

# Conference Gram

United Women in Faith, Western North Carolina

**We believe love in action  
can change the world.**  
Faith. Action. Sisterhood.

## 2024 Vision & Goals

- **Emphasize 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 2024 Conference Financial Goal:** Each unit will increase Mission Giving to the 2019 level.
- **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*

[wnccumw.org/](http://wnccumw.org/)

[www.facebook.com/wnccumw](https://www.facebook.com/wnccumw)

[uwfaith.org/](http://uwfaith.org/)



United  
Women  
in Faith

Western North Carolina

## 2024 Calendar of Events

March 23  
Annual UW Faith Day  
of Giving

April 19-21  
Southeast  
Jurisdiction Event  
Chattanooga, TN

June 13-15  
Spiritual Growth  
Retreat  
Lake Junaluska

August 2-3  
Mission u  
Catholic Conference  
Center, Hickory, NC

September 6-8  
Annual Celebration  
Lake Junaluska

October 5, 12, 26  
Ubuntu Days of  
Service  
Various Locations

October 19  
Leadership  
Development Day for  
District Officers  
(Virtual)

## 2024 WNCC UW Faith Officers

President - Joanie Strohm  
(828) 707-8928 ssjsmars@charter.net

Vice President - Lynn Alexander  
(336) 456-6686 lynn.alexander@qorvo.com

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

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

Spiritual Growth Coordinator - TBD

Mission Education & Interpretation Coord. - Victoria Brown  
(336) 596-5523 vickiebrown961@gmail.com

Membership, Nurture & Outreach Coord. - TBD

Social Action Coordinator - Laquetta Barbee  
(336) 580-5879 Laquetta16@gmail.com

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

Program Resources Secretary - Cathy McCauley  
(704) 965-6566 cathymc855@yahoo.com

Nominations Chair - Brenda Steadman  
(336) 509-4043 bsteadman@triad.rr.com

Mission u Dean - LaDonna Butts  
(704) 652-1994 ladonna.butts@windstream.net

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

Historian - Betty Durham  
(336) 542-8077 betty.durham50@yahoo.com


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

2024 SOUTHEASTERN JURISDICTION

*Get Together!*



There is still time to register for SEJ 2024!  
For information and to register for the April 19-21 event in Chattanooga, TN, visit  
<https://sejuwf.org/>.

## BITS & BRIEFS

- **SAVE THE DATE!** Full details about the **Spiritual Growth Retreat** are coming soon! Watch the [WNCC UW Faith website](#) and Conference e-News emails for complete information about this June 13-15 event at Lake Junaluska.
- From Brenda Steadman, Nominations Chair: Our **Committee on Nominations** is aware of how the local units are working to promote our Purpose and eagerly anticipates working with district and local officers. Please let us know of needs or interest in UW Faith leadership.
- Updated WNCC United Women in Faith **Standing Rules** were approved at the 2023 Annual Celebration in September. Find the updated rules at <https://bit.ly/wncuwfStandingRules2023>.
- Want to help welcome the world to NC for General Conference 2024? Find out how at <https://welcometogc.org/>!



## THE OPPORTUNITIES OF 2024

Joanie Strohm, President  
WNCC United Women in Faith

After the celebration of our Savior's birth, we are graced with the opportunities of 2024: opportunities pertaining to family situations, church situations, world situations, and personal situations. If you are reading this, it is safe to say that we share these opportunities. The opportunities before us in 2024 include abundant life, balance, and connection and community.

**Abundant Life.** We can easily become so concerned about the day-to-day expenses, the work that must get done, the problems at our work or at church that sometimes we don't see the opportunities with which we are blessed. Do we see the opportunities of giving our time, talent, and money? As we read in Mark 12: 42-44, the widow in the Bible did. I once knew a woman who, much like the widow in that Bible story, gave her all: Miss Jennie from Smyrna, Tennessee. Miss Jennie was a widow and a shut-in, lived in a humble home, and had worked in the school cafeteria for many years. She was not wealthy in money; she was wealthy in love for her fellow man. She gave her tithe to the United Methodist Church and pledged to the Smyrna United Methodist Women. She gave sacrificially, and what an example she was of living life abundantly!

**Balance.** Balance in our lives is often hard to maintain. If we find ourselves on the computer or cell phone for too many hours in a day and neglect our family, our friends, or our colleagues, we need to take a good look at how our time is spent. That is what Soul Care retreats are all about. It is important to take time to reconnect with our Creator and creation. Taking long walks or sitting with a friend or neighbor that we haven't taken time to visit would be a good start. We can even have a Soul Care retreat in our own home! Could we actually stay away from our phone, computer, or TV for one day a week, one day a month? Let's be honest, many of us would have a great deal of trouble doing that for even one day a year! Our power went out recently and everything was shut down. It was so quiet in our house, I got a bit antsy! Do we see opportunities to bring balance to our lives?

**Connection and Community.** Connection and community are what the United Methodist Church and United Women in Faith are all about. Ask yourselves: "How many of my best friends would I not have met if I had not been a member of a United Methodist Church or United Women in Faith?" We are blessed to know each other, to pray for and with each other. In spite of the many problems in our world, we still have each other and most of all we have the love, mercy, and forgiveness of our Lord.

As the opportunities of 2024 are upon us, I am reminded of a scripture that a dear friend who is a member of United Women in Faith blessed me with: "Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ," Colossians 3: 23 and 24. We serve the Lord Christ! Make the most of the opportunities you are given; God is with you!



Find out what *Soul Care* means to United Women in Faith at  
<https://uwfaith.org/events/soul-care-retreats/>.





United  
Women  
in Faith

Western North Carolina

## 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 2024? 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, 2024**. Interviews will be conducted on Saturday, March 16, 2024.

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 UW Faith Scholarship Committee Chairperson, if you have questions or need additional information.



## PROGRAM RESOURCES

Kathy Chadwell, 2023 Secretary of Program Resources

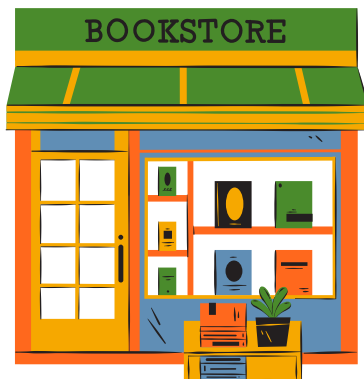
I am here again to remind you how important the [United Women in Faith Reading Program](#) is. Our UW Faith walk is enriched as we learn so much about our world around us and how we depend on each other. Remember to keep track of the books you read for the year and report your participation on the Reading Program [Reporting Form](#)! We want to recognize you and we need to know the participant numbers for our annual report. Remember that UW Faith podcasts, some movies, and bonus books count, too. Please keep reading those books and attending our events. They are important to being involved in United Women in Faith.

As we start the 2024 Reading Program, check out the [Reading Program catalog](#) to get pointed toward some great books! NEW to the Reading Program this year:

- Expanded selection of books for more choices!
- More youth and children's book selections!
- UW Faith virtual bookshop for purchasing Reading Program books while earning 10% back for UW Faith! Shop at <https://bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith>.

### Kathy Recommends...

I have been reading a book called [Phoebe: A Story](#) by Biblical scholar Paula Gooder. It is a story of Phoebe, Paul, Titus, and Peter and a letter written to the church in Rome around 56 A.D. This is a book for anyone who wants to engage more deeply and imaginatively with Paul's theology.



**SHOP NOW**

Find [Phoebe: A Story](#) and other Reading Program books at the new [UW Faith online bookshop](#) and earn 10% back for UW Faith!

### Reading Program Categories

- Education For Mission
- Leadership Development
- Nurturing For Community
- Social Action
- Spiritual Growth

### More Great Ways to Earn Reading Program Credit

- [Faith Talks](#) podcast (one credit in the Spiritual Growth category for listening to 2+ episodes)
- [Voices from the Field](#) webinar (one credit in the Education for Mission category for listening to 2+ episodes)
- **Movies** (see pg. 3 of the [2024 Reading Program Catalog](#) for details)
- [Past years' reading lists](#) (Books from the 2019-2023 lists still count!)
- **Bonus books** (see pg. 2 of the [2024 Reading Program Catalog](#))
- [Mission u](#) (1 credit in Spiritual Growth for reading a Mission u study on your own, 2 credits in Spiritual Growth for joining a Mission u study with others, as a leader or participant)
- [response](#) magazine (1 credit in the Nurturing for Community category for reading one year/6 issues)

### Reading Program Plans

Regular reading of [response](#) magazine plus:

- Plan 1: 5 books, 1 from each category above
- Plan 2: 10 books, 2 from each category above
- Plan 3: 15 books, 2 each category plus 5 additional books from any category
- Plan 4: 20 books, 2 from each category plus 10 additional books from any category

Enjoy keeping a history of your reading and earn a Reading Program certificate each year by keeping track on the [Reading Program Reporting Form](#)!



Join a virtual chat about favorite books in the UW Faith Reading Enthusiasts Group on the Mighty Networks platform.

<https://bit.ly/reading-enthusiasts>





## United Women in Faith Day of Giving 2024



**Day of Giving**  
Save the Date:  
Saturday, March 23, 2024

**Faithfully Forward**  
uwfaith.org/dayofgiving

**Save the Date:** March 23, 2024

**Faithfully Forward** Join United Women in Faith as we step faithfully forward, uniting hearts and hands to create a brighter, more compassionate tomorrow for women, children, and youth. Give to The Legacy Endowment Fund on the Day of Giving, March 23.

**WAYS TO GIVE**

- **Online at:** uwfaith.org/dayofgiving
- **By phone:** 800-278-7771 (8 am–5 pm EST, Mon.–Fri.)
- **Text:** "FUTURE" to 20503
- **By check to:**  
United Women in Faith, Attn: Legacy  
777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor  
Church Center for the United Nations  
New York, NY 10017  
Write "Day of Giving" in the memo section.

**Together we are building our Legacy!**

 **United Women in Faith**

The Legacy Endowment Fund is a permanent investment that supports the work and the future of United Women in Faith.



"Why March 23? Because on that date in 1869 a group of eight intrepid women founded the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, an organization that was the forerunner of United Women in Faith. To fulfill their vision of creating educational opportunities and providing health care to women in India, these founding women asked others to contribute 'their prayers and two pennies.' In this way a movement of faith and generosity in action was born.

**The Legacy Endowment Fund** of United Women in Faith is a permanently invested endowment that supports the work of improving the lives of women, children and youth at home and abroad.

**The annual Day of Giving on March 23** is the single largest fundraising activity for the Legacy Fund of the year. United Women in Faith members and supporters across the country gather locally and virtually to contribute to and raise funds for the endowment."

from United Women in Faith. (n.d.).  
Day of giving.

<https://uwfaith.org/dayofgiving/>

## WNCC UW FAITH LEGACY FUND GIVING

Lynne Gilbert, Legacy Liaison

Did you know? Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith members...YOU...gave \$40,934 to the Legacy Endowment Fund in 2023! Western North Carolina Conference members have given a total of \$514,488 to the Legacy Fund since it began! Thank you! As of December 31, 2023, the Legacy Endowment Fund total was \$36,596,855. Our goal is to raise \$60,000,000. Together, we are making it happen! Day of Giving is a great day for everyone to participate; join us!



## HISTORICALLY SPEAKING



LaDonna Butts, 2023 Historian

It has truly been an honor to serve as your Conference Historian these past two years, two years marked with multiple changes. I refer to the time as BC (before COVID/before changes) and AC (after COVID/after changes).

Yes, I realize COVID has not been eradicated, but in 2022 we definitely saw changes as we began to once again hold in-person as well as virtual events. Additionally, we had a name change to the more inclusive United Women in Faith. Our logo changed along with the name; the vibrant new logo reflects the liveliness and vitality we hope to inject into our organization. When the WNCC UMC restructured from twelve to eight districts several years ago, we promoted the headline, "CHANGE IS GOOD!" Well, once again, change is good for a number of reasons.

Although we held both our 2022 Spiritual Growth Retreat and Annual Gathering Celebration at Lake Junaluska, Mission u was once again a virtual event rather than in-person in 2022. However, change was on the horizon for the 2023 Mission u. With notification that our most recent venue, Pfeiffer University, would be unavailable during the summer of 2023, we had the choice of holding another online-only Mission u or seeking another site. Given the change in the curricula from a justice or global issue mission study to a biblical study, the location change to the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC, offered the ideal retreat setting to explore and experience "Living the Kin-dom" with the study of the Lord's Prayer.

I believe none of the 92 attendees will ever look at the Lord's Prayer in the same light as we have memorized and repeated since childhood. But possibly the most notable change in Mission u 2023 was the increase in first-time attendees. Over 17% of our registrants experienced Mission u for the very first time, and all are eager to attend in 2024!

I cannot presume to know what changes we might experience in 2024 and beyond, but FAITH leads me to know we will face them head-on if HOPE is our attitude and focus and LOVE is put into action for women, children, and youth around the world just as it has been since 1869. Just as our foremothers left us, leave a legacy for others to follow.

## WE LOVE UBUNTU

Victoria Brown, Mission Coordinator,  
Education & Interpretation

What is ubuntu? As we have learned in United Women in Faith, ubuntu means "I am because you are." Through ubuntu service events, we have strengthened our understanding of Matthew 25: 31-40. In a [blog article](#) about the Ubuntu Day of Service at Assembly 2022, event co-organizer Michelle Clemons was quoted and explained, "Ubuntu is the *being* of mission. It focuses on relationships, shared experience, and mutuality. Having a positive impact on someone else's life reminds us of the value we bring and gives our lives purpose" (uwfaith.org).

This past October 7th, one of the three WNCC UW Faith Ubuntu Days of Service for 2023, the Uwharrie District Team selected the Mission Response Center in Mooresville, NC, as their Ubuntu event location. Team members brought donations needed to fill Christmas shoe boxes for Project Agape and, once at the MRC, assembled the boxes. The group filled three large bins of Christmas shoe boxes that day. All were proud to accomplish their goals for Project Agape and felt God's love in doing so.

Ubuntu is the meaning of mission. We find creative ways to come together and put love in action. Each time we participate in Ubuntu Days, it is inspirational and life-giving. We are blessed by serving others, sharing our faith through United Women in Faith, and making hope a reality by making a difference in the lives of women, children, and youth. May all United Women in Faith continue to see God's hand at work and be God's hands at work!



*The Uwharrie District Team living out the meaning of ubuntu at the Mission Response Center for an Ubuntu Day of Service on October 7, 2023*





WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE  
UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

Amy Cochran  
381 Weeks Road  
Rutherfordton, NC 28139

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## DID YOU KNOW...

- ...you can sign up for United Women in Faith action alerts for legislative actions, rallies and marches, letter-writing campaigns, and more? Find a sign-up link in the "Impact" section of the "Inspire, Influence, Impact" page at <https://uwfaith.org/members-and-leaders/inspire-influence-impact/> (log in or create an online account to access this page). You can also learn more about the current Justice Campaigns--ending mass incarceration and criminalization of communities of color and climate justice--*and* sign up for the action alerts on one of the campaign web pages at <https://uwfaith.org/members-and-leaders/justice-campaigns/>.
- ...you can find daily prayer prompts and inspiration on the online [\*\*United Women in Faith Daily Prayer Guide\*\*](#)?

