



United Women in Faith

Western North Carolina

Blue Ridge District Newsletter  
United Women in Faith

**Purpose:** UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH is a community of women whose purpose is to know God and 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.

## Mission u 2026

August 21 - 22, 2026

The Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, North Carolina

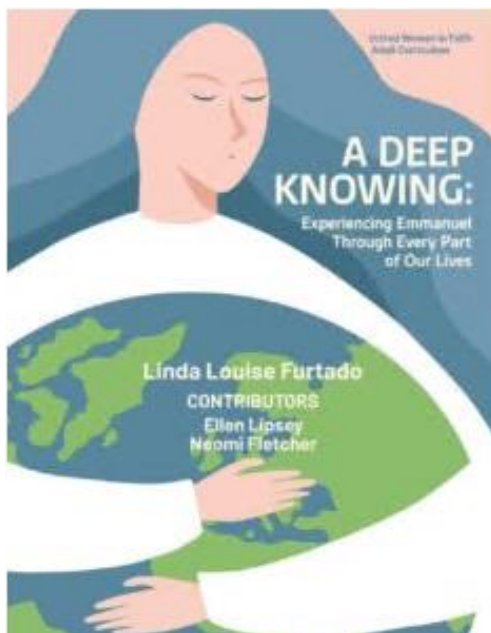
Passionate about mission? Love to learn?  
Want to engage with others who are?  
**Then Mission u is right for you!**

Apply for a first timer scholarship.  
(See page 12 for information)



**[Registration Opens July 6th thru Aug 10th! Click Here.](#)**

There is NO onsite registration.



### A Deep Knowing: Adult Curriculum

In *A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives*, author Linda Furtado invites you to encounter “God with us” in powerful, personal, and transformative ways. This eight-session curriculum opens a path to explore how Emmanuel is revealed throughout Scripture—and how that same divine presence continues to walk with us today.

Each session encourages you to pause, reflect, and take a closer look at the stories of faith found in the Bible. Through thoughtful readings, meaningful discussions, and personal reflection, you’ll uncover connections between those ancient stories and your own life. As you journey with others, you’ll explore how God is present amid justice struggles, adversity, community heritage, and deep spiritual relationships.

# District Annual Celebration

**August 15, 2026**

**9:30 am registration**  
**10:00 am Business Meeting**  
**11:00 am Worship**



## **Piney Mountain UMC**

14 Piney Mountain Church Rd, Candler, North Carolina, 28715

Highlights of event:

Speaker: Eva Farren of Transformation Village  
Election of officers & vote on budget

Please come sing in the Choir! (Be at Piney Mtn at 9:30 for rehearsal)

*Our theme is "Inspired by Faith--Committed to Action"*

Our hands on Mission Project for event is:

**UMCOR Menstrual Hygiene Kits**

[Click here for Kit instructions](#)

*Please bring completed kits with \$2 per kit payable to **WNCCUW in Faith Treasurer** to event.*

Our love offering will be in recognition of those who live with food insecurity in our community.



## *A Message from Your President*

Greetings United Women in Faith sisters. I hope you are having a blessed summer. It seems as though time is flying by. We have so much to look forward to the rest of our year together. Many of us were able to attend the recent Spiritual Growth Retreat in Lake Junaluska. We were smaller in number, but what a great retreat! It is always so inspiring. The Conference UWFaith officers are in discussion about some changes to the Retreat in future years. As soon as any plans are finalized, I will let you know so you can get that information on your calendars.

Many, many continued thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make our 2026 Prayer Breakfast special. To Gwen Harris and my ladies at Oak Grove United Methodist Church, you did an outstanding job of planning and executing the day beautifully. Rev. Jan Brittain did a great job of delivering our message while continuing our 2026 theme of *"Inspired by Faith-Committed to Action."* Thanks for your generosity with giving to the love offering and items for the staff at Brooks Howell Home. Even though it can be a lot of work, it is always a blessing to be able to host an event at your home church. If your church would like to be considered to host an event in 2027 or 2028 (that is hard to write), please let me or Stephanie Goudreau know.

Please check the dates in the newsletter of upcoming events. We have so many more opportunities to be together in mission, education, and fellowship during the remainder of the year. We have two more Zoom Book Clubs, Mission u, District and Conference Annual Celebrations, Leadership Development Days, and Ubuntu Days of Service to look forward to. Attend as many as you can. We are always in service, but brainstorm ideas for local Ubuntu Days of Service in your own communities. I would love to hear what you have planned.

Please invite your nurturing partner to come to one of your unit meetings. Officers love to make these visits and we are here to help you and your units any way we can. We are always amazed at the work your local unit is doing.



Love in Christ

**Lucy Earls, President**



*Prayer Breakfast Table Setting*

## **Vice President's Message**

My Sunday school class at Marion First is studying the book, *The Heart of Christianity* by Dr. Marcus J. Borg. Although it was published in 1989, we are finding it to be a timeless book full of wisdom. My favorite part of the book so far is Chapter 8, which is titled "Thin Places: Opening the Heart". Did you know that the word "heart" appears over one thousand times in the Bible? According to Dr. Borg, the heart is a metaphor for the whole inner self rather than our more common understanding of the heart mainly for love. He goes on to describe the heart as being open or closed. One way our heart becomes open is when we experience "thin places" – the times when we get a glimpse of God. This can happen through worship, music, art, nature, and other people. I have also heard this described as a "glimmer." It's not quite a miracle, but something happens to make you feel extra close to God.

My friend Carol who lives way out in the country recently experienced this when she gave a ride to an unhoused woman who had basically been dumped on Carol's rural road. The woman had started to walk four miles back to town with all her belongings on a very hot day. Carol ended up driving the woman to town to the homeless shelter. She said that the woman talked all the way into town. I suspect that listening to her story was likely as big a service as giving her a ride. When Carol later described this event to our Sunday school class, it was evident that she had experienced a thin place or a glimmer through helping the woman.

Ponder this prayer from Dag Hammarskjold, who served as the Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1953 until his death in a plane crash in 1961:

*Give us pure hearts, that we may see you;  
Humble hearts, that we may hear you;  
Hearts of love, that we may serve you;  
Hearts of faith, that we may abide in you.*

**Stephanie Goudreau**

### **Useful Links:**

UW Faith Reading Program: [Reading Program | United Women in Faith](#)

response Magazine: [response magazine | United Women in Faith](#)

WNC Conference Newsletter: [Conference Gram | WNCC United Women in Faith](#)

Brookes Howell Connection: [Brooks-Howell Serendipitor | WNCC United Women in Faith](#)

# United Methodist Women

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT

## PROPOSED BUDGET

### 2027

PLEDGE TO MISSION \$ 70,000.00

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#### ADMINISTRATION & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (A & M D)

##### OFFICER EXPENSES:

Postage	\$ <u>200</u>	
Supplies	<u>300</u>	
Telephone	<u>00</u>	
Travel (mileage)	<u>1,000</u>	
Printing (letters, handouts, etc.)	<u>200</u>	
Total Officer Expenses		<u>\$1,700.00</u>

##### MEETING EXPENSES:

District Annual Meeting	\$ <u>500</u>	
District Spiritual Enrichment	<u>300</u>	
District Officer Training	<u>200</u>	
Other District Events	<u>100</u>	
Total Meeting Expenses		<u>\$1,100.00</u>

##### OTHER EXPENSES:

Newsletter 1) Printing	\$ <u>100</u>	
Newsletter 2) Postage	<u>100</u>	
Resources and Literature	<u>200</u>	
SMR, GTM, & GIM	<u>200</u>	
Local Women Stipend (3 3 first-timers to Spiritual Growth Retreat, Conference Mission u or Annual Celebration)	<u>450</u>	
Miscellaneous	<u>100</u>	
Total Other Expenses		<u>\$1,150.00</u>

**TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES – A & M D** **\$3,950.00**

Approved by District Executive Committee June 27, 2026

## **Nominations**

The following list of district officers will be voted on at the District Annual Celebration on August 15, 2026 at Piney Mountain UMC.

### Proposed 2027 Blue Ridge District Officer List:

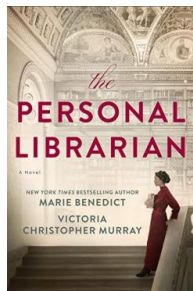
President	Lucy Earls (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Vice President	Stephanie Goudreau (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
<b>Secretary</b>	<b>Kathy Leftwich (1<sup>st</sup> term) 2027-2028</b>
Treasurer	Elizabeth Duncan (1 <sup>st</sup> term) 2026-2027
Mission Coordinator Spiritual Growth	Gwen Harris (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Mission Coord. Member, Education & Interpretation	Sandra Wells (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Mission Coord Membership Nurture/Outreach	Tracey Owens (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Mission Coord Social Action	Beverly Hill (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Program Resources	Jennie Greenway (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2027-2028
Communication	Kathy Woods (2 <sup>nd</sup> term) 2026-2027
Parliamentarian	Jo Pyatt 2025-2028
Committee on Nominations Chair	Martha Phillips 2026-2027 Class of 2029 Jeannette Byrd - Class of 2028 Mary Margaret Ingle - Class of 2029 <b>Open Class of 2029 (will be a 3 year term)</b> <b>Connie Martin</b> <b>Class of 2030</b> <b>Glenda Fuhrman</b> <b>Class of 2030</b> <b>Open Class of 2030</b>

*New officers listed in **red***  
*Officers needed listed in **green***

**Submitted by Martha Phillips, Nomination Committee Chair**

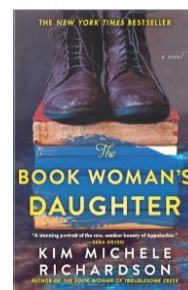
## **Program Resources**

Happy Summer UW Faith Sisters! I hope you are all well and having a great start to the season of sunshine and relaxation. I am very excited for the next two books we will be discussing in our book studies.



On August 8, we will be discussing *The Personal Librarian* by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray. This story follows the life of Belle da Costa Greene who rose to power and fame as J.P. Morgan's personal librarian in the early 1900s. But Belle has a secret. She is living a secret life, denying her true identity as Belle Marion Greener, the daughter of civil rights advocate and the first black man to receive an undergraduate degree from Harvard University. This book is in the Nurturing for Community category and we'll have our Zoom book study at 10:00 am on Zoom. The study will be on August 8.

In September we will discuss *The Bookwoman's Daughter* by Kim Michele Richardson. The sequel to a book study favorite, *The Bookwoman of Troublesome Creek*, this story follows Honey Lovett who inherited her mother's blue skin but feels led to carry on the same mission as her mother, to bring books to the remote areas of Kentucky. Our book study on this will take place on September 19 at 10:00 am. This book is in the Education for Mission category.



I look forward to seeing you at both of these book studies!



Happy Reading!

**Jennie Greenway, Secretary of Program Resources**



## **Spiritual Growth**

In this article I want to look backward to the prayer breakfast and forward to Mission u.

According to the evaluations of those who attended the prayer breakfast, it was a great success! People were especially pleased with Oak Grove as the hostess group. Attendees commented on how friendly the hostesses were, how good the food was, and how the entire church helped make us feel welcome—from the cooks, to the golf cart drivers, to the pastor.

People were also impressed with Jan Brittain (pictured right), the guest speaker who is a retired elder in the Western North Carolina Conference. Her sermon on the theme “Inspired by Faith—Committed to Action” was a powerful discussion of faith as it is lived out in the lives of some of the characters mentioned in Hebrews 11, often called the “Hall of Faith.” She, of course, encouraged us to emulate those saints in our lives. If you could not attend, you can see the entire service by Googling YouTube Oak Grove Church, clicking on the “Search” icon (a magnifying glass), and typing in “Blue Ridge District Prayer Breakfast.”



LINK | [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h\\_0dQV0UCb8&t=27s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h_0dQV0UCb8&t=27s)

And now, let’s look forward Mission u, August 21-22, 2026, at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC. The book we will be studying is entitled *A Deep Knowing: Experiencing Emmanuel Through Every Part of Our Lives* by Linda Louise Furtado. This year the book is available from Amazon in both a print version (\$14.99, plus shipping) and a Kindle version (\$5.99).

The book is from the Spiritual Growth category on the 2026 reading program list. If you read this book and have read the books Jennie Greenway features in her very popular virtual District Book Study, you will complete Reading Program Plan I AND Criterion 22 on the Mission Today list. You will also be ready to attend Mission u.

### **Gwen Harris, Coordinator**



Prayer Breakfast



## **Social Action**

One of the primary aims of UWFaith is to connect spiritual women to act **boldly** for justice and **transform** communities. Where do we get that strength to do that and what in the world can one do?

Good news! I Peter 4 tells us, “Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. **Each** of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ.”

As we continue to reach out in love, we cannot help but be dismayed at the injustices done to our fellow brothers and sisters through Jesus. United Women in Faith has emphasis on some of the issues, but that does not mean that we ignore others. As we offer hospitality and learn to love each other fully, keep your eyes open and look around. Keep your ears open and listening to learn about others and the issues plaguing them. And use your mouth to speak as God would to help correct those injustices. Use our mouths to call our politicians at local, state and federal levels. ACT! That is social action at its core.

Let’s join each other in this service and transform the world!

**Beverly Hill, Coordinator**

Who We Are

**We’re a sisterhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation.**

## **Mission, Education & Interpretation**

I was asked by a long time UWFaith member recently about our mission giving. I told her that UWFaith relies on Five Channels of Mission Giving:

1. Pledge to Mission
2. Special Mission Recognition
3. Gift to Mission
4. Gift in Memory
5. World Thank Offering

In attempting to answer her many (many) questions, I realized that I needed a refresher course in all the details.

I went to WNC UWFaith website and started my research. I am thankful that I was led there, and for the insights it brought me. Sometimes all that is needed is a little push.

*Please attend as many district activities as possible in the next few months (please see calendar of events below).*

Our Blue Ridge District theme is “Inspired by Faith-Committed to Action”.

**Sandra Wells, UWFaith Sister**

### **2026 Calendar of Events**

<b>Events for ALL Members</b>	<b>District and Conference Officers</b>
	<i>Aug 1 Finance Committee (location TBD)</i>
	<i>Aug 2 Executive Committee (location TBD)</i>
<i>Aug 8 BR District Book Study on Zoom, 10 – 11:30 am <b>The Personal Librarian</b></i>	
<i>Aug 15 <b>District</b> Annual Celebration 9:30 am Piney Mountain UMC</i>	
<i>Aug 21-22 Mission u Catholic Conference Center, Hickory</i>	
<i>Sept. 12, <b>Conference</b> Annual Celebration, 10 am – 5 pm, St. Lukes UMC, Hickory</i>	
<i>Sept 19 BR District Book Study on Zoom, 10 – 11:30 am <b>The Bookwoman’s Daughter</b></i>	
	<i>Sept 26 District Executive Meeting 9:30 am at Brooks-Howell</i>
	<i>Oct. 17 Conference Leadership Development Day, All District Officers(In Person &amp; Zoom) TBD</i>
	<i>Nov. 6 Orientation for new Conference Officers Nov. 7 Conference Committee Meetings Nov. 8 Conference Executive Committee meeting</i>

## **Treasurer**

### **Greetings Blue Ridge District United Women in Faith!**

*Romans 12:12 “Let your hope keep you joyful, be patient in your troubles, and pray at all times.”*

We have pledged to support missions by \$70,000. I look forward to achieving this goal with you.

Please feel free to contact me about Gift to Mission and Gift in Memory cards. I have a good supply of cards on hand and look forward to helping you with honoring people this way.

I pray that God continues to watch over you as you labor faithfully in His vineyard and help others to live better and brighter lives.

It is not too late to submit your 2026 pledge.

Together we can make a difference in the lives of women, children, and youth. The work that can be accomplished through mission giving is beyond our imagination. Women, children, and youth around the globe depend on our help and support. As God’s people, we are called to help the less fortunate.



By reaching our \$70,000 goal we will be able to achieve this.

Blessings,  
**Elizabeth Duncan**

### **National Mission**

Nearly 90 projects and community institutions support today’s vital needs across the United States.

### **International Mission**

United Women in Faith continues supporting and empowering local women in 39 countries around the globe to be leaders in the church, community, and the world.

## **2026 Frances Yelton Scholarship Form for Mission u August 21st and 22nd, 2026**

One scholarship to Mission u will be given this year. Each unit is encouraged to submit a name or names of anyone interested who will be a first time attendee. Please complete this form and return to the District President by the following date: **July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Church: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Provide a short biographical sketch of yourself, including your participation in United Women in Faith.

Why do you wish to attend the Mission u?

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please email to District President – Lucy Earls at [jlearls@att.net](mailto:jlearls@att.net)**

**2026 NURTURING PARTNERS for BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT**  
 - PLEASE ASK YOUR NURTURING PARTNER TO COME VISIT

<b>Nurturing Partner</b>	<b>Church</b>	<b>Nurturing Partner</b>	<b>Church</b>
<b>Lucy Earls</b> (828) 453-8566 (828) 223-1325	First Forest City Spindale, Saluda, Edneyville	<b>Jeannette Byrd</b> (828) 230-5308	Central Mills River
<b>Stephanie Goudreau</b> (828) 460-2463	Pleasant Hill-Marion Concord Clinchfield	<b>Gwen Harris</b> (828) 682-4589	Bald Creek Mars Hill Weaverville
<b>Beverly Hill</b> (828) 778-9309	Biltmore East Marion	<b>Sandra Wells</b> (828) 273-0726	Asbury Memorial Skyland Hendersonville First
<b>Glenda Fuhrmann</b> (828) 337-2617	Montmorenci	<b>Jo Pyatt</b> (828) 803-0363	Addie's Chapel
<b>Tracey Owens</b> (828) 246-6006	Black Mountain Groce Oak Grove	<b>Martha Phillips</b> (828) 467-3167	Spruce Pine Windom Marion First
<b>Joanie Stroh</b> (828) 707-8928	Piney Mountain Salem	<b>Kathy Leftwich</b> (919) 218-0586	St. Paul's Abernethy
<b>Jennie Greenway</b> (828) 289-1642	First Rutherfordton Gilkey Moore's Grove	<b>Eva Farren</b> (828) 231-3820	Grace Balfour
<b>Susan Snell</b> (828) 551-0736	S.O.W. in Faith (Oakley/Sardis)		

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

- Gain information and resources.
- Build stronger relationships between your unit and the district 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.



## Blue Ridge District United Women in Faith 2026 OFFICERS

<p><b><u>President:</u></b> Lucy Earls (Oak Grove) 913 Race Path Church Rd. Ellenboro, NC 28040 (828) 453-8566 (h) (828) 223-1325 (c) <a href="mailto:jlearls@att.net">jlearls@att.net</a></p>	<p><b><u>Vice President:</u></b> Stephanie Goudreau (Marion First) 320 S. Garden Street Marion, NC 28752 (828)460-2463 <a href="mailto:segoudreau@yahoo.com">segoudreau@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>Secretary:</u></b> Glenda Fuhrmann (Central) 10 Dustin Drive Swannanoa, NC 28778 (828) 337-2617 <a href="mailto:glendafuhrmann@yahoo.com">glendafuhrmann@yahoo.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>Treasurer:</u></b> Elizabeth Duncan (Black Mountain) 204 Rhododendron Ave Black Mountain, NC 28711 828-808-6478 <a href="mailto:lizzyduncan2000@gmail.com">lizzyduncan2000@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b><u>MC, Spiritual Growth:</u></b> Gwen Harris (Windom) 215 Grand View Lane Burnsville, NC 28714 (828) 682-4589 <a href="mailto:gwenaharris68@gmail.com">gwenaharris68@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>MC, Education &amp; Interpretation:</u></b> Sandra Wells (Central) 219 Aurora Drive Asheville, NC 28805 828-273-0726 <a href="mailto:sandracwells@gmail.com">sandracwells@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>MC, Social Action:</u></b> Beverly Hill (Black Mountain) 202 Border Street Black Mountain, NC 28711 828-778-9309 <a href="mailto:Beverlyhill19@gmail.com">Beverlyhill19@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>MC, Membership Nurture &amp; Outreach:</u></b> Tracey Owens (Marion First) 310 S. Garden Street Marion, NC 28752 (828) 246-6006 <a href="mailto:traceybhh@gmail.com">traceybhh@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b><u>Secretary of Program Resources:</u></b> Jennie Greenway (Oak Grove) 164 Emma Drive Ellenboro, NC 28040 (828) 289-1642 <a href="mailto:jengreenway@bellsouth.net">jengreenway@bellsouth.net</a></p>	<p><b><u>Communications Coordinator:</u></b> Kathy Woods (Skyland) 11 Azalea Road Arden, 28704 (828) 777-8617 <a href="mailto:mysumcemail@gmail.com">mysumcemail@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b><u>Parliamentarian:</u></b> Jo Pyatt (East Marion) P. O. Box 1621 Marion, NC 28040 (828) 803-0363 <a href="mailto:pyattjo@gmail.com">pyattjo@gmail.com</a></p>	
<p><b><u>Historian:</u></b> To be named.</p>			
<b><u>Committee On Nominations</u></b>			
<p><b>Martha Phillips</b> (Pine Grove) P. O. Box 49, Linville Falls, NC 28647 (828) 467-3167, <a href="mailto:mcpwilliams@gmail.com">mcpwilliams@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Susan Snell</b> (Central) 30 Sunflower Lane Fletcher, NC 28732 (828) 551-0736 <a href="mailto:ssnell123@bellsouth.net">ssnell123@bellsouth.net</a> Class of 2023</p>	<p><b>Eva Farren</b> (Piney Mountain) 12 St. Matthews Drive Candler, NC 28715-6207 (828) 231-3820 <a href="mailto:evafarren@icloud.com">evafarren@icloud.com</a> Class of 2025</p>	<p><b>Jeannette Byrd</b> (St. Paul's) 203 Aurora Dr. Asheville, NC <a href="tel:82828805">28805</a> (828) 230-5308 <a href="mailto:jbyrdasheville@aol.com">jbyrdasheville@aol.com</a> Class of 2028</p>
<p><b>Kathy Leftwich</b> (Central) 19 Gaston Mountain Road Asheville, NC 28806 919-218-0586 <a href="mailto:Kathleencleftwich@gmail.com">Kathleencleftwich@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Mary Margaret Ingle</b> (Central) 128 Forest Hill Drive Asheville, NC 28803 828-691-1998 <a href="mailto:marymargaretingle@gmail.com">marymargaretingle@gmail.com</a></p>		
<p><b><u>Members at Large</u></b> Dixie Liggett, (Skyland), 8 Springside Park, Asheville, NC 28803, (828) 684-1831, <a href="mailto:lliggett3@charter.net">lliggett3@charter.net</a></p>			
<p><b><u>Conference Advisor</u></b> Joanie Strohm (Weaverville), 111 Collins Road, Marshall, NC 28753, (828) 707-8928, <a href="mailto:ssjsmars@charter.net">ssjsmars@charter.net</a></p>			

Blue Ridge District United Women in Faith  
Kathy Woods  
11 Azalea Rd  
Arden, NC 28704

**Mark Your Calendars for upcoming 2026 events**

- Aug 8 BR District Book Study on Zoom, 10 – 11:30 am *The Personal Librarian*  
Aug 15 District Annual Celebration 9:30 am Piney Mountain UMC  
Aug 21-22 Mission u Catholic Conference Center, Hickory  
Sept 12 Conference Annual Celebration, Location TBD  
Sept 19 BR District Book Study on Zoom, 10 – 11:30am *The Bookwoman's Daughter*