

Women Talk

July 2026



United
Women
in Faith

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



Smoky Mountain District United Women in Faith
Annual Celebration

Build Each Other Up

Virtual via Zoom
August 15 — 10:00 AM

Preparing for 2027

Election of District Leadership

Approval of our Pledge to Mission

Approval of our Administrative and Membership Development Funds

Mission Speaker: Sandra Williamson

Celebrating 2025

Summary of Mission Giving

Putting Faith into Action: Local Units



“Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11, NIV)

The New Testament contains more than 50 verses of how we are to treat (or not treat) “each other” or “one another.” 1 John 4:20 warns that we cannot claim to love God if we don’t also love others. United Women in Faith grounded its 1869 origins in showing love to others by founding a mission organization to serve women and girls in India who had no access to healthcare or education. Their “foreign missionary society” soon developed “home missions” as well, including the founding of almost 100 National Mission Institutions.

Mission speaker Sandra Williamson is well-qualified to speak to us about the ways we as members of United Women in Faith “encourage one another and build each other up.” Sandra has served in many local, district, conference, and national positions, including Northern Piedmont District President, WNCC Historian, and Mission u Dean. Sandra has led numerous mission studies and has often served as a National Office study leader trainer. Especially relevant to our meeting is Sandra’s personal knowledge of and involvement with some of our National Mission Institutions.



The Zoom link to our Annual Celebration meeting is below.

Peace and all good things,
Lisa Bacon, SMD President

lisabacon304@gmail.com / 828-586-8399 (home) / 828-226-2433 (cell)

Meeting link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83376839535?pwd=3qDqpdzDWZBNinXy9acKSHmR6pxvQ5.1>

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

Page 1—Smoky Mountain District UWFaith Annual Celebration: Build Each Other Up!

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—Hey There! and Celebrating the US by Highlighting our National Mission Institutions.

Page 4—A Repurposed Feed and Seed or Cloth Bag Sewing Event; Hello, United Women in Faith; Reminder: First-time Scholarships for Conference Events

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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

HEY THERE...Can I have Your Eye and Ear for a Moment?

We try to send this newsletter out to officers (and other interested individuals) of all SMD UWF units, using email wherever possible, and snail mail for the rest. If one of your officers is not receiving this document, please let me know so I can correct that. This publication can be helpful to all your members so please remember to forward it to your entire group or make copies and pass it out. If you have any questions or feedback, don't hesitate to contact me by email: smdcommcoor@gmail.com, or by phone: (850) 428-3636. Thanks!

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



Celebrating the US by Highlighting our National Mission Institutions

Last year, we encouraged each local unit to learn about one of our international mission projects and share with other units at our annual Mission Festival. This year our country is celebrating 250 years, so our 2026 focus will be on our National Mission Institutions (NMIs) rather than international projects. Our organization has been making the US a better place for women, children, and youth for more than 150 years.

National Mission Organizations "are community-based organizations and social service agencies that were almost exclusively founded by women in the 19th century to serve marginalized communities and populations across the United States" (quoted from link below).

There is a video, map, and several stories about our NMIs at <https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/what-we-fund/national-ministries/>.

The history of National Mission Institutions may be found in the January/February 2026 issue of **response** magazine, and a complete list of the NMIs may be found in the March/April 2026 issue.

There are many ways to choose an NMI. You could start by choosing a state you've visited or always wanted to visit. You could choose an NMI based on a cause that is near and dear to your heart. You could randomly choose a project and see where chance takes you. Regardless of how your unit selects an NMI to learn about, we hope you'll join us for another fun time of sharing at our District Mission Festival on October 24 at Murphy First UMC.

Lisa Bacon, Smoky Mountain District President

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



HELLO!

I want to make everyone aware of a wonderful opportunity to gather in person for a repurposed feed and seed or cloth bag sewing event happening in Clyde, NC on July 22nd sponsored by the Environmental Action Community (EAC) Bring Your Own Bag Haywood (BYOBH) group. If you are wanting to learn, or just gather and sew bags in community with others, this is for you! You do not have to have any prior sewing experience. We have kits made for folks to jump in sewing and we will have other needs such as washing bags and preparing bags for sewing.

We will gather at: Clyde Christian Fellowship Church.

Time: 9:30am—3:00pm

Come for the morning or afternoon or stay all day! We will stop and share a potluck lunch. This is a wonderful time to visit with like minded individuals in our surrounding community! If you have questions, you can contact Julie Ogletree at Ogletreejulie@gmail.com. No sign up is needed, but if you are planning to come, just let us know so that we can try to set up enough tables. Hope to see you there!

From the Creation Care Team from Cullowhee United Methodist Church.

REMINDER: First-Timer Scholarships for Conference Events

A woman who attends a Conference United Women in Faith event for the first time can apply for a scholarship to cover expenses. A first-time attendee can apply to be reimbursed for up to \$150 for such fees as registration fee, mileage, and lodging. Mission u is August 21-22 at Hickory Catholic Conference Center, and Annual Celebration is September 12 at St. Luke's UMC (Hickory). Scholarships may be divided among applicants, so feel free to share this information with a friend!



To request the brief application form, contact Lisa Bacon at lisabacon304@gmail.com / 828-226-2433 (cell)

HELLO, UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH!

Thank you for giving to United Women in Faith. Our total giving for the 2nd Quarter as \$5,799.40—which represents very closely a thousand dollar increase over 2025!! Included in that giving is \$758 received for Love Offering from the District Mission Study and Day Apart. Giving is a privilege—a gift of God's....from United Women in Faith in Mission. Our Conference Love Offering theme is a Gift to Mission in honor of those who are dreaming, believing, and doing on behalf of women, children, and youth across the world. It is a pleasure to be on the Smoky Mountain team!

Kim Shafer, SMD District Treasurer

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



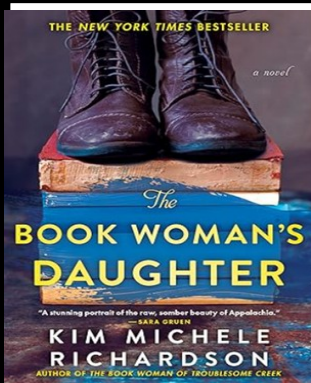
LOCAL UNIT HIGHLIGHT: Reading Program Book Bonanza

Members of Crabtree UWFaith shared 19 children's books at one of their meetings. The books were chosen from all five categories of the United Women in Faith Reading Program (Spiritual Growth, Nurturing for Community, Social Action, Education for Mission, and Leadership Development). Members shared excerpts from and reported on the books. It was a great way to learn about a wide variety of topics related to advocating for women, children, and youth.

Host District Opportunities—help us welcome participants at the WNCC Mission u.

Smoky Mountain District is the host district for two Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith gatherings. The first event was the annual Spiritual Growth Retreat at Lake Junaluska June 11-13. The second event is Mission u at Hickory Catholic Conference Center August 21-22. Our main responsibility there is to provide refreshments at registration.

If you or your unit can help with snacks for Mission u, and/or hands-on help at this event, please let District President Lisa Bacon know. You may reach her at lisabacon304@gmail.com or 828-226-2433. THANKS!



District Read: “The Book Woman’s Daughter”

Last year, we decided to choose one book from the United Women in Faith Reading Program and encourage women in every unit to read the book and participate in a book club discussion at our Annual Mission Festival (October 24 at Murphy First UMC). The goals are to increase awareness of and participation in the Reading Program and to build community in the district.

This year we will read The Book Woman’s Daughter, by Kim Michele Richardson.

“Both a standalone and a sequel to the bestselling novel The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek, The Bookwoman’s Daughter tells the story of Honey Lovett, daughter of the famed, blue-skinned Troublesome Creek packhorse librarian. Honey and her Kentucky 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. Picking up her mother’s library route, Honey begins to deliver books to the remote hollers of Appalachia. But the route can be treacherous, and Honey’s going to have to fight for her place.” (Description from the 2025 United Women in Faith Reading Program catalog.)



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!

Online registration is OPEN!

[Click Here to Register for Mission u 2026!](#)

Mission u 2026 Details!

- **Basic Information**

- **Mission u 2026 Leaders**

- **School Officers**

- **Registration Costs**

- **Hands On Mission**

- **Health Safety Protocols**

Registration is **ONLINE only**, thru August 10. **(There is no onsite registration.)**

Registration costs vary with housing and student type. Fees for full-time students range from \$100 (non-resident with meals) to \$260 (all meals and private room with private bath), depending on type of accommodations. Housing is first come first served to stay on site.

Dates: Friday, August 21 through Saturday, August 22

Location: The Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, North Carolina

Childcare will NOT be available.

Study books should be ordered in advance; they will not be available for sale at the event. You may order a study book for pickup at Mission u as part of the registration process, if you register by August 10. If you choose to order a book to be delivered to you (which will increase your shipping costs), you may do so at <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1952501407>

- **Adult Study:** 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. Whether the stories are familiar or new, each encounter offers the opportunity to see Scripture with fresh eyes and gain a deeper understanding. This curriculum creates sacred space for spiritual growth, shared insight, and mutual support.

Kindle version of the adult study is available at [Amazon](#).

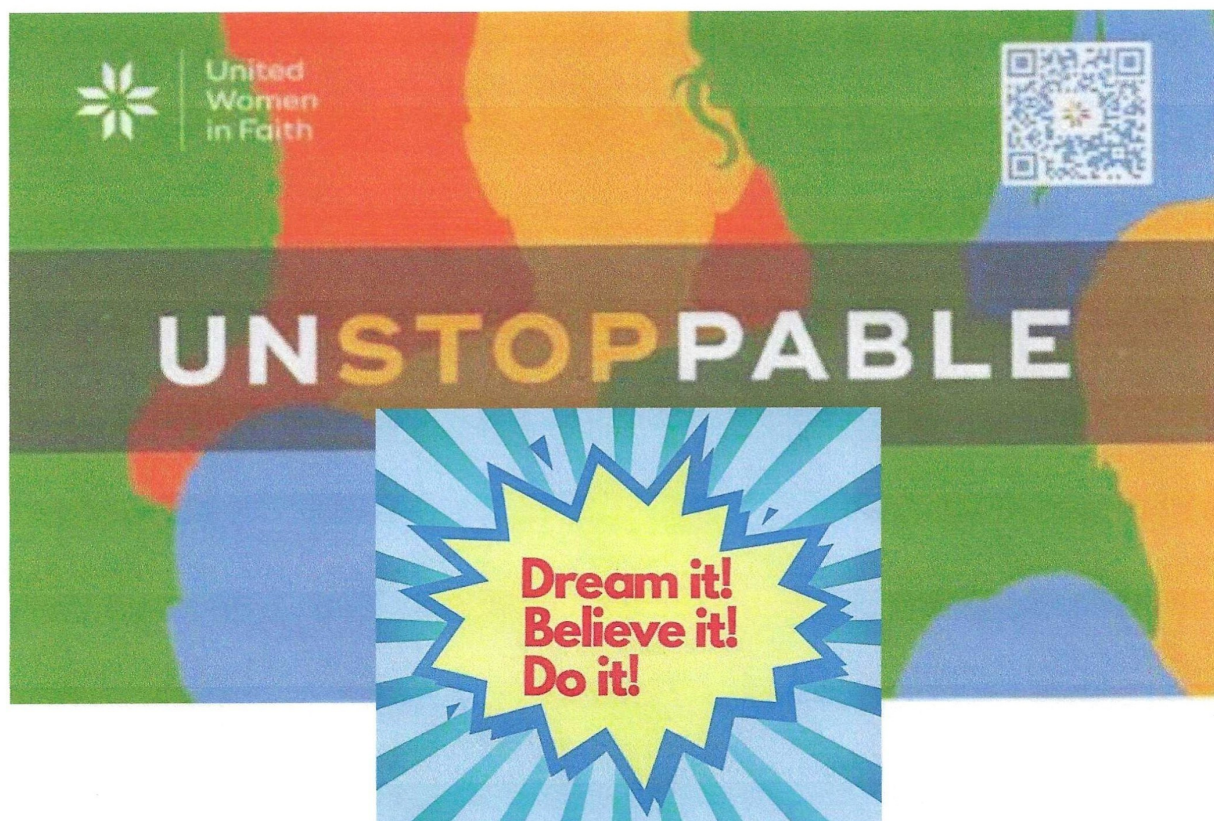
Hands-on Mission: UMCOR Menstrual Hygiene Kits

CEU/Advanced Lay Servant Credit: Participants can apply to receive CEU's and Advanced Lay Servant credit. Forms will be available at Mission u.

Schedule outline: Check-in will begin at 9:00 AM on Friday, August 21st. Mission u will open with worship Friday at 10:00 AM. Lunch will be served at 12:00 noon and the next session will begin at 1:30 PM. Dinner will be served at 6:00. Breakfast Saturday will be served at 8:00 AM. The study should conclude by about 4:00pm on Saturday.

First-timer Scholarships: Each District offers a \$150 scholarship for a person attending Mission u for the first time. Information and applications are available from your District President. Additional scholarship funds are often available through you local unit; contact your unit president for information.

See separate tab for our health safety protocols.



Western North Carolina Conference

United Women in Faith

53rd Annual Celebration

Celebrating 157 Years in Mission

Saturday, September 12, 2026
St. Luke's UMC, Hickory, NC



GUEST SPEAKER

Emily Jones

National UWFaith
Executive for
Racial Justice



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 2025/2026 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.



United Women in Faith Smoky Mountain District
PROPOSED BUDGET 2027

PLEDGE TO MISSION

\$ 28,000.00

ADMINISTRATION & MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (A & M D)

OFFICER EXPENSES:

Postage	\$ 100	
Supplies	200	
Telephone	0	
Travel (mileage)	50	
Printing (letters, handouts, etc.)	0	
Total Officer Expenses		\$ 350

25

MEETING EXPENSES:

District Annual Meeting	\$		
District Prayer Breakfast	300		
District Officer Training	500		
Other District Events & GTM Cards			
Total Meeting Expenses			\$ 800

OTHER EXPENSES:

Newsletter 1) Printing & Postage	\$ 150	
Newsletter 2) Postage	40	
Resources and Literature	400	
SMR, GTM, & GIM	200	
Local Women Stipend (3)	450	
(3 first-timers to Conference events)		
Miscellaneous	50	
Total Other Expenses		\$ 1,290

TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES – A & M D

\$ 2,440

Smoky Mountain District 2025 Five Channels of Giving

1. Pledge to Mission	\$ 18,794.30
2. Special Mission Recognition	\$ 620.00
3. Gift to Mission	\$ 6,604.89
4. Gift in Memory	\$ 680.00
5. World Thank Offering	\$ 2,218.38
6. Walk for Mission	\$ 0.00
Total Undesignated Gifts	\$ 28,917.57

SMD United Women in Faith

Nurturing Partners 2026

Nurturing Partner	NP Contact Info	UWFaith Unit
Lisa Bacon	Lisabacon304@gmail.com 828-226-2433	Andrews, Beaverdam, Canton First, Shady Grove, Sylva First
Debbie Ray	wsray@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.

**WHAT DO YOU
THINK OF THESE?**

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)
1028 Old Cullowhee Road
Sylva, NC 28779
Phone: 828-226-2433
Email: lisabacon304@gmail.com

Vice President:

Vicky Mayse (Cullowhee)
P. O. Box 305
Whittier, NC 28789
Cell Phone: 706-505-7546
Email: Mayse706@bellsouth.net

Secretary:

Nancy Jo Willis (Murphy First)
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Cell Phone: 850-428-3636
Email: smdcommcoor@gmail.com

Treasurer:

Kim Shafer (Waynesville 1st)
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Waynesville, NC 28786
Cell Phone: 704-965-2022
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Social Action:

Kim Shafer (Waynesville 1st)
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Email: kimshaferuwfsm@outlook.com

Education & Interpretation: [Open]

Spiritual Growth:

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562 Suntrace Cir
Cullowhee, NC 28723
Cell Phone: 336-402-4661
Email: wallceleste@gmail.com

Membership, Nurture & Outreach: [Open]

Program Resources:

[Open]

Communications Coordinator:

[Open]

Parliamentarian:

Ellynne Stonebraker (Franklin 1st)
135 Shady Oaks Drive
Franklin, NC 28734
Phone: 828-421-3538
Email: jumperlady21@gmail.com

Historian:

[Open]

Newsletter Editor

[see N J Willis under Secretary]

Conference Liaison

Debbie Ray (Waynesville 1st)
569 Country Club Drive
Waynesville, NC 28786
Phone: 828-400-3499
Email: wsray@charter.net

Nominations Chairperson:

TBD

Nominations:

TBD

TBD

TBD

TBD

Legacy Liaison:

JoAnn Black (Cullowhee)
388 Echo Ridge Road
Whittier, NC 28789
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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

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Aug.21-22 | Mission u, Catholic Conference Center, Hickory, NC |
| Sep. 12 | WNCC Annual Celebration/St. Luke's UMC,
Hickory, NC;10:00am-5:00 . |
| Oct. 17 | WNCC LDD for all District Officers; (Virtual) 10am-12pm |

SMD UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Aug.15 | SMD Annual Celebration/Virtual; 10:00am |
| Oct. 24 | SMD Mission Festival at Murphy First UMC; 9:30am-12:00noon |