

Newsletter

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2021 District Prayer Retreat February 27, 2021 LIVE via ZOOM

The Catawba Valley District will hold its annual Prayer Retreat and Remembrance Ceremony on February 27th via Zoom beginning at 10:00 AM.

The theme of this years event is "Glory Gifts" and Darlene Gardner will be the Guest Speaker. Darlene currently serves as the WNC Conference Spiritual Growth Leader.

This will be first District wide event of 2021 and we would love to have as many as possible in attendance to share in this event. Church UMW Officers with an email address on file will be sent an email invitation with the meeting ID number and the passcode to enter the meeting. Officers you are charged with getting that information to your members. You will be able to join by **computer or Telephone**. Please join us if at all possible.



Love Offering

A love offering will be taken in celebration of all the gifts God has given United Methodist Women. You will be able to give online or use the form below.



Use this form for your Prayer Retreat Love Offering if you wish to pay with a check.

Name _____

Amount: _____

Address _____

Check Number: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to: Joan Jones, Treasurer

Your Church Name _____

Catawba Valley District UMW

City _____

PO box 3122

Drexel, NC 28619

President's Note

Considering all that 2020 taught us, we learned well and found ways to communicate with one another, in spite of quarantines, masks, and social distancing.

The new Zoom tools are likely to stay, now that we have learned a new way forward. Look in the UMW 2021 Program Book "Knitted Together For God's Good Work", you'll find a helpful hint on page IX of the forward. I am confident we can all learn a new skill.

In the Conference Treasurer's report, we all were told by Nancy Reigel that the total \$ collected from our 8 Districts was \$5,217.00 over the 2020 Pledge, meaning we sent \$530,217.00 to the National Office for Missions at home and around the world.

Our calendar in this newsletter reveals we will have virtual meetings for the foreseeable future, Mission projects will not be hands - on at our District events. You could still collect items for local missions or the Mission Institutes in our Conference; like the Brooks Howell Home in Asheville. Or we could send \$ to our District Treasurer, Jane Jones for Love Offering.

Let's live out our purpose as we move into the next 150 years.

Ever Hopeful, Janet Bjork-Colton

President - Catawba Valley District

A Thought for the Times:

¹⁴ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

2 Chronicles 7:14 KJV

Treasurer's Report

For the entire year of 2020 mission donations were as follows:

Pledges 62,046.50

SMRs 1684.50

Gift to Mission 2467.65

Gift in Memory 1640.25

World Thank Offering 4230.75

Walk for Mission 498.41

These figures totaled \$72,568.06 for undesignated giving.

Our district had a pledge of \$80,000 and we fell short. Designated giving was as follows:

Call to Prayer & self denial \$4693.96

Brighter Future \$50

Assembly Offering \$30

Scaritt-Bennett \$30

Magazine Fund \$30

National Projects \$555

Legacy \$3006.64

Total giving for both undesignated and designated was \$81,003.06.

I wish to thank all units for their giving in a pandemic year. I know some units had a difficult time meeting and some have been unable to meet at all. Let us pray that all that will soon be behind us and we can enjoy being with one another again.

Joan Jones, Treasurer

Catawba Valley District



My Personal Experiences with Racism

By Sharon Annette Smith

1st Quarter January 19, 2021

Anyone who knows me personally can attest to the fact that I am a person who prefers to operate in the background or “behind the curtain” in most situations. I prefer not to have the light shine on me in public situations; my preference is to remain observant, but silent. I will support (name your good cause), but do not give me the reins or the bullhorn to direct others.

So, when I was asked to write about my personal experiences regarding discrimination and racism, there was initially some trepidation and perhaps even a little discomfort. Discomfort at the thought that my written words might offend someone, discomfort because my experiences would no longer solely reside within the confines of my mind and finally, discomfort because I am faced with the unease of having to engage with people who do not look like me or share the life experiences of systemic racism, discrimination, and injustice as I and so many people of color have for so many generations.

Even so, in the next few paragraphs, I will try to summarize some of what I have been subjected to and what I have for so long accepted as the “norm” for people of color.

My earliest recollection of racism and a personal attack on me as a Black person happened when I was around 7 or 8 years old. In 1974 or '75, my parents moved my sister and I to a new neighborhood in the Bronx, NY, called Parkchester. For context, Parkchester was initially established as an all-White neighborhood and it was not until 1968 that racial integration was allowed there. Not long after we had moved to Parkchester, I was out riding my bicycle when a White boy picked up a handful of dirt and threw it in my face and called me the “N” word. As to be expected, I cried, ran home with burning eyes and hurt feelings. I could not understand why that little boy was so angry with me.

In our early days in that neighborhood, we regularly heard chants of gangs of boys at night, yelling for Black people to leave the neighborhood. I was afraid to go outside just to play and we certainly knew there were “invisible” lines between neighboring

streets. We were told “don’t go over there” because the Italians lived there and that we would put our lives in danger by crossing those invisible lines. These types of incidences occurred until I was in my early to mid-teens.

My most poignant memory of racism as a child was in the 4th or 5th grade. Tommy was a boy in my class who had made it known that he did not like black people. I do not think Tommy cared for White people that hung around with black people either. One day during recess, Tommy chased me and my friend Laura around the playground with a rope that was fashioned into a lasso. Tommy chased me trying to throw the rope around my neck. He succeeded but, fortunately, I was able to get it off and run away. Laura, however, was not so lucky, and ended up with a terrible rope burn on her neck.

I can still remember the horror of that day. I recall telling my parents about the incident when I got home and as expected my father was furious. My dad went to the principle’s office the next day to complain, I remember that Tommy was there too. Tommy’s response, at the time, was defiant and he proudly told us, “my father is a cop, and we couldn’t do anything about it anyway.” I remember my father saying he “ didn’t give a \$#%& (expletive) who his father was. My memory of the incident stops there in my mind...I cannot recall how this encounter ended but the incident has been burned in my mind for the last 44+ years.

High school years were mostly uneventful as I generally hung around with Black and Latino friends, but as I grew into adulthood, I became more aware of systemic racism, but I learned to stay quiet and assimilate. I also became aware that my skin tone was darker in comparison to others in my family and because of this, the discrimination was more striking.

Like many Black people, I have been racially profiled and followed as I shopped in retail and clothing stores, pharmacies, adult beverage stores, etc. I’ve been ignored when I walked into higher end stores. Perhaps I did not fit the profile of a patron that could afford their merchandise. I have been completely overlooked while standing in line waiting to place an order, while others are cheerfully assisted.

In fact, my most recent encounter was just a week before this writing when I was visiting a chocolate store in Asheville. These are just a few of the many discriminatory encounters I have experienced.

Overt discrimination is typically frowned upon by most decent people, but subtle swipes or microaggressions are things most people would not notice because it never happens to them. For example, if I am in a restaurant with a group of White friends, my order will generally be taken last. It does not matter where I sit, the waiter/waitress will generally start at the other end.

Maybe this sounds trivial or overly “sensitive” to you as you are reading this, but this happens routinely to me and I cannot always chalk it up to “I am looking for the swipe”. I always make a mental note but remain quiet in the company of my non-Black peers. I share only with other people of color because we know all too well the feelings that arise when faced with microaggression, a cocktail of emotions that can range from pain, anger, embarrassment, anxiety, and alienation.

Now that I am a little older, educated, and more established, I am starting to feel a little more comfortable in my Blackness and embrace my skin tone. I’ve learned however that my status as an educated, professional Black woman has not shielded me from the reach of racism or discrimination either.

I have had patients refuse to see me because I am Black. Prior to becoming a Physician Assistant, I was a Licensed Practical Nurse in New York. I was employed in a hospital where a Jewish man told me not to touch his pregnant wife, then he asked for a White nurse. After relocating to North Carolina, I worked with a geriatric population and was routinely called the “N” word by a resident. This resident also referred to me as a “Coon” and a “Negress”. Born and raised in New York, I had no idea what these words meant, and I had to ask my southern coworkers to interpret for me. Obviously, I was once again being reminded of my Blackness and inferiority in White America. I reported this resident to upper management more than once but received no support in dealing with the frequent verbal attacks while trying to do my job.

Being a professional does not shield me from discrimination or racism. Most people respect the title I hold and the white coat I wear, but at the end of the day, when I remove the badge and title and move once again within our larger society, I am reminded

every now and then, that I am still not fully accepted or respected, and I am not afforded the same privileges as others. The reminders are sometimes masked in subtlety but always very clear. My personal response vacillates between being hurt, sometimes angry, but always that what has been said or done to me was wrong. I recognize that what was said or done was insensitive and heartbreaking.

Lastly, here are some situations where you may have pure intentions, but inadvertently say or have said something a Black person might think inappropriate or they might take offense to:

- ◆ Saying to a Black person: “You are very articulate”/”You speak well”
- ◆ Telling a Black parent: “Your children have “normal” sounding names
- ◆ Telling a Black parent: “Your children speak well and are well mannered”
- ◆ Mistaking passion in a conversation or debate with being “an angry Black woman/man (i.e. telling a Black woman to calm down or relax)
- ◆ Asking a Black child or adult “Do you live here?” when encountering them in a nice or higher income earning neighborhood. (This can be extended to asking a Black child “what do your parents do for living?”
- ◆ Saying: “I have several black friends”
- ◆ Saying: “You people”
- ◆ Asking or assuming in a conversation with a Black person that they are all liberal, and only voted for Barack Obama because he was Black
- ◆ Saying: “I don’t see color”. We want you to see, recognize, and appreciate our differences.

The above list above is not exhaustive by any means but comprises a few common examples of macro and microaggressions.

My story and voice are just one of many other melanated professionals, but I am honored to be given this platform to share my personal story. In conclusion, I thank you for taking the time to read this in its entirety and committing to do your part to foster change.

About Sharon A. Smith

Sharon is a Physician Assistant at Novant Health Family Physicians in Gastonia NC. She is a wonderful lady and a highly rated professional. She has been my “Go To Doc” for years and when she is not working you might just find her on the dance floor enjoying an Argentine Tango.

Gwen Perkins

Catawba Valley District UMW Officers

2021

Office	Name	Email	Phone
President	Janet Bjork Colton	jntcltn61@gmail.com	828-205-4157
Vice President	OPEN		
Secretary	OPEN		
MNO	Carol Black	rebblack@hotmail.com	704-276-1045
Treasurer	Joan Jones	Joanj7013@gmail.com	828-438-1931
Social Action	OPEN		
Communications Coordinator	Gwen Perkins	cvdcomm@gmail.com	704-300-9553
Spiritual Growth Coordinator	OPEN		
Mission Education & Interpretation	OPEN		
Parliamentarian	Dorothy Harris	Harris_dl@bellsouth.net	704-827-0163
Historian	OPEN		
Nominating Chair	Patricia Withrow	patriciawithrow@yahoo.com	704-477-9738
Program Resources	Anita Fox	Taco582001@yahoo.com	828-390-6349
Nominations - Burke	Lynda Woody	Mommalynda2003@yahoo.com	828-437-5586
Nominations - Catawba	OPEN		
Nominations - Cleveland	Connie Jackson	Conniechambers77@yahoo.com	704-418-4769
Nominations - Gaston	Vicki Boyd	vwboyd@bellsouth.net	704-922-3241
Nominations - Lincoln	Linda Reep	lindareep@charter.net	704-276-2150
Conference Liaison	Nancy Reigel	Nancy@reigelridge.com	828-268-0637

Message from the District Nominations Committee

The year 2020 was a challenge for everyone, but little by little things do seem to be getting better. Our churches are starting to open back up although with limitations. It is our sincere hope that as things do get back in swing in 2021 that some of you will find it in your hearts to step up in a new and different way. You can share your unique gifts and talents by agreeing to take a spot on the District Leadership Team. Don't let it cross your mind that you can't do anything like that...OF COURSE YOU CAN. Everyone of you has something to offer, talents to give—things only you and no one else has. You will not be alone in the endeavor—that is why it is called a TEAM. We work together so that it becomes easier on everyone. We have the following positions vacant and one of them is calling your name: Vice President, Secretary, Social Action Coordinator, Mission Education and Interpretation Coordinator, Historian, Nominations Committee - Catawba County, and Spiritual Growth Coordinator

Please be in prayer for this and if you or someone you know would like to step up. Please contact:

Patricia Withrow 704-477-9738

patriciawithrow@yahoo.com

Program Resources

Most of us grew up reading the primary books starring Dick, Jane, Sally, and Spot. Today we are not on the same level. Our reading patterns have changed, and thought patterns have grown. Sure it is easy to read the latest Harlequin novel, but there is no depth of thought to this.

Well, I recently picked up a book called: The Hate U Give. GREAT READ! Think about perspectives of race and social graces. How do we communicate with **our friends** versus how we communicate with mere **acquaintances** ?

If you don't have the time to read, or you need to be moving—grab one of the podcasts. There is a variety of subjects to choose from and you can re-run a title anytime after your first reading of it. Each session counts as two credits toward your reading level.

Just go to : www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks

Then Sign Up, and Tune In. Currently there are 24 podcasts to choose from. The next one in January is the 28th at 2:00PM.

By the way, Dick, Jane, and Sally have grown up, married, have jobs, children and grandchildren—even a divorce in there somewhere. Poor little Spot crossed the Rainbow Bridge a long time ago. Yep—grown up and moved on. Lets grow too—it is the **way forward**.

Stay Safe! See you at the Prayer Retreat on Feb 27th.

Anita Fox

Program Resources

Got a Great Book To Recommend? Contact the Reading Program Specialist

Andris Salter administrates the program and welcomes book recommendations, as well as questions and suggestions about the reading program.

e-mail:

asalter@unitedmethodistwomen.org

phone: 212-870-3733

When suggesting a book please include the title, author, publisher, date of publication and price.



One of the Blessings of My Life for which I am Most Thankful... United Methodist Women

1st Quarter January 19, 2021

As I write this, it is actually Thanksgiving Day, and one of the blessings of my life for which I am most thankful is United Methodist Women and my part in it. I have just read and reread [Nancy Reigel's wonderful letter](#) in which she stressed that we are each "doing something" "to bring healing and hope" to the world through our giving to the World Thank Offering. I would like to add by our giving to the [Legacy Fund as Legacy Builders](#).

Did you read [Christi Campos' article about Legacy Builders on page 16 of the November/December response](#)? If you haven't read it, please do. I wonder if your first reaction to the article was the same as mine, that Christi was too enthusiastic in her praise of my recruiting new Legacy Builders. That's what I thought until my Program Advisory Group roommate from South Dakota called to congratulate me. We talked for a few minutes about our families and things, and then I asked "How many Builders have you recruited?" There was silence. Then she said "Myself". I said "You mean you are the only one?" She said "Yes. I guess I'd better get busy. Maybe I'll start by sending a letter to our conference officers."



I suggested she make it personal, as I did. I told her I had sent a personal e-mail to persons in my circle, district, and conference that I hoped to recruit, women with whom I already had a relationship. I suggested she could also make it a contest, telling people to read the response article and "not to let my WNC roommate and her conference beat us."

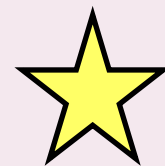
I do not know what she will do. I DO know what I will do: **I will continue to ask individuals to become Legacy Builders. It IS personal.** I think of Jesus as he walked by the Sea of Galilee and called Simon(Peter), Andrew, James, and John. He called them by name, not by extending a blanket invitation. As I continue to ask women I know to join me in Legacy Builders, I encourage each of you to talk about Legacy Builders with women with whom you have a relationship. **Giving to United Methodist Women IS personal.**

Dixie Liggett

*Program Advisory Group Member (2016-2020)
Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women*



Upcoming Events



February 27th Catawba Valley District Prayer Retreat—on Zoom Begins at 10:00 AM

March 1st—Deadline for United Methodist Women Scholarship Application—for more information go to: <https://wnccumw.org/scholarship-program/>

March 13th—Catawba Valley District Executive Team Meeting –on Zoom begins at 10:00

May 1st and 2nd— Mission Study—Led by Lisa Beth White—more information to come



Please sign me up for the 2021 Annual Sampler!

Order the print subscription today for \$40 and save \$4.00.

The Annual Sampler[†] includes:

- 2021 Spiritual Growth study (\$10).
- 2021 Prayer Calendar (\$14).
- 2021-22 Program Book (\$10).
- 2021-24 Quadrennial Calendar (\$10.00 w/orange or purple sleeve).

[†]2021 Issue study: *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique Morris, New York: New Press, 2016. Available in stores, online and libraries. Free downloadable Leader's Guide (PDF) available online at unitedmethodistwomen.org.

The study and the calendars will ship in late fall 2020. The Program Book will ship in the summer of 2021. **Please select:**

- Orange** or **Purple** Quadrennial Calendar sleeve
 Please sign me up for the 2021 Annual Sampler.

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