



United Women in Faith
El Camino Real District Newsletter

In this Issue:

- [President's Message](#)
- [Treasurer's Report](#)
- [St. Paul's Fremont - Simbang Gabi Program](#)
- [Response Magazine Discussion Group Around the District](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

March Q1 2025 Issue

The *Mission Link* is a quarterly newsletter of El Camino Real District United Women in Faith.

Articles for Submission

Please direct items for publication in Mission Link to the Communications Coordinator. If you provide photos of recognizable individuals, please be sure you have obtained permission from those individuals to publish their picture. The deadline for submitting articles, information and photographs for Mission Link Q2 will be Friday, June 13, 2025.

President's Message



Message from the President: Book Review

How We Learn to be Brave by Mariann Edgar Budde

Dear Sisters,

We are living through troubled times. Every day brings another challenge,

another reason for anger, discouragement or sorrow. I hear you all saying "What can we do?" "We can only pray." "We can't do anything."

I was there, also. Although I do work for Racial Justice at the local level, it seemed almost irrelevant at this point if our country becomes a pariah and we abandon our values and our allies in favor of despots and greedy oligarchs.

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Then my daughter Leah sent me a book entitled “How We Learn to Be Brave” by Bishop Mariann Edgars Budde. You may remember that she spoke truth to power directly to President Trump from the pulpit of the National Cathedral. “Have mercy,” she said.

I love her book. I hope you all will read it. I can loan you my copy if you like.

Bishop Budde is indeed a brave woman. In the introduction, she states that “I want to be among the coalition of the faithful. I want to be among those working for the change we need now.” I want to be part of that, too. We all do, don’t we? As United Women in Faith I am sure that we are all working for change. That is what we do. Whether it is in our own faith journey, our church, our community, or the world, UWF gives us the opportunity and freedom to do that.

But how can we be brave and step out of our comfort zone? Bishop Budde says there are 5 steps:

1) We decide to “go” or “stay” in the current situation: Decisive moments make believers out of everyone, for no matter what name we give to it, the inexplicable, unmerited experience of a power greater than our own working through us is real.

2) We decide to start: Whatever vision we’ve been given drives us to take the first steps, and it helps keep us going toward the realization of a dream.

3) We decide to accept what we did not choose: We experience personal transformation through sacrificial love.

4) We decide to step up to the plate: We do what needs to be done even if we feel unprepared or uncomfortable.

5) We decide to persevere: Even though we may experience a letdown, or a failure, we can continue on knowing that our decisive moments will have little transformative power if we quit.

“Ultimately, what she wants to communicate is that heroic possibilities lie within each of us; that the inexplicable, unmerited experience of God’s power working through us is real; and that we matter in the realization of all that is good and noble and true. We can learn to be brave.”

There is a lot more in the book. Find out how we can be brave together as United Women in Faith. It’s the journey we are on.

Sincerely,
Debbie

Debbie Ow
President
ECRD District United Women in Faith

Treasurer Report - Carolyn Bircher

Thank you to all of the units that have sent in remittances for UWF missions. Any additional remittances received by the end of March will be sent with these to the conference in early April.

Please, continue to make remittance checkers payable to "ECRD UMW." The remittance form can be found at:

<https://elcaminorealumw.org/treasurer-information/>

The address for sending in remittances is still:

ECRD UMW, c/o Carolyn Bircher
1663 Martin Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

PLEDGE ACCOUNT:

Remittances received (Jan-Mar)	\$3,463.00
4th qtr. remittances sent to conference	<u>-9,399.10</u>
March 15, 2025 balance	\$3,492.19

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT:

Connect & Learn expenses	-\$250.00
Jan-Mar Communication expenses	<u>-\$119.17</u>
March 15, 2025 balance	\$906.14

The Pledge account is for contributions from the local units for missions, which are passed on to the conference (and then to National) UWF. The Administrative account is for El Camino Real District UWF events and operations.

If you have questions, please email treasurer@elcaminorealumw.org

Carolyn Bircher

ECRD Treasurer

Social Justice Update: Showing Up for Racial Justice

El Camino Real District is partnering with Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) of Santa Clara County. SURJ is dedicated to eliminating white supremacy. We work with various accountability partners made up of People of Color or the disenfranchised in other ways. We advocate for them because power listens more often to the white privileged. Our voices matter.

In the last couple of years, together, we have helped stop a jail from being built (Stop the School to Prison Pipeline), helped alternative crisis response flourish in the county after it was started by families that lost loved ones to police violence (Trusted Response Urgent Support Team), got the city of San Jose to see public safety as more than just police for everything, trained over 80 people to become Rapid Responders as legal observers of ICE activity, and showed up for our accountability partners in countless ways.

That's our collective power--and if everyone reading this takes one step further, we can and will accomplish so much more. And that is **“SO” cool**.

SURJ General Meeting is every first Wednesday at Urban Sanctuary at:
80 South 5 th Street
San Jose, CA 95112

The next meeting will be on April 2 nd at 6:00pm.

The Art Group meets the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm at Urban Sanctuary.

SURJ website is: <https://surjsantaclaracounty.org>

If you don't live in Santa Clara County there are other SURJ chapters in most counties. Check it out. Get involved. Email me if you need a ride. Ow.debora@yahoo.com

St. Paul's Fremont UWF - “Simbang Gabi” Program

The St. Paul's Fremont UWF led another successful “Simbang Gabi” program on December 23, 2024. Simbang Gabi or night mass is a Filipino tradition which consists of nine dawn masses that occur on the days leading up to Christmas. Our church has simplified the tradition by having the programs on night times led by the UMM, UWF, Youth and Children's Group. For the last 10 years or so, the UMW or UWF has used the Program Resource Book as a guide.

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The 2024 Program was titled - “The Greatest Gift: How Are You Defining and Living Love” based on Galatians 5:13-14. We invited our own sister Mele Kei, a UWF officer from First Palo Alto UMC, to share a message. She reflected on how we, as Christians, are called to love our neighbors as we love God. She and her husband shared their mutual gift and sang in Tongan. (Unfortunately, this was one of the last duets they had together as he passed in January). As a part of our program, we distributed templates where we invited everyone to write how they were going to put love in action at home, work, and community and then hang it on our Christmas tree. Under the tree were gifts given by the St. Paul UMC congregation for families, (3 families with children ages 3-16, who were all present) thru the Compassion network. We were also joined in celebration by our ECRD Officers, Debbie Ow and Leslie Fisk. A simple snack of soups, crackers and cookies were enjoyed by all.

As our group awaited the coming of Christ, the Son of God, we live out this calling to love, by serving others and embodying love in God’s kindom.

Elsa Ilagan
(Officer-at-large)



Women’s Reading Group - Response Magazine discussion

Julie Asada and Bonnie Home in San Jose, Nancy Olson and Bernice Smoll in Palo Alto, and K Stone (newly moved to Missouri) don’t let distance keep them from their five monthly Zoom meetings to discuss the newest **response** magazine, plus the five books they have chosen from the 2025 Reading List to help them earn their reading certificates. Here they are at their February 7th meeting.



Ash Wednesday Ecumenical Declaration

I just listened to Faith Talks by Jennifer Farmer, a podcast of the United Women in Faith. The immigrant situation in this country is dire. People are being forcibly removed from their families and homes. The UWF motto is Love in Action Can Change the World. Harriett Jane Olsen, our former General Secretary, put the below link in the chat. Please take a look and sign this declaration. Then forward it to all your members.

Debbie Ow

https://cwsconnect.org/ecumenical-declaration/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTEAAR0124IWIYdSOkosashx7uOdMx0oX1aGfMeFkqQT3ctaCWT3r-XsavF4O2U_aem_s8lzuQYtkwsdKBNFwQ5BhQ

We Have Inherited an Incredible Legacy!

I started writing earlier today & thought to share with my CA Sisters. - K Stone

Check out the timeline of name changes for our organization. [Timeline of Women in Methodism](#) | UMC.org

Woman's Foreign Missionary Society --
Women's Society of Christian Service --
United Methodist Women --
United Women in Faith --

A few extra-special dates from the timeline...

1856 The Methodist Mission in India is established.

1869 Eight women form the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society during a meeting at Tremont Methodist Episcopal Church in Boston.

Isabella Thoburn and Clara Swain leave for India, where Thoburn launches a college in Lucknow that bears her name. Dr. Swain begins medical work in Bareilly, and a hospital is later named in her honor.

1888 Five women, including [Frances Willard](#) who is the president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, are elected lay delegates to the Methodist Episcopal General Conference. Male reserves later replace them. The denomination establishes a deaconess program for laywomen. Deaconesses serve the church in any capacity not requiring full clergy rights in ministries of love, justice, and service.

1972 The Women's Society of Christian Service and the Wesleyan Service Guild are united to form United Methodist Women.

General Conference established the [Commission on the Status and Role of Women](#).

2022 United Methodist Women becomes [United Women in Faith](#).

We continue to evolve, to pass on our Legacy, to support women, children, and youth for the next generations.

Day of Giving Livestream Event March 23, at 1 p.m. ET. [Day of Giving 2025 | United Women in Faith](#)

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Join Us in Giving for Generations to Come

- Become a Legacy Builder by pledging to make a monthly donation of \$18.69 or more.
- Become a Friend of Legacy by making a gift of \$5,000 or more. For more information, please contact Development at 800-278-7771.
- Join the 1869 Society by making a planned gift through a will bequest, gift of stock or securities, or donation of other non-cash assets.

Ways to Give:

For more information about The Legacy Endowment Fund, visit: [Legacy Fund | United Women in Faith](#), call 1-800-278-7771, or email legacy150@uwfaith.org

“One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts.” —Psalm 145:4

K Stone, I Choose Change, Hope & Action ~

(Gratefully found details from the Missouri Conference UMC, NET NEWS Newsletter and from the United Women in Faith website.)

The Nation Must Quickly Course Correct

Press Release by Sally Vonner, President UWF

United Women in Faith, the nation’s largest denominational organization for women, today expressed concern regarding the early policy actions of the new administration.

“We are deeply troubled by the administration’s policy decisions, including the systemic rollback of civil rights protections, especially for communities of color, withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, expulsion of immigrants and proposals to dismantle organizations like USAID, which provide essential humanitarian aid to vulnerable populations globally. Such policies threaten the well-being of individuals and communities that depend on the support of these programs.

“As an organization rooted in faith and committed to justice, we hold that every individual, regardless of immigration status, gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, or location, is made in the image of God and deserves dignity, care, and respect (Genesis 1:27). These policies contradict our belief in the fundamental rights and inherent worth of all people.”

For complete Press Release click the link here - Vonner [Press Release](#)

Around the District

If you have a photo or announcement about a local unit event, feel free to submit it. We will try to publish some things in this section that may trigger ideas for other units.

Watsonville UWF

Conversing and doing business at our monthly meeting. One of our members explained how a member of her family met Johnny Appleseed (Chapman) in Indiana in the early 1800's. He spent many nights in their home before her family made their way to California



Wesley UWF

Hello UWF Sisters,

San Jose, California, our Wesley UWF Leadership team rallied and accepted the *Response Photo Challenge* with a photo screenshot during our 2/21/25 UWF Leadership Team meeting. As we all lifted high our Response magazines, we acknowledged that we receive inspiration, encouragement, greater faith and UWF sisterhood connections by regularly reading and sharing the UWF Response magazine.

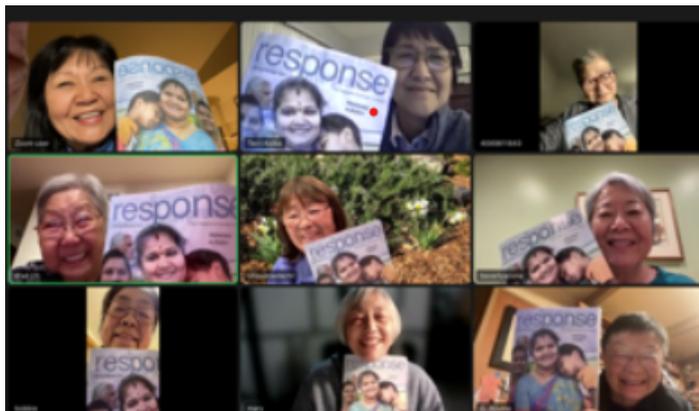


Photo: [first row] Mary Horio, Terri Koike, Joanne Kumano [second row] Kazuko Tengan, Shizuko Adachi, Beverly Acuna [third row] Bobbie Ueunten, Mary Chafey, DeeDee Azuma.

Wesley UMC Rummage Sale - June 7 2025



For over 60 years the Wesley United Methodist Church in San Jose has been holding an annual Rummage Sale. This year the Rummage Sale will be held on Saturday, June 7 , 2025, from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM, at the Wesley United Methodist Church, 566 N. 5 thStreet, San Jose, CA.

The event is sponsored by the Wesley UWF and all profits will support mission work. With funds raised last year the Wesley UWF were able to support organizations such as Gum Moon and Mary Elizabeth Inn, both located in San Francisco (supporting women who are

homeless/low-income/from marginalized backgrounds to become self-sufficient), UMCOR (United Methodist Committee On Relief), the GEM organization (Girls Embracing Mothers in prison), Grateful Garments (nonprofit supporting women subject to sexual violence), and Fire Disaster Fund of the Calif-Pacific UMC Conference, just to name some of the organizations who benefitted from the Rummage Sale. This is an event that Reduces waste, Reuses articles that would otherwise languish in landfill, and Recycles items which others can find useful! Please consider supporting this event.

Making a Difference, One Dress at a Time

Since 2022 our United Women in Faith at Wesley UMC have been involved with sewing dresses for a non-profit organization called “Dress A Girl Around the World.” This time around, 11 women stepped up to sew 53 dresses. It was our 4th sewing drive and in total, 204 dresses have been sewn for this mission’s project. On February 16, 2025, the dresses



Some of our Wesley Sewing Sisters



Dresses ready to be blessed.

were blessed by Rev. John Oda and the Wesley congregation. Not only were the dresses blessed, but a special blessing message was included for the girls receiving the dresses. It is hoped that their lives will be filled with opportunities to grow, to dream, to flourish and that they be protected from harm. All the dresses will be sent to girls living in impoverished areas around the globe, even in the US, aspiring to raise their self-esteem and letting them know they are loved, respected and cared about.

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Sunnyvale



Picture from UWF Sunnyvale United Methodist Church Christmas party. Enjoyed a potluck lunch and brought food and gift cards to donate to Sunnyvale Community Services.

Campbell

Below is a picture of our UWF Executive Board from the Campbell UMC with their Response Magazines. Thanks very much!



Santa Clara

In 2025, we have a theme for each UWF meeting, and we ask our members to complete a task prior to the meeting and then share the results. For example, theme for January was "Throw out the leftovers." We encouraged our members to tackle a decluttering project - like a drawer in the bathroom or the refrigerator door - and then share the results with the group. Members told stories about getting rid of old tax records, or disposing of old college textbooks. It was a time to share and build connections. February's theme was "Reach out and touch someone," and members were encouraged to contact someone they hadn't talked to in a while. If you're looking for ways to spark some interest in your meetings, give this a try!

Lisa Hatchett, Santa Clara UMC

Mission u 2025

Proposed dates -

May 30-June 1 - Monte Toyon, Aptos

July 25-July 27 - ECCO, Oakhurst

Mission u Theme: *Practicing Hope Together*

Practicing Hope is an adult curriculum exploring hope, particularly when hope seems hard to find. The curriculum asks questions such as: What is hope in the face of neo fascism? What is hope in a time of genocide? How do we imagine a future for the next generation as our planet grows hotter by the season? What tools do we have to face these hard realities? How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall?

This study's purpose is to allow all of our communities to cultivate hope that is honest about our current conditions (refugia), hope that is restorative when everything feels urgent (rest), and hope that is possible even when we transgress (repair).

For more information about the different sessions and registration, click the flyer below.

[Missionu flyer 2025](#)

Coming Events

April - Spiritual Retreat in conjunction with Central Valley UWF is still possible

May 17 - Marina UMC Rummage Sale, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

June 7 - Rummage Sale at Wesley UMC, 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

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September 27 - ECRD UWF Annual Celebration at Watsonville UMC

October 4 - CNUWF Annual Celebration, location TBD

ECRD

Please send any announcements for any upcoming events to:

communication@elcaminorealumw.org

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. (Any misspelling, errors or typos are ours alone).

Joyce & Leslie

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