October 1, 2018

It is with great pleasure that we announce that Dr. Julie Ann Tomberlin has been approved by the Advisory Board of the Unity Women’s Desk and confirmed by the Unity Board at their meeting in September 2018 as the new Coordinator of the Unity Women’s Desk.

Sr. Tomberlin is a graduate of the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Texas-Austin, and the Wake Forest University with degrees in Germanic Languages and Literature (PhD.), Speech Communication (MA), and History and Speech Communication (BA). In addition she has participated in continuing education studies in “Global Team Leader Certification,” TESOL (Teachers of English as a Second Language), Leadership Development, Fiscal Management, Volunteer Management, “Teaching Basic Reading for Adults,” “Certificate in Nonprofit Management,” and has attended Centro de Lenguas e Intercambio Cultural, in Seville, Spain to improve her Spanish Language skills, and the Lutheran Church Swahili Language School, Tanzania.

Julie lives outside Winston-Salem and is the mother of three sons: Isaac and twins, John Charles and Daniel. For the last eight years, she has worked as the Director of the Adult Literacy Program at the YMCA, helping to empower women to share their gifts more fully with their community. She sees the position at the UWD as offering a unique opportunity for her to apply her experience “in program development and management to a more international context and also to focus more specifically on helping women become leaders in their communities and in the Moravian Unity. I have a deep love for the Moravian Church and its long commitment to global service and to education for women.”

Sr. Julie lectured at a retreat for Lutheran and Moravian clergy women on the Lutheran and Moravian women of the pre-Reformation era. There Patricia learned of Julie’s experience working with women of many nationalities and helping them learn new skills, and Julie learned of Patricia’s work with the UWD and its efforts to empower women to affect global change. Since that time, Julie has been a regular visitor in the UWD office and has educated the Come and Worship Outreach Ministry, where she attends worship, about the work of the UWD, including organizing a Birthing Kit packing event before worship one Sunday. In addition to all of these activities, she has authored a biography of Countess Erdmuthe Dorothea von Zinzendorf.

In 1987 she participated in the Mission Venture ’87, three week trip to what was then East Germany and Czechoslovakia and remained in the Moravian village of Koenigsfeld im Schwarzwald, and worked as an intern-housemother for 9 months after the rest of the American team returned home. She has returned to Herrnhut four times since then, visiting friends, doing research in the Unity Archives, and working as a volunteer in the Comenius-Foerdere Schule. In 1986 she participated in a

The Rev. Patricia Garner, Coordinator
Advisory Board: Sr. Angelene Swart • Sr. Sallie Greenfield • Sr. Muriel Held • The Reverend Erdmute Frank
two-week mission trip to Labrador and helped teach Sunday school classes. These short-term mission trips prompted her to seek a position teaching for the Board of World Mission. My dream (and plan) was to teach in the Moravian school in Leh, in northern India, but God (and Bishop Graham Rights) thought Tanzania was a better fit so she ended up teaching for the Board of World Mission and Moravian Church in Western Tanzania as a secondary school English teacher for 2 years from 1989-91. This experience introduced her to Moravian missionaries from Denmark, England and St. Kitts, as well as the vibrant Moravian Church in Western Tanzania. She wrote, “This was a life-changing experience for me, and led me to continue my education in teaching German and English as a Second/Other Language upon my return to the U.S. My years in Tanzania were the first time in my life I had been so aware of the specific needs of women in our Moravian world, as I witnessed the struggle of Tanzanian female students and my Moravian Sisters there.” All of these experiences made her much more aware of the struggles women share in all cultures, including her own. She has also been privileged to visit with a variety of Moravian congregations in Germany, England and most recently in Peru. She continues, “I love the multicultural, multilingual, multinational community of the Moravian Church and am eager to serve on a more global level.”

Sr. Julie’s experience in working with non-profit organizations, her grant-writing skills, working with global partners and her relationships with them, her innovative approach to finding ways to help women find life-enriching work that also gives them the ability to provide money for their families—all of these skills will mean increased opportunities for the Unity Women’s Desk to grow and empower women for the times to come.

The Unity Women’s Desk Advisory Board was very pleased to have four very impressive applications for the position of Coordinator. We want to thank these women for offering their services to benefit their sisters. It was only Sr. Julie’s specific experiences working with the Moravian Church and the many characteristics of her former position that prepared her for the work of the UWD that gave her the edge in the final decision for the position. The fact that Sr. Julie lives near Winston-Salem will allow for a seamless transition from Sr. Patricia to her leadership of the UWD.

We ask for your prayers for Sister Tomberlin as she comes on board in the coordination of the many activities of the UWD. She has given thirty days’ notice to her former employer and will start working in the UWD office in early November. Sr. Garner will remain available to train her and to help with the transition until the Advisory Board meeting in January 2019. May the Lord bless Sr. Julie and all the women of the Moravian Unity as we move forward in this wonderful adventure known as the Unity Women’s Desk.