President’s Message

Strong is the Word!

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit, apart from me you can do nothing.” – John 15:5

As I write this article, it is two days after my return from our first executive committee meeting for 2014. I truly believe that there is likely no better qualified group of leaders anywhere than we have in South Georgia. They are energetic, smart, and eager to work. All we need is support from you. And, I know we can count on you.

Many plans are being made for various events for the year. You will want to look at the calendar of events for your district and for the conference to find a mission event that will suit your desire to serve.

Probably the biggest challenge we have this year is to carry out a plan of action that has been mandated by the 2013 Annual Conference to re-district and re-structure the district lines, from nine districts to six districts. Plans for the process have already begun for United Methodist Women, with a conference transitional team in place, and guidelines provided for resource as we move into the plan of action that the committee elects to follow to get the job done. All officers of conference and the present nine district presidents will have a part in the end result.

While this mammoth operation is taking place, United Methodist Women must remain STRONG, a word the conference team has adopted as our

Exley to succeed Bankhead as UMW president

United Methodist Women Gather for 41st Annual Meeting

Pittman Park United Methodist Church’s sanctuary was packed on Saturday, Oct. 19 as women from across the South Georgia Annual Conference gathered together for the 41st annual meeting of the South Georgia United Methodist Women. Meeting under the theme “Living the Heart of God,” nearly 250 women – and a handful of supportive men – celebrated 144 years of mission and ministry.

“There’s a place for laity called to service,” said keynote speaker Dr. Sandi Hortman, a deaconess who served at Open Door Community House until retiring last month. “Be radical.”

Dr. Hortman, who was commissioned as a deaconess in 2007, shared with the group the radical love and 125-year history of deaconesses in The United Methodist Church.

“I get asked, ‘just what is a deaconess?’ at least once a week,” she said. “We are lay women consecrated to a lifetime of service.”

Having served at Columbus’ Open Door Community House for eight years, Dr. Hortman saw, firsthand, how UMW are helping to love and serve those in need.

“Oh, how Jesus has changed lives at Open Door.”

Through the years, Dr. Hortman said, deaconesses have loved and served radically. Phoebe, who Paul called a “helper of many,” was the first known deaconess.

“I consider Phoebe a radical,” Dr. Hortman said. “She may have been the only kind word some people heard.”

Encouraging UMW to continue loving and serving those in need, Dr. Hortman urged them to “be radical.”

UMW president Sara Bankhead, in her last address as president, reminded everyone that they were gathered to celebrate the work and ministry of the UMW in the South Georgia Conference.

“We are 7,990 strong in 254 units. We are women meeting together for Bible study, hands on mission work and fellowship. All things we do to fulfill the purpose of United Methodist Women.”

She outlined the ways that United Methodist Women in South Georgia are learning about, fighting for, and advocating for social justice issues.

Continued on Page 2
Past President's Message

I Dare You to Prove Me Wrong!

Four years ago I was writing my first article as President of the South Georgia Conference United Methodist Women and now this is my article as the immediate past president. In October of 2013 during the Annual Meeting I shared with those present some of the many accomplishments that had taken place across our Conference. We had 92 units receive Mission Today Awards. 36 units are participating in Social Justice Programs which is an increase from 11 the previous year. 94 units have attained the distinction of being a 5 Star Unit and 64 of those went the “second mile” and became Hall of Fame Units. Over 270 adults and 6 children participated in the Reading Program which represents over 2000 books being read. I reported that at the end of three quarters we had given over $21,000 to our three National Mission Agencies here in South Georgia.

I am pleased to report that amount increased by the end of the year to $38,530.97! I am so proud of each of you in your local units that see the needs of others and provides financially. My last report from our conference treasurer was that we will meet our Pledge to Mission for the coming year, a $115,140 budget for the coming year, a $2,435 reduction from the 2013 budget.

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Expressing thanks and appreciation for the support she's been given during her four-year UMW presidency, Bankhead said she was eternally grateful for the opportunity.

“I've traveled many miles, attended lots of meetings and enjoyed having the opportunity to work with many talented and dedicated women,” she said.

During the installation of officers led by Gloria Morgan, four were installed by Bishop for Connectional Ministries, led Rev. Denise Walton, assistant to the pastor and minister of Hispanic ministries; Ivelisse Quinones, St. Luke UMC associate pastor; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Pittman Park UMC; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Pittman Park UMC; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Pittman Park UMC; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Pittman Park UMC; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Pittman Park UMC.

During the day's worship service, attendees sang hymns and were treated to liturgical dancing by Caylee Blanton, a member of Centerville United Methodist Church, and special music by the St. Luke Hispanic Ministry Praise Band.

Rev. Jonathan Smith, associate pastor at Pittman Park UMC; Rev. Chris Ramsey, Statesboro District Superintendent; Rev. Ivelisse Quinones, St. Luke UMC associate pastor and minister of Hispanic ministries; and Rev. Denise Walton, assistant to the Bishop for Connectional Ministries, led worshippers in a service of Holy Communion.

“Thank you for helping me be who I am and whose I am,” Bankhead said. Quoting John Ripley of Ripley's Believe it or Not fame who often said, “I dare you to prove me wrong.” Bankhead said to the UMWAU. “We are radical girls… I’d tell anyone, anywhere – South Georgia United Methodist Women are the best anywhere and ‘I dare you to prove me wrong!’”

With a grateful heart,
Sara Bankhead

~ 41st Annual Meeting

“We are a giving and caring organization that sees the needs of others and provides financially to our three National Mission Agencies here in South Georgia,” Bankhead said.

She highlighted the ministries that, because of involvement by United Methodist Women, are taking place in the South Georgia Conference. So far this year, UMW members across the Conference have been busy with 206 mission studies, have had 276 participants in their reading programs, 92 units have received Mission Today Awards, 36 Units are participating in Social Justice Programs, 94 units attained the distinction of being 5-Star Units, and 64 of those went the “second mile” and became Hall of Fame Units.

During their business session, South Georgia UMW pledged $235,000 to missions giving in 2014 and approved an $115,140 budget for the coming year, a $2,435 reduction from the 2013 budget.

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With a grateful heart,
Sara Bankhead

Continued from Page 1

Executive Committee

~ Used by permission

Communion Served

By Kara Witherow

~ Used by permission
Continued from Page 1

~ President’s Message ~

one-word mantra for this year. At our January meeting, we endorsed a vision of renewing the strength of our organization: STRONG in the Word — STRONG in Organization — STRONG in Connection — STRONG in Proclamation - STRONG in Service — STRONG in Presence. True to our PURPOSE. With God’s help, we will accomplish all of these things.

The conference team is united in believing that in 2014, United Methodist Women has received A Calling for This Time. Romans 9:17 says, “I raised you up for this purpose that I may display my power in you that my name might be proclaimed over all the earth.” Indeed! For, by no greater words can we reveal our mission to the world to which we have been called. Yes, God has called you, me, and us, to proclaim His name over all the earth. United Methodist Women has long lived out that mission at home and abroad as we have served the least of these by being the hands and feet of Jesus.

At the meeting of the executive committee on January 4th, I placed a wrist band on the arm of each conference officer and district president that proclaimed our intent for 2014. It reads, A Calling for This Time. They have been asked to wear the wrist band all year as a reminder to themselves and to you that we have each accepted the call to be STRONG in UMW. We will accomplish the STRONG challenge with our time, our presence, our voice, our action, our connection and by our very appearance. Won’t you join your leadership team in working together to build, renew, and be of service by sharing your many blessings through your service, your gifts, your time, and your skill or talent? God is calling me. Can you hear Him calling you?

STRONG is the word for 2014! You will be hearing it over and over.

Mary Exley
Conference President

South Georgia Conference Mission u
July 17 – 20, 2014

Save the Date: Thursday – Sunday, July 17-20, 2014 @ Epworth By The Sea for the 2014 South Georgia Conference Cooperative Mission u.

Last year in 2013 the name change came to the formerly known School of Christian Mission to be Mission u: Learning Together for the Transformation of the World.

All adults attending will take the Spiritual Growth Study, “How is it with your soul?” with the Rev. Debbie Wallace, General Evangelist & Leader of Romans 8:38 Ministries, as we study and learn together.

Adults also select one other class from the following: “The Roma of Europe” (the Geographical Study) with Mrs. Joyce Dent, “The Church and People with Disabilities” (the Social Issue Study) with leaders from across our South Georgia Conference.

In addition, there will classes for Volunteers in Mission and Spanish Lay Speaking Training.

We will offer a Basic Spanish Class again this year.

Jared Middleton will lead the Youth, and we will have classes and activities for our Elementary Children and a Nursery will be provided for Preschoolers.

Children will stay with their parents or guardians in the motel rooms and Youth will stay together in cabins.

Please also invite your mission chair/coordinator and or mission teams and coordinators to come for this time in education, awareness, and advocacy together. Mission u has something for all ages so place July 17-20 on your calendar and make plans now to attend. Pick up a brochure/registration form from your District President by Mid-March, at Spiritual Growth Retreat or at Annual Conference. See you at the South Georgia Conference Cooperative Mission u.

Wesley’s Love Walk 2014

February 8th, 2014

Wesley Community Centers of Savannah, Inc. has been serving women, children, and youth since April 1949. United Methodist Women have been a great supporter of the programs and services Wesley provide to those in the community. In 2013, we served 8,079 women, children, and families. This was the first time we have ever served more than 8,000 people in a year. This is a mixed blessing. It was fantastic that we were able to serve so many people; however, this means there are MORE people who are in crisis, needing services.

Here is one way YOU can help: Wesley’s Annual Fund Raiser, The Love Walk, is approaching and you can participate. Call (912) 236-4226 for more information.

Prayer Time
for UMW

7:30 a.m. Daily
(or anytime)

God Answers Prayer!

It’s A Love Thang!

Walk starts at 9:00 at Wesley Community Centers 1601 Drayton Street Savannah, GA 31401

Serving Women, Children and Families since 1949
For more information call
912-236-4226
**Room Options for UMW Spiritual Growth Retreat**

**Reservation Deadline:** March 7, 2014

**Rates Per Person for Two Nights Lodging, Six Meals, Use of Meeting Rooms and Tax**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room Option</th>
<th>Reynolds</th>
<th>Pitts/Booth</th>
<th>Robertson Inn</th>
<th>Turner Lodge</th>
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<td>$112.18</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Youth Cabins** $84.34 per person (13 & up) IF BRING SHEETS, BLANKETS, TOWELS AND PILLOW. (Epworth will provide linens for $5.41)

Children ages 3-12 in room with adult: $34.60; Teens (13-17): $80.50; Please note: one adult in a room with one child/teen will pay the single adult rate plus for the child/teen; two adults with child/teen in room will both pay double rate and rate for child/teen. Teens registering for the Young Women’s Retreat are strongly encouraged to stay in the cabins with the rest of their group.

**Important! It is recommended that all teen women registering for the retreat stay in the cabins!**

If desired, individual meal tickets for those not staying overnight may be purchased on site: Breakfast $8.65; Lunch $11.35; Dinner $12.43 (Prices include tax.)

Include full payment with reservation form.

Make check payable to Epworth-by-the-Sea, or use Visa or Master Card.

VISA # _______________________________ Expiration Date ________________

MASTERCARD # ____________________________ Expiration Date ________________

**Arrival Date:** Fri., March 21, 2014 • **Departure Date:** Sun., March 23, 2014

**Arrival Time Must Forfeit First Night’s Charges. Reservations are Transferable.**

**Name** _____________________________ **Phone** ( ____ ) ____________________

**Email** _______________________________

**Mailing Address:** City ___________________ State ______ Zip Code ________

**Arrival Date** _______________________ **Departure Date** ___________________

**Special Requests (If Applicable)** __________________________

**Roommate(s)** ________________________ **No Pets, No Alcohol**

Check In 4:00 PM • Check Out 11:30 AM

**Mission Giving Opportunities**

South Georgia Conference Mission Agencies welcome your gifts. Special requests include:

**Wesley Community Centers** — Baby Wipes; **Open Door** — Bibles (especially children’s & large print), socks, underwear (all sizes children - adult), chapstick, and insect repellent; **Yashti** — Fast food certificates (e.g. McDonald’s, Dairy Queen, Burger King) to be used as rewards for good behavior, good grades, etc.

Please bring your gifts to the designated area in Strickland Auditorium by noon Saturday. All gift certificates and monetary gifts should be given directly to **Leona Rogers**, Conference UMW Treasurer.

**Silent Auction with Becky Britton**

Many hand-made items, “from scratch” goodies, and unique treasures will be available for purchase at the Silent Auction. Put aside a little extra money for this bargain extravaganza! All money raised is for Mission Giving.

_The Teen Women will be constructing UMCOR health kits during the retreat. Donations for this project would be greatly appreciated. Contact your district president to find out how you can help._

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**Purpose of United Methodist Women**

The organized unit of United Methodist Women 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.
not some poor third world country without benefit of a legitimate government and caring community. The title of the book is really asking us just what are going to allow in our backyard.

If you are like me, you are probably wondering how I recognize these injustices in my backyard. One section details some things to look for such as:
- A lack of freedom to come and go as he/she pleases
- Excessive work hours for very low wages or no wages
- Large debt and inability to pay it off

Not to leave us totally disheartened and angered, the author also includes stories of rescue, dedication, and bravery to restore these women and children to a life worthy of an American citizen with the hope of living the American dream.

I highly recommend this book, but it is not for the faint of heart.

Call to Pray and Self-Denial

For 2014, the call to pray and self-denial is entitled “Sound Foundations: Sounds Missions” by Becky Louter and Clara Ester. The objective is:

To reflect on the rich heritage of our mission institutions and through our gifts that enable the institutions to be physically sound and safe spaces for ministry by caring for present and future property needs.

Information obtained from Program Book 2013-2014
Mary Exley

**President**

Mary is married to Wilson Exley and the mother of two daughters and four grandchildren. She lives on a golf course at Black Creek which is about 25 minutes away from Savannah, Georgia. Mary’s background is in Accounting and she is the former owner and publisher of the Bryan County newspaper.

For her enjoyment, she enjoys gardening, needlework and Bible study. She also collects Blue Willow.

She is an active member of the Pembroke United Methodist Church where she serves as Treasurer, as well as many other areas in the church.

Mary has served the United Methodist Women in the following areas: President; Treasurer, and Spiritual Growth Coordinator of local unit; Savannah District Communications Coordinator; Savannah District Treasurer; South Georgia Conference Treasurer; South Georgia Conference Vice President; Southeastern Regional School of Christian Mission Team, and she presently serves as South Georgia Conference President.

Her goal for 2014: To answer God’s Calling for This Time.

Jean Ivey

**Charter for Racial Justice Committee**

Jean has served in various positions of the local United Methodist Women and as Missions and Membership on the District level. Other offices held has been District President from 1992–1995; SEJ Committee on Nominations from 1988-1991; Church Women United; President of the Georgia Unit 1998 – 2001; served on the National Unit Committee on Celebration from 2002-2005, and as the local president of her local unit (Riverside UMW) from 2008-2011.

She is the widower of the late Rev. Tom Ivey. Jean is a certified conference Lay Speaker and is now serving a two year term on the Conference on the Charter for Racial Justice Committee.

**Margaret Wheeler**

**Communications Coordinator**

Margaret is a member of Howard Chapel United Methodist Church in Dublin and has been a member of the United Methodist Women since 1989. She currently serves as president of her local unit and also has served as Vice President, Secretary, Secretary of Program Resources, and Chairperson of the Committee on Nominations. In the Dublin’s District, Margaret has served a total of four (4) years on the Committee on Nominations with two years as chairperson. She also served four (4) years as the Communications Coordinator.

In addition, Margaret has served four (4) on the Conference’s Nominating Committee and two (2) years on the committee for Race and Religion. She is now serving as the Conference’s Communications Coordinator.

She is a former accountant with the Department of Veterans Affairs and currently works as a Program Analyst for the Chief of Staff office. Margaret has one daughter, Katrina.

Merita Evans

**United Methodist, Inc. Advisory Group**

Merita is a member of Howard Chapel United Methodist Church where she serves as Vice President of the local unit of United Methodist Women, Certified Conference Lay Speaker, choir member and Sunday school teacher. She is married to MacArthur Evans and has (5) five children, 13 grandchildren and (2) two great-grandchildren.

She is a retired public servant after working in the public for over 37 years both as a cashier and as a Deputy Clerk for the Magistrate Court in the Laurens Superior Court Office. Merita has also served as president, social actions coordinator, treasurer, and nominations chairperson of the local unit.

In the Dublin District she served as a representative for women under age 35, Global Concerns Coordinator, Supportive community Coordinator, and as a member of the Nominations committee.

On the conference level, Merita served four years in the following positions: Supportive Community Coordinator. She served four years on the Nominations Committee of which 2 of those years, she served as chairperson. In addition, Merita served on the Charter for Racial Justice Committee. She also represented United Methodist Women by serving on the South Atlantic Regional School of Mission committee on nominations and by presenting Mission Studies in the Dublin District or wherever called.

Merita is currently serving as member of the Program Advisory Group (PAG) to the United Methodist Women, Inc.
**SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN AND TEEN'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT 2014**

**MARCH 21–23, 2014**

EPWORTH-BY-THE-SEA
ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GEORGIA

RETREAT SPEAKER: ALLISON LINDSEY

WORSHIP LEADERS: ERIC GONZALES & BICKY WOODARD

TEEN WOMEN'S RETREAT LEADER: NICOLE WALKER

**SATURDAY INTEREST GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE/SUBJECT</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;PraiseMoves: The Christian Alternative to Yoga!&quot;</td>
<td>LAVERNE BATTEN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Keep Calm and Breeze Past Obstacles When the Finish Line is In Sight!&quot;</td>
<td>CHARLENE BLACK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Too much drama in your life? Keep calm and Bring the Scripture to Life through Drama! Let the Spirit move you!&quot;</td>
<td>HATTIE BROWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Caregivers: I've Been One, I Am One, I'll Be One, I'll Need One...But Am I Prepared?&quot;</td>
<td>LISA JACKSON</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Live, Love, Laugh and be Happy!&quot;</td>
<td>ELLEN JETER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Return to Calmness&quot; Feeling frazzled? Learn how to calm yourself through self massage and journaling.</td>
<td>SHIRLEY JOHNSON IRVINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Hooray for Hollywood!&quot; Explore Christian themes in the films of today and yesterday. Enjoy film clips and lively discussion.</td>
<td>TARA JONES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FREE TIME” OPTIONS**

- *Keep Calm with a 1.3 Mile Fun Walk/Run*!
  - Join the participants or the “cloud of witnesses”checker them on at 3:00 PM Saturday afternoon. You may purchase a “Keep Calm” T-shirt for $10. Proceeds will be added to mission giving. You must preregister for this event to be guaranteed a shirt. Please include payment with registration and circle shirt size at left.

**LITERATURE/PROGRAM MATERIALS WILL BE ON SALE FROM FRIDAY AFTERNOON UNTIL SATURDAY NIGHT. (NO SUNDAY SALES)**

- **SAVE THE DATE** -
  - SOUTH GEORGIA CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST WOMEN 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS
  - **MARCH 8**
    - UMW DAY
    - LOCAL CHURCHES
  - **MARCH 21-23**
    - SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT
    - EPWORTH-BY-THE-SEA
    - ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA
  - **JUNE 1-3**
    - SOUTH GEORGIA UNITED METHODIST ANNUAL CONFERENCE
    - SAVANNAH, GA
  - **JULY 17-20**
    - MISSION U
    - EPWORTH-BY-THE-SEA
    - ST. SIMONS ISLAND, GA
  - **AUGUST 2**
    - SOCIAL ISSUES WORKSHOP
    - MCREA UMC
    - MCREA, GEORGIA
  - **OCTOBER 4**
    - DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TRAINING
    - TBA
  - **OCTOBER 18**
    - UNITED METHODIST WOMEN CONFERENCE ANNUAL MEETING
    - PORTERFIELD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
    - ALBANY, GA

**RETREAT LEADER: ALLISON LINDSEY**

Although many of you will recognize Allison from her work with the children at past Epworth events, she wears many other hats! Allison Lindsey currently serves as the Associate Director in the Office of Connectional Ministries for the South Georgia Annual Conference. She serves as the Conference Secretary of Global Ministries, provides leadership to our Conference Nurture, Outreach and Witness Discipleship Teams, and helps oversee the Conference Safe Sanctuaries program. Allison is also responsible for Life Span Ministries, which provides events and spiritual growth formation for children through older adults.

Allison served as a lay delegate to General Conference in Tampa as well as a delegate to the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference, where she was elected a director to the General Board of Global Ministries.

An “Aggie” Class of ‘90 graduate from Texas A&M University, Allison holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology. She is married to Dr. Griff Lindsey, DMD. They reside in Douglas, Georgia with their 3 children, Emily (20), Brady (16) and Noah (10). When she catches “downtime”, she loves reading, sharing family time, and satisfying her Pinterest addiction!

**TEEN WOMEN'S RETREAT SPEAKER: NICOLE WALKER**

Nicole Walker is 29 years old and is married to her high school sweetheart, Reverend Antonie E. Walker. They have an eleven year old son, Antonie II. Nicole holds a degree as a medical assistant but for now enjoys being a full time wife, mother, and very active United Methodist Woman!

Nicole has held several different local and district positions in United Methodist Women including president of the Savannah District. She is currently the Membership, Nurture, Outreach and Coordinator for the South Georgia Conference.

Nicole and her family currently live in Macon where her husband is pastor of Grace Corner UMC. Nicole enjoys computers and bowling. She had an awesome time with the Teen Women at last year’s Spiritual Growth Retreat and can’t wait for the 2014 event!
2014 United Methodist Women Conference Calendar

March 9
United Methodist Women’s Day – Local Churches

March 21-23
Spiritual Growth Retreat – Epworth-by-the-Sea

June 1-3
Annual Conference – Savannah, GA

July 17-20
Mission U – Epworth-by-the Sea

Aug. 2
Social Issues Workshop- McRae, GA

Oct 4
DLTE – Place TBA

Oct. 18
UMW Conference Annual Meeting – Porterfield UMC, Albany, GA

If you would like to subscribe, the cost is $2.00 per year.
Please mail subscription to the Conference Treasurer. Thank you!

Spatial Growth Retreat

Do you feel like you’ve shifted into high gear, but you’re still losing ground? Keep calm, and “...keep your eyes on Jesus, who both began and finished this race we’re in....”

(From Hebrews 12:1-3, The Message)

Join your Sisters-in-Christ at the annual United Methodist Women Spiritual Growth Retreat March 21-23, 2014 at beautiful Epworth-By-The-Sea. Immerse yourself in a community of loving, supportive Christian women for a weekend guaranteed to soothe your soul and strengthen your commitment to live for Christ. Your spirit will be renewed as you learn to relax in the presence of the Holy Spirit, rely on the strength of Jesus, and rest in the assurance of God’s love.

Prayer Time for UMW
7:30 a.m. Daily (or anytime)
God Answers Prayer!