



United Women in Faith
El Camino Real District Newsletter

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June Q2 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. The next issue will be published in September, 2024. The deadline for articles and photos to be submitted is Friday, September 13, 2024.

President's Message



From the President

I've just returned from the Western Jurisdiction Get Together. The theme was "Get Together: Inspire, Influence and Impact." What a spirit filled experience! Being with hundreds of United Women in Faith was truly amazing. Pastor Emily Carroll was our worship leader. She used the analogy of the confluence of two rivers. These two rivers represent our lives interacting with the love of Jesus. As the two merge, our lives are changed. It influences what we say, what we do and who we become.

The message on Saturday was that the paradigm of love was changed by Jesus. The old command was to "love one another as you love yourself." This was insufficient as we often have trouble loving ourselves. The new commandment from Jesus is to "love one another as I have

loved you.” How different these two commandments are. By accepting that Jesus loves us, we can now love others in a whole new way.

The choir from Ola Toe Fuatana United Methodist Church in Anchorage joined us in worship. Their choir numbers were “Jesu, Tawa Pano (Jesus we are here)” and “By Breath.” There were about 40 people in the choir dressed in Tongan attire including many children. Their voices were truly inspiring. One of the highlights for me was a presentation by Jackie Qatalina Schaeffer, an Inuplaq from Kotzebue, Alaska. She is director of Climate Initiatives at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. She spoke about the layers of trauma experienced by Alaska natives from well-meaning Christian missionaries who did not understand the native religions or customs. She used the term “religious colonization” when describing these experiences which shamed the people and forced them to lose some of their culture. As part of that session, a youth dancing group performed several native dances in costume.

In addition to the plenary sessions, we had plenty of opportunities to mingle and meet with women from around the Western Jurisdiction. Our own K Stone attended as well as many others from the California Nevada Conference. Be sure to take a look at the pictures when they appear in the Response magazine.

I have attached some special pictures that I took. Can you identify the UWF and UMC celebrities I rubbed elbows with?



In Sisterly love, Debbie

*Debbie Ow
President
ECRD District United Women in Faith*

Treasurer Report - Carolyn Bircher

We are approaching the end of our fundraising year. Please send in your 2024 remittances for missions by the end of August. Thank you to all of the units that have been working so hard to raise funds for UWF missions. Remittance checks, payable to "ECRD UMW", may be sent to ECRD UWF, c/o Carolyn Bircher, 1663 Martin Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94087

I will send reminder emails to unit treasurers at the end of this month, showing your current progress towards becoming 5-star giving units. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to [ask](#).

PLEDGE ACCOUNT (for contributions from the local units for missions, which are passed on to the conference (and then to National) UWF)

Remittances received (Apr-June 11)	\$10,458.75
1 st qtr. remittances sent to conference -	\$ 5,967.00
June 11, 2024 balance	\$ 8,406.78

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT (for the ECR District UWF events and operations)

Connect and Learn expenses -	\$ 100.00
Donation to Central Valley for retreat -	\$ 100.00
Mission u Scholarships -	\$ 150.00
Jan-June Communication expenses -	\$ 309.00
Donation received	\$ 281.00
June 11, 2024 balance	\$ 2,737.11

We still have funds available for Mission u scholarships. If you would like to attend, but are intimidated by the cost, please email me at treasurer@elcaminorealumw.org to request a \$150 scholarship.

The address for sending in remittances is:

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

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

Carolyn Bircher
ECRD Treasurer

Katherine Kim Is One Of Five Leaders Honored With UMGAC Awards

On April 4, the United Methodist Global Aids Committee (UMGAC) announced the 2024 recipients of the United Methodist Global AIDS Fund Leadership Award. The award ceremony was during the Breaking Barriers AIDS Conference on April 22, at the First United Methodist Church in Charlotte, N.C., 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., day before the opening of the United Methodist General Conference. The leadership awards are presented to persons and churches that have provided outstanding leadership in providing education, prevention, care and treatment in the struggle to eliminate HIV and AIDS in the world.

“All five persons are noted for their antipathy to AIDS stigma and discrimination, and their advocacy of human rights for all people,” said Donald E. Messer, member of the executive committee of the United Methodist Global AIDS Committee.

The 2024 Leadership Award Honorees -

Katherine Kim, of San Jose, California

Ms. Kim is a retired pharmacist, deaconess, and social worker. An immigrant from South Korea, she served as pharmacist with Kaiser Permanente Medical Group for 25 years prior to her retirement.

Travel News Donna Phillips



The Methodist Church is in Tallinn, Estonia! Sixty percent of the population is Russian Orthodox, 30% Lutheran, and the remainder are Catholic and Protestant. This church is right downtown and built about 20 years ago.



Spiritual Retreat



On Saturday, April 6, our El Camino Real District UWF joined the Central Valley UWF for a Zoom online retreat. Our fabulous guest speaker was Rev. Quentisha Davis Wiles, a former social worker, who shared with us her spirit-filled message about her passion for the Christian life. She said that we don't always feel ready to live up to our calling. She finds that God will call us at the most inopportune times. But God sends us to be blessed. We have beautiful souls but we are all of us wounded with scars. This year we are mourning and grieving as a nation. She encouraged us to treat the younger women we invited to our meetings with respect and listen carefully to what they have to say. Inviting them should not be only to

increase our numbers or to make us feel good about ourselves. She offered us Romans 12:12 – “Rejoice in your hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer.”

A Call To Action: St. Paul’s, San Jose Focuses On Affordable Housing

by Helen Lund & Connie Hunter.

Early in 2024, UWF women of St. Paul’s read and discussed the book, *Poverty by America*, by Matthew Desmond. The group facilitator, Donna Furuta (fierce social justice activist), asked “So what are WE going to do to advocate for justice, educate, and change the system?” One element of our answer was to plan a workshop on affordable housing, which we have done. The workshop, *Affordable Housing: Challenges and Solutions: Learning from Lived Experience* was held on May 19th, 2024.



Since St. Paul’s is also “unhoused” due to arson fire two years ago, the women reached out to La Primera Iglesia Metodista Unida to be the host site for the gathering. Pastor Gerardo Vasquez-Padilla immediately said ‘yes’ and volunteered to recruit a couple of members of La Primera Iglesia to participate in the panel, sharing their experience of being housing insecure. The delivery of this workshop became a joint effort of St. Paul’s women and Pastor Gerardo and La Primera Iglesia.

After months of preparations, nearly 80 people gathered to witness the truth of lives challenged by being housing insecure. Four women shared their personal stories, Karen Parker and Mary Sapigao in English, and two members of La Primera Iglesia UMC, Sughey Vazquez and Bertha Hernandez who shared in Spanish. Translation for all speakers of the evening was provided. Panelists also were asked to suggest solutions.



Nearly all the panelists are employed full time, some with partners also working full time, some who have been working and living in San Jose for decades and they are unable to afford a place to live near their work. The toll that being housing insecure takes on the lives of the families was evident in each panelist’s presentation. Solutions the panelists named included: make sure people know about the resources that are available; ensure people are paid enough to provide for their families; and build more affordable housing.

Joyful features of the evening were a catered Mexican dinner, community conversation, and music by St. Paul’s gospel rock band, before the featured panel of four women. To round out the evening Cupid Alexander, Deputy Director of the Department of Housing for the City of San Jose, made a short presentation about the root



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causes of the affordable housing problem. He shared that in San Jose, there are 6200 families without permanent housing, 4200 of which have no shelter at all. San Jose needs to build more than 51000 units of housing to meet demand at ALL levels of income. The severe shortage of affordable housing can be traced to the City's historic practice of zoning for single family residences as opposed to multi-family.



Connie Hunter's presentation about St. Paul's journey working to build affordable housing on St. Paul's campus and a call to action including prayer, advocating for the protection of the City's Measure E affordable housing funds, and voting for a regional affordable housing bond measure on the November ballot concluded the evening.

Please pray for St. Paul's effort to build affordable housing and a new sanctuary at 405 S. 10th St., San Jose. It's been two years, and will be a multi-year journey. We are grateful for the network of UWF groups' support. Together we CAN act for Justice in Housing.

Social Action Update

Showing Up for Racial Justice has been busy as the budget season is in full swing for both the City of San Jose and Santa Clara County. Budgets are being slashed right and left but SURJ is fighting along with other groups to protect Measure E funding for affordable housing in San Jose as well as the campaign to fund another TRUST truck from the county. As you probably have read, Mayor Mahan is again attempting to re-allocate housing monies from permanent housing to temporary housing. He is using the excuse that the SCC Water District will fine the city \$60,000 per day if encampments are not cleared from water ways. This claim is being debunked by the water board and the state. They say the fines may not be levied at all and at most would be \$10,000 in total. Another TRUST truck would respond to mental health calls and not involve the police. Per an investigation by the Mercury News, police are poorly equipped to manage such calls which often result in injury or death to individuals experiencing trauma. The brief campaign to fund stipends to elderly undocumented workers was successful as this group was added to a pilot program already in existence which give monthly stipends to other disadvantaged groups. The money will be funded by Destination Home and the County will administer it.

You can sign up for the SURJ newsletter at SacredHeartCS.org

Debbie Ow

Speaking at San Jose city council in support of TRUST and affordable housing



On Monday, June 10, SURJ supported the Safety Committee of Sacred Heart in advocating for the expansion of the TRUST program. This program is an alternative to calling the police when

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someone is having a mental health crisis. We won! Funds from the Opioid settlement were allocated to expand the service for another 40 hour shift Monday thru Friday.

Get Together ... The 2024 Western Jurisdiction of United Women in Faith was held in Anchorage, Alaska, May 9-11.

Every four years United Women in Faith members gather in five Jurisdiction events for spirited worship, engaging workshops and motivating speakers as voting delegates elect their regions representative to serve a four-year term on the National Board of Directors. It was, indeed, an incredible event filled with God's love, biblical wisdom, leadership development, hands-on opportunities, educational enrichment and so much more!

My 5 days in Anchorage were filled with “ahh–haa” moments! Ubuntu: an African word meaning “humanity to others,” often used as a reminder that “I am because of who we all are.” I had the opportunity, along with about twenty-five of my sisters, to spend time at Bean's Café and The Children's Lunchbox; focused on feeding the hungry and homeless, while providing a pathway to self-sufficiency with dignity and respect. Not only did we chop vegetables, we also cleaned 2500 lbs of potatoes, while singing, laughing, and sharing life stories.



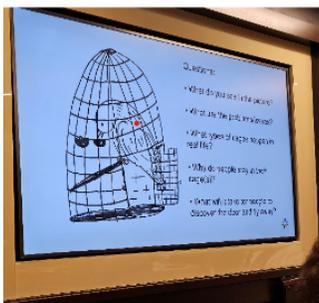
There were opportunities for Town Halls, Community Gatherings and Conversations. Some were on:

Climate Justice and Health Equity

Racial and Restorative Justice

Supporting LGBTQ Community

Soul Care, Move 4 Mission, and our Legacy.



Two workshops I attended were definitely “ahh–haa” moments!

Leadership and Change. I was introduced to the concept of “**Training for Transformation;**” how to create change through our experiences.

"Communicating with God " another workshop, I participated in a drum circle experience. WOW! An amazing feeling of being reminded that I am part of the ONE Universal Heartbeat, an opportunity to connect with ourselves, others and God to release, restore and heal. Even with the smallest and softest sounding instrument, the hand harp... I could feel my heartbeat! What an amazingly ethereal experience!



Message from Sally Vonner of:

Inspire, with Spiritual Growth ... Dream of what can be.

Influence, by inviting others ... Continue to always widen the circle.

Impact, be an inspiration to make a difference ... Believe and take action. Always, know that great things will come from God!

A special memory was of the elevator door opening, there's Sally Vonner and a 2 minute walk down the hall with her ... Another "ahh-ha" moment!

Having Bishop Karen Oliveto involved in several aspects of our Jurisdiction event... whether presiding over our election process, our closing communion worship and to have her joy and laughter with us was another "ahh-haa" moment!



The wonderful world of diversity as seen through song and dance.

The Aleutian Island Dancers, sharing their life stories.

The Ole Toe Fuataina Choir and dancers from First United Methodist Church, a Samoan community.



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The absolute beauty of God's Alaskan nature was just spectacular!
Another "ahh-haa" moment!



The joy of being with almost 90 of my CANV Conference/ECRD sisters, pulled at my heart-strings. I am so grateful for my family of United Women in Faith.

Western Jurisdiction Workshop Resources

by Martha C Parker, Conference CON member

UWF western jurisdiction gave us awesome connections to the native people of Alaska.

Greetings,

Dr. Glenna Kyker, Rev. Murray Crookes, and I are hoping that your attendance at the recent W.J. Let's Get Together Conference Land Acknowledgement workshop provided inspiring and useful information to begin, or to continue, your journey of acts of repentance and healing with the Indigenous Nations in your area.

Attached are resources that may be helpful for you. It is hoped that you will be sharing this information with your local unit and local church.

Blessings as you walk forward on your journey,

Murray Crookes: munrahcito@gmail.com

Glenna Kyker: kyker.brayton@gmail.com

Judy Halverson: judybhalverson@gmail.com

Resources -

1. 24 Actions that Lead to Healing, Relationships, and Conciliation
2. Online Resources Related to Native American Issues
3. United Methodist Church 2016 Book of Resolution: Resolutions: ¶3321-¶3346. pp.317-346
<https://www.umcsc.org/2016bor/>
4. United Women In Faith Reading Program, Native American Related Books
5. Listening Circle Guidelines: Holy Listening (with an Indigenous Attitude)

We Were Represented at General Conference

On Thursday, May 24, hundreds of women across the country joined a 90-minute Zoom and YouTube Summer Town Hall with the United Women in Faith CEO Sally Vonner as she reported on her experiences at this year's United Methodist Church's General Conference, held in Charlotte, North Carolina. She said that of the 19 issues submitted by the UWF to the group for votes, 18 of those items were approved!

Sally Vonner closed with a devotion based on Proverbs 4:25 -- "Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you." She urged us to seize this moment in time and not to let it get away. She also encouraged us to "give bravely" to help our organization to thrive, especially by supporting Mission u and "Soul Care" retreats.

Included in the program was a seven-minute video taken at General Conference, put on by United Women in Faith. The dancers are from Pfeiffer University in Charlotte. Sally Vonner is one of the speakers, standing at the podium on the left and wearing a yellow blouse. See the link below. If an advertisement comes first, click "Skip" to get to the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YnEjxNZNn3k>

At Mission u, We Drew Closer To God And To One Another

Participants of Mission u 2024 traveled to Monte Toyon Camp & Retreat Center in Aptos, California, to spend May 31 through June 2 together. They came from El Camino Real, Bay, and Los Rios districts. Some were first-time Mission u attendees. One brought her husband and both participated. Classes were taught in English and in Tongan. Many came not knowing anyone else but by the end of the weekend they had met many others and had become friends of our Cal-NeV Conference UWF President Linda Wright. Everyone got some outdoor exercise during the scavenger hunt.

Conversations carried into mealtimes and after class to midnight. Surely, the bonding is priceless, and the connections will live on beyond the Monte Toyon Camp premises.

Musician Nina Teu Harrison lit up the event with her voice as she played the keyboard, and on Saturday evening she accompanied groups on the keytar during the gifts and talent program. Joy Clark, Music Director of Temple UMC, joined Nina in providing music. The wonderful harmony of Tongan hymns was heard from Tongan siblings as they sang during morning devotions.

Many believed the time together was too short. They had comforted one another in the sharing of troubles, struggles, and joys. Study leader Sandy Hardin said it best: "Each of you came in with packages, but now returning home with an overflowing cup."

Many thanks to Bay District member Kalesita Fa'asisila who is serving as Dean of United Women in Faith Mission u for 2024 and to Iva Turaga who is serving as Assistant Dean. Link to complete article.

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<https://www.cnumc.org/newsdetails/welcome-home-mission-u-2024-monte-toyon-camp-retreat-center-18386381>

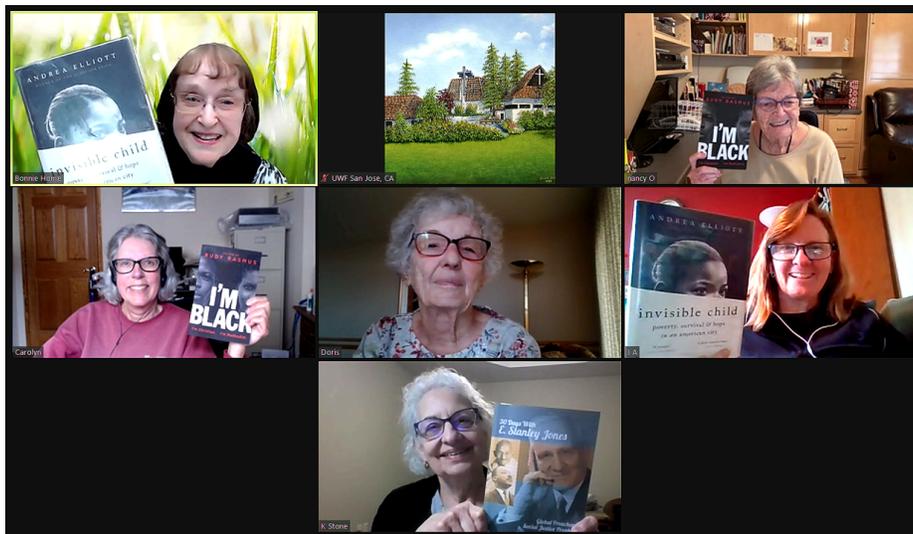
Two more Mission u events are planned for July and August.

3 Day Event- July 26, 2024 to July 28, 2024 @ ECCO, Oakhurst, CA
ECCO Conference Center
43803 Highway 41
Oakhurst, CA 93644

1 Day Event- August 31, 2024 @ Centennial UMC, Sacramento, CA
5401 Freeport Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95822

Photo Challenge - Reading Program & Response Magazine

"Response" magazine has encouraged everyone to email photos of themselves either reading the magazine or absorbed in a book from the UWF reading list. Some photographed themselves reading at the hair dresser, or while getting the car serviced, or while on a retreat. Below are two photos and a story that one El Camino Real District book group sent to the magazine. ~



The miles can't keep these California-Nevada Conference friends apart since they can meet on Zoom. Every year they choose five books and meet monthly from February to June to earn reading certificates, half of the session for book discussion & half to review *response* magazine. Bonnie Home, Doris Warren, & Julie Asada in San Jose, Carolyn Bircher in Sunnyvale, Nancy Olson in Palo Alto, and former Californian K Stone in Missouri are reading *Invisible Child* by Andrea Elliott, *Thirty Days With E. Stanley Jones* by John E. Harnish, and *I'm Black. I'm Christian. I'm Methodist* edited by Rudy Rasmus.

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.

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Good Samaritan UWF Soup Sale for Mission

In March, Good Sam had a soup sale to raise funds for our pledge to mission. We sell a quart of homemade soup, homemade bread and cookies for \$20. We raised \$786 this year.



An Idea For You – A Tea Can Introduce Women To Our Organization

On Sunday, April 28th, the Campbell United Women in Faith held their annual tea in the Fellowship Hall. Fancy invitations were sent to all of the women in the congregation, not just to those who are active in UWF.

Each table was set by a different woman using her own linens and china and she served as her table's hostess.

Everyone enjoyed a lovely afternoon of tea, treats, and wonderful conversation with ladies from various United Women in Faith circles. Some of those attending wore their finest tea hats and "fascinators."

The inspiring guest speaker represented the Bay Area Women's Sports Initiative (BAWSI). The proceeds of the day's charitable donations were given to benefit BAWSI.

Next year's tea is already planned for April 6, 2025. Reservations must be made in advance.



Willow Glen13 UWF – Bananas and Kyrgyzstan



On a summer evening in mid-June, Willow Glen UWF held a mission presentation from Debra Ow. This May 2024 mission trip was her second trip to the Kyrgyzstan area in two years. There was a surprise mystery caller from India that was one of the many friendships Debbie developed on the trip. It was followed by an ice cream social with banana splits fixing’.



Coming Events

September 14 - Rummage Sale at Wesley UMC

October 5 - ECRD Annual Celebration at Valley Faith UMC in Cupertino. **Save the date.** This year’s theme is “Unity in the Community: How Do We Heal?” The speaker will be Motoe Yamada Foor.

October 19 - Craft Sale at Sunnyvale UMC

November 16 - Holiday Faire at Marina UMC

ECRD UWF Monthly Coming Events

Beginning next month, July 2024, there will be a monthly email post about upcoming events around our district. The hope is to act as a planner, to help to avoid competing events and to act as advertising, to inform others about your event. If you have dates for your events and would like them to be in the ECRD UWF Monthly Coming Events, please send your information to Joyce Wilkinson, joyce.wilkinsonuwf@gmail.com. The deadline will be ~the 20th of each month. I will send out a reminder.

Acknowledgements

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

Joyce & Leslie

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