



The Metro Messenger

The voice for the United Women in Faith of the Metro District,
Western North Carolina Conference

President's Message

Dear UWFaith Friends,

Happy New Year! What did you resolve to do in 2026? Did you resolve to walk more, get up a little earlier to exercise, or lose a few pounds before summer? The most common resolution across the country is to exercise more and develop a healthier lifestyle, so if you picked one of the suggestions above, you're in good company. Around the first of January, gym and health club memberships rise, only to fall off sometime in February. As United Women in Faith, let's make a resolution or two that we can keep. How about resolving to read at least one article in each edition of response magazine? Many of you subscribe to response, so it's readily available. If you don't subscribe, you can get the most current edition online. Simply go to <https://uwfaith.org/resources/response-magazine/> and complete the easy sign-up form. Another resolution that is easy to keep is to pray for United Women in Faith every day. You may pray a prayer of thanksgiving, or a prayer of comfort for a UWF sister, or a prayer of encouragement for our missionaries. All prayers count!

Yours faithfully,

Diann

Diann P. Back
Metro District President
dback@carolina.rr.com
704-846-8875



United
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response Podcast

 Tune in to audio versions of some of the top articles from each issue of **response** magazine, the award-winning official magazine of United Women in Faith. Topics cover everything from spiritual growth and living our faith to reports on local, national and international work.

<https://uwfaith.org/resources/podcasts>

Vice President

Happy New Year Metro District! Thank you for all you did in 2025 to support our mission and purpose. I hope you and your loved ones had a wonderfully blessed holiday season, and I hope to see you at our events this year.

Peace and blessings,

Earonita Strong
Metro District Vice President
stronge@carolina.rr.com
704-534-4387

Nominations Committee

Sisters in Christ, we are blessed to have such an excellent group of leaders who have stepped up to serve the Metro District this year, thanks to Linda Davidson, our past Chair, and others on the team. Our goal now is to develop a strong pool of candidates—from different churches and backgrounds- who have the commitment, "gifts and graces" to serve in the future. Presently, we have vacancies on the Nominating Committee -which is an excellent place to start! Please contact Louise Woods at 704-604-0430 if you have a name to share – or if you would like to serve. Thank you for your assistance.

Louise Woods
Nominations Committee Chair



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Mission Education and Interpretation

Happy New Year, my UWF sisters!

We're starting 2026 with the Metro District Mission Study on Saturday, March 7th, featuring Deaconess Nancy Litton as our speaker and facilitator for the study: Practicing Hope by Tabatha Holley and contributions from Deaconess Sophia Agtarap and Steve Taylor. The book is available at bookstores, on Amazon, or at local libraries.

Check-in begins at 8:30 am with the program starting at 9:00 am at Hickory Grove United Methodist Church, 6401 Hickory Grove Road, Charlotte, NC 28215. Coffee, tea, and juice will be provided along with desserts. Attendees are asked to bring their own lunch with a beverage, plus a refillable water container.

A Love Offering for Mission Giving will be collected at the event. Below are the registration form and Hands-on Mission Project details. Please take time to complete the registration as soon as you can.

Thank you to Hickory Grove United Methodist Church and their United Women in Faith Unit for hosting this year's Mission Study. Register today. It is a joy to continue as your Mission Education and Interpretation Coordinator. I look forward to working with you.

Sylvia Sekle-Dueh, Deaconess
Mission, Education, and Interpretation
Coordinator

dueh1409@gmail.com
704-606-5557

Treasurer

Happy New Year to all! I pray you are keeping warm and dry during these extremely cold days. I look forward to working with you as your district treasurer in 2026 to benefit children, youth and women. Please remember them as you spiritually give to United Women in Faith.

The WNCC UWF financial goal for 2026 is: Each unit will make and meet its pledge to missions. I pray that each of you will prayerfully consider this and support the conference in meeting this goal.

Pledge to Mission	\$ 31,738.00
Special Mission Recognition	\$ 2,140.00
Gift to Mission	\$ 3,358.61
Gift in Memory	\$ 2,101.00
World Thank Offering	\$ 3,903.78
Walk for Mission	\$ 3,889.19
The Legacy Fund	\$ 2,198.65
Call to Prayer and Self-Denial	\$ 2,163.55
Designated Supplementary Giving	\$ 4,000.00

The WNCC UWF Love Offering Theme for 2026 is: Gift to Missions in honor of those who are dreaming, believing, and doing on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

By uniting our hearts and hands, we are building a future filled with hope and support for women, children, and youth. Every gift you make, regardless of size, will make an impact for generations to come. Give to The Legacy Endowment on the Day of Giving, March 23rd.

When giving online, please give through the conference website: www.wnccumw.org. Weekly reports are sent to the conference treasurer. She will send me a report so I can credit your giving to your unit.

THANK YOU for continuing to be faithful in support of the mission work of United Women in Faith.

Sylvia Casey
Metro District Treasurer
sil1casey@gmail.com

Social Action

What does a United Woman of Faith do when she is overwhelmed? Tired of the chaos? Impatient that the wrongs of racism persist? Frustrated with the indifference of our climate crisis? Wondering when all God's children will be treated as such? Take a deep breath with me! Focus on the women whose examples are an inspiration! Breathe. Study the words and actions of Jesus! Breathe. Gather and lament, but then get to work! Breathe. Pray for faith, pray for courage, pray for love to win, and stand tall in your calling to advocate, to write letters, to feed and clothe, to educate one another, and hold each vulnerable woman and child close in thought, prayer, and action. Breathe.

Study the Charter for Racial Justice with fresh eyes! I'll share two portions each newsletter with my own emphasis. Write down ideas on concrete, manageable ways to ACT, do what YOU can, join and SUPPORT one another's efforts, SHARE your ideas within the Metro UWF, and PRAY for all on this journey:

Because we believe: 1. That God is the Creator of all people and all are God's children in one family; 2. That racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ;

Therefore, ... take the following actions: 1. Eliminate all forms of institutional racism in the total ministry of the church, giving special attention to those institutions that we support, beginning with their employment policies, purchasing practices, environmental policies, and availability of services and facilities; 2. Create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to be the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together;

Over the next few months, focus on these statements. Sit and pray over individually and as a unit. I pray we can deal honestly with racist attitudes in our own hearts and in our country. Let us come together as a unit, as a conference, in our communities and churches, and as the people God needs us to be.

And remember our work on school funding and teacher pay, equitable education, keeping black girls in schools, clean energy, advocating for marginalized communities bearing the brunt of unfair practices, and those working with funding cuts, especially those who are women and children or work with them. Lord, hear our prayer!

Lisa Delano

Social Action Coordinator



Charter for Racial Justice

United Women in Faith first adopted the "Charter of Racial Policies" in 1952. We worked on ratification at multiple levels of the organization and adopted an updated version in 1962. Throughout the years, we lobbied The United Methodist Church to officially adopt the Charter, seeking to bring its commitments to the full body of the church. The Charter was first reviewed by the General Conference in 1964 and first included in *The Book of Resolutions* in 1980. Since then, it has been updated and readopted regularly by delegates to General Conference. From the 1950s to the present, the Charter has been a core part of our identity.

Because we believe:

1. That God is the Creator of all people and all are God's children in one family.
2. That racism is a rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ.
3. That racism denies the redemption and reconciliation of Jesus Christ.
4. That racism inflicts all human beings of their wholeness and is used as a justification for social, economic, environmental, and political exploitation.
5. That we must declare before God and before one another that we have sinned against our sisters and brothers of other races in thought, in word, and in deed.
6. That in our common humanity in respect to all women and men are made in God's image and all persons are equally valuable in the sight of God.
7. That our strength lies in our racial and cultural diversity and that we must work toward a world in which each person's value is respected and nurtured.
8. That our struggle for justice must be based on new attitudes, new understandings, and new relationships and must be reflected in the laws, policies, structures, and practices of both church and state.

We commit ourselves as individuals and as a community to follow Jesus Christ in word and in deed and to struggle for the rights and the self-determination of every person and group of persons.

Therefore, as United Methodists in every place across the land, we will unite our efforts within the church to take the following actions:

1. Eliminate all forms of institutional racism in the total ministry of the church, giving special attention to those institutions that we support, beginning with their employment policies, purchasing practices, environmental policies, and availability of services and facilities.
2. Create opportunities in local churches to deal honestly with the existing racist attitudes and social distance between members, deepening the Christian commitment to be the church where all racial groups and economic classes come together.
3. Increase efforts to recruit people of all races into the membership of The United Methodist Church and provide leadership-development opportunities without discrimination.
4. Establish workshops and seminars in local churches to study, understand, and appreciate the historical and cultural contributions of each race to the church and community.
5. Raise local churches' awareness of the continuing need for equal education, housing, employment, media, and environmental justice for all members of the community and to create opportunities to work for these things across state lines.
6. Work for the development and implementation of national and international policies to protect the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of all people such as through support for the ratification of United Nations covenants on human rights.
7. Support and participate in the worldwide struggle for liberation in church and community.
8. Facilitate nomination and election processes that include all racial groups by employing a system that prioritizes leadership opportunities of people from communities that are disproportionately impacted by the ongoing legacy of racial injustice. Use measures to align our vision for racial justice with actions that accelerate racial equity.

Resolution #3071, The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church—2016.
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(click to explore more Social Action Campaign Resources)

Program Resources

Happy New Year of Reading! I hope that you are as excited as I am to start reading and journeying through the 2026 UWF Reading list. There are several new books to spike your interest. If you enjoyed *The Four Winds*: a novel by Kristin Hannah from the 2023 Reading List, you will certainly want to check out *The Women*, also written by Kristin Hannah. The main character, Frankie, joined the Army Nurse Corps during the Vietnam War. The book chronicles Frankie and other nurses' chaotic experiences during the war and afterwards, trying to rejoin society and deal with trauma. I highly recommend this *Nurturing for Community* book.

If you are interested in volunteering as a reader-evaluator for the UWF Reading Program to read and review potential books, please use the link for information and complete the 2026 interest form to be returned to Emily Jones.

Sharon Lasher

Metro District Secretary of Program Resources

Apply to Serve as a Reading Program Volunteer Evaluator

Dear United Women in Faith Members and Friends,

Did you ever wonder what goes into shaping the [United Women in Faith Reading Program](#) each year? At the heart of the Reading Program is the work of numerous volunteer evaluators.

Volunteer evaluators read and review assigned books, offering careful and candid feedback regarding the books' overall quality and alignment with our mission. Last year, 175+ volunteer evaluators read and reviewed a total of about 150 books. In 2026, we will be evaluating potential books for the 2028 Reading Program.

Are you interested in serving as a volunteer evaluator for the Reading Program? If so, please take 10 minutes to [complete the 2026 interest form](#). Both new and returning volunteers should use this form.

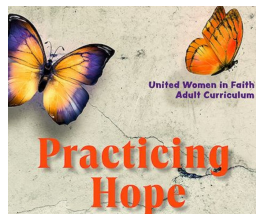
We will consider interest forms on a rolling basis throughout the year, but completion by February 1 is preferred, as it allows us to plan appropriately for the spring cycle book assignments.

Peace,
Emily

Emily Jones
Executive for Racial Justice
United Women in Faith

Metro District Mission Study 2026

March 7, Hickory Grove United Methodist Church, 6401 Hickory Grove Road, Charlotte, NC 28215.
Deaconess Nancy Litton, speaker and facilitator



As the study facilitator, Nancy will be using the book: **Practicing Hope** by Tabatha Holley. The book is available for purchase from bookstores, Amazon or it can be borrowed from your local library.

Metro District Mission Study Registration Form for Saturday, March 7, 2026, 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

Check-in begins at 8:30 am: the study begins at 9:00 am with lunch at 11:30 am.
Bring your own lunch. Coffee, iced tea, water, snacks, and dessert will be provided.
A Love Offering for Mission Giving will be collected for UMCOR.

Name of Church:

NAME	OFFICE	EMAIL

Number of persons _____ x \$5.00 = \$_____ (Use an additional Registration Form or a sheet of lined paper for additional participants.)

Registrations should be postmarked by February 21, 2026. Please send one check per unit/church. Make checks payable to "Metro District UWF" and mail to Sylvia Casey, 7009 Summer Pl., Charlotte, NC 28213.

Hands-on-Mission Project: UMCOR Hygiene Kit. Kit items with assembly instructions can be found at [UMCOR Hygiene Kit - Global Ministries](https://umcmmission.org) (umcmmission.org), and on the next page.

2026 Hands-on-Mission Projects

Mission Study – March 7, 2026: Hygiene Kits

Hygiene Kit Materials

- One hand towel (15 x 25 – 17 x 27 inches) – No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels
- One washcloth – No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels
- One comb – Must be sturdy with at least 6 inches of teeth
 - No pocket combs or picks
 - Rattail and combs without handles are acceptable, but must have at least 6 inches of teeth
- One toenail or fingernail clipper – No emery boards or metal nail files
- Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger) – No Ivory or Jergen's soap. Do not remove from packaging
- One adult toothbrush – Do not remove from packaging. Personal advertising not acceptable.
- 10 adhesive bandages (¾ by 3 inches) – Common household bandages acceptable
- One one-gallon size resealable bag

Assembly Instructions

- Lay hand towel flat on a table.
- Lay the washcloth in the center of the hand towel.
- Place all remaining items on top of the washcloth (except the plastic bag).
- Fold the sides of the hand towel to cover the items.
- Grasp the bundle tightly and roll over the remainder of the towel.
- Place the tightly rolled bundle in the plastic bag, remove air, and seal.

Important Notes

- All items must be new.
- Do not wash any of the items as they will no longer be considered new.
- Do not include any personal notes, money or additional materials in the kits.
- Contents of kits or the containers of kits should **not** be imprinted with cartoon characters, advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage symbols
- Please send a check to Sager Brown for the total amount of hygiene kits times \$2 per kit for the cost of toothpaste and shipping. One check may be written for all of the kits.

Prayer Breakfast – April 25, 2026: Diapers and Wipes for AC4Ed

~ sizes: 1 – 5; 2T – 3T Boys; 2T – 3T Girls; 4T – 5T Boys; 4T – 5T Girls; Baby Wipes

Annual Celebration – August 29, 2026: School Supplies for AC4Ed

~ list will be made available soon



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District and WNCC UWF Events Calendar

March 7

Metro District Mission Study
Hickory Grove United Methodist Church
6401 Hickory Grove Road
Charlotte, NC 28215
Hands on Project: Hygiene Kits

March 23

United Women in Faith Giving Day

April 25

Metro District Prayer Breakfast
Trinity United Methodist Church
416 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
Kannapolis, NC 28083
Hands on Project: Diapers & Wipes for AC4Ed

Springtime

Walk for Mission: Single Units or Groups
Various Locations Across the District

May 15-15

Assembly 2026
Indianapolis, Indiana

June 11- 13

WNCC UWF Spiritual Growth Retreat
91 North Lakeshore Dr.
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

June 19 – 21

Annual Conference
91 North Lakeshore Dr.
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

August 21-22

WNCC UWF Mission u
Catholic Conference Center
1551 Trinity Lane
Hickory, NC 28602

August 29

Metro District Annual Celebration
TBD
Hands on Project: School Supplies for AC4Ed

September 12

WNCC UWF Annual Celebration
TBD

October 17

Leadership Development Day
LDD All District Officers (Virtual)

October 24

Metro District Leadership Development Day
All Unit Officers (Virtual)



United Women In Faith Metro District 2026 Executive Committee

Office	Name	Address	Phone	Email
President	Diann P. Back (St. Stephen)	9301 Whitethorn Dr. Charlotte, NC 28277	704-846-8875 h 704-517-5436 c	dback@carolina.rr.com
Vice President	Earonita Strong (Simpson-Gillespie)	1929 Crestdale Dr. Charlotte, NC 28216	704-534-4387	stronge@carolina.rr.com
Secretary	Debbie Eudy (Memorial/Charlotte)	806 Eaglewood Ave. Charlotte, NC 28212	704-759-4477	snakcak3655@gmail.com
Treasurer	Sylvia Casey (Simpson-Gillespie)	700 Summer Pl. Charlotte, NC 28213	704-596-3578	sil1casey@gmail.com
ME&I	Sylvia Sekle-Dueh (Hickory Grove)	212 Hunslet Circle Charlotte, NC 28206	704-606-5557	dueh1409@gmail.com
Spiritual Growth	Marilyn Morris (North Davidson)	3400 Winterfield Pl. Charlotte, NC 28205	704-807-5551	1circleofgrace@gmail.com
Social Action	Lisa Delano (Davidson UMC)	116 Webbed Foot Rd Mooresville NC 28117	704-957-8035	mybrowneyedgirls@msn.com
MN&O	Shauna Stroud (St. Mark's)	7711 Park Vista Circle Charlotte NC 28226	954-329-5121	shauna.stroud@gmail.com
Program Resources	Sharon Lasher (Memorial, Charlotte)	1836 Graybark Ave. Charlotte, NC 28205	704-661-5268	sharonllasher@gmail.com
Communications	Amanda Dyer (Forest Hill)	701 Wingard Rd. Concord, NC 28025	704-201-8672	adyer0813@gmail.com
Parliamentarian	Lynda Morris (St. Stephen)	737 Pavilion View Dr. Apt. F305 Matthews, NC 28105	704-847-2521 h 704-619-2013 c	lfmorrisap@aol.com
Historian	Nancy Ward (Matthews)	4003 Colton Ridge Drive Indian Trail, NC 28079	704-681-4779	Nward001@carolina.rr.com
Nominations	Louise Woods (Central Charlotte)	1327 Cedarwood Ln. Charlotte, NC 28212	704-536-0335	lwoods@BellSouth.net
Member-at-Large	Sybil Long (Central Charlotte)	8238 Terra Linda Ln. Charlotte, NC 28215	704-773-8678	sibyl.long@gmail.com
Member-at-Large	Linda Davidson, Ch. (Simpson-Gillespie)	6201 Spring Garden Ln. Charlotte, NC 28213	704-281-9565	lad6201@gmail.com
Member-at-Large	Tonja Schult (St. Marks)	134 Oasis Dr. Mooresville, NC 28117	404-290-2690	tonjaschult50@gmail.com
Conference Advisor	Cathy McCauley (St. Stephen)	6835-A Farmington Dr. Charlotte, NC 28212	704-965-6566	cathymc855@yahoo.com

2026 Metro District Nurturing Partner List

CHURCH	PARTNER	CHURCH	PARTNER
Aldersgate	Sylvia Casey	Matthews	Tanja Schult
Bethpage	Lynda Morris	Memorial (Charlotte)	Linda Davidson
Center (Concord)	Amanda Dyer	Midway	Sybil Long
Central (Charlotte)	Lynda Morris	Mount Olivet	Sybil Long
Central (Concord)	Amanda Dyer	Myers Park	Louise Woods
Christ	Sylvia Sekle-Dueh	North Davidson	Sylvia Sdkle-Deuh
Cokesbury	Diann Back	Pineville	Diann Back
Commonwealth	Earonita Strong	Pleasant Grove	Earonita Strong
Davidson	Lynda Morris	Providence	Debbie Eudy
Dilworth	Nancy Ward	Simpson-Gillespie	Sylvia Sekle-Dueh
Epworth	Amanda Dyer	SouthPark	Shauna Stroud
First (Charlotte)	Shauna Stroud	St. Francis	Nancy Ward
Forest Hill	Earonita Strong	St. Marks	Sylvia Casey
Harrisburg	Diann Back	St. Stephen	Debbie Eudy
Hickory Grove	Debbie Eudy	Thrift	Sylvia Sekle-Dueh
Hunters Chapel	Earonita Strong	Trinity (Charlotte)	Sylvia Casey
Huntersville	Lisa Delano	Trinity (Kannapolis)	Sharon Lasher
Indian Trail	Nancy Ward	Woodlawn	Earonita Strong

Your Metro Nurturing Partner is the point of contact and liaison with our local churches. Please welcome them when they contact you. Even with a designated Nurture Partner, the entire team is here to support you. Contact your Partner or any Metro Team Officer with your questions, ideas, or concerns



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WNCC United Women in Faith SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Do you know a student who is a member of one of the WNCC United Methodist Churches?

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 2025?

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

Applications should be requested by contacting the scholarship committee chairperson:

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 on **March 14, 2026** via Zoom.

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 and individuals.

Please contact me if you need additional information.

Blessings,

Tonya Lanier

WNCC United Women in Faith Scholarship Committee Chairperson

United Women in Faith
Metro District of the WNCC UMW
701 Wingard Rd.
Concord, NC 28025



United
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United Women in Faith

Vision

Turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

Mission

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.

Purpose

To 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.