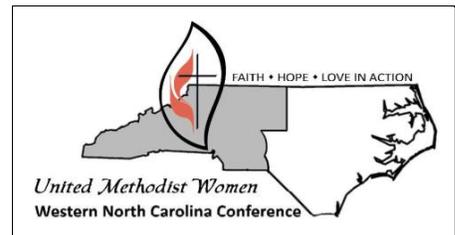


Conference Gram

April/May 2013 - Volume 62, Issue II



Mission Coordinator Spiritual Growth – Sandy Hieronymus
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It's time to make plans to attend the first conference event of 2013. You will be blessed by coming to the Spiritual Growth Retreat on June 14-15 at Lake Junaluska. This retreat is a wonderful opportunity for you and your friends, or even alone, to do something just for yourself. God's Spirit will rest upon you during this special time apart when He is invited into our lives.

Rev. Amy Coles, Smoky Mountain District Superintendent, has planned three inspiring sessions for the theme *Faithful Living*. Cross/Fire is the music team planning a variety of music. This praise band is composed of two women and four men. They are all members of First UMC in Gastonia.

After the Friday evening session, the Junaluska Singers will perform. During the second session on Saturday morning, you will have the opportunity to share your gifts to the Love Offering. During the third session, communion will be celebrated. Rev. Sally Langford will be celebrant with Ruth Williamson helping her. Sally is an elder serving as assistant to Bishop Goodpaster and Ruth is a deaconess in our conference.

The first session begins with gathering music at 6:45 PM on Friday, June 14. Something new: Join others for "Morning at the Cross" at 7:45 AM on Saturday. This will be a time of prayer, meditation, and reflection before the second session. The second session will begin with gathering music at 8:45 AM on Saturday, June 15. The retreat will end about noon on Saturday. The retreat actually will not end, as you will carry the event home with you!

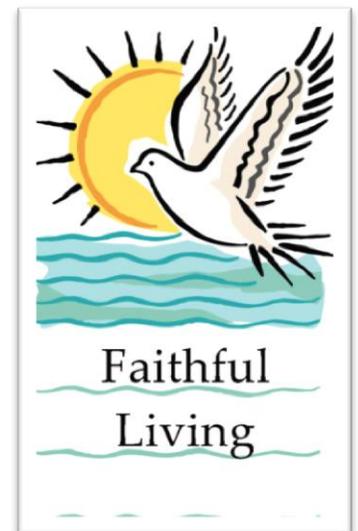
Share God's love with others as you bring the hands-on project of Birthing Kits. These kits will go to the Mission Response Center and will be sent worldwide. There is a great need for these kits.

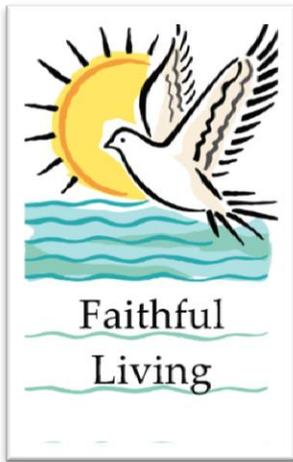
The Memorial Chapel will be open Friday afternoon until Saturday noon. Take time to visit the chapel and spend a quiet time of prayer and meditation. Place a prayer request in the basket provided and take a request from the basket to support others in prayer.

Registration may be done on-line. On-line registration is \$11.00; otherwise, the fee is \$20.00 if you pay your fee upon arrival. All need to come to the Harrell Center Auditorium to check in and receive your program book and other material. **The new, longer time for registration will be 1:00-6:30 PM on Friday.** Registration and Program Resources areas are in the lower level of Harrell Center on Lakeshore Drive. Look for the yellow UMW Registration signs. Stuart Auditorium is between Harrell Center and The Memorial Chapel. Room reservation is by phone only – just call 1-800-222-4930. All information is available at www.wnccumw.org. Check-in for Lake Junaluska housing is 3:00 PM. Check in at the Bethea Welcome Center for room reservations and then register for the retreat at the Harrell Center. If you need child care, make arrangements by calling Lake Junaluska at 1-828-452-2881.

Be sure to visit the Program Resources area which is right beside registration in Harrell Center. Displays and resources to buy are available. The hours are Friday afternoon 1:00-6:30 PM and Saturday 7:30-8:30 AM. Program Resources will be closed during worship.

The grounds of the Lake Junaluska Assembly are lovely. There are many things to enjoy in the area - Susanna Wesley Garden, International Prayer Room, Junaluska Cross, and the walking trail. The walk around the lake is not quite three miles. Benches are scattered around the lake. Stop and have a quiet time. It may rain or be cool. Dress comfortably. I am always blessed from being with United Methodist Women.





Spiritual Growth Retreat June 14 and 15, 2013 Lake Junaluska

Retreat Leader – Reverend Amy Coles

Rev. Amy Coles was appointed by Bishop Larry Goodpaster to serve as the District Superintendent of the Smoky Mountain District of the Western North Carolina Conference beginning September 1, 2012. A graduate of UNCG in Child and Family Development and Duke Divinity School, she has served churches in Trinity, High Point, and Shoals, North Carolina. She was appointed to the Smoky



Mountain District after serving as a District Superintendent in the Albemarle District for three years. She is an active participant with the Board of Disciple Bible Outreach Ministry, the Boards of Rural Faith Development CDC and ConstruX, and the Thriving Communities Initiative at Duke. She represented the Western North Carolina Conference as a delegate to the United Methodist General Conference in Tampa, Florida, and Southeast Jurisdictional Conference at Lake Junaluska in 2012. She enjoys gardening, “crafting,” and spending time with family and friends in her free time. Most recently, she has become the legal guardian of her teenage nephew, Brandon. This new role is both strengthening her prayer life and serving as a wonderful example of the incredible grace of God.

Special Music by – Cross/Fire

Cross/Fire was founded in 2007 to glorify God through contemporary Christian music at First United Methodist in Gastonia, NC. Bandleader Matt Smith (guitar, keyboard, vocals) felt God urging him to use his musical talents for more than just a hobby, and with assistance from Minister of Music, Rev. Saxon Scarborough, recruited several solid musicians who were also church members. Bassist David Radford is a founding member; guitarist/vocalist Michele Graham, drummer Walker Ingle and vocalist Lisa Jurs joined the band in 2009; and guitarist/vocalist Aaron Prillaman is our Worship Leader for “162 East,” the alternative-style worship service at First UMC



Gastonia. “Our group plays most Sundays at “162 East,” as well as leading worship several times a year at Cornerstone Christian Center, a local addiction recovery center. We are excited to worship with you!”

* * * * *

Chair, Committee on Nominations – Lisa Bacon Lbbacon@yahoo.com

At a recent Leader Development for conference officers, I was struck by this description of the responsibility of the Committee on Nominations: “We’re matching gifts and graces, not filling a team with warm bodies.” If there is not a potential nominee for all offices, we may feel pressured to “fill the slots” so we can say our job is done. It is important that we slow down, take a deep breath, and pray for discernment as we review profile sheets and recommendations, consult with fellow officers, and scout for new talent. It is also important that those women who may be asked to serve pray for guidance about their gifts and God’s timing if the call comes. “For such a time as this” may be *your* time.



Conference President – Mildred Carter

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Please share this Conference Gram information with your unit and church. Something may spark an interest in participation. We have many opportunities planned for fellowship and learning this year:

- Spiritual Growth Retreat
- Legislative Seminar
- Mission u (formerly School of Christian Mission)
- Annual Meeting
- Ubuntu Day of Service

Read all about the wonderful Spiritual Growth Retreat planned by Sandy Hieronymus and her committee in *this* Gram.

On a recent conference call, Harriett Olson, General Secretary United Methodist Women, said we have many opportunities in our "new and refreshed" organization.

So, let's try some new ways and new things in this "refreshed" UMW:

- Invite a friend from outside your church to a UMW meeting
- Ask 12- to 25-year olds in your church to participate in your hands-on projects and programs. They will energize your group.
- Attend one of your Conference events to "see the bigger picture" of UMW.

Your Conference Team is trying something new this year -- an Ubuntu Day of Service on October 19. You will be hearing more about this. Hopefully, many of you will be able to participate in a work project and learn more about the National ministries within our own Conference.

May we serve with a smile – letting those around us know that it is a Joy to serve in the ministry of United Methodist Women.

May God continue to empower us to joyfully keep on translating faith, hope, and love into just, committed, and sustainable actions.

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, October 19, 2013
From 9am-3pm

On Saturday, October 19th, we will be having a Conference UBUNTU Day of Service. We will be putting our Love into Action as we join together to work at three of our National Mission Institutions – Pfeiffer University, Bethlehem Center Charlotte, and Bethlehem Center Winston-Salem. We will also be working at Brooks Howell Home in Asheville.

There will be more information and details to come!

SAVE THE DATE!
Saturday, October 19, 2013
From 9am-3pm



Vice-President – Tonya Lanier
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WOW, the newsletters and calendars are full of great programs and events scheduled all around our conference. It appears that we have shifted into high gear and that is something to be excited about. It is evident that many hours, weeks and months have gone into preparations. Planning is not easy. Planning for a large group is even more difficult, but when purposeful prayer is the first thing that happens, the rest will fall into place. James 4:13-16 gives us the advice that if we want to do something, then we should ask God to wish it for us rather than for us to wish it ourselves. The real reason for this is simply that when a person sets out to accomplish something alone, this negates the many opportunities of God. This can be witnessed in the lives of people who seek their own success and achieve it, yet comment on a regular basis that something is missing. Let's not eliminate the most important piece of our planning process.

Good leaders are great planners. To be a leader today, like you are, means having to be comfortable around people not always in our social circle. These people are on our team, part of our committees, attending our events, and if we are lucky, sitting in our pew. This too may be a God-thing.

One resource that I would highly recommend is the April 2013 *response* magazine, *Living Sacramentally, Walking Justly*. I could not put it down. Although this issue deals with hearing God's call, the pages are filled with an array of planning opportunities for an individual, small circle or a large group.

Keep praying, keep planning, great things are bound to happen. Blessings.

Mission Coordinator for Social Action – Martha Phillips
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Greetings Ladies,

I hope you have registered and plan to attend Legislative Day, May 4 at First Conover UMC. We will learn more about Human Trafficking in North Carolina and the actions we can take to advocate for effective legislation in our state and in our country. I look forward to seeing you in Conover.

There have been many hot topics in the news lately that all warrant our attention. Be sure to check our WNCC UMW website (www.wnccumw.org) and the United Methodist Women website (www.unitedmethodistwomen.org) for Action Alerts and the latest information on the Social Issues we are emphasizing. Our Conference priorities are Domestic Violence, Human Trafficking, and becoming a Justice Today unit by continuing study of the Charter for Racial Justice. United Methodist Women is also “playing an active role in pushing for just, humane immigration reform this year.” In a recent article I received from Carol Barton (immigration/civil rights initiative) she reported concerns that have been presented to President Obama by Bishop Minerva Carcano:

- A pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants in the US that is not onerous or lengthy and applies to all Labor rights for immigrant workers, to strengthen wages and workplace rights for all workers in the US.
- Family Unity, including ending the backlog for family visas and expanding visa quotas, as well as ending current enforcement policies that divide families through detention and deportation.
- Addressing economic and military policies that make migration a necessity for millions, creating the choice to migrate or to remain at home.

Furthermore, United Methodist Women is particularly lifting up the concerns of migrant women, youth and children in any comprehensive legislation. For example:

- If the legalization process takes 20 years while immigrants “wait in line,” they will be left without healthcare, with critical impact for women's health.
- Undocumented women may not report violence and abuse if they fear detention and deportation.
- Migrant women are more vulnerable to abuse if their jobs are tied to a single employer or to their spouse.
- 75% of work-related visas go to men—so women could get shut out of future visas.

We must keep ourselves informed and actively participate with other United Methodists making our voices heard on immigration reform. Peace.

Secretary – Elizabeth Lookabill

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Spring is here and I can hear the lawn mower going outside my window. Isn't it wonderful to see everything beginning to bloom? I am so excited about the things going on with UMW. Our Spiritual Growth Event at Lake Junaluska on June 14-15 is quickly approaching. Your Conference Team is working very hard to make this the best ever. Rev. Amy Coles will be the speaker and we will again have the Lake Junaluska Singers.

We need to always keep our Purpose foremost in our minds and never forget that it is all about missions. We have District Events going on all over the Conference. Please make sure you attend all of these that you possibly can. We have some wonderful speakers and programs that you don't want to miss.

When they said, "Let's go to the house of GOD," my heart leaped for joy. *Psalm 122:1*



Historian – Patricia Settle
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New World Outlook addressed in the March/April 2013 issue UMCOR's (United Methodist Committee On Relief) global reach. Perhaps your unit assembled cleaning buckets, packaged birthing kits, and packaged school supplies. "WHERE DID THEY GO?" UMCOR relief supplies are used in disaster relief ministry all over the World. I invite you to take some time to read about the latest UMCOR services in the latest edition of *New World Outlook*. Our legacy continues to lead us to take action, to fulfill our purpose as United Methodist Women; just remember to be flexible, keep planning, praying, and sharing your history. These are some valuable resources you will want to utilize: prayer calendar, program book, *response* and *New World Outlook* magazines. Some upcoming meetings that are sure to be historical will be Spiritual Growth Retreat, Mission u and Annual Meeting. Make plans to attend these events. Shalom.



Secretary of Program Resources – Ann Aldridge
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Greetings, my fellow UMW readers,

On Easter Sunday morning we heard, "Christ is risen" and we responded, "Christ is risen indeed." How grateful I am to be a part of an organization whose purpose is "to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ." We are blessed to have wonderful reading materials to help us expand our understanding of and participation in God's mission.

As I said in my last newsletter article, things are changing with our reading program and change takes time. Last year I reported that Brenda Thompson, our reading program specialist with UMW national office, had stated "Titles from the 2007 reading list will be credited through December 31, 2012. The current reading lists are 2008-2012." Some of you questioned whether we could use books from 6 years for credit, but that was what Brenda had put online for our use. Apparently that was true for only one year because she issued a different statement for this year. She said, "The current years for the Reading Program are 2009-2013, it is a five year program."

If you have previously participated in one or more of the UMW Online communities, you will be interested in knowing that there will be changes to the social network. The new URL will be UMWOnline.org and your current login name and password will work on the new system. New users can register at the above address, and you can start a new group. It is hoped that the new UMWOnline.org will be easier to use and better integrated with the main website and developing web features. If you have used this resource before, you will want to check out the new network. If you have not used it before, why are you waiting? Program resources at the Legislative Day (May 4) will be available but with a limited scope. However, the resource room will be open in full force at the Spiritual Growth Retreat on June 14-15 and at Mission u July 18-21. The new mission study books and 2013–2016 handbooks are available. I will do everything I can to help you KEEP READING!! Blessings.



Treasurer – Julia Willis

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TREASURER’S REPORT

The 2012 reports I’ve received from the National Office indicate Western North Carolina for the **12th consecutive year** led the nation in...

- ✓ Special Mission Recognitions
- ✓ Gift to Missions
- ✓ Gift in Memory
- ✓ World Thank Offerings
- ✓ Total Mission Giving (the five channels)
- ✓ Total Giving



...and for the first time in recent history we also led the nation in **PLEDGE TO MISSION!**

The year-end audit confirms our Annual Total Giving of \$918,397.15 to the National Office.

This is cause to celebrate because you are making mission possible! As we proceed into 2013, remember our Financial Goal, **“To Exceed our Total Conference Pledge to Mission Giving”**. That Pledge is \$820,500 so we have a lot of work to do!

This first quarter of 2013 has been especially challenging for the eight new district treasurers to get a complete list and contact information for all local unit treasurers within each newly configured district. Our first quarter remittances from local units was down \$20,000 compared to 2012. This may be due to some units not being sure where to send their quarterly remittance. Hopefully district treasurers’ contact information will soon be complete. Please contact me if you need information concerning your remittance.

During Spiritual Growth Retreat, visit the Program Resources area to see and purchase an assortment of Gift to Mission and Gift in Memory cards. Come see the **NEW BIRTHDAY, THINKING OF YOU** and **CHRISTMAS** cards! Your local unit will receive credit for your card purchases. “Congratulations” cards are good for May/June high school & college graduations, our “In Service to Christ” card would be an excellent token for your in-coming or out-going minister in July, “Thank You” to church secretary/administrative assistant for the April 24th Administrative Professionals Day, “Thinking of You” for Mother’s Day...and don’t forget the “Baby” card!

We are already receiving Conference Love Offerings in the mail and through on-line donations. This year that Love Offering will be *“A Gift to Mission in Honor of the 8 New Districts of the WNCC.”* See you at The Lake!



Mission Coordinator Membership Nurture and Outreach - Sherry Sink

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Community: The organized unit of United Methodist shall be a community of women....

Whenever we are trying to discover the purpose and meaning of our lives, the community is there to nurture and encourage us as we journey together. Sometimes the community is needed to challenge us to bring out our gifts, to fire our passion, and to remind us of our calling.

As we participate in our calling to social justice, to be the voice of those without a voice, we need the community. As we battle principalities and power in high places, we need community as we are encouraged and empowered to take stands and engage in struggles that we would not think about doing on our own. As a community, we experience a power that is greater than the sum of its parts. This community of believers knows that their power comes from God. To be a part of this kind of community is an honor and a blessing. It is the experience of being in community with United Methodist Women. Come and experience this community of United Methodist Women!



Spring has arrived and with it new growth, beautiful flowers and daylight saving time. God is good to us at all times. God has a plan in which we are given the privilege of sharing in this great world he has made. Through our ministry and mission He will reveal it to us.

It is our hope and prayer that this year we will increase the number of Mission Today units by 5% over last year. It isn't too late to start, but remember, you must complete number one on the list: **"The Unit will make and meet its pledge to Mission"** – it is not an option.

Continue to stress the Mission Today criteria to your local units. Have you made your reservations for Spiritual Growth Retreat? When at least two members other than a district or conference officer attend the retreat at Lake Junaluska, you fulfill #19 of Mission today and you will be renewed spiritually. Using the *Prayer Calendar* and the Program Book are other resources included in the criteria (#2 and #3). Please remember to invite your district and conference officers when planning your calendar. They love to visit.

The January issue of *response* magazine focused on surviving human trafficking. First United Methodist Church in Conover will be hosting Legislative Day focusing on this horrific issue; please attend. This is an opportunity for learning and training on how we can respond on behalf of individuals who have been victimized by some elements of society. We all should be involved in these issues, from reading to writing our representatives about these issues.

It is great to report to you that the value of UMCOR kits collected was \$95,290.86 for 2012. Hallelujah! Just think of how many people are going to be blessed by the efforts and giving of United Methodist Women of the Western North Carolina Conference. God is truly moving among us! The conference is again collecting kits during our events:

Spiritual Growth Retreat in June Birthing Kits
Mission u in July Health Kits
Annual Meeting in September..... Cleaning Buckets
Leadership Development in October..... School Kits

NOTES: Remember do not add toothpaste to the health kit, but please include \$1.00 for toothpaste plus \$1.00 for shipping for each health kit. Visit www.umcor.org for more information on the various kits.

We have requested that the Mission Response Center truck be at each conference event because of the generosity of our ladies. As in the past we will be accepting all kits, which include sewing kits, bedding kits, and layettes. Many of you purchase items that make up various kits when there are sales during season changes, the start of school for school kits; watch and use coupons for purchases. Celebrate birthdays and ask for kit 'gifts' as presents rather than personal items for yourself. It is amazing how many ways we can find to help spread LOVE.

In our efforts to spread the good news of United Methodist Women, we adopted strategies to help in relating to all women the great ministry of UMW:

- Tell our story in local churches
- Be flexible
- Make it personal
- Read and use *response* magazine for examples of projects, pointing out the Mission Giving symbol
- District and Conference officers will take packets of information and guidelines to local units
- Have a Mission Moment in church worship once a month or quarterly
- Put Mission Moments in newsletters
- Establish a balance between foreign and home missions

We also promote Gift Cards Sale opportunities at conference/district meetings and in newsletter articles/posters/etc. Please mark some special days that you can send a card in 2013, including graduations and for moving clergy.

There are many open doors for UMW to serve locally, out of state and around the world. Let's all get involved in issues and opportunities to serve as the hands and feet of Jesus!

**Conference Gram
WNC Conference
United Methodist Women**

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Conference Website:

www.wnccumw.org

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PURPOSE of United Methodist Women

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be 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.

2013 Upcoming Dates:

May 4

Legislative Day, First – Conover

June 14-15

Spiritual Growth Retreat, Lake Junaluska

June 20-23

Annual Conference, Lake Junaluska

July 18-21

Mission u, Pfeiffer University

September 6-8

Annual Meeting, Lake Junaluska

October 12

Leader Development, St. Luke's – Hickory

October 19

UBUNTU Day of Service (watch for details)

