



United Women in Faith
El Camino Real District Newsletter

In this Issue:

- [President's Message](#)
- [Treasurer's Report](#)
- [Annual Celebration 2024](#)
- [Remembering Our Saints](#)
- [Reading Program](#)
- [The Tlingit Tribe of Southwest Alaska](#)
- [Around the District](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)

October Q3 2024 Issue

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. There will be a Quarter 4 Mission link, the deadline for submitting articles, information and photographs will be Friday, December 20.

President's Message



Do you ever have those days when everything is wrong? There seems to be too many things to do and you don't want to do any of them? I have been having some days like that lately. Part of it was that I got COVID at the end of my trip to Peru so I didn't feel good. But really, some of it was just being lazy. The less you do the less you want to do.

How do you get out of a funk like that? Well, you could try eating ice cream. That provides a temporary lift but doesn't last long. I tried that. What did work for me was listing the many things that I am grateful for. I have become aware that we in the US have so much to be thankful for that we just take for granted. It's really eye-opening when you compare your life with those in other countries. That's one reason I value travel. It exposes you to different ways of living, thinking and doing.

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I had a chat with Gwyne Grubb last Sunday and we were comparing notes. She recently visited a few African countries and told me about how the people live. In the rural regions they live in family circles. The family consists of one man (of course) and then his several wives. Each wife has a hut built of cow dung. The hut has a dirt floor and a thatched roof. There is a hole in the roof to let out the smoke of cooking over an open fire. Each wife cares for her several children with no running water.

OK, ladies. Can you list 10 things you are grateful for?

Sincerely,
Debbie

Debbie Ow
President
ECRD District United Women in Faith

2024 Mission Today Awards

El Camino Real District had many local units that achieved Mission Today status in 2024. The award is based on how many objectives on the Mission Today form are completed between September 1 and August 31. My recommendation is that units use this form as a planning tool for each year and incorporate as many listed activities as possible into their planning calendar. There are four levels of achievement: FAITH – 8 objectives completed, FAITH HOPE – 10 objectives completed, FAITH HOPE JOY – 15 objectives completed, and FAITH HOPE JOY LOVE – 20 or more objectives completed.

The following units received 2024 Mission Today Awards:

FAITH: Watsonville and Cupertino Good Samaritan

FAITH HOPE: Sunnyvale, St. Paul Fremont, Marina, Santa Clara, Los Gatos, Wesley

FAITH HOPE JOY: Campbell, Willow Glen

That's a total of 10 units receiving this prestigious award.

Congratulations! These winners were honored at the Conference UWF Annual Celebration.

I challenge all of our units to use this tool in their 2025 planning. I will be presenting this format at our next President's meeting.

Debbie

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Treasurer Report - Carolyn Bircher

Thank you to all of the units that have sent in pledges! A link to the remittance form may be found at <https://elcaminorealumw.org/treasurer-information/>

The address for sending in remittances is still:

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

The offering received for UWF Missions at the district celebration was \$832. Thank you to all who contributed. A couple of units have sent remittances for missions this month, getting a head start to becoming 5-star giving units in 2025.

Here is a summary of 2024 finances. 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 UMW events and operations.

PLEDGE ACCOUNT

Mission pledges received YTD	\$36,707.25
Remittances sent to conference YTD	\$34,601.25
Remittances to be sent	\$ 3,106.00
Oct 31, 2024 balance	\$ 3,135.10

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT

2024 Receipts from CA/NV conf. UWF	\$ 2,600.00
2024 Event expenses	\$ 1,575.81
2024 Communication expenses	\$ 468.90
2024 Admin. Expenses	\$ 581.97
Oct. 31, 2024 balance	\$ 1,488.26

If you have questions, please email treasurer@elcaminorealumw.org

Carolyn Bircher
ECRD Treasurer

Annual Celebration 2024

El Camino Real Annual Celebration – Unity in Community – How do we heal?

Valley Faith United Women in Faith graciously hosted the El Camino Real 2024 Annual Celebration. Fifty people attended the morning meeting, which included a presentation from Pastor Motoe Yamada Foor and a special message from the CA/NV Conference United Women in Faith President, Linda Wright. Debbie Ow, President of the El Camino Real District, welcomed the attendees and did announce the program speakers and order of the meeting.

Pastor Foor is the Director of Adult Discipleship UMC, a delegate of the World Methodist Council and a certified coach of the International Coaching Federation. The scripture reading chosen by the Pastor was Matthew 18:15-20 and Colossians 3:12-17 and was read by Mele Kai in English and Tongan. Pastor Foor's presentation challenged the group to let go of past grievances and acknowledge that everyone receives God's grace of forgiveness to start over.



We were each given a pebble before the celebration event started and invited by her to hold the pebble and think of one past mistake we experienced. On the altar was a large, semicircular shaped bowl full of water, including a splash from the Jordan River, with small blue pebbles spread around the bowl. She encouraged us to bring the rock we had in our hand up to the bowl and drop it in to shed the burden and pick up a blue pebble as a symbol of baptism in God's grace and start afresh again.

Mary Sapigao shared about her organization, Sheltering Scholars, a program to match unhoused college students with homeowners who have a spare bedroom. Liz Pense from Willow Glen UMC also spoke about a program developed at her church called Building Hope. She encouraged the group to keep trying different avenues to help people in need: building a two-room home in Mexico, sponsoring a rotating homeless shelter for women and assisting Casitas de Esperanza, a tiny house community for families in transition housing.

There was a business meeting following the speakers. The ECRD UWF officers were introduced and our new secretary, Cheryl Harmon, was elected. CA/NV Conference United Women in Faith President, Linda Wright, shared some inspirational ideas.





Afterward a delicious lunch that included various Filipino dishes was enjoyed by all. A special thank you to the musical and technical team at Valley Faith: Mark Panelo, tech team; Lina Albano, pianist; and Joyce Samson, song leader. What's next in 2025: Watsonville UMC raised their hands to assist in UWF Celebration in El Camino Real district.

ECRD Officers for 2024

Debbie Ow - President

Carolyn Bircher - Treasurer

Cheryl Harmon - Secretary (new)

Leslie Fisk - Social Justice and Communications

Joyce Wilkinson - Communications

Mele Kei - Member at Large

Remembering Our Saints

Campbell UMC

Bertie Meehan

Cupertino-Good Samaritan

Myra Wagner

Sadie Furumasu

St. Paul UMC, Fremont

Joan Wilson should be added. (2023)

Salinas First UMC

2022 - Jerry Conley

Pat Garlinger

Betty Pettit

2023 - Annie Johnson

2024- Sharon Forrest

Karen Hall
Joan Miloch
Janet Westfall

San Jose First UMC

Nancy Hellyer

Santa Clara UM

DeLois Reynolds

Sunnyvale United Methodist Church

Lisa Evans
Celeste Lacy
Linda Marken

Wesley UWF San Jose "Saints":

Doris Yoshihara
Ann Taniguchi
Kathy Takeda
Marty Iwagaki

2025 Reading Program

The 2025 Reading Program book list is available. You can find the catalog, including photos and descriptions of all the books, at <https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program/>. It is also available in the November/December issue of *Response* magazine.

Some people prefer listening to audio books, rather than reading print. Many of the books on the Reading Program list are available as audiobooks. Some may be checked out of our local public libraries and loaded onto your smartphone or tablet, using the Hoopla or Libby app. You can find a list of each year's books at <https://elcaminorealumw.org/educate/reading-program/>. On these lists, the right-hand column shows which libraries have copies of each book. It also tells which books can be checked out as audiobooks or ebooks. Not all libraries have a particular book in those formats. If your library has the book in audio/ebook format, you can check it out on your device without leaving the comfort of home. Ask a librarian or contact me if you need help accessing the online books.

Carolyn Bircher cmbircher@gmail.com

2024 Reading Certificates

Campbell - 3 readers

Plan 2: Darlene Dyer, Patty Henderson, Melinda Knepp

Cupertino, Good Samaritan - 5 readers (4 new readers)

Plan 1: **Patricia Babiasz, Carlene Nakagawa, Kathi Turner**

Plan 3: **Barbara Shev**

Plan 4: Carolyn Bircher

Sunnyvale - 3 readers

Plan 1: Eleanor Barskey (101 years old!!!)

Plan 2: Linda Morse, Donna Phillips

Marina - 1 reader

Plan 4: Mary H. Adams

Palo Alto 1st - 1 reader

Plan 1: Nancy Olson

Salinas - 1 reader (1 new reader)

Plan 4: **Gaile Patton**

San Jose: Almaden Hills - 2 readers

Plan 1: Bonnie Home, Julie Asada

San Jose: Wesley - 1 reader (1 new reader)

Plan 1: **Mary Horio**

San Jose: Willow Glen - 1 reader

Plan 1: Debbie Ow

Earning Our 2025 Reading Certificates

A book group organized by UWF member Bonnie Home will be meeting once a month on Zoom from February through June to discuss the following five books. The group includes women from more than one church and they would enjoy having more women join them for one session or for all five. One book from each of the five required categories has been chosen and those who read all five will be given Reading Certificates at the October 2025 Celebration.

All of the books are available in the San Jose Public Library except the last one on this list. Summaries of these books are available on the United Women in Faith website and on pages 24-39 of the November/December "Response" magazine.

Education For Mission –

"After the Last Border: Two Families & the Story of Refuge in America" by Jessica Goude

Leadership Development –
“A Right Worthy Woman” by Ruth P. Watson

Nurturing For Community –
“All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir” by Nicole Chung

Social Action –
“The Sun Does Shine” by Anthony Ray Hinton

Spiritual Growth
“Spiritual Practiced for Soul Care” by Barbara L. Peacock (A BONUS BOOK that can be used twice)

To join the group discussion, email Bonnie Home at bonstance22@yahoo.com and she will send you the Zoom link. The most convenient day and time for the five monthly meetings will be decided by the participants.

Beulah Grants Projects -



The Beulah Home, nestled in the Oakland hills, was established in 1912 by the Women’s Home Missionary Society (the forerunner of United Women in Faith) of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Its purpose was to provide housing for retired missionaries, deaconesses, and ministers.

In 1988, the Beulah Home Board concluded that due to shifts in society and the economy, maintaining the Home as a residential facility was no longer viable. Consequently, the proceeds from the Home's sale were transferred to United Women in Faith (previously known as United Methodist Women) under the condition of establishing a permanent fund.

The founding of Beulah Home emphasized the importance of identifying and fostering support systems that improve the well-being of older adults. Income generated from this fund is allocated towards initiatives that address the needs and uphold the dignity of senior adults within the California-Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church.

The deadline for applying for the 2026 Buelah grant is in August 2025. Information [2025+Beulah+Grant++Application.pdf](#)

Beulah grants funded the Valley Faith UMC porch and the Marina UMC sanctuary’s carpet.

Valley Faith - Porch in front of the church

Marina - New Carpet in Sanctuary



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The Tlingit Tribe of Southwest Alaska - by Cheryl Harmon

I would like to share what I learned this summer about the Tlingit Tribe of southwest Alaska. I took my grandson on a small boat tour of Alaska that only accommodated 49 guests. Because of the small size of the boat, we were able to visit many areas where larger cruise ships could not go. On many of those ports of call, we visited the Tlingit Tribe. I was surprised at the impact the Tlingit people's stories, which related their history from the time of Russia's arrival in 1741, would have on my life.



At this time, the Tlingit people did not believe in one god; instead, they practiced animism. Animism is the belief that objects, places, and creatures all possess a distinct spiritual essence, believing that everything has a spirit and is alive, including rocks and houses. They also believed that humans and animals were closely related and that animals could take the form of humans.

Early Russian exploration into Alaska began in 1725 with the Kamchatka Expedition and was led by Vitus Bering. They traveled north through Siberia and the Sea of Okhotsk to determine if there was a separation between Asia and America. Bering was largely unsuccessful until 1741, when he eventually landed in Alaska. This would establish an early Russian claim to Alaskan lands. Spain, France, and Great Britain also sent ships into Alaska, but their settlements did not last. Bering's famous expedition opened up Alaska by spreading the word of the fabulous wealth in fur to be found there. Russia used the natives to help harvest the sea otter pelts. Russians attacked Alaska's Native communities with

cannons and treated their prisoners brutally. The Tlingit people would continue to fight many battles against the Russians.

Explorers coming into Alaska also brought many diseases, such as smallpox. In 1770, 60% of the natives died from these illnesses. Between 1886 and 1895, in the face of their shamans' inability to treat these Old World diseases, many of the Tlingit people converted to Eastern Orthodox Christianity. It has been argued that they saw Christianity as a way of resisting assimilation to the American way of life.

Totem poles are important artifacts made by the Tlingit people, but the Christian missionaries generally misunderstood the purpose and meaning behind the designs. It was assumed the designs were of pagan idols. That couldn't be further from the truth. Totem poles are primarily visual representations of kinship, depicting family crests and clan membership. Totem poles represent the history, culture, and ancestry of a family or tribe of indigenous people. Different types of totem poles can have different purposes, such as to tell a story, welcome new people



into the community, memorialize the dead, or shame individuals who have done something wrong. Totem poles were banned for many years by missionaries. In addition to banning totem poles, they outlawed cultural practices. The elders and the children were told if they continued to speak their native language, they would go to hell. The Tlingit tribes did not have a written language, and with the missionaries forbidding them from speaking their language and the destruction of their totem poles, they lost a lot of knowledge about their ancestors. The present generation that I was in contact with and spoke to explained how so much of their culture was destroyed.

In 1978, the Indian Child Welfare Act was formed in response to the crisis that was affecting the Alaskan Native Children. Before that, the majority of Tlingit children who were separated from their families by court order were placed in non-native foster and adoptive homes outside of their villages. The federal government also forcibly removed more than 100,000 American Indian and Alaska Native children from their families and placed them in Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools, including Indian boarding schools. The goal of the boarding school policy was to separate Native American children from their families, cultures, communities, and tribal nations through removal and reeducation. The schools were often church-run and used assimilation and “civilization” practices to eradicate indigenous peoples in the United States. Children were forced to attend the schools, sometimes as young as 5, and were banned from speaking any language but English. Speaking their tribal language could lead to a beating. The boarding schools in Alaska lasted from the late 1870s until 1969. In 1895, the mother of a 3-year-old Tlingit child was incarcerated for refusing to return her daughter to Douglas Island Friends Mission School.

Around 17,000 Tlingit still reside in Alaska today, mostly in urban and port areas of Southeastern Alaska. They continue carrying on with their own rich traditions while actively participating in Alaska’s present-day culture. I personally feel so privileged to have spoken to the descendants of these families from 1741.

On September 21, 2024 St. Paul UMC in Fremont had an International Day of Peace on our campus. The introductory speech was as follows: “We acknowledge the land and the people to whom this land belongs. This is Ohlone Land, and they are still here. We stand in solidarity with all indigenous people and their right to self-determination and justice. We commit to working toward the healing of the trauma, theft, and dispossession native people faced and continue to face.”

I continue to pray for peace to all nations and all people.

Cheryl Harmon, President of United Women in Faith St. Paul UMC, Fremont Ca.

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.

Good Samaritan

Good Samaritan UWF

- Annual Celebration 2023
- White Elephant Christmas Party
- Reading Program



St. Paul's



St. Paul's UWF

- Joint Breakfast meeting
- Assembly of bags for Outreach
- Distribution of bags



Marina

Marina UWF

- Holiday Faire
- Afternoon Tea



Los Gatos

Los Gatos UWF

- Reading Program
- Presentation



Gilroy UWF Bazaar

The Gilroy UWF will be raffling a quilt. “ Looking Out My Cabin Window” quilt full size, 85” x 103”. Has been pre-washed. Washing instructions: wash, gentle, cold cycle with one or two color catcher sheets. Tumble dry low to medium.

The GilroyBazaar is Saturday, November 16, 2024. 9-3 pm. Soup and pie are served from 11-1:00 pm.

Raffle tickets must be purchased before 12 o’clock noon on Saturday, November 16.

Raffle tickets are: 1-\$5.00, 3- \$10.00. To purchase raffle tickets: contact Debbie Waller , 408–316–0562.



Coming Events

November 16 - Holiday Faire at Marina UMC

November 16 - Gilroy Bazaar at Gilroy UMC

December 11 - Unit President Check-in Zoom meeting at 7:00

February 8 - ECRD Connect and Learn on Zoom (date tentative)

ECRD

Please send any announcements for any upcoming events to:

communication@elcaminorealumw.org

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to all who contributed to this newsletter. (Any misspelling, errors or typos are ours alone).

Joyce & Leslie

joyce.wilkinsonuwf@gmail.com

lesiefisk1@gmail.com