

Conference Gram



Volume 57, Number 2 Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women

April 2008

The Rooms of Your Life



By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.
Proverbs 24:3-4

Have **YOU** marked your calendar for our 2008 **Spiritual Growth Retreats**? You will definitely want to plan to join us at Lake Junaluska in June. **The Spiritual Growth Retreats** for the United Methodist Women of the Western North Carolina Conference will be held at Lake Junaluska on June 13-14 and June 14-15. At this year's retreats, we will explore our theme "**The Rooms of Your Life.**" Our retreat leader will be Jean Padgett, a well-known Christian speaker and Bible study leader. We will have inspirational and thought-provoking sessions as Jean leads us on a journey of discovery.

Housing request forms were sent to each district president. The forms were to be returned in February. If you have not requested housing, please do so right away. Available space on the Assembly grounds fills up very quickly, especially for the Friday/Saturday session. You may also find the housing reservation forms on our conference website at www.wncumw.org. If lodging is not available on the Assembly grounds, you will be advised of other possible accommodations nearby. You may request availability by calling 1-800-222-4930. If you secure lodging off the Assembly grounds, you do not have to send in the Reservation Form, just make your arrangements with the facility off the grounds and then come register with us at Harrell Center when you arrive at the Lake. **It is very im-**

portant for you to register at Harrell Center so that we will have a record of your attendance. If you need child care, you may make arrangements by calling Lake Junaluska at 1-828-452-2881.

No advance registration is required to attend the retreats. However, there is a \$10.00 registration fee that will be collected from all persons attending the Spiritual Growth Retreats. Registration fees will be collected at Harrell Center at the time of registration. Please do not mail the registration fees in with your housing reservation form.

Session One of the retreats will begin at 3:45pm on the Friday/Saturday Retreat and also the Saturday/Sunday Retreat. The themes to be explored at this year's retreats will include: An overview with emphasis on the Foyer: The Attic—"The Junk in Your Life"...The Living Room—"Your Service for God-Time, Talents, Energy"...Unfinished Rooms: "God's Not Finished With You Yet."

REGISTRATION will be downstairs in Harrell Center from 12:30 to 3:45pm. As soon as you arrive at Lake Junaluska, look for the yellow UMW Registration signs. Stuart Auditorium and Harrell Center are right next to each other on Lakeshore Drive. Parking surrounds the auditorium. We recommend that you *register first* for the Retreat before checking into your room if you are staying on

Spiritual Growth Retreats

Western North Carolina Conference
United Methodist Women

June 13-14 & June 14-15, 2007

Stuart Auditorium, Lake Junaluska

Retreat Leader: Jean Padgett

Music Team:

Mark Barden and Adam Ward

the Assembly grounds.

Check in time for the Lake facilities is 3:00pm. PLEASE NOTE: If you are staying at the Lambuth Hotel or Terrace Hotel, you check in/out at that hotel. Check in/out for the Lakeside Lodge, Junaluska Apts., Mountainview Lodge or Sunnyside Lodge will be in the building which houses Jones Cafeteria. There will be an information booth set up at Harrell Center for any questions you might have.

The retreats promise to be a time for spiritual growth as we explore the theme "**The Rooms in Your Life.**" Please be in prayer for our retreats and our retreat leaders.

*Pat Wiseman, Spiritual Growth
rickpat@bellsouth.net*

COMPLETELY NEW THIS YEAR: Please stop by the new Bethea Welcome Center when you arrive for the retreats. There may be important information and directions for you to receive there.

Please remember that registration for the Spiritual Growth Retreats will be held downstairs in the Harrell Center Auditorium where the Program Resources Room will be set up.

School of Christian Mission

"Living The Sacred"

Greensboro College, Greensboro, North Carolina

"July 24-27, 2008"

*Spiritual Growth Study: "I Believe in Jesus"

*Geographic Study: "Israel / Palestine"

*General Issue Study: "Giving Our Hearts Away:
Native American Survival"

Youth Mission Day—Saturday, July 26th

Registration deadline is June 30, 2008!

Brochures are available from your
District Presidents

Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women

ANNUAL MEETING

"Called By Name"

September 5, 6 & 7 2008

Lake Junaluska Assembly

Hands-on Mission Project: **Gift to Mission Cards**
(Remember those persons in Public Education with a
Gift to Mission Card throughout the year!!)

Mark Your Calendar!!!

RETREAT REGISTRATION

Registration for each retreat will begin at 12:30pm to 3:45pm downstairs in Harrell Center. After you register, please take time to browse in the **Program Resources Room** also in Harrell Center. Hours of operation for **Program Resources** will be: Friday: 12:30-3:45pm, 5:30pm-7:00pm and after the last session on Friday. Saturday: 8:00-8:45am, 12:00-3:45pm, 5:30-6:45pm.

Rooms on the Assembly grounds may not be available until 3pm. We share the facilities with others. Check-out time is 11am.

The Memorial Chapel will be open at all times for your personal quiet time. You may place prayer requests in a basket in the Chapel. We will lift up those requests during our retreat sessions.

The Susanna Wesley Gardens, the International Prayer Room, and the Junaluska Cross are other places to visit during free time. You will also want to take a walk by the lake and enjoy the roses. Be sure to dress comfortably, wear good walking shoes, bring a warm sweater and rain gear in case the weather is cool or rainy.

Emergency Telephone Number

The Assembly's switchboard number is 828-452-2881. Please leave this number with your family in case of an emergency.

RETREAT LEADER

A Christian speaker and Bible teacher, **Jean Padgett** uses a four-story miniature house in presentations to church groups across the Southeast. The house is a teaching tool that demonstrates the concept that our

heart is Christ's home. There is humor as well as poignancy as she describes her years of running from God's call to the mission field only to discover that she had not missed the call, only the location of the field. David Padgett, her late husband, wrote and recorded the theme song for



"The Rooms of Your Life."

Jean grew up in Columbia, SC and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Spanish from the University of South Carolina. She was a high school Spanish teacher for several years and later was a co-founder, teacher, and director of a pre-school program in Chapin, SC, where she now lives. She recently retired from the South Carolina Senate after 28 years of employment in Benefits and Payroll.

She is an active member of Riverland Hills Baptist Church in Columbia, SC. After teaching Sunday School for over 27 years, she now leads special events at her church for women's groups, single adults, senior adults, and Sunday School classes. Jean has two grown daughters and four grandchildren.

ORGANIST Adam Ward has served as Organist and Choirmaster at First United Methodist Church of Salisbury for 10 years. At First Church, he oversees a music program that includes eight choirs (vocal, handbell and small ensemble) ranging in ages from kindergarten to senior adults. He also directs the Concert

Choir, Inc. of Salisbury.



Receiving the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in Organ Performance from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, Adam also studied piano, harpsichord, voice and choral conducting at the University. He will complete the Doctor of Musical Arts in Organ Performance at UNCG in May of 2009.

Adam has performed at the Washington National Cathedral in Washington, DC, at St Philip's Cathedral in Atlanta, Bruton Parish Church in Colonial Williamsburg, York Minster in Great Britain as well as recital in Treviso and Torre del Greco in Italy. His 2008 recital schedule will take him to the Cathedral in Pompeii, Italy where he will play in November of 2008.

Adam is the proud father of his three-year-old son, Benjamin Michael Ward.

SONG LEADER Mark Barden

was born into a Methodist parsonage family and lived throughout Western North Carolina as a child. Following his college graduation, he was accepted as a Fellow for graduate study at The University of Mississippi where he later taught broadcasting and coordinated the state press association for high school newspapers and yearbooks. In 1982, he accepted a position teaching broadcast journalism, television production and newspaper editing at Murray State University in Kentucky where he met his future spouse, Barbara Shores.



During his teaching career, Mark accepted the call to ordained ministry, returned to North Carolina and completed ministerial studies at Duke University. Mark was ordained deacon in 1986 and

elder in 1990. He has served several churches in the Western North Carolina Conference.

In 2000, Mark was appointed by the Bishop Director of Mission/Outreach for the Western North Carolina Conference. In this capacity, he traveled extensively worldwide on behalf of the Conference. In June 2006, Bishop J. Lawrence McCleskey appointed him Director of Communication and Ministries Team Coordinator for our Conference. As a team coordinator, he serves Town and Country Ministries, Africa University Initiative, Council on Laity, Church and Society. He also is the fiscal officer for the program area.

Mark's wife, Barbara, currently serves as Minister of Education at Myers Park UMC in Charlotte. Their son, Christopher is a sophomore at Providence Day School in Charlotte.

RETREAT COMMITTEE

Members of the Spiritual Growth Retreat Committee are Patricia Wiseman chair; Amy Johnson, Sandy Hieronymus, Sharon Smith, Sherry Sink, Linda Young, Linda Baity, Kim Keyse, Dr. Lillie Jones, Tonya Lanier and Sandy Letchworth.

A retreat is a time to reflect upon your relationship with God. It is a time to be attentive as God speaks to us. The committee has worked hard to plan an inspirational retreat. We anticipate a wonderful time together. We hope you will meet us by the lake in June.

Directions To Lake Junaluska

From the East: Travel west on I-40 to Exit 27, US-23/US-74. Go 1.5 miles. Bear right on US-19/US-23/US-74 and go 2.5 miles. Continue on ramp at sign reading "US-19 to Maggie/Cherokee/Junaluska Assembly" and go for 0.2 miles. Bear right on US-19 and watch for the signs.

From the West: Travel east on US-19 and watch for the signs.

From the Southwest: Travel northeast on US-23/US-441. Turn right on

ramp at sign reading "US-76 East/ US-23 North to Waynesville/Asheville." Go 20 miles. Exit 102B, sign reads "US-276 North to Maggie Valley/Junaluska Assembly." Turn right on US-276, Dellwood Ave. and go north 1.4 miles. Turn right on US-19 and watch for the signs. Upon your arrival at the retreat center, remember to look for the yellow signs.

President Amy Johnson

Do you remember playing with a dollhouse when you were a little girl? I did not have a store-bought dollhouse, but I looked forward to the time when the new Sears catalog came in the mail. When the new catalog arrived, I became the proud owner of the old catalog and I could cut out furniture and paper dolls and, using an old cardboard box, I would create my own dollhouse. I was able to create two houses each year!

I had forgotten about my days of creating dollhouses until Jean Padgett, the leader of our Spiritual Growth Retreats, led a similar retreat for our Conference's United Methodist Church Secretaries organization in October 2006. Her focal point is a beautiful, fully furnished dollhouse, complete with a patio and a real hornet's nest! She has a humorous, down-to-earth style in the way she relates everyday life to the different rooms in a house. For example, Jean's attic was just full of things that would qualify as clutter and she focused on the clutter in our life that keeps us from having a quality relationship with God.

What a grand time we had reading scripture and focusing on different areas of our lives. We were so blessed by her presentation that I knew she needed to come and present her retreat to our United Methodist Women. Several members of the secretaries' organization are United Methodist Women, and they overwhelmingly agreed with me!

I do hope that you will be able to join us at Lake Junaluska for one of the retreats. You will miss a blessing if you can't come!

At a called session of Annual Conference on February 2, approval was given to form a new district. Several churches from the Charlotte and Statesville Districts will compose the new **Lake Norman District**. **While the new district will begin operation in July, United Methodist Women will continue to operate within the**


present 14-district structure until January 2009.

A lot of work goes into setting up a new district. An interim Committee on Nominations has been identified to nominate a slate of officers for 2009. A steering committee has also been identified. Their responsibilities will be to compose Standing Rules and make plans for an organizational meeting this fall. At the organizational meeting, officers will be elected and a 2009 A&MD budget and pledge to mission will be approved.

Change is never easy, but I feel this is an opportunity for greater representation on our Conference UMW committees. Please be in prayer for the committees working to form this new district as well as for the Charlotte and Statesville Districts as they reorganize due to the loss of some district officers to the new district.

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PURPOSE
OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN



The organized unit of United Methodist Women 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.

Treasurer-Sharon Smith

For the **SEVENTH** consecutive year, the Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women led the nation in:

- Special Mission Recognition
- Gift to Mission
- Gift in Memory
- World Thank Offering
- Total Undesignated Giving
- TOTAL GIVING!!

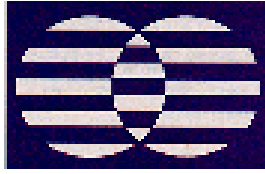
We were 3rd in Pledge to Mission. We met our 2007 \$810,000 pledge. Total mission giving was \$840,595, an increase of \$43,094 over 2006. Our 2007 Financial Goal was to increase mission giving in the Gift to Mission Channel by 10%. We increased our Gift to Mission giving by 22.23%.

Facts about Mission Giving:

- Undesignated **Mission Giving** makes mission possible by supporting mission projects and personnel around the world. The need for undesignated mission funds is greater than ever. The 2008 Women's Division Budget is \$19,342,043.
- In 2008, the funds available for doing mission work through United Methodist Women will be \$52,994.38/day, \$2,208.10 /hour, \$184.01 for five minutes, \$36.80 for one minute and 61 cents for one second. How much mission work did your local unit provide through their Mission Giving?
- Our **2008 Financial Goal** is to **increase Total Mission giving in the Five Channels of Mission Giving by 1%**. The Five Channels of **Mission Giving** are: **Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition, Gift Mission, Gift in Memory and World Thank Offering. Mission Giving** supports the total program of mission carried out by United Methodist Women. With your gift, you honor someone, and you make a difference in the lives of women, children, and youth...around the world.
- The **2008 Love Offering** will be a Gift to Mission **"In Honor of Bishop and Mrs. McClesky for their support of UMW in Mission."** Bring your unit's Love Offering to Annual Meeting or mail it to me.

It is in telling the stories of mission that we pass on to others how important undesignated **Mission Giving** is. If you want to know where your money goes, all you have to do is read **RESPONSE** Magazine. Watch for the

symbol of interlocking circles. You will be reading about a program and/or person supported by undesignated **Mission Giving**.



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Program Resources-Kim Keyse

EXTRA!! EXTRA!!
READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Read any good books lately, my beloved sisters? I have. *"Tuesdays with Morrie,"* by Mitch Albom is not a new release but it is an excellent book. It is on our 2003 reading list. It warmed the cockles of my heart and reminded me to slow down and enjoy life...all aspects of it. This is another aspect of our **Reading Program** that I appreciate...we can read books from 2003 until now. This span allows for a varied array of choices to suit your taste. *"Hard Line: Life and Death on the US - Mexico Border"* by Ken Ellingwood is on our 2008 reading list. Ellingwood gives a timely portrayal of lives affected on both sides of the border, written with compassion and objectivity. He tells the stories of those crossing the border with honesty and wisdom. This book is more about people than policy and gives deeper, non-partisan insight into this controversial subject. These two books broach two different topics...or, do they? Reading provides the opportunity to expand your knowledge and insight and may therefore lead you to take action to improve life for yourself and for others. I believe this is yet another means of living out our **PURPOSE**.

Remember that for more than 135 years, the UMW and our predecessor organizations have been involved in mission that has always included prayer, study, and action. The **Reading Program** is a wonderful opportunity to engage in each of these areas. But being informed is just the beginning...reading should lead to action! Many of the books on the **Reading Program** lists deal with issues such as racism, human rights, peace, the

environment, and concerns of all women and children. Follow up your reading with action!! Read all about it!! Get informed! Get involved! Get going! **READ!!**

An updated Children's brochure is available on our website... www.wncumw.org. Please share this with your ladies. And remember, contact me with any questions or concerns that you may have concerning program resources. Titles read from the 2003 list will be credited through December 31, 2008. The booklists for 2002-2008 are on the **Reading Program Online Community**, www.umwonline.org. Lists for 2007 and 2008 are available at Women's Division website, www.umwmission.org. To order reading program books go to www.missionresourcecenter.org. Remember that there are four **Reading Program** plans in which to participate.

I'll be looking for you in our UMW library at our **Spiritual Growth Retreat** in June...come browse and buy. You'll find me publishing glad tidings!!

kkeyse@bellsouth.net

Dedication of the Annual Report Book

If you know of a United Methodist Woman that has served on the local, district and conference levels of United Methodist Women, you could nominate her for the dedication of the Annual Report Book. This person will be honored at our Conference Annual Meeting in September.

Remember that they must have served on all three levels of United Methodist Women.

Forms for nominations must be filled out and received by June 1, 2008. You can request forms by contacting Karen Wilkerson at 828-328-3045 or email her at kwilkinson@charter.net.

Vice President
Sandy Hieronymus

Spending time with fellow UMW members is always rewarding for me. My heart is warmed by the fellowship. District and Conference events offer us opportunities to be with our sisters in Christ as we worship, study, and have fun together. It is never too early to plan for the summer Conference events. I always look forward to June when we gather at Lake Junaluska for the **Spiritual Growth Retreats**, Greensboro College for the **School of Christian Mission** in July and back to the Lake in September for **Conference Annual Meeting**. I always get great program ideas at these events. You will, too.

Use portions of **Response** in your programming. The December 2007 issue had many stories of how your **Mission Giving** is at work. The February 2008 issue had several good program ideas. I have already shared information from these issues, but ALL issues have worthwhile stories and information. Tell our mission story and how we join others to make a difference in the lives of women, youth and children.

Called by Name is the theme for Conference Annual Meeting. Reservations may be sent in after July 2. Forms are on our website at www.wnccumw.org or from your District President. Vickie Sigmon will be our speaker on Friday evening. Lynn Sloan Barnes will be our Saturday mission speaker. Former Conference President Mildred Gibson will install our officers. Dr. Arnetta Beverly will speak on Sunday morning. Music leaders will be Gail and Charles Liltaker. Check out additional info on the website.

Blessings to you as you serve God through your participation in UMW.

sandyh46aol.com

Membership, Nurture & Outreach—Linda Baity

The Western North Carolina Conference is very strong and doing great things in missions. The evidence tells the story. We recently learned that for the 7th straight year our conference has led the nation in mission giving. With our membership numbers down, this just proves the strong commitment of the leadership and members.

The district officers have determined to locate each unit and get an accurate count of members. Some units had disbanded over the years, which accounts for much of the drastic drop in numbers.

So far this year we have a **great** record! In three months, two new units were chartered. Celebrating a new unit in February, from the Marion District was Carson's Chapel with fifteen members, and in March, the North Wilkesboro District at the Eschol United Methodist Church with thirteen new members! Can we keep this up? **I believe we can!** If the other 14 (or 15) districts organize one new unit this year, just imagine the incredible increase in fellowship, giving and service to women, children, and youth around the world!

In March, I visited the St Matthews UMW Membership Breakfast in Greensboro. With lots of enthusiasm and a fantastic breakfast, the women and youth celebrated membership which included a pledge service and Call to Prayer Program. All ages were in attendance and each circle shared a wide variety of mission service they represented.

We would love to hear what the units in your district are doing to celebrate United Methodist Women. We continue to share and learn from each other. Please contact me with your ideas, or if I can be of any assistance.

lindabaity@wnireland.com

Education & Interpretation
Sherry Sink

Mission Today in 2008

If you want your unit to **become** a Mission Today Unit in 2008, I know that you **started** working on it January 1st!! There are many resources available to empower your unit to fulfill the criteria. There are printed resources such as the **Prayer Calendar, Program Book, Social Principles of the United Methodist Church 2005-2008**, and books used for the **Reading Program** that can be ordered from the **Mission Resource Center**. Pamphlets needed for information on the **Charter for Racial Justice** can also be ordered from there. **Response Magazine** and **New World Outlook** can be ordered from **Magazines with a Mission**.

There are also on line resources on our web site with links to other resources such as **Mission Resource Center, Women's Division, and Public Education**.

In addition to resources there is also some action that has to take place:

Joining the *United Methodist Women's Action Network*,

Corresponding with persons in the Prayer Calendar,

Becoming a member of the *Charter Club*,

Adding new members,

Participating in Hands-on-Mission Projects and Mission Studies,

Attending School Of Christian Mission, District or Conference Annual Meetings, District Prayer Breakfast, Conference Spiritual Growth Retreats,

Sponsoring a woman to a conference event, a **Children's Sabbath**,

Inviting a district or conference officer to your meeting, other women to join your unit,

Implementing the **Charter for Racial Justice**.

Giving by making a Pledge to Mission and meeting your Pledge. Give in **all** 5 Channels of **Mission Giving**.

Completing Plan I of the **Reading Program**,

Reporting on **Reading Program books, School of Christian Mission,**

Using the **Prayer Calendar, Program Book, Response Magazine** for a "Response Moment,"

Completing One of the issues of the **"For Christ's Sake Turn the World Upside Down" Initiative**.

We want at least 40% of our units to be Mission Today Units in 2008!

"For Christ's Sake Turn the World Upside Down" Through Public Education...Leaving NO Child Behind!

The sub-committee on our **"For Christ's Sake Turn the World Upside Down" Initiative** is working hard on the education process for our conference as we focus on **No Child Left Behind**. You will be receiving materials to learn about **NCLB** and how to contact and influence the people in office for change.

We are encouraging every unit to be active with a school in their community. District officers have ideas on ways that you can partner with schools.

You should have received information from district presidents about putting monetary values on volunteer hours, and supplies purchased or collected for school use. Please get this together and back to your president as soon as possible. We want the people in Raleigh and Washington to know how much we have contributed as United Methodist Women to the public education process.

You will be given handouts and information at all Conference events and asked to "take action" as a conference to establish our stand on public education. There are links on our web site to help you with educating yourself and your unit about **NCLB** and what you can do to help in the process.

Contact your District or Conference officers if you need assistance of any kind. We are here to help.

Gift to Mission cards are our Hands on Mission project for Annual Meeting. We ask that you think of ways to use them all year long to honor those in the public education system. (Teachers, bus drivers, principals, custodians, cafeteria workers, etc.)

Let's join together in this Initiative and...

"For Christ's Sake Turn the World Upside Down" Through Public Education

Sherika12754@aol.com

Social Action-Linda Young

As Christians, we are grounded in a Biblical tradition that proclaims God's abundant love for all people and that calls us to be witnesses to this love by caring for our neighbors and creation and pursuing justice and peace in the world. Throughout the prophetic tradition and in the words of Jesus, the measure of our faithfulness to this call is always how **"the least of these"** are faring. In the Bible, the well being of the widow and the orphan is a critical standard for judging the justice of a nation. Millions of Christians have found the mantra **"WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?"** to be extremely helpful in good decision-making. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, and Francis Asbury were geniuses and the most brilliant church planters in Christian history. They combined evangelical zeal, social conscience, reasoned faith, and radical innovation in ministry tactics, all in a catholic spirit that embraced the core of the ancient Christian faith and tradition.

John Wesley is as relevant today as 250 years ago and relevant far beyond United Methodist circles. Transpose his values, his emphases, and his spirit of ministry innovation to our day and the chances of relevant, effective congregational ministry skyrocket. I'm sure if he were alive today, John Wesley would surely still be coloring outside the lines and irritating the hierarchy.

Do you remember the game 'Follow the Leader' we played in elementary school? This is our call to mission. We must follow our leader, Jesus Christ, who used John Wesley to launch a movement that grew three times as fast as the American population. Knowing that we can not do it all ourselves, we must continue to make disciples who have a sense of mission. I am excited about the mission work of our conference this year, especially the **Public Education Initiative** as our priority. By concentrating on one priority, the conference, district, and local units of United Methodist Women will be on one accord and an impact can be made throughout our conference using human and written resources.

I ask that each unit make an extra effort in 2008 to submit an application for the **Social Justice Award**. Martha Phillips, Marion District, received the Award at the 2007 Annual meeting for her work with Fair Trade Products. The **Social Action** committee will be reviewing the applications and select a nominee for recognition at this year's Annual Meeting. These applications are on our **WNCC UMW Social Action** web page or through your District President or Social Action coordinator. Please complete all information on the application. A letter describing the social action accomplishment should accompany the application. The purpose of the **Social Justice Award** is to recognize an individual or group of individuals who have impacted a change for **social justice** in their community, state, or nation. The **Action** needs to be creative and/or innovative. An individual or group will have extended involvement over a period of time with a commitment to human welfare and social reform. The activity will be a bridge builder connecting and interacting with other cultures. The **Social Action** will serve to improve or change the life or situation of others or may be a life-altering experience for the nominee or group. Many of you are making a difference where you live and we want to hear about it. Mail your application by

December 15, 2008. Social Justice is God's Mission.

Have you registered to vote? I pray your answer is -YES! And not only you, but also you have seen to it that every eligible person you know is registered and will be exercising their right to vote in this election year. Voting is the most important tool one has to make a difference. The right to vote is a privilege. Marian Wright Edelman, President of the Children's Defense Fund, stated that "People who don't vote have no line of credit with people who are elected and thus pose no threat to those who act against our interests". Women's Division, at the Spring Board Meeting in March, calls on the United Methodist Women to affirm their commitment to the **Charter for Racial Justice Policies** by confronting the use of race, gender and religion by candidates, media, and the public during the 2008 election process to distort the discussion and threaten the potential for a fair and just election process. Justice requires that we ensure that all candidates are judged based upon their policy prescriptions on issues that confront the nation, rather than have their vision for the United States misrepresented because of prejudice against their race, gender, or religion. The 2008 presidential election in November challenges us to confront untruths about race, gender, and religion wherever they arise. Exercise the right to vote. It is a gift- 'lest we forget'.

Imyou2253@aol.com



New Social Action Logo

 Your conference officers ask you to covenant with us to pray for all the conference events for 2008. Prayer is a vital part in the life of a United Methodist Woman. Please pray that God will touch and change lives through these events.

Historian-Margie Knight

Did you read the February 2008 issue of **Response**? It contained several articles about the history of UMW. Probably something you had forgotten. Every once in a while we like for events and good moments to refresh our minds. I hope each of you are keeping a record about your unit. It could be in pictures, paper articles and even CD's.

Do you have trouble reading old faded manuscripts, printed copy, microfilm. Make a copy on a copy machine. It will make the words more readable. Try this trick. Get yellow transparent film such as you wrap Easter baskets. Cut a piece large enough to cover the copy machine glass before you lay the document on it. The yellow blocks our the distortions and makes it more readable either to copy or read aside from the copier.

mmknight@embarqmail.com

Secretary-Ann Aldridge

"For Christ's Sake, Turn the World Upside Down" through Public Education! I hope that is not the first time you have heard this slogan. If it is, I assure you it will not be the last. The Western North Carolina Conference UMW Executive Committee selected the area of **Public Education** as a Conference priority for 2008. Each District selected three activities in the area of **Public Education** in which their members could engage to make a difference. There is a Conference education initiative team which is meeting to plan ways that we can make a change in public education. We want to go beyond our current level of providing material assistance to schools and effect more lasting change.

Included in this issue of our Conference Gram is an information sheet on the federal legislation **No Child Left Behind Act**, referred to as **NCLB**. This act is up for reauthorization and we want to make our voices heard. Read the material, look at the Western NC UMW website, learn all you can about **NCLB**, and join us in taking action.

Jesus said: *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."* **Luke 10:14** and *"I tell you the truth, whatever you did for*

one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." **Matthew 25:40**
We are God's hands and we need to use them to his glory.

If I may be of service to any of you, please do not hesitate to contact me.

ahaldridge@charter.net

Nominations-Patsy Baker

I hope by this time you have a good idea for your slate of officers for 2009. You need to get these completed so that your District Executive Committee can approve them and they can be presented in your newsletters 30 days prior to your district's annual meeting. I know that you have had questions in this process and I appreciate you calling on me. I am your primary resource and I am always glad to listen and help you. If I can't answer your question, I have contact with wonderful women at Women's Division who are always willing to get us the answers. All conference officers are available to answer your questions about the office they are serving. I thank you for the hard work your committees are doing and I urge you to not feel alone. We are as close as a phone call or email away.

dannybakerfarm@earthlink.net

Hands on Mission Opportunity for School of Christian Mission

UMCOR Health Kits

- 1-Hand Towel (15" x 25" up to 17" X 27" no kitchen towels)
- 1-Washcloth
- 1-Comb (large and sturdy, not pocket-sized)
- 1-Metal Nail File or Fingernail Clippers (No emery boards or toenail clippers)
- 1-Bath-size bar of soap (3 oz. and up)
- 1-Toothbrush (single brushes only, in original wrapper-no child size brushes)
- 6-Adhesive plastic strip sterile bandages

Change in **Health Kit!!! UMCOR** is now purchasing toothpaste in bulk to be added to health kits before shipping to ensure that the product does not expire before they are sent.

Please follow the list completely!!! Place items in a one gallon plastic bag.

For full details and instructions on the **Health Kit** log on to our website at www.wnccumw.org.

Wanted All District Officers To Attend....

District Officers Training

When:

Saturday, October 11, 2008

Where:

Highland UMC in Hickory

All district officers should make plans to attend!!!!

If you have any questions, please

contact **Betty Swarhout**

at 828-452-2689 or

e-mail her at

blswarhout@yahoo.com

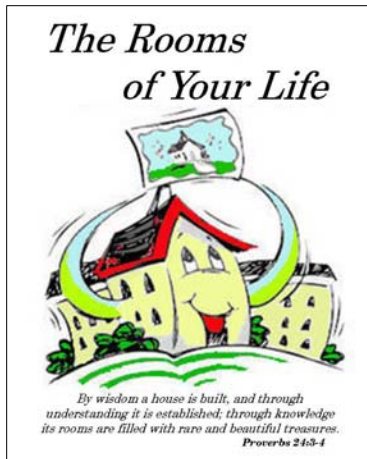


School of Christian Mission
July 24-27
at
Greensboro College

Conference Annual Meeting
September 5-7 at Lake Junaluska



CONFERENCE GRAM
The official newsletter of the
WNC Conference United Methodist Women
 Karen Wilkerson, 2829 17th Avenue SE, Newton, NC 28658



**CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR WNC CONFERENCE
 UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

2008

- June 5-8 UMC Annual Conference, Lake Junaluska
- June 13-14/14-15 Spiritual Growth Retreats, Lake Junaluska
- July 24-27 WNCC UMW School of Christian Mission, Greensboro College
- September 5-7 WNCC UMW Annual Meeting, Lake Junaluska
- October 11 WNCC UMW Officer Training for District Officers, Highland UMC in Hickory

Web Site Address: www.wnccumw.org—Lynne Gilbert maintains the web site. You are invited to send her articles and photos for the web site. Just remember our initials!! **W**estern **N**orth **C**arolina **C**onference **U**nited **M**ethodist **W**omen

Join Our Conference Email List!! To receive conference event information & updates, the Conference Gram, etc: send an email to Lynne Gilbert (lynnegilbert@bellsouth.net) or Karen Wilkerson (kwilkerson@charter.net), giving your name, email address, and district name. Join Now!!

The **Conference Gram** is published four times per year by the Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women. It is mailed, free of charge, to all district and conference officers, and to local unit presidents, vice-presidents, secretaries, treasurers, and circle chairs. If you hold one of these offices and have not received your copy, please send your name, address, local unit name, office, and district name to Karen Wilkerson, WNCC UMW Communications Coordinator, 2829 17th Avenue SE, Newton, NC 28658. Any other persons may use the subscription form at the bottom of this page to subscribe or you may receive the **Conference Gram** by joining our conference email list.

2007 Conference Gram Subscription
 Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____ District _____
 Make \$2.00 check payable to WNCC UMW & mail to: Karen Wilkerson, 2829 17th Avenue SE, Newton, NC 28658

The Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women's Special Initiative.....



No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Information contained herein was obtained from a variety of websites including the US Department of Education, United Methodist Women's Division, and the National Council of Churches (NCC) Committee on Public Education and Literacy.

The **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** is a controversial US federal law that reauthorized a number of federal programs that were intended to improve the performance of US primary and secondary schools. The law includes four principles of educational reform: stronger accountability for results, expanded flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. The legislation is based on the belief that high expectations and setting of goals will result in success for all students. States are required to develop assessments in basic skills that will be given to all students in certain grades if those states are to receive federal funding for schools.

Student progress and achievement is measured according to a test that is given to every child every year. The results are available in annual report cards on school performance and on statewide progress. By relying on a single test score, the law fails to honor children's growth and accomplishments, increases pressure on schools to push out low-scoring adolescents into GED programs or focus only on children whose scores are close to the passing rates, narrows the curriculum to focus primarily on the areas tested and reduces time for the arts and social studies, and overly punishes special needs children and English language learners. The resulting labeling of schools and districts as "low performing" is driving racial segregation in particularly metropolitan areas where the press identifies affluent, white suburban districts according to standardized test scores, as the only good place to raise a family

Teachers feel trapped by demands they cannot meet even while doing the best they can. United Methodist Women strongly support improving public schools, but we fear that the production target of "all children proficient by 2014" is unrealistic. We fear that the law has undermined education for our most vulnerable children in big city districts. It has penalized their schools and school districts with sanctions that have redirected Title I funding away from educational programming to pay for transportation and privatized, supplementary tutoring services for which there is no quality control. Parents with children in failing schools can be allowed to transfer their child to a better-performing public or charter school immediately after the school is identified as failing. While the law sets reconstitution of staff, charterization, and state takeover as the final sanctions in the fifth year, there is no evidence that the disruption caused by staff reconstitution improves school in the short run.

NCLB causes schools to be ranked according to test score thresholds of children in every demographic subgroup, a “failing group of children” will know when they are the ones who made their school a “failing” school. They risk being shamed among their peers, by their teachers, and by their community. The **No Child Left Behind Act** is an unprecedented effort to expand the role of the federal government in education. The Constitution contains no provisions for influence in education. However, if states wish to benefit from the federal education funding, they must comply with whatever regulations Washington imposes.

Another component of **NCLB** is that it authorizes an increase in federal funding for reading and links that funding to scientifically proven methods of reading instruction through the Reading First plan.

The **No Child Left Behind Act** is up for reauthorization. We are urging the United Methodist Women of the Western North Carolina Conference to become knowledgeable about the legislation and to get involved in public education advocacy.

The United Methodist Women’s Division is advocating significant changes to **NCLB** in coalition with ecumenical partners and an alliance of 140 national organizations that have signed a Joint Organizational Statement on **NCLB**. We are called upon as women of faith to share our concerns and expectations with members of Congress that they address the law’s injustices.

Specific recommendations from Women’s Division are below:

- Fully fund **NCLB** and fully authorize Title I. The federal government must substantially underwrite the costs, especially in districts with diminishing tax bases and exploding needs that serve populations segregated by race and extreme poverty.
- Reduce reliance on one annual standardized test by incorporating multiple measures of achievement including portfolios, teacher made tests, and other indicators such as grade promotion and graduation rates.
- Replace the current system that credits learning only when average group scores reach benchmark targets with a growth model that tracks each student's learning over time.
- Require all schools to match the rate of progress shown by research to be actually achievable, and scrap the unrealistic "all children proficient by 2014" deadline.
- Replace sanctions (that too frequently redirect funds into unregulated, privatized tutoring service with professional development driven by the needs teachers identify. Build public school capacity by reducing class size, and improving school climate in our poorest schools.

Contact your representatives and let them know that you want to make a difference in the lives of the children of our state and nation.

As United Methodist Women, we are called to minister to women, children and youth around the world. As members of the Western North Carolina Conference UMW, we are called into action through this special initiative. The **No Child Left Behind Act** is a challenging issue for all us and you will be hearing more about it in the months to come. Please be in prayer for this initiative that God will lead as we “For Christ’s Sake, Turn the World Upside Down” Through Public Education. Working together WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR WOMEN, CHILDREN AND YOUTH EVERYWHERE!!!

We need your help!!! Please compile a list of projects your local unit did in relation to Public Education during 2007. This list should include mentoring/tutoring a student, any other volunteer opportunities, supplies donated, honoring or assisting teachers/school system personnel (for example, a meal/ refreshments), providing funds for field trips, etc. We would like for you to put a dollar value on all these items. You can use the North Carolina minimum wage of \$6.15 per hour to calculate a value for hours spent tutoring, mentoring, or volunteering in some way. Please put a dollar value of all items donated, such as supplies, clothing and money for field trips. Please send your unit’s list to your District President as soon as possible. Thank you for all you do to promote the work of the United Methodist Women!!!!

RESERVATION REQUEST FORM



WNC United Methodist Women's Spiritual Growth Retreats
June 13-14 and 14-15, 2008
Lake Junaluska Conference & Retreat Center-Lake Junaluska, NC
Theme: "The Rooms of Your Life"

Do not mail this form before February 11, 2008

I plan to attend:
Session I (June 13-14) _____
Session II (June 14-15) _____

Return to: WNC UMW
PO Box 188
Lake Junaluska, NC 28745

Please print legibly or type

Name _____ District _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (_____) _____ Business Phone (_____) _____

E-mail (for confirmation) _____

of Persons to Occupy Unit: Adults _____, Children (6-11) _____, Children under 6 _____

Handicapping Condition: Yes () No () If "yes" please briefly indicate the nature of the condition: _____

Please List Roommate(s): _____

(Roommate's request form must be mailed in the same envelope)

Please mark first, second, and third choices; rates include room for one (1) night, three meals and a \$1.00 Common Area Fee.

The Terrace or Lambuth Inn (various bed types)

_____ Double \$72.00 per person _____ Triple \$64.00 per person _____ Quad \$60.00 per person

Lakeside Lodge (2 double beds)

_____ Double \$65.00 per person _____ Triple \$59.00 per person _____ Quad \$56.00 per person

HEATED AND AIR CONDITIONED Junaluska Apartments (various bed types)

_____ Double \$63.00 per person _____ Triple \$57.00 per person _____ Quad \$54.00 per person

Rates include lodging, three meals and a \$1.00 Common Area Fee. The meal plan (\$27.00 per day for dinner, breakfast and lunch) is optional for persons not staying in The Terrace or Lambuth. If you are staying at Lakeside Lodge or the Junaluska Apartments, please indicate below if you do NOT want meals.

_____ I do NOT want meals if I'm staying at Lakeside Lodge, Junaluska Apartments, Mountainview Lodge, or Sunnyside Lodge.

Early Arrivals:

_____ Check here if you want lunch on Friday which will be served at Terrace only. The cost will be \$10.00 and meal tickets should be purchased at the hotel desk.

_____ Check here if you are coming early for Retreat II and want lunch on Saturday which will be served at both The Terrace and Lambuth. The cost will be \$10.00 and meal tickets should be purchased at the hotel desk.

PLEASE NOTE:

There will be a \$10.00 registration fee collected from all persons attending the SG retreats and Annual Meeting. Fees will be collected at Harrell Center at time of registration. PLEASE DO NOT SEND WITH THIS FORM.

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH RETREAT

*Please note: The Assembly's switchboard number is 828-452-2881.
Please leave this number with your family in case of emergencies.*

Please, DO NOT send money with this form—The total amount due will be requested when you are notified of your facility assignment. Reservations are not confirmed until deposit is received. Deposits must be received within 21 days of receiving your facility assignment or room(s) will be released.

Guests wishing to share a room must send their reservation requests (one reservation form per person, please) in the same envelope. In order to accommodate the largest numbers of persons on the Assembly grounds, at least two persons will be assigned to each room. NOTE: Private rooms will be assigned based on availability (please indicate on your form if you wish to have a private room). **Single room rates will apply to private rooms.**

If your roommate is unable to attend, you will be charged according to the number of guests staying in your room.

Please complete and return the enclosed reservation request form to our address: POSTMARKED BETWEEN FEBRUARY 11 AND FEBRUARY 15, 2008. When all properly submitted requests are in, we will make lodging assignments according to the preferences you list as available. Each year, the list will rotate so that every district will be at or near the top once every four years. Guests attending the 2008 retreat will have priority according to the rotation list below:

- | | | | | |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. Statesville | 4. Albemarle | 7. Gastonia | 10. Lexington | 13. N. Wilkesboro |
| 2. Waynesville | 5. Asheville | 8. Greensboro | 11. Marion | 14. Salisbury |
| 3. Winston-Salem | 6. Charlotte | 9. High Point | 12. Northeast | |

If you wish to send in a form postmarked after February 15, 2008, please call our office for availability. No telephone reservations will be accepted.

Guests attending Retreat #1 must check out before attending the final session on Saturday morning. Rooms will need to be readied for the second retreat. Guests attending Retreat # 2 should check with the Bethea Welcome Center front desk upon arrival at the facility where they will be staying to see if their room is ready. Check -in for hotel rooms will be in the Bethea Welcome Center. Check-in is after 3:00 PM; check out by 11:00AM.

Costs: All rates include one night's lodging, dinner on the first day and breakfast and lunch on the second day. Persons not staying in Assembly-owned facilities may eat on the grounds by purchasing a meal ticket from the Terrace desk. Housing for children 11 years old and under who are staying in the room with parents is free. Children ages 6-11 receive meals at half-price; children 5 years old and under receive meals free.

In order to cancel a confirmed reservation, a cancellation request must be made 30 days prior to arrival date to receive a refund (less a processing fee of \$15.00 per person). Deposits are on an individual basis: Every person attending must submit their deposit or their room reservation will be cancelled.

WNC UMW, P.O. BOX 188, LAKE JUNALUSKA, NC 28745

	RATES (includes one night's lodging, 3 meals and \$1.00 common area fee)		
Terrace or Lambuth	Double \$72.00 per person	Triple \$64.00 per person	Quad \$60.00 per person
Lakeside	Double \$65.00 per person	Triple \$59.00 per person	Quad \$56.00 per person
Heat/AC Apartments	Double \$63.00 per person	Triple \$57.00 per person	Quad \$54.00 per person

*****Day of arrival lunch will be \$10.00 per person. If you wish to have that meal please mark the line on the registration form.**

PLEASE NOTE:

There will be a registration fee of \$10.00 collected from all persons attending the SG retreats and Annual Meeting. Fees will be collected at Harrell Center at time of registration. PLEASE DO NOT SEND WITH THIS FORM.