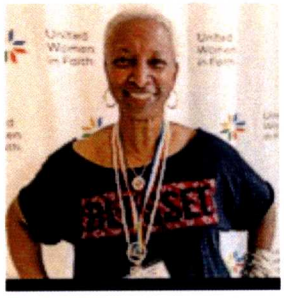
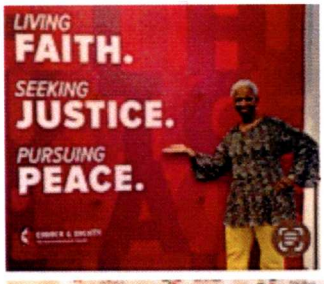
Congratulations President Elaine Bailey Johnson and Rita L. Smith

EO/General Secretary Sally Vonner, President Jana Jones, Northern Illinois Conference President Barbara Farley and the United Women in Faith Sisterhood Salutes

Rita L. Smith, Human Rights 2024 Honoree





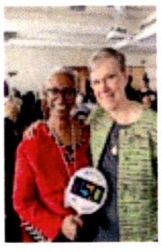
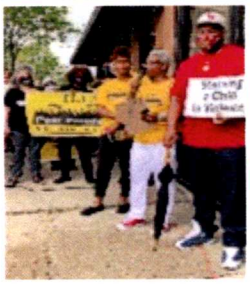




















Human Rights Honoree
Greater Chicago Area Unit

Rita Lafay Simpkins-Smith



Rita's active Christian journey began in New York City through baptism at Williams Institutional Christian Methodist Episcopal Church and membership at Harlem's St. Marks United Methodist Church in the 1960's through the 1970's. She relocated to Chicago with her husband and joined Gammon Memorial, now Resurrection UMC. She holds a B.S. from Tuskegee University and a M.Ed. from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. Rita is a retired Chicago Public School administrator, teacher, counselor and coach. She received Oppenheimer Counselors Award and a Congressman Danny K. Davis Administrator Award. An advocate for parental and children's rights, she serves as vice presidents at two different elementary schools and president at one. Rita was featured on a television show, "One Church, One School" She is the recipient of the Chicago Black Methodist for Church Renewal Laity Award, the Valiant Women Award and Human Rights Award for Church Women United and is a Laity Award Honoree from the *By Faith Magazine.*

Serving from the heart as a past Lay Leader, delegate to United Methodist Church representing Laity of the Northern Illinois Conference General and Jurisdictional Conferences, Midwest Council and Episcopacy member, chair and member of numerous Northern Illinois Conference (NIC) committees, President Chicago Black Methodist for Church Renewal, teacher at Pembroke Institute, Chaplain to Chicago Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and member of the Midwest Regional Chaplains Council, and North America Area World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFM&UCW) treasurer. Rita authored a Lenten prayer for the NIC and a prayer for the WFM&UCW World Observation Day program in 2024.

Her passion for speaking for the voiceless is through serving on the boards of D'Estee, Midwest Selah Freedom, Chair House, and Chicago Park District LaFollette Park Council. Rita also testified at an Environmental Protection Agency hearing.

Her commitment to mission as a fighter for equality, social justice and civil human rights through the United Women in Faith sisterhood includes not only as a member, but as local unit, conference and jurisdiction president. She co-authored, "Phase III Campaign for Children on Public Education, and initiated state lobby days and annual human trafficking vigils the Saturday before Superbowl's as the conference Social Action Coordinator.

Rita is currently the co-chairman of the Poor People's Campaign, Westside Caucus. They provided blankets and tarps to the homeless. Advocating and speaking for climate justice, and marching for minimum wages, immigration rights, registering voters, and canvassing the West Side of Chicago are programs and activities Rita takes pride in planning and participating in.

Rita is the wife to Charles for 53 years, mother to Tamara (Duane), Brady and recently deceased son, Anthony, and grandmother to Imani, Ethan, and Brady Jr.

One of Rita's favorite scriptures comes from Matthew 5:14-16, "*You are the light of the world…In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in Heaven."*

Congratulations President Elaine Bailey Johnson and

State Assembly Chair Dr. Elnora P. Hamb

From

Rita L. Smith

UN/Global Concerns Chairman and Greater Chicago Area Human Rights Honoree 2024



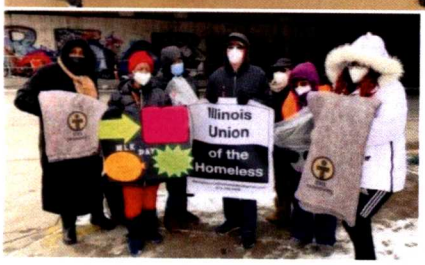






















Illinois Church Women United State Assembly
United Nations/Global Concerns







Rita L. Smith, Chairman
April 25-26, 2025

"What does the Lord your God require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

- Attended the Quadrennial Assembly in June in Oak Brook. As a member of the National Action and Global Concerns Committee, the four priories for 2024-2028 were presented at the council and accepted. They are as follows:
  - ✓ Peace/Shalom/Salam
  - ✓ Freedom and Justice – Human Trafficking
  - ✓ Quality and Equality in Public Education
  - ✓ Fair and Accessible Housing
- Resurrection United Methodist Church in Chicago hosted the Community Awareness Forum in June 2024. Justice for Our Neighbor presented as an immigrant ministry.
- Attended zoom meetings in 2024 and 2025
- Participated in the National Young Church Women United zoom program on Human Trafficking after viewing the film "Buying Back My Daughter"
- Prayed daily for the Human Trafficked in January from prayer e-mailed from our national president and our partnership organization Shared Hope International
- Distributed Human Trafficking information for Human Trafficking Month – January
- Distributed Liturgy for International Women's Day 2025
- Participated in the Balm in Gilead Praying Summit for the Healing of Aids
- March 7 – Participated in the World Day of Prayer program at Woodlawn African Methodist Episcopal Church in Chicago
- March 8 – Participated in the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women Observation Day Program – International Women's Month event at Martin Temple African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Chicago
- Participated virtually in the Non-Government Organization/Commission of the Status of Women (NGO-CSW69) event at the United Nations March 14-15, 2025
- Shared selected calendar of events from the United Nation website
- Hold a Red Membership Card
- Participated in the Thursdays in Black campaign and pray for our world leaders
- Let's continue giving to our partnership organizations: Church World Service, Bread for the Word, Shared Hope International and Balm in Gilead

United Nation/Global Concerns Photos from 2024-2025 Events



Thursdays in Black at the North America Area World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women Seminar in Atlanta, Ga.



Community Day Forum at Resurrection UM Church in Chicago



World Day of Prayer at Woodlawn AME Church in Chicago



Quadrennial Assembly Atlanta, GA



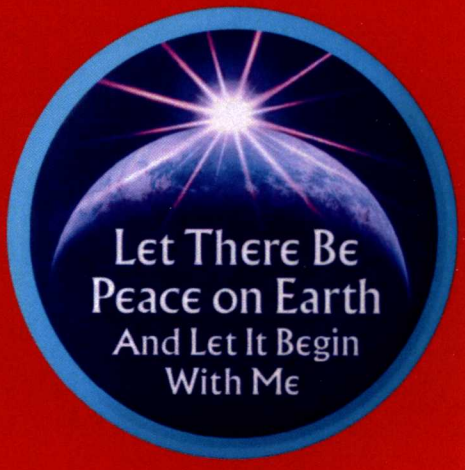
N.A.A. WFM&UMW World International Day at Martin` MartinTemple AME ZION

ILLINOIS STATE ASSEMBLY

CHURCH WOMEN UNITED

THEME:

Peace/Shalom/Salam



April 25-26, 2025

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON CHICAGO – ALSIP
5000 WEST 127TH STREET, ALSIP, ILLINOIS 60803

Mrs. Elaine Bailey Johnson, Illinois State President
Dr. Elnora P. Hamb, Illinois State Assembly Chair
Mrs. Kelly Shelton Northeast Area Coordinator
Mrs. Barb McCoy, East Central Regional Coordinator
Ms. Norma Borgmann, Past East Central Regional Coordinator
Mrs. Edna Holloway, Immediate Past Illinois State President
& CWU National Denominational Representative
Mrs. Margaret Broussard Rushing, CWU National President

"AGREED TO DIFFER, RESOLVED TO LOVE, UNITED TO SERVE"