

# Conference Gram

United Women in Faith, Western North Carolina



United Women in Faith

Western North Carolina

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

Faith. Action. Sisterhood.



United Women in Faith

Western North Carolina

## 2025 VISION & GOALS

- Model our **Purpose** as United Women in Faith (UWFaith) who come together in unity, loving, and serving.
- Raise awareness and promote personal advocacy and action for our two United Women in Faith priority issues: *Just Energy 4 All*, and *Ending Mass Incarceration and Criminalization of Communities of Color*
- Build relationships with our local units, members, and potential members in living out the **Purpose**, leaning in to and supporting opportunities to meet and serve together.
- 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 2025 Conference Financial Goal: Each unit will increase their Gift in Memory giving 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 WNC United Women in Faith Team*

wncumw.org • facebook.com/wncumw • uwfaith.org

## Calendar of Events

### 2025

March 1  
Scholarship Deadline

March 23  
Giving Day  
Live stream at 1:00 pm ET

June 12 - 14  
Spiritual Growth Retreat  
Lake Junaluska

July 18-19  
Mission u  
Catholic Conference Center, Hickory

September 6  
Annual Celebration  
Location: To Be Determined

October 11, 25  
Ubuntu Days of Service  
Various Locations

*Bring a Friend.*

*Share the experience of being United Women in Faith*

**2025 WNCC UWFaith Officers**

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

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

**Secretary – Lynda Morris**  
 (704) 619-2013 lfmorrisap@aol.com

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

**Spiritual Growth – Betty Durham**  
 (336) 542-8077 Betty.durham50@yahoo.com

**Mission, Education & Interpretation – Victoria Brown**  
 (336) 596-5523 Vickiebrown961@gmail.com

**Membership, Nurture & Outreach – Kim Eller**  
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**Social Action – Laquetta Barbee**  
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**Communications Coordinator – Deborah Brooks**  
 (336) 812 5826 dlawsonbrooks@aol.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**  
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**Historian – Sandra Williamson**  
 (336) 681-7258 stbw1948@gmail.com

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

**National Board of Directors – Renee Hayes**  
 (336) 707-2980 renee.hayes1956@gmail.com

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



Ways to give:

- Online at: [uwfaith.org/dayofgiving](http://uwfaith.org/dayofgiving)
- By phone: 800-278-7771 (8 a.m.-5 p.m. ET, Mon.–Fri.)
- Text: “FUTURE” to 20503
- By check to: United Women in Faith  
 Attention: Legacy  
 Church Center for the United Nations  
 777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor  
 New York, NY 10017

Write “Day of Giving” in the memo section.

2025  
 Reading Program  
 Programa De Lectura  
 독서 프로그램



**Eligible years:** For 2025, books from the 2020, 2021-2022, 2023, 2024, and 2025 Reading Program lists are all eligible for Reading Program reporting credit, if you have not previously read them.

### Where Do We Go From Here?

Joanie Strohm, President

2024 seems like two different years. It started quite normally. Several of us attended the SEJ event in Chattanooga, Tennessee and were thrilled to witness our own Renee Hayes elected as a National Office Director. General Conference had wonderful, joyous and productive meetings in Charlotte. We were chugging along and wham! Hurricane Helene hit the beautiful mountains of North Carolina!

That began the second part of this surreal year. People were without power for days and some for weeks. Our families didn't know if we had survived because many lost their lives. Our lives changed, the landscape changed, never to be the same. Some of you called to check on me and asked if there was anything you could do to help. Sally Vonner, General Secretary and CEO of the National Office contacted me to ask about my wellbeing. There proved to be an outpouring of love and care for one another.

2025 has already presented challenges ,so **where do we go from here?**

**Remember who we are.** Faithful living is edgy, unpredictable, adventuresome and scary. Wesley established faith communities with mentors, peers, friends and fellow journeyers to help people move forward daily. (From the Wesley Study Bible "Life application Topic—Faithful Living" )

Why don't we do those "edgy, unpredictable, adventuresome and scary things?" Are we not BOLD? Have we lost that boldness? Are we truly inclusive, inviting, daring to do something different, agree to disagree and most importantly really listen to one another's ideas and concerns?

**Remember whose we are.** Micah 6:8b asks, "And what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (NASB) Do we care about justice for all? Are we always kind? Are we truly humble and quietly serving our Lord through faith, hope and love?

Are we really concerned about "the other?" Do we welcome the stranger, the less and least. Do we remember our PURPOSE as we travel this road? Do we ask the Lord's guidance before we jump into something that might offend, embarrass or truly hurt someone?

**Forward in faith, hope, and love in action is where we go from here!**

### SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Betty Durham

Spiritual Growth Coordinator

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Can you believe it's already 2025! Before you know it, June will be here, and we'll be headed to Lake Junaluska for our Spiritual Growth Retreat. Go ahead right now mark your calendar for June 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>. We are very lucky this year that Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel will be our speaker sharing with us the many names of God from the scriptures. Aryn is the daughter of Sara Williams and has been a UMW/UW Faith from a very early age. Aryn serves Cashiers UMC in the Smoky Mountain District.

The Retreat this year will be different, but it will be very special. Watch your Conference Grams and District Newsletters for all the special things to come. I hope to see all of you at the Lake.

Remember to pray for each other daily.



United  
Women  
in Faith

**WNCC United Women in Faith SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

Do you know a student who is a member of one of the WNCC United Methodist Churches?

Will they attend one of the United Methodist supported institutions in our conference (**Bennett College, Brevard College, Greensboro College, High Point University, Pfeiffer University**) for the fall semester 2025?

Then they are eligible to apply for a WNCC United Women in Faith scholarship!

Applications should be requested by contacting the scholarship committee chairperson:

Jatana Royster

8227 Laurel Oak Court Harrisburg, NC 28075

**704-451-3816 (cell) Email: [jatanaroyster@gmail.com](mailto:jatanaroyster@gmail.com)**

Applications are due by **March 1, 2025**. Interviews will be conducted on March 15, 2025 via Zoom.

YOU can support our scholarship program by:

Referring students.

Praying for our students and UM supported institutions.

Contributing to the general scholarship fund as districts, units, circles and individuals.

Please contact me if you need additional information.

Blessings,

Jatana Royster

WNCC United Women in Faith Scholarship Committee Chairperson



**TREASURER’S REPORT**

Bess Redmond  
Treasurer

**2024 Financial Report of the Treasurer**

Western North Carolina United Women in Faith, in 2024 **YOU** made the following happen in support of United Women in Faith Missions around the World.

**Total Giving** through the 8 districts from local units:  
**\$397,275** (11% decrease from 2023 Giving)

**All Love Offerings**  
**\$15,073** (2.5% increase from 2023)  
(includes Spiritual Growth Retreat, Mission u, and Annual Celebration donations)

**Undesignated Mission Giving sent to UWFaith National Office:**  
(Pledges, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory, Special Mission Recognition, & World Thank Offerings)  
**\$307,748** (decrease of 8% from 2023)

**Designated Giving** to UWFaith National Office and GBGM/UMCOR  
**\$37033** (2% decrease from 2023 Giving)

**Donations to Other Projects:**  
(Crossnore Communities for Children WNCC Scholarships, MATCH, and others)  
**\$2510** (16% increase from 2023 giving)

We need to increase our efforts by telling our story  
of helping women, children, and youth in the United States and across the world!

**We Believe Love in Action can Change the World.**

**NEW BECOMING OLD?**

Deborah Brooks  
Communications Coordinator

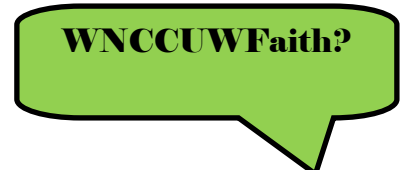
Has “United Women in Faith” become easier to speak? Like me, I’m sure you have an occasional slip-ups with the old term UMW.

Please refrain from using “UWF”. When using abbreviations, somewhere in your document, the abbreviation needs to be spelled out. Example:

United Women In Faith (UWFaith)

Then you can use “UWFaith” by itself as you have established what the abbreviation stands for.

Keep practicing!!!





**HAVE CONVERSATIONS**

Brenda Steadman  
Chairperson, Committee on Nominations

Greetings, My Sisters.

As I began my last year as your Chairperson of the Committee on Nominations, I am excited about the possibilities to think differently about recruiting women to serve.

I encourage you to mentor individuals who are in your midst! Remember we are in His midst. Let us be willing to reach out and think differently.

How do we think differently? Look around you. What is the Holy Spirit asking you to do?

**HAVE CONVERSATIONS?**

Do not hesitate to bring up issues that may be uncomfortable. Remember how Jesus approached the Pharisees!

- He listened!
- He Learned!
- He Loved!

The Holy Spirit is pushing me to do more for United Women in Faith. Please pray along with our Committee on Nominations to fulfill our purpose as women of faith. Blessings! If you would like to suggest a candidate, or have questions on positions, please reach out to one of our committee members .

**Members of Committee on Nominations 2025**

Brenda Steadman	(336) 509-4043	bsteadman@triad.rr.com
Kimberly Witherspoon	(828) 729-0876	Kwitherspoon03@yahoo.com
Deborah Ray	(828) 400-3499	wrray@charter.net
Cathy Ward	(336) 880-1057	lward2004@triad.rr.com
Donna Ireland	(336) 817-8215	hgumcsec@bellsouth.com
Virgina Robinson	(828) 238-4493	Robinsonva62@gmail.com
Roberta Walker	(336) 755-0397	r_walker1961@gmail.com
Tammy Long	(828) 774-6010	Lynntb79@gmail.com
Valerie Prim	(336) 408-9693	primswim@yahoo.com

See any familiar faces?



**QUIET, EVERYONE!**

Kim Eller  
Membership, Nurture & Outreach Coordinator

Well, hey, my bodacious ladies! Recognize any of these faces on the picture below on the left?

Zechariah and his pal Haggai teamed up for the task of getting the people of Judah to rebuild their temple and, more importantly, to restore and revitalize their identity and purpose of being God’s people. The people of Judah had experienced some tough, tragic times. God’s task for Zechariah and Haggai was to pull these folks out of self-preoccupation and to work together again as the people of God, fulfilling His purpose.

We can relate with the trials and tribulations within our denomination that have caused a domino effect on all areas of our beloved church life and family.

So, how can we nurture and refresh our ladies after our storms? Zechariah has some input on that as well!

**Quiet, everyone! Shh! Silence before God. Something’s afoot in his holy house. He’s on the move!**

Zechariah 2:13 (MSG)

We need to care for our souls and minds before we can truly continue to fulfill our Purpose, and we begin with being quiet and silent before God.

That’s hard for me to do, be quiet and silent, but I have learned that it does work.

As we continue our 2025 UWFaith journey, here are some suggestions for your own nurturing or Soul Caring:

- Take a gratitude walk in nature and be filled with His presence.
- Meditate on Scripture...meditate, not simply read.
- Sleep an extra half hour...yeah, boy!
- Laugh. “A joyful heart is good medicine.” (Proverbs 17:22, NIV).

Turn on praise music and dance and sing along...but no cleaning! Just joyfulness.

As Zechariah reminds us, **Something’s afoot in his holy house. He’s on the move!**

God’s on the move among and within our UWFaith! In order for us to faithfully fulfil His purpose for us, we need to follow the crucial instructions given on airline flights: “In case of an emergency, put your oxygen mask on first before attempting to assist others!”

**Something’s afoot... He’s on the move.** Let’s be prepared to move with Him by nurturing ourselves so we can lovingly nurture each other.

## MISSION u - PRACTICING HOPE

LaDonna Butts  
Mission u Dean



**Practicing Hope** - How do we understand **hope** in the midst of hard realities? Is it merely optimism? What if we understood **hope** as something we practice every day? **Mission u 2025** begins

with the resurrection appearances of Jesus and the example of early Christian communities to explore what it meant to **practice hope** in God even when things seem to be falling apart.

Mission u will be held at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory on Friday, July 18<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, July 19<sup>th</sup>.

The Adult Study's theme of **"Practicing Hope"** is a biblical curriculum that invites us to explore hope as a daily practice. Its purpose is to teach all of our communities to cultivate hope that is

- **honest** about our current conditions (refuge)
- **restorative** when everything feels urgent (rest)
- **possible** even when we transgress (repair).

Assistant Dean Nancy Litton has done a marvelous job at securing our Study Leaders, so Mission u 2025 is definitely not to be missed!

Participants with Basic Lay Servant certification may apply for Advanced Lay Servant credit for this event.

A final reminder - The Conference Center has a limited number of rooms (50), but each room has two double beds. We encourage you to reserve your room early and double or triple the number of roommates. Selecting a private room may cause someone else to miss out on this fabulous weekend! So, grab a friend (or 2 or 3) and get away for an inviting and educational spiritual weekend.

We **HOPE** to see you there in 2025!



## DISASTER RELIEF

Vickie Brown  
Mission Coordinator, Education & Interpretation

Our brothers and sisters in Western North Carolina mountains are in rebuilding stages and still need assistance as they recover from Hurricane Helene. Any teams to help rebuild are greatly appreciated. The current focus is obtaining propane to get residents through the mountain winter.

### Your Continued Support

As we move forward, we ask for your continued financial support. While we are currently pausing the donation of material goods, financial gifts remain crucial.

Thank you for your overwhelming generosity thus far. We encourage you to remain engaged as the road to recovery is long. Please stay connected to Conference and District communications for updates on how you can continue to support your neighbors through the months and years ahead.

### How you can help:

- **Pray** for those impacted by Hurricane Helene.
- **Donate:**
  - ⇒ Online: <https://bit.ly/WNCCHurricaneReliefDonations>
  - ⇒ By check made out to "Office of Disaster Response" and mailed to PO Box 2757, Huntersville, NC 28070, with the memo "Helene."
  - ⇒ Through local church Apportionments. Please make the check to "WNCC Treasury" and mail to PO Box 2757, Huntersville, NC 28070, with the memo "Disaster Ministries."

Learn more about how your donations support disaster relief at <https://www.wnccumc.org/newsdetail/hurricane-helene-response-18662070>





**Western North Carolina Conference**

**United Women in Faith**

Deborah Brooks  
PO Box 342  
Wallburg NC 27373

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## What We Do

**We connect spiritual women to act boldly for justice and transform communities.**

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