

February 2025

Women Talk



United
Women
in Faith

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

Smoky Mountain District Mission Studies: Welcome Home

Option 1: Virtual via Zoom (with Blue Ridge District)

Saturday, March 8, 10 AM—Noon
and

Monday, March 10, 6:30 PM—8:30 PM



Registration Link: bit.ly/MissionStudyRegistration

Handouts will be emailed to participants—you do not need to purchase the study guide.
This study counts as a qualifying mission study and meets Criterion #4 on Mission Today.

Option 2: In Person

Saturday, March 29, 9:30 AM—Noon
Franklin First UMC



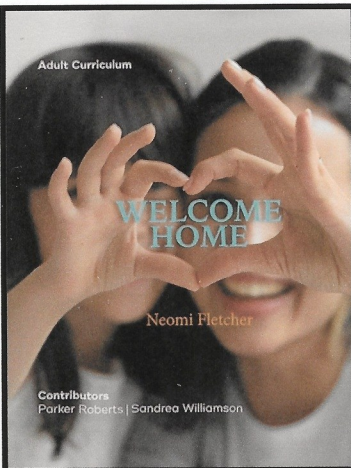
9:30—10:00 Registration and light refreshments

10:00—Noon Mission Study

Registration Link: bit.ly/SMDMissionStudy

Handouts will be provided for participants—you do not need to purchase the study guide.

This study does **not** count as a qualifying mission study and does **not** meet Criterion #4 on Mission Today. But we **will** learn a lot and enjoy good fellowship!



“*Welcome Home* explores how we can know God as an intimate friend who welcomes us. Abiding in God’s safety and dwelling in God’s provision, allows us to open our hearts to a fuller embrace of the power and presence of God so that we may find our home in God. Participants are invited to dig deeper into what it means to live in the kingdom of God and how this helps us to develop practices for building and existing in healthier communities.”

(from back cover of study guide)

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

Page 1—"WELCOME HOME" Mission Study (two options)

Page 2—A Table of Contents...so you can find the things you really want to find first!...plus our Mission Statement and a special thought.

Page 3—Our President's Article and Greetings to You from Our Treasurer

Page 4—Notes from Esther Manchester, and Meeting Scholarships Available.

Page 5—Parade of Missions—Highlighting UWFaith Int'l. Ministries PLUS "Braiding Sweetgrass."

Page 6—WNCC United Women in Faith SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Page 7—WNCC 2025 Vision & Goals

Page 8—We had fun at our MISSION TRAVELOGUE. Join us next time!

Page 9—Nurturing Partners 2025 and Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund.

Page 10—READING IS REWARDING, District Love Offering, and communications tips.

Page 11—The 2025 SMD UWFaith Executive Team and PAG Listing.

Page 12—SMD & WNCC Calendar of Events

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.

**Life is a coin. You can spend it any way you wish,
but you can only spend it once.**

* * * * *

"For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

-- James 4:14 NKJV

President's Article — A FRESH WIND IN OUR SAILS

Conventional wisdom says that when someone is in a traumatizing situation, it takes at least a year of recovery for each year of trauma. While it is difficult to pinpoint the beginning and end of the COVID-19 pandemic, experts consider that it lasted about three years, starting in March 2020 and ending in May 2023. No wonder we are still struggling to recover from the pandemic. One of the hardest parts of the pandemic was its isolation. Psalm 51:12 (The Message) says,

"Bring me back from gray exile, put a fresh wind in my sails."

Thanks be to God, our "gray exile" is over, and I believe God is putting a fresh wind in our sails. Attendance is increasing at our district events, and there is an air of hope and excitement of better things to come.

I'm excited that we will have two options for our district mission study this year. One is a virtual event with the Blue Ridge District, but we will also have an in-person study. Details can be found on the front page.

I'm excited for two district-wide initiatives that will be highlights of our November Mission Festival—a book club discussion and a global mission parade (see details elsewhere in this newsletter).

Lisa Bacon, SMD President

lisabacom304@gmail.com / 828-586-8399 (home) / 828-226-2433 (cell)



GREETINGS TO YOU FROM OUR TREASURER:

Peace in Christ to you all. THANK YOU all for continuing to be faithful in support of the mission work of United Women in Faith. Our amazing sisters in Christ gave \$31,755.10 for undesignated giving with a total of \$34,569.57 for all giving in 2024!

Our Western NC UWFaith Conference financial goal is that each unit will increase their Gift in Memory giving by 10%. Remember that Gift in Memory is a good way to show family and friends that you remember their loved ones on the anniversary of their birthdays. You may also make a Gift in Memory without sending a card.

Also, remember to lift up the Walk for Mission undesignated giving this year. It is a great way for your unit to get together while meeting good health goals.

Thank you to all those units who remain faithful to our Legacy giving. The Legacy Endowment fund allows for us to keep our expenses down now and for the future so that we can continue to pass on the vast majority of our giving directly to missions in the field.

There are thousands of children, youth and women that depend on us! Please remember that as you spiritually give to United Women in Faith. We take great pride in being fiscally responsible and being a volunteer community of women in Christ.

Kim Shafer, SMD District Treasurer

Cell: 704-965-2022 Email: kimshaferuwfm@outlook.com



Esther Manchester, Committee on Nominations Chairperson

As I am writing this note we are getting our first real snow of the season in the far west corner of North Carolina. It is very cold here in Brasstown but the jonquils are peeking through the ground, giving us the assurance that spring will eventually arrive—a sure sign of hope; the kind of hope that relates to confident optimism, not simply “wishful thinking.”

As we begin this new year I invite you to join our Nominations Committee—Velma Zeek, Gail Powell and me in renewing our **hope** in God as He uses each of us to move this great organization forward.

Our **goal** for 2025 is to have dedicated leaders in each of the following positions: Vice President; Spiritual Growth Coordinator; Membership, Nurture and Outreach Coordinator; Mission Education/ Interpretation Coordinator; Secretary of Program Resources and Historian. Our **hope** is to have a full slate of officers to recommend for 2026 by our annual meeting that is scheduled to take place in the month of August.

In the meantime, I ask you to **pray** for our SMD UWFaith organization and for any role you are willing to explore further. Please call me if you have suggestions or questions about becoming involved. My contact information is Phone # 828-226-7481, (leave a message), Mailing address, PO Box 256, Brasstown, 28902, or ehm1@yahoo.com.

Every one of us has a story about how we came to be involved in United Women of Faith. This year I look forward to hearing a lot of your stories. Let’s make it a priority to share these stories with each other. I will be happy to share mine. Will you invite me or one of the other SMD UWFaith leaders to share a story, a book review or lead a program at one of your monthly/quarterly UWFaith gatherings?



Meeting Scholarships Available

- Scholarships are available for each WNCC UWFaith event: Spiritual Growth Retreat, Mission u, and Annual Celebration.
- First-time attendees are eligible.
- Recipients will receive up to \$150 in reimbursement for meeting expenses.
- More than one recipient may receive funds depending on cost of the event.
- Contact Lisa Bacon for the brief application or for more information (828-226-2433 or lisabacon304@gmail.com).



Parade of Nations—Highlighting United Women in Faith International Ministries

From chicken farmers in Zimbabwe to pediatric cancer patients in India, your mission dollars are hard at work. If you attended our Mission Travelogue at Crabtree UMC last November, you saw the decorations that featured the diversity of missions we help fund.

We're encouraging each unit to pick one international ministry and learn more about it. Write or email the contact person for a mission. Visit the mission's website. When someone asks "where the money goes," you will have a concrete example to share. We can rattle off figures about number of projects or dollars, but people respond more to a story than to a list of amounts. Let's have a story to tell.

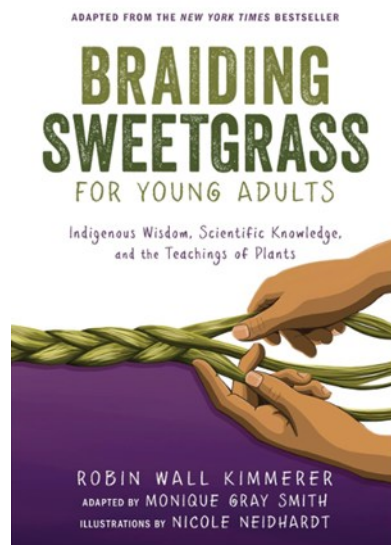
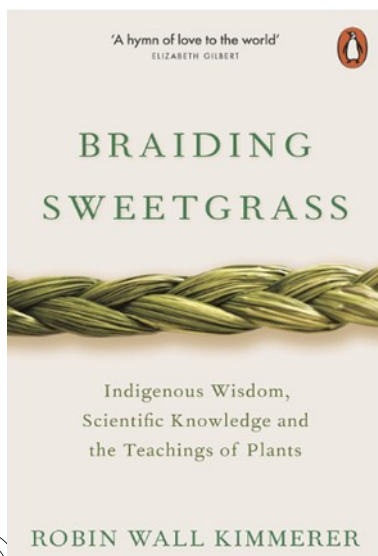
Units will be invited to participate in a "parade of nations" as part of our 2025 Mission Festival. [Details will follow in future newsletters.] You can find a list of the international projects in the March/April issue of **response** magazine or online at [International Mission | United Women in Faith](#). The Daily Prayer Guide is also a useful resource.

Braiding Sweetgrass: Smoky Mountain District Book Club Selection

At our 2024 Mission Travelogue, we discussed selecting one book from the United Women in Faith Reading Program to be promoted throughout the district. We consulted several women who have participated in the Reading Program over the years, and the book chosen is "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

"As a botanist, Kimmerer is trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. Here, she brings these two lenses together. Drawing on her life as an Indigenous scientist and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. She circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of ecological consciousness requires acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world." (from the Reading Program catalog)

The Reading Program has two choices, one for adults and one for young adults. You may read either version. Both are widely available in libraries.

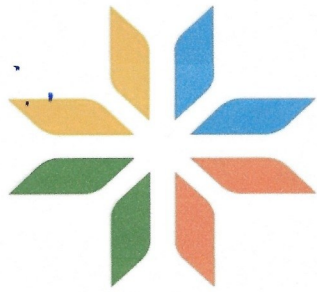


Avoid Shipping Costs!

Order a copy of Braiding Sweetgrass (either version) and pick it up at the District Mission Study (March 29) or at Day Apart (May 3).

To order a copy, contact

Lisa Bacon (828-226-2433 or lisabacon304@gmail.com)



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

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

**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!**

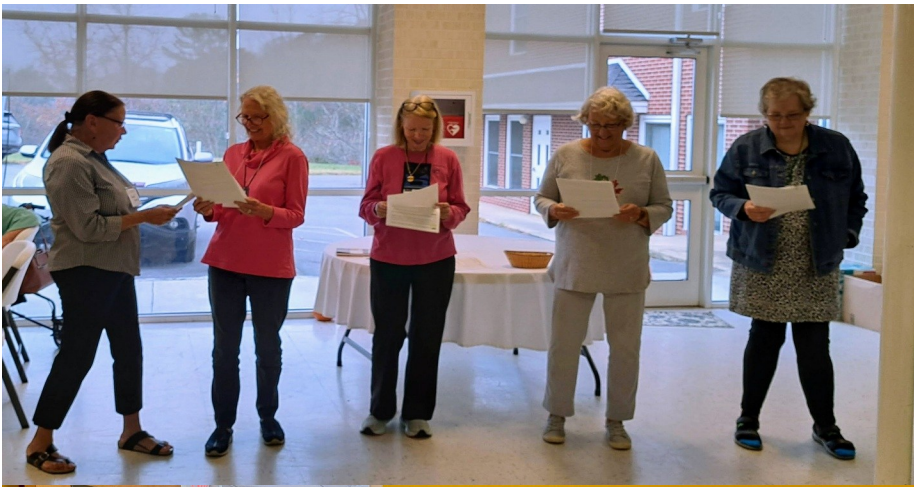
Our Purpose:

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

wnccumw.org • facebook.com/wnccumw • uwfaith.org



**WE HAD FUN AT
OUR MISSION
TRAVELOGUE!**

**HOPE YOU
JOIN US
NEXT TIME!**



**SMD United Women in Faith
Nurturing Partners 2025**

Nurturing Partner	NP Contact Info	UW Faith Unit
Lisa Bacon	Lisabacon304@gmail.com 828-226-2433	Bryson City, Love's Chapel, Sylva First, Webster
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Laurel Bevill	laurelbev@icloud.com 828-456-5528	Clyde Central, Maple Grove
Velma Zeek	Vzeek56@frontier.com 828-369-5782	Andrews, Franklin First
Esther Manchester	Ehm1@yahoo.com 828-226-7481	Oak Forest, Ranger, Robbinsville, Tomotla
Ellynn Stonebraker	Jumperlady21@gmail.com 828-524-8787	Cullowhee, Hayesville First, Murphy First
Julie Leatherwood	leatherwoodjulie@gmail.com 828-926-8787	Maggie Valley, Waynesville First
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Kim Shafer	kimshaferuwfsm@outlook.com 704-965-2022	Crabtree UMC

Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund

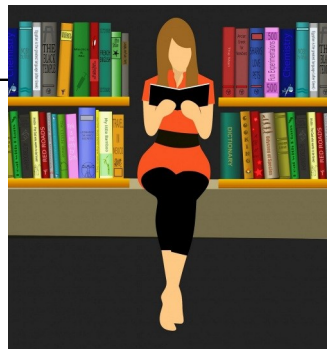
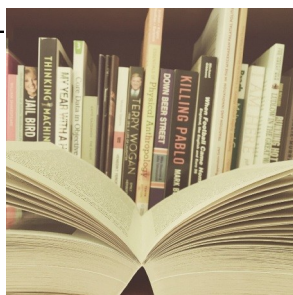
- ◇ Make a gift to the Legacy Fund through your local unit United Women in Faith treasurer.
- ◇ Make a one time donation or consider becoming a Legacy Builder by giving a monthly gift of \$18.69 or more.
- ◇ Use our Western North Carolina Conference Legacy Commitment Form, available on our website at 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.



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 UWFaith info and we can save on postage! THANKS!*

READING IS REWARDING!

- Share the program with United Women in Faith members and members of the community.
- Help people attain books. Distribute this guide. [2025 Reading Program Catalog \(uwfaith.org\)](http://uwfaith.org)
- 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.



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.

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

United Women in Faith 2025 Smoky Mtn. District Exec. Team & Program Advisory Group

President:

Lisa Bacon (Cullowhee)
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Vice President:

[Open]

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Education & Interpretation:

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Spiritual Growth:

[Open]

Membership, Nurture & Outreach:

[Open]

Program Resources:

[Open]

Communications Coordinator:

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Newsletter Editor

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1/29/25

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

TO:



United
Women
in Faith

2025 UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CONFERENCE & DISTRICT EVENTS

WNCC UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 12-14	WNCC Spiritual Growth Retreat, Lake Junaluska
July 18-19	WNCC Mission u, Catholic Conf. Ctr., Hickory
Sep. 6	WNCC Annual Celebration (TBD)
Oct. 11 or 25	Ubuntu Days of Service—various locations
Oct. 18	WNCC LDD for All District Officers (Virtual)

SMD UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar. 8+10	BR/SMD Mission Study (Virtual)
Mar. 29	In-Person SMD Mission Study, Franklin First
May 3	SMD Day Apart (Maggie Valley)
Aug. 16	SMD Annual Celebration (Virtual)
Nov. 1 or 15	SMD Missions Event (TBD)