



The UMW Voice

The Newsletter of Bozeman's United Methodist Women

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Spiritually Speaking

Brenda Anderson-Baker

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NOTE: I wrote this column in the spring of 2016, and my heart has been heavy with the same thoughts and feelings I expressed then. In truth, I'm even more worn down by it today. This piece captures what I want to say better than anything new I could write two years later, so please forgive the recycling of my words (with just a couple of very minor changes).

I am so far from being like the kindest folks I know. I have a snarky sense of humor, a judgmental attitude, and a vocabulary that turns the first two flaws into deadly weapons. My biggest contribution to civility and grace in this world is my unrelenting commitment to returning my shopping cart to its designated spot in the parking lot, which—while it should count for something—does not make me Mother Teresa.

At the risk of sounding like a prudish old woman, however, I am almost reduced to tears and fears at the escalating levels of incivility in our world right now. Behavior that would get a school kid detention or an employee a closed door meeting with management plays out in the public arena with barely a flicker of mention. By accepting increasing levels of rude and crude speech and conduct, the standards for acceptable behavior continue to decline. And we are the worse for it.

I'm talking mostly about politics, of course. Just pointing out the obvious puts me at risk of sinking to a similar standard. It's easy to fall into the trap of maligning the offenders so that I am on their level. It's natural to want to meet outrage with more outrage. Thinking of Jesus' message to turn the other cheek is so unsatisfying, so unnatural, and so very difficult.

How can I—someone who struggles with common kindness and decency in the best of situations—get through these days and months and years with faith and integrity intact? How can I be a faithful Christian and a responsible citizen when it seems as if the very culture is conspiring to turn life in this country into a giant mud pit?

The first thing I am trying to do is remind myself that God is in charge—not the Democrats or Republicans, not the media or the special interest groups. In God, all things are possible. In God, order arises from chaos. In God, goodness ultimately wins.

The second thing I am paying attention to is my own level of anger. I try to notice when my anger is genuine and righteous and when it is being manipulated to cause me to feel fear or outrage. Am I willing to give someone else that much power in my life? Just as I struggle not to let an angry driver ruin my day, can I take steps not to let someone else's vitriol and hatred trigger my own strong reactions?

The third thing I want is to stay connected to God throughout this time. I want to pray, to maintain that relationship that lets me confess my failures and inspires me to rise above the things that pull me down. I want to be reminded that, as a follower of Jesus, I am called to kindness and love even when—maybe especially when—that's a hard challenge to obey.

Brenda Anderson-Baker

Register by January 26th for a discount! Winter School - February 2-3 - Mission u, Laurel UMC

link to registration: <https://www.yacumc.org/files/websites/www/Mission+u+Reg+2018+Feb.pdf>

Studies are Friday : Living as a Covenant Community - Peg Plimpton
the United Methodist Church in the USA - Anita Turner

Saturday: Missionary Conferences of

UMW Happenings by Janna Christensen

December was a busy month for our BUMW with a special emphasis on missions and mission giving. We held our first ever Mission Market on December 3 in the Fireside Room and the narthex. It was a fun morning selling crafts and baked goods capped off with the final bids at our silent auction. We were able to raise \$1600 to put toward our UMW pledge to Mission. Thanks to all the workers, for the creative donations, and the buyers that made the morning such a success. We hope to do it again next December.

The following Wednesday was our annual Advent general meeting where after a lovely brunch, we heard some thoughts from Bonnie Hash about women and youth health issues in conjunction with Gloria Zimmer using the UMW Advent program on that topic. At this morning fellowship we also had the opportunity to present Kay Lansverk with Special Mission Recognition. The pin and gift to mission in her name honored all of Kay's years of work at BUMC and in particular her work with women and children. The busy morning also included our annual Thank Offering (also given to mission support) and the installation of 2018 BUMW officers.



UMW Officers



Bonnie Hash

Congratulations!

Kay Lansverk

UMW Special Mission
Recognition

General UMW gathering Wednesday, March 7, 1:00 p.m. at Aspen Pointe
(note this is not the usual Feb date)

Pastor Deb Christine, an artist and teacher of art, will help us look at the work of El Salvador artist Fernando Llort. Everyone will have the opportunity to either create their own drawing in this style or simply color one that will be provided (or kibbitz with those who are). Llort's artwork portrays the life and images of the El Salvador culture, and the BUMC mission team to El Salvador used these images to create the mural they painted there.

Join us in the Fireside Room, reached by going through the main lobby, past the dining area, and into the hallway. Refreshments will follow the program. Come and enrich your soul!

Submitted by Gloria Zimmer

Did you know.....? **YOUR** Bozeman United Methodist Women, working together, in 2017 donated \$8,697.08 to missions. Your generous donations help to spread God's love both locally and around the world.

Upcoming Meetings

Feb. 2-3 Mission U – Mission U Laurel UMC
Feb 13 Tues Mission Team Meeting Friendship Room, 10-Noon
Feb.20 Tues. Newly Retired Group, IHOP, 10:00 a.m
Feb.21 Wed Miriam-Ruth Circle, Church Conf Rm., 09:30-11:00 am Trinity, Fireside Room 1:15 pm
Feb.22 Thurs. Noon Luncheon Group Christus Collegium, 12-1:00 pm
Feb. 26 Mon. Inkspots card making 4-6pm at the home of Martha Hendricks myhendricks@icloud.com
March 7 Wed. General meeting at Aspen Pointe 1pm