments behind. Inviting each one of us to do the same.

And all for the price of being teachable.

As I've surrendered my life to Jesus' teaching, even his rebukes, I've learned the value of God's tender discipline. It is only when we struggle to break free from the chrysalises of our lower nature that the true beauty of the new life Christ offers can truly be known.

So don't be afraid to shed the familiarity of old patterns and old clothes.

Jesus, remember, came to make all things new.

So hear him and obey. Receive his discipline.

And then...get ready to fly.

Margaret Fisher, Red River District President

mfisher0844@gmail.com



Mission U 2025



Would you be interested in meeting other members of United Women in Faith across our Red River District? Do you want to work in a community of other UWF members to study scripture and deepen your faith? Mission u is for you!

Each year, United Women in Faith develops justice-focused Biblical curricula for adults, youth, and children focused on a common theme. In 2025, our theme is Practicing Hope Together.

Practicing Hope is an adult curriculum exploring hope, particularly when hope seems hard to find. The curriculum asks questions such as: What is hope in the face of neofascism? What is hope in a time of genocide? How do we imagine a future for the next generation as our planet grows

hotter by the season? What tools do we have to face these hard realities? How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall?

This study's purpose is to allow all of our communities to cultivate hope that is honest about our current conditions (refugia), hope that is restorative when everything feels urgent (rest), and hope that is possible even when we transgress (repair).

The author, Tabatha Holley, former pastor of New Day Church in the Bronx is a writer in the 2024–2025 Sojourners Opinion Writing Cohort and founder of A Space to Land, LLC., to provide holistic, interfaith services to individuals and communities ranging from funerals and weddings to workshops, curriculum development, and conflict mediation.

Mission u events are held across the United States, typically in the summer. **Our Tennessee Western Kentucky Conference of UWF will hold its Mission u event June 12-14 at Scarritt Bennett Center in Nashville.**

The registration form is shown on the following 2 pages. Please note that the deadline for registration is May 10.



MISSION U 2025



PRACTICING
HOPE
TOGETHER

Tennessee Western Kentucky United Women in Faith

Adult Curriculum: Practicing Hope by Tabitha Holley: exploring hope, particularly when hope seems hard to find. How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall?

Youth Curriculum: Communities of the Spirit by Regina Heater: examines the inexplicable hope we find in early post-resurrection Christian communities and how they kept hope alive even in seemingly hopeless times.

Children's Curriculum: Hope as a Resurrection People by Joni Cisowski: helps children build trust in Jesus to bring them comfort and support as they find courageous hope in the face of uncertainty.

Thursday, June 12-Saturday, June 14, 2025
Scarritt Bennett Center
1027 18th Avenue South, Nashville, TN 37212-2126

**Registration form is attached and open now through May 10, 2025
to assure for meals and rooms
(registration fee does not include the cost of the study book).
Each participant will purchase their own study book.
Be sure to register NOW!**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO CONSIDER WHEN REGISTERING

-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.)

-We are pleased to offer a study for children (ages 6-11) and youth (ages 12-17). During non-classtime, 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.

TWK CONFERENCE UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH – MISSION u 2025

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

June 12-14, 2025

Registration deadline is **May 10, 2025** - To assure housing and meals.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ Email _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Church _____ District _____

First -time Attendee Yes _____ No _____

Male _____
Female _____
Clergy _____
Laity _____
Study Leader _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____ Relationship _____

Phone – Day _____ Night _____

ACCOMMODATIONS

Are you: 1. Staying at Scarritt Bennett _____ 2. Commuting _____ 3. 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: _____

Choice of adult study leader—Please mark (1) for first choice and (2) for second choice (filled in order of registration date received)
_____ Rev. Dr. Chris Haynes _____ Holly Neal _____ Marilyn Ramsey
Please indicate children or youth leader:
_____ LaSonia Scantling-Children (6-11 yrs) _____ Caroline Martin-Youth (12-17 yrs)

REGISTRATION FEES:

2 nights, 5 meals(Thurs.dinner thru Sat.Breakfast)	\$175.00
1 night, 4 meals (Fri.breakfast thru Sat. breakfast)	\$140.00
Commuters - 4 meals (Fri.breakfast thru Sat.breakfast)	\$ 85.00
Virtual -	\$ 35.00
Children/Youth in their own room	\$ 75.00
Children/Youth sharing room/bed with accompanying adult	\$ 50.00

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

Mail registration form and check, payable to TWK Conference UWF, Mission u to: Delores Smith, Registrar, 808 S. College St. Trenton TN 38382. If you have questions, contact Delores at 731-487-0084 or smithumw@gmail.com . Send only this page and must be received by May 10.

Spiritual Day Apart at Mt. Carmel UMC

Would you describe your faith as a river or a lake? At the Spiritual Day Apart held at Mt. Carmel UMC on March 29, Holly Neal profoundly challenged us to think about carrying our faith forward.



Beth Bagget and speaker Holly Neal in the Mt. Carmel sanctuary

Faith like a river, flowing and nourishing ourselves and others OR faith like a contained lake keeping everything to itself? In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul writes to Timothy: “I am reminded of your sincere faith which first lived in your grandmother Lois, and in your mother Eunice and now I am persuaded, lives also in you.”

Like a river, how was faith poured into me? And by who? Both of my grandmothers, Mary Alley (Port Royal UMC) and Bertha Weakley (Mt. Carmel UMC) were devoted members of the WSCS which became UMW and now United Women of Faith. The names may have changed, but the purpose to be a group of women, who love God, who experience wholeness in Jesus Christ, and who meet to create supportive fellowship and live to serve through missions remain the consistent lifeline throughout.

And then there is my sweet mama, Mary Weakley. In my eyes I don't suppose there could have been anyone who loved UMW any more than she did. These women would be the foundation of my faith. Continually pouring their love and prayers over me. Living by example. But the amazing thing about rivers is that they are fed by many creeks and streams and springs. An so it is with us, we are poured into by many sources.

I was fortunate to be raised in a small community church in which several families have attended for generations. I have grown up in this church alongside my siblings and siblings of other families that are truly my brothers and sisters in Christ. It is the heritage of the church to pour into its members. I can think of so many UMW (UWF) women that poured into my faith as I grew up at Mt. Carmel. They poured into the rich heritage of Mt. Carmel by simply showing up and offering their talents. Whether it was cooking or cleaning up, organizing or



teaching, singing in the choir or planning VBS and so many other things. They were imprinting on me how to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

It was such a joy to work with the Women of Faith at Mt Carmel to host Spiritual Day Apart. It flowed seamlessly. Operating together like women who had had faith poured into them from the generations before! Sometimes our purpose can be simple; to show up for each other with love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control and see how Jesus uses us.

So the question we were sent home to ponder: How am I continuing the Legacy? Who am I pouring into? Am I a river or a lake?



Claudia Newberry standing by the wonderful breakfast treats prepared by the ladies at Mt. Carmel. All the flowers on the buffet and the tables were live and came from members' gardens.



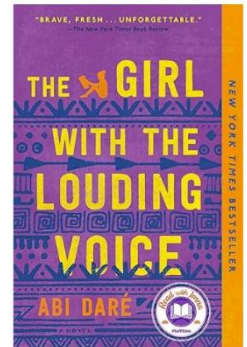
Members of the Mt. Carmel UWF circle who hosted the Spiritual Day Apart event.



Let's Read! UWF Reading Program

Explore the reading program that is a cherished tradition program for the women of the United Methodist Church, all of their friends, and their community. There is something for everyone: adults, youth, children, and even YOU.

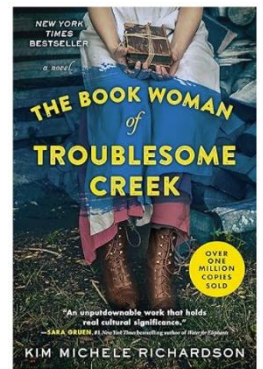
Emily A. Jones, Executive for Racial Justice, suggest that reading allows us to travel the world. One of the books for this year might allow you the joy of visiting Nigeria. Abi Dare's novel, *The Girl with the Louding Voice*, is a story about a 14-year-old girl who want to get an education so she can find her "louding voice" and speak for herself. She never loses sight of her goal of escaping her life of poverty. A New York Times best seller.



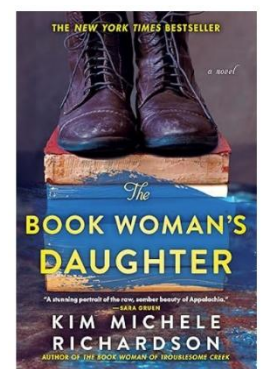
How can you explore this wonderful program? Go to:

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program/>

Why not explore other sites by going to the menu, finding information about the Podcast and webinars, the digital section, ,pray guide, Response magazine, etc.

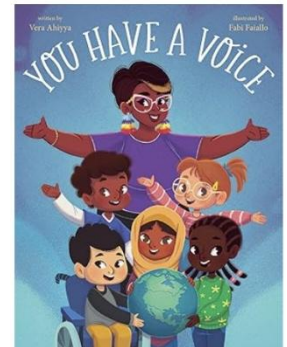


Some other selected books to read might be, "The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek" by Kim Michele Richardson. This book is from the 2023 catalog (you may have already read it), but would still count as a book this year. A new book by the same author is on the 2025 reading list and is called "Book Woman's Daughter." These books tell the story of the true blue-skinned people of Kentucky and the dedicated Kentucky Pack horse library service of the 1930s. Packhorse librarian Cussy Mary Carter has to confront prejudice as old as the Appalachians and suspicion as deep as the holler to bring the joy of reading to the hill folks. This is a story of raw courage and fierce strength, and one woman's belief that books can carry us anywhere – even back home. This year's book continues the story with the daughter, Honey Lovett. Honey and her family have been hiding from the law all her life. When her mother and father are imprisoned, she realizes that she must fight to stay free. GREAT READ.



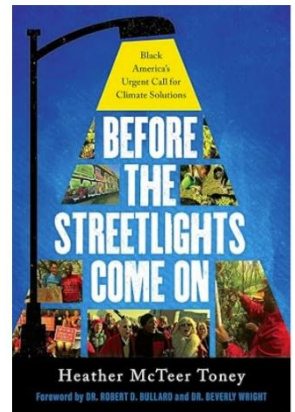
Let's Read! UWF Reading Program

Don't forget the children's books. They are wonderful, short reads and fun to share with the children that you know. Consider "You Have a Voice" by author Vera Ahiyya from the 2024 catalog. You know what's right; You know what's wrong; You have a voice, Speak UP! Be Strong! This book celebrates the power every child naturally holds in using their voice to make change for good and empowers both kids and grown-ups to use their voice.



No Time to Read? Listen to an Author Talk!

Hope that some of you will want to join The author talk by Heather McTeer Toney on "Before the Streetlights come On: Black America's Urgent Call for Climate Solutions." This zoom call will take place on Wednesday April 30, 2025 at 6:00 pm CST. Attending this zoom talk will count as 1 reading credit in the program. [Register here if you want to attend this author talk.](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/jmZ2p8UOT0CVIxd8l_WCg?mc_cid=71ebf9893a&mc_eid=a41fcbef67#/registration)



(This is the link to the page for registration in case the hyperlink above does not work:

https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/jmZ2p8UOT0CVIxd8l_WCg?mc_cid=71ebf9893a&mc_eid=a41fcbef67#/registration)

Challenge! How many books can we read, listen to audiobooks, podcast, or videos. Select a plan 1,2,3,or 4. Don't miss the Fun!

Joanna M. Bailey, joannambailey411@gmail.com



Red River District Treasurer's Report

1st Quarter Financial Report, 2025

March 14, 2025

Beginning Balance	\$6013.01	
Deposits		
1st qtr AM&D	\$450.00	
2nd qtr AM&D	\$450.00	
Pledges	<u>\$3931.75</u>	Total deposits +\$4831.75
	\$10,844.76	
Expenses		
Copies In a Flash	\$260.80	(printing directory/handbooks)
Harland-Clarke	\$40.93	(check order)
Check Image Fee	\$9.00	(DecJanFeb)
Lou Wilkin	\$31.96	(mailing directories)
TWKY Conference	\$3931.75	(1st qtr pledges)
		Total expenses - \$4274.44
End of 1st Qtr Balance	<u>\$6,570.32</u>	as of 3/14/2025

Pledge breakdown:

Pledge to Mission	\$3132.75	(This amount is the only one that counts toward our total 2025 pledge.)
SMR	\$80.00	
Gift to Mission	\$5.00	
Gift in Memory	\$5.00	
World Thank Offering	\$134.00	
Call to Prayer	\$443.00	
Bethlehem Cntr	\$132.00	(birthday \$\$)
	<u>\$3931.75</u>	

10 units remitted pledges in this first quarter.

Submitted by Treasurer Valerie Lavery, vwlavery@hotmail.com



Red River District Calendar of Events 2025

United Women in Faith Red River District Calendar of Events 2025

Date	Event	Location
22-Feb	District Executive Meeting	TBD
1-Mar	Pledge Remittance Due to District Treasurer	
Mar 21-23	Beersheba Women's Retreat	Beersheba Springs
29-Mar	District Spiritual Day Apart	Mount Carmel UMC
1-Jun	Pledge Remittance Due to District Treasurer	
Jun 1-4	TWK Annual Conference	Collierville
Jun 12-14	TWK Conference Mission U	Scarritt Bennett
12-Jul	Conference Charter for Racial Justice	TBD
19-Jul	District Mission u Study	TBD
13-Aug	District Reports Due to Conference Officers	
16-Aug	District Intergenerational Meeting and/or Social Action Event	TBD
1-Sep	Pledge Remittance Due to District Treasurer	
Sep 5-7	United Women of Faith Women's Fall Retreat	Lakeshore
27-Sep	Conference Annual Meeting	Gordon Memorial UMC
18-Oct	Red River District Annual Meeting	Belle Meade UMC / Bellevue UMC
Nov	Officer Training will be conducted via Zoom with each District	
1-Dec	Pledge Remittance Due to District Treasurer	

TBD - This means place to be determined. If your Church can host, please advise which date you would be willing to host so we can have, before the newsletters go out, directions to the Church.

