



53rd Annual Celebration

Celebrating 157 Years in Mission

September 12, 2026

St. Luke's United Methodist Church

Hickory, NC

Western North Carolina Conference



United
Women
in Faith

ARTICLE X: RULES OF ORDER

Section 1: Rules Of Order For Annual Celebration Of The Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith

A. General Information

1. Celebrations shall open and close at the times stipulated in the official program.
2. Members and guests shall wear nametags at all times to all functions to indicate delegate status.
3. During voting sessions (business sessions) delegates shall be seated within a designated voting bar.
4. Members and visitors not designated as delegates shall be seated elsewhere.

B. New Business

1. All new business that has not been considered by the Executive Committee of the Conference shall be presented in writing to the Secretary twenty-four (24) hours prior to being considered by the voting delegates.
2. Proposed Resolutions must be submitted in writing to the Conference President sixty (60) days prior to the beginning of the Conference Annual Celebration.

C. Motions

1. All motions except on matters of procedure shall be written and signed by the maker and furnished to the Chair before action is taken.
2. The Secretary, unless directed otherwise, shall not record motions ruled out of order, points of order on which no appeal is taken, or trivial matters of privilege.

D. Debate

1. In seeking recognition from the Chair, a member must stand to address the Chair and, upon being recognized, state his or her name before making comment or motion.
2. The maker of a motion in preference to any other delegate shall be entitled to the floor immediately after the motion is stated.
3. Debate shall be limited to fifteen (15) minutes per topic.
4. No delegate shall speak to a motion a second time until all others have been given the opportunity to speak.
5. No delegate shall speak more than twice on the same question on the same day, nor more than two (2) minutes at one time without consent of the body.
6. General consent shall be required if additional time is to be given.

E. Voting Membership

The voting body of the Conference organization shall be composed of the following persons:

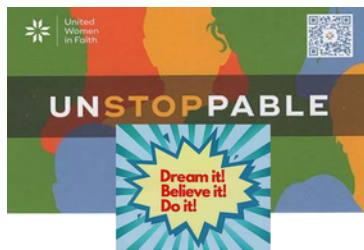
1. One representative of each local unit of fifty (50) members or less, with one additional representative for each additional fifty (50) members in the unit.
2. All District officers and chairpersons of District Committees.
3. Past Presidents of the Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith and Conference Past Presidents of the United Women in Faith now living within the bounds of the Western North Carolina Conference.
4. District Presidents, as members of the Conference Executive Committee.
5. Conference officers and chairpersons of committees.
6. Any member of the United Women in Faith National Office or of the Southeastern Jurisdiction leadership team organization residing within the bounds of the Conference.
7. The resident Bishop.
8. The President of the Jurisdiction Deaconess Association if residing within the bounds of the Conference.
9. All elected members-at-large.

F. Delegates For Quorum

A quorum shall be a simple majority of the delegates registered for the meeting.

G. Parliamentary Authority

1. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised shall be the parliamentary authority.
2. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the delegates is required to suspend or amend these rules.



53rd Annual Celebration United Women in Faith Western North Carolina Conference

September 12, 2026

Hickory, North Carolina

Lynn Alexander, President

Linda Greer, Vice President, Chairwoman of Program Committee

2026 Program Committee

Linda Greer, Lynn Alexander, Lynda Morris, Bess Redmond, Betty Durham,
Vickie Brown, Kim Eller, Laquetta Barbee, Cathy McCauley,
Gabrielle Alexander, Lisa Bacon, Sherry Sink, Lynne Gilbert

Visit our Conference Website, www.wnccumw.org

You can find lots of information at our conference website: conference event information, registration forms, Mission Today resources, the Conference Gram, and links to many resources available on the National Office website, www.uwfaith.org, just to name a few.



Join Our Conference Email List!

If you are interested in receiving email with Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith information, updates, and Conference Gram, go to the website, www.wnccumw.org, and sign up.

Also, find us at www.facebook.com/wnccumw, www.twitter.com/wnccumw, and www.youtube.com/user/wnccumw.

Join now and stay informed!

Very Special Appreciation

The Program Committee would like to thank the following:

- All the United Women in Faith who joined us at St. Luke's UMC today
- Susan Griffis, St. Luke's Unit President, Frances Garrard, Unit Vice President and all Unit members and friends who helped with the event
- The St. Luke's staff, especially Rev. Aryn Ruebel and Angie Queen who have been immeasurably helpful in planning this event
- Members of the Conference Executive Committee and volunteers from the District Teams
- Emily Jones, Executive for Racial Justice of United Women in Faith for being our Keynote Speaker and Workshop Moderator
- Makayla Astalos for sharing her musical talents
- Hunter Jamison for sharing his musical talents
- Lynne Gilbert & Sara Williams for technical support
- St. Luke's Technology Team for technical support
- Rev. Tim Webster & Emily Jones for their leadership in the afternoon workshops
- Panel discussion participants Laquetta Barbee, Kathy FitzJeffries, Tonya Lanier, Daphne Strickland, and Rev. Susan Suarez Webster
- Rev. Amy Coles, Assistant to Bishop Carter, for joining us today.
- All the United Women in Faith members who helped in various ways in this Annual Celebration.
- Display providers
- Charity Kluttz for preparing our meals
- Lee Sharpe, The Taylorsville Times, for the printing of this program book.



If using cell phones or tablets for scripture reading or note taking, please make sure your device is silenced.

Thank you!





Registration & Display Gallery Walk 9:00—9:45 a.m.

Gathering Music—9:45 a.m.

Hunter Jamison, Pianist

Session 1—10:00 a.m.

Call to Order Annual Celebration

Lynn Alexander, Conference President

Greetings from St. Luke's UWFaith

Frances Garrard, Unit Vice President

Greetings from Pastor of St. Luke's UMC

Rev. Aryn Williams Ruebel, Senior Pastor

Greetings from the Office of the Bishop

Rev. Amy Coles, Assistant to Bishop Carter

WNCC UMC

Announcements, Presentation of Guests & Program Participants

Linda Greer, Conference Vice President

Daily Prayer Guide/Prayer

Betty Durham, Conference Spiritual Growth Coord.

***Hymn "Many Gifts, One Spirit"**

UMH #114

Our Purpose

See back of Program Book.

Tammy Long, Conference Nominations Committee

Legacy Moment

Special Birthday Wish

Lynne Gilbert, Conference Webmaster & Legacy Leader

Update from UWFaith Director

Deaconess Renee Hayes

BUSINESS SESSION

Lynn Alexander, Conference President

Lynda Morris, Conference Secretary

Martha Phillips, Conference Parliamentarian

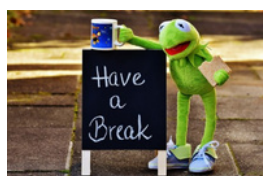
My UWFaith Story

Tonya Lanier, Former Conference President
Current Scholarship Chairwoman

Pledge Service

Bess Redmond, Conference Treasurer

Break - 10 mins



*Please stand in body or in spirit.



Session 2—11:30 a.m.

***Hymn “Lift Every Voice and Sing”**

#519 UMH

Introduction of Speaker

Linda Greer, Conference Vice President

A Message from Sally Vonner, UWFaith CEO/GS

Emily Jones, National Executive for Racial Justice
United Women in Faith

Scripture: Luke 18:1-8

Montessa Thomas, Communications Coord. YV Dist.

Message: “An Unstoppable Influence for Good”

Emily Jones, National Executive for Racial Justice

Love Offering

Bess Redmond, Conference Treasurer

Special Music “Precious Lord, Take My Hand”

Makayla Astalos, Soloist, UWFaith Member

Hunter Jamison, Pianist

Doxology

Lunch Blessing

Bess Redmond, Conference Treasurer

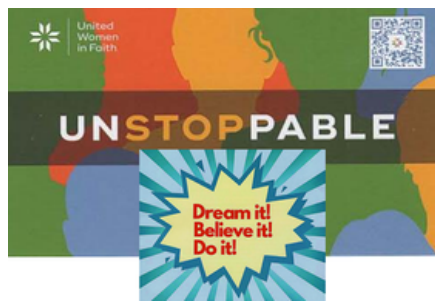
Break for lunch (1 hour)

- If you ordered a box lunch with registration, please help yourself.
- If you **did not** order lunch, enjoy the lunch you brought.

*Our Love Offering 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.*

*Please stand in body or in spirit.





AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS:

1:30 p.m.—2:15 p.m.

Redirecting Incarcerated Youth--What Can We Do? Led by Rev. Tim Webster

Rev. Tim Webster is representing Epiphany Ministry of North Carolina. He is a retired Elder of the Western North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church. Rev. Webster and his wife served as missionaries in Mexico for 15 years, focusing on church planting and training young people for ministry. They are the parents of two adult sons, both married, and the proud grandparents of three children ranging in age from four to six. Rev. Webster's wife is a local pastor serving on staff at Guilford College UMC in Greensboro. He assists her in ministry with the Spanish-language community at GCUMC, known as Brazos Abiertos (Open Arms). He is currently active with Epiphany Ministry, helping establish the ministry in a new location in Siler City, NC. In addition, he provides pulpit supply for churches throughout the Triad.



2:30 p.m.—3:15 p.m.

'For Such a Time as This': Women of WNCC on Racial Justice —Moderated by Emily Jones

Panelists: Laquetta Barbee, Tonya Lanier, Kathy FitzJeffries, Daphne Locklear Strickland, Susan Suarez Webster





Session 3—3:30 p.m.

Soul Care Moment

Rhita Newcomb, Mission u Assistant Dean

*Hymn “The Summons”

#2130 - TFWS

Celebrations & Spotlighting our Districts

Kim Eller, Conference MN&O

Time of Appreciation-Honoring

Outgoing Officers

Lynn Alexander & Bess Redmond

Installation of Officers

Joanie Strohm, Former Conference President

Dedication of Annual Report

Deaconess Renee Hayes, National UWFaith Director

Scripture: Isaiah 43:19

Gabrielle Alexander, Conference Communications

President’s Message

Lynn Alexander, Conference President

“Forward in Faith--UNSTOPPABLE in MISSION ”

Special Music “The Lord’s Prayer”

Makayla Astalos, Soloist, UWFaith Member

Arrangement by Albert Hay Malotte

Hunter Jamison, Pianist

Sending Forth

Lynn Alexander, Conference President

*Please stand in body or in spirit.

Upcoming 2026 Events

Ubuntu Day of Service “I am because you are.”

Various activities across the Conference--Check for opportunities in your district or choose your own date--create your own event!

October 15, 2026 9 a.m.

Take a Tour of the Bethlehem Community Center!

To register and get more information, see Vickie Brown today or email her at vickiebrown961@gmail.com



October 17, 2026 10 a.m.—12 noon

Leadership Development Day (LDD) for ALL District Officers

ZOOM Meeting

"The single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development."

~ John C. Maxwell





Program Participants

Keynote Speaker: Emily Jones

Emily Jones serves as the Executive for Racial Justice at United Women in Faith. She leads the organization's work on the Charter for Racial Justice, the Reading Program, and its campaign to end Mass Incarceration and Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Before stepping into her current role, Emily served as Director and Lead Organizer for the Rhode Island Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty. Her previous experience also includes program management with Communities in Schools of Chicago and ministry leadership as a lay associate pastor for discipleship at Urban Village Church in Chicago. She began her career as a labor organizer with District 1199/SEIU, the healthcare employees' union in Connecticut. Emily lives in New York City and is the grateful mother of two young children.



Hunter Jamison has served as the pianist at First United Methodist Church of Taylorsville since December 2020 and as co-pianist at Taylorsville Presbyterian Church since August 2024. In addition to his musical roles, Hunter is a PhD student in Infrastructure and Environmental Systems at UNC Charlotte, where his research focuses on environmental health concerns—particularly well water and groundwater quality in North Carolina. Hunter is also the owner of Hunter Jamison Piano Services, LLC, offering piano tuning, repairs, and full restoration work. For piano tuning or service needs, Hunter can be reached at 704-682-2665 or through his website: JamisonPiano.com.



Makayla Astalos is a 19-year-old sophomore majoring in Choral Music Education at Appalachian State University. She has sung in choral ensembles for nearly 11 years and has studied private voice since age 12.

During her senior year of high school, Makayla discovered a deeper love for music and teaching when she began directing as a student conductor. Since then, she has continued to grow in her leadership, serving as a substitute director and leading choirs at First United Methodist Church of Taylorsville and First Baptist Church of Taylorsville.

Makayla began attending First United Methodist Church of Taylorsville in January 2026, where she regularly participates in United Women in Faith meetings alongside her mom.

Afternoon Workshop Panelists:



**Laquetta
Barbee**



**Kathy
FitzJefferies**



**Tonya
Lanier**



**Daphne
Locklear Strickland**



**Susan
Suarez Webster**

Laquetta Barbee has served United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women) in the Northern Piedmont District in numerous capacities and currently serves the Western North Carolina Conference as Social Action Coordinator. She has also shared her gifts as a Mission u study leader. Laquetta is a devoted member of Collins Grove UMC in Greensboro. She and her husband, John, are the proud parents of two adult children. She delights in spending time with her grandchildren and enjoys traveling whenever she can.

Kathy FitzJefferies answered a spiritual call to become an outspoken advocate and co-conspirator for racial justice within her church, personal life, and professional work. Throughout her faith journey, she has served in numerous leadership roles, including on the United Women in Faith SEJ Racial Justice Charter Support Team. She is the former Mission Coordinator for Social Action for the Northern Piedmont District and previously chaired the Commission on Religion and Race for both the Western North Carolina Conference and the Southeastern Jurisdiction.

Professionally, Kathy brings more than forty-five years of experience as a Clinical Addiction Social Worker and Educator. She is a member of the NAADAC Critical Issues in the Black Community Committee and has spent the past twenty-five years designing and facilitating workshops on systemic racism and racial equity for professional colleagues and United Methodist groups.

On her spiritual journey, Kathy continues to grow in her understanding of anti-racism, openly acknowledging—and wrestling with—the daily challenges of unearned white privilege.

Kathy is married to Rev. Dr. Donnell FitzJefferies and is a member of University City United Methodist Church in Charlotte, where her husband serves as Senior Pastor.

Tonya Lanier is an engaged community leader with a strong commitment to lifelong learning and service. She has contributed her gifts through numerous boards and commissions, including Davidson-Davie Community College, Friends of the Lexington Library, the Davidson County and North Carolina Genealogical Societies, and the New York African American Historical & Genealogical Society. She has also served her hometown as a member of the Lexington City Council and the Board of Education.

A native of Lexington, North Carolina by way of Southmont, Tonya and her husband, Robert Freeman, are the proud parents of one adult son, Tavon, and delighted grandparents to Harper and Donovan. She works as a legal assistant for a local municipality.

Tonya is a devoted member of St. Stephen United Methodist Church, where she has served as Chair of Church Council, Trustee Chair, on the Historical Committee, and as an alto in the choir. Her leadership extends across the conference and district through service on the Board of Laity, as an Alternate Delegate to the 2008 General Conference, a Certified Lay Speaker, a member of the Western North Carolina Archives, and a Delegate to General and Jurisdictional Conferences.

From 2014–2018, Tonya served as Conference UMW President. She believes wholeheartedly that “we are nothing without our tribe.”

Daphne Locklear Strickland is a Native American of the Lumbee/Tuscarora tribe. Born in Robeson County in southeastern North Carolina, she has lived in the Greensboro area with her husband, Daniel, for 65 years. Together, they have raised four children and are blessed with six grandchildren. Daphne graduated from Guilford College in 1999 with a Bachelor's degree in Justice and Policy and Women's Studies, with a concentration in African-American Studies. As a grandmother and respected elder in her community, Daphne enjoys volunteering at Triad Native American United Methodist Church, where she is a founding member and dedicated leader.

Rev. Susan Suarez Webster serves as the Associate Pastor at Guilford College UMC in Greensboro. In 2022, she helped form the Spanish-language faith community at GCUMC known as Brazos Abiertos.

Raised in the United Methodist Church in Syracuse, New York, Susan studied Spanish at Syracuse University and later completed graduate studies in Bible and Missions at Columbia International University. She then served for 15 years as a missionary in Mexico, teaching Scripture and discipleship, leading outreach ministries, and planting new churches.

After returning to the United States, Susan became a licensed local pastor in the United Methodist Church in June 2011 and completed the Course of Study at Duke Divinity School.

Susan is married to Rev. Tim Webster, and together they have two grown sons. They are the proud grandparents of three delightful grandchildren.

With a deep passion for serving others and a special love for Spanish-speaking communities, Susan joyfully shares her faith with those whom the Lord places in her path. She prays to be God's instrument—conveying love and grace in this world—and to trust fully in God's power to equip her for building God's kingdom.

Report of Social Action Coordinator



The role of District Social Action Coordinator was presented to encourage engagement across each District, along with the Social Action Quadrennium Priorities for 2024–2028:

Mass Incarceration and the Criminalization of Communities of Color - Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline

Just Energy for All – Caring for God's Creation

At our Annual Celebration, the Conference partnered with the League of Women Voters of North Carolina to support public schools in our communities by signing the NC Resolve for Fully Funded Public Education. Participants were encouraged to take a form and gather additional signatures in support.

Social Action Coordinators participated in the SEJ Charter for Racial Justice Zoom Book Study. We also tested the new Practicing Difficult Conversations workshop via Zoom and provided feedback to the Mobilization, Advocacy, and Leadership Coordination Consultant.

Thank you to every Unit for your participation in the Justice Today program and for your continued commitment to our Social Action priorities.

Recommended books from our United Women in Faith Reading Program:

**The Sun Does Shine: How I Found Life and Freedom on Death Row* by Anthony Ray Hinton

**Charisma's Turn* by Monique Couvson (Young Adult Fiction — graphic novel)

**The Rage of Innocence: How America Criminalizes Black Youth* by Kristin Henning

**Pushout: The Criminalization Of Black Girls in Schools* by Monique Morris Couvson

**A Knock at Midnight* by Brittany K. Barnett

~ Laquetta Barbee



Our Western North Carolina Every Member Legacy Fund Goal:

That every member of
United Women in Faith
make a gift to
The Legacy Fund
of at least \$18.69 per year,
over and above her Pledge to Mission,
for at least five years.

**Celebrate United Women in
Faith! 157 Years and
Counting...**



**United
Women
in Faith**

Western North Carolina

Sustaining Phase, Building On Our Success

As a **permanently invested endowment**, The Legacy Endowment Fund will forever be a source of income for United Women in Faith providing the assurance that United Women in Faith can provide the life-affirming, compassionate care and support that heals, restores and empowers populations of women, children and youth in the years and decades to come. **Every single gift to The Legacy Endowment Fund, of any size, will make a difference!**

In 2014, the Legacy Endowment Fund Campaign was created and set a bold goal of raising \$60 million for the endowment. Through the generosity and efforts of women like you, we are confident this goal can be reached!

Thru July 31, 2026, United Women in Faith in Western North Carolina have given \$591,301.67 to The Legacy Endowment Fund! Thank you! And, as of July 31, 2026, the Legacy Endowment Fund had reached \$56,918,162! We are getting there!

The Sustaining Phase, builds on the accomplishments achieved during the campaign's ten-year history, strengthening that momentum with a range of activities to help us reach our \$60 Million dollar goal. With every gift received in 2026 and beyond, we will secure the financial resources needed to deepen and expand our mission. Consider joining your legacy with ours and making a gift today.

The Legacy Endowment Fund is second mile giving, after your critically important support of undesignated Mission Giving through Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition, Gift to Mission, Gift in Memory, and World Thank Offering. **Thank you for your support of Mission Giving, and The Legacy Endowment Fund!**



LEGACY BUILDER Consider becoming a Legacy Builder!

A Legacy Builder moves forward the mission of United Women in Faith by making a monthly gift of \$18.69 or more to The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign. As we began 2024, we had at least 54 Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith who had become Legacy Builders! More information at: uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/

Where can I get more information about The Legacy Endowment Fund?

Visit our website at: wnccumw.org/legacyfund/
You can also contact any of our Legacy Campaign Team members, your District President, or your District Treasurer.

Information available on the website includes:

- Legacy Campaign Commitment Form & FAQ
- How you can make your gift(s) to The Legacy Fund
- Variety of Legacy videos & resources to use in your local unit
- Links to more information on the United Women in Faith National Office website at: uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/



Consider joining the
1869 Society!!

If you inform United Women in Faith of your intentions to make a planned gift, you become a member of our 1869 Society (in recognition of the year of our founding), honoring those who have named United Women in Faith as a beneficiary of a will, trust, retirement plan or life insurance policy. More information about making a planned gift to United Women in Faith is available at: uwfaith.org/give/legacy-fund/

Our Conference Legacy Campaign Team:

We are happy to answer your questions,
and to share information with your local unit!

Lynne Gilbert, Chairperson

lgilbert@wnccumc.org

336-207-3479



United
Women
in Faith

2025 Financial Report of the Treasurer

Western North Carolina United Women in Faith, in 2025 YOU made the following happen in support of United Women in Faith Missions around the World:

Total Giving through the 8 Districts from Local Units:

\$392,955 (1.1% decrease from 2024 Giving)

All Love Offerings

\$13,620. (9.6% decrease from 2024)

(Includes Spiritual Growth Retreat, Mission u, and Annual Celebration donations)

Undesignated Mission Giving Sent to UWFaith National Office:

\$312,853 (increase of 1.7% from 2024)

Designated Giving to UWFaith National Office and GBGM/UMCOR

\$35,415 (4.4% decrease from 2024 Giving)

Donations to Other Projects:

(Crossnore Communities for Children, WNCC Scholarships, Arise Collective, etc.)

\$1801 (28% decrease from 2024 Giving)

Congratulations on not only meeting our pledge of \$300,000 in Mission Giving but overpaying by \$12,853.

Share the news of the good work that
United Women in Faith
is doing around the world!

We Believe Love in Action can Change the World.

Bess Redmond, Treasurer, WNCC UWFaith



We are Grateful for All the Units Who Contributed in All 5 Channels of Mission Giving!!!!

APPALACHIAN DISTRICT

Boone
Clifton
First North Wilkesboro
First Taylorsville
Hiddenite/Stony Point Parish
Hudson
Littlejohn
Millers Creek
Sparta
Union Grove
Wilkesboro
Yadkinville

BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT

Abernethy
Addie's Chapel
Asbury Memorial
Bald Creek
Black Mountain
Central
Concord
East Marion
First Marion
Moore's Grove
Oak Grove
Pleasant Hill
Saluda
Skyland
St. Paul's
Weaverville
Windom

CATAWBA VALLEY DISTRICT

Aldersgate - Shelby
Bethel - Hickory
Boger City
First Valdese
Marvin - Lincolnton
Mount Pleasant - Stanley
Palm Tree
Park Street
Pleasant Grove - Lincolnton
Rock Hill - Gastonia
Salem - Denver
South Point - Belmont

METRO DISTRICT

Central - Charlotte
Davidson
Forest Hill
Hickory Grove
Hunters Chapel
Memorial - Charlotte
Pineville
Providence - Charlotte
Simpson-Gillespie
South Park
St. Mark's - Charlotte
St. Stephen - Charlotte
Woodlawn

NORTHERN PIEDMONT DISTRICT

Bass Chapel
Bethel Archdale/Liberty Grove
Celia Phelps
Centenary - Stoneville
Christ - Greensboro
College Place
Collins Grove
First High Point
Garretts Grove
Hinshaw
Holmes Grove
Hopewell
Laughlin Memorial
Lebanon
Mt. Tabor
New Goshen
Newlyn Street
Raleigh's Crossroad
St. Matthews
Southeast Guilford
Spring Hill - High Point
Stokesdale
West Market Street

SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT

Crabtree
Elizabeth Chapel
First Waynesville
Maggie Valley
Maple Grove

UWHARRIE DISTRICT

Bethlehem Waxhaw
Central - Denton
Central - Monroe
Fairview - Denton
First Asheboro
First Lexington
First Norwood
First Salisbury
First Wadesboro
Jordan Memorial
Macedonia
Milford Hills
Morven
North Kannapolis
Pleasant Hill* —Seagrove
Pleasant Hill - McFarlan
Piney Ridge*
Providence - Salisbury
St. Luke
*Empire Charge

YADKIN VALLEY DISTRICT

Brooks Temple
Centenary - Winston-Salem
Fair Grove
Faith
First Mocksville
Harmony Grove
Level Cross
Main Street
Memorial
New Beginnings
Pine Grove
Saints Home
St. James
Sedge Garden
Sharon
Sherwood Forest
Yadkin College



Report of Mission Coordinator for Spiritual Growth

While we still gathered at the mountaintop at Lake Junaluska, our 2025 retreat changed in several ways. Because Annual Celebration 2025 was to be a one-day event, several program components were moved to Spiritual Growth Retreat. These changes were well received by participants, and the District Spiritual Growth Coordinators were invaluable in helping to carry out the revised schedule.

Retreat Leader Rev. Aryn Williams-Ruebel reminded us of who God is (Everything) and who we are in God (Beloved and Child of God). WNCC Director of Recovery Maggie Armstrong was the Mission Speaker, and she shared about the ongoing recovery efforts related to Hurricane Helene. Music leaders Catherine Ritch and Charlie Harnish blessed participants with diverse music for gathering, hymn singing, and special music. Breakout sessions included a Move 4 Missions Treasure Hunt, book club discussion, UWFaith Choir, Ubuntu at two area ministries, a labyrinth walk, and Jazzercising 4 Jesus.

New retreat components included the Memorial Service for the UWFaith saints who joined the Church Triumphant in 2024, the Missionary Luncheon, and Late Night.

~ Betty Durham



Report of Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation

Conference Mission Theme for 2025: Practicing Hope. This year, we embraced Hope as a daily practice—something we live, teach, and model in every community we serve. We explored hope that is honest about current conditions (refuge), restorative when everything feels urgent (rest), and possible even when we must courageously cross boundaries to make things right (repair). Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the witness of Christian communities throughout history, we learned what it means to practice hope in God when the world feels like it is falling apart. We are reminded to love one another, as God loves us (John 13:34–35). We continue to connect Spiritual Women across our Conference. We do this by applying boldness for justice and a steadfast resolve to help our communities thrive. Our districts are passionate about making a difference in the lives of Women, Children, and Youth—faithfully loving God and showing love to all.

It is a true pleasure and blessing to serve my Sisters in Christ—United Women in Faith.

~ Vickie Brown





Report of Mission Coordinator for Membership Nurture and Outreach

Membership in the Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith totaled 6,525 members in approximately 248 Units at the end of 2025. While we sadly lost 433 members, we rejoice over 255 new members who joined our sisterhood.

Of our eight Districts, two Districts reported Nurturing Partner visits to 32 Units. In the Uwharrie District, we celebrate net growth in three Units—Central in Denton, Central in Monroe, and St. Stephens. Congratulations, ladies—well done!

We also increased our number of Units, another Jubilee worth celebrating. Even though our lost members outweigh our gained members, we continue to welcome new women into our bodacious band. I am both proud and inspired by all our UWFaith sisters and their faithful commitment to Jesus our Savior and to our Purpose.

We persevere, we press on, and therefore—we are UNSTOPPABLE!

~ Kim Eller



Report of Secretary of Program Resources

Reading Program Participation	Plan I	Plan II	Plan III	Plan IV	Children	Total
Appalachian District	15	1	2	1	1	20
Blue Ridge District	29	2	1	5	-	37
Catawba Valley District	19	5	-	-	1	25
Metro District	39	6	-	3	2	50
Northern Piedmont District	13	6	2	1	-	22
Smoky Mountain District	8	6	-	-	-	14
Uwharrie District	22	7	5	5	1	40
Yadkin Valley District	22	15	2	3	-	42

Conference Total Participation: 250

All Reading Program information is available in the 2026 Reading Program Catalog at

www.uwfaith.org/resources/readingprogram and in the November/December issue of *response* magazine.

Books may be purchased at bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith, where 10% of each purchase supports United Women in Faith.

~ Cathy McCauley

Report of Chairwoman of Committee on Nominations Nominees for Conference Offices 2027

*Indicates second year first term

**Indicates a second two-year term.

***Indicates a third two-year term.

Secretary **

Treasurer ***

Communications Coordinator *

Lynda F. Morris (Metro)

Bess Redmond (Blue Ridge)

Gabrielle Alexander (Northern Piedmont)



Nominees for Committee on Nominations

Class of 2030

Montessa Thomas (Yadkin Valley)

Class of 2030

Carol Harper (Smoky Mountain)

Report of Dean of Mission u



The Western North Carolina Conference United Women in Faith held Mission u on July 18–19, 2025, offering one full-time adult study session. Since COVID, this marked our third consecutive year gathering in person at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory, NC. We are deeply grateful for this venue. Its convenient location, lodging, dining, conference rooms, and chapel—all under one roof—make it especially welcoming for our older members and those with physical impairments.

In 2025, we had 95 registered adults, including 13 first-time participants. Although we had no youth attendees, we celebrated 13 women who completed advanced lay certification, with certificates mailed to their district offices. Our schedule—Friday morning through late Saturday afternoon—continues to be a blessing for our women who serve vital roles in their local churches. Ending before dark allows them to return home safely and be present for Sunday worship, which many expressed as a true gift.

Our study, “Practicing Hope,” was timely and deeply relevant to the spiritual and political moment we are living in. The study was led by Martha Efird, with Nancy Litton serving as Assistant Dean. Additional study leaders included Sandra Williamson and Deaconess Tracey Owens. Our music team—Amy Johnson and Donna Ireland—wove music beautifully into the study, providing the spiritual tone for the weekend.

Participants were assigned seating at designated tables, each named for a Biblical woman whose legacy continues to inspire us. Seating followed an Emmaus-style format with ten per table, blending veterans and first-timers from various districts to help everyone “develop a creative and supportive fellowship.” We chose twilight Vespers on Friday evening rather than Saturday sunrise praise. The theme, “We Are the Light,” created a moving and memorable worship experience. Our study concluded with sung communion, led by Rev. Tracey Fullbright Love of Mt. Hermon/Cedar Valley UMC.

A heartfelt thank you to our Study Leaders, Music Team, Tech Team, and the Mission u Committee. Your dedication made this event possible, meaningful, and Spirit-filled. We could not have done it without you.

~ LaDonna Butts

Report of Scholarship Committee Chairwoman

For the 2025–2026 school year, the Scholarship Committee awarded a total of \$23,546.24 in scholarships. These funds supported five students attending three of the five United Methodist–supported colleges and universities within our Conference: Greensboro College, High Point University, and Pfeiffer University. The remaining eligible institutions are Bennett College and Brevard College.

Scholarship Recipients include:

Aidan Eller – Greensboro College (Northern Piedmont District);

Mia Spies – High Point University (Metro District);

Connor Price – High Point University (Uwharrie District);

Samuel Castelan Menese – High Point University (Metro District);

Lola Cabaniss-Ali – Pfeiffer University (Metro District).

Members of the 2025 Scholarship Committee: Jatana Royster, Joanie Strohm, Bess Redmond, Deborah Brooks, Lisa Bacon, Vickie Brown, Rhita Newcomb, and Sarah Lee.

Please continue to share information with your local units about the scholarships available through our Conference.

Details can be found on the Conference website as well as in district and Conference newsletters.

~ Jatana Royster





Annual Report Dedication

Each year an Annual Report Book is created highlighting the activities of the conference and districts, officers, financial reports, and others. This book is dedicated to honor a United Women in Faith member from our conference.

The honored recipient is presented a diamond-studded Special Mission Recognition Pin and a \$1,000 donation is given in her honor to undesignated Mission Giving through the National Office by the conference. Often her family is invited to share in the presentation celebration. Upon completion of the Annual Report Book with her photo & dedication, she is given copies to share with friends and family.

A written nomination form is required along with reasons for the recommendation. See your district president or district and conference newsletters for an application form. A conference committee of five persons appointed by the president receives these written nominations by June 1st or other specified date.

Criteria for the nomination per Standing Rules Article V, Section 8, E (1)-(5):

- (a) Nominee shall have served on local, district & conference levels of UWF
- (b) Nominee must demonstrate leadership ability and work well with peers
- (c) Committee members may be considered
- (d) A person may receive this honor only once

Partial List of former recipients:

2025 Renee Hayes		
2024 Jatana Royster		
2023 Sandra Williamson		
2022 Lisa Bacon		
2021 Ann Aldridge		
2020 Carolyn Payne		
2019 Nancy Reigel		
2018 Lynne Gilbert		
2017 Kim Eller		
2016 Martha Phillips		
2015 Bess Redmond		
2014 Dot Alvord		
2013 Julia Willis		
	2012 Tonya Lanier	2001 Sara Williams
	2011 Patricia Wiseman	2000 Beth Griffin
	2010 Sherry Sink	1999 Dori Thurman
	2009 Sandy Hieronymus	1998 Janet Collins
	2008 Sharon Smith	1997 Bishop Charlene Kammerer
	2007 Karen Wilkerson	1996 Mildred Carter
	2006 Kris Peurifoy	1995 Mildred Gibson
	2005 Amy Johnson	1994 Vada Beck
	2004 Polly Pearson	1993 Faye Cox
	2003 Elizabeth Holbrooks	1992 Mary Kizer
	2002 Dixie Liggett	1991 Linda Reep

Dedication

Congratulations to this year's recipient, _____



United
Women
in Faith

SOCIAL ACTION CAMPAIGNS

Why is social action important?

**... what does the Lord require of
you but to do justice and to love
kindness and to walk humbly
with your God?**

—Micah 6:8 (NRSVUE)



Get involved and learn more today!

Learn more and join one or both
campaigns by using the links below:

CLIMATE JUSTICE:
[uwfaith.org/
climate-justice](http://uwfaith.org/climate-justice)



**END MASS
INCARCERATION:**
[uwfaith.org/
mass-incarceration](http://uwfaith.org/mass-incarceration)



Your support matters.

The members and friends of United Women in Faith are a powerful, fearless force driven by God's love. Together, we can act for justice and transform communities.

Ways to give.

Online:

uwfaith.org/give

Text "GIVE" to 202503

By check to:

United Women in Faith
Church Center for the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10017

Write the campaign name in the memo
line of your check.

M5331

Rooted in Faith. Called to Act.

At United Women in Faith, Social Action isn't an add-on. It's central to who we are.
Our faith calls us to stand for justice, grounded in Scripture
and shaped by our Methodist tradition.

Social Action has always been part of our faith.
Our United Methodist heritage reflects a history of commitment to this path of
vital discipleship and social action.
John Wesley placed strong emphasis on the Christian life as a combination of
faith and love put into practice.
Wesley taught that social holiness and personal piety were both essential
components of discipleship.

2026 CONFERENCE OFFICERS

President.....	Lynn Alexander
Vice President.....	Linda Greer
Secretary.....	Lynda Morris
Treasurer.....	Bess Redmond
Secretary of Program Resources.....	Cathy McCauley
Communications Coordinator	Gabrielle Alexander
Mission Coordinators:	
Social Action.....	Laquetta Barbee
Spiritual Growth.....	Betty Durham
Education and Interpretation.....	Victoria Brown
Membership Nurture & Outreach.....	Kim Eller
Chair, Committee on Nominations.....	Deborah Ray (2026)
Committee on Nominations Members.....	Cathy Ward (2026)
	Donna Ireland (2026)
	Roberta Walker (2027)
	Nancy Ward (2027)
	Tammy Long (2028)
	Valerie Prim (2028)
	Linda Davidson (2029)
	Darlene Gardner (2029)
Interim Historian.....	Sandrea Williamson
Parliamentarian.....	Martha Phillips
Scholarship Committee Chair.....	Jatana Royster
WebMaster/Legacy Liaison.....	Lynne Gilbert
Dean, Mission u.....	Nancy Litton
National UWFaith Director.....	Renee Hayes
Resident Bishop, WNCC UMC.....	Rev. Kenneth Carter

2026 Mission u Officers

Dean.....Nancy Litton
Assistant Dean.....Rhita Newcomb
Coordinator.....LaDonna Butts

2026 District Presidents

Appalachian.....	Janice Taylor
Blue Ridge.....	Lucy Earls
Catawba Valley.....	Tanya Lunsford
Metro.....	Diann Back
Northern Piedmont.....	Sherry Sink
Smoky Mountain.....	Lisa Bacon
Uwharrie.....	Sarah Lee
Yadkin Valley.....	Jamie Smith

**Gift to Mission and Gift in Memory Cards:
Available at the registration table. See Treasurer Bess Redmond.**



NAME TAG NOTATIONS:

Members of units giving in all **5 CHANNELS OF MISSION GIVING** in 2025 have **SMILEY FACES** on their name tags. **Congratulations!**



Persons attending Annual Celebration for the **first time** have **STARS** on their name tags. **We are joyful that you are here!**



Voting Delegates have **HEARTS** on their name tags.



**Please be sure to take an UNSTOPPABLE commitment card
from your table home with you.**



The Purpose of United Women in Faith

**The organized unit of United Women in Faith
shall be a community of women whose PURPOSE is
to know God and to 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.**