

Conference Gram

United Women in Faith, Western North Carolina

WNCC UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH
2025 SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT
Thursday June 12th - Saturday June 14th
Lake Junaluska, NC



Retreat Leader:
Rev. Aryn
Williams - Ruebel

Theme: My Name is...God

Retreat Leader: Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel

Mission Speaker: Maggie Armstrong

Music Leaders: Catherine Ritch and
Charlie Hamish

REGISTRATION: www.WNCCUMW.ORG

HANDS ON PROJECT: Home Improvement Gift
Cards for Brooks Howell

BREAKOUT SESSIONS THIS YEAR!!!

More information available in this issue as well as online.

www.wnccumw.org



United
Women
in Faith

Western North Carolina

Calendar of Events 2025

June 12 - 14
Spiritual Growth Retreat
Lake Junaluska

July 18-19
Mission u
Catholic Conference Cen-
ter, Hickory

September 6
Annual Celebration
Williamson's Chapel UMC
Mooresville

October 11, 25
Ubuntu Days of Service
Various Locations

For detail of our confer-
ence events, go online at
Www.wnccumw.org

Bring a Friend.

*Share the experience
of being United
Women in Faith*

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DID YOU KNOW?



Did you know that any woman can become a member of United Women in Faith, even without a local United Women in Faith in their church?

Sisters, if you haven't already done so, please invite 2 new women to come to a UWFaith event at the local, district, or conference level!

Renee Hayes
United Methodist Deaconess



response is the award-winning, official magazine of United Women in Faith. Subscriptions are available as print and digital.

Each issue will touch your heart, stir your soul, and challenge your mind with features such as:

- Bible studies
- Opportunities for spiritual growth and development
- Articles on people and projects supported by your Mission Giving
- Regular features such as "Bright Lights" and "Responsively Yours"

Want a taste of **response**? Check out our free digital samplers – select stories from each issue.

Go to website for more details:

uwfaith.org/resources/response-magazine/

Changes They Are A Coming!

Betty Durham - Spiritual Growth Coordinator

The Spiritual Growth Retreat will look different this year, The Spiritual Growth Retreat will be different.

On June 12th thru 14th we'll meet once again on the mountain top that will be the same. This year will honor our missionaries, we will honor our sisters that have gone before us. We'll have breakouts, the UWFaith Choir, and we'll have Late Night "Kranking it up with Kim" after the June 13th evening session.

Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel will be our Retreat Leader. Aryn is the pastor at Cashiers UMC in the Smoky Mountain District. Maggie Armstrong, WNCC Director of Recovery will be our Mission Speaker. Catherine Ritch will be with us at the piano and Charlie Har-nish will be our music leader, Weaverville UMC, Blue Ridge District.

Our **Hands-on -Project** will be gift cards from Lowe's Home Improvement, Home Depot and Walmart for Brooks-Howell Home. We encourage you to buy a card from one of these businesses. Please place the card in an envelope with the amount and business on the outside. At the end of the weekend, we will report the total. If you like, you can put a note inside the envelope. Martha Phillips's article below will explain the reason for home improvement gift cards.

We will have five breakouts and the UWFaith Choir. All staggered so you can attend more than one breakout if you like. Continue reading the Conference Gram to learn about each breakout and decide which one (s) you would like to attend.

Registration is online and room reservations are open. It's going to be a spiritual weekend. Come be a part and join us.

Why Gift Cards for Brooks-Howell Home?

Martha Phillips, Brooks-Howell Home Advisory Board

For more than two years before Hurricane Helene hit Western North Carolina, Brooks-Howell Home has been working to renovate their apartments and medical facilities. These improvements were needed to make Brooks-Howell Home more financially independent. When Helene hit, the Home did not experience flooding but had considerable damage to the grounds and a significant increase in expenses due to loss of power and water.

Much of the renovation work is being managed in-house but help is needed to purchase supplies for the improvements. This is why our Hands on Project for Spiritual Growth Retreat 2025 is gift cards for Brooks-Howell Home from Lowes Hardware, Home Depot, and Walmart.



Gift to Mission Cards will be available at Spiritual Growth covering a variety of occasions (graduations, weddings, birthdays, etc.) Gift in Memory cards can be sent to someone who just lost a love one or send one a year later letting the person know you are still thinking of their loss. Death of family pet is another opportunity to send a card.

Brooks-Howell residents would love cards. Purchase a Gift to Mission card. Add a note. Insert your home improvement card too. All will be distributed to the appropriate areas.

Visit Bess Redmond, WNCC UWFaith Treasurer, at the lower level of Harrell Center to purchase a Gift to Mission Cards.



NEW: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

June 13th Lower Level Harrell Center

Move 4 Missions Treasure Hunt: 8:00 am to 9:00 am. Meet outside Harrell Center. Want to walk on the wild side? Then register for the *Move 4 Mission* breakout session with Valerie Prim as our fearless leader. You will depart Harrell Center, walk around the lake where the swimming pool is located, cross over the foot bridge, and the wildness begins! You will search for treasure there in the wild and then invited to continue your journey around the lake or return as you came. Ask your Unit to support you in this adventure by contributing funds for missions...yes, it will cost you to join this endeavor. The exercise, the camaraderie, hanging with Valerie Prim, the treasure you find, the overflowing joy of supporting women, children, and youth is well worth the cost.

Book Club: 9:00 am to 10:15 am at Harrell Center. During this session, Jennie Greenway will hold discussions on the book *The Lucky Ones* by Linda Williams Jackson. This book takes place in 1967 in the Mississippi Delta. Ellis Earl is an 11-year-old boy who dreams of becoming a teacher or a lawyer, but most of all he wants a big, brick house in town and wants there to be enough food for him and all his family. Ellis' teachers sees potential in him and works hard to encourage him. Ellis is encouraged by a book his teacher gives him, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, by seeing a poor family who has a happy ending. After his mama tells him that he may have to quit school and get a job, he wonders if he'll get his happy ending. We hope you enjoy the book and look forward to seeing you at the Book Club!

UWFaith Choir: 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm at Harrell Center. Do you love singing? Make a joyful noise with your UWF sisters who also love to sing. Come together to learn a new song under the direction of Catherine and Charlie.

Labyrinth Walk: 2:30 to 4:00 pm at Harrell Center. After a short video on the history of Labyrinths, we will silently transition to the Labyrinth beside the Memorial Chapel. You will be given a booklet to use during this walk. A quiet reflection on your journey in faith. Bring your Bible. Take time to meditate anywhere around the Lake before or after you walk the Labyrinth. Get in touch with the nature around you. Slow down and feel God's presence all around. You won't regret the time you spend relaxing, resting while you take the time to renew.

Jazzersizing 4 Jesus: 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm at Harrell Center. No retreat would be complete without Jazzersizing 4 Jesus led by LaDonna Butts. Come enjoy, exercise in a chair while worshipping Jesus. LaDonna makes this so much fun that you don't even know you're working up a sweat.

Ubuntu: 2:00 pm up to 5:00 pm. Meet at Harrell Center. Come participate in Ubuntu with a local community agency in the Waynesville area where we will serve where needed. It will not be hard labor but certainly a labor of love. For more details, read Kim Eller's article on page 5.

Kim Eller

Membership, Nurture, & Outreach Coordinator

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

Colossians 3:15-17 the MSG

Yup, this is goanna be happening at the Spiritual Growth Retreat...teaching, singing, admonishing, preaching, serving while we fellowship and nurture each other. And you don't want to miss any of it! New and exciting changes in the program are scheduled along with new breakout sessions. Here are two breakout sessions I know that you will want to register for:

Move 4 Mission...or bust a move! It's a TREASURER HUNT

Either way, it's mission in action...exercising our bodies while funding missions...there is a registration fee for this event. Register for this action-packed mission that includes a short walk from Harrell Center where, after crossing the footbridge, you will go on a treasure hunt! The treasure you find will remind of you of our Spiritual Growth Retreat for years to come...a true collector's treasure. You may then continue around the lake or return the way you came, refreshed and ready for the remaining adventures.

AND/OR

Ubuntu Experience in Waynesville

- **Friendship House** at First United Methodist Church At the Friendship House, you are invited to bring canned goods, non-perishable food items, and Clorox wipes. We will sort clothes and stock their food pantry. The Clorox wipes will be needed for cleaning the kitchen.

- **Pigeon Multi-Cultural Development Center**, we will be cleaning and setting up classrooms for their summer program. Items needed are paper plates, bendy drinking straws, toothpicks, zipper-lock sandwich bags, large balloons, unsharpened pencils, scotch tape and Q-Tips.

Choose one of the Ubuntu experiences. Bring items to the designated automobile in parking area in front of Harrell Center. Everyone is invited to bring any of the listed items even if you are not able to participate in the Ubuntu. To ensure that your gifts go to the proper place, please mark clearly the intended project on your packaging.

Carpooling will be offered and given in detail at our event.

LATER IN THE EVENING.....

Krinking It Up with Kim! At the end of Friday evening session, we will enjoy celebrating UWFaith with Late Night as you **Krank It Up with Kim**

In Memory

It is such a blessing to see our world coming alive with all the green leaves and the beautiful blossoms. And for me, with spring comes spiritual renewal and thoughts of going to Lake Junaluska for our United Women in Faith Spiritual Growth Retreat. I have never come away from one of our SG Retreats when I didn't feel nearer to God and blessed to be in His presence along with my UWFaith sisters. As you have certainly already learned, Spiritual Growth will be a bit different this year as we include some of the activities that we normally have at Annual Celebration.

One such activity is the Memorial Service when we will celebrate the lives of all our ladies who Graduated to the Church Triumphant in 2024. These exceptional ladies left a legacy for us with the examples they set. Every district had members who transitioned last year and surely many of you will want to join us at The Lake in honoring their lives.

Another activity is the Mission Service. Our retired and active mission personnel who reside in our Conference will be invited to join us for our Mission Service as we recognize and honor them for their years of service in the mission fields. As the flyer states, Maggie Armstrong will be our Mission Speaker. Ms. Armstrong started Oct. 21, 2024 on the annual conference staff as the Director of Recovery, a month after Hurricane Helene stunned the state with its power and devastation. It will be very interesting to hear her stories.

Linda (LindaLu) Greer

Spiritual Growth Sub Committee Member



Annual Celebration - Celebrate Change!
September 6, 10 AM - 5 PM
Williamson's Chapel UMC, Mooresville

I am so excited about our **WNCC Annual Celebration** on September 6th. Our theme is "Celebrating Change". We are making a change for this event to be a 1-day event, from 10am – 5pm, and will be held at Williamson Chapel UMC in Mooresville. We will still have workshops and celebrations and lunch. Our guest speaker is Sally Vonner, CEO of United Women in Faith!

We would like to build some excitement about Sally coming to be with us. Have you ever heard of Flat Stanley? My kids did this in school. This is a paper doll that you send to your family or friends and they are to take a picture of him doing different things, like going to circle meetings, prayer breakfast or other district and local unit events. Our idea is to create a Flat Sally and have her travel our districts to take pictures with her at your events leading up to the Annual Celebration where we will have an opportunity to take a picture with the Real Sally for a donation to missions. The donation for the picture will replace our walk for mission fund raiser. Here is the picture that we are using for the Flat Sally. A poster copy is going out to the District President's to be used at the events. Please send your pictures to me at alexanderlynn807@gmail.com

There will be more details on the event coming soon on the website. I look forward to celebrating all of the great things your Districts have done and hearing the wonderful message Sally will bring to us!

Lynn Alexander
Conference Vice President
WNCC UWFaith

MISSION u 2025



MISSION u 2025

Friday, July 18th - Saturday, July 19th.
Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC

“Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone.” Mark 16:15

This year’s study is reflective of the spiritual and political moment we are in, a time when many of our churches are discerning where Christ is calling us to be morally courageous when our world leaders fail us and our communities work to “come back” together after being on the brink of collapse.

What is hope in the face of neofascism? How do we imagine a future for the next generation as our planet grows hotter by the season? What tools do we have to face these hard realities? How does Christ teach us to embody hope when our backs are against the wall. This year’s study will explore how we can hope differently than we have in the past.

The study’s purpose is to allow all our communities to cultivate hope that is honest about our current conditions, hope that is restorative when everything feels urgent, and hope that is possible even when we transgress.

I am always impressed how our National team continuously seems to have their finger on the pulse of the nation, even though the theme and curricula is chosen and written years before. And now more than ever we all need HOPE for a tomorrow we can be proud of.

We will never change the world to the way we want it, so let us come together, learn, pray and ask God how we can help to change it to the way He wants it!

Lay Servants: Mission u is an excellent way to earn your advanced Lay Servant certification. But first, you need to complete the basic Local Church Lay Servant training. There may still be opportunities for you to complete the basic training and I highly encourage you to take advantage of the training.

Visit www.WNCCUMW.org for more details on registering for Mission u 2025!

LaDonna Butts - Dean of Mission u

TREASURER’S REPORT

Bess Redmond WNCC UWFaith Treasurer

We are well on our way to reaching our conference pledge of \$300,000. First Quarter I was able to send \$55,043 towards our goal to the National Office. According to a report from the National Office in 2024:

- \$642 thousand was budgeted for Social Action and Justice Work (supporting the Just Energy 4 All campaign and educational webinars).
- \$1.93 million was budgeted for Education and Leadership Development which includes Leadership Development Days, Mission u, the Reading Program, and Scholarships to students in the United States and internationally.
- \$1.72 million was budgeted for National Mission Institutions supporting nearly 90 National Mission Institutions across the United States. This includes five in our own conference: Brooks-Howell Home, Pfeiffer University, Bennet College, Alliance Center in Charlotte, and Bethlehem Center in Winston-Salem.
- \$1.54 million was budgeted for International Mission supporting international partners that are enhancing the capacities of local and regional women leaders and supporting economic development programs for women and youth.
- \$684 thousand was budgeted for the support of Deaconesses and Home Missioners.
- \$1.30 million was budgeted for Mission Resources such as Response magazine.
- \$1.30 million was budgeted for program support such as Assembly and other smaller programs.
- \$4.50 million was budgeted for administrative needs, fundraising, financial services, grants and scholarship administration.

The national goal is to raise undesignated Mission Giving to \$10 million each year. We are not there yet, but please tell women in your church and others the important work of United Women in Faith.



Western North Carolina Conference

United Women in Faith

Deborah Brooks
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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Assembly 2026

May 15-17, 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Dream it!
Believe it!
Do it!**

There has never been a more important time for women of faith to come together, tap into our strength and unite to change the world.

Visit www.uwfaith.org. Then click on ASSEMBLY 2026.