

Conference Gram



Volume 57, Number 3 Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women

June 2008

School of Christian Mission

"Living the Sacred"

Greensboro College, Greensboro, NC

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"

Registration Deadline: June 30, 2008

Registration brochures are available from your District President, and on our website at: www.wnccumw.org



"Living the Sacred"

"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good" concludes the unfolding story of God's creation of the earth and all its living creatures as revealed in Genesis, Chapter 1. How are we as God's people to understand the story in the midst of human acts of racism, violence, and earthly destruction?

Native American traditions teach us that creation includes all that comes from God and all that comes from the heart and mind of God is sacred. Native American traditions call on its people to value life as God values life. To be a created people is to be relationally connected to all people everywhere, as well as to all God has created.

To believe in Jesus is to love as God loved and live as Christ lived, valuing all creation. To believe in Jesus is to live in the way of Christ, freeing the oppressed, healing the sick and wounded, clothing the naked, welcoming all. To believe in Jesus is to follow the sacred commandment to love as God loved. To believe in Jesus is to embrace the sacredness of life.

While God has given humanity the gift of life and relationship, too often we have created barriers between people and lands. We have acted in ways that violate the sacredness of life and do not make for peace.

As followers of Christ, as Christians in community, let us deepen our understanding of what it means to live in sacred harmony. Then, let us walk together in ways that lead to peace and reconciliation.

"The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it." (Psalm 24:vs1)

Join us for some of the best lay faith education being offered anywhere in the

church! Register today! You will be glad you did!

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Registration: Thursday, 2:00-5:30pm; Friday & Saturday, 8:00-10:00am

Discovery Room & Resource Room: Daily schedules

Opening Session: Thursday, 7:00pm

Morning Praise: Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 6:45am

Friday PM Dinner: Get to know your district family

Who Should Attend? Local officers and members of UMW; District and Conference UMW Officers; District Chairpersons of Outreach Ministries; Ministers; All men, women, and youth of the Church; and anyone who would like to worship God, learn new things, and enjoy the fellowship of other Christians.

Registration Deadline: All students must pre-register (Resident, Non-resident, One Day, and Teen Women Day). See registration brochure (available from District Presidents or on our website) for cost and miscellaneous fees. There will be **NO** on-site registration. All registrations must be post-marked by **June 30, 2008**.

Spiritual Growth Study: "I Believe In Jesus" Session times are: Thurs. 7:30pm, Fri. 9:00am and 7:30pm; Sat. 9:00am.

Geographic Study: "Israel/Palestine" Session times are: Fri. 10:45am and 2:00pm; Sat. 10:45am and 2:00pm; Sun. 8:30am and 10:00am.

General Issue Study: "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival" Session times are: Fri. 10:45am and 2:00pm; Sat. 10:45am and 2:00pm; Sun. 8:30am and 10:00am.

One-Day Overview: Spiritual Growth & Geographic studies: **Either** Friday 10:00am & 2:00pm **OR** Saturday 10:00am & 2:00pm.

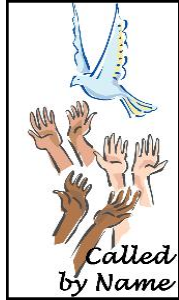
Mission Event for Teen Women: "Walking in These White Man's Shoes" Youth Explore Native America Saturday, July 26th, 10:00am—4:00pm.

Workshop for Leaders of Children: Fri. 4:15pm

Location: Greensboro College, 815 West Market Street, Greensboro, NC 27401. College Switchboard: (336) 272-7102. Campus security: ext.245.

Questions: Call Sara Williams, Dean, School of Christian Mission, 336-699-8079, sarawill@yadtel.net

Bring this issue of the Conference Gram with you when you attend our Conference School of Christian Mission. It is a useful resource and guide.



**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!
Leadership Training
for
District Officers**

**October 11, 2008
9:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Highland UMC in Hickory

As the District Nominating Committees work to complete the slate of district officers for 2008, please stress the importance of new and continuing officers attending this training.

President—Amy Johnson

In fulfilling our *PURPOSE*, what better way is there to **expand our concepts of mission** than by attending the School of Christian Mission at Greensboro College? It will be a full schedule of classes for the time that we are there. For those of you who may not be able to come for the entire weekend, make plans to participate in one of the one-day overview sessions on Friday or Saturday.

The themes for the studies are chosen several years in advance. It always amazes me how the three studies relate to each other so well and how timely they are in relation to the world news. As women organized for mission, the studies engage us to take action after our studies are complete to make the world a better place in which to live.

Come and be a part of this year's School of Christian Mission. You won't regret it!!

Update from General Conference - As I write this *Conference Gram* article, I am in my hotel room in Fort Worth, Texas. I have just finished a 10-day marathon of worship, legislative committees, and hours and hours and hours of debate and voting on issues that face our society as well as revisions to *The Book of Discipline* and *The Book of Resolutions*.

I served on the Global Ministries legislative committee. This committee reviewed over 100 petitions, some of them relating to Women's Division and United Methodist Women. Sandy Hieronymus was also a delegate to General Conference and served on the Local Church legislative committee where some petitions addressed UMW in the local church. I'm happy to report that no changes were made affecting United Methodist Women.

Attending General Conference afforded me an opportunity to gather with people from all around the world. There were people in my legislative committee from Great Britain, Ukraine, Argentina, the Philippines, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

We are truly a worldwide church. I will always cherish the memories.

ideere620@aol.com

**Vice President
Sandy Hieronymus**

Are you looking for a good program and don't know where to turn? Your district and conference officers are available to help. We can assist you with programming ideas and where to find resources that you need. We can share a program with your group. By having an officer from the conference or district come to your gathering, you will meet Mission Today criteria #21. Units large, small, or medium in size can be a Mission Today Unit. We have new criteria for Mission Today so review it and strive to be a Mission Today Unit.

Many great program ideas are gleaned from the School of Christian Mission (SCM). Parts of a study or plenary may be used in your circle or unit. If you cannot attend the whole time, come to the SCM for the day.

"Called by Name" was the April 2008 Southeastern Jurisdiction theme and is your Conference Annual Meeting theme for September 5, 6, 7 at Lake Junaluska. There is no advance registration for attending Annual Meeting. Housing reservations for Lake Junaluska facilities may be sent in after July 2. Forms may be downloaded from our conference website. The next issue of the *Conference Gram* will be full of information about Annual Meeting. Make your plans now for a large group from your unit to attend. Bring your friends and you will also make new ones. You may come for a session, a day, or the whole weekend. This meeting is open to all – including non-Methodists. May your summer be blessed with UMW activities.

sandyh46@aol.com

Program Resources

Kim Keyse

**EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!
PUBLISH GLAD TIDINGS**



Lake rat...she really didn't like being called that from the other kids. After confiding to her grandfather about her sadness, he reminds her of the wondrous legend of the muskrat. A dream and a symbolic dive into

the lake helps this Native American girl accept her heritage. **Muskrat Will Be Swimming** by Cheryl Savageau is a summer "must read" for the Native American survival study, **"Giving Our Hearts Away,"** for our School of Christian Mission. We will gather on the Greensboro College campus July 24-27 to focus on the mission education portion of our *PURPOSE*. **"Living the Sacred"** is the theme for our School of Christian Mission. This event has become magical and inspirational to me with the knowledge that is shared and learned. Being with my beloved UMW sisters has long been special to me but I **really** delight in this opportunity to worship, fellowship, and learn from our sainted Deaconesses and missionaries that also attend...what a blessing and privilege to mingle among these disciples! And the Program Resource Room is a remarkable place to mingle with our missionaries and each other, for there you will find an abundance of "must reads" awaiting for you. The difficult decision will be which ones to select! Books for the **"Israel/Palestine"** study and the **"I Believe in Jesus"** Bible study will be available along with other pertinent UMW material for your individual use and pleasure as well as for your circle and/or Unit. **Muskrat Will Be Swimming** is a children's book under Nurturing for Community and would be a wonderful way to get the children in your life involved in the reading program.

Summer reading...can't think of a better

pastime...and I have just the "must read" you need. Keep reading so you can keep publishing glad tidings. See you on campus.

kkeyse@bellsouth.net

Secretary—Ann Aldridge

The Women's Division web page states: "United Methodist Women is a national membership organization with nearly one-million members whose purpose is to foster spiritual growth, develop leaders and advocate for justice! Members raise approximately \$20 million a year for programs and projects related to women, children and youth in the United States and in more than 100 countries around the world!" Another statement from the same source worthy of your attention is "United Methodist Women is a community of women who nurture and encourage one another in their spiritual growth, personal leadership and transformation."

Attending the Southeastern Jurisdictional Quadrennial UMW meeting April 4 – 6 provided a wonderful opportunity for our women in the Western NC Conference to have the experiences quoted above. Participating in that meeting made me wonder once again why I waited as long as I did to attend UMW events beyond the local church. District and Conference programs are well planned, spiritually enriching, and motivating. I just didn't know what I was missing!!

An upcoming Conference event, the School of Christian Mission, will be held at Greensboro College July 24 – 27. Mission studies include the spiritual growth study "*I Believe in Jesus*," the general issue study "*Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival*," and the geographic study "*Israel/Palestine*." There is a special teen event on Saturday and one-day overviews on both Friday and Saturday for those who can attend only one day. Reach out to others. Look for young women and those who participate in UMW only at the local level and invite them to ride with you to the School. The theme "*Living the Sacred*" will be carried out in a way that encourages us to walk together in peace and reconciliation. Don't miss this opportunity!!!

Watch for updates and download a registration form for the School of Christian Mission at our conference website.

ahaldridge@charter.net

Social Action—Linda Young

Mission is still the story of being called and sent. For us the call comes today to challenge the false gods (little 'g'). John Wesley's response to the false gods of his day is worth noting. Wesley said, "Why has God raised up the people called Methodist? Answer-To reform the nations, espe-

cially, the churches, and to spread scriptural holiness across the land." For Wesley, there is no personal holiness that does not include "social holiness." Mission today is to look deep into the biblical and theological under-girding of our spirituality and make constant choices. The biblical vision of justice is holistic and separating the spiritual from the social is less than the whole gospel for the whole person. John Wesley was clear on the unity of faith and action as he declared, "Christianity is essentially a social religion."

You have been encouraged to register and exercise your right to vote. Our right to vote is a privilege that we must not take lightly. The candidates have saturated North Carolina from east to west. I'm sure they were scheduled close enough to each of you that if you had a question/concern, it could have been voiced.

Jeremiah 5:5 (NEB) reads "I will go to the great and speak with them; for they will know the way of the Lord..." Politics is not the dirty word that it's made out to be! It has been debased only because good people have neglected getting involved in it. Politicians are persons who are "versed or experienced in the art or science of government." Become an expert on one or two issues and you will acquire a reputation for expertness that will make you a powerful influence.

The Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women are becoming experts on the issue of Public Education. I find myself reading everything that mentions our priority. We are number one in the nation in giving. Let us also become the leading conference in the area of social justice. We must make some awesome accomplishments in the number of units that will be Charter units. We must receive numerous applications for consideration to be awarded the Social Justice Award. In Public Education, the local units in our conference are encourage to explore the root causes of the crisis, such as poverty, allocation of funds, race, class, and societal conditions. Poverty is the largest driving force. Did you know that a baby is born into poverty in America every 35 seconds; that almost 13 million-one out of every six-children in America live in poverty.

Children's Defense Fund Founder and President, Marian Wright Edelman, has worked relentlessly to lift children out of poverty, protect them from abuse and neglect, ensure access to health care and quality education, and provide moral and spiritual foundation to help them succeed with the support of caring adults and communities. The Children's Defense Fund is celebrating its 35th Anniversary in 2008. It is able to be the nation's strongest voice for all America's children thanks to the prayers and support of many caring people, like you.

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 knowl-

edgeable about the legislation and to get involved in Public Education advocacy. Today, more than 72 million of the world's children still lack access to even a primary school education. Although there are challenges to expanding this access, education for all is a powerful investment in the future. The returns for individuals, families, and countries are many, for instance, bolstered economic productivity, reduced maternal and child mortality, improved nutrition and health-including the prevention of HIV/AIDS-and stronger, more stable communities.

TAKE ACTION!! Call your Senators and Representatives and urge them to keep our promise to the world's children. Ask Congress to Support the Education For All Act of 2007 and make education for all a higher priority of United States foreign assistance. This Act was introduced in May 2007 by a handful of members of Congress. This legislation calls for increased funding to facilitate the elimination of school fees and other expenses and barriers to education. The bill would also support those countries that are developing, implementing, and tracking bold national education plans to get their children in school. Children must not be denied education because their families are poor. UMW must be that voice that will make a difference in the lives of the children of our state and nation.

I ask you to pray for me for I have been asked to be a one-day overview leader at our 2008 School of Christian Mission at Greensboro College July 24-27. I will be teaching "*Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival*." This study, along with the biblical and geographical study, will increase our faith, knowledge, and deepen our understanding of what it means to live in sacred harmony.

lmyou2253@aol.com

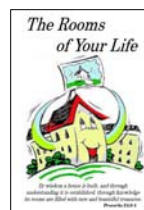
Spiritual Growth—Patricia Wiseman

Don't forget our Spiritual Growth Retreats which are June 13-14 & June 14-15, 2008 at Stuart Auditorium at beautiful Lake Junaluska. Our retreat leader is Jean

Padgett. She will be sharing about our theme "*The Rooms of Your Life*." If you haven't registered yet, there is usually room at the second retreat. If you can't come for the whole week-end think about coming up on Saturday and spending the day. Our registration

fee for the retreats is \$10.00 whether you stay on the grounds, off the grounds, or if you come just for the day. See you there!!!

rickpat@bellsouth.net



Treasurer-Sharon Smith

Everything we do as United Methodist Women is to fulfill our *PURPOSE* and everything we do is about Mission. Each new year brings new challenges and the need for undesignated funds is greater than ever. Our 2008 Financial Goal is **To Increase Total Mission Giving in the Five Channels by 1%**.

The Five Channels of Mission Giving that support the total program of mission carried out by the United Methodist Women are Pledge to Mission, Special Mission Recognition (the pins), Gift to Mission cards, Gift in Memory cards, and World Thank Offering. Check the WNCU UMW website for more information about each of the five channels of giving. Please continue to promote this goal. **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.

Your **undesignated Mission Giving** helps to make mission possible all around the world through the support of mission projects. Financial giving is a way for UMW members to express their faith. United Methodist Women respond to the needs of people. If we are committed to women, children and youth, we must be equally committed to securing money for mission. Giving is a privilege – a gift of God's grace. Giving to mission is a commitment to proclaiming the Gospel in its many forms.

We need to be in prayer for the mission work of United Methodist Women and we need to thank God for the opportunity to be a part of UMW's mission outreach around the world. As United Methodist Women, we pledge our prayers, our time, and our gifts as we seek to fulfill our *PURPOSE*. **YOUR GIFTS make mission possible throughout the world.**



Read *Response Magazine* to learn more about the mission stories and see how our mission giving is helping around the world.

YOU make Mission possible through undesignated Mission Giving.

kitty5255@yahoo.com

Membership—Linda Baity

We are past the halfway mark of 2008 and most are wondering where the time has gone! We look backward with **pride** and forward with **hope and anticipation!** It is time to review our **Conference Goals** and see how we measure up so far.

#1 Our Financial Goal: To increase total Mission Giving through the 5 channels by 1%. (Are you remembering to take the Gift to Mission cards to **every** event including your executive meetings?)

#2 Mission Today Goal: 40% of local

2008 CONFERENCE LOVE OFFERING

A Gift to (undesignated) Mission Giving

"In Honor of Bishop and Mrs. McCleskey for their support of UMW in mission"

You may bring your Love Offering or your Local Unit's offering to Conference Annual Meeting at Lake Junaluska, September 5-7 or send it directly to:

**Sharon Smith,
WNC Conference Treasurer
P. O. Box 903
Marion, NC 28752**

**Please make checks payable to:
Treasurer, WNCU UMW**

units to become Mission Today Units. (They can gently be reminded that it is not too late, through the district newsletter and the Shepherdess and/or LUV visits!)

#3 Increase attendance at conference events by 2% If you can't attend the entire event, then try coming for the day.

The School of Christian Mission is just around the corner. This event is one of the "best all around" events to interpret the true meaning of United Methodist Women. It is exactly what it says! School, education, learning, with lots of fun and fellowship thrown in! Everyone participates in the Spiritual Growth study. You then pick between the Geographical Study or the General Issue Study. Every conference, district and local officer should attend the School of Christian Mission. The leadership skills learned through class participation, the knowledge learned of the timely studies, and the opportunity to increase our faith through the Spiritual Growth study, can only strengthen the leadership and membership in our conference.

There is a little *electricity in the air* in the Western NC Conference UMW. Have you checked out our conference website lately? Our website is full of information that you need to know! The upcoming events, reports from past events, program ideas, celebration of new units, all from our conference, and may be linked to anything you might want to know about United Methodist Women, past and future.

Recently the communications chair from the California-Nevada Conference requested to use our beautiful logo for "*Living the Sacred*" and wanted a copy of the "*Extreme Makeover*" skit, which she read about on our website. She is recommending our website to their ladies. If you have not checked it out

lately, as our former conference president, Nina Tharpe said one time that if we were not subscribed to *RESPONSE* Magazine, "**shame on you!**" We all know, in order to be effective in growing our membership, we must be informed and be able to communicate.

I look forward to seeing all of you in Greensboro at the School of Christian Missions. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

lindabaity@wnireland.com

ATTENTION TEENS!!!!

SUMMER FUN FOR YOU!!!!

Are you looking for something **different** to do with your time this summer?...

Are you looking to put some **LIFE** into your summer?...

Are you looking for "**What's Happening**" this summer?..



Join us on Saturday, July 26, at the School of Christian Mission for a day of activities, study, learning opportunities and **FUN** as we look at the issue "*Walking In These White Man's Shoes*"— the Youth Mission Study on Native Americans. Youth Day starts at 10:00am.

Cost if coming for Saturday only is \$15.00 and this includes lunch. (Teen women who are registered for the entire school may participate in the Youth Mission Day on Saturday at no extra charge.) Advance registration is required, and registrations must be received by June 30, 2008.

Who are Native Americans?... How have they survived? ?... How have we been affected by their ways/traditions?

Come join us as we walk together to find the answers. **YOU** are invited. Come walk with us.

Registration forms are available on our Conference Website www.wncumw.org.

Sherry Sink
Mission Education & Interpretation
Sherika12754@aol.com

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. In separate envelope, please bring a check written to **UMCOR Sager Brown** for at least **\$2.00** for each kit to help with the costs of buying one tube of toothpaste and the processing and shipping of the kits around the world. If you are bringing multiple kits, or if your whole unit is collecting kits, it is fine to just write one check in an amount sufficient to cover all of your kits. Do not put the money envelope inside your UMCOR Health Kit bags. There will be a place for you to drop off the money when you drop off your kits.

Please have kits in a box so that can be handled by our women and the total number of kits on the side of the box.

Important: Please do not include any religious, political or patriotic notes or emblems in any kit.

****Participating in this Hands-On Mission Opportunity will help your local unit to meet Mission Today criteria #23.**

The School Committee is composed of: Sara Williams (Dean), Michelene Mathews, Donna Parsons, Brenda Alexander, Amy Johnson, Sandy Hieronymus, Ann Aldridge, Sharon Smith, Sherry Sink, Linda Young, Patricia Wiseman, Linda Baity, Kim Keyse, Karen Wilkerson, Patricia Gilbert, Peggy Wilkerson, and Rev. Lillie Jones.

Music Leaders: Patricia Gilbert and Donna Cooke

Media & Technical Specialists: Linda Reep, Sharon Quate, and Lynne Gilbert.

There will be no nurse on duty during the school. A first aid kit will be available in the Dean's office.

MEET OUR STUDY LEADERS

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

"I Believe In Jesus"

Rev. Dr. James Howell, Charlotte, NC—James has been the senior pastor of Myers Park United Methodist Church in Charlotte since 2003. He is the author of twelve books, including "Yours Are the Hands of Christ", "Conversations With St. Frances" and "The Beatitudes for Today." James is married to Lisa, and they have three children (Sarah, Grace and Noah). James is also an adjunct professor of preaching at Duke Divinity School. James is a repeat study leader for the School of Christian Mission, having led our study of Psalms.



GEOGRAPHIC STUDY

"Israel / Palestine"

Rev. Dr. Tom & Mrs. LaVon Sigmon, Charlotte, NC—Tom is a graduate of Lenoir Rhyne College, Duke Divinity School (MDiv), and Drew University (DMin). He retired in 2005 after serving appointments across the Western North Carolina Conference for over forty years, including as District Superintendent for the Gastonia District, and as Conference Director of Connectional Ministries. As a pastor, Tom has always worked actively with United Methodist Women. He is trained as an Interim Minister and has led many Consecration Stewardship events for local churches. He also serves as a consultant in Discipleship Ministries with a focus on Stewardship Education.



LaVon has been active at all levels of United Methodist Women with the local, district, and conference. She serves her

church as a Stephen Minister and as a regular hospital visitor. Together LaVon and Tom have led Marriage Enrichment Events. In retirement, they enjoy spending time at their mountain home at Lake Junaluska, traveling, and spending time with their grandchildren. We welcome Tom and LaVon as repeat study leaders.

Rev. Joe Tarpley, Shelby, NC—Rev. Tarpley is pastor at Sharon UMC in Shelby. He received his undergraduate degree from Kennesaw State University and his Master's of Divinity (MDIV) from Emory University in Atlanta, GA in 1999. Joe was ordained elder in the Western North Carolina Conference in 2004. Joe is involved in mission and ministry in many different ways. He is married to the Rev. Veranita Alvord and they have two children. Joe is a repeat study leader for Israel / Palestine.



She has been a longtime volunteer in an Alzheimer's respite care program. She is past president of Sharon UMW and is active in Church Women United. She teaches children's Sunday School and leads the Congregational Care work area at church.

GENERAL ISSUE STUDY

"Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival"

Nancy and William Berry—Charlotte, NC—Nancy and Bill are the empty-nest parents of four children and are the grandparents of five. Nancy is a graduate of Radford College and is now a retired elementary school teacher.



Bill is a graduate of Virginia Tech. He served in the U. S. Army, worked as an engineer and is now professor of management at Queens University of Charlotte. He is chair of the Pastor Parish Relations Committee at Sharon UMC and frequently teaches his adult Sunday School class. They are lifetime lovers of the outdoors. They became acquainted with the situation of Native Americans through their daughter, Bethany, who is a nurse-midwife for the Indian Health Service currently serving the Oglala Sioux at Pin Ridge, South Dakota.

Dixie Liggett, Asheville NC - Dixie has served the women of the Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women as a District and Conference officer and is currently completing a four-year term as a member of the Southeastern Jurisdiction Core Planning Group. She is a retreat leader for the Resurrection Women



retreats. She has taught several times in the WNC Conference School of Christian Mission. She designed a workshop entitled "How to Do a Mission Study" and has presented it nine times at the School. Dixie is a graduate of St. Luke's Hospital School of Nursing and of Western

North Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She is recently retired as a registered nurse. Dixie has been married for 42 years to Dr. Larry Liggett, a retired educator. They have two grown children.

Gary Locklear, Pembroke, NC –Gary has been married to Panthia Locklear for 37 years. They have three children: Nakesha, Garrick, and Autumn; a daughter-in-law, Kimberly; son-in-law, Chad; two grandsons and a granddaughter. He was educated in Robeson County, North Carolina and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke with a Bachelor of Science degree. Gary



taught in the Public Schools of Robeson County for three years, he spent the next twenty seven-years in private industry in manufacturing management, human resources, and training and development. He took early retirement from that post in 2000. Six months later he accepted a three-year assignment as a 10-10-10 Missionary working with Native American Ministries in the North Carolina Conference. Since then Gary has been commissioned a Church & Community Worker and a Home Missioner. His work remains in the Native American Congregations of the North Carolina Conference with the Rockingham District Native American Cooperative Ministry. Gary has been a member of the same United Methodist Church all of his life, where he has served in almost every leadership role. Gary was the North Carolina Conference lay recipient of the Harry Denman Award in 2006. Gary was elected to go to General Conference in 2004 and 2008. He has a passion for the small church and its preservation.

Daphne Strickland, Jamestown, NC—Daphne is a Native American of the Lumbee/Tuscarora tribe. She was born in Robeson County and lives in the Greensboro area with her husband Daniel. They have four children and three grandchildren. A graduate of Guilford College, Daphne possesses a bachelor's degree in Women's Studies and Justice & Policy, with a concentration in African-American studies. She served as a 10-10-10 Missionary for the



General Board of Global Ministries 2001-2003. She is an active member of the Triad Native American United Methodist Church. She also chairs the Southeastern Regional Native American Caucus and serves on several Conference, Jurisdictional and National committees.

Rev. Donna Strickland-Smith, Salisbury, NC—Donna is a second career pastor. She received her Master of Divinity from Duke Divinity School in 1999 and was ordained Elder in 2002 in the Western North Carolina Conference. She is the first Native American (female) Elder in the Conference. Donna's undergraduate degree is in Music Education—Voice, and she served as a church music director for a number



of years as well as an elementary music teacher in the Greensboro/Guilford County School system. She recently completed a twelve-year term on the board of the United Methodist Publishing House. Her family includes Kelly, her husband of 21 years, and their son Daniel, who is seven years old. She is in the process of recording a vocal CD, which has been a desire of hers for many years.

ONE-DAY OVERVIEW STUDY LEADERS

"I Believe In Jesus"

Ann Aldridge, Morganton, NC—Ann is a life-long United Methodist, and member of Oak Hill United Methodist Church. She is a graduate of Appalachian State University and the University of Tennessee. She is retired from the North Carolina School for the Deaf where she worked as a classroom teacher, educational director, principal of elementary, middle and high schools, as well as



testing coordinator and educational evaluator. She is currently secretary for the North Carolina School for the Deaf Foundation. Ann has served as an adjunct instructor for Appalachian State University, Lenoir-Rhyne College, and Western Piedmont Community College. Ann has served United Methodist Women at the local and district levels and is currently the conference UMW secretary. She is vice-chair of the Brooks-Howell Home Board of Directors, a lay delegate to both Annual Conference and Southeast Jurisdictional Conference. Ann is married to Wade and has two sons. She loves to travel and is an avid reader.

Check our conference website often! There's tons of valuable information available on the website!!! Go towww.wnccumw.org.

Linda Baity, Yadkinville, NC— Linda is the Mission Coordinator for Membership, Nurture and Outreach for the WNCC-UMW. She is past president of the North Wilkesboro District. Linda organized one of the first teen circles of UMW in this conference and continues to sponsor this group of young women at Yadkinville United Methodist Church. Linda is employed as an insurance customer service agent with W.N. Ireland Insurance Agency. She is married to Kenneth and they have two sons and four grandchildren.



"Giving Our Hearts Away"

Karen Wilkerson, Newton, NC—Karen is currently serving her fourth year as Communications Coordinator for the WNCC-UMW and has also served as Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation. She attends Highland United Methodist Church in Hickory where she sings in the Chancel Choir and the Highland Praise Team. She is the leader of an inspirational movement group called the "Rays of Praise." She is president of the United Methodist Women at Highland and has also served the Statesville District UMW as President, Treasurer and Nominations Chair. Karen is employed full time as a bookkeeper at K&M Tire Company in Hickory. She and her husband Hugh have two daughters and four grandchildren. In her spare time, Karen enjoys singing alto with "Friends of Christ," a southern gospel choir.



Linda Young, Catawba, NC—Linda is born and educated in Iredell County, North Carolina. She is a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church where she serves as the Nurture and Care chairperson and is a member of the Spiritual Lights Gospel Choir. She has co chaired the capital campaign and taught Sunday School. Linda is a certified Lay Speaker and serves on the Conference Committee on Finance and Administration. She has served United Methodist Women on the local, district and conference levels. She is a past Statesville District President and currently serves as conference Coordinator for Social Action. Linda is married to Ricky Young, Sr., and they have one son and one grandson, Isley, who is the delight of her life. Linda enjoys reading, singing, walking, cooking, swimming and tennis.



WORKSHOP FOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN

Sandy Hieronymus, Charlotte, NC—

Sandy is a native of Kentucky and a life-long Methodist. For over twenty years, Sandy has been a Pre-K teacher at a United Methodist church. She is a certified lay speaker. She has held various offices in the United Methodist Church and United Methodist Women on the local, district and conference levels. Before taking her current position as the WNCC UMW Vice President, Sandy served four years as the Charlotte District Lay Leader and four years as the Charlotte District UMW President. She currently serves on the Conference Ministry Advisory Council and Aldersgate Retirement Community Board of Advisors. Sandy enjoys teaching all ages. In her free time, she likes reading, arts and crafts, and being a "beach bum." She believes the greatest gift we can give our children is to give them God. She and her husband, Gerry, have three grown sons.



YOUTH MISSION EVENT FOR TEEN WOMEN LEADER

Sherry Sink, High Point, NC—

Sherry is the current Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation for the WNCC-UMW. Sherry has been actively involved with youth ministry. Her energy and spirit are contagious. Sherry coordinates the "Hands-On Mission" projects at Conference UMW events. She creatively inspires the women of this conference to make these projects overwhelmingly successful. Sherry attended the National Seminar in Nashville, Tennessee sponsored by United Methodist Women, and is coordinating our conference initiative "For Christ's Sake, Turn the World Upside down."



MUSIC LEADERS

Donna Cooke, Winston-Salem, NC—

Our pianist for the weekend is currently the District Educator for the Winston-Salem District for the United Methodist Church. Prior to accepting this position, Donna served Central United Methodist Church in Mt. Airy for 28 years as Director of Music Ministries, where she directed children's choirs, youth girls ensembles, children's chimes, adult and youth handbell choirs.

Patricia Gilbert, Salisbury, NC—Our song leader for the weekend is currently the President of the Salisbury District United Methodist Women, which is also the hostess district for the School of Mission and Annual Meeting. Patricia has served in several ministry areas in her local church and on the district level.

DIRECTIONS TO GREENSBORO COLLEGE

Greensboro College is easily accessible from all directions, using several different major highways, including Interstates 85 and 40. **Complete directions, including parking information, will be sent to each person who registers for the school.** And, complete directions are available on our conference website.

DEAN OF SCHOOL

Sara Williams, East Bend, NC—Sara has served on the local, district and conference levels of the United Methodist Women. She has also been a study leader at the School of Christian Mission.

She has served in many areas of the United Methodist Church. Currently she serves as Chair of Mission and Outreach in her local church, Prospect UMC in East Bend.

On the conference level of the UMC, she currently is a member of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry and is on the Board of Trustees of the Methodist Children's Home.

She is married to David Williams. They have three children and four grandchildren.

ASSISTANT DEAN

Michelene Mathews, Charlotte, NC

is a member of St. Marks United Methodist Church. She is active not only in her local unit but in the Charlotte District of United Methodist Women. Michelene has served as Mission Coordinator for Education and Interpretation and is currently Secretary for Program Resources in addition to her duties as Assistant Dean for the School of Christian Mission. Michelene is employed by Wachovia Bank in Charlotte.

BUSINESS MANAGER

Donna Parsons, Charlotte, NC—

is an active member at St. Stephen's United Methodist Church where she has served in several areas of ministry. She is active on the local and district levels of United Methodist Women. She is the immediate past treasurer for the Charlotte District. Donna and her husband Mike are originally from Kentucky and both are graduates of the University of Kentucky. They have made Charlotte their home for many years. They are the proud parents of one adult son.

HOUSING MANAGER

Brenda Alexander, Charlotte, NC—

Brenda is an active member of Calvary

United Methodist Church where she serves as President of United Methodist Women, Chair of the Outreach Committee, Communion Steward, and member of Staff Parish. She is a past President and Vice President of the Charlotte District UMW. On the Conference level, she served on the Committee on Nominations and two years as Chair. Currently, she is serving on the WNCC Church and Society Committee and has served on various Charlotte District committees and as a member of the Bethlehem Center Board of Directors. She retired from the Chevrolet Division of General Motors after twenty years and has been employed at Sonic Automotive for eight years. She is married to Ted Alexander and has two sons.

Is your unit striving to be a Mission Today



Unit for 2008? Sending at least one member of your unit (other than a district or conference officer) and having them to report back, helps your unit to meet

criteria #11 of the NEW MISSION TODAY CRITERIA. **Mission Today Goal FOR 2008: 40% of local units to become Mission Today Units. Help us reach our goal!!**

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.

Order program resources materials online at the Mission Resource Center website at:

www.missionresourcecenter.org

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.

2008 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