

February 2026

Women Talk



United
Women
in Faith

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

Practicing Hope

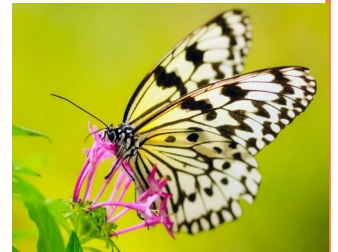
Smoky Mountain District Mission Study

Saturday, March 21, 2026

9:30 am — 12:00 noon

Maple Grove UMC

(79 Maple Grove Church Rd., Waynesville, NC)



Join us as we discuss how to practice hope when hope seems hard to find. We will explore what hope is, how we imagine a more hopeful future in the midst of hard realities, and how Christ teaches us to embody hope in our neighborhoods and around the world.

Schedule:

9:30am—10:00am Check in and light refreshments

10:00am—12:00 Noon Mission Study (Handouts will be provided.)

Registration link: <https://bit.ly/SMDMissionStudy>

(Registration is not required but assists us in planning.)

NOTE: 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!

Lisa Bacon, SMD President

Email: lisabacon304@gmail.com / Cell: 828-226-2433



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

Page 1— **PRACTICING HOPE**

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—**Parade of Nations: Tour the World. We had fun!**

Page 4—Notes from Debbie Ray, and Hello, United Women in Faith from your District Treasurer.

Page 5—"The Book Woman's Daughter" - Smoky Mountain District Book Selection, and 2026 Mission Focus: National Mission Institutions

Page 6—WNCC United Women in Faith Scholarship Program

Page 7—District Love Offerings and Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund

Page 8—2026 Nurturing Partners and Local Unit Visitations = Consider These Points!

Page 9—The 2026 SMD UW Faith Executive Team and PAG Listing.

Page 10—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.

**It is good to remember that the tea kettle,
although up to its neck in hot water,
continues to sing.**

* * * * *

*Rejoice evermore. In everything give thanks: for this is
the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16,18

Parade of Nations: Tour the World through United Women in Faith

We had a great time at our Parade of Nations Tour of the World on November 1st.

PARADE OF NATIONS



PARADE OF NATIONS

FILIPINO SNACKS



KENYAN TEA

“BRAIDING SWEETGRASS” DISCUSSION

Hands-on Project: Items for exam bags to be distributed on campus by the Wesley Foundation at Western Carolina University. Suggested items: ramen noodles, hot chocolate packets, individual tea packs, stress relievers (fidget toys, stress balls, etc.) small Kleenex packs, ChapSticks.



NOTES FROM DEBBIE RAY

Debbie Ray, Conference Liaison

I recently lucked into this post on uwfaith's digital platform and wanted to share it. To access: UWFAITH.ORG, digital, home, in the search box put Epiphany Chalk Blessings. It's about Epiphany Chalk Blessings—something I had never heard of before. The idea is that you chalk this blessing above doors in your home or church asking blessings upon those who enter. I am going to use it with my girls' circle this Sunday. You can also just print the blessing on a small strip of paper and tape it to openings. This is the blessing:

EPIPHANY CHALK BLESSING

20+C+M+B+26

May Christ bless this house.

If you are intrigued by this, let me know and I will share the code.

Debbie Ray, Conference Liaison

Email: wrray@charter.net / Cell Phone: 828-400-3499



HELLO, UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH FROM YOUR DISTRICT 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 \$28,918 for undesignated giving with a total of \$30,969 for all giving in 2025!

Please mail your first quarter remittance by February 21st. Mail is expected to be even slower this year than last year... Look for the first quarter treasurer letter the beginning of February. There are no changes to the forms.

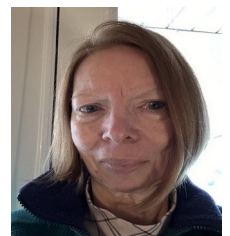
Also, remember to lift up the Walk for Mission undesignated giving this year. It is a great way for your unit to get together while meeting good health goals.

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: kimshaferuwfsm@outlook.com



“The Book Woman’s Daughter”

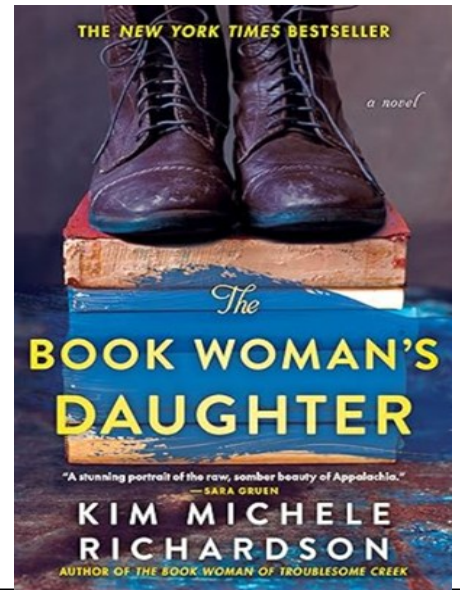
Smoky Mountain District Book Club Selection

Our 2026 “District read” is “The Book Woman’s Daughter”, by Kim Michele Richardson. This book is a 2025 selection in Education for Mission in the United Women in Faith Reading Program. The book is available in several formats (including large print, Audible, and Kindle) in most public libraries.

The book may be purchased at local booksellers, online at <https://bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith> (an online bookstore that financially supports local, independent bookstores by giving them a share of profits from book sales), and at other online sites.

We will discuss this book at our District Mission Festival on October 24, 2026.

“As the daughter of the famed blue-skinned, Troublesome Creek packhorse librarian, Honey and her family have been hiding from the law all her life. But when her mother and father are imprisoned, Honey realizes she must fight to stay free, or risk being sent away for good. Picking up her mother’s old packhorse library route, Honey begins to deliver books to the remote hollers of Appalachia. But the route can be treacherous, and some folks aren’t as keen to let a woman pave her own way. If Honey wants to bring the freedom books provide to the families who need it most, she’s going to have to fight for her place, and along the way, learn that the extraordinary women who run the hills and hollers can make all the difference in the world.” (from the 2025 Reading Program catalog)



2026 Mission Focus: National Mission Institutions

This year we encourage each local unit to learn about one of our 84 National Mission Institutions and share with the district at our District Mission Festival on October 24, 2026. National Mission Institutions include Bethlehem Centers, Wesley Community Centers, colleges and universities, etc. You may find a list of the National Mission Institutions in the March/April 2024 issue of *response* magazine, at the United Women in Faith website (uwfaith.org), and at this link:

Uwfaith.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/NMIRosterByState.pdf.



United Women in Faith

WNCC United Women in Faith SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Do you know a student who is a member of a WNCC United Methodist Church?

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 2026?

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

Contact the scholarship committee chairperson for an application:

Tonya Lanier

710 Burgess Street, Lexington, NC 27292-4214

336-470-1100 (cell) / Email: sonshiners61@gmail.com

Applications are due by **March 1, 2026**.

Interviews will be conducted via Zoom on **March 14, 2026**.

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, or individuals.

Please contact me if you need additional information.

Blessings,

Tonya Lanier

WNCC United Women in Faith Scholarship Committee Chairperson

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 2024/2025 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.



Ways to Give to the Legacy Fund

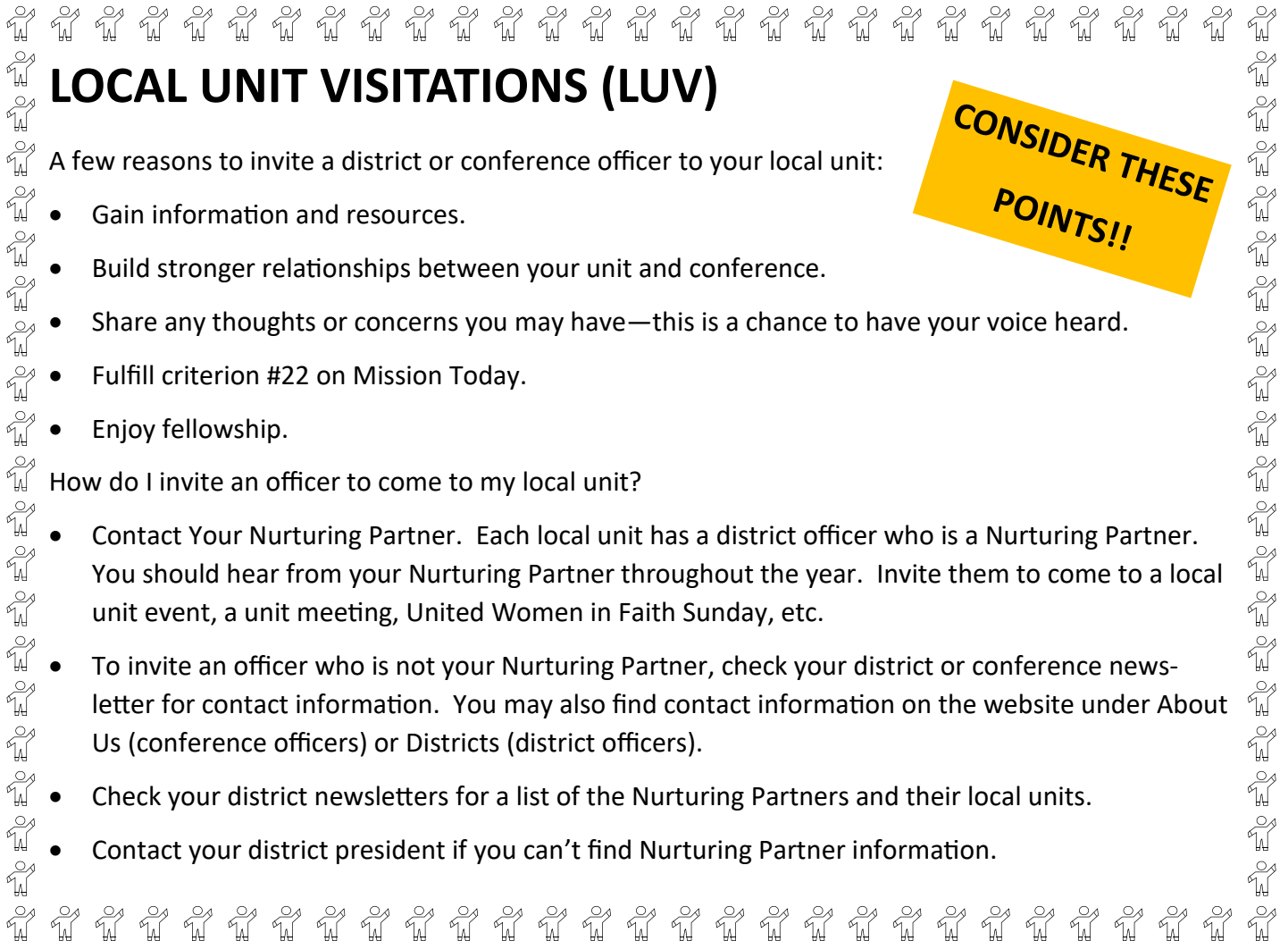
- ♦ Make a gift to the Legacy Fund through your local unit United Women in Faith treasurer.
- ♦ Make a one time donation or consider becoming a Legacy Builder by giving a monthly gift of \$18.69 or more.
- ♦ Use our Western North Carolina Conference Legacy Commitment Form, available on our website at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



SMD United Women in Faith

Nurturing Partners 2026

Nurturing Partner	NP Contact Info	UW Faith Unit
Lisa Bacon	Lisabacon304@gmail.com 828-226-2433	Andrews, Beaverdam, Canton First, Shady Grove, Sylva First
Debbie Ray	wrray@charter.net 828-400-3499	Maggie Valley, Elizabeth Chapel
Laurel Bevill	laurelbev@icloud.com 828-456-5528	Clyde Central, Maple Grove
Vicky Mayse	mayse706@bellsouth.net 706-505-7546	Bryson City, Franklin First
Esther Manchester	Ehm1@yahoo.com 828-226-7481	Robbinsville, Tomotla
Ellynn Stonebraker	Jumperlady21@gmail.com 828-524-8787	Cullowhee, Hayesville First, Murphy First
Celeste Wall	wallceleste@gmail.com 336-402-4661	Canton Central, Waynesville First
Kim Shafer	kimshaferuwfsm@outlook.com 704-965-2022	Crabtree UMC



LOCAL UNIT VISITATIONS (LUV)

A few reasons to invite a district or conference officer to your local unit:

- Gain information and resources.
- Build stronger relationships between your unit and conference.
- Share any thoughts or concerns you may have—this is a chance to have your voice heard.
- Fulfill criterion #22 on Mission Today.
- Enjoy fellowship.

How do I invite an officer to come to my local unit?

- Contact Your Nurturing Partner. Each local unit has a district officer who is a Nurturing Partner. You should hear from your Nurturing Partner throughout the year. Invite them to come to a local unit event, a unit meeting, United Women in Faith Sunday, etc.
- To invite an officer who is not your Nurturing Partner, check your district or conference newsletter for contact information. You may also find contact information on the website under About Us (conference officers) or Districts (district officers).
- Check your district newsletters for a list of the Nurturing Partners and their local units.
- Contact your district president if you can't find Nurturing Partner information.

CONSIDER THESE POINTS!!

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

United Women in Faith 2026 Smoky Mtn. District Exec. Team & Program Advisory Group

President:

Lisa Bacon (Cullowhee)
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Vice President:

Vicky Mayse (Cullowhee)
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Secretary:

Nancy Jo Willis (Murphy First)
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Treasurer:

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Education & Interpretation: [Open]

Spiritual Growth:

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Membership, Nurture & Outreach: [Open]

Program Resources: [Open]

Communications Coordinator: [Open]

Parliamentarian:
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Historian: [Open]

Newsletter Editor
[see N J Willis under Secretary]

Conference Liaison
Debbie Ray (Waynesville 1st)
569 Country Club Drive
Waynesville, NC 28786
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Nominations Chairperson:
TBD

Nominations:
TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

Legacy Liaison:
JoAnn Black (Cullowhee)
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Program Advisory Group

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1/31/2026

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

TO:



United
Women
in Faith

2026 UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CONFERENCE & DISTRICT EVENTS

WNCC UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 11-13	WNCC Spiritual Growth at Lake Junaluska
Aug.21-22	Mission u, Catholic Conference Center, Hickory
Sep. 12	WNCC Annual Celebration/TBD;10:00am-5:00
Oct. 17	WNCC LDD for all District Officers; (TBD/virtual?) 10am-12pm

SMD UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar. 21	SMD Mission Study at Maple Grove; 9:30am-12:00noon
Apr. 25	SMD Day Apart at Canton Central; 9:30am-12:00noon
Aug.15	SMD Annual Celebration/Virtual; 10:00am
Oct. 24	SMD Mission Festival at Murphy First; 9:30am-12:00noon