

# Conference Gram



Volume 58, Number 3

Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women

June 2009



**School of Christian Mission**  
**July 16-19**  
**Greensboro College**  
**Theme: "Together at the Table"**

**Hands-on Project: Layette Kits**  
**Registration deadline: June 22**  
**Forms available from district presidents or online at**  
**[conference website: www.wnccumw.org](http://www.wnccumw.org)**

## SCHOOL DEAN - MICHELENE MATHEWS

Greetings.

I hope you are as excited about the School of Christian Mission for 2009 as I am. Our studies are on the Sudan, Food and Faith and we are repeating the study on Native Americans. If you did not have the opportunity to be a part of that study last year, please sign up for this study. Our Mission study on the Sudan will help us to see how through chaos there may be hope for peace. Our Spiritual Growth Study may have many wondering if we are going to talk about our daily diets. I cannot say enough about the Study Leaders we have this year, but I will say that you will have great class sessions. You will leave filled with more spiritual knowledge and understanding of brothers and sisters in the Sudan, compassion for our Native American brothers and sisters in struggle to survive and be recognized and knowledge that the food we eat relates to our faith and how it is nurtured.

Keep us in your prayers as we finalize the plans for our SCM and I look forward to seeing you in July at Greensboro College.

Joy and peace always,  
Michelenemathews@yahoo.com  
704-759-3360

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

## SCM PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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

**Discovery Room:** Daily Schedules

**Resource Room:** Daily Schedules

**Opening Session:** Thursday evening, 7:00pm

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

**Friday PM Dinner:** Districts get together for dinner - dining hall

**Plenary:** Saturday evening, 7:00pm, Giving Our Hearts Away

**Hands On Mission:** Layette Kits

**Who Should Attend:** Local officers and members of United Methodist Women, District and Conference UMW Officers, District Chairpersons of Outreach Ministries, ministers, all men, women, and youth of the Church, anyone who would like to worship God, learn new things, and enjoy the fellowship of Christians

**Registration Deadline:** June 22, 2009 (All Students must pre-register. There will be no on-site registration.) All registrations must be postmarked by June 20, 2009

### **Theme: Together at the Table**

For generations the table has been an important symbol for the gathered community. It is around the table that food is shared, discussions are held, decisions are made, crafts are created and board games are played. As Christians, we are reminded of the significance of the table in Jesus' life and ministry. All along his journey, Jesus shared meals in the home of friends. In the temple, he overturned the tables of injustice. On the eve of his death, around the table

with his disciples, he broke bread and set forth a means of grace for all who would believe. Yet, when we gather at the table, there are contradictions. At the table, there is feast and there is famine. At the table, treaties are made and treaties are broken. At the table, hospitality is offered and hospitality is denied. At the table we gather to celebrate and we gather to grieve. At the table there is peace and there is conflict. At the table, there is hope and there is doubt. Our human frailties and the realities of the world in which we live too often divide and exclude people at our tables. The Christ we follow calls us to a higher standard of living and loving as together we work for peace and justice for all of creation. As the Psalmist says, "Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God." (Psalm 90:1-2) Though we are many, we are bound by a living God who goes before us and embraces all. In the sacred circle of life, enfolding the world and all that dwells therein, all are together at the table of God's love.

### **Courses of Study:** **FOOD AND FAITH**

This study is about how our faith is nurtured, strengthened, and enhanced, by food and all the ways food touches our lives. It is no accident that our most profound sacrament, Holy Communion, is food. We will explore how the bread and fruit of the vine illustrates the magnitude of God's love for us on multiple levels, and how God's presence is invoked and the divine and the ordinary



connect in a mystery created by Christ and ordained by God.

Leader: Rev. Angela Pleasants

Session Times: Thursday 7:30pm, Friday 9:00am & 7:30pm, and Saturday 9:00am

**THE BEAUTY AND COURAGE OF SUDAN: Why A Dream Of Peace Is Possible**

For the past twenty years the country of Sudan has been plagued with severe drought. The shortages of food due to the drought have sometimes reached famine proportions. Then there are the wars of the Sudan. Join us as we explore an overview of the history of the Sudan that began in Bible times. We will also explore the country's main ethnicities, religions and languages and the way Sudanese women are contributing to the peace process and to the culture as a whole.



Session Times: Fri. 10:45am & 2:00pm, Sat. 10:45am & 2:00pm, Sun. 8:30am & 10:00am

**GIVING OUR HEARTS AWAY: Native American Survival**

The purposes of this study are to learn about the inter-relatedness between the indigenous peoples and their land. We will seek to identify selected key issues affecting the Native Americans in the United States. We will examine the root causes of these issues in order to understand and appreciate the "Give Away" culture of the Native Americans in the areas of spirituality, ecology, language, storytelling, and food. Participants will be encouraged to act as responsible US citizens and Christians in accompaniment and solidarity with Native Americans.



Session Times: Fri. 10:45am & 2:00pm, Sat. 10:45am & 2:00pm, Sun. 8:30am & 10:00am

**ONE-DAY OVERVIEW: Food and Faith & The Beauty and Courage of Sudan**

Session Times: EITHER Friday 10:00am & 2:00pm, OR Saturday 10:00am & 2:00pm

**WORKSHOP FOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN**

Leader: Ms. Sandy Hieronymus

Session Time: 4:15pm Friday only

**SPECIAL INVITATION TO Teen Women: Teen Women Mission Day --**

Leader: Ms. Sherry Sink

Session Time: Saturday 10:00am- 4:00pm

**2009 School of Christian Mission Committee:**

Micheline Mathews (chair); Karen Wilkerson, Donna Parsons, Brenda Alexander, Amy Johnson, Sandy Hieronymus, Ann Aldridge, Sharon Smith, Patricia Wiseman, Linda Baity, Linda Young, Virginia Robinson, Kim Keyse, Janice Lentz, Rev. Mark Barden, Nillah Cody, and Velma Zeek

**Hands-On Mission Opportunity for School of Christian Missions UMCOR Layette Kits**

Many women do not have swaddling clothes with which to welcome their child into the world. Layette Kits provide basic supplies for their baby's needs. The details for the preparation of a Layette Kit are shown below. Please follow the directions exactly. Include all items; do not add items that are not on the list. Note: All items must be new!

**UMCOR Layette Kit**

- 6 cloth diapers
- 2 shirts or 2 one-piece body suits
- 2 baby washcloths
- 2 gowns or sleepers
- 2 diaper pins
- 1 sweater open in the front
- 2 receiving blankets

Bundle the items inside one of the receiving blankets and secure with the diaper pins. In a separate envelope, please bring a check written to UMCOR Sager Brown for at least \$1.00 for each kit to help with the processing and shipping of the kits around the world. If you are bringing multiple kits, it is fine to just write one check in an amount sufficient to cover all of your kit. If your whole unit is collecting the kits, it will be okay to collect the money and put it all in one envelope to be turned in when you drop off your kits at the School of Christian Mission. Please keep the money separate from the kit.

If at all possible, please have kits in a box that can be handled by our women and the total number of kits listed on the side of the box. We are trying to make it as easy as possible to collect, count and transport our Layette Kits.

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

**PRESIDENT – AMY JOHNSON**

United Methodist Women provides many opportunities for education. We learn through participating in our Reading Program and by reading Response magazine. But I feel the best way we expand our concepts of mission is by attending the School of Christian Mission each summer. It is four days packed with learning opportunities. 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.

Study leaders spend many months preparing to lead the studies. There is a lot of reading and studying that takes place in the months leading up to the School of Christian Mission. I speak from personal experience as I am preparing to lead the one-day overview on "Food and Faith." United Methodist Women seem to always be on the cutting edge of any issue. The studies are always so timely in relation to world events.

This event encompasses all aspects of our PURPOSE. Won't you come and learn with us?

deere620@aol.com

336-922-3468

**VICE PRESIDENT-SANDY HIERONYMUS**

Programs! Programs! Programs! Most vice presidents and folks in charge of programs are eager to get programming ideas. The School of Christian Mission (SCM) takes place in July. The SCM is a great place to worship, study, fellowship, and enjoy being with women from around our conference. Program ideas are in abundance at the SCM. You may choose to have one of the studies in your church or district. Portions of the studies may be used for short programs. I have made many friends through the years whom I met at the SCM.

The LUV program gives district and conference officers the opportunity to be with local units. A visit counts as Mission Today criteria #21. Looking for a good program idea or someone to present a program? Contact a district or conference officer. We can help you find program resources and may also be available to present a program to your group. We would love to visit and be a part of your gathering. No unit is too small for a visit.

The next issue of the Conference Gram will be full of information for Annual Meeting, September 11, 12, 13. We are all sisters in Christ and "Sisters With a PURPOSE" will be a meaningful theme for our 140th birthday year. Lake Junaluska housing request forms may be sent in after July 1. Go to [www.wncumw.org](http://www.wncumw.org) for information and forms for Annual Meeting. Plan now to get a group together and come to the beautiful mountains of NC in September. You don't have to be a United Methodist to participate and/or join United Methodist Women. You will be blessed by participating in UMW and its events.

Sandyh46@aol.com

704-545-6910

## 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 2009 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 Pins, Gift to Mission cards, Gift in Memory cards, and World Thank Offering. Check the WNCC 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 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  
828-652-7948



## MEMBERSHIP NURTURE & OUT-REACH – LINDA BAITY

Happy Birthday United Methodist Women! All of you have probably had at least one celebration as we are well into our 140th birthday year in mission. We have so much to celebrate! We can only imagine the millions of women, children and youth that have benefited through the mission work all over the world in 140 years! I hope you are having as much fun as I am. It's very exciting to participate in chartering new units. It was a real treat to attend the Statesville District Membership Fair

with great displays and new ideas shared. My local unit celebrated in April with a big Birthday Party. Invitations along with UMW News were mailed to all the members. The party consisted of cake and ice cream, games (pin the missionary on the country she/he serves), presents (baby layettes to be delivered at School of Missions) and keeping with the theme the skit, "Just a Handful of Women," a drama of the first meeting of our beginning was presented with group participation. It may not have been "exactly" by the script, but we sure had lots of laughs. We understand being in mission is serious business, but we also know it is healthy and nurturing for everyone to laugh and have fun! On the following Sunday we continued to celebrate by leading the worship service for UMW Sunday. Rev. Mark Barden, who has worked with United Methodist Women through the conference for many years, was guest speaker. Mark shared much information about Mission Giving by UMW through global ministries of the church and impressed the importance of the connection and support between UMW, the conference, church and the pastor. Mark recently returned from Sudan and will be leading one of the studies at School of Christian Mission.

School of Christian Mission is one of the best ways to learn first hand what United Methodist Women is about. It will be held July 16-19 at Greensboro College. See details of studies in this newsletter. The attendance continues to grow each year. Let's make 2009 our largest ever. Plan to attend and encourage your local units to attend. Those who attend School of Missions make better informed members and officers. I look forward to seeing you there. If I can be of any assistance, just let me know.

lindabaity@wnireland.com  
336-679-8648

## SOCIAL ACTION – LINDA YOUNG

How did you come to join this great organization of United Methodist Women? Most of you joined because some woman who already knew the PURPOSE invited you to go to a meeting, gathering, or special event. Someone was interested in you, cared about you, and wanted to share a good thing with you. One thing that I value in our organization is that one does not have to be a member of the United Methodist Church in order to be a member of the United Methodist Women. We have a lot to learn from new members. Mission is a gift God has given us and the very reason for our existence. Women in mission are communicators of love in action. We have a passion for justice. We see ourselves as commissioned by the Holy Spirit to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church. For 140 years, United Methodist Women have taken the risk of being in the middle of mission action.

Public Education is our primary priority for 2009. I encourage you to keep this in the

forefront of your unit's social action strategy. If you have mastered this priority and believe your unit can address other social concerns, don't hesitate. I constantly receive correspondence concerning various issues that need to be addressed, i.e. immigration, climate control, international violence against women, child labor, child soldiers, waste disposal, human trafficking, green team issues, all the 'isms', and the list goes on. These issues, and many more, need our immediate attention and action and can be found on the Women's Division link on our conference website. You will also find information on the Conference Social Action webpage.

Please download the application for the Social Justice Award and Action Alert and include them in each of your District newsletters. Consider having the forms available at all District gatherings. Encourage your local units to become a Charter Club Unit also.

I look forward to our time together at the upcoming Spiritual Growth Retreat in June and at the School of Christian Mission in July. I have been trusted again to do a one-day overview of The Beauty and Courage of Sudan.

On a personal note, I must say thank you again for the many, many acts of love and concern shown to me through your cards, calls, emails, visits, thoughts, and prayers during my recent illness and continuing recovery.

Lmyou2253@aol.com  
828-241-2343

## 2009 Conference Love Offering

**A Gift to (undesignated)  
Mission Giving Honoring  
"Sisters with a PURPOSE -  
Celebrating 140 Years Together  
in Mission"**

**You may bring your Love  
Offering or your Local Unit's  
offering  
to Annual Meeting at Lake  
Junaluska, Sept. 11,12, & 13,  
or send it directly to:**

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

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

## PROGRAM RESOURCES – KIM KEYSE

OH, YUMMY...

sipping on iced sweet tea with lemon while swaying in the hammock reading Three Cups of Tea... munching on cheese fries and drinking ice cold Dr. Pepper while resting under a shaded tree reading Faith and Fitness-Diet and Exercise...savoring a breakfast of ham, eggs, buttery grits, and hot sweet coffee while leisurely reading Sharing Food...devouring a rich slice of chocolate cake late at night while curled up in your chair reading Reduce, Reuse, Recycle...Good food and good books just seem to go hand-in-hand...Holy Stuff of Life in one hand and a peanut butter cracker in the other! Oh, yeah, that's the good life! There will be plenty of both as we come "Together at the Table" at our School of Christian Missions at Greensboro College, July 16-19. Study books, reading program books, and organizational materials will be available in the Resource Room. Come by to purchase Food and Faith, the study book for our Spiritual Growth, led by Rev. Angela Pleasants. Along with the many reading program books you will surely need to purchase, pick up a copy of the study book for our geographical course, "The Beauty and Courage of Sudan," and one for our general issue course, "Giving Our Hearts Away."

I can guarantee the books will be delicious, savory, and filling. While I may not be able to make the same claim for the food, I can promise flavorful fellowship and fun as we gather to worship and learn.

I'll be eagerly a-waiting for you, my beloved, ready to offer good reading, warm hospitality, and maybe, a goodie or two to enhance your reading pleasure!

Bon appetite and reading!!  
Love, Kim

kkeyse@bellsouth.net  
336-508-0756

## SECRETARY – ANN ALDRIDGE

We are told that "valley" experiences make us really appreciate "mountain top" experiences. In this season of economic hardship where we are having to tighten our belts, look for jobs that are hard to find, and

if we have a job, expect no raise or maybe even a cut in salary, it is vitally important that we take advantage of "mountain top" experiences planned for us by United Methodist Women.

The Spiritual Growth Retreats (June 19-20 and 20-21) at Lake Junaluska are for the sole purpose of spiritual growth. For a mere \$10 registration fee, we are able to gather with women from all over Western North Carolina to pray, study, sing, and grow as we listen to the Rev. Dr. Mary John Dye, Statesville District Superintendent, lead us in "Encounters with Jesus." The first retreat will begin on Friday afternoon and conclude at noon on Saturday and will be followed by a repeat retreat on Saturday afternoon through Sunday noon. Our Conference has offered two different times for your convenience. However, the Saturday-Sunday event may be discontinued in the future if attendance continues to decline. If it is important to you to continue having the choice between two different times, be sure to encourage attendance at the Saturday-Sunday retreat.

For years, I heard people talk about the School of Christian Mission, and I could not figure out what made it so special. I had to attend myself to appreciate this unique experience. Put July 16 – 19 on your calendar and register for the school prior to June 22. "Together at the Table," we will learn about "Food and Faith" and have the opportunity to select between "The Beauty and Courage of Sudan" and "Giving Our Hearts Away: Native American Survival." For those who cannot attend Thursday – Sunday, you have the opportunity to attend a one-day overview on either Friday or Saturday. The Teen Mission Event will be held on Saturday. There is something for everyone at this special event held on the campus of Greensboro College. UMCOR has expressed an urgent need for layette kits, so our hands-on mission project for the School of Christian Mission will be the UMCOR layette kits. For a content list, visit our Conference UMW website at <http://www.wncumw.org/>.

Visiting with you in your districts and individual UMW units has been a blessing to me. Thank you for allowing me this privilege and thank you for sharing my passion for the work we are doing for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through United Methodist Women. Please remember that all of your District and Conference officers are available to help you in any way possible.

Love in Christ,  
ahaldridge@charter.net  
828-433-0988

## EDUCATION & INTERPRETATION – VIRGINIA ROBINSON

In just three months the Western North Carolina Conference ladies will be converging on Greensboro College for our School of Christian Mission! Many opportunities await you as you come onto campus. Coming to the School helps to fulfill Mission Today criteria #11. Encourage all ladies to take advantage of the school. Be in prayer for our study leaders and the school committee...that the School will be the best ever.

To fulfill Mission Today criteria #23, begin putting together layette kits as the conference-wide mission project for the School. Some of you have been concerned that you were unable to find the open-front sweaters. I have received information from UMCOR that the "hoodie" zippered sweat-shirts up to size 12 months are acceptable for the kits. Those are much easier to find than the open-front sweaters. I do have patterns that UMCOR shared if anyone is interested in knitting or crocheting the sweaters. Just e-mail your mailing address to me and I will be glad to get that to you.

Some ladies have asked if the kits can be inserted in 1 gallon bags that would be easier to pack. I have been in touch with UMCOR and they indicate the items will not fit in gallon bags and that they must be wrapped in the blanket. Please adhere to this so we don't have to remove the bags before shipping.

In a separate envelope, please bring a check written to UMCOR Sager Brown for at least \$1.00 for each kit to help with the processing and shipping of the kits around the world. If you are bringing multiple kits, it is fine to just write one check in an amount sufficient to cover all of your kit. If your whole unit is collecting the kits, it will be okay to collect the money and put it all in one envelope to be turned in when you drop off your kits at the School of Christian Mission. Please keep the money separate from the kit.

Read your newest issues of RESPONSE magazine (March and April) containing articles ON "Food and Faith", the Bible study, and "The Sudan", the geographical study. There is a wealth of information in the articles. Go to your next meeting with a review of one of the articles and give a "Response Moment".



The unit then fulfills Mission Today criteria #17.

I look forward to seeing you in Greensboro!

varobinson55@yahoo.com  
828-443-0679

### NOMINATIONS – PATSY BAKER

Serving on the conference nominating committee has been a wonderful experience for me. If you know ladies to recommend for offices or if you are interested in serving yourself, please fill out a Prospective Leader Profile Sheet or the Recommendation Form for Prospective Leaders. These can be downloaded at [www.wnccumw.org](http://www.wnccumw.org) under Downloads Available or call me if I can mail you some forms. The Nominating Committee will be at the School of Mission looking for prospective leaders for our talent bank. We will have copies with us if you will see me. Please help us by completing these forms. See you in Greensboro.

dannybakerfarm@earthlink.net



### News from the Conference Public Education Initiative Committee

As you are aware, the 2009 Conference priority is to implement the “For Christ’s Sake, Turn the World Upside Down Initiative” in the area of public education – a continuation of our priority for last year.

Many of you will remember the letter writing campaign which we launched last year on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. The law was up for reauthorization in 2007, but that reauthorization has not occurred as of this date. We believe that our efforts have contributed to the continued examination of the law. We have made a difference. Our representatives are doing their homework and learning more about the law and asking questions.

**OUR WORK IS NOT FINISHED.** There are new senators and representatives and a new secretary of education. We need to revisit the letter writing campaign information, and if you are so inclined, you

can write more letters. Our Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women website <http://www.wnccumw.org/> has the information. Scroll down about half way and click on “Click here for more information” under the Public Education Section. You can find out who your US senators and representatives are as well as state legislators. Arne Duncan is the new Secretary of Education, and his mailing address is US Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202.

Learn as much as you possibly can about what is happening. A free email subscription to Public Education Network (PEN) is available by going to PEN’s website at <http://www.publiceducation.org> and following the instructions in the lower left-hand section of the homepage. Review <http://www.boldapproach.org>. This initiative insists that Congress improve schools and also address three of the mass of issues in the lives of poor children that make it harder for them to learn: the need for enriched early care and pre-school; the need for healthcare for all families; and the need for enrichments outside the school day that most of us take for granted but which are missing in the lives of children in poverty. After you submit your name, it will take a week or so, but the staff of this initiative will soon get the list updated to include you. Once you have signed-on, encourage other people to follow your lead and support the Broader, Bolder Approach to Education.

Recently the Civil Rights Project published a powerful new report: “Why High Stakes Accountability Sounds Good But Doesn’t Work—And Why We Keep on Doing It Anyway.” You may view this report which questions the validity and workability of test-and-punish, accountability-based school reform at [http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/esea/study\\_nclb\\_sanctions\\_2009.pdf](http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu/research/esea/study_nclb_sanctions_2009.pdf).

Many of you are already aware that the NC State Department of Public Instruction Report Card is available for your examination. You can find testing information from 2001 – 2008 for any public school in North Carolina by visiting <http://www.ncreportcards.org/src/>

Last but not least, look for more to come about how we will continue our efforts to find more opportunities to support public education.

**Mark your Calendar!  
Leadership Training for  
District Officers  
Saturday, Oct. 10  
Broad Street UMC,  
Statesville  
Hands-On Project:  
Boxtops for Education**



**Annual Meeting  
September 11, 12, 13  
Hands-on Mission:  
Gift to Mission Cards  
Conference Love Offering:  
A Gift to Undesignated Mission  
Giving: Sisters with a PURPOSE  
Celebrating 140 Years together in  
Mission.**



**Save the Date!  
United Methodist Women  
Assembly 2010  
April 29 - May 2  
St. Louis, Missouri  
Stay tuned to  
[www.wnccumw.org](http://www.wnccumw.org)  
for more details!**

## MEET OUR STUDY LEADERS



### **Spiritual Growth Study:** **Food and Faith**

#### **Rev. Angela Pleasants**

Angela is a native of Greensboro, North Carolina. She is a graduate of NC A&T State University and a seminary graduate of Duke Divinity School. Angela is an ordained elder in our conference. Before taking her new appointment this summer at Central United Methodist Church in the Charlotte District, she was pastor for 5 years of Wingate United Methodist Church in the Albemarle District. She was elected as a delegate to the 2008 General Conference. She serves on various boards and committees both in the community and church. She enjoys sports – running marathons and boxing. She is involved in self-defense training for ladies to build confidence as well as protection skills. Angela loves to travel. One of her hobbies is Pysanky, Ukrainian egg painting.

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



#### **Darlene Jacobs**

Darlene graduated with a Master of Arts Degree from the University of Oklahoma. Her career spans various areas of government. She has been employed with the NC Commission of Indian Affairs as Community Services Director. She has worked with the NC Department of Health and Human Services-Office of Minority Health, as a Public Health Consultant. At the tribal level, Darlene held the position of Tribal Administrator for the Lumbee Tribe. She was instrumental in helping develop a greatly needed spiritual Native American ministry within the triangle and surrounding area, serving as Co-Chair of Triangle Native American United Methodist Church Taskforce, which was later named Circle of Christ. She serves on the Native American International Caucus, NC Conference Committee on Native American Ministries and the Governor's Commission on Community Service and Volunteerism. Darlene currently serves as the Executive Director of the SEJ Agency for Native American Ministries (SEJANAM), which covers nine states from Virginia to Mississippi and serves 23 Native American ministries within fifteen conferences.



#### **Rev. Donna Strickland**

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 School system. She recently completed a twelve year term on the board of the United Methodist Publishing House. Her family includes her husband of 21 years, Kelly, and a 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.

### **Geographic Study: The Beauty and Courage of Sudan**



#### **Lynda Morris**

Lynda Morris is a 3rd generation native Charlottean. She received her B.A. from Wake Forest University and her M.Ed. from Winthrop. She retired from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in 2003 after 13 years in the classroom and 17 years as an administrator. For the past six years she has returned part time to observe and evaluate teachers in the classroom. She loves to sing and is a member of the St. Stephen UMC Chancel Choir. She became active in UMW after she retired and has served as circle leader, unit secretary and currently unit president. She is also a member of the Bethlehem Center-Charlotte Board of Directors. Lynda has been married to her husband Steve for 29 years. She is proud to be a part of the School of Christian Mission 2009.



#### **Reverend Mark Barden**

Mark 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. 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 Director of Mission/Outreach for the Western North Carolina Conference. In this capacity, he traveled extensively worldwide on behalf on the Conference. In June 2006, Mark was appointed Director of Communication and Coordinator for Lay Ministries and Special Projects for the conference. Mark's wife, Barbara, currently serves as Minister of Education at Myers Park UMC in Charlotte. Their son, Christopher is a junior at Providence Day School in Charlotte.



#### **Martha Phillips**

Martha graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Physical Therapy. She is retired and lives in Linville Falls, NC with her daughter, son-in-law and 3 grandsons. She is a member of Pine Grove UMC where she is the lay leader and choir director. Currently, she is active in the Marion District UMW and serves as District Treasurer. Martha enjoys traveling and has traveled in Europe, China, Tibet, Peru, Egypt and Russia. She traveled to Cambodia on an Ubuntu Journey in 2006 and to Palestine/Israel in 2008. In March 2009, she traveled to Sudan on a GBGM sponsored Mission Travel Study. The group of 20 included clergy and laity. They visited churches, schools, vocational training centers and UMCOR projects in Southern Sudan and Uganda. Martha's other daughter lives in Trinity, NC where she is pastor of Hopewell UMC. She and her husband, also an elder, have a daughter and son.



#### **Sandra Williamson**

Sandra is a lifelong Methodist and a native of Columbia, S.C. where she attended the local Bethlehem Center as a preschooler. She graduated magna cum laude from Johnson C. Smith University in 1969. She received her Master's degree in History from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1972 and taught there. In 1978 she & her husband accepted faculty appointments at NC A&T State University. She is presently the Assistant Director of the Honors Program. In 1995 she was a participant in a Fulbright Study Tour of China. She has accompanied groups of Honors students to London and Moscow

and she serves as the Head Coach for the A&T Honda Campus All-Star Challenge Academic Team. She is the Secretary of the Board of the Guilford Battleground Company. Sandra is married to Dr. Alex Williamson, and they have two sons.



**Ruth Daugherty**

As a Free Lance Educator/Consultant, Ruth has served in various offices in United Methodist Women including conference president and president of Women's Division, and she has also served as Vice President of the General Board of Global Ministries. Ruth has often been a study leader in regional and conference Schools of Christian Mission, and has traveled extensively throughout the world visiting areas of mission and leading workshops. She is the author of the booklet, *United Methodist Women in Mission*, and has written numerous other resources for United Methodist Women. Presently she serves as Secretary of the Northeastern Jurisdiction and president of Southwest District UMW. She also serves on other boards and advisory committees. Ruth is a graduate of Shenandoah Junior College and Lebanon Valley College. She has Doctor of Humanities degrees from Albright College and Shenandoah University. She lives in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and has three children and four grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.



**Fredrick N Jones**

Fredrick is a retired Graphic Arts Design Instructor of 25 years at Guilford Technical Community College in Jamestown, NC. He is an award-winning teacher and an award winning painter with a specialty in figure drawing and portraiture. He is well known for volunteer work with children and youth in both public and private school settings in NC and beyond. Believing that every child possesses a God-given talent, he embraced the philosophy that a "wise teacher makes learning a joy." He is a weekly columnist for the WNCN UMW e-news. As a former member of the Conference Council on Laity, he was the editor-in-chief of "Connections: A Summary of Ethnic Minority Involvement." He has been married 43 years to Dr. Lillie M Jones, who serves now as the District Superintendent of the Lake Norman District. They have a son and daughter and have five grandchildren.



**ONE DAY OVERVIEW: FOOD AND FAITH**

**Amy Johnson**

Amy, with her husband Paul of 36 years, lives in Tobaccoville which is north of Winston-Salem. They have one daughter, Jill, who is married and is a second grade teacher. Amy and Paul are the proud grandparents of a grandson, Dylan. They are members of Faith United Methodist Church in Rural Hall where

Amy serves as Chair of the Finance Committee and President of the United Methodist Women. Amy is the Administrative Assistant to the Winston-Salem District Superintendent of The United Methodist Church and has been employed there 13 years. Working in the District Office has allowed Amy to merge her love of secretarial work with her love for the Church. Amy has a passion for the work of United Methodist Women. She has served in several capacities on the district level: Committee on Nominations, Secretary, Membership, and District President. On the Conference Level, she served as Spiritual Growth Coordinator, member of the Committee on Nominations, and Treasurer. Amy is serving in her fourth year as Conference President.



**Lynn Sloan Barnes**

Lynn is a graduate of Methodist College, and is a retired Spanish teacher. She was commissioned a Deaconess in The United Methodist Church in April of 2005, and is currently serving as Director of Outreach Ministries at First UMC of Elkin. As a deaconess, she started the Tri-County Health Resource Center, which helps provide food, medical care, and coats for persons in need. Lynn is a certified lay speaker, and has taught at several conference Schools of Christian Mission. She has also made numerous trips to Bolivia on medical mission teams. She was honored in April 2007 as a "2 Those Who Care" recipient by WFMV News 2. She is married to Wayne Barnes and they reside in Elkin, North Carolina.

**ONE DAY OVERVIEW: SUDAN**



**Linda Young**

Linda was 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 playing tennis.



**Janice Lentz**

Janice is currently serving her first year as our Conference Communications Coordinator. She has been very active in the North Wilkesboro District serving as District Communications Coordinator and in other areas. She is a member of First

UMC in Taylorsville, now is in the Statesville District and serves as their conference liaison. After retiring as a school librarian, her new passion is VIM mission trips. She made trips to Africa and Armenia this year. Janice is married to Danny Lentz and they have 4 grown daughters and 2 grandsons.

**LEADER OF TEEN WOMEN: Sherry Sink**



Sherry previously served 4 years as the High Point District Mission Coordinator for Mission Education and Interpretation. During this time, she was also the youth director in her local church.

She has served on the Conference team as Mission Education and Interpretation for four years and the chairperson of the Public Education Committee. She currently serves as the Scholarship Chairperson for our Conference. Sherry has taught the teen class at the School of Christian Mission the past two years. She also currently serves on the Committee On Mission and Outreach as the chair of the Hunger Committee. She is married to David Sink and has two grown daughters, Stacy and Britney. Stacy is a graduate of NC State and currently the County Extension Agent for Livestock and Small Grains in Halifax, NC, and Britney is a senior at UNC-Chapel Hill. Sherry is an amateur photographer, loves basketball, nature, drama, music, and the UMW.

**WORKSHOP FOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN: Sandy Hieronymus**



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 WNCN 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.

**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.



*Conference Gram*  
*WNC Conference United Methodist Women*  
*Janice Lentz, 336 Midway Park Lane, Taylorsville, NC 28681*

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### **2009 Calendar of Events for WNC Conference United Methodist Women**

<b>June 11-14</b>	<b>Annual Conference, Lake Junaluska, Regional School for Conference Officers and Study Leaders</b>
<b>June 19-20/20-21</b>	<b>Spiritual Growth Retreats, Lake Junaluska</b>
<b>July 16-19</b>	<b>School of Christian Mission, Greensboro College</b>
<b>September 11-13</b>	<b>Annual Meeting, Lake Junaluska</b>
<b>October 10</b>	<b>Officer's Training, Broad Street UMC, Statesville, NC</b>

*Mark Calendar for April 30-May 2, 2010: Assembly in St. Louis, MO*

Web Site Address: [www.wnccumw.org](http://www.wnccumw.org). Lynne Gilbert maintains the web site and you are invited to send her articles and photos. 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 and updates, the Conference Gram, etc., send an email to Lynne Gilbert ([lynnegilbert@bellsouth.net](mailto:lynnegilbert@bellsouth.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. Anyone can sign up to receive it online.