

April 2024

Women Talk



United Women in Faith

Smoky Mountain District † United Methodist Women † Western North Carolina Conference



Smoky Mountain District United Women in Faith
Day Apart
Living Water: Peace Like a River
May 4 — 9:30 AM to Noon
Robbinsville UMC, 249 W Fort Hill Rd



Retreat Schedule:





- 9:30—10:00 Check-In & Light Refreshments
- 10:00—11:00 Breakout Sessions
- 11:00—Noon Worship and Communion

Retreat Speaker:

Dr. Pati Graham
District Lay Representative
&
District Director for Lay Servant Ministry



Breakout Session Options (Choose One)

<p>Prayer Beads Make and take a set of prayer beads.</p>		<p>Pray & Color A visual and playful way to pray using colorful doodles.</p>	
<p>Lectio Divina Read, reflect, respond, and rest with Scripture.</p>		<p>My Body in Prayer Explore simple prayer postures (sitting or standing).</p>	

Please register in advance using this link: bit.ly/SMDRetreat
If you need assistance, please contact Lisa Bacon at 828-586-8399 or lisabacon304@gmail.com.

WHAT'S IN THIS NEWSLETTER THAT I'D BE INTERESTED IN?

Page 1—DAY APART, Saturday, May 4th at Robbinsville UMC.

Page 2—A Table of Contents...so you can find the things you really want to find first!...plus Let's Pray for our General Conference in Charlotte!

Page 3—Greetings from your new District Treasurer and Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund.

Page 4—Our Mission Statement, a special thought to ponder, and "Bright Lights" from *response*.

Page 5—Spiritual Growth Retreat, June 13-15th at Lake Junaluska, NC

Page 6—A Letter from Bess Redmond, our WNCC UWFaith Treasurer.

Page 7—Special News from Project AGAPE and "Reading is Rewarding."

Page 8—The 2024 SMD UWFaith Executive Team and PAG Listing.

Page 9—Nurturing Partners for 2024, District Love Offering, and communications tips.

Page 10—SMD & WNCC Calendar of Events

PLEASE PRAY FOR:



General Conference Charlotte

Let's pray for our WNCC delegation as they prepare for the meeting of the General Conference coming to Charlotte on April 23 - May 3, 2024. We look forward to hearing from them at Annual Conference in June as we continue moving into the future of The United Methodist Church together!

Greetings from your new District Treasurer:

Thank you for giving to United Women in Faith. Our total giving for Quarter 1 was \$2,538.88. I apologize for the rocky start lately due to the changeover to me as treasurer and change to quarterly treasurer letters that are now emailed in place of 'snail' mailed letters to save time and mission dollars. There were a few treasurers who missed the letter, but did contact me and sent in funds that will be applied to Quarter 2 – Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Giving is a privilege – a gift of God's grace. ...from United Women in Faith in Mission. Our Love Offering theme is A Gift of Mission in honor of future generations of women, children, and youth. The new brochure for Love Offering will be in my next letter to the Treasurer. You can give the Love Offering at the 2024 Annual Celebration in September or send to our Conference Treasurer, Bess Redmond. Please read more information about 2024 Conference goals in a separate article in this newsletter. The deadline for your remittance for Quarter 2 will be May 25 in order to reach me by May 31.

Kim Shafer, SMD District Treasurer
281 Valley View Terrace
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Phone: (704) 965-2022



Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund

- ◇ Make a gift to the Legacy Fund through your local unit United Women in Faith treasurer.
- ◇ Make a one time donation or consider becoming a Legacy Builder by giving a monthly gift of \$18.69 or more.
- ◇ Use our Western North Carolina Conference Legacy Commitment Form, available on our website at www.wnccumw.org/legacyfund.
- ◇ Online on the national office website at <https://uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/>
- ◇ **By phone:** 800-278-7771 (8 am–6 pm EST, M-F)
- ◇ **By check:** note "Legacy Fund" in memo line & mail to: United Women in Faith, Attn: Legacy, Church Center for the United Nations, 777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor, New York, NY 10017.
- ◇ **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.



MISSION STATEMENT OF UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence and impact local and global communities.

My obligation is to do the right thing. The rest is in God's hands.

* * * * *

"If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who does right is born of him." - 1 John 2:29 RSV

Look who we found on p. 12 of the March/April 2024 issue of **response** magazine! Share your unit's Bright Lights in a future issue of response magazine by submitting your story at response@uwfaith.org.

influence

Comforting Children in North Carolina

by **ROBIN BURNETTE**

Seventeen years ago, Diane Sims had an idea sent by the Holy Spirit. To this day, the First United Methodist Women in Faith of Murphy, North Carolina, continue to make her inspiration a reality.

The mission was to reach out to children in the community whose families were in crisis. Diane Sims, with the help of Sheila Snow, designs comfort bags. Snow sews cloth bags, and Sims draws and paints a different animal on each one. Then Snow chooses ribbon to match each animal and adds handles. Ladies from the Willing Hands Circle of response@uwfaith.org.



The Willing Hands Circle of United Women in Faith at First United Methodist Church of Murphy, North Carolina, create and deliver comfort bags to local children in need.

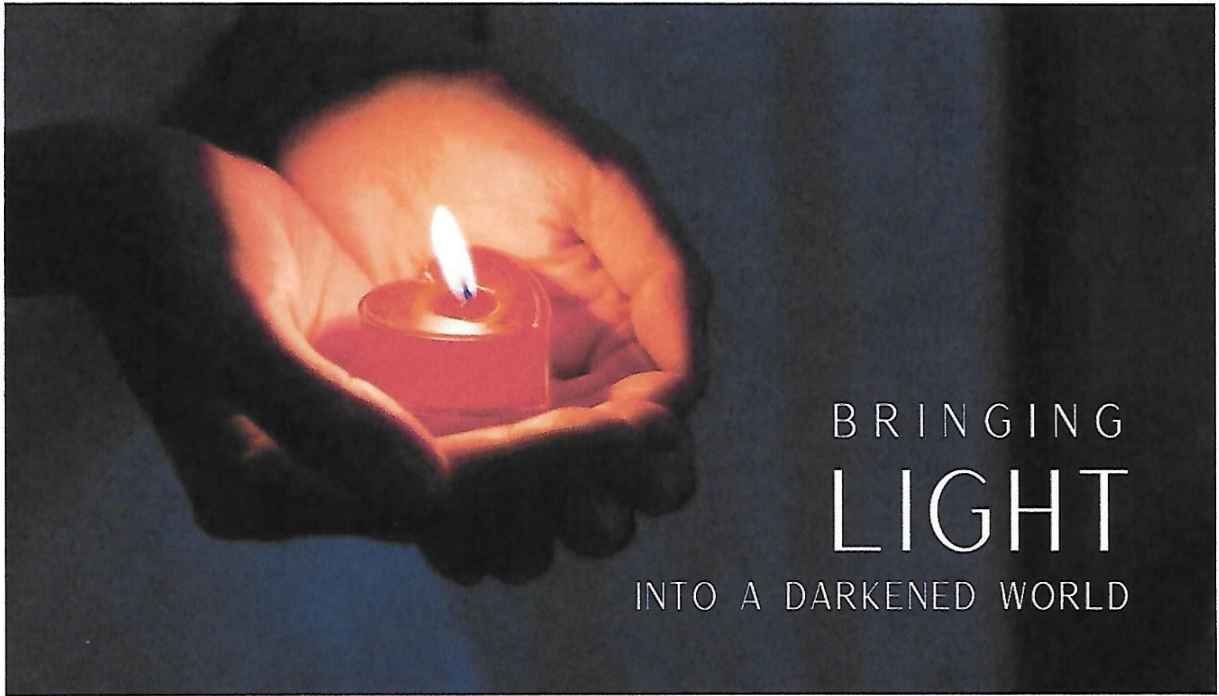
United Women in Faith purchase and fill each bag with personal hygiene items and toys.

Half of the bags are delivered to the Children Advocacy Center director at the local sheriff's office. The remaining bags are given to REACH, a nonprofit shelter for domestic violence survivors. In 2023, 26 bags were created and filled.

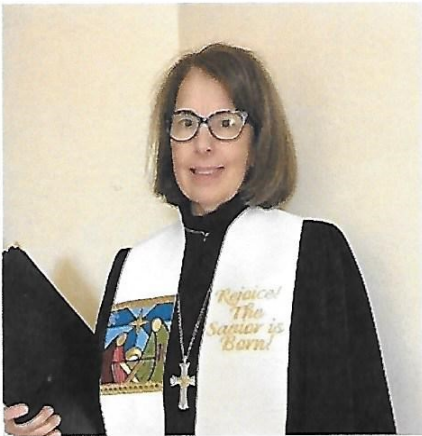
These bags provide comfort to children who need extra love

during a difficult time. This way, Sims, Snow, and the women's group fulfill the vision God shared: "And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." (Luke 1:45) ■

Robin Burnette is a United Women in Faith member of the Willing Hands Circle at First United Methodist Church of Murphy, North Carolina, which is a part of the Western North Carolina Conference.



Western NC Conference United Women in Faith
Spiritual Growth Retreat
June 13-15, 2024
Lake Junaluska, NC



Rev. Marilyn Weiler
Retreat Leader



Rev. Dr. Mark Barden
Music Leader



Catherine Ritch
Music Leader

Hands-on Project: Hygiene Kits

Registration: www.wnccumw.org

To: All United Women in Faith Sisters across the WNCC Conference,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all that you do in your church, your community, and especially through your participation in United Women in Faith. We have a challenge ahead of us. We all are aware of the effects of disaffiliation throughout our conference. Last year our Mission Giving was the lowest that I can remember. Our Mission Giving in 2023 was \$336, 727 to the National Office compared to \$410,968 the previous year. This is a 18% decrease. Our financial goal for 2024 is for each unit to increase their giving to the 2019 (pre-pandemic) level. If your unit is already doing that, I challenge you to do even more.

According to the Membership, Nurture, and Outreach report from the 2023 Annual Celebration, we have a membership of 14,915 members in 425 units (recent numbers at the end of 2023 are not yet available.)

What if:

Every member gave up One Starbucks coffee once a month . . .
(this is as cheap as you can get at Starbucks) $14,915 \times 12 \times \$2.50 = \$447,450$

What if:

Every member sent just ONE Gift to Mission Card . . . $14,915 \times \$5.00 = \$74,575$
Every unit gave ONE additional Gift to Mission Card . . . $425 \times \$5.00 = \$2,125$

What if:

Every unit purchased just ONE plain gold Special Mission Recognition Pin . . .
 $425 \times \$40.00 = \$17,000$
(Check with your district treasurer about other pins that are available)

What if:

Every member sent three (3) Gift in Memory cards in lieu of a sympathy card . . .
 $14,915 \times \$15.00 = \$223,725$

What if:

Every unit asked their local congregation to help with the World Thank Offering. . .
 $425 \times \$250.00 = \$106,250$

GRAND Total OVER \$800,000 IMAGINE!

The most important thing that we can do is invite other women to join us in our mission to help women, children, and youth at home and across the world. **Please tell our mission story!**

Yours in Christ, Bess Redmond, WNCC-UW Faith Treasurer

We Believe Love in Action Can Change the World!

SPECIAL NEWS FROM PROJECT AGAPE:

Nara Melkonyan, the Director of Project AGAPE, sends out regular newsletters regarding the situation in Armenia. Our own Beverly Bard (former MEI Coordinator) always receives one and forwards the information on to other interested individuals. Following is a special email from Beverly regarding Nara's latest newsletter and changes to Project AGAPE's Donation Policies.

Nara states authorities have mandated an important update on new regulations on their donation policies by the Armenian Custom Office. The authorities have mandated that only **NEW ITEMS CAN BE IMPORTED TAX-FREE**. Due to this recent change in government regulations, they are no longer able to accept used items, as they are now subject to taxes upon importation to the country.

Nara states that they want to express gratitude for your ongoing support and understanding as we adapt to these changing circumstances. Your unwavering commitment to Project AGAPE remains the cornerstone of our success, and we are confident that together we will overcome this challenge with the same compassion and resilience that define our Christian spirit.

Nara also stated that there was a surge of support towards Armenia when there was an exodus of Armenians from Artsakh, but disappointment of aid consisting of used items that proved to be of little or no use. Taxes were levied on all used items. The authorities have mandated that only **NEW ITEMS** can be imported tax-free.

Please pass this information on. Thank you!

Beverly Bard (828-646-7558)



READING IS REWARDING!

- Share the program with United Women in Faith members and members of the community.
- Help people attain books. Distribute this guide. [2024 Reading Program Catalog \(uwfaith.org\)](https://www.uwfaith.org/2024-Reading-Program-Catalog)
- Connect with local and district groups. Start a book club, download books onto an e-reader to pass around and share, present book reviews at group meetings.
- Display a progress chart in your church for all who wish to participate, and post displays to encourage book sales.
- Pray. Books often raise concerns about people, countries, and issues. Bring these concerns to God during your prayer time at home and at group meetings.
- Advocate for tangible change. Many Reading Program books address issues including climate change, mass incarceration and racism. Organize a task force to address these issues in your community.

DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT US IF YOU NEED ANYTHING!

United Women in Faith 2024 Smoky Mtn. District Exec. Team & Program Advisory Group

President:

Lisa Bacon (Cullowhee)
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Vice President:

[Open]

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Spiritual Growth:

[Open]

Membership, Nurture & Outreach:

[Open]

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Historian:

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Newsletter Editor

[see N J Willis under Secretary]

Nurturing Partner Coordinator & Conference Liaison

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Nominations:

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Legacy Liaison:

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1/27/2024

SMD United Women in Faith
Nurturing Partners 2024

Nurturing Partner	NP Contact Info	UW Faith Unit
Lisa Bacon	lisabacon304@gmail.com 828-226-2433	Bryson City, Love's Chapel, Sylva First, Webster
Debbie Ray	wrray@charter.net 828-400-3499	Beaverdam, Canton First, Canton Central, Fincher's Chapel, Rockwood, Shady Grove
Laurel Bevill	laurelbev@icloud.com 828-456-5528	Clyde Central, Maple Grove
Velma Zeek	vzeek56@frontier.com 828-369-5782	Andrews, Franklin First
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Ellynn Stonebraker	jumperlady21@gmail.com 828-524-8787	Cullowhee, Hayesville First, Murphy First
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Judy Starnes	starnes.judy@gmail.com 828-452-3548	Cruso, Elizabeth Chapel
Nancy Watkins	nmhwatkins@gmail.com 828-550-5927	Crabtree

District Love Offerings:

We invite you to give generously to your district love offering. Your Mission Giving continues the work of United Women in Faith, making a difference, every day, in the lives of women, children and youth around the world. **Thank you for your support of Mission Giving!** Every single dollar makes a difference!

You may give to your district love offering in a couple of ways:

- ♦ **Make an online donation using the special link for your district found on the District Events 2024 page at wnccumw.org.** Each district has a unique link so that we can give your district credit for your gift.
- ♦ **Mail a check to your District Treasurer (Kim Shafer),** made payable to United Women in Faith, and designated as District Love Offering. We will share those addresses during the meetings, and you will also be able to find them in a recent newsletter for your district on your district's page of our website.

1. *Have you changed your email address recently? If Yes, please let us know at smdcommcoor@gmail.com.*
2. *Have you added email to your list of communication tools? If Yes, please let us know.*
3. *Why? So you won't miss any important SMD UMW info and we can save on postage! THANKS!*

Nancy Jo Willis
Secretary & Newsletter Editor, SMD
310 Cassady Lane
Murphy, NC 28906

TO:



United
Women
in Faith

2024 UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CONFERENCE & DISTRICT EVENTS

WNCC UWF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 19-21	Southeastern Jurisdictional Conf, Chattanooga, TN
June 13-15	Spiritual Growth Retreat, Lake Junaluska
Aug. 2-3	Mission u, Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC
Sept. 6-8	Annual Celebration, Lake Junaluska
Oct. 5, 19, 26	Ubuntu Days of Service—multiple locations
Oct. 19	District Leadership Development—Virtual at 10:00 am

SMD UWF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 4	Day Apart (Robbinsville UMC)
August 17	SMD Annual Celebration (virtual)
November 2	SMD Missions Festival (Crabtree UMC)

April 23-May 3 UNITED METHODIST CHURCH GENERAL CONF.