

COAST TO COAST: CELEBRATING OUR NATIONAL MISSION INSTITUTIONS

We will wrap up 2026 with a Mission Festival celebrating our United Women in Faith National Mission Institutions.

There is still time to learn a little about one of our 80+ mission institutions to share with the rest of the district. 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 is a video, map, list of NMIs, and several stories at <https://uwfaith.org/what-we-do/what-we-fund/national-ministries/>.

We're suggesting that local units bring a few dozen cookies representing the state where their selected NMI is located, and we'll have a cookie swap so you can take home some treats. My unit selected an NMI in Alaska. When I did a search on "Alaska state cookie," there wasn't an official state cookie, there were a couple of cookies suggested as representative of Alaska. Even if there isn't an "official" state cookie for your NMI, there will probably be some tasty suggestions. You can also bring a small state flag (paper or cloth) and other items for the display area.

We will also discuss our 2026 District Read, The Book Woman's Daughter, by Kim Michele Richardson. This book is a 2025 selection in Education for Mission in the United Women in Faith Reading Program. The book is available in several formats (including large print, Audible, and Kindle) in most public libraries. The book may be purchased at local booksellers, online at <https://bookshop.org/shop/uwfaith>, and at other online sites.

Note: This book is the sequel to "The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek." There will be a brief overview of "Book Woman" to set the stage for "The Book Woman's Daughter."

Registration is not required but will better help us plan for your participation.

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/SMDFestivalReg> ("If link doesn't work, copy and paste into your web browser.")

When: Saturday, October 24, 2026

Where: Murphy First United Methodist Church, 73 Valley River Avenue, Murphy, NC (directions pg. 3)

Times: 9:30 –10:00 AM Check in, drop off hands-on mission items, and enjoy light refreshments.

10:00 AM—12:00 Noon Coast to Coast: Celebrating our National Mission Institutions

"The Book Woman's Daughter:" book club discussion

Hands-On Items: Items for Four Square Community Action, Inc. serving Cherokee, Clay, Graham and Swain Counties in NC, including their Head Start Programs. Four Square Community Action Inc. is committed to opening doors for eligible low-income individuals and families by providing advocacy, services, and resources to increase self-sufficiency. **Their "Blessing Box" is our hands-on project and needs all kinds of easily accessible food and toiletry items.**

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

Page 1—Coast to Coast: Celebrating our National Mission Institutions

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—Special Note from Debbie Ray; Directions to Murphy First UMC

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Page 8—2026 Nurturing Partners; Ubuntu Day of Service; UWFaith Town Hall Zoom Calls; 2025 Year-End Reports for Western North Carolina Local Units

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Page 10—SMD & WNCC Calendar of Events

MISSION STATEMENT OF UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

We are women with a PURPOSE! 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.

**The past should be a springboard
not a hammock.**

* * * * *

*"This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind,
and reaching forth unto those things which are before.*

--Philippians 3:13



United
Women
in Faith

We believe
love in action
can change
the world.

faith
action
sisterhood

SPECIAL NOTE:

Leadership Development Day is coming on October 17th by zoom from 10:00am to 12:00 noon. Smoky Mountain has very few officers but I want to encourage anyone who has an interest in serving our district in any capacity to let me know and I will see that you get the link. You can learn about the officers and determine if there is some way you can help. United Women in Faith needs you to decide you can do this with God's help and the support of women.

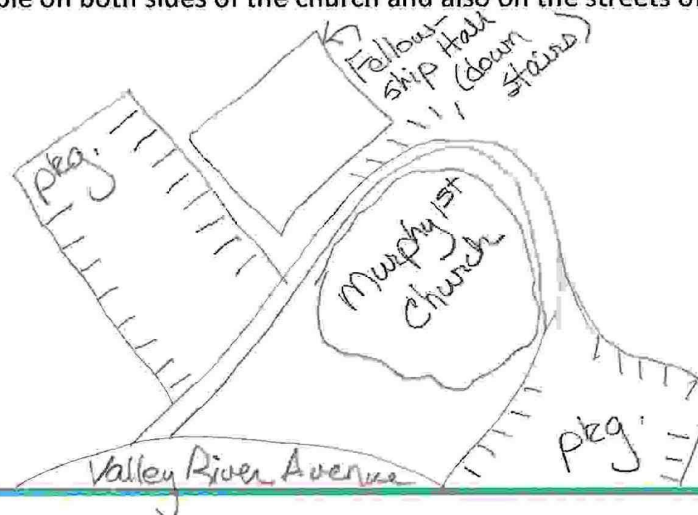
From Debbie Ray (former District President), serving on the conference team but eager to support the district team too.

Debbie Ray, Conference Liaison

Phone: 828-400-3499 or Email: wsray@charter.net

DIRECTIONS TO MURPHY FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH:

1. From Waynesville: Take the ramp onto US-74 W/Great Smoky Mountains Expressway (25.7 mi.); keep left to continue on US-74W (51.2 mi). Turn right on Unicoi Turnpike (Peachtree St). Go to traffic circle, turn right onto Hiwassee St/Valley River Ave and destination will be ahead of you.
2. From Waynesville and Sylva: Take the ramp onto US-23 S/US-74 W/Great Smoky Mountains Expy (18.3 mi). Take exit 81 for US-23 S toward US-441 S/Dillsboro/Franklin/Atlanta (0.2 mi) (20.3 mi). Continue onto US-64W (46.4 mi). Continue straight onto Peachtree St./Unicoi Turnpike. At traffic circle, turn right onto Hiwassee St/Valley River Ave. Destination will be ahead of you.
3. From Robbinsville: Turn right onto US-129S/Rodney Orr Bypass (11.3 mi)/US-74W. Turn right on Unicoi Turnpike (Peachtree St). Go to traffic circle, turn right onto Hiwassee St/Valley River Avenue and destination will be ahead of you.
4. Parking is available on both sides of the church and also on the streets of Murphy proper.



HELLO, UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH!

Thank you for giving to United Women in Faith. Our total giving for Quarter 3 was \$4,707.12. Included in that giving is \$393.92 received for Love Offering. Giving is a privilege—a gift of God's grace....from United Women in Faith in Mission. Our Conference Love Offering theme is a Gift of Mission in honor of future generations of women, children, and youth. I enjoyed seeing many of you at our August Smoky Mountain District Celebration.

Friendly reminder that the mail date deadline for your remittance for Quarter 4 will be Friday, November 23rd. Any later will be posted to 2027 especially due to Thanksgiving weekend holiday mail slowdown. It is a pleasure to be a member of the Smoky Mountain District United Women in Faith team! Thank you!

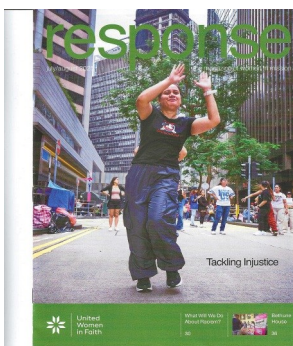
Kim Shafer, SMD District Treasurer

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response

the magazine of women in mission



The magazine of women in mission will touch your heart, stir your soul, and challenge your mind. Topics and issues cover spiritual growth, mission outreach and reports on our local, national and international work. [Get more information, and to subscribe today!](#)

HEY THERE...Can You Cast Your Eyes This Way For a Second!

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



Why I Participate in the UWF Reading Program

I admit that my participation in the reading program has been somewhat sporadic over the years, although I have always loved reading. One of the greatest gifts my mother gave me was a love for reading, and in my younger years I was somewhat of a bookworm. This was in the days before social media, streaming, and hundreds of TV channels (we got two channels). Once I started working full-time, got married, etc. I found I had less time for reading, but once I stopped working full-time in 2024, I vowed to read more, including books from the UWF Reading Program.

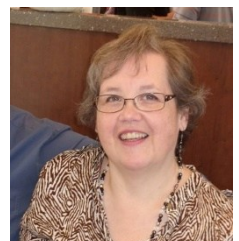
Since the death of Dolly Parton, we have heard more about the value of books and reading, particularly for children. Yet statistics reveal that fewer Americans are reading. Forty percent of Americans do not read a single book in a year, and the median is 2 books per year. Dolly believed books and reading were the ultimate key to self-education, dreaming, and escaping poverty. Books expand our minds, improve health, and preserve knowledge. Regular reading maintains brain health (important as we age) and reduces stress (just 6 minutes of reading can lower stress by half). Reading also builds empathy, letting us see life through someone else's eyes.

Reading is also one of the greatest freedoms of democracy. We live in a society of misinformation, and some would like to limit free access to diverse ideas and information. UWF Reading Program books (and children's books, movies, podcasts, magazines, etc.) are carefully chosen to inform and enrich us in the areas of spiritual growth, mission education, nurturing community, social action, and leadership development. By participating in the reading program, I have read books that I would probably not have chosen to read, but I am grateful for how these books have helped to form me into the person I am today. These books have helped me in spiritual formation (e.g. *A Faith of Many Rooms: Inhabiting A More Spacious Christianity*, by Debie Thomas), to become a better leader (*Speaking Well: Essential Skills for Speakers, Leaders, and Preachers*, by Adam Hamilton), informed my understanding of important social and moral issues like racism (*The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone*, by Heather McGhee – I think a must-read for every American), and through story have helped me to empathize with the struggles of others (*The Four Winds*, a novel set during the dust bowl era by Kristen Hannah).

Books are so accessible now through e-books, audio books, on-line bookstores (used and new), and libraries (NC Cardinal allows you to request a book from any library in the state). Reading program books are often exchanged at district and conference events. Participating in the reading program doesn't have to mean completing one of the plans. If all you can do is read one or two books a year, I think you will find you are the better for doing so. I will close with a quote from "The Book Woman's Daughter" by Kim Michele Richardson: "Books are the cornerstone to greater minds."

Carol Harper, Program Advisory Group

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LOCAL UNIT HIGHLIGHT: It Worked for Us!



Haywood County Churches Meet for Faith and Fellowship. Canton Central United Women in Faith hosted a luncheon for Faith and Fellowship on September 10th for Haywood County United Methodist Churches, with and without active local units. The group enjoyed a lunch of salads and desserts provided by participating churches. Women from Beaverdam, Canton Central, Canton First, Clyde Central, Crabtree, Faith, Shady Grove, and Waynesville First churches attended. Special guests were Rev. Beverly Parker-Reece, pastor of the Cherokee/Whittier charge and several women from Cherokee UMC, who shared about mission projects between the church and community as well as about Cherokee culture and faith.



A TIME OF GATHERING
Welcome- Linda Masters
Devotion- Rev. Tom Owens
Blessing- "Sing Along" with Linda
Lunch

A TIME FOR SHARING
Welcome Cherokee United
Methodist Church- Pat Owen
Program: Cherokee UMC- Beverly
Parker Reece, Pastor

A TIME FOR CLOSING
Comments: Pat Owen
Closing Prayer



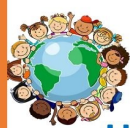
♥ We invite you to give generously to your district love offering. Your Mission Giving continues the work of United Women in Faith, making a difference, every day, in the lives of women, children and youth around the world. Thank you for your support of Mission Giving! Every single dollar makes a difference! ♥

- ♥ ♦ **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.



- ♦ 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**



United
Women
in Faith
Western North Carolina

Ubuntu Day of Service

**Take a tour of the
Bethlehem Child Care Center
520 N Cleveland Ave
Winston-Salem, NC 27101**

October 15, 2026 9am

**Register at Mission u or Annual Celebration
or email Vickie Brown @
vickiebrown961@gmail.com**

**If you wish to bring donations, please bring items for
the day care and school supplies.**



U•B•U•N•T•U
"I am human because you are human"

UWFaith Town Hall

Zoom Calls

2nd Monday of each month

@ 7pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85209872137?pwd=AXoqsxaVJ0xqFo18LBxljF7Y7x4hHS.1>

Got questions?

Want to hear about upcoming events?

Want to share what is going on in your Unit?

Please join us!



United
Women
in Faith

2026 Year End Reports for Western North Carolina Local Units

[Click to Download Full Set of 2026 Year End Reports – WORD File](#)

[Click to Download Full Set of 2026 Year End Reports – PDF File](#)

[Click To Download Full Set of 2026 Year End Reports – Fillable PDF File \(fill in online and email\)](#)

Return to your District President by December 15, 2026

SMD United Women in Faith

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

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Nominations:

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TBD

TBD

TBD

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1/31/2026

Nancy Jo Willis
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TO:



United
Women
in Faith

2026 UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH CONFERENCE & DISTRICT EVENTS

WNCC UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 17 WNCC LDD for all District Officers; (Virtual) 10am-12pm

SMD UWFaith CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Oct. 24 SMD Mission Festival at Murphy First UMC; 9:30am-12:00noon