

faith

action

sisterhood

UWF Appalachian District News
Third Quarter 2023

AppaLadies in Mission



**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.**

President Report



Dear Friends,

As usual, I am on a spiritual high this time of year after attending our WNCC UWF Spiritual Growth Retreat in June. The SGR theme was “Coming to Christ” led by Rev. Jan Brittain. She offered much insight and different ways of thinking about some of the Biblical women’s stories of their encounters with Jesus. I am excited to reveal that Rev. Brittain has agreed to speak at our 2024 Prayer Breakfast in March. Do come and you will be blessed!

Ladies, when you choose to come to these uplifting events that take months of prayerful planning, you are gifted with opportunities to bond and worship with your sisters in faith and form meaningful relationships. We are truly a sisterhood. Please make plans to be a part of our upcoming Appalachian District Annual Celebration in August and Membership and Leadership Development Day in October. Hopefully, you have already registered for Mission u at the end of July. Come to our events! We want to be your friend! We cherish YOUR friendship.

As I was proofreading this newsletter, I received the heartbreaking news that Judy Sipe, our former District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, lost her life on the evening of July 8 due to injuries she sustained in an automobile accident the previous morning. She is now in the presence of her Lord and Savior and I am sure He said to her, “Well done, My good and faithful servant.” Please hold her family in your prayers. See her Memorial page later in this publication.

As I have informed you before, I would like to have some photos of our local units to put into a slide presentation for the Annual Celebration, so please send those photos to me as soon as possible and prior to August 10. You may email, text, or snail mail the photos. I will return any snail mail photos that you want back. Thank you in advance!

It saddens me that some of our churches have disaffiliated from the UMC and I am enclosing at the end of this newsletter an excellent article by Tara Barnes, Director of Denominational Relations for United Women in Faith, that appeared in the May/June 2024 issue of response magazine. The article explains much about disaffiliation, how it happened, and where we go from here.



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On behalf of our Appalachian District, I want to thank Nancy Johnson and Judy Sipe for their faithful service as District Treasurer and District Spiritual Growth Coordinator. Nancy took care of our funds diligently as she sent them on their Mission Journey and Judy led our team in planning our inspirational Prayer Breakfasts over the past few years. These ladies are members of a church that has disaffiliated and they felt led to resign their UWF positions as of June 1. We will miss Nancy and wish God's blessings upon her in her future endeavors. We will also miss Judy and hold fondest memories of her in our hearts as we lift up her family in our prayers.

We thank Nancy Reigel and Sherry Summerlin who agreed to fulfill the duties of District Treasurer and District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, respectively, through the end of 2023. Our District Executive Team has voted for this change and are thankful for their willingness to serve.

I reiterate what I said in the letter I sent with or after the last newsletter: *Perhaps your unit has become inactive or your church has disaffiliated from the United Methodist Church. In either case, you are still welcome and wanted in United Women in Faith. You and your friends are still invited to any and all of our district and conference events. If your unit is no longer meeting or your church has already disaffiliated or is planning to do so, you can still be a district member and your unit can still be a UWF unit. If we do not agree on all issues, that's okay. We can agree that we are all connected as Christian women in faith and we know that we can love each other and agree to disagree without being disagreeable.*

Also, if you wish to be removed from the mailing list or email list, please let me know. We certainly do not wish to annoy you with unwanted mail and emails. You may email, text or call me.

Feel free to contact me whenever you have questions and if I don't know the answer, I have some very knowledgeable friends who do.

Love, peace, and joy,
Linda (LindaLu) Greer
828-244-2251



United
Women
in Faith



Greetings,
As we look to our District Annual Celebration, please note that we will vote on accepting the revised Appalachian District Standing Rules. A copy will be available to you at the August meeting. I look forward to seeing you on August 26, 2023.

Blessings and peace,
Sherry Summerlin
Appalachian District Parliamentarian.



Greetings,
In the last newsletter, I forgot to introduce myself. I am Traci Snyder and I attend First United Methodist Church of Taylorsville. I have been a Methodist all of my life. I have enjoyed putting the newsletter together. If you have any suggestions please let me know.

Blessings and Peace
Traci Snyder
Appalachian District Communication Coordinator



Vice President

Jan Taylor

Can you believe that 2024 is half over?!?! Time definitely flies when we're having fun. Our Spiritual Growth Retreat at Lake Junaluska was so inspiring – with a theme of “Women Coming to Christ”. Our conference and district planning teams, breakout session leaders, Lake Junaluska staff, and retreat leader, Rev. Jan Brittain, and music team, Rev. Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch did an outstanding job. As Rev. Brittain said in her closing remarks, “If you remember nothing else I have said in our time together, I want you to hear this. Coming to Jesus AND staying there is the only way any of us can make it to the promise of the empty tomb and the power of the resurrection. We can't just be women who come to Jesus, Beloved. We have to be the women who come to Jesus and stay.” Such a powerful message! If you couldn't make it to the Spiritual Growth Retreat, I do hope that I will see some of you at Mission u July 28-29.

Our next Appalachian District event is our District Annual Celebration at New Covenant UMC in Lenoir NC on Saturday, August 26th (see the Annual Celebration flyer in this newsletter for details). This is a time to celebrate each other for 2022 unit accomplishments, to review and approve our proposed District 2024 budget, and to elect and install our 2024 Appalachian District Officers. I hope that many of you will take the time to attend and be a part of celebrating each other!

If there is anything I can do to help you, please don't hesitate to call, text, or email me.

Blessings,

Jan Taylor, 336-468-0313





2023 Calendar of Events



(Bold Print indicates Appalachian District Events)

July 28-29 Mission u, Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, N C

August 26 Appalachian District Annual Celebration New Covenant UMC, Lenoir, NC

September 8-10 Annual Celebration, Lake Junaluska

October 7 Appalachian District UBUNTU Mission Response Center, Terrell, NC

October 7, 14, 28 Ubuntu Days of Service (various sites)

**October 28 Appalachian District MLDD Wilkesboro UMC, Wilkesboro, NC
Membership and Leadership Development Day**

Join us for all these Events!



Hello from Membership, Nurture, and Outreach.

If you look at that title, you will notice that I have addressed membership, but Nurturing each other comes second. Remember that we need to be aware of what the needs of our members are and give them some nurturing. Last is outreach, so reach out to any who could benefit from being a Woman of Faith. Keep our friendships strong and prayerful.



**God Bless,
Micki Earp**



Social Action

We are stewards of God's creation. All creation is God's and we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse it...God has granted us stewardship of creation. We should meet our stewardship duties through acts of loving care and respect.

Jenny Hix
Social Action Coordinator





Treasurer Report



Hello, Appalachian District United Women in Faith! I am thrilled to have the opportunity to serve you as your Interim District Treasurer for the SECOND half of 2023. I know many of you, but for those of you I have not met, I am Nancy Reigel, a proud member of the Appalachian District since the district was formed in 2013. I have had the privilege of serving as the President of the District for 3 years and then as WNCC UWF Conference Treasurer for 7 years, and look forward to working with my Appalachian District sisters again.

I begin by wishing our previous District Treasure, Nancy Johnson, the very best. Nancy was an awesome, organized, and efficient District Treasurer. We are sad she is leaving us but we understand her desire to maintain her ties with her existing church as they find a separate way. Change can be difficult. But what has not changed is YOU and your continued commitment to our United Women in Faith Mission and Missions.

As I look over these past months, what I find is undeniable evidence that those who have elected to continue with us provide gleams of hope and stalwart support of our Missions and Mission. Your district officer team is gathered to support you. But we cannot deny that as these members and units withdraw their support, those for whom our Missions have offered hope and paths to better lives may feel the consequences. All we can do is work to diminish those consequences as much as possible at the Local, District, Conference, and National levels. That is what WE need to be about...doing what we, as individuals, units, and a district can.....spreading the word about Mission, looking for opportunities to expand our membership, and finding other ways to raise funds for Mission.

So how ARE we doing at this one-half mark in 2023? At the end of the second quarter of 2023, the Appalachian District sent \$12,526 in Mission Giving to the Conference. That is slightly behind what had been sent this time in 2022. Our District 2023 pledge is \$40,000. That may seem an unattainable goal, especially as we lose members/units. But, let's forget that number and focus on what we CAN achieve, which is MUCH and which is the only thing that really counts. Many units are actually on track to meet their individual unit Pledges and we know that many search their coffers toward the end of the year to bolster their support for Mission. That gives me optimism that we in the Appalachian District will indeed end the year with our heads held high in support of Mission. We will do as much as we possibly can, and that is what counts. Appalachian District United Women in Faith GIVE to Mission in Love.

I AM THRILLED TO BE PART OF THAT! Please tell me how I can help!

Blessings,
Nancy F. Reigel

Mission, Education & Interpretation Coordinator

Well done, **Appalachian District Units!** **Forty-three feminine hygiene kits** were collected at the April Mission Study at First United Methodist, North Wilkesboro. It certainly was a great day with Kim Eller, Northern Piedmont Lay Leader, presenting the mission study, "Who Can We Be Together: A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13."

Our Annual Celebration is coming up quickly! Saturday, August 26 at New Covenant UMC, Lenoir. **The Hands-on mission will be collecting new kitchen items for Project Agape: plates, bowls, cups, silverware, pots & pans, cooking utensils, dish towels, and washing clothes.** These will help families that have been displaced to set up in their new homes. Thank you for your generous giving.



Blessings,
Penny Ledbetter
ME&I Coordinator



Greetings!

Can you believe how this year is flying by so fast? Time waits on no one. The nominating committee has a great task before us. We have several positions that need to be filled.

Here are the following officers we need:

1. Secretary
2. Treasure
3. Spiritual Growth Coordinator
4. Mission, Education, and Interpretation Coordinator (ME&I)
5. Two Nominations Committee Members
6. Historian



To all the units in the district, we ask you to be in prayer that the Lord send us "willing workers."

Special Thanks to Nancy Reigel for stepping in as Treasurer, and Sherry Summerlin as Spiritual Growth Coordinator until the end of the year!

If you or someone you know may be willing to serve, contact me or any member of the nominations committee! On the following page see the slate of officers nominated for election at the 2023 Annual Celebration in August.

Be Blessed!



Blessings
Roberta Walker
Nominations Chairperson
r_walker1961@yahoo.com or 336-835-1939

Appalachian District United Women in Faith
Committee on Nominations Proposed Slate of Officers for 2024
District Annual Meeting - August 26, 2023

The Appalachian District Nominating Committee presents the following slate of officers:

Office	Term	Nominee
President - continuing	2024-2025	Linda Greer
Vice President - continuing	2024-2025	Janice Taylor
Secretary	2024-2025	
Treasurer	2024-2025	
Spiritual Growth Coordinator	2024-2025	
Mission Education & Interpretation	2024-2025	
Membership Nurture & Outreach	2022-2023	Jane Long
Social Action - continuing	2023-2024	Jenny Hix
Communications - continuing	2023-2024	Traci Snyder
Program Resources - continuing	2024-2025	Brenda Kimberlin
Nominations Committee - ongoing	2022-2025	Brenda Jones
Nominations Committee - ongoing	2023-2025 (served 1 yr. 2020-2021)	Sherry Mabry
Nominations Committee - ongoing	2023-2025	Cindy Sellers
Nominations Committee - ongoing	2023-2026	Jean Stetler
Nominations Committee	2024-2027	
Nominations Committee	2024-2027	

Appointed Officers

Parliamentarian

2024-2025

Sherry Summerlin

Legacy Fund Energizer & Webmaster

2024-2025

Nancy Reigel

Historian

2024-2025

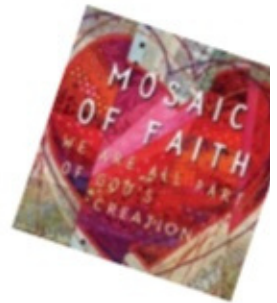


Appalachian District Annual Celebration

Share and celebrate your successes from 2022....



United
Women
in Faith



Celebrating Mosaic of Faith: We Are All Part of God's Creation

Saturday, August 26, 2023

Registration & light refreshments ~ 9:30 am Meeting ~10am - noon

Location: New Covenant UMC
426 Woodsway Lane NW
Lenoir, NC 28645

Speaker ~ Kim Richmond, Convener of the Creation Care Ministry, WNCC UMC Reconciliation & Justice Team

District Officer Installation ~ Martha Phillips, App. Dist. UWF Liaison

Hands on Mission Project: Project Agape in Armenia - New kitchen items: sets of unbreakable plates, cups, bowls, silverware, cookware, cooking utensils, dish towels

Love Offering: *In Honor of UWF Members' Ongoing, Faithful Commitment to Mission*

For childcare, contact: Jan Taylor (336-468-0313) no later than August 12th j.kay.tay@gmail.com

By AUGUST 10, Please send photos of your unit for a slide show presentation to Linda Greer.

jacklindagreer@bellsouth.net or 828-244-2251 or 3201 Mt Wesley Church Rd., Stony Point, NC 28678

Directions to New Covenant UMC:

From Sparta/Wilkesboro and North: Follow Hwy 18 South through Wilkesboro and into Lenoir. Turn right onto Blowing Rock Blvd; in .5 mile turn left onto Hospital Ave. NW then right onto Woodsway Ln; in .3 miles turn right and continue straight into the church parking lot.

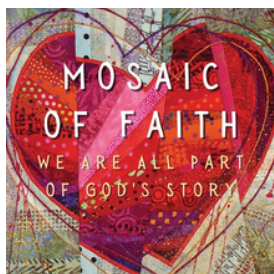
From Statesville and South: Take I-40W to Exit 148(US-64/NC-90); turn right onto NC-90/US-64 and follow directions from Taylorsville.

From Hickory, Hudson, Granite Falls areas: Take US 321N into Lenoir; turn left onto Hospital Ave. NW then right onto Woodsway Ln; in .3 miles turn right and continue straight into the church parking lot.

From Taylorsville/Stony Point/Hiddenite: Take NC 90W to US 64W to Lenoir; turn left onto Wilkesboro Blvd. NE (Hwy 18); in approx. 1.4 miles, turn right onto Blowing Rock Blvd; in .5 mile turn left onto Hospital Ave. NW, then right onto Woodsway Ln; in .3 miles turn right and continue straight into the church parking lot.

From Boone & areas west: Follow US 321 South to Lenoir. Turn right onto Hospital Ave. NW then right onto Woodsway Ln; in .3 miles turn right and continue straight into the church parking lot.

From Elkin, Ronda, Roaring River and West: Take US 421N to Exit 286A (NC-16/18S); Keep right at the fork and follow directions from Sparta/Wilkesboro.



UNITED WOMEN In FAITH

Western North Carolina Conference

What: 50th Annual Celebration

Celebrating 154 Years in Mission

When: September 8-10, 2023 Event Check-in begins 2 pm; Program 6:45

Where: Lake Junaluska, Terrace Auditorium

Annual Celebration

UWF Registration:

Begins June 20, 2023

- All registration is online. There will be no on-site registration.

- **Get a UWF DISCOUNT!**

Register early and ONLINE!

Online advance registration,

Dates: June 20-August 14 **\$25.00**

per person! Full registration is

\$40 per person. Dates: August

15-Sept 5 The online registration

link on our website at

www.wnccumw.org. will open

June 20

- **Registration fees are non-fundable**

- **Register yourself AND**

others! Our online registration is

for one person at a time, but

one person can do multiple

individual registrations using the

same email address. Thanks for

helping other members of your

local unit to register online —

especially those who may not

use a computer!

- Contact us if you have a

question about registration.

- Wearing masks indoors will be

by personal choice

REGISTRATION FOR THE EVENT IS SEPARATE FROM RESERVING LODGING. CALL LAKE JUNALUSKA FOR LODGING.

Keynote Weekend Speaker:

Rev. Holly Cobb McKim,

Minister, Hudson UMC



Mission Speaker: Julie Marie

Wilson

Missionary, Open Arms

Community Center, Winston-

Salem



Music Leaders Dr. Craig

Estep & Catherine Ritch

Hands-On Mission: UMCOR Period Packs and Christmas Shoeboxes for Armenia

Mosaic! Saturday Afternoon :

UWF Choir led by Craig Estep

Where Our Money Goes led by Linda

Greer

Jazzercizing 4 Jesus led by LaDonna

Butts

Mosaic! Highlights:

- Hosting Missionaries for Lunch
- The Celebration Continues...- Saturday Night Entertainment
- UWF Choir on Sunday
- Inspiration Point, Rose Walk, Susanna Wesley Garden, Biblical Garden, Corneille Bryan Native Garden, 2.3-mile Lakeside Walking Trail

Hostess District: Yadkin Valley

Complete information about Annual Celebration will soon be available on our website:

www.wnccumw.org

Contact Persons:

Annual Celebration Program

Lynda Morris, Vice President

lfmorrisap@aol.com

704-619-2013

Questions & Assistance

Online Registration

Lynne Gilbert, Webmaster

lgilbert@wnccumc.org

336-207-3479



Lake Junaluska
Conference & Retreat
Center, P. O. Box 67
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

Reservations Phone #:

1-800-222-4930 (Toll Free)

Lake Junaluska Reservations:

**Housing Reservations
Open June 20**

To book Lake Junaluska
lodging for
Annual Celebration

- **Call the Lake Junaluska reservations department at 1-800-222-4930.**
- Then select 1 for the Reservations Department, and the next available agent will be glad to assist you. The Lake Junaluska reservations team is on duty from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

**REGISTRATION FOR THE EVENT IS
SEPARATE FROM RESERVING
LODGING.**



**United
Women
in Faith**

United Women in Faith
Western North Carolina Conference

Visit our Website:

www.wnccumw.org

Visit us on

facebook

www.facebook.com/wnccumw

2023 Annual Celebration

September 8-10, 2023 - Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

Lake Junaluska Accommodations & Rates

The Terrace or Lambuth Inn*

(Private baths, heat, air conditioning, TV, phone, elevator, free WI-FI)
Rates are per room, per day, room & meals, before applicable taxes.
11% room tax, 7% meal tax, 8% meal gratuity will be added to total

The Terrace Lambuth Inn Weekend 5-Meal

Room per night Room per night Package*

Single \$135.00 \$135.00 +\$82.50

Double \$135.00 \$135.00 +\$82.50

Triple \$155.00 \$150.00 +\$82.50

Quad \$175.00 \$165.00 +\$82.50

*Lake Junaluska operates The Terrace and Lambuth Inn on an American Plan, and meals are required with the room.

NOTE: NO SUNDAY Lunch will be provided in this package!

Apartments (meals optional)

(Private baths, heat, air conditioning, TV, phone, free WI-FI, three floors, no elevator)
Rates are per room, per day, no meals, before applicable taxes.

Single \$105.00

Double \$105.00

Triple \$115.00

Quad \$125.00

NOTE: PHOTO ID and CREDIT CARD required for EACH PERSON at Check-In

Lake Junaluska Lodging Information:

Event lodging reservation deposit is equal to the first night's lodging and is due at the time of reservation. Any rooms not reserved with a Lodging Reservations Deposit will be released into general availability 30 days prior to an event. Individual lodging reservations deposit refund policy: 15 days or more before an event receive a full refund minus \$30 processing fee; 14 days or less before an event will not receive a refund.

EXPRESS CHECK-IN: To expedite check-in time, pay room in full at time of reservation or when contacted via email in advance of meeting and make any roommate changes.

CHECK IN TIME for all facilities is 4:00pm; check out is 11:00am.
Photo ID and CREDIT CARD for each person for incidentals required at Check-In. For those who do not have a credit card, the Lake suggests purchasing prepaid credit card prior to arrival.

Meal Information:

NOTE: NO Sunday Lunch in this package!

The room rate that shows on your confirmation letter is the room rate only, meals are an additional cost. Meals are optional for all facilities other than The Terrace or Lambuth Inn. Guests staying in optional meal facilities may purchase package at \$82.50 per person for 5 consecutive meals. Children 4 through 11 years of age receive meals at half price, 3 years of age and under eat free. **A 5-meal package of \$82.50 per person will automatically be added for each person staying in The Terrace or Lambuth Inn (dinner on Friday, breakfast, lunch & dinner on Saturday, breakfast on Sunday).** (tax and gratuity will be added to all meal charges)

United Women in Faith - Appalachian District Scholarship Application 2023

Annually, the Appalachian District offers stipends of up to \$150 each for attendance at the following events:

- 1 for Mission u
- 1 for the Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith Annual Celebration
- 1 for a teen girl to attend one of the above events

Each unit is urged to encourage applications from your unit based on only two considerations:

- A person who has never attended before
- A person who is interested in learning more about United Women in Faith

Please appeal to women in your unit to apply for one of these great opportunities to grow their faith!

- Applicants for the Mission u stipends must turn in applications by July 5, 2023 and recipients will be chosen by the District Executive Committee by July 9, 2023.
- Applicants for the Annual Celebration stipends must turn in applications by July 29, 2023 and recipients will be chosen by the District Executive Committee by August 5, 2023.

This application is for: (check one)

- ☐ Mission u at The Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC July 28-29, 2023 (Registration closes 7/13.)
- ☐ Western NC Conference Annual Celebration at Lake Junaluska September 8-10, 2023 (Registration 6/25-8/15)
- ☐ Teen Application for Mission u at The Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC July 28-29, 2023
- ☐ Teen Application for Western N C Conference Annual Celebration at Lake Junaluska September 8-10, 2023

Note that recipients will need to pay the expenses for the event and then turn in receipts to District Treasurer.

Name _____		
Street Address _____		
City _____	State _____	Zip Code _____
Home Phone _____	Mobile Phone _____	Work Phone _____
E-mail Address _____	Local Church _____	

Please share why you want to attend your chosen event and how you plan to use the knowledge you will gain:

Recommendation statement from a fellow United Woman in Faith:

Signature _____	Date _____	Phone _____
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Return completed form to Appalachian District President Linda Greer, 3201 Mt. Wesley Church Rd., Stony Point, NC 28678 or jacklindagreer@bellsouth.net For questions, call Linda at 828-244-2251.

2023 Appalachian District UWF Officers and Nurturing Partners

Linda Greer	Linda Greer	Jan Taylor	Nancy Reigel
President	President	Vice President/Acting Secretary	Treasurer/Legacy Energizer/Webmaster
jacklindagreer@bellsouth.net 828-244-2251/704-585-6263	jacklindagreer@bellsouth.net 828-244-2251/704-585-6263	j.kay.tay@gmail.com 336-957-3024/336-468-0313	nancy@reigelridge.com 828-268-0637
Broad Street (Statesville) New Covenant (Lenoir) *Scott's Chapel (Statesville) *Marvin (Stony Point) *Monticello (Statesville)	Hiddenite/Stony Point Parish (Hiddenite, Bethel, Liberty, Philadelphia, South River) Stony Point *Carson's Chapel	First North Wilkesboro Miller's Creek *First Lenoir *Wesley Chapel (Hamptonville)	Clifton (Warrensville) Henson Chapel/Mabel *Bethelview (Boone)
Penny Ledbetter	Micki Earp	Jenny Hix	Sherry Summerlin
Education & Interpret. Coord.	Membership, Nurture, Outreach Co.	Social Action Coordinator	Parliamentarian/Spiritual Growth Co.
pennygrietje@gmail.com 704-880-3722	13micki@gmail.com 828-632-6769	hxjnn@aol.com 336-981-6360	sherrysummer@charter.net 828-728-4936
New Beginnings (Jonesville) *Chapel Hill *Friendship (Statesville) *Linville *Rose Chapel (Statesville)	Pisgah-Hiddenite *Bethlehem (Statesville) *Christ Boulevard (Statesville) *First Troutman *Midway (Statesville)	Charity (Elkin) Wilkesboro *Crossfire (N Wilkesboro) *Temple Hill (Ronda)	Banner Elk Altamont-Jonas Ridge *FaithBridge (Blowing Rock) *Grace Chapel (Gr Falls)
Brenda Kimberlin	Traci Snyder	Roberta Walker	Jane Long
Secretary of Program Resources	Communications Coordinator	Nominations Chairwoman	Member, Nominations Comm.
bjkimberlin22@gmail.com 828-728-0371	tsnyder@caldwellschools.com 828-308-3452	r_walker1961@yahoo.com 336-835-1939	jshooklong@gmail.com 828-292-9250
Baton (Granite Falls) Cox's Chapel (Mouth of Wilson) Piney Creek (near Sparta) *Ebenezer (Granite Falls) *Gamewell (Lenoir)	First Granite Falls Hudson Littlejohn (Lenoir) Mount Hermon (Lenoir) *Mt. Bethel (Alexander)	Charity Grassy Creek (State Road) Mountain View (Statesville) Union Grove *First Elkin	Maple Springs (Ronda) *Rocky Springs-Hiddenite *Harper's Chapel (Patterson)
Sherry Mabry	Cindy Sellers	Jean Stetler	Brenda Jones
Member, Nominations Comm.	Member, Nominations Comm.	Member, Nominations Comm.	Member, Nominations Comm.
mabrysh@gmail.com 336-927-4332	cindysellers49@aol.com 704-657-5196	jstetler52@gmail.com 828-264-6629/828-964-1396	brendarsjones21@gmail.com 828-632-7037/828-234-1772
Shiloh (Sparta) Sparta	First Taylorsville *Providence (Statesville)	Boone Deerfield (Boone) Warrensville	Barbara Heck (Maple Springs) *Cool Spring *Wesley Memorial (Statesville)
Pamela Reid		Conference Officers Living in	Our District
Member-at-Large		Martha Phillips	Kimberly Witherspoon
preidnc@yahoo.com 828-234-1707		WNCC UWF Parliamentarian Appalachian District Liaison	WNCC UWF Nominations Committee Member
Colliers (Lenoir) Trinity (Lenoir)		mcwphillips@gmail.com 828-467-3167	kwitherspoon03@yahoo.com 828-729-0876

* Denotes unit is not currently meeting or has become inactive, disaffiliated, or is in process of disaffiliation.

What's Happening in The United Methodist Church?

Amid exits and misinformation, change is a chance for hope and renewal.

by **TARA BARNES**

It's a time of change and transition in The United Methodist Church. As members of United Women in Faith and faith leaders in your churches and communities, you can be a source of strength and vision as we navigate new waters together.

This past year, hundreds of churches disaffiliated from The United Methodist Church, leaving the denomination to become independent congregations or join another denomination. Since 2019, around 2,000 churches have left the denomination, according to United Methodist News and the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration.

So what's going on?

In 2019, after a special session of the United Methodist General Conference, a new paragraph was added to *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* allowing local churches to leave The United Methodist Church, or disaffiliate, and keep their church building. Before 2019, leaving the denomination meant closing the church, with church property given to the annual conference board of trustees.

The provisions of the new disaffiliation paragraph expire Dec. 31, 2023, which explains some of the current urgency.

What isn't going on is a church split. There are more than 40,000 United

Methodist churches worldwide, with nearly 13 million members. Nor have disaffiliations led to a mass exodus, but they have taken a toll.

How did we get here?

The 2019 General Conference that introduced disaffiliation into the United Methodist law book was an attempt by the global decision-making body to address the church's longtime and ongoing disagreement over homosexuality.

The special session was born of a recommendation by the Council of Bishops in 2016 "that the General Conference defer all votes on human sexuality and refer this entire subject to a special Commission, named by

the Council of Bishops, to develop a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in our *Book of Discipline* regarding human sexuality." The goal was to keep our global denomination united and better able, by moving beyond our impasse, to make disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world.

The special commission, called the Commission on a Way Forward, offered a report on which the General Conference would act and included three possible plans for the future of the church: one that allowed but did not require the ordination and marriage of LGBTQ+ United Methodists, one that created three values-based conferences that churches



Praying together at the 2019 General Conference in St. Louis are Yvette Richards (left) from the Missouri Conference and Jennifer Long, volunteer. Richards is a former national president for United Women in Faith.

could join, and one that maintained the denomination's wedding and ordination bans and increased the penalties for clergy who violated those bans.

By a difference of only 54 votes, General Conference supported the Traditional Plan, which reinforced the instruction that the "practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" and strengthened enforcement of church restrictions related to homosexuality. The new paragraph, "Disaffiliation of Local Churches Over Issues Related to Human Sexuality," also passed.

What resulted was a denomination with a broken heart—and United Methodists with heels dug in. Instead of exiting, many United Methodists who want the marriage and ordination exclusions removed have stayed to continue to work for a more inclusive church.

In response, in the leadup to General Conference 2020, an exit plan was brokered that would, if passed, allow local churches to keep their property and give \$25 million to a traditionalist splinter group hoping to establish its own denomination. This legislation, called "Reconciliation and Grace Through Separation," or the Protocol, was more palatable to many traditionalists than the disaffiliation paragraph passed in 2019, so, though the disaffiliation paragraph was in effect, many churches decided to wait until the next General Conference in hopes the Protocol would pass.

COVID-19 safety restrictions ultimately postponed the 2020 General Conference to 2024—past the disaffiliation time limit—and traditionalists decided to move for-

ward with their new denomination in May 2022. With the disaffiliation deadline looming, the new denomination is rushing to encourage United Methodist congregations to leave The United Methodist Church. The proselytizing is at full steam, and misinformation continues to spread.

What do we need to know?

As members of United Women in Faith, it's important for you to know that you can remain a member even if your church disaffiliates. You can continue to meet as a United Women in Faith group, or your local unit can also become a cluster group with other units or become a district unit.

There's also All Access Membership, which offers an opportunity to remain connected to the work at the national level independent of a unit or with a new All Access group.

Individuals can join nearby and district groups and also become an All Access member. There are many ways to be a part of our sisterhood and make an impact! You can learn more at uwfaith.org/all-access-membership. Contact membership@uwfaith.org with questions.

If your church is leaving and you wish to remain United Methodist, you can transfer your membership to another United Methodist church. Contact your district superintendent to learn more about your options. You may even have an opportunity, like in the North Carolina Conference, to become part of a collective until you find your new church home. Your United Methodist conference should have some resources to help you remain United Methodist as well.

Because The United Methodist Church is not splitting, a vote by lo-

cal churches on affiliation or disaffiliation is not required—no congregational action is necessary for United Methodist churches to remain a part of The United Methodist Church.

Know, too, that United Women in Faith is and remains the official women's organization of The United Methodist Church. This does not mean you must be United Methodist to be a member—it means our theology and practices of faith align with those of The United Methodist Church. We are a bold, welcoming sisterhood and a safe, empowering space for women to belong and grow in faith, leadership, and mission.

To learn more about who we are, check out our resources on our website at uwfaith.org.

Getting it right

We're in a strange place where folks are leaving The United Methodist Church based on a perceived future, and it seems the sky is the limit as far as some of those predictions go. You may have heard it said that The United Methodist Church will soon no longer believe in the divinity of Jesus, will edit the Bible, will disregard *The Book of Discipline* and core tenets of Methodism altogether, will be completely changing its social and moral stances to extreme progressive viewpoints in just a few years, will force out traditionalists, and other forecasting meant to instill anxiety and fear. None of this is true. Nor is it true that members of disaffiliated churches can continue to serve in leadership positions in The United Methodist Church, or that exiting congregations can continue to offer the same health benefits and pensions to staff, or that pastors leave

with their churches—pastors decide for themselves, and there is no guarantee of clergy leadership for disaffiliated churches.

The United Methodist Church makes decisions together through elected delegates from around the world coming together to conference and vote. These delegates bring a great variety of reason, tradition, experience, and understanding of Scripture to these decision-making spaces, and United Methodists strive for diversity and unity, not conformity.

The future of The United Methodist Church is ours to make.

Hope for the future

Methodism dates back to 1730, when John and Charles Wesley started small student groups at Oxford University in England. The United Methodist Church was founded only in 1968 as the coming together of many Methodist and Evangelical United Brethren denominations that had their own splits and mergers. Our organization has had more than 20 names and iterations. In other words, we've been here before, and the church is still here today.

Disaffiliation is a big decision that should not be made without prayer, transparency, information, and conversation. You, as a faith leader, can be a great resource for your congregation and Methodist siblings in this time in our church, lending your ear, faith, and knowledge and offering clarity, conversation, and comfort.

You are a member of United Women in Faith. You dare to believe in a bright future—and do the work to make it happen.

We are in a time of change. Like the women who faced such challeng-

The following are some resources to help you learn more.


Staying United Methodist
 “Breaking Up Would be Hard to Do” by Kathy Gilbert with United Methodist News, a timeline of the debate on LGBTQ+ exclusion and inclusion at General Conference: umnews.org/news/breaking-up-is-hard-to-do
 “Staying” by the Louisiana Conference: la-umc.org/staying
 “My Church Is Being Led to Disaffiliate from The UMC, but I Want to #BeUMC: What Can I Do?” from the Central Texas Conference: ctcumc.org/my-church-is-being-led-to-disaffiliate-what-can-i-do
 “Remaining in The UMC” from UMsConnected: umsconnected.com/what-about-my-umc-membership

Tracking disaffiliation
 Numbers from the United Methodist General Council on Finance and Administration: gca.org/reports
 United Methodist News is also tracking disaffiliations approved by annual conferences: umnews.org/en/news/disaffiliations-approved-by-annual-conferences
 Disaffiliation paragraph in *The Book of Discipline*: umc.org/en/content/book-of-discipline-2553-disaffiliation-over-human-sexuality

Clarifying misinformation
 “Is The United Methodist Church really ... ?” and Ask The UMC series: umc.org/content/ask-the-umc-series-is-the-umc-really
 “Bishops Push Back Against Recruitment Tactics” by Heather Hahn with United Methodist News: umnews.org/en/news/bishops-push-back-against-recruitment-tactics
 “What Are the Big Concerns? What those withdrawing from the UMC to form a new Methodist denomination may not be telling you” by StayUMC: stayumc.com/concerns

es before us, it's our turn to make change an opportunity to reach and uplift even more women while we take care of one another in the transition. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it. Joy will be found, for we know who and whose we are. We are faith, action, and sisterhood. The next United Methodist General Conference will take place April 23 to May 4, 2024, in Charlotte, North

Carolina. United Women in Faith will be there.

It is our ability to change, grow, and continue to let God perfect us in love that keeps us going. God is still at work in The United Methodist Church. United Women in Faith has a crucial role to play in building God's kin-dom. 

Tara Barnes is director of denominational relations for United Women in Faith.

in Loving Memory



Judy Leru Starnes Sipe, age 75, passed away Saturday, July 8, 2023, at Atrium Health in Mecklenburg County. She was born to the late Grady Thomas Starnes and Melza Irene Little Starnes on Tuesday, December 30, 1947, in Catawba County. Mrs. Sipe was a devoted and lifelong member of Mt. Bethel Methodist Church where she was a leader in the church and president of the Methodist Women's Group. Judy worked closely with Drum Majorettes of America. She enjoyed working with flowers, crafting, collecting tea pots, watching westerns, and the Atlanta Braves. Judy was a generous soul that would give and help anyone. She loved her family dearly and cherished spending time with them.

Including her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband of 45 years, Charles Wenter Sipe; son, Michael Wenter Sipe.

Those left to cherish the memories of Judy include her son, Tracy Sipe (Marie) of Hickory; daughter, Kisha Sipe of Mount Airy; grandchildren, Jackson Sipe, Jordan, Amber, and Kendra Hill; sister, Karen Bowman (Gary); and a number of nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Funeral arrangements were entrusted to

Alexander Funeral and Cremation Service.

Condolences may be sent to www.alexfuneralservice.com



"Find a Feather.....
God's Guardian Angels Are Near.

Psalm 91:4
He shall cover thee with His feathers and
Under His wings shall thou trust;
His truth be thy shield and buckler.

