



The LINK is published twice a year and **distributed by email only**. Please print and share it with your unit



Greetings United Women in Faith, River Bluffs members. As I write these words, it is a sunny day and rising temperature with the promise of near 40 degrees for today. News is that ICE is going to be moving out of Minnesota. We have been under unrelenting pain of concern for those who are afraid of harm. Many have stood together in witness and in helping our neighbors. Blessing to those in active work and in earnest prayer.

The Spring Gathering for River Bluffs Area will be Saturday, April 18, 2026, at Northfield United Methodist Church. The plans for the day will be filled with learning, prayer, and singing. Come together to celebrate all we have and our love of being in small and large ministries.

Elizabeth Everitt, President UWFaith, River Bluffs Area

Northfield United Women in Faith is hosting a gathering of women from the southeastern Minnesota area on April 18, 2026, 8:30-2:00. We will be coming together to learn more about food insecurity and climate change. **Afternoon Fundraising Panel** is Janet Ewing-The Well, Rosemount; Brenda Blair-First UMC, Red Wing; Becky Coleman-Living Sirit, Minneapolis; Nancy Hoffman-Resurrection, Hastings; Dee Dee O'Dell-Christ UMC, Rochester. Nicole Weydt and friends will share **"Becoming a Deaconess"**

"Everyone deserves to eat! (source Second Harvest Heartland website) At Second Harvest Heartland, we believe accessing food should be free from anxiety and fear. There is more than enough food for everyone. Every day we are working together to source and distribute food efficiently, advocate for effective policies and programs, and invest in new ways to end hunger in the heartland. Second Harvest Heartland is making sure everyone can eat by providing emergency food boxes. Each box feeds a family of four and includes items like pasta, rice, beans, canned tuna, baking mix, and cooking oil. This is along with the regular food shelf activities.

Annissa Zynda: Speaker for Second Harvest Heartland. **Bio:** Annissa Zynda is the Partner Operations Manager at Second Harvest Heartland, having previously worked for the organization as an Agency Services Coordinator, Compliance Specialist, and Compliance Lead. After studying Agronomy and Global Health in undergrad, Annissa completed three AmeriCorps service terms, including one term as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the Foodbank for the Heartland in Omaha, NE. Her work in food banking is centered in supporting partners in all things compliance, capacity building, and customer service. She recently bought her first home in Northfield, MN where she lives with her boyfriend and cat.

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Hello, I am Brenda Blair, **secretary for River Bluff area United Women in Faith**. I am also a local unit president for United Women in Faith at First United Methodist Church in Red Wing, MN. I am a retired early childhood special education teacher who has traveled yearly with my husband to the country of Sierra Leone on Africa's western coast. We celebrated 10 years of traveling to Mondema Village, Sierra Leone in January 2026 where we met with the local village board for Passion for Learning Initiative, our most recent endeavor there. In the US, I love many outdoor adventures, hike, swim, and canoe/kayak, bake and can garden produce and collect agates. I also like reading and supporting my local small communities in their efforts for justice for all.

MONEY MATTERS—from your Treasurer

From your treasurer, Jane Baker:

Greetings! This is my second year serving as your River Bluffs Area treasurer. It is a relief to be wearing only one hat this year! I live in beautiful Red Wing with my husband; we attend Red Wing UMC; I am active in Red Wing UWFaith.

As Area treasurer, I receive monies from unit treasurers and send them quarterly to our Conference



Treasurer. I collect offerings and registration funds from our Area Gatherings and pay our bills. In summary, I am the person who oversees where our money goes.

United Women in Faith needs funds to fulfill its vision of turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world. That's the reason units have pledge services, bazaars, salad luncheons, and many other fundraisers. I hope that your unit will plan to grow our vision by raising funds this year.

Our Area's 2024 pledge to missions was \$40,000 and to Emma Norton was \$10,000. Preliminary figures show a pledge payment of \$25,000, and an Emma Norton payment of \$6500. These amounts include remits from 21 units as well as offerings from our spring and fall gatherings. Final numbers should be determined by the end of February.

Our Area has pledged \$39,000 to missions and \$10,000 to Emma Norton in 2026. Please assist your unit to help meet this goal.

Reminders for treasurers:

- Send remits to me, Jane Baker, 727 Hi Park, Red Wing, MN 55066. Please include a remit form with the check showing the designation for the donation, as well as your name and contact information. Remit forms are available from me.
- Please send remits only for organizations designated by National UWFaith. These include Emma Norton, UMCOR, McCurdy Mission, and many others. You can send checks directly to those not listed by National (such as Ronald McDonald House). Contact me with questions about others.
- Unit treasurers can contact me anytime with questions at 651-764-2505. If there is no answer, leave a message, including your name and number, and I will get back to you ASAP.

Blessings to all River Bluff Area units in 2026. Jane Baker

If you need remittance forms, please contact me, Jane Baker, by phone or text (651-764-2505), or email (janekbaker@yahoo.com).



Ginny Vandervest - Chair of Nominations River Bluff Area

I belong to Resurrection United Women in Faith, Hasings. I've been active in UMW and now UWF

Since the early 1980's, thanks to the mentorship of a dear friend who was very active for many years. I served in several offices in the Metro East District, including President for 16 years, then on Conference in several offices including Secretary. I served on the Board of Emma Norton Services for 6 years in the early 2000's and have been on the advancement committee since. I have been acting secretary of River Valley and now River Bluffs Area for 4 years. I look forward to continuing to serve as Chair of Nominations and to my 4th Assembly in May.

I have a husband of 58 years, 2 sons and 2 grandsons. My sister lives in North Carolina and we are planning to meet at Assembly.

RIVER BLUFFS AREA COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

The Committee on Nominations will be working to fill the positions that offer the opportunity for United Women in Faith members to serve, learn and grow through the programs and challenges facing all women. UW in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship and education so we can impact local and global communities. The opportunities are present and our Area needs the talents and service of many to fulfill the UWF vision of turning Faith Hope and Love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

You can start in River Bluffs District!!! We have opportunities on the committee on Nominations and as Program Coordinator. Along with these opportunities are benefits. The goal is for all to be able to serve without concern for cost - so.... As a part of the leadership team your registration, meal costs, and mileage is paid to meetings. GREAT BENEFITS.

The nominations committee is responsible for encouraging and contacting members to serve giving accurate information on expectations and duties of the various positions.

The Program Coordinator works alongside the leadership team to plan the Area meetings and is the contact person with the hosting UWF unit.

Thank you to those who have taken the opportunity to serve and promote the activities and purpose of River Bluffs Area. Please consider the opportunities and contact Ginny, Teri, or Diana for further information; Ginny Vandervest - 651-491-7614, Teri Arnold - 507-273-3812 or Diana Eickelberg - 507-358-9576.

Resources for Enrichment We offer many ways for you to enrich your life, live your faith, and put love into action.

<https://www.uwfaithmn.com> – for Minnesota events, area connections & Fresh Connection

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/127497622121> – Minnesota United Women in Faith

<https://www.uwfaith.org> – National Who We Are, Resources, Get involved, What We Do, News, Events, Give, Legacy Fund, Membership, Donate

<https://www.facebook.com> – United Women in Faith National

<https://www.youtube.com/uwofaith/videos> - watch current United Women in Faith videos

[Instagram.com/uwofaith](https://www.instagram.com/uwofaith) [twitter.com/uwofaith](https://www.twitter.com/uwofaith)



SOCIAL ACTION

Rita Carter - rita.carter65@gmail.com

Greetings for 2026, which has already challenged us in many ways. That's why Romans 12:12 is a good verse for us to remember: "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer." (NRSV)

I'm Rita Carter, your new Social Action Coordinator, and my photo shows a favorite framed piece ("The Peaceable Kingdom") behind me in my Rosemount home, where I moved from Iowa last May with my retired clergy husband and our cat to be near our son & wife and our two youngest grandchildren. We also have a daughter with work ties to Minnesota, her husband, and teenage grandson in South Carolina. I rejoice in being with them all as often as possible, and I also have hope for peaceful communities for them and elsewhere so that

all people can flourish.

We can patiently work for this through the political arena, establishing just and fair laws & policies to alleviate and prevent suffering, for example. Marion Hansen, our Conference President, has urged us to attend the **Day on the Hill 2026 on Monday, March 9th, at Central Presbyterian Church, 500 Cedar Street in St Paul, from 8am to 3pm.** The theme is "In the Image of God" and will feature keynote speaker Rabbi Jill Avrin plus issues focusing on food security, affordable housing and homelessness support, and opposition to gambling expansion. There will be shuttle buses to and from the Capitol. This event is sponsored by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (Catholics, Protestants, and Jews). Please register at www.jrlc.org. An optional donation of \$50 is suggested.

I am to have open-heart aortic valve replacement surgery on February 16th so may still be recovering and unable to attend this Day on the Hill, but I was very involved in social action work through United Women in Faith in Iowa and also advocated for United Methodist positions at the Iowa Capitol for several years. I urge you to use your faithful voice in person and other ways to contact elected officials as often as possible about important concerns.

Please visit the United Women in Faith website (www.uwfaith.org) often as we persevere in prayer and action on the priority issues of racial justice and climate justice with particular concern for women, children & youth in our communities, state, and beyond. United Women in Faith has been busy for almost 157 years—and the work needs us to continue. One way to do this is through the Legacy Fund. I give monthly, but there are other ways—and the annual **Day of Giving on March 23rd** will be another chance!

Let us continually pray that as we work together, we can show others that love is truly more powerful than hate.

Christie Brown: Emma Norton Representative Being a fourth generation Methodist Woman, I have held numerous offices in United Women in Faith at the local, district, and conference levels. I got the most out of Spiritual Growth, and am enjoying being Emma Norton representative. I find it very illuminating. Come to see the new facilities and volunteer with the residents, play bingo, birthday parties,

I am church historian at the Red Wing First UMC. I enjoy being a grandma. I do a lot of quilting and one of my quilts helped my granddaughter earn a trip to California.



Education & Interpretation Coordinator, Phoebe Bode

As We Give, Let Us Pray “And you and you and you,” said civil and human rights activist Harvey Milk to a group of people gathered, “you have to give people hope.” Your contributions to United Women in Faith give people hope because they allow women, children, men, and families in our country and throughout the world to receive support in many areas of life they would not have otherwise. As the Education and Interpretation Coordinator, I am amazed at the innovative ways we are changing lives and thank God for your contributions. I would like to share some of the myriad programs benefitting from your gifts.

Housing isn't just shelter, it is vital to staying alive and that is what Emma Norton Services provides for 350 women and children in St. Paul. Emma Norton's Restoring Waters, also in St. Paul, provides apartments for over sixty residents. Susanna Wesley House, in Baltimore, Maryland, takes our most vulnerable—homeless women and their children—and gives them hope for a stable and safe future and an independent life. Let's pray God's blessings on the recipients of those gifts.

Besides opportunities to learn horticulture, cooking, and art, Restoring Waters features the Living Room, a place where anyone can go when experiencing a sudden emotional challenge and a need to talk to someone. Meeting with a peer who not only has experienced mental health issues but also has received training allows drop-ins to get immediate attention. When one is suffering from fatigue, from the elements, is too cold or hot or hungry, it is difficult to be a loving parent. For extended counseling, the Epworth Children & Family Services' Family Support Network in St. Louis, Missouri, offers free weekly family counseling to families at risk of child abuse and neglect. The Cunningham Children's Home in Urbana, Illinois, provides behavioral health services for youths ages 10-19. Let's pray God's peace as the recipients of your gifts receive counseling.

My heroes are teens who finish high school while parenting their children. When these teens receive help, such as that which is provided by Teens and Young Parents Program of Atlantic Street Center in Seattle, Washington, they are able to parent better. Also providing support to expectant mothers and mothers of young children is the Neighborhood Center in Camden, New Jersey. We can pray those receiving help will be encouraged to use their God-given gifts to bless others.

The Myrtle Social Welfare Network in India helps families with children diagnosed with cancer access resources, information, and support. We can pray God's healing hand on the suffering and guidance for the doctors.

Often, the things we take for granted are for others just a dream. Your contributions help Creekside Elementary students and their families in Boulder, Colorado, by providing LED lightbulbs to improve evening study habits and literacy. The Project Readiness program of Bethlehem Center in Jackson, Mississippi, prepares preschool children for school. We can thank God for providing richly in our lives.

The Iglesia Evangelica Metodista En Bolivia trains women in vocational and leadership skills. In rural Ghana, CommunityAID Integrated trains women and youths in grass charcoal production, promoting energy and mitigating climate change. Your contributions support Environmental Buddies Zimbabwe to promote alternative energy sources and provide education and a transition to sustainable livelihoods and reduced deforestation. Thank You, Lord, for giving women a way to ensure they can provide for their families.

Perhaps you think one particular need should be United Women in Faith's main focus, such as housing or food or education or job training. Perhaps your concern is medical care or immigration or counseling, or the environment. By supporting programs you think are important, you don't just provide essential needs for others and give people a better life. You are giving them hope with dignity. God honors your gifts.



Hello! My name is **Nicole Weydt**, and I am honored to serve as the **Spiritual Growth Coordinator for the River Bluffs area** of United Women in Faith. I look forward to meeting many of you and partnering together as we seek to create meaningful, lasting change rooted in justice, compassion, and faith in action.

By way of introduction, I am a deaconess in The United Methodist Church and a registered nurse. I currently serve as the director of a health services department for a large nonprofit organization in Winona, Minnesota, supporting individuals with developmental disabilities. I am deeply grateful to United Women in Faith for the opportunity to live out God's calling in my life through my deaconess ministry—integrating spiritual growth, advocacy, and service in ways that promote dignity, equity, and wholeness.

Outside of my professional work, I cherish time with my husband, our two college-aged children, and our dog. I find renewal and joy hiking the beautiful bluffs of the Driftless region in southeast Minnesota, where creation itself inspires reflection and gratitude.

We know there is still much work to be done to ensure that all people—especially women, children, and youth—have the opportunity to thrive. As women of faith committed to spiritual growth, leadership development, and social justice, we are called not only to deepen our discipleship but also to learn about the systems and realities that perpetuate injustice. Together, grounded in faith and strengthened by community, we can respond boldly and compassionately to the needs of our neighbors and participate in God's transforming work in the world. See Reflections later in newsletter.

Thalia Duffield, Membership Nurture and Outreach Coordinator.

Greetings to the members of UWFaith of River Valley!



I certainly hope that you are all doing well with what we are living through with the ICE presence in the state. Our voices and prayers are certainly needed at this time.

I took on this position at a time when UMWomen were in the process of making changes to our Minnesota districts and I'll have to admit that it has been a challenge finding out which parishes are now part of RV. And of course now that I know that answer, my dilemma is how to be in touch with everyone. It certainly can't be by visiting each of you given the numbers!! But I do feel that it is important for all of us to find ways to share our talents and ideas with one and another.

One way is to provide information via our newsletter telling about a mission project that your group has accomplished, or that you have been working on. That can be done by communicating with me or Catherine Williams, describing your project. And of course it is always great to have pictures!!

Something I personally would appreciate knowing is if your unit is struggling in any way to remain active. As I mentioned, with such a large number of groups in the River Bluffs district now, I certainly won't be able to visit everyone in person but would find a way to connect where possible. I live in Northfield and am retired so do have some available time. Also, we can connect at District meetings! Let me know what your needs are. We will find a way to work together. Blessings to all!! thaliakduffield@gmail.com

Catherine Williams, Communication/newsletter editor: Greetings to all. Back in the 70's I was an elementary teacher and planning to be a teacher forever. I had my first child and realized I needed to be available for him and his special needs at any time. United Methodist Women was a the place for me to find fellowship, support, and a venue to develop my leadership skills. I have had positions in the local units of my churches, and positions at the district (ie. spiritual growth, program, communication) and state (ie. membership, nurture, outreach; communication). I have been an avid reader of the UWFaith Reading Program for many years. The program truly helps us to understand what is happening in the world today. I love being a part of God's natural creation and try to help others learn more about it and where we fit into the scheme of things.



2026 UWF Reading Program in the River Bluffs District



Hello everyone, I am **Holly Hugart, the new Reading Program Ambassador** for the River Bluffs district. My home church is Fairmount Avenue UMC in Saint Paul where I have been a member for over 25 years. I look forward to meeting you at the River Bluffs District meetings this Spring and Fall. If your UWFaith unit would like me to give a presentation about the Reading Program, please email me at hhugart@gmail.com to arrange a time.

The November/December 2025 Response Magazine had a wonderful article discussing the United Women in Faith Reading Program which can be accessed at: <https://uwfaith.org/latest-news/2025/nov-dec-response-the-2026-united-women-in-faith-reading-program/>. This program has long been a strong foundation for UWFaith book clubs, providing education on wide-ranging topics from personal spiritual practices to justice and societal issues in our communities. The resources of the Reading Program can help us

develop mission projects to meet the needs of our neighbors and encourage us to think critically about what goes on around us.

The Reading Program suggests books in five categories including youth and children's books.

Topic Category	Description
Education for Mission	Issues, religion, and culture from around the world
Leadership Development	Studies of leaders and their methods to improve our own effectiveness
Nurturing for Community	Stories of people supporting and improving the lives of their communities
Social Action	Topics of injustice in society and methods to address them
Spiritual Growth	Methods of prayer, scripture study, and worship to enhance our spiritual journey

The

Minnesota UWFaith Conference has a lending library with over 140 books to support the Reading Program. Information about the lending library can be found on the River Bluffs UWFaith Reading Program page: <https://www.uwfaithmn.com/the-reading-program>. This webpage has a PDF document of the 2026 Reading Program catalog, a PDF of the books available in the lending library, dates for two book clubs in the Minnesota conference which have been scheduled for 2026, and instructions for using the Minnesota UWFaith Conference lending library. Send an email to our Conference Reading Program Coordinator, Connie Scott, at connielulu55@msn.com to check-out a book from the lending library. The book will be mailed to you with instructions on how to mail the book back. Connie reminds everyone to please return books when you finish them so others can use them.

The UWFaith Reading Program provides 4 levels of participation recognition. Participants who have submitted forms logging the titles of the books they have read during 2025 will receive recognition certificates during the River Bluffs UWFaith Spring Meeting. The forms for 2025 must be received by March 1 of 2026. For the current year, 2026, all the books from the Reading Program catalogs from 2021-2026 may be used. Previous years reading program catalogs can be found on the Global UWFaith Reading Program page:

<https://uwfaithresources.org/prodDetail.cfm?productID=12860>

Level	Requirements	Total
Plan I	Read one book* from each category and Response Magazine	Five books*
Plan II	Read two books* from each category and Response Magazine	Ten books*
Plan III	Read two books* from each category plus another five from any category and Response Magazine	Fifteen books*
Plan IV	Read two books* from each category plus another ten from any category and Response Magazine	Twenty books*

*Physical books are not the only items counted as a book, listening to the audio book or watching a movie based on the book are equivalent.

Additional activities which earn Reading Program credits and are logged on the same form.

Activity	Resource Involved	1 credit in this category
Reading	All 6 issues of Response Magazine in the calendar year	Nurturing for Community
Listening	2 or more 'Faith Talks' podcasts	Spiritual Growth
Listening	2 or more 'Voices from the Field' podcasts	Education for Mission
Joining	Mission u or Keyhole Missiology study with others as a participant or leader	2 credits in Spiritual Growth

Excerpt from Sally's message in the Response Magazine September/October 2025



Sally Vonner, General Secretary and CEO, United Women in Faith
Photo: Janet Joyners

"Sally Vonner mentioned, recent months have been filled with disruptions, especially acts of injustice and concerns of criminalization of communities of color; deportations; immigration; protests; wars; violence; and the U.S. budget cuts for significant programs and spending that disadvantage the poor, elderly, women, children, and the environment with the expectation of increased natural disasters.

"This has likely been a heavy weight for you as it has for me. It is why soul care is so important! It strengthens our hope to offset feeling overwhelmed, hopeless, and helpless when advocacy and action for justice are more important than ever.

"The Mission u study, *Practicing Hope*, fortified and recentered me. My favorite session was "Hope is a ritual (even when it's hard)." It reinforced for me how important soul care is to unground hope in difficult times.

"To be creators of justice and joy, compassion and peace, we must continue to practice soul care, to refuel, refresh, and continue the journey, even when it is hard. We know that justice work is sanctioned by God since the beginning of creation and lived out through the prophets/prophetesses and Jesus.

In the depth of silence
no words are needed,
no language required,
in the depth of silence
I am called to listen.

Listen to the beating of your heart,
Listen to the blowing of the wind,
the movement of the Spirit.
Be silent, said the Lord,
and know that I am God.

And listen to the cry of the voiceless.
Listen to the groaning of the hungry.
Listen to the pain of the landless.
Listen to the sigh of the oppressed
and the laughter of children.

For that is authentic communication~
listening to people
living with people
dying for people.

A Lenten Reflection: Authentic Communication

by Deaconess Nicole Weydt

As we enter the Lenten season, we do so in Minnesota—and in our River Bluffs area of the Minnesota Conference—amid profound traumas. I cannot begin my term as Spiritual Growth Coordinator without naming this reality. Our communities have witnessed, and many have directly experienced, violence in Minnesota and Minneapolis tied to the presence and actions of federal immigration officers—abductions, armed and masked patrols and raids, unchecked force against those seeking justice, and the killing of two Minneapolis residents who sought to help a neighbor.

Words cannot fully capture the suffering that has occurred, nor the extraordinary courage and love shown in response. Across Minneapolis and the state, people have embodied selflessness, resilience, and a fierce commitment to dignity and freedom—forming loving, inclusive community even in the face of chaos, violence, and loss. Through their actions, countless people have authentically communicated their love for their neighbor. This witness calls us to keep showing up for one another, to listen deeply, and to reimagine

systems and relationships rooted in justice. This witness also shows us that the building of beloved community requires honest, authentic communication through action—and that work is required of each of us if we are to fully recognize and honor the great loss, the abounding love, and possibilities for reconciliation at this point in our history.

I hope we each enter Lent with continued peaceful engagement for justice while also making space for inner silence and simple prayer—practices that ground us in honest self-reflection and open us to deeper, more compassionate listening to ourselves, others, and God, so that our actions are guided by love and measured by justice. In times of stress, trauma, and grief, prayer can feel difficult or inadequate. When words fail, I turn to brief phrases I repeat quietly to God throughout the day—walking into a store or my workplace—trusting that few words are enough.

This Lenten season, I will be offering the short prayers [bottom left] by focusing on one per week and repeating it often throughout my daily routines. I invite you to do the same. Allow simple, repetitive prayer to be a source of calmness during the day, when your thoughts race, when competing messages crowd in, when you feel anxious or unsure, or when you need space for rest and renewal—while also praying the sentiments that arise from your own heart.

In closing, I share the poem [top left], written in 1983, by an unknown Indonesian author. It is a profound message about authentic communication rooted in loving community. I invite you to join me in using this poem as prayer during Lent as we reflect upon the unconditional love of God through Jesus Christ. Peace be with you.

“I breathe you in God. You are with me.”
“I am yours, God, and you are mine. I love you.”
“Be with me. Calm me. Heal me.”
“Help me, God, to be still and listen.”
“Help me, God, to love and to forgive.”
“Jesus Christ, help me share your love today.”

Emma's Corner / Store Inventory

The following is a list of items that may be stocked at Emma's Corner / Store. This list is not exhaustive and is intended to guide inventory selection.

****Gift Cards from ****

Target-Walmart-CUB-Aldis increments of \$25, \$50, \$75, \$100

Art Supplies/Hobbies

- Coloring Book
- Crayons/Colored Pencils/Markers
- Deck of Cards
- Knitting Supplies
- Notebook (large)
- Notepads
- Picture Frames
- Planner

Snacks/Drinks

- Beef Sticks
- Beverages (Soda, Energy Drinks, Electrolyte Drinks, Juice Boxes, etc.)
- Candy Bars
- Cereal
- Chips
- Coffee Creamer
- Crystal Light
- Gum
- Gummy Candy
- Jello/Pudding Mixes
- Little Debbie Cakes
- Movie Theater Candy
- Pantry Items (Dessert Mixes, Mac and Cheese, etc.)
- Popcorn Packs
- Ramen Cups/Bowls
- Soup Cups
- Wafers

Self Care/Personal Hygiene

- Bath Sets
- Body Wash
- Cocoa Butter
- Combs
- Cotton Swabs/Balls/Pads
- Detangler
- Dry Shampoo
- Electric Dental Care
- Face Cleanser/Makeup Remover
- Face Masks
- Facial Mist
- Fragrances
- Hair Accessories
- Hairbrush
- Hair Gel
- Hair Oil
- Handmade Soaps
- Hand Sanitizer
- Loofahs
- Lotion
- Pedicure and Manicure Tools/Kits
- Press-On Nails
- Razors
- Shampoo
- Shaving Cream/Hair Removal Kits
- Shower Caps
- Shower Shoes
- Skin Care Sets
- Skin Oil
- Styling Tools (Curling Iron, Straightener, Hair Dryer, etc.)
- Sunscreen/Sun Block
- Vaseline

Home Goods

- Alarm Clocks
- Aluminum Foil/Wax Paper/Plastic Wrap/Parchment Paper
- Baking Dishes
- Bed Linen Sets
- Bathmats
- Bath Towels

- Comforters/Throw Blankets
- Flatware
- Foil Trays/Pans
- Food Storage Containers
- Kitchen Towels
- Kitchenware
- Laundry Baskets
- Oven Mitts/Hot Pads
- Pillows
- Reading Light
- Room Decor
- Shower Mats/Suction Cups
- Small Kitchen Appliances
- Sponges/Dish Cloths
- Stuffed Animals
- Throw Pillows
- Tie Blankets/Quilts
- Ziploc Bags

Miscellaneous

- Air Fresheners
- Batteries
- Bike Locks
- Coffee Mugs
- Command Hooks/Strips
- Cough Drops
- Dryer Sheets
- Electric Candles
- First Aid Supplies
- Flashlight
- Foldable Step Stool
- Hand Warmers
- Hangers
- **Household Cleaning Supplies**
- Household

Makeup/Jewelry

- Bracelets
- Earrings
- Eyeliner
- Lip Crayon
- Lip Gloss
- Lipstick
- Makeup Bags
- Mascara
- Nail Polish
- Necklaces
- Rings

Emma Norton Services

Volunteering at Restoring Waters is exciting. Come and see the new facilities and volunteer with the residents, play bingo, birthday parties, cooking, gardening. "Have a skill you'd like to share? A fun activity or empowering opportunity you'd like to bring to our residents. Don't hesitate to reach out! As our volunteer program continues to grow, there's plenty of room for new ideas and opportunities." (Emma Norton website)

April 23 Gala - \$100 individual donation



Intercontinental Riverfront, St. Paul, MN

Silent Auction Items needed – theme baskets; food items (Pies, breads, etc.)

What to focus on: These are the auction items our community bids on the most!

Themed baskets: This year we are suggesting baskets with higher values and cohesive themes. Successful baskets combine tangible goods with gift certificates! Themes that have been popular in the past: Local Experiences, Family-friendly Activities, Luxury Relaxation and Spa, and Gourmet Food or Coffee.

Experiences + services: Donate your time/skills for an activity/service, or talk to a talented friend or family member about what they could donate! Examples include a guided foraging walk, therapeutic massage, sound bath experience, etc.

Local business gift cards: Support the auction AND a business you love!

Baked goods + treats: Wildly popular every year-- a single pie can go for \$100!

Support the 2026 Opening Doors Gala Auction Please contact Victoria at 651-251- 2662 or vvirasy@emmanorton.org for more information.

Donations, except perishables and commissions, should be dropped off or scheduled for pick-up no later than **Monday, April 13.**

What to avoid: Used items, small items, and second-hand art/textiles. Our data shows that too many items at an auction ends up lowering how much people bid overall! We're grateful for your support of the ODG auction! Please understand that not all items donated may be used in the auction for a variety of reasons. Such donations will be made available to our residents through our programs.

National Unit Survey for 2025 “Power our Unstoppable movement!” from Marion Hansen, MN Conference UWFaith President

The 2025 Unit Survey is now open! As part of the Unstoppable Campaign to grow, deepen, and sustain United Women in Faith for the future, this year’s survey provides critical insight into what’s working, what’s needed, and where we must go next. Your voice helps shape how we strengthen our sisterhood. The survey takes about 10-15 minutes to complete, and **closes March 31**. Please also share the survey widely with local and district leaders in your network.

The website is uwfaith.org/unit-survey. Help us know how to better grow and engage membership, foster leadership development, and increase program awareness and participation. Together we will continue shaping a bold future grounded in faith, justice, and action for women, children, and youth. Questions? Contact Membership@uwfaith.org.

How to Access the Survey

The Unit Survey can be accessed in **two ways**:

1. **Directly at:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MNUnitSurvey2025>
2. **Through the Conference Officer Space on UWFaith Digital (UWFD)**

If you are not already logged into UWFaith Digital, you will be prompted to log in first. Once logged in, look on the side menu under “**Conference Officer Resources**”. Once there, click and navigate to your region and conference to access the correct survey link.

A **sample survey** is available as a reference to preview the questions and guide participation. Please note: the National Office will **not** accept paper submissions. However, we encourage districts to support local units that may need assistance completing the survey online.

The survey takes approximately **10–15 minutes** to complete.

The survey closes March 31, 2026.

UWFaith Assembly 2026

May 15-17, 2026

Indianapolis, Indiana

Indiana Convention Center

Halls A, B, and C

Key note speaker: Stacey Abrams and REV. Carolyn Abrams

“There has never been a more important time for women of faith to come together, tap into our strength and unite to change the world.

Assembly 2026 is that moment—once every four years gathering of women committed to faith, empowerment, and making a difference. Picture a weekend that uplifts your soul, strengthens your faith, and brings you together with an unstoppable sisterhoods.

“Come to be nurtured by deep, soul care experiences. Be equipped through cutting edge workshops. Be inspired by top women experts in their field. Become influencers through networking opportunities. Come and make an impact through action for justice.” UWFaith.org/assembly



**River Bluffs Area United Women in Faith
Spring Gathering 2026 - Theme: Food Scarcity**

April 18, 2026 8:45AM-2:30 PM Cost: \$20.00, Lunch included

Northfield United Methodist Church - Rev. Donna Dempewolf

1401 South Maple Street, MN 55057 - 507-645-5689-Catherine Williams

8:45 AM Registration and Emma Norton Coffee Treats
(Emma Norton Offering)/Resource Tables & Displays

9:20 AM Gathering in the Sanctuary Singing

Welcome: Elizabeth Everett, RB Area UWF President;

NUMC Rev. Donna Dempewolf; NUMC UWF President

Call to Worship: Message & prayer: Spiritual Growth

Mission Moment: Education & Interpretation

UWfaith Offering: Treasurer

Special Offering for Assembly also taken

10:15: "Feeding the Hungry" Second Harvest Heartland by Annissa Zynda

11:10 Break

11:15 "Answering God's Call" Deaconess/Home Missioners by Nicole Weydt & Carolyn Winslow

Announcements- Elizabeth Everitt

Skit-River Bluff Officers

12:15 Lunch in Fellowship Hall-Displays/Quilt Tying

1:15 Gathering/Hymns Sanctuary

Fundraiser Panel "Financing God's Work"

2:15 Wrap Up - Sending Forth

Preferred Registration online at: <https://forms.gle/Stzhjg8LfFgJnR5x6>

If Needed: Send Registrations to: Thalia Duffield; Northfield UMC; 1401 S Maple Street; Northfield,

MN 55057 - email: thaliakduffield@gmail.com Checks payable to **River Bluffs. UWfaith**

Registration is \$20.00. Register by Tuesday, April 14. Child Care is not provided at this time.

Directions to church: Follow US 52 to Co Rd 9; go west/north onto 246; at Middle School roundabout take first exit, east, onto Jefferson Parkway; to Maple Street; North on Maple Street to church, 1401 S. Maple Street..

Directions to church: Interstate 35 to MN 19; turn east onto MN 19 for about 6.7 miles past Post Cereals, to Hwy 3; turn south on Hwy 3 to Woodley Street (light); turn east on Woodley to second stop sign Maple Street; turn south on Maple to church, 1401 S. Maple Street.

****Offerings: UWfaith Mission AND Emma Norton Services AND UWfaith Assembly Add Paper products for Emma Norton & Hygiene items for kits**

Name for Name Tag: _____

Church Name and Town/City _____

Local/District/MN Conference Leadership? _____ New Officer? _____

E-mail Address/Phone Number: _____

Food Allergies or dietary concerns: _____

River Bluffs Area Calendar for 2026

March	9	JRLC Day on the Hill
April	11	Conference Exec. Mtg. Zoom 9-12 noon
April	18	RB Spring Gathering – Northfield UMC
May	14-17	UW Faith Assembly – Indianapolis, IN
June	17-19	MN Annual Conference UMC, St. Cloud, MN
June	20	RB Executive Meeting
July	24-26	Mission U, in person, Koronis Paynesville, MN
August	8-9	Visioning Retreat – ALL Conference Officers & Exec Meeting – Koronis
September	12	RB Fall Gathering – Fairmont UMC St. Paul, MN
October	10	MN Conf Annual Gathering, Camphor UMC, St. Paul, MN
October	10-11	Leadership Development Retreat, Camphor UMC
November	7	RB Exec. Meeting zoom
December	10	Area Book's Close
December	15	Conference Books Close

Personal Dignity Kits for Midwest Mission Distribution Center

You do not have to make a kit, just bring items that will go into the kits. These items will be taken to MN Annual Conference in June.

Personal Dignity Kits REQUIREMENTS

All kit items must be NEW. Kits should contain ONLY the requested items. No camouflage on fabrics.

PERSONAL DIGNITY KIT

- 1 Hand towel - no kitchen towels
 - 1 Washcloth - no dishcloths
 - 1 Adult toothbrush – no multipacks
 - 1 Bar soap - 3-4 oz
 - 1 Shampoo - 12-19 oz
 - 1 Deodorant - 2-3 oz - stick, roll on, or pump
 - 1 Lotion - 8-10 oz
 - 1 One-gallon resealable plastic bag Place all items in the resealable plastic bag.
- \$2 donation for toothpaste and carrying bag.

Bring to River Bluffs Spring Gathering at Northfield UMC

Personal Dignity items
Emma Norton items
United Women in Faith Mission offering
United Women in Faith Assembly offering (optional)
Food Shelf Donations