



United Women in Faith
El Camino Real District Newsletter

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December Q4 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 2025 Quarter 1 Mission link. The deadline for submitting articles, information and photographs will be Friday, March 14, 2025.

President's Message



Getting a Good Start in the New Year

2025 is almost here and it's time to start planning new events and programs. It's exciting to see all of the possibilities for growth, fellowship and service that United Women in Faith has for us. It's also a good time to remember the foundations of how and what we do. To this end I'd like to revisit some of the fundamentals that set us apart from other groups.

Sisterhood of Grace

This set of rules governs our meetings and sets a tone of respect for each other and reminds us that all members need to be heard.

Listen in love and with respect;
Hear each voice with compassion;
Be patient, respectful, and kind with one another;
Respect each person's experience, skill and talent;
Every person has a gift to offer;
Speak from your own perspective and experience;
Questions are needed and expected and will be addressed as able;
Speak into the space with gentleness;
Respect confidentiality;
Speaking out is courageous;
Silence is appropriate at times.

The Heart Principles

Hear and understand me.
Even if you disagree, please don't make me wrong.
Acknowledge the greatness within me, I am a Child of God.
Remember to look for my loving intentions.
Tell me the truth with compassion.

Vision of United Women in Faith

Turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

Mission of United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

Purpose of United Women in Faith

To be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ;
To develop a creative, supportive fellowship;
And to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

Please review these basics frequently as we move into a new year of faith, hope, and love. I will be praying for you.

Debbie

Debbie Ow

President

ECRD District United Women in Faith

Treasurer Report - Carolyn Bircher

Thank you to all of the units that have sent in pledges! Any additional mission giving received by December 31 will be sent in on January 1. 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

If your unit has a new treasurer, please contact me at treasurer@elcaminorealumw.org to let me know the name, contact information and unit of the new treasurer. I can schedule a Zoom training session, if requested.

The offering received at our district celebration was \$732 to support the many missions of United Women in Faith. Thank you to all who attended!

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 UWF events and operations.

PLEDGE ACCOUNT

Jan 1 Balance		\$ 4,208.01
Mission giving in 2024	\$42,733.25	
Celebration offering	732.00	
Interest received	<u>\$ 0.37</u>	
Total income		\$43,465.62
Remittances sent to conference in 2024	\$40,308.25	
Shipping expense for cards	<u>\$ 5.25</u>	
Total paid		<u>\$40,313.50</u>
Dec. 18, 2024 balance		\$ 7,360.13

\$ 7,331.00 will be sent to conference in Jan.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNT

Jan 1 Balance		\$ 3,114.94
Funds received from conference	\$ 2,600.00	
Donation	\$ 281.00	
Interest received	<u>\$ 0.23</u>	
Total income		\$ 2,881.23
2024 Event expenses	\$ 500.00	
2024 Mission u scholarships	\$ 1,356.81	
Western Jurisdiction Assembly travel	\$ 1,600.00	
2024 Communication expenses	\$ 627.90	
2024 Admin. Expenses	\$ 136.18	
2024 Audit of 2022 & 2023 books	<u>\$ 500.00</u>	
Total expense		<u>\$ 4,720.89</u>
Dec. 18, 2024 balance		\$ 1,275.28

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

Carolyn Bircher
ECRD Treasurer

Called to Action in California

Once again a district United Women in Faith group is featured in "Response" magazine ! On page 17 of the January/February edition's "Bright Lights" section is an article written by Helen Lund about St. Paul's United Women in Faith's social justice project. The group had read the book "Poverty, by America" by Matthew Desmond. Donna Furuta, a tenacious social justice activist, asked what they were going to do themselves to advocate for justice, to educate the public, and to change the system. They decided to hold a workshop called "Affordable Housing: Challenges and Solutions -- Learning from Lived Experience." They partnered with the congregation of La Primera Iglesia for this event. After weeks of preparation, 80 people gathered to hear the presentations. Connie Hunter, who lives in San Jose and is mission coordinator for social action for the California-Nevada Conference, was one of the speakers, as was a city official from the Department of Housing. A panel of four local women shared their personal stories of how, as people with jobs, they could not find affordable housing near work. The event was conducted in English and Spanish with translations for everyone. Included was a catered Mexican dinner where guests could get to know one another and talk about the evening's theme. Helen included a photo of St. Paul's gospel rock band performing for the event.

Susanna Wesley Women's Group Reading Group

Five Books We Recommend

If you've been looking for a short-term book group that meets only five times a year, consider the Susanna Wesley Women's group. The women have chosen five books from the United Women In Faith reading lists. Four of the five books are available in the San Jose Library system and may be available in other libraries as well. Once all five books have been read, along with six copies of "Response" magazine, the readers will have earned their UWF Reading Certificates. This is the meeting schedule for five Fridays in 2025 from 4:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. (Pacific Time) on Zoom ~

February 7 -- "After the Last Border: Two Families & the Story of Refuge in America" by Jessica Goudeau

March 7 -- "A Right Worthy Woman" by Ruth P. Watson

April 4 -- "All You Can Ever Know: A Memoir" by Nicole Chung

May 2 -- "The Sun Does Shine" by Anthony Ray Hinton

June 6 -- "Spiritual Practices for Soul Care" by Barbara L. Peacock (Not in the San Jose Library system)

Contact **Bonnie Home** at bonstance22@yahoo.com for the Zoom link.

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.

Evergreen Valley UWF Bill Wilson Center Project

Evergreen Valley UWF donated 22 gift bags for the Bill Wilson Center on November 19, 2024. These bags were distributed as Christmas presents for children ages 1 -6 years old. Each bag contained a personalized pillow case, reading books with crayons, a knit cap and socks.



Wesley UWF



The Wesley UWF used money raised by our rummage sale to shop for household products such as toothpaste, laundry detergent, fabric softener, dish soap, a kitchen towel, a roll of paper towels, tissues, Scotch tape and other useful items, along with donated toothbrushes, lotion, toilet paper, and lip balm. We assembled 40 large shopping bags that were given to those food insecure Grant Elementary School families that sign up to come every other week to our Tuesday Food Distribution. When they picked up their produce, milk, eggs and sometimes meat or dry goods we gave them each a

Blessing Bag and told them the women of the church would like to give them this as a gift. It warmed my heart to see them smile and their eyes light up when they looked in the bags.

We did this last year, but only made 22 bags then. The need is growing. We pray their families know we care and want them to be healthy.



Christmas is a season of miracles shared with grateful hearts. Our Wesley UWF Crèche Display added a beautiful visualization of celebrating this holy Christmas season. Each of the 42 crèche sets carried its own story and each viewer surely experienced a different space and time.

The crèche displays were traditional, whimsical and artistic... all expressing the joys of the season.

Your UWF is grateful for our Wesley UMC congregation that shared their treasured Nativity/Crèche sets as gifts to each viewer as we continued to celebrate this holy Christmas season. Reverent silence, a smile, a chuckle, some ohs and ahs were all part of experiencing this Nativity/Crèche Display. There are no limits on ways to glorify our gracious and loving God.





Prayer: Help us, dear Savior, to come to the manger and see you with the same awe and wonder as the first visitors of long ago. Amen

Rounding Out 2024 - The Sarah Circle Holiday Party at Wesley UMC



The Sarah Circle at the Wesley UMC consists of a small group of women who meet once a month via Zoom to discuss interesting books that help them to grow spiritually and that also help them to gain an understanding of their lives and the world as it pertains to scripture. Fellowship is nurtured and members share joys and concerns.

On December 4, 2024, 12 Sarah Circle members, 2 Sarah Circle guests, and 6 church staff attended our holiday Christmas party which included a catered buffet lunch of Bucca de Beppo food. A white elephant gift exchange game was played. Everyone enjoyed fun, laughter, fellowship and yummy figgy pudding!

We wish everyone a Happy New Year!!

Marina

Marina UWF had their Annual Holiday Fair in November. The funds from this event are used to support their adopted philanthropies - Marina Youth Arts, Undocufund, Thomas Carmen Food Bank, and Elizabeth's Library (International Reading building program). One major concern was the need for better publicity to increase foot traffic to our event.



Los Gatos



Los Gatos Christmas get together at the home of Allison Shaw

Mission U 2025

Proposed dates -

May 30-June 1 - Monte Toyon, Aptos

July 25-July 27 - ECCO, Oakhurst

Theme: *Hope as Resurrection People*

How do we understand hope as followers of Christ? Is it merely optimism despite what we witness all around us or is it something deeper than that? This theme begins with the resurrection accounts to explore how Jesus' followers were changed and the actions that followed (Acts). The hope that grew in these "resurrection people" is evident in how their community grew even in the midst of persecution and overwhelming hardship. What does it mean to be "resurrection people" in the 21st century, and what can we learn and apply to our own lives from the accounts of people who encountered Jesus after his resurrection? The curricula will invite us to explore what it means to have hope in God even when things seem to be falling apart.

Coming Events

February 8 - ECRD Connect and Learn on Zoom. Theme - "Bridging the Cultural Divide."

April - Spiritual Retreat in conjunction with Central Valley UWF is still possible

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

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