



The Connecting Link

SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT UNITED METHODIST

Holston
Conference

Smoky
Mountain
District

Local
Unit

MARCH 2021

Upcoming Events

Day Apart Zoom Event
April 17, 2021
Link to Zoom Event on page 2

Mission u Zoom Event
July 23-24, 2021
More information later

Social Action Event
August 21, 2021

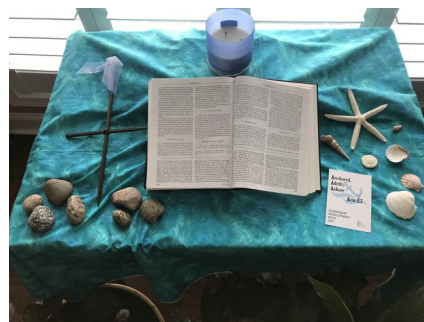


THE JOURNEY

Greetings, Smoky Mountain District United Methodist Women! We have arrived in this new year with renewed hope of better todays and tomorrows. At the end of January, I attended the United Methodist Women Leadership Development Days, LDD, with 700 other United Methodist Women from the United States. The event was held virtually. Holston Conference UMW had 26 Officers and District Presidents in attendance. It was a wonderful time of worship and learning. I was so impressed with the National United Methodist Women staff! Our scripture for the weekend was Acts 27. "This exciting passage details how Paul, a prisoner being taken to Rome, is on a ship that sails into a storm. After two weeks in the storm, the sailors are forced to run the ship aground on an unknown shore – but Paul has faith that all will be saved." The opening worship service featured Garlinda Burton, Deaconess and interim General Secretary of the General Commission on Religion and Race. She talked about all of us being in a state of brokenness at times. Truly each one of us has all fallen on hard times; our world is currently going through a hard time. Garlinda says we must look "beyond earthly anchors to the all-loving redeeming power of Jesus Christ." I was able to meet with other District Presidents from all over the United States for a time of sharing and brainstorming. Even though we had never met one another, we had so much in common. I truly felt the sisterhood of United Methodist Women. We were encouraged to create a home prayer space (mine is shown below) and share pictures for all LDD participants to see. I enjoyed seeing these throughout the weekend. They were all very different, yet all had a welcoming and inviting feel. I was very blessed by attending LDD and will share more with you throughout the year.

I will close with a verse of one of the LDD songs: "Spirit, open my heart to the joy and pain of living. As you love, may I love in receiving and giving. Spirit, open my heart." That is my prayer for the Smoky Mountain District United Methodist Women this year. May our hearts be open to live out the Holston Conference UMW logo, *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.** May God bless you in the storms of life and may you be anchored in Jesus Christ!

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/>

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SPIRITUAL GROWTH—SPRING 2021

Dear UMW Sisters,

Greetings! I am blessed to now be your Mission Coordinator for Spiritual Growth of the Smoky Mountain District. I have been a grateful United Methodist for over 30 years and have been blessed to serve in various UMW offices since joining in 1993. I served on the former Maryville District UMW team as Vice President, Mission Coordinator for Social Action, as Program Resources Coordinator, and served as Unit President and in other offices of my home church unit.

My husband Mickey and I moved to Tennessee 18 years ago and just love it! As I write this my mind turns to spring in the mountains and by the time you read this, it will be here! Spring is a time of new beginnings here in East Tennessee as the flowers begin to bud and days warm up. Despite the March winds...and the cold and isolating Covid-19 atmosphere we have endured, we begin to prune and plant and look for new growth.

Just as we look to our gardens, we should also welcome new growth in our faith. Being new in this position I have prayed for guidance, and I have been in touch with my Holston Conference counterpart, Pat Bellingrath, to help navigate our spiritual growth path this year. A good place to start is the 2021-2022 UMW Reading Program for pertinent and timely publications to help us cope with the continuing challenges of this world.

Pat recommends *Finding Peace in an Anxious World*, in the Spiritual Growth Category. It is edited by Erin-James Brown and is a mission study using the book of Proverbs and "The Serenity Prayer" as a guide to help Christians find their way through anxiety, worry and fear and move towards God's peace, which surpasses all understanding. Pat says, "*Finding Peace* is extremely relevant and a great book to help find some inner peace in this crazy world." She also highly recommends *Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship*. Her local unit has done studies on both these books and says they are wonderful! They are great to read alone or to use in a study.

Pat also encourages us for the upcoming Lenten season, that we simply find a devotional to use, focus on our daily prayer, and instead of "giving up" something for Lent, try "adding something" to our lives that will give purpose and meaning. A great suggestion!

To find many resources for study and enrichment, go to <https://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org> and click on Reading Program. You may get books through community book stores or order on amazon.com. You can also visit smile.amazon.com, Amazon's charitable giving page, and select "United Methodist Women" as your

charitable organization, for all eligible purchases made on smile.amazon.com.

If you are interested in an inspiring Daily Devotional through Holston Conference you may request it be emailed to you by going to www.holston.org. Click on the "Daily Devotional" button at the top of the page and then click on the button "Join My Mailing List."

I look forward to a year of spiritual growing with you! You may reach me at clsylvester@outlook.com or 865-567-5138.

Blessings & Happy Spring!

Cassie Sylvester
Mission Coordinator - Spiritual Growth

"It cannot be that the people should grow in grace unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will be a knowing people." John Wesley

DISTRICT SOCIAL ACTION EVENT 2021 SAVE THE DATE

Ladies, can you believe we have been in the throes of this pandemic for a year now? We have learned many new ways to cope with our "new normal" way of life! The greatest challenge for UMW members is to go "virtual" and not meet in person and see our sisters in Christ. With that being said, it is time to begin making plans once again for our District-wide social action event. This year will mark our second annual co-event with the Tennessee Valley District. Presently, we are planning on a virtual event like last year unless the pandemic changes greatly with the vaccine and cases between now and then. Last year's event proved to have record numbers virtually. Let's make that happen again. Our date is August 21, 2021 and is to be recorded once again at Central United Methodist Church in Lenoir City, TN. Further updates will be forthcoming as we get closer. Please mark your calendars and save the date. A topic is still being arranged at this time. Let us remember during these uncertain times my favorite passage of scripture, Phillipians 4:13 **"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."**

Social Action Chair

Alice Nichols



LOCAL UNIT SECRETARY – PLEASE KEEP US UP TO DATE ON OFFICER CHANGES

Thanks for your efforts during our unusual 2020 with many events canceled and many more going virtual. Even if units don't meet in person, we have made new ways to keep in touch with our sisters in United Methodist Women and our communities. Postal mail, phone calls, texts, email, and ZOOM (a word we didn't even know a year ago!) help bridge the loneliness gap for those who are not able to socialize as before.

Keep up the MISSION work. Pray for one another each day and find ways to encourage, inspire and support one another. Our mission is only slightly different now that we need to find new ways to get God's word and works done.

Everyone always wants to know what is going on, and it is impossible to communicate if we do not have correct contact information, so please keep me up to date on your Local Unit officers.

Please contact me at any time if you have questions! **We truly appreciate your willingness to serve as a Local Unit Secretary.** We literally could not carry on our business of mission to women, children, and youth around the world without you!!!

Blessings!

Sandra Guinn
Smoky Mountain District UMW Secretary
408 E 3rd Ave.
Lenoir City, TN 37771
sjguinn336@charter.net

TREASURER'S REPORT

Hello Ladies,

As I write this, Groundhog Day has just passed, and I believe Punxsy Phil decreed six more weeks of winter. Since it is also six more weeks until Spring, it's all a matter of perspective, isn't it? February 2nd is much more special to my family and me than simply waiting to hear from the furry prognosticator, though. It's the birthday of my maternal Grandmother. Grandma would have been 104 this year. She passed away in November 2019 at 102, less than 3 months shy of her 103rd birthday. With the benefit of hindsight, it was a blessing that she

passed before the pandemic hit, since we wouldn't have been able to visit or assist in her care in her last year.

We have a family reunion every Labor Day weekend with Grandma's side of the family (she was the second youngest of 15!). 2020 was the first year the reunion had to be cancelled since it began in the 1950's? 1960's? – and it was very strange to not have that annual connection with extended family. One of our favorite traditions is having a family sing. We sing favorite hymns (and always end with the Hallelujah Chorus!). However, we always start "the sing" with our family theme song, He Leadeth Me. I know we all know it well, but I'd like to share the lyrics here with you.

He leadeth me: O blessed thought! O words with heavenly comfort fraught!
What-e'er I do, where-e'er I be, Still 'tis God's hand that leadeth me.

Sometimes mid scenes of deepest gloom, Sometimes where Eden's bowers bloom,
By waters still o'er troubled sea, Still 'tis his hand that leadeth me.

Lord, I would place my hand in thine, Nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see, Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

And when my task on earth is done, When by thy grace the victory's won,
E'en death's cold wave I will not flee, Since God through Jordan leadeth me.

He leadeth me, he leadeth me, By his own hand he leadeth me;
His faithful follower I would be, For by his hand he leadeth me.

The past 14 months have been so terrible for so many. But even in the darkest times, God is with us. May we always remember this, and help those who are struggling to remember this, too. My prayer for 2021 is for this pandemic to end, and for us all to let the Lord lead us through our days. God bless you; and I pray we can see each other in person someday soon.

Kim Henry
Treasurer

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SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT DAY APART SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2021

Mitzi Sadler-Thorne will be the Featured Speaker for our District Day Apart via ZOOM in April. Her topic is **“My Path and Service as Deaconess.”**



Mitzi says, “I am proud to say that I have been a United Methodist all my life. I have been involved with the United Methodist Women, it seems most of my life and attended many meetings and activities with my mother. I have made so many friends as a United Methodist Woman! I am married to Rocky and have

two lovely daughters Hannah and Hali, and a nephew, Seth, living with us in Narrows, VA.

We attend the First United Methodist Church of Narrows, Virginia. I am also the New River District UMW President.”

Mitzi’s past service includes the Holston Conference Social Action Coordinator. She was also the Dean and Assistant Dean for Mission u and has taught the children’s study at Mission u for several years. She also served as the Program Resource Coordinator for the Tazewell District. Alongside her husband, she helps facilitate the Discipleship Bible Study at Bland Correctional Center, a multi-custody facility located in Bland, VA, and operated by the Virginia Department of Corrections with a housing capacity of 650 male inmates.

Mitzi became a Deaconess in May of 2020 and her ministry is as Special Education Teacher at Pikeview Middle School in Princeton, West Virginia. She shared, “This year and last have been challenging for all we teachers, students, and families because of the pandemic!” “I so look forward to my time with you, my Smoky Mountain District UMW friends, and in sharing my path in becoming and serving as Deaconess. I hope to encourage others to become involved as well.”

A Zoom invitation will be sent out soon. Please mark your calendars to join us and learn more about our Mitzi and her path and service.

Cassie Sylvester
Mission Coordinator - Spiritual Growth

DAY APART 2021– MISSION GIVING OPPORTUNITY TO HELP HOMELESS

Dear Friends,

In the past, we’ve offered a hands-on mission opportunity for the Day Apart event. This year, due to Covid-19 restrictions and for safety, we’re taking the “hands-on” off, that is, simply requesting your monetary donations for two critical mission organizations which help the homeless.

Jesus said it in Matt. 28:20, in the Great Commission, “...go out into ALL of the world,” so we’re requesting your support for Shades of Grace UMC in Kingsport, TN and Proverbs 3:27 Mission Center, Hunt Memorial UMC, Bristol, VA. Your donation will be split between both.

AT THIS TIME, JUST MONETARY DONATIONS PLEASE! Make your check out to: SMOKY MOUNTAIN DISTRICT UMW with Day Apart Mission on the memo line and mail to: Kim Henry, PO Box 5061, Maryville, TN 37802. Thank you for your generosity!

[Here’s info from the local Pastors about their outreach passion and how they help the homeless:](#)

Shades of Grace, a United Methodist Congregation is a new church start in the Holston Conference, which began in 2014.

We provide cremation, burial, and funeral services for homeless individuals that are unclaimed. At our most recent internment service in October, we buried the remains of 22 persons. We serve a daily community meal to anyone who shows up. We have a clothing closet that assists with emergencies and recently released inmates. We purchase birth certificates and photo identification for anyone requesting them. We have a community mailbox where many homeless persons receive mail.

Shades of Grace is the closest thing whom some call home. We pay co-pay’s for insured persons who may be unable to afford their prescription (non-narcotic).

We recently began an international outreach in Nigeria, Africa. We send monthly offerings to this project which is called Shades of Grace Uzoma. We are currently sending money to build (bore) holes for 4 fresh-water wells. The pandemic is just now beginning to

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Day Apart Mission, continued

appear in those villages and our assistance is an answer to prayer.

We offer a weekly worship service at 4 p.m. on Sundays which is also live streamed to over 54 countries in the world. We have baptized 95 persons since we began this ministry. We also offer bible studies, grief support, and G.E.D. classes.

Shades of Grace has been closed to public gatherings since March 2020, but our staff continues to work each day in the building meeting needs as they arise.

We seek to be an inclusive congregation where all people are welcome, and no one will face discrimination because of who they are. Jesus loves us all.

Sincerely, Pastor Will Shewey, Shades of Grace UMC, [313 E Sullivan St, Kingsport, TN 37660](https://www.facebook.com/shadesofgracekingssport.org/) Tel: (423) 765-2440. Email: wshewey@aol.com

More info on our website at

<https://shadesofgracekingssport.org/> or see us on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=shades%20of%20grace%20a%20united%20methodist%20congregation>

Proverbs 3:27 Mission Center at Hunt Memorial United Methodist Church began as a dream for Pastor Caroline Hawthorne about four years ago. Hunt Memorial UMC has always worked with low-income families in our neighborhood, but one Christmas found out that one of our families was actually living in their car. Through much prayer and support, we began opening our church doors when the daytime high temperature did not rise above the freezing mark. That first year we opened our doors a handful of times and the donations began pouring in. Local churches donated food, blankets, hats, gloves, and socks. It then became our mission to reach out to homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless.

In July 2020, this dream became more of a reality as the Pastor received a full-time appointment at only our church to be able to fully concentrate solely on our church and mission. We are working on becoming a full-time Day Center in Bristol, VA for homeless individuals and opening our doors year-round Monday through Friday 9:00 – 4:00.

Our guidance comes from Proverbs 3:27: *“Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to help them.”* Currently we are providing the following services:

*Shelter during inclement weather – when the daytime high temperature hovers at 32 degrees, we open our doors as a daytime warming shelter *Breakfast and lunch are served on daytime warming shelter days *Mondays we provide sack lunches to the homeless (hot lunch during non-COVID times) *Mail receipt for those with no permanent mailing address *Blankets, sleeping bags, bed rolls, coats and jackets, gloves and hats, and clothing through our clothes closet *Toiletries and hygiene items; toilet paper *Showers, restrooms, and laundry facilities *Motel assistance (Thanksgiving lunch and Christmas gifts) to those staying at the local motel through People Inc. (Rodeway Inn) *Food assistance and Laundry *Transportation and help moving to transitional and permanent housing *Referrals to United Way, People Inc., and Salvation Army for services they may provide (i.e. overnight accommodations, motel, bus tickets, groceries, etc.) *Referrals to Frontier Health and Ballad Health as needed for services they may provide (i.e. counseling, inpatient therapy, after surgical care, etc.) *Referrals to Bristol Faith in Action and Salvation Army for services they may provide (i.e. utilities, rent, etc.).

Funding is appreciated for our immediate goals as follows: Lockers so individuals can store some of their belongings * Partnering with our local Family Promise affiliation to become a full-time Day Center * Partnering with Crossroads Medical Mission to provide free healthcare to homeless individuals * Partnering with Bristol TN & Bristol VA Housing Authorities to help move individuals into permanent housing * Capital Campaign to build additional showers and laundry facilities onto our church, a new roof on our church house which is where the shower & laundry facilities are now located * Funding funeral services for homeless individuals * Funding utility and rent assistance.

Thanks & Blessings,
Caroline Trinkle Hawthorne, Pastor, Hunt Memorial UMC & Proverbs 3:27 Mission, 824-826 Harmeling Street, Bristol, VA 24201
Tel: 276.821.3023 office 423.963.9703 cell 423.968.3568 home, contact us at proverbs327Mission@gmail.com or see us on Facebook.

Cassie Sylvester
Mission Coordinator - Spiritual Growth



Mission u

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.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18, The Message (MSG)

SAVE THE DATE FOR 2021 MISSION U
JOIN US July 23-24, 2021
Registration Information will be available soon

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 Kin-dom: 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, Beverly Hayden, Janie Hull, Janet Jonas, and Tawana Teague.

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LAY SERVANT TRAINING GOES ONLINE

Tim Jones, Director of Communications, Holston Conference, The United Methodist Church

Holston Conference's Lay Servant Training will be offered online through Zoom meetings in 2021.

Classes begin on Saturday, February 27, and will continue through Saturday, May 1, excluding April 3 (Easter weekend). Each district will offer a class. Every class begins at 9 a.m.

Cost for each class is \$10, plus the cost of the book. You must register through the district teaching the class. Download the District Registration Form from <https://www.holston.org/lay-servant-training>.

Here are the classes offered by district, topic, date and instructor:

- **Feb. 27** | Scenic South | Basic Course | Becky Hall
- **March 6** | Tennessee Valley | Polity of UMC | Rev. Dennie Humphreys
- **March 13** | Three Rivers | Spiritual Gifts | Rev. Michael Vaughn
- **March 20** | New River | Heritage of UMC | Rev. Kim Goddard
- **March 27** | Smoky Mountain | Preaching | Rev. Paul Seay
- **April 10** | Clinch Mountain | Worship | Rev. Caroline Hawthorne
- **April 17** | Appalachian | Polity of UMC | Rev. Jackie McGowan
- **April 24** | Hiwassee | Heritage of UMC | Rev. Hugh Kilgore
- **May 1** | Mountain View | Prayer | Stacey Morgan C.L.M.

For more information, contact Bobby Stair at bsstair@comcast.net.





Smoky Mountain District United Methodist Women

Communications Coordinator

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