



# HEADWATERS UPDATES

*A Newsletter for United Women in Faith of the Headwaters Area*

## **The Purpose of United Women in Faith**

*United Women in Faith 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.*



United  
Women  
in Faith

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH **Headwaters Area Spring Gathering**



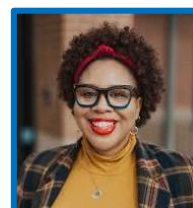
***“Disruptive Love:  
Gospel Response  
to Immigration Injustice”***

**Saturday, April 18, 9:00am – 2:30pm**  
Motley United Methodist Church  
847 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. S., Motley MN

Emma Norton Coffee begins at 8:00 ~ Program follows at 9:00  
**Morning session will be live streamed - Zoom link on page 3**

**Guest Speaker ~ Rev. Brittany Radford**

*Director of Racial Equity and Justice,  
MN Annual Conference*



- Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/mMD1NPLtXnSuRcFq8>
- Cost: \$20.00 (checks payable to Headwaters Area UWF)
- Pay Online: <https://www.uwfaithmn.com> (click on Donations/Payment)
- Pay by Mail: Diane Bublitz, 1514 Aspen Lane, St. Cloud, MN 56303
- *Registration Deadline: April 10, 2026*



## From Your Headwaters Area President

*Linda Kotschevar*

As your new Area President and current Newsletter Editor I'd like to welcome you to the spring edition of our Headwaters Updates newsletter! It's been a long and difficult winter for all of us here in Minnesota and a breath of springtime is just what we need. As our Spring Gathering approaches, I am excited to reconnect with each of you at Motley UMC. On April 18<sup>th</sup>, we have the privilege of welcoming Rev. Brittany Radford, who will guide us in understanding the complexities of immigration injustice currently affecting both our state and nation. Be sure to join us!

I would like to take a moment to share a bit about my background with you. This is not my first time in this role—I previously served as the district president about fifteen years ago in the Big Waters District. Returning to this kind of leadership position is a privilege, and I look forward to working alongside each of you. I have been a member of UWFaith for the past 25 years and have served in leadership roles at the local, district and conference levels.

I am a lifelong Methodist growing up in the Methodist church in Atwater where my grandma, aunts and mom were all WSCS/UMW members. What a legacy! Love First UMC of the St. Cloud Region has been my church for the past 18 years.

My husband and I are retired and have two married sons and six grandchildren—four of them under the age of five! I have been active in the League of Women Voters for many years and find that lots of their priorities are similar to those of UWFaith. I enjoy hanging out with my grandkids, reading, gardening and going for motorcycle rides.

Being part of our sisterhood of faith has provided me with so many opportunities to grow personally and spiritually. Through our supportive fellowship, I have been able to learn new skills, serve others, and build lasting friendships. Most importantly, my involvement has empowered me to take meaningful action for women, children, and youth, both locally and around the world.

## Spring Gathering Speakers

### *Rev. Brittany Radford*

We are honored to have Rev. Brittany Radford, join us as the guest speaker at our Spring Gathering. Beginning on February 1, 2025, Brittany became the Minnesota Conference's new Director of Racial Equity and Justice. She is committed to creating brave and sacred spaces where BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) clergy can experience renewed belonging, connection, and intentional support.



Brittany moved to the Twin Cities from St. Louis where she spent four years at The Gathering—a multi-site United Methodist church that worships 1,500 people on a Sunday. Prior to that she spent two years as director of family support initiatives at Area Resources for Community and Human Services in St. Louis. Brittany earned a bachelor of arts in sociology from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio, and a master of science in human development and family studies from Mississippi State University.

### *Gail Chalbi*

We are pleased to welcome longtime UWFaith member, Gail Chalbi, who will join us during the afternoon session to share her journey in social justice advocacy. Gail will discuss how she became involved with the Palestine-Israel Justice Project and the experiences that led her to her participation with Minnesota Conference Church and Society, ultimately serving as chair. In addition, Gail is a member of the Conference Mission Promotion Team and the newly established Social Action Coalition. She will provide insight into other conference social action groups and extend an invitation for attendees to engage and become part of these initiatives.



## Spring Gathering Hands-on Offering Emma Norton Grocery Gift Cards



Our Spring Gathering hands-on offering will be \$25 grocery gift cards for the clients at Emma Norton. Please purchase cards from Target, Walmart, Cub, Aldi and Hy-Vee and bring them with you to the gathering. Your donations will help make grocery budgets stretch a little farther at Restoring Waters and Emma's Place.

### Join the Spring Gathering Via Zoom! Saturday, April 18, 9:00am - Noon

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2183526466?pwd=TnVRU3hFaE5UcXFrL3d1SDFoZGdKUT09&omn=89008116304>

Join instructions:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/2183526466?pwd=TnVRU3hFaE5UcXFrL3d1SDFoZGdKUT09&omn=89008116304>

## Immigration Resources

In recent months, the federal government has intensified immigration enforcement. One executive order reverses a policy that restricts federal immigration agents from arresting migrants at "sensitive locations" like schools, hospitals, and churches. Minnesota United Methodist churches and ministries have been impacted by this. Both the Minnesota Annual Conference and United Women in Faith have resources to help you:

- **MN Annual Conference**--Find resources both to assist targeted populations and to equip churches as they discern how they are called to stand with migrant and immigrant neighbors and respond to the recent actions. [Immigration Resources](#)
- **United Women in Faith**--Use this new resource to identify ways you can learn, act, and lead today, tomorrow, and all the days to come. [Immigrant Rights Are Under Attack. What Do We Do? Stand Up, Fight Back!](#)

## What Our Social Principles Say About Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees



"We affirm the dignity, worth, and rights of migrants, immigrants, and refugees, including displaced and stateless people. In so doing, we acknowledge that the world today is facing an unprecedented crisis related to the displacement

of vast numbers of people due to such factors as ongoing wars and other hostilities, foreign interventions, widespread famine and hunger, global warming and climate change, and the failure of nation-states to adequately protect and care for their people.

"We recognize that displaced people are particularly vulnerable as their in-between status often provides them with few protections and benefits, leaving them open to exploitation, violence, and abuse. We urge United Methodists to welcome migrants, refugees, and immigrants into their congregations and to commit themselves to providing concrete support, including help with navigating restrictive and often lengthy immigration policies, and assistance with securing food, housing, education, employment, and other kinds of support.

"We oppose all laws and policies that attempt to criminalize, dehumanize, or punish displaced individuals and families based on their status as migrants, immigrants, or refugees. Additionally, we decry attempts to detain displaced people and hold them in inhumane and unsanitary conditions. We challenge policies that call for the separation of families, especially parents and minor children, and we oppose the existence of for-profit detention centers for such purposes."

- The United Methodist Book of Discipline 2024/2024, ¶ 163

## Mission Giving & 5 Star Units

Diane Bublitz ~ Treasurer



### Mission Giving Makes Mission Happen!

2025 was a year in which the Headwaters Area continued to get organized and started to get to know each other in our newly configured area including learning to say area instead of district. During the year **16 units and 1 individual** made contributions. Our Area's Pledge to Mission was \$20,000 and our pledge for Emma Norton was \$6,500. Our results - **\$28,950.26** for Mission Giving and **\$6,500\*** for Emma Norton.

Our Area's Administration and Membership Development (A&MD) allotment is \$6,370. A&MD is used for things like Area meeting expenses, communications, copies, and the annual financial review. In 2025 we had Area expenses of \$3,542.16. The remaining \$2,827.84 was returned to the Conference through adding **\$975.50\*** to achieve the Emma Norton pledge and the remaining **\$1,852.34** was added to Mission Giving.

**Seven** local units gave to all five channels of giving to achieve 5 Star status. The five channels are Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory, and World Thank Offering. Together these channels support the work of United Women in Faith around the world and through 80+ community-based National Mission Institutions such as Emma Norton. The March/April Response magazine includes "Love in Action Maps" showing where our Mission Funds are being put to work.

The units earning 5 Star status are:

**Brooklyn in Brooklyn Center, Community in Monticello, Elk River, Immanuel in Corcoran, Osseo, Rosendale, and Zion in South Haven.** The 5 Star units will be celebrated at the Spring Gathering on Saturday, April 18 at Motley United Methodist Church.

Please contact me if you have questions or need forms. My contact information is:

*Diane Bublitz, 1514 Aspen Lane, St. Cloud, MN 56303, 320-259-1939/landline, call or text 320-267-0912/cell. (Leave a message if your call is not answered with your phone number so I can call you back), [bublom01@gmail.com](mailto:bublom01@gmail.com)*

## Education & Interpretation

### What Our Money Funds!

United Women in Faith is trusted with pledges and donations from individual members as well as from mission partners and anonymous donors who are dedicated to mission. Here is what our money funds:

- ❖ **National Mission Institutions (NMIs)** - We support nearly 90 NMIs across the United States serving the needs of marginalized and vulnerable communities.
- ❖ **Regional Missionaries** - Focusing on issues of health, gender equality, and elimination of violence among women, and support for the uprooted and marginalized.
- ❖ **Grants and Scholarships** - In 2021 we awarded grants and scholarships totaling \$4,084,488!
- ❖ **Service and Advocacy** - This includes work on peace and justice, education, the rights of children, human rights, and farm workers'. We host leadership training on our social justice priorities and have a program for consecrating deaconesses and home missionaries to a lifetime of service!

For further information on what UWFaith funds, go to [What We Fund | United Women in Faith](#).

### Mission Today Units & Reading Program Participants

Please send completed forms (attached to this mailing) to the following people by April 10 to be recognized at the Spring Gathering:

**Reading Program Participants** – Connie Scott, 700 Agency Trail #305, Mankato, MN 56001

**Mission Today Units** – Louise Johnson, 1705 11<sup>th</sup> St NE, Buffalo, MN 55313

## Reading Program/Lending Library

*Jill Michael*

### Reading Program Ambassador



Hello everyone, I am your new Reading Program Ambassadors for the Headwaters Area. I look forward to meeting you at the Area Gatherings this spring and fall. If you have questions regarding the Reading Program please email me at [jhmichael53@gmail.com](mailto:jhmichael53@gmail.com).

The November/December 2025 Response Magazine had a wonderful article discussing the United Women in Faith Reading Program which can be accessed at: [Nov./Dec. response: The 2026 United Women in Faith Reading Program | United Women in Faith](#). 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.

You can find information at the Minnesota UWFaith website about the Conference Lending Library. [Go to The Reading Program | UMW Minnesota](#). There you can download the following materials to support your participation in the Reading Program:

- Reading Program Catalog
- Reading Program Report Form
- Current Lending Library Book List
- Books about Native American Boarding Schools

## 2026 ZOOM BOOK DISCUSSIONS\*

### Connie: Tuesday Evenings 6:30-8 pm

1. **January 12:** The Defiant Middle: How Women Claim Life's In-Betweens To Remake the World, Kaya Oakes (2026 - Leadership Development)
2. **March 9:** What We Remember Will Be Saved: A Story of Refugees And The Things They Carry, Stephanie Saldana (2026 - Education For Mission)
3. **May 11:** Everyday Ubuntu: Living Better Together, The African Way, Mungi Ngomane (2026 - Social Action)
4. **September 14:** Sisterhood Heals: The Transformative Power of Healing in Community, Joy Harden Bradford (2026 - Nurturing For Community)
5. **November 9:** The Women of the Bible Speak: The Wisdom of 16 Women and Their Lessons For Today, Shannon Bream (2025 - Spiritual Growth)



### Myrna: Sunday Afternoons 3-4:30 pm

1. **February 1:** The Women, Kristin Hannah (2026 – Nurturing For Community)
2. **April 12:** Madam C.J. Walker's Gospel of Giving: Black Women's Philanthropy During Jim Crow, Tyrone McKinley Freeman (2026 – Leadership Development)
3. **June 7:** God's Ghostwriters: Enslaved Christians And the Making of the Bible, Candida Moss (2026 – Spiritual Growth)
4. **October 4:** The Happiest Man On Earth: The Beautiful Life Of An Auschwitz Survivor, Eddie Jaku (2026 – Education For Mission)
5. **December 6:** Seventy Times Seven: A True Story of Murder and Mercy, Alex Mar (2026 – Social Action)

\*Contact Connie Scott at [connielulu55@msn.com](mailto:connielulu55@msn.com) for info and the Zoom link.

## Emma Norton Update

Kathy Hulsebus – Emma Norton Rep



Come join the fun and excitement of the Opening Doors Gala!! The Gala takes place on April 23, 2026, at the Intercontinental Riverfront in St. Paul from 4:00-8:00 p.m. Early Bird Registration is open and you will be entered into an early bird prize drawing. Tickets are \$100 each. Be sure to register by March 31 at <https://secure.ggiv.com/event/odg26> to be entered in the drawing for some fabulous Emma Norton swag.

The Opening Doors Gala is Emma Norton's largest and most critical fundraiser! With major government funding cuts on the horizon, the Gala is more important than ever.. This year's goal is \$150,000+ and you can be a part of it, by sponsoring a table for eight at \$1000. Invite your friends, co-workers, family and fill a table. Contact Shawna Nelsen-Wills at [snelsen@emmanorton.org](mailto:snelsen@emmanorton.org). to sponsor or table.

Another way to support the Gala is by Silent Auction Donations: Put together a local business gift basket with your church, company, book club or family and donate it to our silent auction! Contact Victoria Virasy-Ertelt at [vvirasy@emmanorton.org](mailto:vvirasy@emmanorton.org) for drop off or scheduled pickup no later than Mon., April 13.

Some donation ideas for the silent auction include: Themed baskets of high value which sell the best combining tangible goods with gift certificates. Some themes that have worked in the past include Local Experiences, Family-friendly Activities, Luxury Relaxation and Spa, and Gourmet Food or Coffee. Donate your time/skills for an activity/service such as therapeutic massage, sound bath experience or guiding a foraging walk. Local business gift cards support the auction AND the business you love! Last, but not least--HOME BAKED GOODS AND TREATS ARE VERY POPULAR EACH YEAR; a singles pie can go for as much as \$100!

The Emma Norton Gala is grateful for items you bring for the auction, but please avoid smaller items, used items, and second-hand art/textiles. Our data shows that too many items at an auction ends up lowering how much people bid overall! .

## The Abundance of the Earth

Vicky Claussen ~ Spiritual Growth Coord.

*The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. Psalm 67:6*

The abundance of the earth is a sign of God's blessing to all peoples and a call to the whole earth to honor the giver of that abundance. Every flower, cloud, mountain, lake, river, beach, fruit tree, and field of crops speaks of God's creativity, provision and blessing and calls us to praise God. All the peoples of the earth depend on God's goodness. Where do you see God's abundance and blessing as you look upon the earth and your life?

God the Creator, give us eyes to see the beauty and abundance of your creation. Make your face to shine upon us so that your way may be known upon the earth. Amen.

## Earth Day is April 22

The first Earth Day in 1970 mobilized millions of Americans from all walks of life to birth the modern environmental movement. Since then, Earth Day has evolved into the largest civic event on Earth, activating billions across 192 countries to safeguard our planet and fight for a brighter future.



The theme for Earth Day 2026 is *Our Power, Our Planet* which refers to the role of people and communities worldwide in sustaining environmental protections that affect the cost of living, public health, infrastructure reliability, and long-term stability. Environmental conditions influence food systems, water availability, energy access, disaster risk, and economic resilience across all regions. Learn more at [Earth Day 2026 | Theme, Activities, Events & Resources](#).

## Social Action Update

The Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JLRC) is the most expansive and inclusive bi-partisan, multi-issue group of its kind in Minnesota using faith-based values to advance the common good. Representing three of the largest faith communities in the state – Catholics, Protestants, and Jews – they uniquely build consensus and find common ground while advocating for targeted policy recommendations based on their policy pillars--human dignity, families and public life.

The Minnesota Conference UWFaith actively encourages its members to participate in and support the advocacy initiatives led by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition. By engaging with JLRC, UWFaith members contribute to advancing policies rooted in faith-based values and promoting the common good within Minnesota.

You can be a part of positive change in our state by signing up for the JLRC's newsletter at [Newsletter Signup - Joint Religious Legislative Coalition](#). By signing up, you will receive updates, event invitations, and opportunities to get involved in shaping the future of our state.

The JLRC legislative agenda for 2026 includes the following primary policy priorities:

**Food Security:** The JRLC supports allocating \$4 million in state funding for the Minnesota Local Food Purchase Assistance (LFPA) grant program, which would replace funds previously provided through the federal local food purchasing grant program that were revoked in the Big Beautiful Bill.



*Conference President, Marion Hansen, attends JRLC Day on the Hill in St. Paul.*

**Affordable Housing and Homelessness:** The JRLC supports increasing the base appropriation for the Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program (FHPAP) to improve housing stability and reduce homelessness. The JRLC also supports allocating \$400 million in Housing Infrastructure Bonds (HIBs) to build and maintain affordable housing throughout Minnesota.

**Online Gambling Expansion:** The JRLC opposes the expansion of gambling. In the context of sports betting, the JRLC's advocacy emphasizes harm mitigation measures.

Secondary priorities include: Security Funding for Nonprofits in the State Budget and Gun Violence Prevention.

Learn more at [Joint Religious Legislative Coalition](#).

## Minnesota Unit Survey 2025

Welcome to the 2025 Unit Survey!

As a valued part of the UWFaith community your unit's insights help shape how United Women in Faith plans, supports, and grows our mission. The unit survey gathers information from the 2025 membership year to inform planning and resourcing for 2026–2027.



This year, the survey focuses on key areas that will help UWFaith National strengthen their collective impact, including:

- Giving and engagement patterns that support membership growth
- Leadership development within and beyond United Women in Faith
- Awareness of and participation in programs and resources

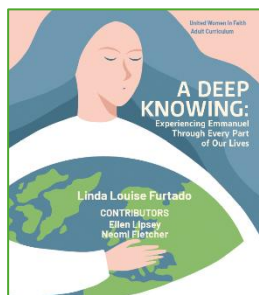
Your unit's responses will be shared by National with our Conference Leadership Team to better understand how local units are engaging and where additional support, training, or resources may be most helpful. To complete the survey, have one member from your unit go to [Minnesota Unit Survey 2025](#) and answer the questions.



## Mission u 2026 "Experiencing Immanuel"

Are you interested in deepening your faith in community? Gaining experience interpreting Scripture? Working toward healing for yourself, your community, and all of creation? Mission u is for you!!

This year's adult curriculum, *A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives* by Linda Furtado, invites you to encounter "God with us" in powerful, personal, and transformative ways. The study opens a path to explore how Emmanuel is revealed throughout Scripture—and how that same divine presence continues to walk with us today.



The curriculum encourages you to pause, reflect, and take a closer look at the stories of faith found in the Bible. Through thoughtful readings, meaningful discussions, and personal reflection, you'll uncover connections between those ancient stories and your own life. As you journey with others, you'll explore how God is present amid justice struggles, adversity, community heritage, and deep spiritual relationships.

Whether the stories are familiar or new, each encounter offers the opportunity to see Scripture with fresh eyes and gain a deeper understanding. This curriculum creates sacred space for spiritual growth, shared insight, and mutual support.

### For Your Information

Mark your calendars with these Mission u dates and check the Spring Fresh Connection for further information and details.

- In-Person – Camp Koronis, July 24-26
- Virtual – Nov. 1, 8, 15, 25, 6:30-9:30pm

## Assembly 2026 May 15-17, 2026



The United Women in Faith Assembly 2026 will take place from May 15-17, 2026, in Indianapolis, Indiana. This event is a gathering of women committed to faith and empowerment, and registration is currently open. The assembly will feature various activities aimed at nurturing and equipping participants.

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—a 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 sisterhood. At United Women in Faith's 2026 Assembly, you can DREAM IT! BELIEVE IT! DO IT!

There is still time to register. Go to [Home](#) for further information. For Lodging information contact Marion Hansen at [marionhas@wcta.net](mailto:marionhas@wcta.net)

### SAVE THE DATE

## Conference Annual Fall Gathering Saturday, October 10, 2026 Camphor Memorial UMC



You are invited to join United Women in Faith from across the state for an enjoyable day of education, spiritual growth, fellowship and fun! The women of Aurora Sky Area will be hosting the 2026 Conference Annual Fall Gathering on Saturday, October 10, at Camphor Memorial UMC in St. Paul.

The Leadership Development Retreat (LDR) will be held the same weekend as the Annual Gathering-October 10 and 11 at Camphor Memorial UMC. Conference and Area officers will receive further information in August.

## 2026 Headwater Area Leadership (Area & Conference Officers)

### **President**

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### **Member At Large**

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952-926-1458  
8200 W 33<sup>rd</sup> St, St. Louis Park 55426

### **Open Positions\***

- Chair Committee on Nominations
- Committee on Nominations  
Classes 2026-2029
- Membership Nurture & Outreach  
Coordinator
- Social Action Coordinator

*\*Contact Linda Kotschevar if interested in an open position. [jlkotsch2@gmail.com](mailto:jlkotsch2@gmail.com)*

## 2026 Headwater Area Leadership (Area & Conference Officers)

### **Conference President**

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### **Conference Secretary**

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### **Conference E&I Coordinator**

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### **Conference Directory Project Leader**

Jomyla Choate  
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### **Conference Emma Norton Scholarship**

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### **COSROW Co-Chair**

Laurie Boche  
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## Headwaters Area UWFaith 2026 Calendar

April 17 - Executive Team Meeting, Motley UMC, Motley  
April 18 - Area Spring Gathering, Motley UMC, Motley  
April 23 – Emma Norton Opening Doors Gala, Intercontinental St. Paul Riverfront  
June 13 - Executive Team Meeting, First UMC of the St. Cloud Region, Sartell  
July 24-26 – Mission u, Camp Koronis, Paynesville  
September 25 - Executive Team Meeting, First UMC of the St. Cloud Region, Sartell  
September 26 - Area Fall Gathering, First UMC of the St. Cloud Region, Sartell  
October 10 - Conference Fall Gathering, Camphor Memorial UMC, St. Paul  
October 10-11 - Leadership Development Retreat, Camphor Memorial UMC, St. Paul  
November 1, 8, 11, 25 Virtual Mission u

*Have a blessed Easter!*