

**UWM – Great Lakes Region
President’s Report 2023-2024
A Year in Review**

At this year’s annual meeting I will complete my third year as the president of the Great Lakes Region, and my fifth year of board service. My how I have grown and learned and developed leadership skills and beautiful bonds with the people I’ve served with since I began as an alternate in 2019. This year we faced some hurdles and have made some significant changes and advancements. Through it all, myself and your board of trustees have remained grounded in our principles, in integrity, in clear, kind and respectful communication among us, and committed to the vision and mission of this region and the Unity movement. I believe our region is standing on more solid ground with a grander vision. I am proud to have been of service, and I step away knowing that there is great leadership coming forth.

Below are some of the highlights from the past year.

The 2023/24 board began our year of service by choosing our officers during the 2023 conference with the new board which included the following members.

- Cindy Yamamoto – President and Communications Liaison
- Kathy Harwood Long – Vice President and YFM Liaison
- Ric Schumacher - Treasurer
- Michael Everett Davis – Secretary
- Nancy Berdasco – Trustee and Conference Team Liaison
- Susan Liddell – LUT Liaison

Due to a prior resignation, we had one seat still open. We filled the vacant seat in January when we invited Ray Nelson to join us. After years of prior service to the board, we knew him to be a good candidate and were thrilled when he agreed to step into service to complete the term until September 2025.

Our new treasurer really dug in and went the extra mile in understanding and updating our banking system and ensuring a smooth flow in the ways that we give, receive and account for our funds. Then, Ric notified us that he was going to step down from the board for personal reasons, but was willing to stay on until we were able to transition to a new member.

We then put forth a call to fill the newly vacant seat and Debra Williams responded. The board clearly saw that Debra would be a great asset, and she joined us in March. Shortly after, Ray agreed to step into the role of treasurer

In February the board began holding visioning sessions for the region and what best service to it might look like; this in the wake of the release of our Regional Consultant. Through our process, it became clear to us that we really desired to have someone on our staff who would serve as a representative of the region working with UWM as it moves through changes, and would also become an outreach ambassador for all in our region. To this end we have been working very closely with some of the UWM staff to get updated contact information for all ministries and credentialed leaders in our region, and to learn about the support they offer to, and the expectations of a regional representative. We, the board also adopted a statement that reads:

It is our intent to be the bridge in consciousness and action by which the region's members connect, communicate, and are represented.

Also in February, Daryn Wells agreed to lead the conference team and planning got underway.

In March we formed teams to review our by-laws and policies. We also decided to step up as a sponsor for the Juneteenth celebration that would be taking place at the Unity Worldwide Ministries Annual Convention in June. Additionally we had a wonderful team of three volunteer ministers do a peer financial review and they found everything to be in good order.

This is a just a brief synopsis of our year. More detail can be found in the board meeting minutes posted on our website.

As I step down from the board, I know that I am better for having served and I am filled with gratitude for:

- All the people that have served with me on the board over the past 5 years
- Those who have stepped up to serve on various teams to support the region
- The amazing staff members I have worked with and their dedication
- The honor of witnessing the individual and collective personal growth in all those I have had the privilege to serve with and in myself.
- The mentors and friends that have guided me through this journey
- The staff at UWM and former board members who were always willing to offer support and guidance when I reached out to them
- The grace shown by those who I've worked with in any capacity, and the way they picked up, often without being asked, when I dropped something, or forgot, or they sensed that I might need some help. (You know who you are.)
- The gift of being surrounded by such dedicated and loving servants
- My board, staff, and congregants at Unity of Livonia, who have supported me and seen the benefit for us, in my work with the region.

We have accomplished so many things during my tenure, and there is so much more to be done. Trust me when I say, that what you give to the region will come back to you in ways greater than you can imagine. I pray that each of you will listen to the call to service. There are many small ways to make a big difference. I know that together we will continue to experience the greatness of this Great Lakes Unity Region in Peace, Joy, and Love.

Humbly and gratefully,

Cindy Yamamoto

Cindy Yamamoto
GLR Board President