



Conference Gram

September 2020

Volume 69, Issue 4

Walk in
God's Light

Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women Annual Celebration Webinar 2 PM, September 26 & 27, 2020

Keynote Speaker: Deaconess Cindy Johnson, serving with [La Posada Providencia](#) in the Rio Grande Conference

Musicians: Deaconess Tracey Owens and Howard Smith

Free online [registration](#) begins September 1, 2020.



Cindy Johnson

First it was the scramble to find toilet paper—oh, the toilet paper stories! Next it was sheltering in place, staying home, staying safe. What about church? What about helping at the food bank? What about United Methodist Women's events? Was that really just March?!

For 151 years members of UMW and our predecessor organizations have refused to be defeated by challenges: the pandemic of 1918/19, two World Wars, 9/11, and other uncertainties within our church and world. Nor will this year's trials stop us from **living out our Purpose with faith, hope and love in action.**

Annual Celebration will be held not at Lake Junaluska, but in our homes. Join us online at 2 PM September 26 and September 27, 2020. We will have a Virtual Annual Celebration just as we had a Virtual Spiritual Growth Retreat. Because we have items to vote on (Administrative & Membership Development Budget, Pledge to Mission, and slate of officers), our **Virtual Annual Celebration will be a webinar rather than a video.**

Our theme "Walk in God's Light" is based on I John 1:5. ("This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that **God is light and in him there is no darkness.**") Deaconess Cindy Johnson will share with us about La Posada Providencia, which provides shelter, food, and other services to immigrants. You will find photos of and information about Cindy in our [2020 Prayer Calendar](#) on pages 26, 50, and 95. Greetings from Bishop Leeland and a message from Conference President Julia Willis will be part of our program. Spiritual Growth Coordinator Darlene Gardner will lead us in a Memorial Service for our members who left us in 2019.

You will be able to download the [Annual Celebration Program Book](#) to follow the program, read the reports from our various coordinators, see the list of the officers, and find other important information.

Registration begins online on September 1, 2020. There is **no** fee for registration. Watch for the WNCC United Methodist Women E-News to guide you through registration. **Directions for voting delegates are on p. 6.**

Whether we meet in person or virtually, members of United Methodist Women always take seriously their responsibilities to women, children, and youth. Make this Virtual Annual Celebration a unit event! Make it an exciting event that keeps us motivated to do our mission work well.

Please wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash your hands frequently, and do not attend gatherings inside a building. We want to meet in person in 2021, and we want **you** to join us!

Joanie Strohm, Conference Vice President
ssjismars@charter.net/828-649-1156



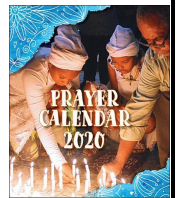
Annual Celebration Webinar Logistics

Additional information is available at wnccumw.org/events/annual-celebration-2020/

1. Register online to attend. Registration is **free but required**. Registration begins September 1.
2. The nominations report, proposed budget and Pledge to Mission, and other information may be read and/or downloaded from the link given above.
3. Approval of the budget and Pledge to Mission and the election of officers will take place during the Business Session beginning at 2 PM, September 26. To see whether you are a voting delegate, please refer to the guidelines on p. 6.

Mission Memo

Prayer Calendar. Even though many of us are staying home more, we can be armchair travelers to our Mission Projects and communicate with mission personnel through our Prayer Calendars. You may order a **Prayer Calendar** from the Mission Resources e-store (www.umwmissionresources.org or call 800-305-9857) You may also read posts at the **Prayer Calendar Facebook page**.



Mission Today. We have three levels for qualifying this year: Gold, Silver and Bronze. **If a member of your unit attended Spiritual Growth, Mission u, or District and/or Conference Annual Meetings online**, you may count those in the criteria.

The required number of Mission Today criteria will be modified for 2020 as follows:

Gold: Complete 10 criteria (6 with asterisks and 4 other)

Silver: Complete 8 criteria (4 with asterisks and 4 other)

Bronze: Complete 6 criteria (4 with asterisks and 2 other)

Hands-on Missions. UMCOR needs **only Hygiene Kits and School Kits. Masks** for Cleaning Buckets are **not** needed as was previously reported, and **no** Cleaning Buckets are needed. UMCOR requires N-95 masks for the Cleaning Buckets, and those will be collected later.



Project AGAPE. The Conference is **not** collecting Christmas Shoe Boxes this year since there are enough on hand. The need is **new children's clothing sizes 2 to 14, all items**.



Mission Response Center. The response center is open on 2nd and 4th Tuesdays and 3rd Saturdays. If your group wants to schedule a workday, register online. Click this **hyperlink** or visit the Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Church website: wnccumc.org. Click on "Mission Engagement" on the left, then "Mission Response Center." Scroll down and click the "Register Now" button to see a list of available dates. If you have UMCOR kits or clothing to be dropped off at the MRC, contact Brian Mateer (bmateer@wnccumc.org or 704-714-2340) to be sure the center will be open when you make your drop-off. The

Mission Truck will be making pick-ups around the Conference if you would prefer to drop items off at a location listed on the **website**. If your group makes donations, please **turn in a list of items and approximate values to your District Mission Education & Interpretation Coordinator** so your donation is included in her year-end report.

Love, peace and joy,

LindaLu Greer, Conference Mission Coordinator for Education & Interpretation
jacklindaqreer@bellsouth.net/704-585-6263

Visit wnccumw.org to see the **updated Mission Today criteria**.

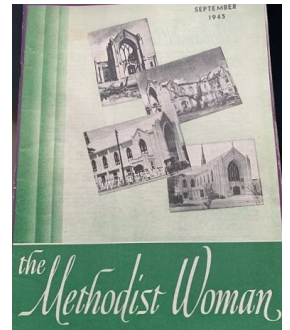
From the Historian's Quill

In a time when we communicate via e-mail, Zoom, and Virtual Events, you may wonder how our foremothers managed to get an organization off the ground and growing with great speed in 1869 with no phone or internet. How did they get "Our Story" out to members?

From the first, Mrs. Parker and Mrs. Butler knew effective communication was key to starting and growing our predecessor organization, Woman's Foreign Missionary Society. Just two months after the first meeting on March 23, 1869, ["The Heathen Woman's Friend"](#) was born. This publication told the personal and professional stories of our missionaries and ran from May 1869 until December 1895. In January 1896 it was more appropriately named ["Woman's Missionary Friend"](#) and ran under that name until August 1940.

During the first ten years, thanks to the communications set in place from the beginning and the hard work of untold numbers of women, our predecessor organization blossomed. The Tenth Annual Meeting of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was held at Centenary Church in Chicago on May 23, 1879. Their published report ([First Decade of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society](#)) stated that 43 missionaries were sent to India, China, Mexico, Asia, and Africa. There were two thousand auxiliary societies (units) and fifty thousand members. Contributions in the first decade totaled \$514,850.54 (more than \$13,200,000 in today's dollars).

"The Methodist Woman" was published monthly by the Woman's Division of Christian Service of The Methodist Church beginning in 1940. The September 1945 issue included articles like "War Comes to the Church in the Philippines." The nation was at war, but we were still serving women, children, and youth around the world. That same issue also shared the Financial Conference Report for the first six months of 1945. The women of our conference pledged \$58,000.00 (more than \$826,000 in today's dollars). Even in times of crisis, the women of the Western North Carolina Conference knew the importance of telling and living "Our Story."



Betty Durham, Conference Historian

betty.durham50@yahoo.com/336-542-8077



Christian Social Relations Seminar Group at DePauw University, including Dr. E. R. Bartlett of DePauw University, and Miss Talitha Gerlach of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A., two of the keynote speakers on the opening day.

(Photos of the September 1945 issue of *The Methodist Woman* were taken and submitted by Betty Durham. *The Methodist Woman* was published 1940-1968 in Cincinnati, Ohio by the Woman's Division of Christian Service, Board of Missions and Church Extension, The Methodist Church.)

Challenged To Become An Antiracist



When I first heard of the horrific death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, a jumble of feelings filled me: anger, surprise, indignation, and horror among them. How could this happen? Why didn't someone stop the police officer kneeling on Mr. Floyd's neck? What is wrong with our country that these killings of black Americans and other people of color keep happening? Then came the protests and riots. Social media erupted with opinions on racism and the systemic abuse and oppression of people of color.

Like most white people, I told myself (and others), "I am not a racist." While acknowledging my white privilege, I loved my black and Latinx friends and wanted the best for them. But recently I have begun to question if I am truly not a racist. As I wrestled with this thought, a friend brought to my attention the book [How To Be An Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi.

Mr. Kendi defines a racist as "someone who supports a racist policy through their actions or inaction or expresses an idea based on racism." In contrast, an antiracist is "someone who supports an antiracist policy through their actions or expresses an idea based in antiracism." Supporting an antiracist policy goes beyond simply opposing a racist policy, just as **being antiracist goes beyond being "not racist."**

Mr. Kendi writes further that racial inequality happens when "different racial groups do not share the same level of power in a society. For race equality to be real, these levels would have to be even. Any policy which supports this level of inequality is a racist policy." Mr. Kendi contrasts racism vs. antiracism in terms of power, ethnicity, culture, behavior, color, and class.

Our [Charter for Racial Justice](#) reminds us what we as members of United Methodist Women believe about the realities of racist systems. The Charter challenges us to move beyond awareness to action. After reading [How To Be An Antiracist](#), I reread the Charter and would encourage you to do the same. What a marvelous document UMW has created to help us navigate these difficult times more faithfully. While COVID-19 limits our being together, we can use this time to read our Charter, Social Action books on our [Reading Program](#) list, and other books and commentaries about issues of racism and antiracism.

What we profess, we should do!

Martha W. Phillips, Member of Justice Today Committee and Conference Committee on Nominations
mcwphillips@gmail.com/828-765-7009

Nurturing and Reaching Out During a Pandemic

Let's lean into our circumstances—in true United Methodist Women-style—and find ways to use this time to our advantage. As units search for ways to stay connected, inspired, and informed, consider using our national website (unitedmethodistwomen.org/) to:

- select from among the 40 [response podcasts](#) and the 17 [FaithTalks](#) to use as programs for small groups meeting online or in-person (while social distancing) or for personal devotions.
- learn how to host a [virtual event](#) (at Membership Resources under Members and Leaders)
- view one of the dozens of videos from our [UMWomen YouTube](#) channel, from personal reflections to Assembly sessions.
- invite young(er) women (or anyone in your community who is tech savvy, whether they are currently members of a unit or even of a church) to assist with posting these resources to church websites and/or Facebook pages and creating #hashtags to increase our outreach.
- interview members by phone and then record their responses via the ["Share Your Story!"](#) link (at Membership Resources under Members and Leaders). What a great way to nurture our membership and reach out to others through sharing authentic experiences.

Renee Hayes, Conference Mission Coordinator for Membership Nurture & Outreach
renee.hayes1956@gmail.com/336-707-2980

Virtual
Resources

Trea\$urer Tidbit\$: Impacts of the Pandemic

On June 30, we closed out the first half of 2020, a tumultuous half-year by any measure and certainly true for our conference finances. Below is a year-to-date glimpse of how we're doing.

Compared with the first half of 2019, **Undesignated Giving (Five Channels of Giving) dropped 16%, or \$46,291.** Of the Five Channels, [Pledge to Mission](#) shows the largest absolute drop (\$26,904) while [Gift to Mission](#) has the highest percentage drop. Clearly our inability to meet as circles and units or to gather at district events is having a real impact. In response, we are offering more online giving opportunities. As members become more comfortable with online donations, the numbers will improve. Even so, we should not expect full recovery from the impact on giving caused by the pandemic.

Give Now

At the half-year mark, the total amount received toward the [Spiritual Growth Retreat Love Offering](#) was **\$2,723.06**. Of that amount, \$1,139.88 came from Spiritual Growth Retreat registration fees you redirected to the Love Offering when the 2020 Retreat went virtual. Thank You! All Love Offerings are Undesignated Mission Giving and will count toward our conference Pledge.

In past years, giving was the major driving force in what we sent to the National Office toward our conference Pledge. Conference and district expenses typically varied little from year to year. But this year our expenses have also been impacted as events continue to be cancelled or converted to virtual formats. The result has been a **significant reduction in expenses**. We were able to forward \$226,473 in Undesignated Giving to the National Office during the first half of 2020. That is 43% of our \$525,000 Pledge and \$14,046 **more** than at this point last year. The bottom line is the reduction in expenses more than overcame the drop in giving.

This may sound like a good thing, but such a trend is not healthy. As the old business adage goes, "An organization that is staying open only by consistently reducing expenses is an organization going out of business." We want to avoid that fate. Let's find ways to continue as a thriving and growing fellowship in and for mission regardless of our external circumstances.

We WNCC United Methodist Women are rising to the challenge of a global pandemic. We are "seeing" each other more often on our Zoom screens, and we are increasingly more confident, productive, and upbeat. Our task now is to take what we are learning and blend it with our past "best practices" to create an even more powerful tool kit for telling the stories of **Mission, funded by Mission Giving**, around the world.



Nancy Reigel, Conference Treasurer
nancy@reigelridge.com/828-268-0637

A Note from Nancy about our [2020 Love Offering](#)—**Let's honor our clergywomen!**

A Gift to Mission ***"Honoring and Affirming Clergywomen: Past, Present and Future."***



You are invited to **share the names of clergywomen you wish to honor for their impact on your life.** You may complete [an online form](#) if you are donating [online](#) or include their names with your check made payable to Treasurer, WNCC UMW, and mailed to Nancy at 375 Troy Norris Rd, Boone, NC 28607.

The names of the honorees will be compiled and shared in a 2021 Conference Gram. We know it will be a list to cherish as we celebrate **their legacy in our lives.**

Check out this video about [Susanna Wesley](#), the "Mother of Methodism," (at umc.org/en/who-we-are/history) and arguably our first clergywoman by her actions if not in name.

Are YOU a Voting Delegate for Conference Annual Celebration?

When you register online to participate in the [2020 Annual Celebration Webinar](#), you will be asked if you are a voting delegate. We want all eligible delegates to answer yes! Most confusion about eligibility arises with local unit members and district officers. Check with your local unit to see who is attending the online business session and be sure that someone has registered as a voting delegate. (See information below regarding how many delegates a unit may have.) If you are the president of your local unit, you may designate who your voting delegate(s) will be (just make sure they register that way).

According to our conference standing rules (page 24), you are a voting delegate IF you are:

- representing your local unit which has a membership of 50 members or fewer. If your unit has more than 50 members, there is one additional voting delegate for each additional 50 members. (Example: a unit of 150 members would have three voting delegates.) Typically, the president of the local unit would be the voting delegate if she plans to attend.
- a district officer or a **chairperson** of a district committee. (**Members** of the nominating committee or other district committees are not voting delegates **unless** they are representing their local unit.)

The complete list of voting delegates is at www.wnccumw.org under Mission Resources. Click "[Downloads Available](#)" and scroll down to "[Standing Rules September 2019.](#)"

Please let me know if you have any questions.

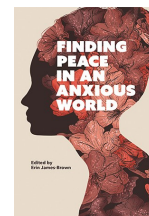
Jatana Royster, Conference Parliamentarian
jatanaroyster@gmail.com/704-451-3816

Your vote counts!

On Kathy's Reading List...

Thanks to "staying at home," many of us have had more time to read and study some of our 2020 United Methodist Women [Reading Program](#) books. A "pandemic favorite" of the conference executive team is "[Tilly and the Crazy Eights](#)," which we have been **mailing from one officer to another** (also available on [Kindle](#)). The postage rate for books is low. How have you been sharing books?

Mission u 2020 will be a virtual event later this year, so I hope you are reading [Finding Peace in an Anxious World](#) (which will be our online study), available at the [e-store](#) and on [Kindle](#). It counts as a bonus book for the Reading Program. **Bonus books count as two books** toward your reading goal.



These additional bonus books are related to upcoming and recent mission studies and qualify as selections for the 2020 Reading Program:

[So You Want to Talk About Race](#) by [Ijeoma Oluo](#)

[Practicing Resurrection](#) by [Janet Wolfe](#) (currently sold out at the [e-store](#) but available on [Kindle](#) at Amazon)

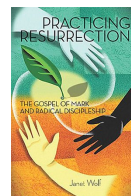
[What About Our Money? A Faith Response](#) by [Susan K. Taylor](#) (available at the [e-store](#) and on [Kindle](#))

[Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission](#) by [Ellen Blue](#)

United Methodist Women Mission Resource e-store contact information:

www.umwmissionresources.org/ (website), cs@umwmissionresources.org (e-mail), 800-305-9857 (phone), 770-280-0061 (fax)

Kathy Chadwell, Conference Secretary of Program Resources
k.sc2008@hotmail.com/336-475-1261



And the Nominees are...

The Conference Committee on Nominations is pleased to announce the following nominees to be presented for election during the Business Session at the [Conference Annual Celebration Webinar](#) on Saturday, September 26, beginning at 2 PM.

Nominees for a two-year term (2021-2022)

Secretary: Dianne Beam (2nd term)

Communications Coordinator: Lisa Bacon (2nd term)

Nominees for a one-year term (2021) under extension of tenure by suspension of the Standing Rules

Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation: Linda Greer

Committee on Nominations: Michelene Mathews
Martha Phillips

Justice Today Committee: Deborah Matthews

The Committee on Nominations thanks these women for saying yes.

Sandy Letchworth, Conference Committee on Nominations Chair
sletchworth@usindustrialpiping.com/336-813-1168

Mission Witness from Jamie LeJeune, [Order of Deaconess and Home Missioner](#), [The Studio at Court Street, Hattiesburg, Mississippi](#): “People who are different somehow than ourselves can make us uneasy. As a parent of two people with autism, I have seen this at work. People avoiding them, getting aggravated at sounds my son makes. I have seen God in my children many times and I have seen God work through my children. When people spend enough time with them and form a relationship, they too witness this. It is in our relationships and community with others that we can see the God in all.”
(2020 [Prayer Calendar](#), page 75.)



Think you can't Zoom?

Think again! You can join a Zoom meeting in the same way you join a conference call. Use any phone to call the telephone number provided in a Zoom invitation e-mail, and enter the meeting ID and passcode with the phone's number pad. You will be able to hear and talk with the other participants. Don't miss out!

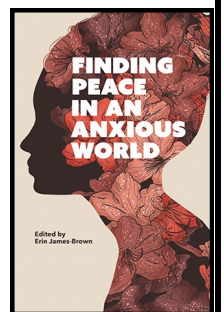
Mission u 2020: Coming soon to a screen near you!



We are moving ahead with the spiritual growth study, [Finding Peace in an Anxious World](#). Mission u this year will be similar to our virtual Spiritual Growth Retreat. Sandra Williamson will be the online study leader. Music will be provided by Catherine Ritch. The study will be shared over YouTube this fall.

Stay tuned for further details.

Patricia Moore, Conference Mission u Dean
phmoore71@gmail.com/704-502-2383



Western North Carolina Conference

United Methodist Women

Lisa Bacon

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Sylva, NC 28779-6539

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Building a Legacy as Women of Vision and Resolve



In 2015 we members of United Methodist Women started a new tradition by designating March 23 as a “[Day of Giving](#)” to the Legacy Fund. That first “Day” we raised almost \$100,000—a remarkable feat. In 2020, even as we faced the uncharted waters of a pandemic and its economic uncertainties, **we raised \$400,803**. Incredible! Even more incredible is the total amount raised as of April 30, 2020, through all Legacy Giving: **\$29,165,341 toward our goal of \$60,000,000**.

We UMW members are mirroring the characteristics of [our foremothers in Boston in 1869](#), “Women of Vision and Resolve.” The Vision to see beyond local boundaries to found enduring institutions for improving the lives of women in India and beyond. The Resolve to obtain and maintain funds so those institutions were sustained and replicated across the world. Remember, this took place when women had no vote and could own little or no property. Communications were in person or by handwritten letter. Yet our foremothers succeeded by sheer persistence and Resolve. And so shall we.

Today we continue to be “Women of Vision and Resolve.” Certainly, donating on the Day of Giving qualifies. Another way to join that band of sisters is to be a “Legacy Builder” by giving a specific amount to the Legacy Fund each month for a year. Online giving makes this easy and convenient. To sign up or learn more, visit: unitedmethodistwomen.org/donate/legacybuilder .

It all comes down to this: we are putting Faith, Hope and Love into ACTION today through our [Mission Giving](#) as well as laying the groundwork for ongoing mission through our [Legacy Fund](#). Both are essential.



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For more information, visit wnccumw.org