



BRINGING
LIGHT

INTO A DARKENED WORLD

Spiritual Growth Retreat

United Women in Faith
Western North Carolina Conference
June 13-15, 2024
Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

Prayer and Meditation time can happen anywhere around Lake Junaluska. **Memorial Chapel** is a quiet, holy space in which to pray. Open your mind and heart to the renewing Spirit of God's light. **New:** On the prayer table in **Harrell Auditorium**, you may place your prayer request in the basket and take a request to give the gift of prayer to another.

Registration is in Harrell Center Room 201, Susan Todd Lounge, from 2:00-6:45 PM on Thursday and 8:15-9:00 AM on Friday.

Program Resources and Mission Displays are in Harrell Center Room 201. Stop by and check out the resources and view the displays.

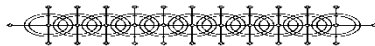
UMCOR Kits will be collected in Harrell Center Room 202. Drop off items from 2:00-4:00 PM on Thursday and 10:00-11:00 AM and 1:00-2:00 PM on Friday.

ALL meals for both the Terrace and Lambuth Hotels will be served in the Terrace Hotel Dining Room:*

Dinner: 5:30-7:30 PM Breakfast: 7:30-9:00 AM Lunch: 12:00-1:30 PM

*Please allow those with ribbons on their nametags to break line if needed. They have duties for the retreat. Thank you.

An Offering for Mission Giving will be taken during the Friday evening session. Checks should be made payable to WNCC-UW Faith.



Dates to Remember in 2024:

Mission u at the Catholic Conference Center, August 2-3
Annual Celebration at Lake Junaluska, September 6-8
Ubuntu Days of Service in various locations, October 5, 12, 26
Leadership Development for District Officers, Virtual, October 19

Friday Morning Breakout Sessions

9:00-10:15

- **United Women in Faith Choir** led by Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch, Harrell Auditorium
- **Book Study, *Other Words for Home***, led by Jennie Greenway, Blue Ridge District SG Coordinator, Room 105, lower level of Harrell Center

10:30-11:45

- **General Conference 2024 Recap** led by Lynne Gilbert, delegate to GC, Harrell Auditorium
- **Jazzercise with Jesus** led by LaDonna Butts, Room 105, lower level of Harrell Center
- **Walk around the Lake** led by Valerie Prim, Yadkin Valley District SG Coordinator, meet in front of Stuart Auditorium



Thank you for silencing your electronic devices during all sessions. Please feel free to use them for scripture reading and taking notes.

Session One - June 13

Gathering Praise – 7:00 PM Rev. Dr. Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch

Welcome Joanie Strohm
Conference President

Announcements and Introductions Sandy Hieronymus
Interim Conference Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator

*Call to Worship from Psalm 90:1-2 Sandy Hieronymus

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations.
**Before the mountains were brought forth or you had formed
the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you
are God.**

*Hymn: *Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore* Page 344
The United Methodist Hymnal

Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer Debbie Eudy
Interim Metro District Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator

Scripture: Genesis 1:1-5 Cathy McCauley
Conference Secretary of Program Resources

Message: *From the Beginning* Rev. Marilyn Weiler

*Hymn: *Shine, Jesus, Shine* Page 2173
The Faith We Sing

*Benediction Sarah Lee
Uwharrie District President

Postlude Catherine Ritch

**Please stand as you are able.*

Session Two - June 14

Gathering Praise – 2:00 PM Rev. Dr. Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch

Announcements Sandy Hieronymus

Legacy Moment Lynne Gilbert
Webmaster/Legacy Liaison

MN&O Moment Kim Eller
Membership Nurture and Outreach Mission Coordinator

Mission u LaDonna Butts
Mission u Dean

Annual Celebration Lynn Alexander
Conference Vice President

*Call to Worship from Psalm 23 LaDonna Butts

Praise to the Lord our shepherd, who gives us all we need for life.

We are fed in green pastures;

we are washed in the calm waters of God's goodness.

God leads us on our path to life
and comforts us in the dark valley.

**The Lord spreads a table for us before our enemies
and anoints us with healing oil.**

The cup of God's blessing overflows for us;
God restores our life.

We will dwell in God's house our whole life long. Alleluia!

*Hymn: *Christ is the World's Light*

Page 188

The United Methodist Hymnal

Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer Sherry Sumerlin
Interim Appalachian District Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator

Special Music: *My Tribute* Rev. Dr. Mark Barden

Scripture: Isaiah 49:1-6 Laquetta Barbee
Conference Social Action Mission Coordinator

Message: *The Prophecy*

Rev. Marilyn Weiler

*Hymn: *This Is My Father's World*

Page 144
The United Methodist Hymnal

*Benediction

Cindy Carter
Uwharrie District Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator

Postlude

Catherine Ritch

**Please stand as you are able.*

Session Three – June 14

Gathering Praise – 7:00 PM Rev. Dr. Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch

Welcome and Opening Prayer

Sandy Hieronymus

Hands-on Mission Project Report

Vickie Brown
Mission Education and Interpretation Mission Coordinator

*Call to Worship from Psalm 32 and 107

Vickie Brown

O give thanks to the Lord, who is good;
whose steadfast love endures forever.
Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story,
those whom God has redeemed from trouble.
Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O righteous,
shout for joy, all who walk in the light of God.
Come, let us worship the Lord.

*Hymn: *Come, Now Is the Time to Worship*

Page 3196
Worship & Song

Love Offering and Prayer

Bess Redmond
Conference Treasurer

Offertory: *Lord, Make Me What You Will*

Rev. Dr. Mark Barden

Doxology: *Give Thanks*

Page 2036
The Faith We Sing

Scripture: John 1:1-5

Rhita Newcomb
Yadkin Valley District President

Message: *Fulfillment of the Prophecy*

Rev. Marilyn Weiler

*Hymn: *This Little Light of Mine*

*Benediction

Valerie Prim
Yadkin Valley District Spiritual Growth Mission Coordinator

Postlude

Catherine Ritch

**Please stand as you are able*

Session Four - June 15

Gathering Praise – 10:00 AM

Rev. Dr. Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch

Special Mission Recognition

Sandy Hieronymus,
Joanie Strohm, Bess Redmond

*Call to Worship: *We Long for Light*

Lynn Alexander
Conference Vice President

We, your people, have walked in darkness too long.

Today, Lord, we bow before you in search of the light of hope.

We, your people, have wandered into darkness too often.

Today, Lord, we ask for clear guidance - light our way.

We, your people, have allowed darkness to take residence in our lives.

Today, Lord, we cry for forgiveness for opening our hearts to what we knew was wrong.

All: Today, Lord, we, your people, choose the Light of Salvation instead of the darkness of sin.

(from The Africana Worship Book, page 140)

Daily Prayer Guide

Jennie Greenway
Blue Ridge District Spiritual Mission Growth Coordinator

*Hymn: *Gather Us In*

Page 2239
The Faith We Sing

Anthem: *Carry the Light*

United Women in Faith Choir

Scripture: 1 John 1:5-10

Betty Durham
Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator

Message: *Our Charge*

Rev. Marilyn Weiler

Service of Holy Communion

Receiving Bread and Cup: Please remain seated as baskets are passed.

Communion Musical Meditation:

Catherine Ritch

Let Us Break Bread Together

Prayer After Communion:

**Faithful God,
in baptism you have adopted us as your children,
Made us members of the body of Christ
and chosen us as inheritors of your kingdom.
We thank you that in this Holy Meal
you renew your promises within us,
empower us by your Spirit to witness and to serve,
and send us out as Jesus' disciples to be a light in a
darkened world. In Christ's name we pray. Amen**

*Hymn: *I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light*

Page 206
The United Methodist Hymnal

*Sending Forth

Joanie Strohm

Postlude

Catherine Ritch

**Please stand as you are able.*



- Special Thanks -

The Spiritual Growth Committee would like to thank the following individuals and groups for sharing their talents and gifts for this meeting:

- Reverend Marilyn Weiler for being our keynote speaker and celebrant for communion
- The musicians: Reverend Doctor Mark Barden and Catherine Ritch
- All of the program participants
- All of the District Mission Teams for your help and support
- Members of the Conference Executive Committee
- UWFaith Tech Team: Lynne Gilbert, Betty Durham, and Sara Williams
- The Lake Junaluska Assembly staff
- YOU for your dedication to United Women in Faith

Thank you for sharing in this Spiritual Growth Retreat.

Spiritual Growth Committee: Sandy Hieronymus, Interim Chairperson, Lynn Alexander, Laquetta Barbee, Vickie Brown, Amy Cochran, Lynne Gilbert, Sarah Lee, Cathy McCauley, Rhita Newcomb, Bess Redmond, and Joanie Strohm



United
Women
in Faith

Western North Carolina

We believe
love in action
can change
the world.

faith

action

sisterhood



Program Participants

Reverend Marilyn Weiler - *Retreat Leader* - Marilyn Kearns Lawrence Weiler was born in Winston-Salem, NC, and was baptized there at Centenary United Methodist Church. Following in the Methodist tradition of her family since the 1700s, her loving parents, Rachel and Gilbert Lawrence, brought her up through activities of Sunday School, VBS, church camp, confirmation, UMYF, worship, mission work and church leadership. This foundation continues to support her in her life's journey.



After graduating from Meredith College, Marilyn began her 50-year marriage to her high-school sweetheart, John Weiler, who died in 2023. They are the proud parents of their incredible daughter, Johanna. Marilyn taught high school math and computer science. She earned a Masters of Education Degree in mathematics from Campbell University. She entered the corporate world working for the Hanes Division of Sara Lee Corporation.

Marilyn discerned a call to ordained ministry when she was a member at Main Street United Methodist Church in Kernersville. She left the corporate world and earned her Masters of Divinity Degree at Duke University Divinity School. She started ministry as a new church planter and has continued to lead congregations through difficult times. After serving churches in rural, suburban, town, and urban settings, she now enjoys her retired status back at Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem, NC.

Reverend Doctor Mark Barden – *Soloist and Music Leader* – While serving on the Western NC Conference staff, Mark was liaison to the Conference United Methodist Women from 2000-2011. Through the years, he has participated in many UMW/UWF events.



Mark is the son of a WNCU United Methodist pastor and grandson of United Methodist missionaries who served in Africa. He began his career teaching journalism and broadcasting at the University of Mississippi and Murray State University in Kentucky. Following his call to ordained ministry, he completed seminary at Duke University. He later

earned a doctorate in Arts and Theology from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, DC. Mark has served churches throughout our conference in addition to serving on the conference staff. He is now retired spending time between Charlotte and Lake Junaluska.

Mark is married to the Reverend Barbara Barden, retired Deacon from Myers Park United Methodist Church, Charlotte, NC. They have a son, Chris, who is a computer software developer and lives in Charlotte.

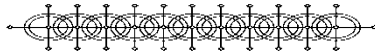
Catherine Ritch – *Pianist* – Catherine is a native of Matthews, NC. She is a composer and author of inspirational fiction, non-fiction, and children’s books with 27 books in print and 7 others in process. She is a frequent speaker/musician in a variety of venues. She has entertained or spoken to audiences around the world. Catherine was selected as the International Profile of The United Methodist Church for September



2009 because of her continual work and efforts with missions for schools in areas of natural disaster.

Catherine combines wit, talent, inspiration, and positive energy to inspire and entertain audiences of all ages. From Bach to Broadway to Boogie to the Best of Gospel, she will have the audience enthralled with the rhythms of life. One of Catherine's most fun ventures is a comedy series featuring Miz Eudora Rumph of Smackass Gap, NC, where Methodists have The Hinton Retreat Center. She has entertained many from all walks of life through simple mountain wit and wisdom of her Appalachian grandmother. In Catherine's words, "People in today's society take themselves way too seriously or get caught up in unnecessary stresses. A good dose of Miz Eudora is a cure for all that ails you, and also for that which don't."

Catherine has been introduced as an author, composer, comedienne, entertainer, teacher, musician, inspirational/motivational speaker, and volunteer-in-mission, but her favorite way to be acknowledged is "friend."



Hope is being able to see that there is Light despite
all of the darkness. *Desmond Tutu*

It is better to light one small candle than to
curse the darkness. *Eleanor Roosevelt*

**All the darkness in the world cannot extinguish
the light of a single candle.** *Francis of Assisi*

Darkness cannot drive out darkness:
only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate:
only love can do that. *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Notes for Session One

From the Beginning – Genesis 1:1-5

Notes for Session Two

The Prophecy – Isaiah 49:1-6

Notes for Session Three

Fulfillment of the Prophecy – John 1:1-5

Notes for Session Four

Our Charge – 1 John 1:5-10

Notes and Journaling



United Women in Faith

The PURPOSE of United Women in Faith

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.

Visit our Conference UWF Website:

www.wnccumw.org