

Conference Gram

United Women in Faith, Western North Carolina



**We believe love in action
can change the world.**

Faith. Action. Sisterhood.

2023 VISION & GOALS

- Raise awareness about our **Purpose** as United Women in Faith
- Raise awareness and promote personal advocacy for our two United Women in Faith priority issues: Climate Justice and Criminalization of Communities of Color & Mass Incarceration
- Support, encourage, and build relationships with our local units and members in living out the **Purpose**, emphasizing the safety and wellness of ALL of our members as they participate in meetings and gatherings. Consistently lean into the first of John Wesley's General Rules, "Do no harm," in everything we do.
- Encourage local units to build relationships with and support the United Women in Faith mission institutions in our conference: Alliance Center for Education Charlotte, Bethlehem Center Winston-Salem, Brooks-Howell Home, Bennett College, and Pfeiffer University
- Achieve our 2023 Conference Financial Goal: Each local unit increase their Mission Giving through the World Thank Offering channel by 10%.
- Turn faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world as we live out our **Purpose** as United Women in Faith!

Our Purpose:

The organized unit of United Women in Faith 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.

In love and action,

Your WNCC United Women in Faith Team

2023 Calendar of Events

June 8-10
Spiritual Growth
Retreat
Lake Junaluska

July 13-15
Mission u
Pfeiffer University

September 8-10
Annual Celebration
Lake Junaluska

October 7, 14, or 28
Ubuntu Days of
Service
Various Locations

2023 WNCC UWF Officers

President - Joanie Strohm
(828) 649-1156 ssjsmars@charter.net

Vice President - Lynda Morris
(704) 619-2013 lfmorrisap@aol.com

Secretary - Albertina McGirt
(919) 914-1826 hefavorsme7@triad.rr.com

Treasurer - Bess Redmond
(828) 231-7625 bessRed17@gmail.com

Spiritual Growth Coordinator - Darlene Gardner
(336) 766-1552 gardnerdarlenel@gmail.com

Mission Education & Interpretation Coord. - Carolyn Payne
(336) 766-5568 carolynp8g@yahoo.com

Membership, Nurture & Outreach Coord. - Molly Welch
(336) 803-1214 molly.welch9311@gmail.com

Social Action Coordinator - Joyce Irby
(336) 575-3600 joyce.irby60@hotmail.com

Communications Coordinator - Amy Cochran
(828) 429-6922 auntieacc@gmail.com

Program Resources Secretary - Kathy Chadwell
(336) 475-1261 k.sc2008@hotmail.com

Nominations Chair - Ann Aldridge
(828) 433-0988 ahaldridge1@gmail.com

Mission u Dean - Lynn Alexander
(336) 456-6686 lynn.alexander@qorvo.com

Parliamentarian - Martha Phillips
(828) 467-3167 mcwphillips@gmail.com

Historian - LaDonna Butts
(704) 652-1994 ladonna.butts@windstream.net

Scholarship Chair - Jatana Royster
(704) 451-3816 jatanaroyster@gmail.com

Program Advisory Group - Sherry Sink
(336) 880-2663 sherrysink@gmail.com

Webmaster/Legacy Liaison - Lynne Gilbert
(336) 207-3479 lynnegilbert2@gmail.com



SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT: "WOMEN COMING TO CHRIST"

Darlene Gardner, Spiritual Growth Coordinator

What happens when a woman comes to Christ? What are her expectations? How does Christ respond? Does she have to wait until her life has been "cleaned up" before approaching the Savior? These and other questions will be explored at this year's Spiritual Growth Retreat, June 8 -10 at Lake Junaluska. Our retreat speaker, Rev. Jan Brittain, will examine four instances in the New Testament when women came to Christ. What can we learn from these four women? How might we relate to their experiences in our own lives? By studying the scriptures hopefully we will all leave knowing that we, too, can come to Christ regardless of our life situation.

We will once again welcome Catherine Ritch and Rev. Mark Barden as our musicians. The retreat, including breakout sessions and free time, will begin on Thursday evening and conclude by lunchtime on Saturday. Our Hands on Mission Project will be UMCOR Menstrual Hygiene kits; directions are available at umcmmission.org > [UMCOR > Relief Supplies > Menstrual Hygiene Kit Instructions](#). And of course with the beautiful setting of Lake Junaluska, spiritual renewal is bound to transform us. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us as "Women Coming to Christ."



Here's a helpful tip from Conference Parliamentarian Martha Phillips:
Stay abreast of effective and appropriate procedures by referencing our *WNCC UWF Standing Rules* at bit.ly/wnccstandingrules2022.

A Message from Our Conference President

As I read through the article I wrote in the first *Conference Gram* last year introducing myself, I recognized similarities and differences between then and now. I am still from the midwest and still influenced by my mother's dedication to United Methodist Women. She would not be pleased at what has been happening to The United Methodist Church and would understand why we became United Women in Faith. Mentoring and being there for one another are still so important. Mission giving is our priority and will remain. What I see as our challenges in 2023 are as follows.

Communicate Clearly. Truly listen to one another whether in person, online, text, telephone, or email. The most important clue that someone is listening to you is if they don't finish your sentence. It is that simple! We should listen to our family, friends, the grocery clerk, and others. Sometimes it surprises the person you are addressing that you really want to hear what they are saying.

Speak Up. If you speak up in a gracious manner, chances are good that the person with whom you are sharing your opinion will pay attention and not tune you out. United Women in Faith members are dealing with many adversities: racial injustices; inequality in the treatment of women, children, and youth here and around the world; climate change; gun violence; LGBTQ+ inclusion; and disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. When I get

questions about disaffiliation, I do my best to answer them sincerely and clearly. One such question is "Can I still be involved in United Women in Faith if my church disaffiliates?" The answer to that is a resounding "YES!"

Speak Out. There are times when we need to speak out against atrocities, false information, and misinformation. There is a saying, "The truth will set you free." Not *your* truth but *the* truth that takes everything and everyone into consideration - balanced truth.

Go Forward. Going forward with a positive attitude, not being a gloom and doom person, recognizing the challenges we face and will face for the foreseeable future yet treating one another with respect are important for all of us to practice.

Please know I am preaching to the choir (myself). Also know I will do my best to be there for you, support you, pray for and with you, have discussions with you—you get the picture. My heart is with you, fellow United Women in Faith sisters in Christ.

Joanie Strohm, WNCC UWF President

ssjsmars@charter.net 828-649-1156 (home) 828-707-8928 (cell)



MISSION GIVING NEWS

Bess Redmond, Treasurer

I am so excited to be your new treasurer! Nancy Reigel is my hero. She has been so faithful in her service as your treasurer for the last seven years and has been a valuable resource to me as I start this new position.

We are beginning a new journey as United Women in Faith but our work continues in ministry to women, children, and youth. Please convey to members in your unit and district how important this mission continues to be. Thank you for your efforts in making mission happen!

WNCC UWF 2022 Giving

Total Giving through the 8 districts from local units

\$537,563.57

(a decrease of \$16,666.00 from 2021)

All Love Offerings

(Spiritual Growth Retreat, Mission u, Annual Celebration, Love Offerings)

\$15,414.34

(An increase of \$1075 from 2021)

Undesignated Mission Giving sent to the UWF National Office

\$410,967.63

(a decrease of \$94,175 from 2021)

\$89,032 below the 2022 Pledge of \$500,000*

Designated Giving to UWF National Office and GBGM/UMCOR

(includes Call to Prayer & Self-Denial, General, National, International, & UMCOR),

\$57,255.95

(an increase of \$17,855)

Donations to other local projects

\$3,464.50

*Result of a blend of the drop in Undesignated Giving (\$22,724) and increases in expenses as meetings and other gatherings are resumed.



Together, we are building our legacy.

Thank you, Western North Carolina, for your strong support of The Legacy Endowment Fund! Thru November 30, 2022, YOU had given \$32,048.46 in 2022, and YOU had given a total of \$461,026.51 since the fund began! Thank you, YOU are building our Legacy!



As a permanently invested endowment, the Legacy Fund will be an ongoing source of income, providing the assurance that our important work can always continue. Giving to the Legacy Fund will support United Methodist Women / United Women in Faith in perpetuity. That's why gifts to the endowment fund are such a vital way to sustain and grow our capacity to serve and advocate. Every single gift to The Legacy Endowment Fund, of any size, will make a difference!

Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund:

- Through your local unit United Women in Faith treasurer
- Online on the national office website at <https://uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/>
- By phone: 800-278-7771 (8 am-6pm EST, M-F)
- Text Legacy150 to 41444
- By check: note "Legacy Fund" in memo and mail to: United Women in Faith, Treasurer's Office 15th Floor, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115
- Be a Legacy Builder by making a gift of at least \$18.69 per month
- Other methods include gifts of stock, life insurance, bequests, and other forms of planned giving. If you are interested in making a gift like this, contact the national office at 800-278-7771.
- Learn more on our website at <https://wnccumw.org/legacyfund/>. We also accept Legacy Fund gifts on our conference website through our online giving page at <https://wnc-reg.brtapp.com/MissionGivingUMW>.

PROGRAM RESOURCES

Kathy Chadwell, Secretary of Program Resources



As we begin this new year we are blessed with a [new 2023 catalog](#) of exciting books for our [UWF Reading Program](#). We have the opportunity to read across diverse genres, including: Education for Mission, Leadership Development, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, and Spiritual Growth.

In addition to books from the 2018-2023 reading lists and bonus books, remember that [response magazine](#) and the [Faith Talks podcast](#) also count toward the Reading Program! The following powerful movies can also be counted in your Reading Program: "Hidden Figures," "Pushout," and "The Hate U Give."

One of the books I enjoyed recently is *The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek* by Kim Michele Richardson. It recounts the experiences of the Kentucky women who ran the pack horse library service in the 1930s. The book is a story of raw courage, fierce strength, and the belief that books can carry us anywhere.

Don't forget to track your progress on the [Reading Program Reporting Form](#) so that you can receive a certificate of recognition. And be sure to keep an eye on the [UWF Reading Program web page](#) for author talks and other special events and information!





WNCC United Women in Faith Scholarship Program

Do you know a student who is a member of a WNCC United Methodist church and plans to attend one of the below United Methodist supported educational institutions in our conference for the fall semester of 2023? They are eligible to apply for a WNCC United Women in Faith scholarship!

Bennett College
Brevard College
Greensboro College
High Point University
Pfeiffer University

Applications may be requested by contacting Scholarship Committee Chairperson Jatana Royster at:

8227 Laurel Oak Court, Harrisburg, NC 28075
(704) 451-3816
jatanaroyster@gmail.com

Applications are due by **March 1, 2023**. Interviews will be conducted on Saturday, March 25.

YOU can support our scholarship program by:

- Referring students;
- Praying for our students and conference-supported educational institutions;
- Contributing as a district, unit, circle, and/or individual to the general scholarship fund.

Please contact Jatana Royster, WNCC UWF Scholarship Committee Chairperson, if you have questions or need additional information.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE IN STORIES FROM THE PAST

LaDonna Butts, Historian

You probably think it a bit odd that the conference historian would write an article on the future of United Women in Faith, so I'll begin with scripture from the Old Testament, more specifically *The Prayer of Jabez*. Jabez prayed for enlarged territory. As we enter into a new year, I urge all my sisters in faith to pray for new and expanded opportunities to put our faith, hope and love in action.

A Brand New Year. We got this! We have experience, 154 years worth. The eight women who gathered to hear from the two missionary wives on that dark and stormy night in 1869 had no idea their mission to provide for the spiritual and medical needs of women in India would grow into over half a million women serving not only women in India, but women, children, and youth all over the world. Yet through prayer, conviction, and hard work here we are.

A Brand New Name. Been there, done that! Actually, we have done that twenty-five times! From Woman's Foreign Missionary Society to today's United Women in Faith, our purpose has remained the same. We were and will remain "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." Plus our objective is to be more inclusive by more clearly stating that any woman, not just women from one denomination, who desires to be united in faith for a greater cause can participate in our organization.

A Brand New Logo. Now that's new and improved! I love our new logo. It is bright, bold, colorful, and creative. Ladies, we are not the same old, same old. If you look at a picture of those women from 1869 in their black and white corseted dresses it becomes obvious we have evolved. We are not even the housewives of the 1950s.

Many of today's women have careers. They may or may not be married, they may or may not have children, and they may have obligations outside of their homes that make it challenging to add another meeting to their to-do lists. Just like our new logo, today's woman is bright, bold, colorful, and creative. She may prefer to ZOOM from the comfort of her own home, but she can still be committed to our purpose. Although her contributions and her desires to expand concepts of mission may be different from those of the women of even the 1980's or 1990's, they are still vital to our organization.

A Brand New You. Now that's a resolution if I ever heard one! Faithful women, if you look around your UWF circle or your unit, what do you see? Do you see bright, bold, colorful, creative young women? Or do you see the same people you have been meeting with for the past umpteen years? Have you made an effort to reach out to the teens in your church? Have you encouraged younger women to join your unit? Does your unit provide child care for young mothers during meeting times? How about your friends or neighbors that may not attend your church? We have an opportunity to expand our territory far beyond our Methodist church family! All we have to do is ask them. So I challenge each of you to reach out, expand your territory; all you have to do is ask. Now, I'll be the first to say I was asked multiple times to attend a meeting; each time I cordially declined. BUT when I was asked to come to a Christmas party, well, that's where it all began. I became a member that night and I have never looked back. So, Lord, bless us and expand our territory, let your hand be with us. And as the scripture says, "GOD GRANTED THE REQUEST!"

"Oh, that you would bless me
and enlarge my territory!
Let your hand be with me,
and keep me from harm
so that I will be free from pain."

*I Chronicles 4: 10 (NIV)
The Prayer of Jabez*



Amy Cochran
 381 Weeks Road
 Rutherfordton, NC 28139

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



WNCC United Women in Faith
2023 Spiritual Growth Retreat
Thursday June 8 – Saturday June 10

Online retreat registration
 coming soon to wnccumw.org!

Lake Junaluska Accommodations

Reservations open February 22, 2023. Call 800-222-4930.
 (Prices below are per room, per night and do not include tax.)

Hotel Lodging	Single	Double	Triple	Quad	Meal Pkg/Person (5 meals)
Terrace Hotel	\$135.00	\$135.00	\$155.00	\$175.00	\$82.50
Lambuth Inn	\$135.00	\$135.00	\$150.00	\$165.00	\$82.50
Lake Junaluska Apartments	\$105.00	\$105.00	\$115.00	\$125.00	Not Included

Musician
 Catherine Ritch



Retreat Leader
 Rev. Jan Brittain



Song Leader
 Rev. Mark Barden

