

Report to the Synod of 2022
From: Unity Women's Desk

Mission, Purpose and Values (brief statement):

The **mission** of the Unity Women's Desk is to empower Moravian girls and women for global change. The Unity Board officially established UWD as an agency of the Moravian Unity in 2011 and appointed Rev. Patricia Garner as the founding Coordinator to work with a Steering Committee. The first official Advisory Board was appointed in 2016.

Our **purpose** is to identify and coordinate resources available throughout the Unity and share them in a way that empowers girls and women.

The UWD shares the **values** set forth in the Unity Mission Agreement, approved at the Unity Mission Conference in South Africa (2017). Our priority is working to overcome gender barriers within the Unity and the communities it serves. We endorse all the values stated in this document and its general call to carry out Christ's work of reconciliation:

"Our Moravian Unity is a gift, a witness and a task.

It is a **precious gift** we have received as a heritage from our ancestors in faith...Through our Lord and Savior we are bound together in a fellowship of love and forgiveness...Our Unity is a powerful **witness** to the world that we remain together despite our cultural, economic, and linguistic differences. More than that, we Moravians care for each other in our Unity: "If one part of the body suffers, all parts suffer with it." (I Cor. 12:22) Our Unity is also a **task** given to us...We will not allow theological and cultural differences to break our communion, but will seek the open dialogue with each other to solve conflicts among us. In this we are a token of Christ's reconciliation working through us in the world...Missionaries today are sent to overcome barriers of race, class, and gender. It is our mission to speak out wherever barriers divide humanity and harm our brothers and sisters. "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." (Eph. 2:19)

Responsibilities (including any specific assignments from the 2018 synod)

The UWD Advisory Board and Coordinator report directly to the Unity Board, which has given the UWD these responsibilities in all provinces, including MCSP.

1. Raising awareness among pastors and congregations about violence against women and gender justice.
2. Providing materials and educational opportunities for pastors and the laity regarding violence against women and human rights for women.
3. Planning the Unity Women's Consultations.

The UWD is eager to share our heartfelt gratitude to the MCSP for its amazing support for the establishment and growth of our ministry. The generosity of the MCSP has enabled us to carry out our responsibilities in all provinces.

1- The UWD's office has been located in Winston-Salem since its establishment.

From 2016 through 2021, Salem Congregation provided UWD with a grant for office rent in the Cedarhyrst building in Old Salem, allowing donations to go directly to girls and women. In 2022, the Southern Province PEC voted to continue providing a grant for office space in a space shared with the Provincial Women's Board. One of the greatest benefits of having an office among the provincial staff is the proximity to the amazing staff of the MCSP. Special thanks to Robyn Glance, Treasurer's Office, Cindy Lamb, Provincial Women's Board Administrator, and Heather Stevenson, Commission on Congregational Development, for all their encouragement and willingness to answer questions.

2- Key volunteers. Many of our key UWD volunteers are from the Southern Province. Liz Venable has served as Secretary/Assistant Treasurer since 2015. Linda Hastings, (Come and Worship) Sandra Dorr (Come and Worship) and Carol Brown (Bethania) are regulars in the UWD office and also offer

tech support. MCSP congregations have hosted events, helped with fund-raising, allowed us to use their facilities, and carried out service projects.

3- Financial Support: 38 MCSP Women's Fellowships, Mission Committees, and Sunday School classes have supported us financially since 2018. Many more individuals have generously supported the UWD through financial contributions. Without your generosity, this work would not be possible.

Summary of Activities Since 2018:

LEADERSHIP/Finances

-2018. UWD hired first paid Coordinator and appointed 2 new Advisory Board members: Bishop Blair Couch for N America and Sister Rachel Lwali for Africa.

-2020. Concluded *Standing with our Sisters Capital Campaign*, after receiving 100% of the \$417,500 pledged. From end of 2018 to end of 2021, total assets have increased 38% despite paying a full-time staffer, distributing almost \$200,000 in scholarships and \$23,000 in loans and grants. Most of these donations are in designated investment funds, so our current greatest need is to build our general fund. This fund covers salary, technology needs, support for volunteer Program Coordinators, and creating advocacy materials and resources.

-2020. Appointed 2 New Sub-Desk Coordinators: Alay Gonzalez (Spanish-Speaking Latin America/Caribbean), Merita Meko (Europe), Fatima Kiongosya (East/Central Africa).

-2020. Held first meeting of all Sub-Desk Coordinators and Advisory Board members on ZOOM.

-2021. Unity Board requested evaluation of staff and structures. Recommendations for change include adding two additional Advisory Board members to represent Moravian women, increasing the number of Program Coordinators, and moving all applications to online processing.

-2022. Will appoint two new Advisory Board members for Europe and Latin America/Caribbean regions (approval in process).

The UWD is grateful for many opportunities since 2018. In the midst of COVID, UWD was able to join in meetings of the Southern Province Moravian Ministers' Association, American Board of World Mission, the European Missions Council, German Mission Board (HMH) and the Unity Development Board, as well as many provincial events throughout the Unity. We are blessed to have such supportive partner organizations.

Advocacy Activities:

-International Women's Day Annual Event

The in-person event scheduled for March, 2020 was canceled at beginning of the pandemic. In 2021 and 2022, we published YOUTUBE Programs featuring women from all four regions of the Unity. The 2021 Video included a special appeal by a Moravian female pastor in Tanzania to raise money for twelve young Maasai girls to attend a Tanzanian Moravian Secondary School, so they would not be forced to marry young. We quickly raised over \$30,000, which was enough funding to keep them in school through the highest level of secondary school. In 2022, we are appealing for donations to establish a technology fund for our scholarship recipients. Creating these videos has provided great opportunities to work together directly with women across the Unity.

-Monthly Publication.

In 2019, the UWD Prayer List transitioned to a digital publication with the new title, *Unity Women's Voices*. It features stories by and about girls and women throughout the Unity. It also invites readers to join in prayer for the lives and work of these girls and women.

-2021. First-ever Latin America/Caribbean Moravian Women's Consultation on ZOOM. Over seventy participants from ten countries, including the USA.

-2022. Interprovincial Women's Board Mission Study.

I was asked me to share the impact of the UWD in its first decade. This was an excellent opportunity to collect stories and statistics about the girls and women who have received scholarships and loans,

as well as the broader impact the UWD has had connecting women from different provinces, advocating for gender justice, and building the Body of Christ.

-The UWD has recently purchased a video series that guides faith-based communities to learn about violence against women, reflect on how they can respond, and take concrete steps to end violence against women and support those impacted by it. The series can be shared online throughout our provinces. This series was used by Laurel House in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, for a series sponsored by Moravian Theological Seminary, and is an excellent resource to equip pastors and lay leaders alike.

-October 2022. The UWD will publish a *Violence against Women Resource* (VAW) edited by Rev. Patricia Garner. It includes chapters by American and Tanzanian pastors. This will be the foundation piece of a new VAW Resource Page that will invite contributions from all provinces in the Unity.

UWD Programs: Scholarships, Loans, and Grants

1. Since 2018, we have distributed more than \$200,000 in scholarships and \$23,000 in loans and grants. We continue streamlining our application and tracking processes through technology, but we remain highly committed to sharing resources in a way that strengthens relationships with and between funding recipients; we are only as strong as the personal relationships we establish with our sisters and brothers in this work. Accountability to our donors -and to our purpose- is a high priority for all Advisory Board members and global volunteers. We all take very personal responsibility for ensuring each scholarship and grant reaches its intended recipient, and we empower the beneficiaries to share their knowledge and experience with others.

Key Activities in MCSP and joint MCSP/MCNP:

1. Interprovincial Violence against Women Awareness Sunday (North America)
Observed the 3rd Sunday in October each year. Proposed by UWD and approved by both PECs in 2018. In 2019, UW distributed liturgies and resources for VAW Awareness Sunday. In 2020 and 2021, UWD distributed resources for VAW Awareness Sunday and partnered with Family Services of Forsyth to collect items for Domestic Violence Shelter and offered a ZOOM Program on Violence against Women. Twelve Winston-Salem area congregations have participated in collecting items for the Domestic Violence Shelter. We challenge congregations in other areas to begin a similar campaign on the Moravian Day of Service in September and ending in October, which is National Domestic Violence Awareness Month.
In 2020, UWD requested changing the name from VAW Awareness Sunday to Human Rights for Women Sunday. Both PECs approved this.
2. UWD awarded our second College Scholarship to a young woman from the Southern Province. (four years, \$1000/year scholarship) Applications for our next Southern Province Scholarship will be received in the spring of 2024.
3. In 2020, UWD partnered with Estamos Unidos to receive a \$15,000 Winston-Salem Foundation Women's Fund grant for Rev. Angelica Regalado-Cieza to teach Technology Classes for Latina Mothers in the Sunnyside area.
4. In 2021, UWD provided a grant for Estamos Unidos' first Women's Retreat at Laurel Ridge.
5. At least one birthing kit packing event has been held in the Southern Province each year since 2018. We sent a shipment to Honduras in 2018 and we were able to send 100 kits to Tanzania in 2021, as free checked luggage.
6. The 5th Unity Women's Consultation was scheduled to take place in 2023 here in the Southern Province, with delegates spending four days at Laurel Ridge and then celebrating three days of open-programming in Winston-Salem. We have postponed the Consultation indefinitely, due to COVID, but we still plan to hold it here.

Future Direction and Opportunities

The UWD looks forward to continued growth as we serve girls and women in provinces throughout the Unity. We experienced tremendous growth in our first decade and we are grateful for all who have helped us in our work. Most of our scholarships cover only a part of the expenses girls and women need for their academic endeavors, and we are working to offer larger scholarships for those whose families are completely unable to assist them. When we reschedule the Fifth Unity Women's Consultation, we hope many of you will join us in planning the program, hosting delegates, and collecting funds to defray travel expenses for delegates in provinces economically weakened by the pandemic.

Our greatest financial need currently is to increase our General Fund (Hinge Fund) that covers administration, training and technical consultants (financial auditors, video production, strategic use of social media and website. We also hope to develop of our fledgling Global Market as an entrepreneurial endeavor that can help support our work and we welcome volunteers interested in helping us make this dream a reality.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Tomberlin

