



United Women in Faith  
El Camino Real District Newsletter

September - Q3 2023 Issue

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

**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 December, 2023. The deadline for articles and photos to be submitted is December 8, 2023.

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## President's Message

*Debbie Ow*  
*President*  
*ECRD District United Women in Faith*

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## Treasurer's Report

### PLEDGE ACCOUNT

Pledges/Donations received (Jan-May)	\$22,515.71
1st qtr. remittances to conference UMW	\$ 7,198.25
Mission Springs offering sent to Marina	\$ 1,000.00
Interest received	\$ 0.17
<b>May 31, 2023 balance</b> (To be sent on June 30)	<b>\$14,250.90</b>

### ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT

Connect & Learn expenses	\$ 100.00
Mission Springs deposits	\$ 7,907.00

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Mission Springs expenses	\$ 9,408.20
Jan-May Communication expenses	\$ 247.50
Jan-May Admin. Expenses	\$ 80.23
<b>May 31, 2023 balance</b>	<b>\$ 4,183.62</b>

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

Thank you all for your dedication to raising funds to support the many United Women in Faith ministries. The Mission Springs offering of \$1,000 was sent to Marina UMC to help support a Ukrainian refugee family that the church is sponsoring. The family was very grateful to receive this gift.

An updated remittance form can be found at

<https://elcaminorealumw.org/treasurer-information/>

*Carolyn Bircher*  
*ECRD Treasurer*

Book Review: <TBD>

*Carolyn Bircher*  
*ECRD Secretary of Program Resources*

### Love in Action – Wesley UWF’s Project for G.E.M.



Back in February of this year, Wesley UWF sent 70 fleece heart kits to a G.E.M. (Girls Embracing Mothers) program at a Gatesville prison in Central Texas. Enough kits were sent to the program so that this activity could be done more than once.

Once a month, girls with incarcerated mothers are transported by bus for a special 4-hour visit with their mothers. During the visit, mother and daughter are able to bond and do activities together. Check out the heartwarming photos sent showing mom and daughter making their fleece pillows together.



Love in action can take many forms. No act of kindness is too small. It is very inspiring and heartwarming to realize our work can be very impactful.

The work of the G.E.M. organization aligns closely with the UWF's core commitment to addressing mass incarceration and criminalization of communities of color. The G.E.M. organization has a longstanding commitment to support women and girls.

The G.E.M. organization was founded by Brittany K. Barnett. Her book, "A Knock at Midnight: Story of Hope, Justice, and Freedom," is one of the 2023 UWF Reading Program Books.

~ Terri Koike, Wesley UWF



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## Sally Vonner – Putting One Foot in Front of the Other



If someone had asked you three years ago if you would be attending a July ceremony for our women's group in Dallas, Texas, you probably would have said that it wasn't likely. But thanks to the Internet, the installation in Texas of Sally Lee Vonner as General Secretary and CEO of United Women In Faith on Saturday, July 29, was watched by 1500 viewers around the world and included some from our El Camino Real District UWF. Many members of Sally's large family were in the room, including her daughter Lessie who played the trumpet beautifully for her mother's special day, but

Sally's sister Carolyn couldn't be there in person and was watching online with the rest of us.

The installation was held at Lovers Lane United Methodist Church. In his introductory words, the pastor referred to his church's spectacular stained-glass windows depicting the cosmos and online viewers could glimpse their brilliant colors. The ceremony was filled with music, provided by a team from the neighboring St. Luke United Methodist Church, whose soloist and marvelous pianist found no song to be too difficult. St. Luke's liturgical dancers, dressed in blue and purple, signed in ASL "Faith," "Hope," and "Love" in action, accompanied by their church's drummers.

A brief video of Sally Vonner's life began with photos of her childhood and showed viewers how Sally's extensive training and work experience have prepared her for the very demanding work ahead.

The installation ended with an anointing ceremony for Sally where several special oils were combined, carrying out the theme scripture from Luke 4:18 that said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me." United Women in Faith President 'Ainise 'Isama'u presented the beautiful carafe of oils to Sally as a keepsake. At the end of the ceremony, the entire congregation was invited to be anointed, too, in support of Sally's new role.

The closing song was the theme music of the day, "You gotta put one foot in front of the other and lead with love."

To watch the 90-minute service for yourself, click on the link below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uBWDRaGt7ZY&t=170s>

~ Bonnie Home, Almaden Hills UWF

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## Katherine Parker Comes to Wesley UMC



On August 21, the Wesley United Women in Faith hosted a presentation and project with Katherine Parker, who is a missionary in Nepal. Terri Koike of Wesley UWF did a wonderful job of planning and organizing this event.

Katherine is a missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church and she is a advisor working with the [United Mission to Nepal \(UMN\)](#). The UMN is an ecumenical organization focused on "fullness of life for all in a transformed Nepali society."

Katherine's main focus areas are:

- Adolescent empowerment, including sexual reproductive health and rights, mental health, and menstrual hygiene
- Dignity for migrant workers, and
- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Before lunch, Katherine talked about Nepal and her work there. While Nepal is relatively small, there are no less than 12 different ethnic groups and many more languages. Nepal is on an interesting time zone -15 minutes between India and China, because they want to stay neutral.

Katherine spoke about some of the harmful traditions, such as isolating women in small huts during their menstrual cycles. However, she also cautioned us to consider the feelings of the women

involved in the practice. Some women actually saw that time as a respite from cooking and the many chores that make life in Nepal particularly challenging for women.

Much of Katherine's work in Nepal is educational, helping people understand when their traditions can be harmful, but doing so in a culturally sensitive manner. She also uses her background in microbiology. For example, storage She has been involved in mapping water sources, and delivery, in order to ensure that the water isn't contaminated.

Lunch was a wonderful potluck treat! I think everyone enjoyed from the wonderful food and fellowship! For those of us not from Wesley, it was such a tasty and welcoming luncheon!



involved menstrual girls in

enjoyed from

involved menstrual girls in



The event project making reusable products for women and Nepal. A panty-shield with a leak-proof barrier and inserts that could be changed out easily were made during the project portion of the event. There were many different tasks, but as they say "many hands make light work". It was a very productive day! We made a total of 39 shields and 78 liners.

Katherine will be returning to California in November of this year. She is seeking to establish covenant relationships with churches here. If your church would like to have her come and speak with you, you can contact her by email at [kparker@umcmmission.org](mailto:kparker@umcmmission.org). Katherine's blog is found at the following URL: <https://bokashi.blogspot.com> You can subscribe to her newsletters on that site. Look for the "Stay in Touch" tab.



Many thanks to Terri Koike and the Wesley UWF for organizing and hosting this event!

If you would like to see the slides that Katherine shared with us, they are located on our Google Drive: [Katherine Parker Slides](#).

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## Coming Events

**October 6, 2023 – Annual Celebration.** We will have our annual celebration at Good Samaritan UMC at 9:30 a.m. Form more detailed information. Our speakers are Deb St. Julien and Sigrid Jacobsen, both members of SURJ. For more detailed information, please view the [online flyer](#).

**Katherine Parker**, United Methodist Missionary to Nepal, will be back in town during the month of November. If you haven't already heard her speak, you may want to attend one of these events:

- **Thursday, November 9**, 12:30 P.M at Watsonville First United Methodist Church.
- **Saturday, November 11**, 1:30 P.M. at Good Samaritan UMC, Cupertino.

For a small article about Katherine's visit to Wesley UMC, refer to this issue.

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## Around the District

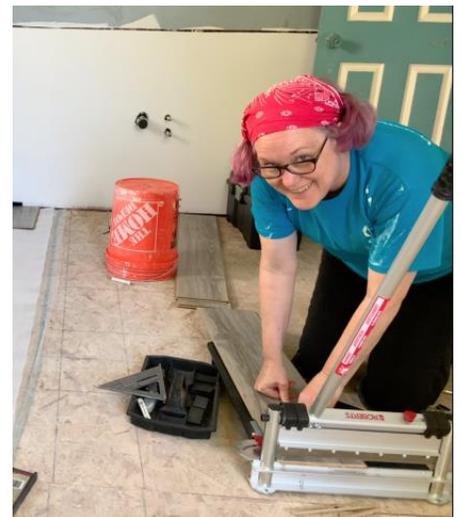
*If you have a photo or announcement about a local unit event, feel free to submit it. We will try to publish some things in this section that may trigger ideas for other units.*



**Watsonville UWF members** participated in cleanup efforts for the Pajaro Dunes disaster which brought flooding and infrastructure failures to residents of that community. A total of 240 single family homes, 42 multi-family dwellings and 81 commercial dwellings were damaged, as well as the Pajaro Middle School.

The water was contaminated and the sewage system was completely destroyed.

The Watsonville UWF provided volunteer groups with meals throughout the summer!





**Wesley UWF's Gem Project.** Please refer to the longer article in this issue about the [G.E.M. project](#). Wesley UWF, led by Terri Koike sent 70 kits to the G.E.M. organization in Texas.

**SURJ event.** UWF members from around the district attend SURJ event. Find out more about [SURJ San Jose Chapter here](#).



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## Communications Update

This summer, we've been having some tutorial sessions about the various technologies and tasks used to communicate with our District. Leslie Fisk and Joyce Wilkerson have spent many hours attending these and practicing their skills. I can't thank them enough for their attention and dedication! I feel confident the district will be in excellent hands for 2024!

For those who may still be interested in helping with the Communications tasks for 2024, we have posted the materials and the recordings on our website. Go to "Education and Training", "Communications Tutorials" to access them. I've also forwarded a link to the tutorial page to Jo Neish at the conference level, as some of the skills are generic, so they may have use beyond our district.

If you are interested in helping with the Communications efforts for 2024, please contact me ([lauriellindsey@gmail.com](mailto:lauriellindsey@gmail.com)), or anyone on the District Team.

*Laurie Lindsey*  
[Communications Coordinator](#)

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## Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. Once again, I want to thank Bonnie Home for her wonderful editing skills which she has so generously employed to assist me in preparation of the Mission Link Newsletter!

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(Any misspelling, errors or typos are mine alone).

*Laurie*