



United  
Women  
in Faith

# NORTHERN VIRGINIA DISTRICT

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

### NOVA NOTES



APRIL 2024

*Please share this invite and link with others in your group/circle/unit.*

#### Mission Statement

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

#### UWF Updated Purpose

We are 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.

## Season



On Friday morning I stepped outside to put some things into the recycling bin. This is something I do nearly every morning and regardless of the weather I usually go out in about the same attire – it’s just a few steps across the deck and it isn’t usually worth more than a flip flop’s worth of preparation.

I braced myself for a blast of chilly air and opened the door – as it turned out, it was about 65 degrees outside. It felt like I stepped out of my winter expectations right into the reality of spring. It was hard to go back inside, even with the promise of coffee!

A few minutes later, as I was texting with my friend, I said that didn’t think I could ever live some place that didn’t experience all 4 seasons; I just love the promise of a new thing always just around the corner. Every season has its wonders; miracles and metaphors. In the Spring we see rebirth, and in the Fall we see the beauty in letting go. The Summer is full of color and light, while Winter is full of mystery and potential.

Every season has its responsibilities; every season has its rest.

I took the above picture in November of 2019 after spending an afternoon cleaning up the wilted remains of summer and planting some bulbs to winter over for the spring. As I looked down with pride at what looked on the surface to be containers of dirt, a thought came to mind, and I posted the image with this caption:

“It is amazing to me how different a successful day of gardening looks in the spring verses how it looks in the fall. A solid reminder, really, that success isn’t always in bloom.”

Just as the seasons we experience here on Earth come with different expectations for climate and growth; the seasons we pass through in our lives are no different. You would not expect a flower to bloom in the winter; you wouldn’t think that if it was just a little more committed – if it worked *just a little bit harder* – it could grow up through the frozen ground.

And yet, in the winter seasons of our lives, we expect so much more of ourselves than we do of the flower. We never allow ourselves rest; we refuse to accept a season of growth if it looks like relative dormancy on the surface.

But the thing is – we aren’t created to live in perpetual harvest. Your time spent planted in the rich soil of last season’s lessons is not failure. You need that darkness to see the spark of a new thing.

Back in November of 2019 there was more moving under the soil than would meet the eye. I was working in my yard that day because I was trying to get my head right after a particularly difficult weekend...and yet that season was actually the calm before the storm. The following winter was one of heartbreak and exhaustion, and I don’t think I need to tell you how the spring shaped up.

I think I do need to tell you that right before Easter, when it was time to produce and film music for Holy Week in my living room, those fall bulbs yielded spring tulips and hyacinths, right on time.

Sharon Rosenfeld  
March 28, 2021  
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Northern Virginia District
United Women in Faith

Spiritual Life Event

April 13, 2024, 11am – 2pm

Sydenstricker United Methodist Church, 8508 Hooes Rd, Springfield, VA 22153

Speaker: Rev Alyssa Densham of Provision Church

Lunch will be provided by Provision Church, The cost is \$15/person. A love offering taken to help support Provision Church and their ministry. Provision Church is a new Methodist faith community.

You won't find us in a church building.
Because we're out in the world being the Church.
We gather in kitchens and at tables to make bread and to break bread.

Our mission is Provision Kitchen, a culinary entrepreneurship training program for individuals experiencing generational poverty in Northern Virginia. We believe in dreams and we believe in supporting the dreams of people whose dreams have been for too long deferred and unheard. We believe that we are called to a table that excludes one and that, at that table, what happens is more than a meal. It's a movement.

Lunch will be provided by Provision Church

- Maple-brined Grilled Chicken Sandwiches on Ciabatta Bread with green leaf lettuce, and garlic aioli
Fresh Seasonal Fruit Cup
Vegetarian option is Grilled Portobello Mushroom Sandwich
Gluten Free bread option available

Registration Required (form below):

The cost is \$15/person to cover meal costs.

There will also be a love offering taken to help support Provision Church and its ministry.

Additional information for registration https://www.provisionchurchnova.org/

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Registration for Meal (\$15/person) Required by April 7, 2024

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: gluten-free \_\_\_\_\_ vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ dairy-free \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to NOVA District UWF and mail to: Marty Bickford, 3561 Martha Custis Drive, Alexandria, VA 22302-2003. If you have any questions, please contact Beth Meserve at beth.meserve@gmail.com



*We are ecstatic that Guest House is the recipient of a grant of \$2,000,000. It is well-deserved and will mean so much toward furthering the important programs Guest House offers to rehabilitate formerly incarcerated women.* Marty Bickford, UWF

Guest House is the only reentry program in Northern Virginia that comprehensively addresses the unique needs of formerly incarcerated women- spanning healthcare, jobs, housing, and more. Its six-month, 24/7 residential program offers reentering women a supportive environment as they rebuild their lives.



### ***Never Give Up: Cynthia and Michelle's Faithful Fight Against Mass Incarceration***



**Honor International Women's Day** by watching and sharing *Never Give Up: Cynthia and Michelle's Faithful Fight Against Mass Incarceration*, [now available on YouTube](#). This short and intimate documentary portrait, created by Ania Freer, tells the story of United Women in Faith leader Cynthia Morrison Holland and her daughter, Michelle Morrison.

**Available on YouTube as of 3/8/2024:**

**UWF Stories of Sisterhood:** <https://uwfaith.org/stories-of-sisterhood/2024/prayer/>



**April 2024 Tips**  
**Earth Day 2024 Focus:**  
**Planet vs. Plastic**

- At work, check out the coffee station. Styrofoam cups and plastic stirrers get thrown away **but never go away. Look for non-plastic alternatives** for coffee cups. Buy a package of linguine pasta, break the strands in half and use them to stir the coffee or tea. The pasta-stirrers can be composted or thrown away without the same harm that plastic generates.
- Money talks. **Boycott companies that use excessive plastic packaging.** Purchase from businesses that are committed to environmentally friendly practices as well as plastic-free products. Look for [B Corp certification](#). Read the “About” tab on websites. Complain if you receive something with plastic packaging. Buy food not wrapped in plastic. (In the past *I’ve already contacted Chic-Fil-a about their take-out red straws but I think it’s time for another call! For instance, have you counted the plastics used when you order a salad!?! There’s more plastic than there is lettuce, it seems. Way too much!*)

**Donate to organizations that are addressing the plastic problem** on a larger scale. Your financial support enables them to reach far and wide. Check out these: [EarthDay.org](#), [Plastic-Free July](#), The Story of Stuff Project, specifically [The Story of Bottled Water](#).

**Approach this Earth Day—and every day—with gratitude.** Our Creator God has gifted us with an amazing planet—not wrapped in plastic. Our faithful response is to cherish and care for this treasure.

Share these Tips with your family, friends, and congregation. Choose any or all. Forward them to someone you care about. Cut-and-paste to put them with your email signature, in your letters and emails, worship bulletins, newsletters, social media, or website.



## Earth Day Sunday April 22, 2024

Everywhere we look in our culture you will find plastic.

One place where you will not find plastic, however, is in the Bible.

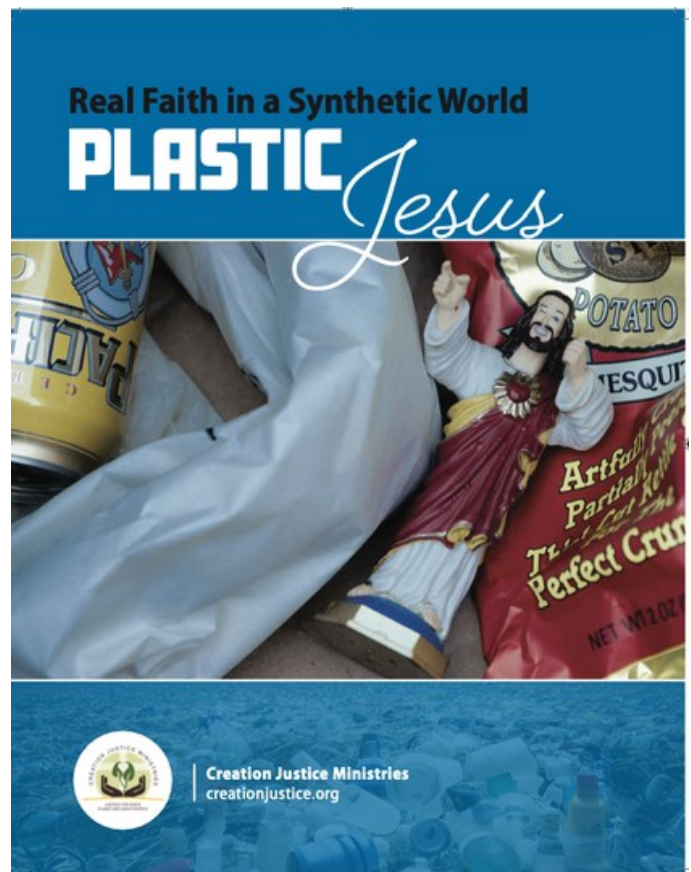
This resource is designed to help congregations think more deeply about the ways that plastics impact our lives and God's creation. It is also intended to equip people of faith to take actions to address this epidemic in faithful and practical ways.

**Download** this resource to find stories of individuals and communities making a positive impact, sermon starters to spark meaningful discussions in your church, worship resources to unite in prayer and reflection, and actionable steps to address the plastic crisis in your life, community and, our world.

### Plastic Jesus: Real Faith in a Synthetic World

This resource is designed to help congregations think more deeply about the ways that plastics impact our lives and God's creation. It is also intended to equip people of faith to take actions to address this epidemic in faithful and practical ways.

<https://www.creationjustice.org/plasticjesus.html>







## Faith Climate Action Week April 19-28

The theme for 2024's Faith Climate Action Week is **Common Ground: Cultivating connections between Faith, Food, and Climate**. VA IPL (Interfaith Power & Light) is offering [film screenings of the film "Common Ground,"](#) as well as garden blessings. To register for a film screening and/or garden blessing, register below.

**Interfaith Power & Light** offers a themed organizer's **kit for Faith Climate Action Week** every year to support your efforts around Earth Day to engage you and your congregation in Caring for Creation.

[https://interfaithpowerandlight.org/faithclimateactionweek/organizerkits/?gad\\_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw2PSvBhDjARIsAKc2cGMFrzhmO8420QWLZSp6S4mabxWXbjqxn6ykAGvRF6R8cH0QS6OfNfoaAtG6EALw\\_wcB](https://interfaithpowerandlight.org/faithclimateactionweek/organizerkits/?gad_source=1&gclid=Cj0KCQjw2PSvBhDjARIsAKc2cGMFrzhmO8420QWLZSp6S4mabxWXbjqxn6ykAGvRF6R8cH0QS6OfNfoaAtG6EALw_wcB)

Download the 2024 Faith Climate Action Week kit.

[CLICK HERE FOR FREE DOWNLOAD](#)

Download the 2024 Faith Climate Action Week kit in Spanish

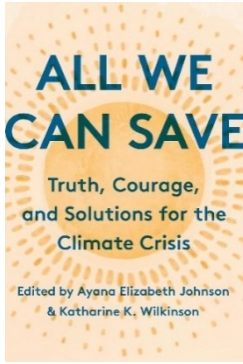
[KIT DEL ORGANIZADOR 2024.](#)

Plant a pizza garden as part of your Earth Week activities at your congregation. (Or later as fits your growing season.)

A popular Pizza Garden heirloom seed collection was selected by Interfaith Power & Light for its' "climate-hardy" attributes. The organic seeds in this kit are vigorous varieties that are highly productive, flavorful and nutritious. A fun way for children to experience a closer connection with the earth – grow it and eat it! Have a pizza party!

[PURCHASE SEED KITS HERE.](#)

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT [broderick@interfaithpowerandlight.org](mailto:broderick@interfaithpowerandlight.org)**

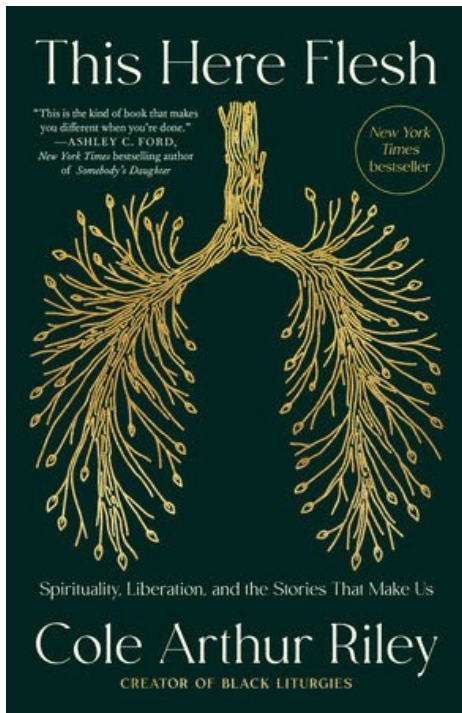


**All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis Read Together Book Discussion: “All We Can Save: Truth, Courage and Solutions for the Climate Crisis”**

**Join us via Zoom on Thursday, May 4, 7-8 pm ET; 4-5 pm PT.**

Register: <https://uwfaith->

[org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvduCqqT0vHdJmGFKB4o\\_fduLB34bcYrtA?mc\\_cid=a69de0c509&mc\\_eid=42e341edfd#/registration](https://uwfaith-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvduCqqT0vHdJmGFKB4o_fduLB34bcYrtA?mc_cid=a69de0c509&mc_eid=42e341edfd#/registration)



Join United Women in Faith members and friends for a **Read Together book discussion** of *This Here Flesh: Spirituality, Liberation, and the Stories That Make Us* by Cole Arthur Riley. *This Here Flesh* appears in United Women in Faith's [2024 Reading Program](#) as a spiritual growth selection.

**Pre-reading is required.** This is a fully interactive small group book discussion that requires all participants to read *This Here Flesh* prior to attending. Space is limited and registration is accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration will close when we reach capacity. **Please register only if you will be able to read the book before the May 6<sup>th</sup>.**

**Virtual gathering.**

You can borrow the book from your local public library or purchase it at your favorite book store. You can also buy it online from [bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith](https://bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith) to earn 10% back for the organization.

This *Read Together* event is hosted by United Women in Faith.

There is no cost to participate.

All are welcome.

***(One copy of book at Fairfax City Library, call number 200ArthyrR2022)***

Register Here <https://uwfaith->

[org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvduCqqT0vHdJmGFKB4o\\_fduLB34bcYrtA?mc\\_cid=a69de0c509&mc\\_eid=42e341edfd#/registration](https://uwfaith-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwvduCqqT0vHdJmGFKB4o_fduLB34bcYrtA?mc_cid=a69de0c509&mc_eid=42e341edfd#/registration)





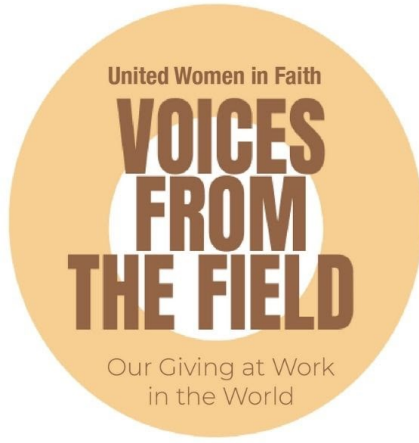
On March 16, the **Herndon United Women in Faith** hosted approximately 44 women in the Herndon UMC Doe Fellowship Hall for a 1-day retreat. What a wonderful day of ‘Traveling Together’ to build relationships as **Rev Emily Moore-Diamond** shared thoughts about the friendships of the bible’s Mary and Martha and Elizabeth and Mary. Song leader **Megan Dietrick** had us on our feet singing and doing hand and arm movements!! Breakfast and lunch were included in the cost of the retreat. Everyone ‘stuffed’ a heart pillow for the

**Mending Hearts program** of area hospitals—a prayer was said over each pillow and for the individual recovering from heart surgery who will receive each pillow. Before the retreat closed with communion participants linked arms around the hall as Emily shared a prayer about **the importance of building relationships with other women**. It was a wonderful day of sharing with old friends and finding new ones!!



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***If you missed the March 19<sup>th</sup> Voices in the Field podcast listen now:***



Listen now on the YouTube recording from March 19, 2024 UWF Podcast [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f\\_th3hGiQSM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_th3hGiQSM)

**Voices From the Field:  
Investing in Future Leaders**

Join us for **Voices from the Field: Investing in Future Leaders: United Women in Faith Scholarships Create Opportunities Through Education**. Meet Amanda Choi, Assistant Treasurer, National Office, and national and international *United Women in Faith* scholarship recipients who will share stories of how *United Women in Faith* scholarships afforded them an education that

changed their lives. This event highlighted the pivotal role of education for women, emphasizing the significance of *United Women in Faith* scholarships. Learn how your contributions enable *United Women in Faith* to provide scholarships worldwide to change lives through the personal stories of national and international scholarship recipients. The quarterly Voices from the Field events feature leaders sharing their work and life stories, daily challenges, hopes, and dreams. This conversation series highlights *United Women in Faith*'s initiatives supported by Mission Giving—initiatives that significantly improve the lives of women, children, and youth down the block and around the world.



Take the survey and make your voice heard! Click the link by April 5th to share your thoughts: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SN6T3YF>

**Voices From the Field** are quarterly events.  
The next one will cover **National Mission Institutions** will take place on **May 14th, 2024**.