



NEWS FOR AND ABOUT
AAUW GRAND
BRANCH MEMBERS

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Grand Rapids Timberline



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MISSION: AAUW advances gender equity for women and girls through research education and advocacy.



February 16, 2026

Location: United Methodist Church

Social/Registration: 11:30 AM Lunch: 11:45 AM

Menu: Wild Rice Soup, Ham and/or Turkey Sandwiches, Cheesecake Bars
Cost \$15

Food Chair: Karen Karls

Food Committee: Marva Jean Hutchens, Jean Gardner, Sue Koprowski

****RSVP to AAUWRSPVGrandRapids@gmail.com
by Monday, February 9, 2026**

If you have a concern on your reservation, you can either use the reservation link or contact Linda Johnson directly at: lindajohnson482@gmail.com or 218-259-2305. Linda is our reservation expert, and she checks the reservation emails daily.

Business Meeting and Program: 12:30 PM

**Program: Bridge Builders: A Hometown Experiment in Seeking
Understanding Across Differences**

As political, cultural and social divisions deepen in our community and across our state, many people are asking, what can I do - on my own and together with others - to help close these growing divides? Pastor Erik Kling of the Grand Rapids Alliance Church and Bernadine Joselyn of the Itasca Unitarian Fellowship will describe the local effort to do just that. Four times since last April, Bridge Builders has brought together members of both congregations - one religiously liberal and one Evangelical missions-minded - to explore their respective faith traditions and worldviews, and to build understanding and empathy across their differences.

Our presenters will share reflections on their experience working toward their shared aims of helping folks challenge stereotypes and engage respectfully with people whose views are different from their own. Erik Kling has been a pastor at Grand Rapids Alliance Church for 17 years. He has a Master's in Church Leadership from Crown College and enjoys communicating with people from diverse backgrounds and worldviews. Bernadine Joselyn was raised Unitarian-Universalist and is a dedicated rural advocate. She has a Master's degree in International Affairs from Columbia University and a Master's degree in Public Affairs from the University of Minnesota Hubert H. Humphrey Institute.



President's Message

Hello Friends!

Our first meeting of 2026. Our AAUW group has sent \$1000 to the ICC Foundation to help support the STEM Programming being held in February of 2026.

January is the month when we look for volunteers to fill the open positions on the Board. This year there are three positions that need to be filled. The positions are: President, Vice President/Membership and Secretary. If you would be interested in one of these positions, please let me know.

Our branch of AAUW has chosen the Honorees for the State Convention to be held in Brainerd on April 24th and 25th. The convention will be held at Ruttger's Bay Lodge. The Honorees are: *Marilyn Rossman, Shirley Jacobson, Colleen Nardone and Dodie Davies*. These are Lifetime Members.

The Scholarship application review committee could use one more person to help evaluate applications for the GRACF Scholarship. This is done online after March 1st.

Respectively submitted,

Susan LaVelle, Branch President



***Travel Treasures

Thank you to Cathy Davies! Because of her generous donations, we added \$27 to our Scholarship Fund.

Cathy traveled to Mongolia and brought a camel coaster, and to Nepal and donated a loved case with teabag. Our new Treasurer, Carolyn Chase, was the lucky winner of both!

Cathy is off to new adventures in Africa! Have fun!

Hope to have more items for our February meeting.

Marlys Mestemacher
Jean Gardner

INTEREST GROUPS

***LITERATURE

The Monday Morning Lit Group will meet on February 2nd at 9:30 AM in the private dining room at Majestic Pines. Eileen Grosland will lead our discussion of HORSE: THE NOVEL by Geraldine Brooks. This historical novel 'weaves together multiple timelines to tell the story of legendary 19th century racehorse, Lexington and the Black horsemen who were critical to his success, connecting the past to the present through themes of race, art, science and American history ". Coffee will be provided. For more information, contact Nancy Salmi at 218-244-6063 or nsalmi@earthlink.net.

***WALKING & TALKING

The fall and winter schedule has the group walking on Tuesday afternoons at 1 PM. The locations change from week to week but usually are in the Grand Rapids area. The group is open to new members interested in walking. If you would like to join us, send your email address and cell number to Karen Karls at k.karls@yahoo.com. You will receive an email with the weekly walk location. Members walk when they can or want to; no need to RSVP.



Walking on crispy days & then warming up to treats! Out again another day!

***SUNSHINE & CARING

If any member of AAUW needs a bit of sunshine because of illness or a sympathy card, please let Nancy Raymond know, she is our SUNSHINE & CARING contact. She will send a card from AAUW. You can email her at: nmraymond14@gmail.com.



Fun Valentine Candy Facts

Richard Cadbury created the first heart-shaped box of chocolates for Valentine's Day in 1861.

Valentine Conversation Hearts
were created in the 1840's by pharmacist Oliver Chase.
They were originally medical lozenges!
His brother later invented a way
to press letters onto them using vegetable dye.



Grand Rapids AAUW Board Meeting Minutes January 19, 2026 - United Methodist Church

Susan LaVelle, President, called the meeting to order. Additional attendees were Janis Johnson, Karen Karls, Carolyn Chase, Marlys Mestemacher, Kathleen Spencer and Vicki Holmstrom.

Secretary's report: Karen moved the minutes from the previous board meeting be approved as read. Marlys seconded the motion. Minutes were approved.

Treasurer's report:

- Income for the month included \$601 in Scholarship Fund donations.
- The bank balance as of January 19, 2026, is \$5971.61 with \$4530.61 available to spend. \$1441.00 is reserved for scholarships.
- During December 2025, the Board held an email vote approving \$1000 to be sent to the ICC Foundation to support the "IlookLikeanEngineer" event for high school girls to be held on February 7 at the Mn North College Itasca. The money has been sent.

Dinner/Food: The amount of coffee we need to prepare has been reduced by half. Our caterer's let us know that well over half of our coffee was still left at the end of our meetings.

Communications: Karen Karls will be introducing today's speaker.

Old Business:

- Our Grand Rapids Branch will be submitting the following names for our Honorees at the 2026 State Convention: Shirley Jacobson, Colleen Nardone, Dodie Davies and Marilyn Rossman. These are Lifetime Members. Susan will send in the information.
- The State Convention is April 24 and 25 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort in Brainerd. We need some volunteers to pick out an item or items for the silent auction. Our treasury will reimburse for the items.

Scholarships: Applications for scholarships through GRACF (Anniversary Scholarships) are received from January 1 through March 1. After that, our scholarship application review committee will evaluate the applications. This is done through an online process.

New Business:

- Volunteers are needed for the Nominating Committee. The committee needs one board member and one or two others from the general membership. Susan will ask for volunteers at our meeting today. The nominating committee will be announced at the February meeting. Candidates are announced at the March meeting and voted on at the April meeting. Positions open are President, Vice President/Membership and Secretary.

Adjournment: Vicki Holmstrom moved the meeting be adjourned. Karen Karls seconded the motion. The next board meeting is scheduled for 9:30, March 9, at the Methodist Church.

Minutes respectfully submitted by
Vicki Holmstrom, Secretary



AAUW Grand Rapids Branch will be offering 4 scholarships through GRACF this year:

3 - \$1500 AAUW Anniversary Scholarships
1 - \$4000 AAUW GR - GM Karen Lonson Memorial Scholarship
(focused on variety of business-related programs)

Please spread the word about these scholarships to your friends, neighbors, and family members that they are available to women, 25 years and older, who live in Itasca County or have graduated from a school in Itasca County.

It is required they have a minimum of an Associate of Arts, Associate of Science, or the equivalent of 2 years of college. They can be used for a certification program, a bachelor's degree, or an advanced degree.

Applications are due by March 1st and are available online through the Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation at: [Apply for Scholarships](#)
[<https://www.grfoundation.org/apply-for-scholarships>](https://www.grfoundation.org/apply-for-scholarships)

Thank you, The Scholarship Committee



AAUW Grand Rapids MN Branch General Meeting Minutes January 19, 2026 – United Methodist Church

The Grand Rapids branch of AAUW met at the United Methodist Church on Monday, January 19, for social time, lunch and program. There were 29 attendees plus 1 speaker and 1 guest.

President Susan LaVelle opened the business meeting with the reading of the AAUW Mission Statement.

Susan made the following announcements:

- During December 2025, the Board held an email vote approving \$1000 to be sent to the ICC Foundation to support the "IlookLikeanEngineer" event for high school girls to be held on February 7 at the Mn North College Itasca.
- Volunteers are needed for the Nominating Committee. The committee needs one board member and one or two others from the general membership. The nominating committee will be announced at the February meeting. Candidates are announced at the March meeting and voted on at the April meeting. Positions open are President, Vice President/Membership and Secretary. If you are interested in being on the nominating committee, let Susan know.
- The State Convention is April 24 and 25 at Ruttger's Bay Lake Resort in Brainerd. We need some volunteers to pick out an item or items for the silent auction. Our treasury will reimburse for the items.
- Our Grand Rapids Branch will be submitting the following names for our Honorees at the 2026 State Convention: Shirley Jacobson, Colleen Nardone, Dodie Davies and Marilyn Rossman. These are Lifetime Members.

Member announcements:

- Marge Lavalier announced that AARP Tax Aid, which takes place at the United Methodist Church, is now making appointments. The number to call is 218-245-9202.

Travel Treasures raised \$27 for our scholarship funds.

Karen Karls introduced our speaker, Lisa Fox, from Northland Counseling. Her presentation, 'The Heart of Caregiving – Finding Strength and Support', gave us good tips for coping with the stress of the caregiving roles we find ourselves in.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Vicki Holmstrom, Secretary



Happy Birthday!

Shirley Jacobson - February 2

Pat Anderson - February 12

Julie Skallman - February 12

Colleen Nardone - February 22

Ann Clark - February 26

Pam Friesen - February 27

Frieda Holl - February 28



Websites for state and national AAUW information:

MN AAUW website: <http://aauw-mn.aauw.net>

National AAUW website: www.aauw.org

ADVANCING EQUITY FOR WOMEN & GIRLS – FOR MORE INFORMATION

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION www.aauw.org

AAUW MINNESOTA www.aauwmn.net