



Western North Carolina Conference
United Women in Faith

Spiritual Growth Retreat

June 12 - 14, 2025

Lake Junaluska, North Carolina

Session One – June 12

Gathering Music 6:45pm / Session 7:00pm

Gathering Music	Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish	
Welcome		Joanie Strohm
Welcome from Lake Junaluska		Ken Howle
Announcements and Introductions		Betty Durham
Call to Worship		Berthina Thomas
Grace and peace to you from the One who is, who always was, and who is still to come— the Alpha and Omega—the beginning and the end. This is our God— the One who loves us, and who gave himself for us; who gathers us together in this place, and bids us seek his face. Let's worship God together!		
Hymn:	Spirit Song	UMH 347
Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer		Cindy Carter
Introduction of Retreat Leader		Linda Greer
Scripture:	Revelation 1:4-8	Kim Shafer
Message:	My Name is...Everything	Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel
You Say		Lauren Daigle, Video
+Benediction		Mildred Carter
+Postlude		

+Please stand in body or spirit.

Please remain seated while singing, so all may see the words.

Please silence your cell phone during all sessions.

Session Two – June 13

Gathering Music 10:15am / Session 10:30am

Gathering Music	Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish	
Welcome and Introductions		Joanie Strohm
Announcements		Lynn Alexander
Legacy Moment		Lynne Gilbert
Committee on Nominations		Brenda Steadman
*Call to Worship		Gwen Harris
Our God, in the glory of early summer we come to worship reveling in the beauty of your handiwork. Give us insight this morning into how the work of our hands is part of the work of your hands. We join with you in lifting the heavyhearted, comforting the sorrowful, and calming the anxious. Fill us with the joy of service this morning. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus, Amen.		
Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer	Tracey Owens, Deaconess	
Hymn	The Summons	Video
Introduction of Mission Speaker		Lisa Bacon
Message		Maggie Armstrong
Hymn	Here I Am, Lord	UMH 593
+Benediction		Renee Hayes, Deaconess
+Postlude	Who Am I	Casting Crowns, Video

+Please stand in body or spirit.

Please remain seated while singing, so all may see the words.

Please silence your cell phone during all sessions.

Please remain standing as our mission guests exit for lunch.

Session Three – June 13

Gathering Music 6:45pm / Session 7:00pm

Gathering Music	Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish
Welcome and Opening Prayer	Lynda Morris
Announcements	Lynn Alexander
Membership Nurture & Outreach Update	Kim Eller
Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer	Sandra Williamson
Call to Worship	Donna Miller

L: We belong to God.

P: God's stamp is on our lives.

L: God's love and compassion are built into us.

P: God's mercy and hope flow through us.

L: Let's celebrate the powerful presence of God.

P: Let's rejoice in all the opportunities God gives us to serve. Amen.

Hymn	I Know Whom I Have Believed	UMH 714
Love Offering		Bess Redmond
Offertory		
+Doxology		
Scripture	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10	Rhita Newcomb
Message	My Name is...Beloved	Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel
Hymn	Take My Life, and Let It Be	UMH 399
+Benediction		Lily Pierce
+Postlude		

+Please stand in body or spirit.

Please remain seated while singing, so all may see the words.

Please silence your cell phone during all sessions.

Session Four – June 14

Gathering Music 10:15am / Session 10:30am

Gathering Music Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish

Welcome Betty Durham

Call To Worship Diann Back

L: Lift praises to the name of our God; bless God's name forever!

P: How great is our God!

L: From generation to generation we will sing your praises and speak of your goodness!

P: Great is our God and worthy of praise!

L: God, you are just and kind in all your doings!

P: Great is our God and worthy of praise!

L: God, you watch over us in love and hear the desperate cries of those who call to you!

All: How great is our God! How great is our God! Bless God's name forever!

Daily Prayer Guide and Opening Prayer Sherry Summerlin

Hymn Sweet, Sweet Spirit Doris Akers

Memorial Service Betty Durham

Special Music UW Faith Choir

Scripture Hebrews 2:10-18 Patricia Shoffner

Message My Name is...Child of God Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel

Special Recognitions Joanie Strohm, Bess Redmond
Betty Durham

Hymn Come, Sinners, to the Gospel Feast UMH 339

Holy Communion Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel
Sara Williams

Hymn In Christ There Is No East or West UMH 548

+Sending Forth and Blessing of the Gift Cards Joanie Strohm

+Postlude

+Please stand in body or spirit.

Please remain seated while singing, so all may see the words.

Please silence your cell phone during all sessions.

Retreat Leader: Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel

Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel comes from a long line of faithful women. She is the daughter of David and Sara Williams. Aryn grew up in East Bend, NC, and attended Prospect UMC. She started attending United Methodist Women with her mom and grandmama as a young girl.

Aryn attended East Carolina University where she achieved a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Health Education.

Aryn was very active in the formation of a Young Women's UMW Circle at Trinity UMC in New Bern and a new UMW group at St. Luke's UMC in Hickory. She served briefly as the communications coordinator for Catawba Valley District UMW.

After working in various careers Aryn received the call to go into ministry in 2011 while a member at St. Luke's UMC. After attending a formative Walk to Emmaus experience, Aryn began serving as a local pastor in 2012 in Sylva, NC, while attending seminary at Candler School of Theology. She was ordained in 2018 and has served in the local church in Haywood and Jackson Counties.

Aryn has been married to Jay Ruebel since 2015, and together they are proud to have three wonderful daughters, Gracie, Norah, and Journi.

Aryn currently serves as Pastor at Cashiers UMC in the Smoky Mountain District.



Mission Speaker: Maggie Armstrong



Maggie Armstrong started October 21 as the Director of Recovery for the Western North Carolina Conference, not quite one month after Hurricane Helene stunned the state with its ferocity and devastation.

Maggie is the daughter of two Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist pastors, Jamie Armstrong and the late Elizabeth Graves. As such, she was perhaps destined to return to this conference. She grew up within the conference (including Swain and Haywood Counties) and spent a lot of time at Lake Junaluska.

Maggie has also lived in the Chapel Hill and Durham areas, in Florida, and in Germany. Earlier this year she came home to North Carolina to become a Fellow for the Piedmont Triad Regional Council, writing grants and policies.

Before coming to her current position, Maggie spent three years with the Florida Conference as Hurricane Volunteer Coordinator. She then earned a Master of Science degree at United Nations University & University of Bonn in Geography of Environmental Risks and Human Security, a program that takes an interdisciplinary approach towards environmental risks, natural hazards, and their implications for human-nature relations.

Pianist: Catherine Ritch

Catherine, a native of Matthews, NC, is a published composer and author of inspirational fiction, nonfiction, and children's books with 27 books currently in print, and seven others currently in process. A frequent speaker and musician in a variety of venues, she has entertained or spoken to audiences around the globe.

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 disasters.

A radio personality once said of Ritch, "Catherine's lightning quick wit and musical talent are astonishing enough, but combined with her neverending source of positive energy, the woman is a ball of fire that's sure to inspire."

Put Catherine on a piano, organ, or keyboard, and from Bach to Broadway to Boogie to the Best of Gospel, she'll 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, which happens to be a real place (where Methodists have The Hinton Retreat Center). Dressed as Miz Eudora, she has entertained doctors and medical personnel, ministers and bishops, teachers, and other groups with "Laughter Is the Best Medicine" through the 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."



Music Leader: Charlie Harnish



Charlie hails from Sarasota, FL, and began playing the piano around four years old. Although music is his primary passion, he has many other interests from watercolor painting to gourmet cooking, and he enjoys exploring it all with his partner Andy, their chihuahua (Wolfgang), and their cat (Clara) in beautiful Candler, NC. Charlie has been the Director of Music for Weaverville United Methodist Church since August of 2018, and dearly enjoys directing the voice and bell choirs as well as performing thrilling piano and organ music for worship services.

Friday Breakouts

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

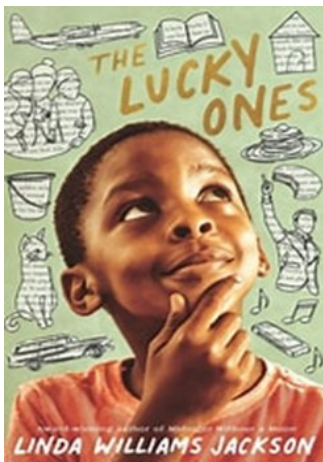
Move 4 Missions Treasure Hunt with Valerie Prim

8am to 9 am / Meet outside Harrell Center for a fun morning walk.

Want to walk on the wild side? Join the **Move 4 Mission** breakout session with Valerie Prim as our fearless leader. Depart Harrell Center, walk around the lake where the swimming pool is located, cross over the footbridge, and the wildness begins! Search for treasure there in the wild and continue your journey around the lake or return as you came. Ask your Local 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, and the overflowing joy of supporting women, children, and youth is well worth the time!

The very popular **BOOK** Club with Jennie Greenway

9am to 10:15am / Harrell Center Lower Level



We will discuss **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 enough food for him and his family. Ellis' teacher 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.

UWFaith Choir

1:30pm to 2:30pm / Harrell Center Lower Level

Do you love to sing?

Come make a joyful noise with your UWFaith sisters who also love to sing. Join your voices to learn a new song under the direction of Catherine and Charlie.



'I Am Because We Are': The African Philosophy of Ubuntu

Ubuntu with Kim Eller / 2pm to 4:30 or 5pm / Meet in front of Harrell Center



Participate in **Ubuntu** by serving at **Friendship House** at First United Methodist Church and the **Pigeon Multi-Cultural Development Center**, both in Waynesville.

For Friendship House, you are invited to bring canned goods and other nonperishable food items and Clorox wipes. We will sort clothes and stock their food pantry.

At the **Pigeon Multi-Cultural Development Center**, we will clean and set up classrooms for their summer program. Items needed are paper plates, bendy drinking straws, toothpicks, zipper-lock sandwich bags, large balloons, unsharpened pencils, cellophane tape, and cotton swabs.

Take Ubuntu back to your Districts and encourage your Local Units to go Ubuntuing! Together, we can make a divine difference. After all, ***I am because we are.***

Labyrinth Walk with Betty Durham

2:30pm to 4pm / Harrell Center Lower Level

After a short video on the history of labyrinths, silently transition to the labyrinth beside Memorial Chapel. You will be given a booklet to use as you reflect quietly on your faith journey. 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 and resting as you take the time to renew.



Jazzercising 4 Jesus with LaDonna Butts

3:30pm to 4:30pm / Harrell Center, Room 105



No retreat would be complete without Jazzersizing 4 Jesus. Come enjoy exercise in a chair while worshipping Jesus. LaDonna makes this so much fun that you don't even realize you're working up a holy sweat!

Krinking It Up with Kim

Friday Night after Session Three / Harrell Center Auditorium

What's in a name?

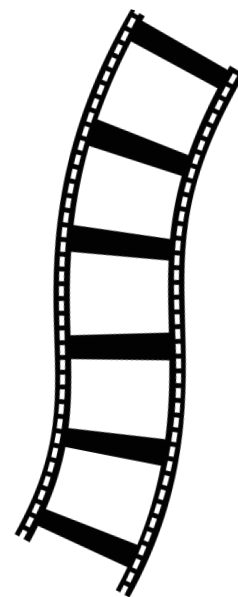
Districts will compete against one other
to see who can ring in first!

Name that tune!

Name that movie!

Name that book!

Join all the fun!



Upcoming WNCC UWFaith Dates

- July 18-19 Mission u (Catholic Conference Center, Hickory)
- September 6 Annual Celebration (Williamson's Chapel UMC, Mooresville)
- October 18 District Leadership Development, ALL District Officers
(Taylorsville First UMC and Virtual)
- District Ubuntu any time in October at various locations

Special opportunity at WNCC Annual Celebration!
For just \$1.00 you can have your picture made with Flat Sally
and meet her in person.
Look for the photo booth in Room 105 Harrell Center!



Program Participants

(in order of appearance in the program)

Joanie Strohm – Conference President
Ken Howle – Lake Junaluska Executive Director
Betty Durham – Conference Spiritual Growth Coordinator
Berthina Thomas – District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Yadkin Valley
Cindy Carter – District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Uwharrie
Linda Greer – District President, Appalachian
Kim Shafer – District Treasurer, Catawba Valley and Smoky Mountain
Mildred Carter – Past UMW/UW Faith Conference President (2009-2012)
Lynn Alexander – Conference Vice President
Lynne Gilbert – Conference Webmaster/Legacy Fund Liaison
Brenda Steadman – Conference Committee on Nominations, Chair
Gwen Harris – District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Blue Ridge
Tracey Owens – Deaconess, District Membership Nurture & Outreach Coordinator, Blue Ridge
Lisa Bacon – District President, Smoky Mountain
Renee Hayes – Deaconess, National Office Director
Lynda Morris – Conference Secretary
Kim Eller – Conference Membership Nurture & Outreach Coordinator
Sandrea Williamson – Conference Historian
Donna Miller – District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Northern Piedmont
Bess Redmond – Conference Treasurer
Rhita Newcomb – District President, Yadkin Valley
Lily Pierce – District Communications Coordinator, Northern Piedmont
Diann Back – District President, Metro (Host District)
Sherry Summerlin – District Spiritual Growth Coordinator, Appalachian
Patricia Shoffner – Unit President, Southeast Guilford United Women in Faith

Special Thanks to...

Our speakers – Rev. Aryn William-Ruebel and Maggie Armstrong
Our musicians – Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish
Our Breakout Leaders – LaDonna Butts, Betty Durham, Kim Eller, Jennie Greenway, Valerie Prim
Our Host District – Metro (President Diann Back)
Our Tech Team – Lynne Gilbert and Sara Williams
Our District Spiritual Growth Coordinators – Sherry Summerlin (Appalachian), Gwen Harris (Blue Ridge), Donna Miller (Northern Piedmont), Cindy Carter (Uwharrie), Berthina Thomas (Yadkin Valley)
Our District Presidents – Linda Greer (Appalachian), Lucy Earls (Blue Ridge), Janet Bjork-Colton (Catawba Valley), Diann Back (Metro), Sherry Sink (Northern Piedmont), Lisa Bacon (Smoky Mountain), Sarah Lee (Uwharrie), Rhita Newcomb (Yadkin Valley)
Our Program Committee – Lynn Alexander, Joanie Strohm, Lynda Morris, Bess Redmond, Betty Durham, Victoria (Vickie) Brown, Kim Eller, Laquetta Barbee, Cathy McCauley, Deborah Brooks, Diann Back, Sherry Sink, Lynne Gilbert.



Registration is in Harrell Center Lower Level from 2pm – 6:45pm on Thursday and 8:15am – 9am on Friday.

Leave a prayer; take a prayer. Look for the table in Harrell Lower Level. There will be a basket where you may place your prayer request and take a prayer request. Give the gift of prayer to one another.

Prayer and Meditation can happen anywhere and at any time 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.

Program Resources and Mission Displays are in Harrell Center Lower Level. Stop by to check out the resources and view the displays.

Hands-On Project is gift cards for Brooks–Howell Home. We ask that the cards come from Lowe’s Home Improvement, Home Depot, or Walmart. Please place your gift card in an envelope with the amount and store name on the outside. You can put a note or card in the envelope. Think about purchasing a Gift to Mission card to go along with the gift card. There will be baskets at registration to collect the cards. We will bless all the cards at the end of the last session. The total amounts will be announced then.

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

Breakfast: 7:30am – 9am Lunch: Noon – 1:30pm Dinner 5:30pm – 7:30pm

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

A Love Offering for Mission Giving in Celebration of the Vibrant Future of United Women in Faith will be taken during the Friday evening session. Checks should be made payable to WNCC UWFaith.

**We believe
Love in Action
Can Change
The World**