



# The Connecting Link

SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST

Holston  
Conference

Smoky  
Mountain  
District

Local  
Unit

MARCH 2021

## Upcoming Events

Mission u Zoom Event †  
July 23-24, 2021

Social Action Event †  
(Conference)  
August 7, 2021  
Zoom

SMD Social Action Event  
August 14, 2021  
Central UMC  
Lenoir City, TN  
In-person and Zoom

Conference Annual Meeting †  
September 18, 2021  
Zoom



## THE JOURNEY

“Sagan was having a very bad day. He pushed one teacher, struck two others. He refused to listen to instructions, and he refused to stay in his classroom. He was mimicking a gun with his hand and pointing it at students. Sagan had assaulted teachers and threatened students and would be suspended from school. A school board member was arguing that charges should be filed against him.” This is the beginning of the chapter entitled “What is the School-to-Prison Pipeline?” in Ijeoma Oluo’s book *So you want to talk about race*. Our first thought may be that Sagan is a threat to his school. But Sagan is 5 years old! He had never been in trouble at school before. Ijeoma continues, “But his day had started out poorly, and as the discipline continued with each outburst, he acted out more and more. There’s no indication in the many paragraphs documenting the incident that any staff members tried to redirect Sagan’s energy or ask him why he was upset. They simply ordered him to stop what he was doing and instituted some sort of punishment when he didn’t respond the way they wanted.

A few weeks ago on the news, I saw a similar story. A very young boy had broken a computer and had run away from school. The school had contacted the police who found the child, handcuffed him, put him in the back of the police car alone and took him back to school. They showed live footage of the child being brought back to school. He was crying as he entered the school, and the school official who came to let him in began yelling at him. Having a 5-year-old granddaughter, my heart breaks for these children who experience such trauma. Ijeoma continues, “Nobody asked if Sagan was feeling well . . . frustrated or sad or uncomfortable about something. Nobody took the time to figure out how they could help this boy.”

Five months into his kindergarten year, Sagan was suspended and learned that “he was too ‘bad’ to be educated.” I do not have all the answers to this problem, but I do have the responsibility to learn all I can and do all I can to see that no child has to experience this! One of our Mission u studies this year is based on the book by Monique W. Morris, *Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools*. I invite you to attend our virtual Mission u July 23 – 24, 2021, as we explore and learn more about how decisions made by teachers, school administrators, and policymakers shape how our children learn and live.

The Holston Conference UMW logo is, *One Body, One Spirit*, from Ephesians 4:4-6, **One God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.** I pray we learn to live our lives in this way!

Blessings,  
Susan

The † symbol denotes a  
Conference or Jurisdiction event.  
For more information or to  
register for conference events,  
visit our website:  
<http://holstonumw.org/>

# The Connecting Link

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## SPIRITUAL GROWTH—SPRING 2021 Finding Peace

Dear Sisters,

Time has flown since our Day Apart online gathering in April. Now we launch into summer. What a different climate, not only weatherwise, but politically, financially and, of course, health-wise than we experienced last year. Our hope is that, though we have been shaken up, that the past year has brought change for the better – that we're kinder, more vigilant and caring for our own health and that of others, that we erase the lines between color and privilege, and really experience life at peace here as God intended. There will always be bumps in our road, but how we choose to travel makes all the difference.

In early May, and prior to the challenges of an upcoming gas shortage, my husband Mickey and I traveled to South Carolina pulling our little camper to see family. We then trekked up the Atlantic coast to the serene and beautiful Outer Banks of North Carolina. We had deliberately isolated ourselves from the world and unbeknownst to us the fuel supply had been closed for ransom by cyber hackers and seven states were hit. We couldn't find gas anywhere and on our return trip we literally coasted into a campground in Raleigh, NC on fumes! God had us, as always, when he sent a local friend with two gallons of gas, a nephew with one gallon from his lawn mower, and good old AAA travel service with one gallon and bottles of ice water. Those same friends and family in Raleigh also carted us round-trip from the campground to their homes and treated us to sumptuous meals. How blessed we were!

The little bit of fuel brought allowed us to drive the area and search for stations that were still open. Of course, I could have let anxiety overtake me but instead I prayed throughout this and God spoke to me to, "*Just relax.*" In Erin James-Brown's book, *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, we are reminded that in times of uncertainty and anxiety, Jesus offers wisdom from Luke 24:36 "*Peace be with you.*" I felt peace and I knew he would provide us fuel if he wished us to leave for home or sit tight. In His timing, He provided a station where we lined up with others, and were able to fill-up plus four gas cans... enough to get us on to Lake Junaluska Campground then home to Greenback, TN. I knew it was my faith in trusting Him that got us through and He had worked fast and plentifully!

In a recent sermon, Pastor Emeritus Joe Green said to trust God in what you don't understand and cited scripture where we are assured that when things are shaken up, the "unshakeable" things are left behind.

He reminded us of the precious promise in Jeremiah 29:11 "*For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*" And a friend sent me this from Deuteronomy 31:6 "*Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic...For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.*"

Now those words are a comfort! Be at peace.

Cassie Sylvester  
Mission Coordinator - Spiritual Growth

## DISTRICT SOCIAL ACTION EVENT 2021

### CHANGE OF DATE-MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Due to the unavailability of one of our speakers, we had to move the date up a week. The second annual district-wide Social Action event will be held on August 14, 2021. Once again, the event will be held at Central United Methodist Church in Lenoir City, TN.

We are presently planning an in-person event at this time. Isn't that exciting?? We will be thrilled to see everyone in person for fellowship, fun, and enlightening information on "CLIMATE JUSTICE." We will also have the option available as a Zoom platform as well for those who prefer that method. Watch for further details in the coming months for speakers, registration, times, and a Zoom link. Your local presidents will have all the pertinent and current information as it becomes available. Can't wait to see everyone. Let's make this in-person, joint event with the Tennessee Valley District, well attended. Thanks UMW sisters.

Yours in Christ,  
Alice Nichols  
Social Action Chair



Climate  
Justice

## DISTRICT SECRETARY

In this “new” uncertain world, TIME is important. It’s time to take a deep breath and reflect on the blessings we take for granted. It’s time to love our family and friends and time to let them know it, time to give thanks for the many blessings we have been given over time, and time to begin living each day to its fullest. It’s time to put God into each day and to share God’s blessings.

It’s also time to strengthen our communications. I hope your units are keeping in touch whether it is by phone, email, ZOOM meetings, or even letters and cards through postal mail! Communication is critical to our District’s success during the year, and it is also critical during these times of isolation for maintaining connections between people. If you live alone and not in a community, it can be very lonely. An integral part of our purpose is “...to develop a creative, supportive fellowship ...”, and each member can contribute to that whether meetings are being held or not! Keep up the good work!

It is also important to maintain your Local Unit contact information. This contact information is used for the Smoky Mountain District *Connecting Link*, which is sent to ALL Local Unit officers, and the Holston Conference *Holstonian*, which is sent to ALL Local Unit Presidents.

If there have been changes in your officer contact information, it is important to notify me. And please notify me if any new officers are appointed. We want YOU to know what is going on in the Smoky Mountain District UMW.

We could not carry on our business of mission to women, children, and youth around the world without you!!! Please contact me at any time if you have questions!

Blessings!

**Sandra Guinn**  
**Smoky Mountain District UMW Secretary**  
**408 E 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave.**  
**Lenoir City, TN 37771**  
**[sjguinn336@charter.net](mailto:sjguinn336@charter.net)**

## TREASURER’S REPORT

Hello Ladies,

I hope that many of you were able to watch the District “A Day Apart” event in April. Our Unit (Peck’s Memorial) gathered in the sanctuary and were able to watch it together on the “big screen”. It was a great way for our ladies who do not use a home computer to be able to take part. We really enjoyed hearing Mitzi Sadler-Thorne share her story on becoming a deaconess. She is one busy lady!

The two “hands-on” mission projects we were asked to donate to as part of the event were Shades of Grace, located in Kingsport, TN, and Proverbs 3:27 Mission Center in Bristol, VA. I am very pleased to report that we have collected \$610! I will be sending each organization half of this donation.

Thank you to all who donated for your generosity. I know these organizations would covet our prayers as much as our financial support, so please include them in your prayer time.

Take care and God Bless,

Kim Henry  
Treasurer

## NOMINATIONS REPORT

**YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE!!** We have several positions available on the Smoky Mountain District UMW Team. Volunteers are needed. I’m sure there is someone who is willing to serve. It provides a wonderful opportunity to meet new people and provide support to women, children, and youth. Don’t be afraid to step out of your comfort zone for you are not alone. We are a team and we help one another. I ask you to PRAY about serving. You will be blessed.

Positions available: Vice President, Treasurer, Membership, and Nurture & Outreach Coordinator

Please take a look at the Talent Bank Information on page 4, and please let me know if you have any questions. You can call or text 865-789-9547 or email me at [nancylampe1024@comcast.net](mailto:nancylampe1024@comcast.net).

Nancy Lampe  
Nominations Chair

**HOLSTON CONFERENCE UNITD METHODIST WOMEN  
TALENT BANK INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE LEADERSHIP**

Type or print (attach additional pages as necessary)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGE: (circle one) 20's 30's 40's 50's 60's 70's 80's+

Race/Ethnicity (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Language/s spoken \_\_\_\_\_

**Local, District, Conference Office/s held with United Methodist Women**

Local: \_\_\_\_\_

District: \_\_\_\_\_

Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

**Professional skills, job or church experience or Areas of special interest, talents, skills:** (use room on back of form or attach additional page)

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**Which office/s on the conference UMW Team would you most like to hold given an opportunity to serve?** (Circle all that apply)

President Vice-president Secretary Treasurer Nominations Education & Interpretation

Membership Nurture & Outreach Social Action Spiritual Growth Program Resources Web Site

Communications Historian/Archivist Language Coordinator (specify language) Other

**As the position chosen requires, is it possible for you to be away from your home or employment for**

Full day Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Weekends Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Extended times Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**I am sorry, but I am unable to accept an office this year. Please keep my name on file. I can be available by** Month \_\_\_\_\_, year 20\_\_\_\_. Please contact me for this date.

Return to: Nancy Lampe, 2609 Stock Creek Road, Knoxville, TN 37920  
or email to nancylampe104@comcast.net



# The Connecting Link

## NEW VISIONS 2021

Thank you to Kristy Dubois for sharing an informative and inspiring account of how Wesley House has continued to be innovative in the midst of the Covid pandemic. In addition to providing quality childcare, they have developed a food ministry to deliver groceries in the neighborhoods they serve.

### Food Pantry Needs

- Baby food           Baby formula
- Baby supplies (diapers, etc.)
- Dish soap           Hand soap
- Laundry detergent
- Personal hygiene products
- Pet food            Bread
- Butter              Canned fruits and vegetables
- Canned meat/beans/protein
- Cereal              Eggs
- Lunch meats       Milk products
- Non-perishables   Oatmeal



## LOCAL UNIT NEWS

### GREEN MEADOW ELIZABETH FRANKLIN UNIT

We will be beginning a book study on Zoom. We will select one of the books from the 2021-2022 Reading list to discuss. We will have an afternoon group and an evening group.

Please share suggestions for books that you'd like to read and discuss together. You can email me your interest and suggestions: [ginny.w.case@gmail.com](mailto:ginny.w.case@gmail.com)

This is your special invitation to join the Elizabeth Franklin Circle of Green Meadow as we expand our concepts of mission through the global ministries of the church. For the past several months, we have "visited" with folks in mission as far away as Willow, Alaska and San Francisco, and as close to home as Pennington Gap, Sneedville, and Knoxville. Guided by Ginny West Case, our "ZOOM leader" and Carol Green, our vice president, we have had the opportunity to learn first-hand from the leaders of mission projects that we as United Methodist Women support.

Our meetings are the third Monday of the month at 6:00 and include a short business session, sharing from the UMW Prayer Calendar, and our guest speaker. It's easy to join us. Just log in at [ginny.w.case@gmail.com](mailto:ginny.w.case@gmail.com). Ginny will take care of the rest!

Our programs through the remainder of the year are as follows:

- |          |                                                                                                |
|----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| June 21  | Learning in Community (Mission u)<br>Susan Daffron                                             |
| July 19  | Creation Care - Interfaith Power and Light<br>Jennifer Alldredge                               |
| Aug 16   | Advocacy for Fair-Wage Practices<br>Personal stories of advocacy for immigrants<br>Judy Lovely |
| Sept. 20 | Persistence in Mission: 150 Legacy Fund<br>Barbara Campbell<br>Brooks-Howell Home, Asheville   |
| Oct. 17  | UMW Sunday—Tabitha Damron, Director<br>New Hope Children's Advocacy Center                     |
| Nov. 15  | World Thank Offering                                                                           |
| Dec. 20  | Pledge Service                                                                                 |

Elizabeth Franklin needed a project during her confinement during Covid. She learned that blankets were needed for the immigrants who were coming through Knoxville on buses. True to Elizabeth's grace-filled life, she has made these beautiful quilts for our neighbors who are traveling to new homes. She is amazing grace personified.

## LOCAL UNIT NEWS

### TUCKALEECHEE UMW

The Tuckaleechee UMW recently spent a wonderful and inspiring morning touring The Wears Valley Ranch. What a fantastic facility they have, and what a great service they provide for children whose home lives have been disrupted for a variety of reasons. It was a blessing to see God's work through the leadership the staff provides and to know that the mission funds we contribute are helping to change lives.

Our next fund-raising project will be our annual Fall Festival to be held October 14, 2021. We look forward to being able to hold our festival once again, and invite all our friends and neighbors to join us for a fun day. As always, we will have our craft and bake sale, as well as a quilt raffle. In addition to the quilt, we will have a lovely side table provided by a talented wood craftsman in our congregation. Of course, we will also have lunch and dinner served by the UMW ladies. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us for a great day in the mountains!



### FAIRVIEW UMW

Fairview UMW held their Dogwood Luncheon on Saturday, May 1, 2021 in the Gym of our church. We had 51 ladies attend with Masks and Social Distancing. We served a pre made and pre packaged lunch of Chicken Salad Croissants, Broccoli Salad, Fruit Salad, Chips and a Lemon Cookie for dessert. Our speaker was our own Joy Rainwater. She used the theme "Knitted Together for God's Good Work" and her life and experiences as a pastor's wife. Through heartfelt recollections laced with humor, she reinforced the realization that as individual threads we may be lacking, but "Knitted Together" we create a strong fabric of love and Christian faith.

In other news, our circles have been meeting in person since January 2021. Some have met in the larger classrooms of the church with masks and social distancing and others have met outside in our Youth pavilion. Each circle has been using the program booklet and doing a monthly mission project or collections. Our circles have sent cards to our shut-ins, collected money for Raising a Voice, collected packs of cookies for our food pantry, provided items for Wesley House, and collected items for our pantry Christmas store. These are just a few things they have been busy doing. The Ladies of Fairview may not be able to "Knit," but they have come up with some very creative ways to reach out to our community doing God's Good Work and Knitting us all together.





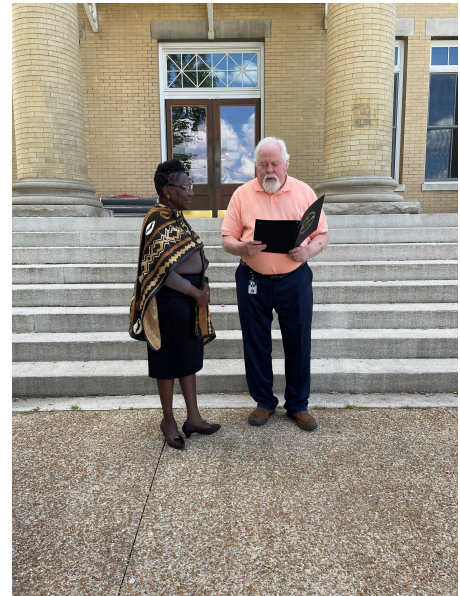
# HOLSTON CONFERENCE UMW TAKE A STAND ON RACIAL INJUSTICE

On a warm spring day, members of the United Methodist Women of the Holston Conference gathered at the steps of the Blount County Courthouse in Maryville as Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell presented Holston Conference United Methodist Women President Donna Mosby with a Proclamation recognizing the establishment of the Holston Conference United Methodist Women's Charter for Racial Justice.

In 1978, the Women's Division (now United Methodist Women) of the United Methodist General Board of Global Ministries created and adopted the Charter for Racial Justice. The Charter was adopted by the whole denomination in 1980. The Holston Conference UMW now has a policy encouraging members to work together to live out the tenants of the Charter and create increased opportunities for inclusion, accountability, and growth across racial lines.

Since our founding in 1869, United Methodist Women have fought for racial justice and against racial discrimination. From sending female educators and doctors to India in 1869 to sending missionaries around the world, the United Methodist Women became the women's mission organization of The United Methodist Church in 1973.

"This is our legacy," Mosby said at the reading of the Proclamation. Given the racial unrest that continues today and is spreading across communities and churches, the time is right to bring education and acceptance to the forefront. UMW is encouraging action through advocacy and civil engagement. Mosby asks us to participate in community events and help organize them if none are planned.



Blount County Mayor Ed Mitchell reads the Proclamation to Holston Conference UMW President Donna Mosby.



United Methodist Women members join Donna Mosby and Ed Mitchell for the reading of the Proclamation.



**THIS IMAGE REPRESENTS UNITED METHODIST WOMEN'S COMMITMENT TO WORK FOR RACIAL JUSTICE. IT SYMBOLIZES A WORLD OF RACIALLY AND ETHNICALLY DIVERSE PEOPLES WORKING TOGETHER SIDE BY SIDE TO CREATE A WORLD IN WHICH EVERY PERSON HAS A VOICE, RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ABUNDANT LIFE. WITHIN THE IMAGE ARE TWO HANDS JOINED TOGETHER TO WORK FOR JUSTICE FOR ALL GOD'S CHILDREN.**



## Mission u 2021

# There's Far More Here THAN MEETS THE EYE

So we're not giving up. How could we! Even though on the outside it often looks like things are falling apart on us, on the inside, where God is making new life, not a day goes by without [God's] unfolding grace. [...] There's far more here than meets the eye. The things we see now are here today, gone tomorrow. But the things we can't see now will last forever.

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2021 MISSION U  
JOIN US **July 23-24, 2021**

**Online Registration:** <https://holston-reg.brtaapp.com/2021Missionu>

*We have known and felt what it is like when "things are falling apart on us." We have experienced a great unraveling that has shifted, quite literally, everything.*

*Could there be, as 2 Corinthians puts it, "far more here than meets the eye"?*

**Mission u**, like many activities in our lives, has moved **online**. While virtual, we are still creating spaces for spiritual community, lifelong friendships, lessons that change us and our communities, and spiritual practices that arrive when we need them most. In a time when it looks like things are falling apart on us, God's grace is still unfolding and life is being made new. Indeed: There's far more here than meets the eye. Will you join us?

*At our upcoming **Mission u**, we will examine anxiety, the culture of violence that impacts children in and out of schools, and how we as God's people can deepen our moral witness and respond faithfully.*

Our 2021 **Mission u** will offer the following studies:

**Finding Peace in an Anxious World**, edited by Erin James-Brown

**Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools** by Monique Morris **Bearing Witness in the Kingdom: Living Into the Church's Moral Witness**

**Through Radical Discipleship** by Darryl W. Stephens

**Becoming Peacemakers in a Culture of Violence: A Curriculum for Youth Leaders**  
by Jay Godfrey

Smoky Mountain District Mission u team members are Susan Daffron (Dean), Kim Hill (Assistant Dean), Lori Sluder, Tim Jones, Ben Smith, Donna Camper, Deborah Carte, Kacye Castenir, Sandra Guinn, Janie Hull, Karen Adair, and Tawana Teague.

***Holston Conference United Methodist Women 2021 Mission Giving Focus  
The Bethlehem Center • Chattanooga, Tennessee***

The Bethlehem Center is one of the two *National Mission Institutions* located in the Holston Conference, (Wesley House Community Center, Knoxville being the other) and is the 2021 Mission Giving Focus. Born out of two separate Methodist ministries; The Good Shepherd Fold daycare, run by Reverend Sallie Crenshaw, and the Wesley House, established by Mrs. Miriam Brock, the now known Bethlehem Center offers programs for children, youth, adults, and the community.



Photograph above, two elementary girls pictured outside The Bethlehem Center, Chattanooga.

During this time of COVID 19, the Bethlehem Center has partnered with Hamilton County Schools to launch Virtual Learning Centers whereby students gather in small groups, under the supervision of qualified adults to engage in remote learning. This partnership ensures students who are learning remotely have support and supervision when needed.

Other programs offered include Read to Lead After School Academy and Camp Restart which provides children with a safe place after school where they can grow academically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually and provides children with adventure-filled summers that includes science, technology, art, reading, and more.

Programs and activities for youth include leadership training and mentoring programs like the Bethlehem Leadership Unit (B.L.U.), the Independent Youth Services Foundation (IYSF), Boys to Men at the Beth, and the Omega Lamplighters, all seeking to empower high school youth with the tools they need to be effective citizens. The primary focus of these mentoring programs is to stress personal and social development with educational, cultural, social, emotional, and psychological activities. They are designed to provide good life skills and prepare them to become successful and contributing members of the community.

Other happenings for children include a sports program and The Nehemiah Project. Being a part of one of the sports leagues encourages growth and togetherness, develops skills such as trust and teamwork. Partnering with other agencies, The Nehemiah Project provides backpacks and school supplies to ensure children have basic items they need to do well in school.

Adult programs include Faith and Finances which provides faith-based support for financial stability, Building Stable Lives provides life coaches in neighborhoods to empower participants to develop social and economic independence, and Impact1!, a mentoring program for men who strive to achieve their goals and are provided with employment assistance.

The Bethlehem Center also partners with other agencies and provides four Community Outreach programs that support families in the areas of economic empowerment, leadership & spiritual development, and connection to resources.



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**Smoky Mountain  
District United  
Methodist Women**

**Communications Coordinator**  
Kim Hill  
1504 Aberdeen Drive  
Alcoa, TN 37701

Email:  
kimhillumw@gmail.com

Address Service Requested

**A NEW Virtual United Methodist Women Unit Being Formed!**

Are you looking for a UMW unit to join? Perhaps you know of someone looking for a unit to join?

There is a place for you! Meetings will take place over ZOOM and will use BASECAMP as a platform for documents and resources. More information to come!

Organized by Lori Sluder - if you are interested contact her at LoriLSluder@gmail.com with your name, email address, church, and district.