



United Women in Faith  
El Camino Real District Newsletter

Q2 -June 2022 Issue

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The *Mission Link* is a quarterly newsletter of El Camino Real District United Methodist Women.

#### Articles for Submission

Please direct items for publication in Mission Link to the [Communications Coordinator](#). If you provide photos of recognizable individuals, please be sure you have obtained permission from those individuals to publish their picture. The next issue will be published in early September, 2022. The deadline for articles and photos to be submitted is Tuesday, September 6, 2022.

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## Presidents Message

A lot has been happening!

### National Level:

We have changed our name to United Women in Faith. Our logo has changed, we have a new website [UWFaith.org](#) and there are many new programs and options within the organization including a national membership option. These changes were made so that we can better meet the needs of our existing members, appeal to new and younger members and broaden our appeal to women of color. Please visit the new website to see all of the exciting changes. The ECRD website [elcaminorealumw.org](#) is also being updated.

Our purpose remains unchanged: **To know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.**

The third weekend in May, 45 of our members attended the National Assembly in Orlando Florida (30 in person and 15 virtual). The theme was "Turn It Up". There were many inspirational speakers and lots of music and fun. Our members will be energized for action in recruiting new members and

supporting the many missions of United Women of Faith around the world. There will be much more to come.

I have been hearing a lot of good things about the Faith Talks podcasts with Jennifer R. Farmer (she was at Assembly), so I know that many of you already subscribe. Jennifer hosts these and has focused on many interesting topics including: Invest in Our Planet, Lenten Reflections on Restorative Justice, Women in Peacemaking and many more. These and more are available on the **uwfaith.org** website. Check it out (if you haven't already)! You can find them by typing FaithTalks in the search window from the home page. (It looks like a magnifying glass)

### **District Level Events:**

Our El Camino Real District Spiritual Retreat was held on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The theme was "Healing on our Journey to God." Our speaker was Beth Carter, a Board-Certified Health Coach. We learned about healing and how God can work in our lives to improve our spiritual and physical wellbeing. Everyone who attended was very pleased with the presentation. Special thanks to Sandra Nesheim of Salinas UMC for heading up this event and to Deo Agustin who provided some really beautiful music. What a blessing!

Upcoming District Events to mark on your calendar:

- Mission u at Sparks, NV August 5-7 ([still time to register](#))
- Unit President's meeting, June 20<sup>th</sup>; 5:00pm on Zoom
- District Celebration on October 1<sup>st</sup>, location TBD

As I close this report, I want to especially express my gratitude to all of our members who continue to support UWF through these unprecedented and challenging times. Many units have struggled with Zoom meetings and are now working on reestablishing in-person meetings. It's not easy! Please remember that you are what makes UWF such a great organization that accomplishes a great deal of good in our world. I appreciate you!

Sincerely,

*Debbie Ow*

*President*

*ECRD District United Women in Faith*

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## Treasurer's Report

Thank you to all of the units that have sent in remittances for missions. It is so encouraging to see how you've continued to raise funds, in spite of the pandemic.

Just so you have it handy, the address for sending in remittances is:

ECRD UMW, c/o Carolyn Bircher  
1663 Martin Ave.  
Sunnyvale, CA 94087

## PLEDGE ACCOUNT

Pledges received (Jan-Mar)	\$ 3,850.50
1 <sup>st</sup> qtr. remittances to conference UMW	\$ 3,850.50
Interest received	<u>\$ 0.02</u>
March 31, 2022 balance	\$ 63.49

## ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT

Jan-Apr Deposits	\$ 2,800.17
Jan-Apr Event expenses	\$ 200.00
Jan-Apr Communication expenses	\$ 158.76
Jan-Apr Admin. Expenses	<u>\$ 2,565.00</u>
April 30, 2022 balance	\$ 3,558.69

The Pledge account is for contributions from the local units for missions, which are passed on to the conference (and then to National) UMW. The Administrative account is for the El Camino Real District UMW events and operations.

*Carolyn Bircher*  
*ECRD Treasurer*

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## Assembly 2022 – A New Day is Here



**United Women in Faith**, celebrated Assembly 2022 in Orlando, Florida. More than 3000 participated, in-person and, for the first time, on-line. 24 countries and all 50 states were represented for the **"Turn It Up!"** event.

Many came for the Ubuntu Day of Service, the day before Assembly 2022 began. Participants put together seed, meal and hygiene kits. Recipients were from local Florida outreach organizations including the Cornerstone Family Ministries, a United Women in Faith national mission institution.

Much gratitude for supporting the request of seeds!

*I had a fun-packed weekend!* Friends from the past & New Friends, Learning, Laughing, Singing, Dancing & most importantly getting re-ignited!

Representing CA NV, we had performances by our Fijian and Cambodian Sisters!

The weekend consisted of Community Gatherings, Town Hall Meetings and Workshops focused on soul care, leadership, and change-making, led by Fierce, Smart, Funny Powerful Speakers

- **Rev. Sung Yeon Choimorrow**, executive director of the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, spoke about the discrimination towards Asian American women, challenging actions of love, to change the path of racism.
- **Heather McTeer Toney**, lawyer and environmentalist speaking about caring for creation.
- **General Secretary Harriett Jane Olson**, spoke of the re-branding on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, of United Women in Faith. The national membership model is based on *Faith, Sisterhood and Action*.

Harriett encouraged us:

- To learn, know & share:
  - the strength of our personal **spiritual, faith-based** roots
  - the **impact** of telling our story thru the nimbleness of virtual tools
  - the power of **connections, ALL** must know this is a safe place
  - the commitment to **act**
- Creation of an "All Access" on-line membership.
- Inclusive of all faiths
- Need for Soul Care Retreats
- Inspiring, Collaborating, Leadership studies

"We can be even more a place where women of all ages, all ethnicities, cultures, economic classes, LGBTQ women, straight women, rural women, urban women, all women can know this is a place where they can feel and belong safe."

"God trusts us to do His work in the world ... NOW is our chance to be Change-Makers"

- **Janet Wolf**, a theologian-in-residence, author of United Women in Faith's mission study *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship*. A powerful, profound preacher who participated throughout the weekend.
- **U.S. Secretary of the interior Deb Haaland** also joined Assembly 2022 via video, speaking on the moral responsibility women of faith have when it comes to climate change, environmental reform and caring for the earth.
- **Rev. YaNi** spoke with unique, rapping, powerful poetry. **She was AMAZING!**
- **National President 'Ainise 'Isama'u**, as well as past National Presidents participated.
- Taking part also were **United Methodist Bishops and United Methodist General Secretaries**
- United Women in Faith's **Elizabeth Chun Hye Lee** and **Emily Jones** invited Assembly attendees to join in the organization's Just Energy for All and Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline campaigns.

Attendees filled out post cards to be sent to elected representatives urging them to pass legislation that advances climate justice and helps protect children from racist policies in their schools.

Virtual attendees signed on-line petitions for "Clean Air as a Human Right," "Ending of Corporal Punishment in "Counseling not Criminalization in Schools" and "Help to End the School Pushout."

Assembly 2022 also featured two town halls focusing on United Women in Faith advocacy issues:

- “Restoring Just Relationships: The Critical Role of Just Transition Toward Climate Justice, Just Energy for All”.
- **I attended** “For Such a Time As This: Racism, Antiracism and The United Methodist Church.”

### **Workshops I attended:**

“Letting go of Leadership: Passion vs Title” (take-away...passion can be a driving force)

“Leadership Development: A Necessity for a Change-Maker”

(take-away...self-assessment is a valuable tool for leadership)

**Phenomenal music!** Assembly 2022 featured an all-woman band. Their music complimented the mood and added to the message of each Community Gathering & service.

We were not only dancing in our chairs, but also in the aisles!

The

band also created their own song “**Turn It Up!**”!

### **Experience Hall**

- many exhibitors (local & global), many United Methodist agencies, and organizations
- **I stopped by the McCurdy Ministries, UMCOR, United Methodist Appalachian Ministry (Red Bird) & UMVIM tables**
- areas to mix-and-mingle for informal networking and make new friends
- featured a bookstore for United Women in Faith resources
- an area for authors to sign books
- prayer & meditation rooms, including a labyrinth

As a FIRST, a Legacy Banquet was held, in support of the Legacy Endowment Fund, to ensure the work of United Women in Faith continues for 150 more years and beyond.

We are Sisters, seeking opportunities for meaningful service and advocacy, here we will discover many opportunities to make a difference — in Climate Justice, Racial Justice and Equity and so much more.

Be sure to join us for the next Assembly **May 15-17, 2026, in Indianapolis!**

*K Stone*

*Past ECRD UMW President*

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## Reflections on Mission U at Monte Toyon

Upon arriving at Monte Toyon, I was at once struck by the beauty of the setting: the trees that shaded the walkways, the blue sky, the peacefulness, the way the buildings nestled into the site.

This was going to be a relaxing weekend! And what a weekend it was! The schedule was relaxed.

Martha Parker (the Dean) said we were on camp time right from the start.

Martha Parker and Kalesita Fa'asisila (the Deans) did a wonderful job in planning. There were two adult sessions: in English led by Justin Ryu of New Creation UMC in Campbell and in Fijian led by Iva Turaga the President of the Bay District. Both leaders were truly inspirational and guided us through our study titled "Who Can We be Together." Our biblical reference was Luke 13.

The music was led by Pastor Fel Cao and his band from Riverside UMC in Sacramento. He very capably led us in singing God's praises and asking Him for guidance as we work through the challenges of life. Thanks, Pastor Fel and Angelina!

This session was different from earlier Mission u's that I have attended in that it included many youth and children. They were certainly a blessing. They had their own study leaders and had plenty of time for games and fun also but always joined us for worship and at meal times. (The food was really good too!)



At the closing study session, the Fijian women shared their stories of how the Lord has worked in their lives illustrating that a small mustard seed of their faith has grown into a mighty tree. I am inspired by their witness to do what I can to grow our Untied Women in Faith and that the Holy spirit will turn my small deeds into something big!

Our closing prayer: (From the study book page 34<sup>1</sup>)

*Dear God,*

*You are the architect of this world. You built it to sustain life. You were intentional about the greenery, the waters, the animals, the distance from the sun, the diverse range of humans.*

*We have been swindled into believing that there are only enough resources among us for some of us to have a quality experience. We sometimes believe that the church is a club that we can keep others out of, whether we say it firmly or politely.*

*So, convict us, dear Lord. Show us the beauty of the more expansive church, right here and now. Teach us to be open to the movement of the Holy Spirit, which moves like a breath and like a rushing wind. Fast or slow, the Spirit is always hard to capture and pin down. The Spirit is always ready to invigorate what we once knew to be true. Glory to God for new revelations every day.*

*Amen.*

There is one more session in August in Sparks Nevada. There is [still time to register!](#)

*Debbie Ow  
ECRD President*

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<sup>1</sup> *Who Can Be Together: A Biblical Exploration of Luke 13*, by Candace Simpson. © 2022 United Methodist Women, All Rights Reserved. ([Refer to the book review](#))

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## Dress-A-Girl Update

You may recall a little article from the previous Mission Link that described a project in the planning phase at Willow Glen. Since that time, there has been quite a bit of progress on this project, especially since Terri Koike and the Wesley United Women in Faith have been very busy sewing!



Figure 1- Dresses made by Wesley UWF

In April, Terri Koike and Laurie Lindsey had a Zoom meeting with Barbara Taylor, who is the Santa Cruz ambassador for Dress-A-Girl Around the World. Barbara was so helpful and inspiring to both of us. She reiterated the mission:

*“We endeavor to raise the esteem of girls living in poverty around the world by providing them with a made-with-lots-of-love, well-constructed, beautiful dress.”*

Barbara also gave us some helpful guidelines and arranged for us to have “kits”, which the Santa Cruz organization had previously put together. The kits were so helpful, since the material was already selected, cut and serged together and the trims were included.

Barbara mentioned that they use the sewing of dresses as a “prayer activity”, praying for each girl that will receive a dress.

To date, the Wesley United Women in Faith have completed 43 dresses, including 14 infant dresses from kits. The dresses will be blessed by the outgoing pastors at Wesley UMC on Sunday, June 5. Several women in the Wesley UWF have expressed an interest in continuing this project.



Figure 3 - Michelle Partsch, Willow Glen UWF

The Willow Glen UWF held their sewing event for this project on Sunday, June 5. They made infant and school-age dresses from kits provided by the Santa Cruz Dress-A-Girl organization.

UWF at the Marina UMC have also participated in this project. If you would like to know more, Terri Koike ([tkoike5037@gmail.com](mailto:tkoike5037@gmail.com)) and Laurie Lindsey ([lauriellindsey@gmail.com](mailto:lauriellindsey@gmail.com)) would be happy to share their experiences.

**Laurie Lindsey**  
ECRD Communications Coordinator

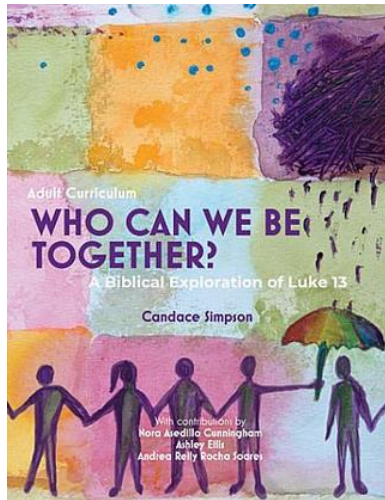


Figure 2- infant dress by Wesley UWF

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## Book Review: *Who Can We Be Together*, by Candace Simpson

What does God say about creating spaces of care? About community building? About shifting boundaries and norms? And how can this be done when the entire world seems to be on fire? These are some topics addressed in this year's Mission u textbook. It delves into Luke 13 to help readers develop faith, both personally and collectively, through an anti-oppression lens.



Each of the eight chapters of this book includes Bible commentary, group activities, discussion questions and thoughts for reflection. It is designed to be studied with a group, either online or in person, but could also be read individually. If you are attending Mission u, you will have the opportunity to cover all of this material. If not, I'd challenge you to form a group within your unit to do the study together.

We did a bulk order and still have some copies which can be purchased for \$11 from Carolyn Bircher (Sunnyvale: [cmbircher@gmail.com](mailto:cmbircher@gmail.com)) or Debbie Ow (South San Jose: [ow.debora@yahoo.com](mailto:ow.debora@yahoo.com)). Or you can purchase the book at [umwmissionresources.org](http://umwmissionresources.org).

### Book Discussions

Bonnie Home of Almaden Hills UWF leads Zoom book discussions of some of the Reading Program books. If you would like to participate, contact Bonnie at [bonstance22@yahoo.com](mailto:bonstance22@yahoo.com) to get the Zoom link. Here's the schedule for June & July:

- Monday, June 20, 2022                      EDUCATION FOR MISSION  
"One Dress, One Year" by Bethany Wintz & Susana Foth Aughtmon - published in 2016
- Monday, July 18, 2022              SPIRITUAL GROWTH  
"The Time Is Now" by Sister Joan Chittister -- published in 2019

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### Coming Events

- Mission u at Sparks, NV August 5-7 (still time to register)
- Unit President's meeting, June 20<sup>th</sup>; 5:00pm on Zoom
- District Annual Celebration on October 1<sup>st</sup>, location TBD - **Save the Date!**

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### Beulah Older Adult Grant Fund

Beulah grants are funded by the residual income derived from the sale of the home for older adults in 1988. The fund is administered by a committee. The objective of the fund is to "promote programs



that serve the needs and uphold the dignity of senior adults” in the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Women in Faith.

Please visit <https://canvuwf.org/beulah> for more information and to obtain the form to apply for a grant.

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## Around the District

*If you have a photo or announcement about a local unit event, feel free to submit it. We will try to publish some things in this section that may trigger ideas for other units.*

- Connecting with nature and each other:  
Sometimes, a little outing can be an opportunity for building friendships and bonding. On May 22, the Willow Glen UWF took a little field trip to Filoli Gardens, in San Mateo. They enjoyed an afternoon of glorious weather, a fun walk in the garden and a picnic lunch.



- It is with sadness that we report an arson fire at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in San Jose. Please [read the story](#) on the California-Nevada Conference website.

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## Communications Update

This quarter, you will note that the form of the Mission Link has changed again. Hopefully, we are zeroing in on something that will work for everyone:

- We want to retain the management of the mailing list by Mailchimp. This is much less error prone than manually maintaining a list.
- We listened and determined that many members still prefer to have a printable .pdf file, rather than lots of links. This will enable printing of the entire newsletter. It can be used as a recruiting tool (on bulletin boards, etc.) and it also enables printing of only the articles you are interested in (by selecting the section of interest and then printing it.)
- We want to be able to archive the newsletters in a way that preserves *the entire content*. A PDF file that contains *whole articles*, rather than a small paragraph with links, meets that objective.

That said, we cannot actually attach a PDF file to a Mailchimp mailing. So, there is link to the pdf file in the Mailchimp distribution. You will be able to access the newsletter by clicking on that link. From there, you can read or print.

Since I also need to work on the rebranding, I will be doing some work on the website over the summer. I will run the proposed changes past our district team prior to implementing them.

Stay tuned!

*Laurie Lindsey*  
*Communications Coordinator*