

UUWF Full Annual Report

Founded in 1963 through consolidation of Unitarian and Universalist women's organizations, the UU Women's Federation has evolved into an education, advocacy, and funding organization with a vital mission: To advance justice for women and girls and promote their spiritual growth. UUWF is one of two associate member organizations of the UUA, along with UUSC.

The UUWF "affirms the inherent value of every woman, defined inclusively as one who identifies as a woman, trans* woman, or genderqueer woman."

- We affirm the importance of women's voices in our religious movement;
- We pledge action against the religious roots of sexism;
- We pledge to support the diversity of religious feminisms;
- We work to raise consciousness of the linked nature of oppressions;
- We seek justice for all women in the struggle to transform institutions of oppression.

Our board is comprised of passionate volunteers committed to gender justice and intersectionality.

2017-18 board members include:

- Claire Sexton, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Marissa Gutierrez Vicario, Vice President of Recruitment and Outreach
- Gretchen Ohmann, Vice President of Communications
- Sue Boone, Treasurer/Clerk

Our other leadership team members are:

- Rev. Marti Keller, Affiliated Minister
- Rev. Joyce Palmer, Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley Scholarship Chair
- Dana Robb, Administrator

As announced at last year's GA, we are proceeding for UU Women and Religion to become a key program of the UUWF, combining forces in our mutual quest toward gender equity.

UU Women & Religion...

Challenges women, men, and children to affirm, defend, and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

Progresses toward our goals, using shared leadership and consensus building.

Works to end patriarchal systems, which undermine achievement of a world of peace and justice with respect for every person and for the interdependent web of all existence.

Encourages each person's own path to spiritual growth.

Empowers all people to choose how to change unjust systems, as we walk together toward a new day.

The New Prophetic Sisterhood (NPSUU), a project of the UUWF, continues its work to amplify the voices and ministries of women-identified religious professionals. This year we expanded the scope of this project to include not only clergy, but all religious professionals. One of the initiatives of NPS is the annual Justice for Women and Girls Sermon Award.

We received many excellent sermons this year, many of which were a response to and contribution to the larger #metoo movement. The award recipient for 2018 is Clare Fortune-Lad, the Director of Religious Education in Haverhill, MA. Her sermon, “#MeToo, Now What?” will be delivered at General Assembly in Kansas City, and will be the jumping off point for lively discussion about the question she poses – “now what?”

Another UUWF program at GA 2018 is a collaborative program with the International Women's Convocation (IWC), “#METOO: Called to Challenge the Systemic Patriarchy.” The panel of distinguished guests --including the UUWF's Rev. Marti Keller-- will look at the problem with an intersectional lens and lay out possible options for dealing with sexual harassment and abuse. Rev. Keller will address U.S. legislative and other public policy options and other panelists will address congregational and international options.

A GA highlight for UUWF is a Thursday morning breakfast to celebrate two recipients of the 2018 Ministry to Women Award. The award recognizes significant contributions that extend and enhance our mission of “advancing justice for women and girls, and promoting their spiritual growth.” The honorees this year are Rev. Dr. Deborah Pope-Lance and Rev. Gail Seavey for their work of exposing, disclosing, remediating, and preventing the use of the religious authority of our ministers to exploit and sexually abuse those in their care. The UUWF convened the first denomination-wide task force on UU clergy sexual misconduct in the early 1990's and the work has been carried on largely by Revs. Pope-Lance and Seavey. We recognize their brave & pioneering advocacy and for modeling and teaching public disclosure and safe congregation practices.

Funding Programs

The Margaret Fuller Grants program supports Unitarian Universalist women in scholarly, prophetic, and innovative exploration of religious feminisms. Our Margaret Fuller Projects this year include funding an ongoing project to document UU women's herstory in a special collection at Meadville-Lombard. Before her health turned, Denny Davidoff asked UUWF to contribute to the preparation of the [*HEResies Special Collection*](#) archives to be converted to searchable online documents. In addition to contributing many boxes of rough-scanned herstorical documents and several artifacts such as quilts, the UUWF Board has committed to funding the bulk of this project. Once the physical and digital collections are complete, it should make researching our herstory and the women who made it a far easier task.

The UUWF is also helping to fund an upcoming Skinner House book project "Speaking Our Stories and Telling Our Truths: Black Women Clergy in Unitarian Universalism." The anthology will provide the first published scholarly treatment of Black women clergy in the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

Equity & Justice grants are made to Unitarian Universalist organizations & groups, or to groups / organizations with a significant number of UUs involved in the hands-on work of the project. The program welcomes inquiries addressing a wide range of issues consistent with UU principles and which emphasize the achievement of social justice for women.

An Equity & Justice grant this year provided funds for a congregation in Harrisburg to offer childcare during the 40-day season of civil actions by the Poor People's Campaign, Pennsylvania at the state capital as part of the larger Campaign, A National Call for Moral Revival.

An upcoming project is to expand a congregational project of providing menstrual products to food pantries, women's shelters, and other organizations serving low-income women and families. The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Susquehanna Valley supplies 10 organizations in six counties, and is ready to expand beyond the capabilities of the congregation. UUWF funding will allow the project to be made into an independent nonprofit (called "Shape of Justice") and expand to five new locations, as a test for possible further expansion around the US.

The Marjorie Bowens-Wheatley scholarship provides direct financial support to aspirants or candidates to the Unitarian Universalist ministry, or candidates in the UUA's religious education or music leadership programs, who identify as women of color, Latina, or Hispanic.

This past year's recipients are Dianne Daniels of Norwich CT and Sana Saeed of Arlington, MA. We are proud to support Dianne and Sana on their paths to ministry.

The panel was convened by scholarship committee chair Rev. Joyce Palmer and included Maria O'Connor, Director of Religious Education, Unitarian Universalist Church West, Brookfield, WI; and Rev. Julie Forest, Interim Minister, Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert, Rancho Mirage, CA

Collaborative Work

UUWF is working with UUW&R and IWC to convene a facilitated meeting in September 2018 entitled ***Many Voices/ United Vision: A Collaboration of U*U Women***. The meeting is an opportunity to share experience, expertise, and insights as we unite our voices to strengthen collaboration among U*U women and lay out strategies for a joint vision and collective action. To gain the widest perspective possible, UU organizations with goals of human rights and social justice are invited to send representatives, whether or not women's rights are an official part of their portfolio, as so many issues affect women disproportionately.

Aims of the meeting are to: bring the leadership of U.S. UU women's organizations and other UU women's voices together to engage in a planning process; develop an understanding of how each organization functions and what it is doing to advance women's human rights; explore how our organizations can work together to strengthen women's voices and women's leadership in our movement; build positive and productive working relationships; build a joint vision; lay out possible paths of collaboration; and hopefully establish a common course of action.

Advocacy

As the minister of the UUWF Rev. Marti Keller brings more than 30 years experience in public witness and advocacy to our gender rights and justice work. Actions taken by UUWF in 2018:

As part of an interfaith coalition we signed on to a letter to Congress "expressing our deep concern about proposals to undermine Americans' basic living standards" by imposing working requirements on essential anti-poverty programs. These programs: Medicaid, The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps), and housing vouchers assist millions of Americans on the path to self sufficiency.

We joined Planned Parenthood Federation of America and more than 85 faith based and secular organizations in a letter to the US House and Senate Appropriations committees to "strongly oppose adding 'ideological policy riders'

to ongoing funding resolutions. These attachments to appropriation bills have been used by opponents to comprehensive, accessible women's health programs including sweeping new religious refusal language allowing employers, insurers and healthcare providers to deny other's access to abortion and ideologically driven cuts to the national family planning and comprehensive teen pregnancy prevention programs.

On the 25th anniversary of the signing of the unpaid Family and Medical Leave Act we joined the National Partnership for Women and Families in celebrating its beginnings, and urging the passage of a meaningful national paid leave standard that would further empower women, and strengthen families.

We also joined with the National Women's Law Center and other organizations in declaring that equal pay is crucial for all women, and that much greater pay disparities for women of color and women with disabilities must be addressed forcefully and intentionally in an ongoing way.

Most recently, we joined with 110 faith and secular groups to write the Secretary of Health and Human Services, protesting the new regulations attached to Title X national family planning program funding, all of which will seriously constrict health workers from providing information on the full range of reproductive choices following an unplanned pregnancy.

The UUWF seeks to amplify the voices of women in the Unitarian Universalist movement and the voices of UU women in our country. We are committed to engaging UUs in the work for gender justice.