

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN – LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

November 2015 Newsletter

Dr. Barbara Ferguson, President

website: umwla.org

At this time of Thanksgiving, we are thankful for you.



We have so much for which to give thanks!!

One hundred seventy-three (173) United Methodist Women attended our Annual Meeting, almost doubling our attendance from previous years of around 90! Commendations to the Leadership Team for continually making changes, causing the Annual Meeting to be of greater interest to all. The business meeting has been shortened to Friday afternoon only, and Saturday morning is used for hands-on mission activities. Also, more time is allotted for fellowship and interaction with others. The Leadership Team streamlines their reports to focus on the work and actions of the local units of United Methodist Women. The local unit is the purpose of our work. The local units, collectively, are the foundation of United Methodist Women. Our jobs, at the conference and district levels, are to support and nourish the local units.

Conference Leadership Team: Officers whose terms end in 2015

Three officers conclude their terms in 2015. My term as President will end, and Marjorie Franklin, who was the Spiritual Growth Coordinator will begin to serve as President in 2016. Replacing Marjorie in her position will be Vickie Bollinger. Anita Hansberry's term ends and replacing her will be Erica Washington. We give thanks for the above women, and for all who have answered the call to serve as an officer at the conference level.

Next Conference Event:

The next UMW conference event is the Social Action Retreat, which will be held in Pineville, LA on March 5, 2016. For more information, you can visit our website or contact Melinda Graham at mلاغraham2617@yahoo.com.

UMW Conference Budget and Budget Concerns

The 2016 Conference Budget, which was adopted at the Annual Meeting, is located on page 6 of the program book. If you were not at the meeting, you can find the program book on our website.

The Pledge amount from the local units for 2016 is **\$144,500**. That is outstanding considering that only one-third of United Methodist churches in Louisiana have organized units of United Methodist Women!

The \$144,500 in Pledges from the local units will be used as follows:

- \$62,741 will remain at the District, Conference and Jurisdiction levels for operating expenses.
- \$81,759 will be sent to National UMW for mission.

When local units pledge their money, they often think that their entire pledge goes to National UMW to support mission work. This has never been so as a portion of it is always used for operating expenses. The less used for operating expenses, the more that will go to National for mission. Thus, our goal is to always look at the operating amount and try to keep it as low as possible.

Another reason for always trying to cut operating expenses is that such expenses are a reason many churches do not have organized units of United Methodist Women. In our survey to non-UMW churches in 2012, a majority of the non-UMW churches stated that they have women's groups committed to mission, but the groups did not want to belong to the United Methodist Women organization because of the operating expenses that would be subtracted from the money raised or donated to missions.

In addition to the Leadership Team's review of the budget, it is important for the local units to review the budget and contact the Leadership Team members to suggest any changes. During my four years as President, we were able to hold the line on many expenses, especially, the out-of-state travel subsidies that had already been in the budget. Also, we reviewed the costs of the three conference events: Mission u, Spiritual Retreat/Social Action event, and Annual Meeting. Mission u is funded at about \$18,000 while the other two are funded at less than \$1,000 combined. Thus, finding ways to cut costs for Mission u, while still maintaining the same quality program, and re-distributing some funds to the other events has been studied by the Leadership Team.

Another way, the Leadership Team has discussed to cut costs is to decrease the size of the Leadership Team. Currently, we have eleven officers, plus a Mission u dean if that person is not an officer. Since the Leadership Team's travel and expenses are paid in part, cutting the size of the Leadership Team would reduce costs. National UMW requires only four officers: President, Secretary, Treasurer and Nominations Chair. Through attrition and combining positions, we hope to reduce the size of the Leadership Team.

Again, local units, as well as district leadership teams, need to send budget recommendations to the Conference Leadership Team. Just like government spends the tax payers' money, the Leadership Team spends your (pledge) money. Thus, you should give your input on this.

2016 Directory

For the past few years, our Directory has been distributed by the first month of the new year. In order to have our Directory ready for distribution by January 2016, our Secretary Karen Martin must receive the district officers' contact information, the local unit presidents' contact information and the 2016 calendars of events by the end of this month. Thus, local units, please get your information to the district, and district officers, please send that information to Karen by **November 30, 2015**. Many thanks!!

*Happy Thanksgiving
to you and your family!*

*God has done great things for us and
for this we are exceedingly glad!*

*Barbara Ferguson
bferguson@umwla.org*