



# UPDATES AND REFLECTIONS

March 2017

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Best wishes! Remember that spring is not far away now. It is easier to anticipate the spring season once Lent has begun. March 1 ushers in the Lenten season with the promise of Easter.

On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, several of our members traveled to Richmond for United Methodist Day with the General Assembly. No matter what one's political affiliation, it is important to bring significant issues to the attention of elected officials. It is easy for politicians to be swept up in the fervor of topics that have gained the attention of the press and the public. Sometimes that means that less glamorous but equally important topics can be put on the back burner. When the voting constituency takes the time to remind elected officials of these issues, great things can happen. United Methodist women speaking about women's and children's issues like poverty and human trafficking keep the elected officials in touch with such topics. Thanks to all of you who went to Richmond.

Don't forget our annual Candle Burning! Gwen Hamrick is in charge this year and she is working to make it a memorable Saturday morning. Circle leaders will be asking for donations of baked goods for this event. Look for more information in "This Also is Our Worship" and "The Messenger."

At the February 27 UMW Board meeting interested Circles will be assigned to the tables they will sponsor for the Bazaar in November. It is never too early to begin preparations and planning for that big day. In next month's Updates and Reflections, you will see a list of what each Circle will be doing.

If you haven't already turned in your 2017 Pledge to Missions to you your Circle treasurer, please consider doing so. For 2017, the suggested contribution is \$48 per member. Remember, your contribution supports our obligations to the district and to the things we support, like our youth mission trips, our reading program and recognition awards. Detailed information on this year's budget can be found in the 2017 membership book on pages 5 & 6,

We encouraged members to try to attend at least one of our five general meetings this year. I hope to see many of you at our first general meeting, the Candle Burning on March 25.

*Janet*

## SOCIAL ACTION

Four church members attended the United Methodist Day at the General Assembly on February 2. They were Karen McPherson, Linda Upshaw, and Carolyn and Bob Spencer. Our group had appointments with two members of the House of Delegates, Mike Mullen (93<sup>rd</sup> District) and Brenda Pogge (96<sup>th</sup> District). Delegate Pogge had a last-minute scheduling problem so they met with a staff member. Both Del. Mullen and Sen. Mason were very welcoming and willing to answer questions about the legislative areas that had been identified by the *Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy (VICAPP)* as concerns to be discussed.

A bill (HB 2213) was introduced that was intended to reduce the amount of time needy families can receive financial support from TANF Safety Net (*Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*). This bill was defeated.

HB 2386, which passed, establishes the requirements that courts cannot deny a defendant's eligibility for a restricted driver's license. The bill requires that a court must consider a defendant's financial circumstances, including whether the defendant owes fines and costs to other courts. Defendants can lose their driver's license and if a restricted license is not issued, it affects the defendant's ability to pay their fines if they cannot drive to and from work.

Another issue being addressed by *VICAPP* is that of wage theft. This occurs when employers break the law by not paying the minimum wage, not paying overtime for hours worked over 40 hours per week, stealing worker's tips, taking illegal deductions from worker's paychecks, giving paychecks that bounce, and calling workers "independent contractors" rather than employee's—thus not paying the employer side of payroll taxes, workers' compensation insurance, unemployment insurance and overtime. There is no bill addressing this issue in the current session but *VICAPP* will hold hearings around the state in preparation for the 2018 legislative session.

Healthcare expansion: The focus this year is specifically on expanding mental health and substance abuse services. *VICAPP* supports the Governor's proposed budget which includes money

to expand these services. The services were expanded under the approved budget but much is up in the air in this area, depending on what the United States Congress does with the *Affordable Care Act*.

### **CIRCLE HAPPENINGS**

The **Carol Scott Circle** met February 14. There were 10 members present and 1 guest. Marilyn Johnson gave an interesting program on her years as a young girl in Nigeria. She spoke of her parents who were missionaries and their many good works of medical deeds and setting up schools and churches. The work that they started continues to this day. Our circle continues to support our sick members and different projects in the community. Betty Garrington turned in many UMCOR kits. We welcomed Betty back after an extended illness.

The **Clarke-Heritage Circle** met February 7 and there were 19 members present. Our speaker, Holly Walling, shared her experiences as a volunteer in prison ministries. She shared information about the Kairos Prison Ministry and our churches involvement. We made placemats for the ministry which are used for the weekend retreats that help develop a Christian community inside the prison.

The **Friendship Circle** met February 13. There were 12 members present. Members spent the meeting packing vitamins and pain medications for the Honduras mission trip. We contributed four boxes of appropriate items to be donated to ARC for their bingo night and donated several bags of items for the Lenten Shoe Boxes.

The **Jean Craig Circle** met February 6 in the Activities Room at Brookdale. There were six members present and one guest, Connie Bland. We had a new member who joined and we would like to welcome Sally Davis. Linda Upshaw was our program speaker. She shared a short program on the history of Valentines and shared a collection of old Valentines dating back to the early 1900's. Members decorated placemats with a Valentine theme for Respite Care.

The **Olive Casey Circle** met on March 6 with 11 members present. Our speaker was Anthony Williams, Director of the Early Childhood Music School. He told us about the classes available at ECMS, the Jessie Elizabeth Scholarship Program and The Elliott's Song Program. He had lots of interaction and questions from the attendees regarding his education that prepared him to teach and direct this wonderful program. This help everyone to more fully understand the importance of this program and to appreciate how wonderful it is for the children who participate. Our circle is putting the school bags together for UMCOR and donating

money for shipping. We have also donated food for FISH and made a monetary gift to CASA.

The **Sisters in Faith Circle** met on February 14. There were 14 members present and 1 guest. For the January meeting our speakers were Monis Rokhsafat and Abbas Javaheri (wife and husband) who spoke about being from Iran, the Iranian culture and the religion of Islam. Our February meeting was spent planning for the Bazaar in November. Our members continue providing meals for funeral receptions as needed. We also provided medicines for the Honduras Mission trip.

The **Susanna Wesley Circle** met on February 1. There were 13 members and 1 guest present. Our speaker was Joanne Sutlive. She gave a very interesting talk about her life and all the great things she experienced while in Malaysia, how her family adapted to the changes and how her young children learned to speak many different languages. Our circle donates non-perishable food items, socks and underwear to FISH, pop-top tabs to Ronald McDonald Charities, stamps to UMCOR and we sell knives to raise funds for missions.

### **PRAYERS & CONCERNS**

Prayers are requested for Norma Hall as she recovers from her hospital stay (*Jean Craig Circle*). Carol Nelson is now home and recuperating from heart surgery (*Carol Scott Circle*). Prayers are also requested for Marylyn Voorhess, Barbara Van Wormer, Rose Rogers, Marty Martin, and Sylvia Montroy and her husband (*Olive Casey Circle*). Please pray for Kay and Doug Barre', Althea Hinson's son-in-law as he battles prostate cancer, Sylvia Teeweun and family as they grieve the loss of her son-in-law (*Sisters in Faith*).

### **DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR**

**March 25**-Candle Burning

**March 27**-UMW Board Meeting

**April 28 & 29**-VA Conference Spiritual Life Retreat

**April 30**-UMW Sunday