

Tarheel Talk

WINTER 2023/24



Light of the World

Speaker



Nicki Koziarz

IGNITE Missions Conference & the 133rd Annual Meeting

April 19-20, 2024
Parkwood Baptist Church
Concord, NC

Music & Worship



Cindy Morgan

A WOMAN'S MISSIONARY UNION OF NORTH CAROLINA PUBLICATION

Inside Talk

Winter 2023/24

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Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina is a missions organization whose purpose is to challenge, prepare and equip Christian believers to be radically involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

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The Light of the World

In John 8:12, Jesus says about himself, "I am the *light of the world*. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." In Matthew 5:14, Jesus says to the crowd listening as he preached the Sermon on the Mount, "You are the *light of the world*. A city on a hill cannot be hidden."

Jesus existed before creation, was present when light was spoken into being, and brought the "light of life" into the world when he was born, fully human and fully God. He is the light that cannot be overcome by darkness. Even death could not contain him.

Yet he calls his followers by his title. He calls you and me the Light of the World!

Jesus was in the business of giving his identity to us. He is God's son, yet through him, we are God's children. He was perfect, but he took our sins as his own, erasing our imperfections. He was the Light of the World, and yet we get to be the Light of the World.

It's quite the honor and responsibility to bear the same title as Jesus. Though we reap all the blessings, none of it comes from us. Though we are still human, we are meant to reflect Jesus to those around us. Though Jesus could spread his light throughout the world in an infinite number of ways, he chooses to spread his light to the world through us.

In these pages, you will find inspiring articles about how women across the state are intentionally being the Light of the World. You'll also find information and opportunities that can challenge, prepare, and equip you to be the Light of the World right where God has placed you. We at WMU NC are praying for you. We're excited to come alongside you with resources and support to help you shine!

Jesus didn't misspeak when he defined you as the Light of the World. Live into that amazing identity today.

—Allison Markwood, Editor

New podcast episodes available on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Google Podcasts!

CREATING A
MISSIONAL
LIFESTYLE IN
THE MIDST OF
EVERYDAY
MOMENTS



SCAN WITH YOUR PHONE!



Missions Education



I loved being a GA and an Acteen. I was an overachieving kid who wanted to do all the steps to learn and get the highest prize. I thrived in and loved the work. Now, as I look through my notebook, I see that I wrote a drama script, studied the missionary journeys of Paul, and drew maps of all the places he went. I planned a Vacation Bible School and listed all the countries of the world noting their populations and numbers of missionaries. I wrote a paper on what Mormons and Muslims believe. I memorized Bible verses and prayed for missionaries. I wrote poems on missions and participated in evangelism. I still have my notebook and cape and scepter after all these years because it was so special to me.

It is a huge joy to me to know that children and youth still participate in these learning activities and get rewarded for them. Some of the award patches children can receive are for:



- memorizing verses,
- participating in the missions offerings,
- disaster relief,
- prayerwalking,
- giving to hunger relief,
- participating in the International Mission Study, and
- ministering to a senior friend in their church or community.

On July 30, 2023, Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Hudson, NC (Caldwell Baptist Association) hosted an Acteen Recognition service to honor five girls for their hard work. One girl received the highest award as she has been in Acteens for six years.

On August 20, 2023, 12 children from three different churches were recognized at the Hispanic WMU/UFM Annual Retreat at Camp Mundo Vista. They were rewarded at a statewide event in front of 250 women. How special!

While I applaud the children and youth for their hard work, I also want to say a word about the leaders. Leaders are faithful. They spend precious time planning lessons and activities, and come to each meeting to teach and prepare these children and youth for worldwide service. They love on their students and encourage them. They pray for them. They do missions projects with them. They show those they teach their purpose in life- to glorify God and share His love to the nations. They are investing in the children's lives today and for tomorrow. They are heroes.

If you are a child or youth in missions education, I praise God for you and for your parents who take you to church. I praise God for the curriculum from WMU that still honors and teaches about our missionaries. I praise God for the leaders, for their time and dedication. I praise God for the churches that count missions education as important in their overall church programming.

If God is calling you to teach children or youth, we want to help. Please call our office and we will get you started on a very rewarding calling.

Amy
Amy Pardue Boone,

WMU NC Executive Director/Treasurer



2023 MISSIONS

2023 was an exciting year for Missions! WMU NC hosted several trips, and WMU women also joined partner organizations for even more mission trip opportunities. Check out where WMU NC ladies went in 2023 and pray with us for more in 2024!

Tamaulipas, Mexico

In April, UFM, the Hispanic WMU, hosted its first mission trip! Seven women traveled to Tamaulipas, Mexico to serve and encourage the children and workers in orphanages there. The women also shared the gospel with large groups of children at a community center event, and nine children accepted Christ! In January 2024, UFM will send a mission team to Costa Rica. *Pray for UFM to continue growing and offering mission trip opportunities. Pray for the impact these teams have on our Spanish-speaking brothers and sisters.*



Children in Tamaulipas hear the Gospel.

Standing Rock Reservation, North & South Dakota

Staff member Sara Lamkin joined this trip hosted by WMU Virginia in July. WMU VA's longstanding partnership with Standing Rock Reservation came to a close this year. Sara went to observe and pray over future opportunities for WMU NC to minister to the people there. Sara saw God's hand in the deep relationships that had been formed throughout years of ministry. Some friendships have become so close that Virginians and members of the



Ministry partnership formed beautiful relationships.

reservation would travel to visit one another for big life events like graduations and weddings. *Pray for these relationships to continue now that the partnership with VA has ended. Pray also for opportunities for WMU NC to send missionaries to this reservation.*



Felicia Bryant of the Lumbee tribe poses with her Native American sisters from the Crow tribe.

Crow Agency, Montana

In September, God used the WMU NC mission team, led by Board Member Val Wilson, to breathe new life and excitement back into Apsaalooke Baptist Church and its pastor. After the pandemic, the church felt apathetic and never quite got back on its feet. While there, the team did some cleaning and maintenance, hosted a VBS, donated school and church supplies, and built lasting relationships with the women. Church members testified to neglecting the church and expressed the desire to restart services and Bible studies. The women there were especially excited and inspired because WMU NC was the first mission team they'd encountered that included another Native American. Felicia Bryant, of the Lumbee, received a beautiful wedding cape: a gift from one tribe to another. The team noted many needs there that they could not meet during this trip. *Pray for WMU NC to form a partnership with Apsaalooke Baptist Church that will lead to more mission trips and opportunities to serve the people there.*

IN REVIEW

Check out our webpage for information on future trips.



Armenia is known as "the land of Noah." Mt. Ararat can be seen from the windows of the Theological Seminary of Armenia.

Armenia

Before the pandemic, NC Baptist Men (now Baptists on Mission) and WMU NC had an ongoing relationship with the Theological Seminary of Armenia that hosted mission teams several years in a row. In September, Baptists on Mission were able to return to Armenia to continue this partnership. WMU NC members Claudia Hayes and Duronda Hood traveled with the team to Armenia to help lead women's activities. *Pray for leaders to rise up and for more opportunities to send teams to Armenia. Pray for the refugee crisis happening in Armenia due to conflict with Azerbaijan.*

Vermont

In September, WMU NC President Deborah Taylor led WMU NC's fifth trip to Vermont's Rumney Conference Center to help host a retreat for church planters' wives and leaders from the New England Baptist Convention. Every year, the number of participants grows, and most excitingly, Vermont has moved up the list from the least evangelized state to the



Retreat attendees pose with the WMU NC mission team.

4th least evangelized state! New churches are being started and new believers are being baptized and disciplined. *Pray for church planters in Vermont to persevere, to build uplifting community, and to continue reaching the people of Vermont with the Gospel.*

laeger, West Virginia

In 2021, God led Executive Board Member Jaime Hare and her husband to support God's Outreach Food Pantry, a small ministry that distributes food to around 75 families once a month. This year, the Hares invited WMU NC to join their ministry. Throughout 2023, six different trips were taken to laeger! Several churches from across the state participated, sending men, women, and youth to sort and serve food, build a storage room onto the building, and perform outreach in the community. Sisters Who Care and other churches also helped by collecting food and raising money to send. This ministry is a beautiful, ongoing partnership! *Pray for more groups to sign up to help God's Outreach Food Pantry and for the families this pantry serves.*



Jamie Hare and volunteers work to organize the Food Pantry.

Disaster Relief

WMU NC ladies often join Baptists on Mission to be part of their Disaster Relief teams. This year has had multiple opportunities for women and men to serve. If you are interested in being trained to serve on these teams, visit www.baptistsonmission.org.

Contact Sara Lamkin if you are interested in leading a WMU NC mission trip.

Be a Light to Those Grieving this Holiday Season



Every Christmas I set out a reindeer that is missing its left ear on the mantle above my fireplace.

To anyone else, it would appear to be a Christmas decoration that has long served its time and is overdue on making its way to the trash, but I won't ever get rid of it because it was hers. And oh, how my mom loved her Christmas decorations.

This year will be the fourth Christmas and holiday season I've experienced without my mom, and while time does ease the pain of her passing, it doesn't ever fully erase it. In the first few months after her passing, I remember looking at the calendar and dreading the holiday season that was upon us. First would come Thanksgiving, then Christmas, and then New Year's. All stark reminders to me that one of the most treasured and special people in my life was no longer there. Every holiday tradition looked different to me, and every family gathering made my heart ache a bit more. As painful as it was (and still is) to grieve her loss, I felt the presence of Jesus with me every step of the way, comforting me, and lamenting with me.

You may have experienced a loss yourself and understand how difficult it can be to navigate the holiday season without your loved one. As we enter the upcoming holiday season, consider ways you can be a light to those around you who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

Ways you can help someone grieving during the holidays:

- ❧ **Acknowledge their pain.** Any holiday after a loved one has passed away is difficult, but the first ones are often the hardest to know how to navigate. It helps to acknowledge that the holidays look different now for the person who has lost their loved one. Maybe their mother is the one who always hosted Thanksgiving, or their father or grandfather always had a special Christmas Eve tradition he shared with the kids in the family, and once that loved one passes away, those traditions change and often, are never the same again. This type of change can be difficult for the griever to process. Simply reaching out with a card, phone call, or text message can bring the griever comfort and help them feel less alone.
- ❧ **Mention their loved one's name.** Share stories and memories of them. We often think that bringing up someone's loved one who has passed away will make them feel worse or sadder. I promise you; they are already sad and missing their loved one.



They are already thinking about them and how different everything is without them. Sharing stories and memories and speaking their loved one's name out loud helps the griever know their loved one has not been forgotten, and their presence is still acknowledged.

- ❧ **Invite but don't expect.** Holiday gatherings with family and friends are one of the things that can make the holidays so enjoyable and fun. But for a griever, especially a new one, events and gatherings can be overwhelming. It's wonderful to extend them invitations but let them know there is no pressure to attend, and that it is okay if they cancel plans at the last minute if they aren't feeling up for something. You can also offer to pick them up and go with them to a gathering, so they aren't going into a social situation alone.
- ❧ **Offer practical help.** Do they need someone to wrap their Christmas presents for them? Do they need someone to finish their shopping? Or help with baking a cake for the church Christmas gathering? It's wonderful to offer practical help and encouragement to them throughout the holiday season.
- ❧ **Consider giving a gift in memory of their loved one.** It doesn't have to be a big gift or even one of great monetary value. It can simply be a way for you to show them you are thinking of them and their loved one. It can be a photograph of their loved one, a special memento, a donation made somewhere in their loved one's honor, etc. It is truly the thought that counts!
- ❧ **Stay connected to them.** The holidays can be a lonely time for grievers. Regular check-ins, cards, texts, etc. help people know they are not alone (even though to them it may feel as if they are very much alone). Simple phrases like "You are on my mind today," "You are loved," "_____ (loved one's name) is so missed," and "I'm thinking about you," go a long way in helping to encourage someone experiencing a loss. Listen with intention to what needs they may have (try not to assume), and regularly pray with and for them as you can.

It's important to remember that grief takes many forms and is different for every person. Grief carries an enormous weight with it. It can be a comfort at times, a brutal force, or an uninvited guest that stays too long. But it can also be hope and strength, and memories, and the courage to keep going.

Jesus is right there with us through it all.

How can you be a light to those grieving this holiday season?

— Amanda Martinsen
WMU NC Leadership Development Consultant
and Resource Coordinator



Project HELP: Mental Health

3 New Year's Resolutions for Mental Health

If you are like most people, you have made and abandoned your share of New Year's Resolutions. For some reason, we think we can wake up on January 1 and just be different, but that's not how it works. Who we are and how we behave is a product of thousands of daily habits and choices. When we try an "all or nothing" method of changing, we risk almost certain failure, which can then have negative effects on our mental health.

So this year, why not try making some tiny New Year's Resolutions that will actually improve your mental health?

- 1. Resolve to DO LESS.** Most resolutions consist of us trying to do more each day, but many who struggle with mental health already feel overwhelmed. What can you take off your plate in 2024?
- 2. Prioritize self-care.** Self-care is often imagined as taking luxurious baths or getting a massage, for which some of us have neither time nor money. While those are forms of self-care for some people, self-care can be as simple as spending a few minutes in prayer, singing a worship song, going to bed on time, or doing something small each day that brings you joy.
- 3. Show yourself grace.** Jesus looks at you and sees someone who is worthwhile, important, and dearly



loved. He has already paid for all your sins, mistakes, and imperfections. He knows you are human, and He chooses you anyway. If the Light of the World can look at you like that, who are you to be so hard on yourself? Let the grace of Jesus seep into your mind and soul, and practice talking to yourself with a tone of love and forgiveness.

3 Church Goals for Taking Action

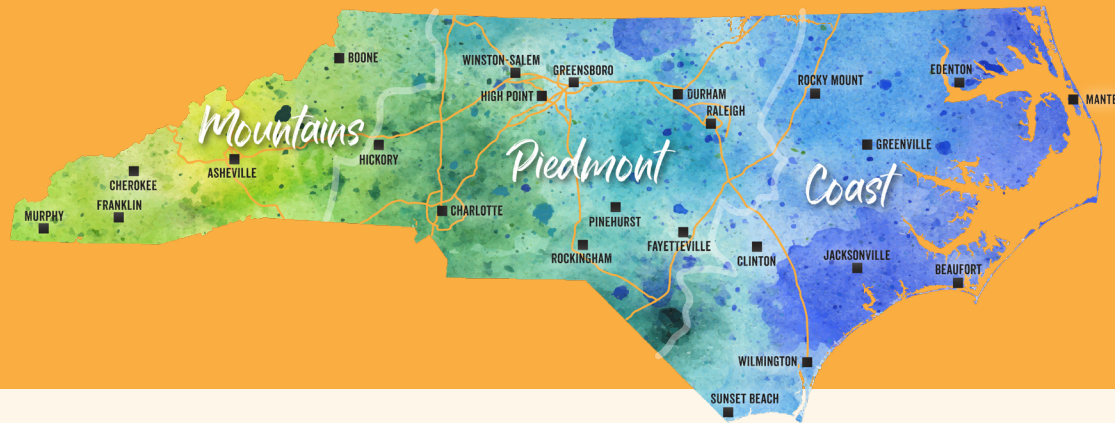
The start of a new year can invigorate organizations and communities to set new goals as well. Here are some ideas for how your church or missions group can take action steps to minister to those impacted by mental health illnesses and disorders in 2024.

- 1. Recognize Mental Health Awareness Days.** Did you know there is a year-long calendar of mental health awareness months, weeks, and days? Simply marking some of these days on your church calendar will help you remember to pray for people dealing with mental health issues. Posting on social media, making announcements from the pulpit, or hosting special events for these days can also go a long way to letting your community know that mental health is an acceptable topic of conversation and that your church cares.
- 2. Reach out to a local mental health organization to see how you can help.** Maybe your church can make donations to a counseling service near you, write cards for families who are impacted by mental illness, visit with folks in nursing homes or hospitals, or volunteer with a crisis hotline.
- 3. Host a special prayer night focused on mental health awareness and action.** Teach church and community members about the mental health crisis in America. Ask people who are willing to share their testimonies about mental health, how the church has responded, and the impact it has had on them. Spend time praying for those affected by mental health illnesses and disorders.

National WMU has awesome resources on Mental Health and how the church can respond.

Check out <https://wmu.com/compassion-ministries/project-help-mental-health/>





Mountain Region

Locust Field WMU, Dillsboro

Each Christmas, the Appalachian Regional Ministries, a ministry of the North American Mission Board, gifts thousands of backpacks to children in high-poverty areas in the Appalachian mountains. These backpacks include various hygiene items, toys, gifts, Bibles, and a copy of the Christmas story.

For the last two years, members of the Locust Field WMU have packed backpacks to donate, individually purchasing and packing all items. But this year, they're stepping up their game and making it more hands-on! Their church decided last spring to purchase and donate the supplies, while the WMU has volunteered to pack 50



backpacks and hand-make a tied fleece blanket to go in each one.

Making tied fleece blankets is a time-intensive project that is great for all ages. WMU members (Mary Barnes, Wanda Henson, Amber Lambert, Karen McCracken, Regina Farmer, Virginia Pangle, and Eula Brooks) and GAs (Bella Farmer and Anna Leigh Lambert) got started in June to make sure they'll have 50 blankets ready before the drop-off date. If your church is interested in making blankets for a ministry in your area, you can easily find tutorials online.

Piedmont Region

First Baptist Church, Liberty

It's no secret that churches are struggling as congregations age and culture changes. One Sunday morning in January 2021, long-time WMU faithfuls, John and Joyce Rogers, attended First Baptist Church of Liberty. John had been called as the transitional interim pastor, and on their first visit, there were only 24 in attendance. "The church wasn't even [standing] on toothpicks," John said. "It was on sawdust!"

They had a tiny Baptists on Mission group, a "remnant" made up of women aged 78, 85, and 97 who did not want to see their church die. When John and Joyce encouraged them to think "outside their walls," they decided to start ministering to a nearby low-income apartment complex that served an elderly population. What started as a small group gathering has now grown into a group of 30-40 people from different places who meet monthly.

FBC Liberty didn't stop there. They also decided, though they had no children in their church, to host a community VBS. The first summer, they had a skeleton crew of workers and only a handful of participants. This past summer, with the help of volunteers from Balfour Baptist Church in Asheboro, they hosted 89 people!



REGIONS RECALL MOUNTAINS TO THE COAST



Thanks to generous gifts from the Baptist Foundation and a church in South Carolina that wanted to bless another church's revitalization efforts, FBC Liberty has also been able to invest in local schools, building relationships with students, their families, teachers, and

administrators. Other volunteers have been working alongside the local police department, praying for officers and working to meet their needs.

"Thinking outside the walls" has begun a movement. Word has started to get out that the church is doing something again, 22 new members have been welcomed into the congregation, and Sunday attendance is up. While there is a long way to go, FBC Liberty is living proof that missions is a key component of a healthy church.

Please pray for FBC Liberty as they seek a pastor who will continue the missions focus and revitalization efforts.

Coastal Region

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Lumberton

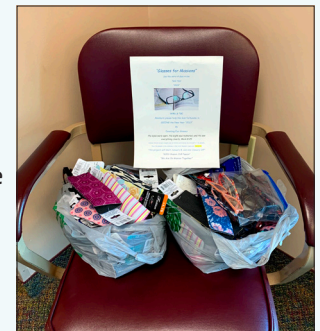
The WMU Ladies of Tabernacle Baptist Church of Lumberton NC Hwy 711 have been busy with missions this year. With the tagline, "God's Mission, Our Passion," these women have hosted multiple missions events, collections, and projects to serve and impact their community with the love of Jesus.

- In January, they collected eyeglasses for the less fortunate.
- They participated in the Food Roundup sponsored by Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina by making a donation to the Baptist Odum Home in Pembroke, NC.
- In April, group members wore ribbons to advocate about Sexual Assault Month and donated baskets of personal items to the Rape Crisis Center of Robeson County.



- In May, they hosted a Mother's Day Breakfast.
- They collected and donated toys to the Domestic Violence Center.
- And so much more!

These ladies are leading the way for missions, encouraging their church family to participate alongside them. They are also a great example of how love for God's mission translates into a passion for helping others.



Is God moving through your church WMU? We'd love to share it with others! Send pictures and descriptions of your events or ministries to allisonmarkwood@gmail.com.

Focus on WMU

Planning Worksheet

Help your church get excited about missions by hosting a Focus on WMU Sunday! Follow these steps and use the worksheet below to make planning easy.

- Step 1. Set a Date.** Talk to your pastor and put Focus on WMU on the calendar. Our official emphasis month is February, but any month is a good month to Focus on WMU!
- Step 2. Secure a speaker.** Ask a dynamic missions leader or missionary in your church to talk about how God is working through WMU. You can also request a speaker through www.wmunc.org. We have lots of ladies excited to come share about the missions and ministries of WMU NC!
- Step 3. Order Heck-Jones® Offering materials.** WMU NC has brochures, prayer guides, and offering envelopes to make giving to the Heck-Jones Offering an easy and worshipful part of your Focus on WMU Sunday. The Heck-Jones Offering is the only source of income for WMU NC. All of our missions and ministries are made possible by your generosity!
- Step 4. Get the kids and youth involved.** These Sundays are great opportunities for children and youth to present missions projects they have done.
- Step 5. Plan to celebrate and honor the missions leaders and missionaries in your church.** Leaders who challenge, prepare, and equip others to fulfill the Great Commission are unsung heroes. Take this opportunity to honor them and pray over them.
- Step 6. Consider planning a churchwide missions project.** Put words into action by providing your church the opportunity to do missions together.

Church Name: _____

Focus Sunday Date: _____ Is it on the church calendar yet? (Y/N) _____

Speaker Name: _____

Speaker Contact Info: _____

Have you ordered Heck-Jones Offering Materials from www.wmunc.org? (Y/N) _____

Special Presenters (could be children, youth, or other church members involved in missions and missions discipleship): _____

Missions Leaders/Missionaries to Honor _____

Mission Project Idea _____

Action Steps to make Mission Project possible:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Who is praying over your Focus on WMU Sunday _____

Contact our office if you need help with planning. We'd also love to pray for you and your church!

Sharing Hope

ROMANS 15:13 (NIV)



2024
HECK-JONES[®]

Offering

WEEK OF PRAYER
for WMUNC
GOAL: \$325,000
www.wmunc.org



Celebrating the Light of the World



Have you ever wondered why God created “light” on the first day of

Creation? Light is an important motif throughout Scripture and is described multiple times all the way through to

the very end in Revelation 22:4-5: “*there will be no more night or need for the light of the sun, because God will give them light.*” The physical light that God made on the first day of creation is a wonderful picture of what He does in every heart that trusts in Christ, the True Light. There is no need to walk in the darkness of sin and death. In Christ, we “*will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life*” (John 8:12).

Candles and decorative blinking lights are signs of the holiday season as we remember that Christ became a child and lived among us so that we could experience an everlasting life filled with light. As we adjust to stumble through the early morning darkness of Daylight Savings Time, may we be drawn to the True Light of the World. Perhaps we leave a small night light on in a new place or place a small lamp in a child’s room to help with their fears and sleep. May we also take time to thank God for the gift of light and to teach our young ones about the Creator of Light.

WMU NC wants to help you experience and Ignite that Light for all the nations of the World. Please save the date now! Our 2023 Missions Conference will be April 19-20 at Parkwood Baptist Church in Concord.



Cindy Morgan



Nicki Koziarz

We are excited to have Grammy Award winner Cindy Morgan lead us in worship! Nicki Koziarz, a best-selling author, has a passion for teaching the Bible and is a sought-after speaker.

Perhaps you have attended our *Mission Extravanzas* before or joined us last year in Greensboro. If so, you know that this weekend will be filled with fellowship; time to learn, pray, and talk with missionaries; check out interesting topics in break-out conferences; gain new ideas and opportunities of ministry at our missions expo displays; and celebrate how God is Igniting Hope across our state and around the world.

Perhaps you are not so sure about this “missions conference weekend” and wonder if it is worth your time. Please take this personal invitation to come and see! I believe this weekend will make an impact on your life, the life of your church, and your circle of influence. Our “hands-on” mission projects will involve packing food boxes to end hunger through The Rice Challenge as well as preparing bags for locals in need whether homeless or in transition. We have experiences for children and youth, too!

We will also celebrate 25 years of Christian Job Corps and hear from our ministry partners such as Sisters Who Care, Hispanic Network, Baptist Nursing Fellowship, Mission Trips, Ministers’ Wives.... and more!

I love meeting you and speaking at your churches! Please use our Speaker’s Team, officers, staff, etc. to help lead your Prayer Emphasis and Heck Jones Offering. Take advantage of the resources available for our International Mission Study, Lottie Moon Offering, and missions opportunities to Ignite your church and community. It is an honor to join with you in challenging, preparing, and equipping Christian believers to be radically involved in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Deborah Taylor

Deborah Taylor

WMU NC President



Light of the World

IGNITE Missions Conference and the 133rd Annual Meeting

April 19-20, 2024
Parkwood Baptist Church
Concord, NC

wMu[™]
North Carolina

Join Us for Ignite!

Who Is This Conference For? It's for YOU!

Jesus' message to "go and tell" is meant for every believer. Come hear missionary stories from around the world, explore timely topics in breakout sessions, and get excited about missions opportunities in your area. Come be *challenged*, *prepared*, and *equipped* to spread the Light of the World to those around you!

Keynote Speaker: Nicki Koziarz



Nicki Koziarz is a wife, mom, best-selling author, Bible teacher, podcast host, Proverbs 31 contributor, and first-generation farmer.

Teaching the Bible is a huge passion of Nicki's and she frequently speaks at events.

"I believe we are on the edge of revival with God in our homes, communities, cities, nation, and the World. I want to see people whole, confident, and becoming all God intended them to become through the power of understanding the Bible."

Nicki is the author of several books and Bible studies including *Your New Now: Finding Strength and Wisdom When You Feel Stuck Where You Are* (Bethany House Publishers, 2023); *Flooded: The Best Decisions to Make When Life Is Hard and Doubt Is Rising* (Bethany House Publishers, 2021); *Why Her? 6 Truths We Need to Hear When Measuring Up Leaves Us Falling Behind* (B&H Books, 2018); *Rachel & Leah: What Two Sisters Teach Us about Combating Comparison* (Lifeway Press, 2018); and *5 Habits of a Woman Who Doesn't Quit* (Lifeway Press, 2016). She also offers Bible and Coaching classes, available on her website www.nickikoziarz.com.

Worship Leader: Cindy Morgan



Singer/songwriter Cindy Morgan is a two-time Grammy nominee, a Thirteen-time Dove winner, and a recipient of the prestigious Songwriter of the Year trophy.

An East Tennessee native, her evocative melodies and lyrics have mined the depths of life and love both in her own recording and through songwriting for

noteworthy artists around the globe, including Vince Gill, India.Arie, Rascal Flatts, Amy Grant, Sandra McCracken, and Glen Campbell.

Cindy is the author of two works of adult nonfiction—the memoir *How Could I Ask for More: Stories of Blessings, Battles & Beauty* (Worthy Inspire, 2015) and *Barefoot on Barbed Wire: A Journey Out of Fear into Freedom* (Harvest House Publishers, 2001)—and of the children's picture book *Dance Me, Daddy* (ZonderKidz, 2009). *The Year of Jubilee* is her critically acclaimed debut novel released by Tyndale House Publishers in April of 2023.

Cindy is a co-creator of the charitable Hymns for Hunger Tour, which has raised awareness and resources for hunger relief organizations across the globe.

Cindy has two daughters and splits time living between a small town near Nashville, TN and Holly Springs, NC with her husband Jonathan. For more information visit cindymorganmusic.com.

Mission Projects

This year's conference will feature the opportunity to make donations to and participate in hands-on mission projects like:

- ✿ A Food Packing Party
- ✿ Making Basket of Hope Hospital Kits
- ✿ Assembling bags for Raceway Ministries
- ✿ And more!

Stay tuned to our website for upcoming information about how to sign up and what to bring!

www.wmunc.org/missions-conference

Invite your friends and mark your calendar today! Check out the website for updates and registration announcements.

State Youth Advisory Panelists



Sara Lamkin

WMU NC Consultant for Students and Ministry Involvement

Last year's first-ever, co-ed Youth Advisory Panel was a great success! Students learned to give their testimonies, did mission projects together, led breakout sessions at Ignite!, and helped plan a missions event at Ridgecrest just for teens.

2023-2024 is off to an amazing start with a brand new panel of eight missions-minded students who are already hard at work.

Pray for these students' spiritual growth and leadership development through their involvement on the State Youth Advisory Panel. Pray that they will be a light to their families, peers, and community members in their everyday lives. Pray that they will say "yes" to whatever God calls them to do and wherever He calls them to go.

Introducing the 2023-2024 State Youth Advisory Panelists!



Emma Buckner

Church: Parkwood Baptist, Concord

Favorite dessert: Strawberry Shortcake

Bible verse for the year: Proverbs 3:5-6



Kenan Norris

Church: Dudley Shoals, Granite Falls

Favorite dessert: Banana Pudding or Red Velvet Cake

Bible verse for the year:
1 Thessalonians 5:16-17



Eden Gilbreath

Church: Stallings Memorial, Salisbury

Favorite dessert: Brownies

Bible verse for the year: Proverbs 3:5-6



Gracie Stamey

Church: Mt. Zion Baptist, Hudson

Favorite dessert: Brownies

Bible verse for the year: Psalm 37:4



Courtney Heath

Church: Holly Springs, Broadway

Favorite dessert: Brownies

Bible verse for the year: Psalm 34:4

Two returning panelists!



Hannah Klingenberg

Church: Pleasant Grove Baptist, Willow Spring

Favorite dessert: Ice Cream

Bible verse for the year: Jeremiah 33:3



Sarah Beth Heath

Church: Holly Springs, Broadway

Favorite dessert: Chocolate Cake

Bible verse for the year: Proverbs 3:5-6



Alyssa McMillon

Church: Dudley Shoals Baptist, Granite Falls

Favorite dessert: Chocolate Cake

Bible verse for the year:
Philippians 4:6-7

Meet the panelists at this year's *Ignite!* conference. If you are interested in having one of these students help or speak at an event at your church, please reach out to Sara Lamkin.

You Need Only Be Still



In Exodus 14, God forced Pharaoh's hand with ten plagues. With the plagues, the freedom of the Hebrew people was won, but once again, Pharaoh's heart was hardened and God's people found themselves in one of the most epic chase scenes in the Bible. Imagine millions of Hebrew men, women, and children with all of the possessions they could carry, being chased by the most lethal army on earth. One group has donkeys and oxen and the other group has horses and chariots!"

The Israelite people find themselves pursued to the edge of the sea. They cannot walk or run any further. They have hit a wall. In their panic and desperation, the people screamed at Moses that this was all his fault!

"¹⁰As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. ¹¹They said to Moses, 'Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt?' ¹²Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!'"

In their minds, the Lord had led the Israelites there to die! They could not see God's hand at work. Despite the plagues and wonders, they could not believe that God had a plan for rescue. But notice what Moses says in that moment:

"¹³...Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. ¹⁴The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

In their moment of greatest fear and panic, Moses reminds his people that the LORD is still in control. He has not brought them all this way to die! He will be their rescue! And then Moses says five words that are everything "You need only be still."

Be still. Stop struggling. Stop running. God has got this.

This was part of the message to the female offenders at our Annual Prisoner's Retreat. The retreat's theme scripture, like our Ignite conference, was John 1:5, "*The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it!*" This retreat was a place for some of these women to lay their burdens down, to stop running, and just be still. The amazing volunteers this year became light-bearers as they served as safe places, listening ears, and encouragers. In their company and in the mighty presence of God, our guests found rest and connection to the "Light of the World." The hours may have been spent in Bible Study, crafts, recreation, and beatification, but in the midst of it all, just like for Moses, God passed by. At the closing of the retreat, we gave an altar call for women to give Christ their burdens and be prayed for by our volunteers. Almost all of the women came forward for prayer. Some of the guests went to multiple volunteers and we prayed for and over them many times. They came with lives like empty cups extended, and God poured out love, forgiveness, protection, and healing. Walls came down. Cups overflowed. God was in that place!

Have you hit a wall in your life? Have you come to the end of your rope with a situation or a relationship? Does it seem like you keep hitting the same wall again and again or have you been trying to find a way over or around the wall but find that it is too high or too wide to overcome? Perhaps it is time to stop struggling. Stop running. Stop trying to figure out a way and... **Just. Be. Still.**

When we are still, we can see God move. When we quiet ourselves and pray, we find that God clears a path forward for us. Our stillness is our message to God that HE is in control. It is like saying, "Go ahead, God, and part the waters."

Be still. Give God control. Hold out your cup. Let yourself be rescued by the Light of the World.

PRAYER: Holy God, help me to stop running into walls and instead, run into your arms.

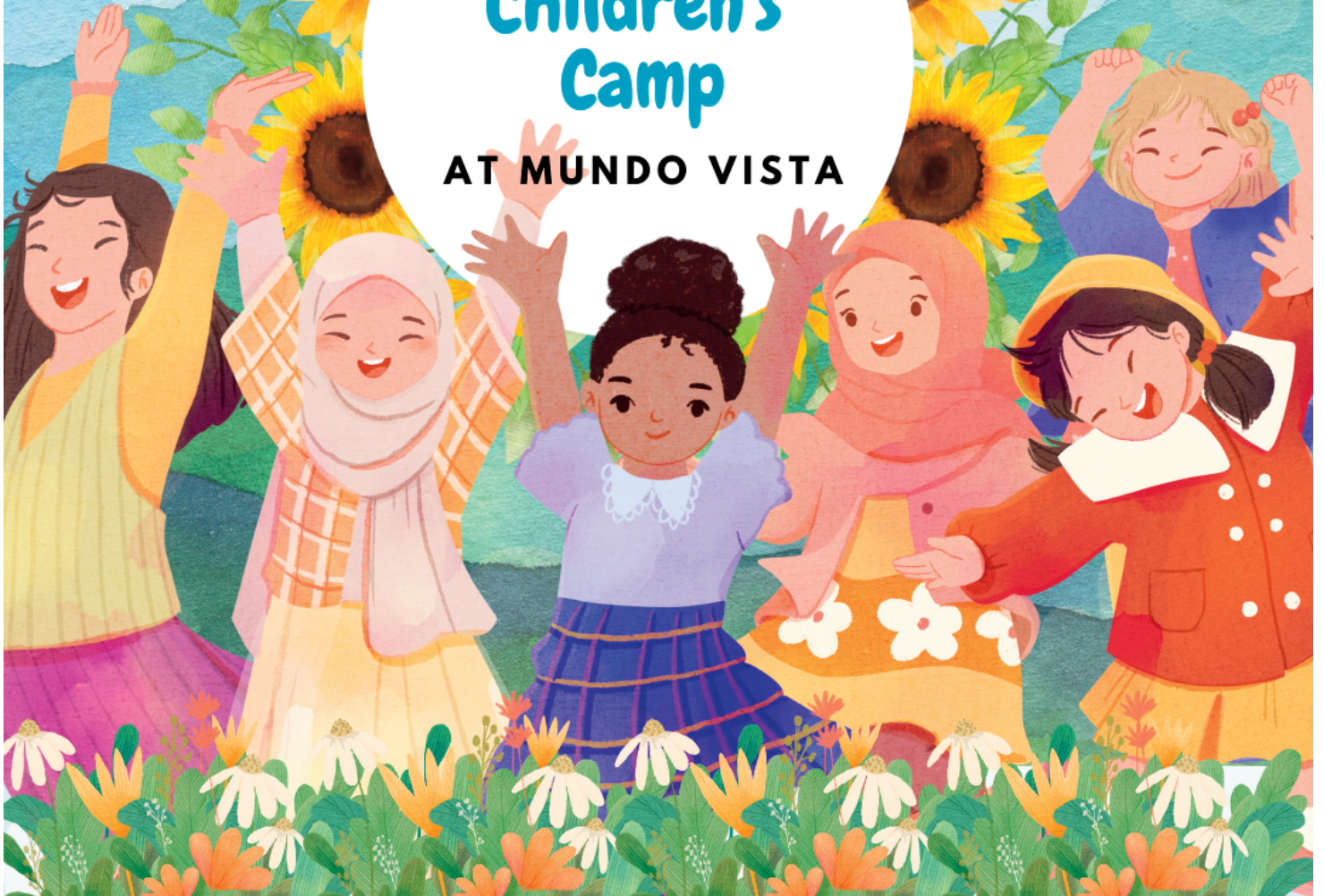
Amen.

— Rebecca Lindhout
*Consultant for Adults And Children and
Ministry Involvement*

JUNE 24-28

**International
Children's
Camp**

AT MUNDO VISTA

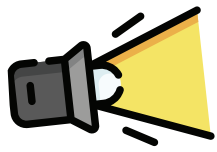


**1 SPECIAL WEEK
30 REFUGEE CHILDREN
7 NATIONALITIES**

**VOLUNTEER AT CAMP AND BE
AN INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONARY RIGHT HERE IN NC!**

**SIGN UP TO
LEARN MORE**





Ministry Spotlight:

Baptist Nursing Fellowship

BNF Celebrates 40 years in 2023!

It was while attending Mission Extravaganza around 2000 that I first encountered Baptist Nursing Fellowship (BNF). I saw women who were attending with BNF name badges, and I thought, "What a fantastic idea! Nurses being involved in this arena!"

It was several years later that I was invited to a BNF annual meeting and encountered a group of colleagues devoted to a special ministry. I was enthralled with the prayer walk, the speakers, fellowship, continuing education, praise and worship, and the "blessing of the hands." This group encourages each other, prays for each other, and lifts each other in spirit. This group challenged me to join, and I have never regretted joining Baptist Nursing Fellowship.

Did you know that BNF is the only Christian Nursing Fellowship that ***focuses on Missions?***

BNF is a group of healthcare professionals who are interested in Christian Professional Fellowship. Continuing education and growth is a focus for members and nurse missionaries. Members engage in divinely inspired nursing service projects as well.

In case you are wondering, Ellen Tabor was the founder of BNF. She told me during one of our meetings how her husband would attend medical meetings. He was a physician at Baptist Hospital. While the men were meeting, the women would wait on them. One day she had an idea. "Why not organize a nurses' fellowship?" North Carolina Baptist Nursing Fellowship established the first meeting 40 years ago in 1983. Today, BNF has chapters in multiple states with the national office in Birmingham, Alabama.

I had only been a member for a couple of years when I went on my first mission trip to Guatemala. This was life-changing for me. I must say my childhood dream of being a nurse in a Christian atmosphere came alive. I really was a "missionary in action," but doing what I love: nursing! Many of the members have been on mission trips to places like Guatemala, China, Armenia, Uganda, Kenya, and others. These experiences drive us to continue our efforts to become the hands and feet of Jesus. We share the good news of Jesus for spiritual healing while also helping heal physical needs.

NC BNF is here for you. Whether you are having a health fair or a church event where you need a nurse, or you want to educate a group of GA's or RA's, we would love to send a nurse to help. If you reserve the Medical bus and need assistance, we are available for that too!



Baptist Nursing Fellowship exists to ***empower, educate,*** and ***encourage*** nurses & medical workers to be on mission for Christ.



Our Fellowship offers monetary scholarships to nursing students based on set criteria. This is yearly and requires an application which is due by May 1 each year.

The North Carolina annual meeting is scheduled for March 1-2, 2023 at Caraway. Share this date and plan to attend if you are a nurse or health professional. Our theme is "Book of Life." In March 2023, our theme was "Salt of the Earth" and our continuing education was on Human Trafficking. We were able to provide snacks and gas cards to use in this ministry locally.



BNF Members celebrate 40 years of ministry at Ignite! Missions Conference.

Christian nurses compassionately care for their patients as instructed by God. Proverbs 31:31 says, "Honor her (him) for all that her (his) hands have done and let her (his) works bring her (him) praise at the city gate." God sees and rewards those who diligently seek him. Jesus spoke in Matthew 25 on how we are to care for the poor, strangers, sick, and imprisoned. Nurses serve every aspect: hospital, hospice, prison, home health, surgery, education, primary care, pediatrics, nursing facilities, just to name a few areas. May God use NC BNF in every opportunity given.

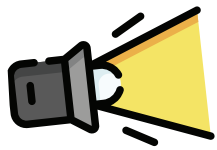
Love in Christ,
 Penny Jones, MSN, FNP-C
 BNF NC President

Are you a Nurse or Medical Professional?

Join BNF online at
www.wmunc.org/nc-baptist-nursing-fellowship
 or contact Penny Jones for more information.
penjones@wakehealth.edu

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for nursing students.
- Pray for nurses.
- Pray for the families of nurses.
- Pray for the mental health of nurses as their jobs can be overwhelming and stressful.
- Pray for nurses to boldly speak of spiritual healing through Jesus even as they help with physical healing.
- Pray that BNF members can serve, grow, and stand firm in their faith.
- Pray God will lead and bless BNF members as they are Called to Care.



Ministry Spotlight: Christian Women's Job Corp



A Space for Ministry and Healing - *The Gathering Place*

By Cara Lynn Vogel, State Coordinator



Christian Women's Job Corps of North Carolina is beginning its twenty-fifth year on December 31, 2023. It is unlikely that those who were working to begin CWJC in North Carolina in 1999 could have envisioned the changes in economics, world politics or even everyday living in the last 24 years, despite the fact that they were very forward-thinking people. While each of our sites has similar stories, here is one where their work has produced ministry and healing.

In 2011, after completing the National Certification Training, Roanoke Chowan Christian Women's Job Corps (RCCWJC) registered their intent to serve the women of Hertford, Bertie, Gates and Northampton counties.

This ministry's reach has continued to expand through the years. In June 2017, the North Street House was restored and opened to serve as a transitional house in a community with very little access to affordable housing. The house was designed to serve up to three women and their children, providing shelter and an opportunity to grow the funds necessary for a down payment on permanent housing.



Just as RCCWJC was beginning to outgrow its space for classes and mentoring options, Pat Byrd (right), executive director, learned that the buildings and land that had been First Presbyterian Church in Ahoskie were being offered to be used for mission and ministry.



Courtesy of WDLZ Radio Station, Murfreesboro, NC.

RCCWJC was chosen and entered a partnership with the Presbytery. This new endeavor is called The Gathering Place.

Equipped with a sanctuary, fellowship hall, and kitchen which can be used by the community, there is classroom space for CWJC and a clothing/household goods ministry. The Ahoskie Food Pantry has chosen to remain in its location at The Gathering Place along with other ministries to the community. In recent months, a chaplain has joined those working out of The Gathering Place to encourage churches and individuals to provide chaplain services to nursing homes in the area.

RCCWJC is now hosting monthly worship services including dinner for the community. These non-denominational services are drawing 50 or so people for worship and community fellowship.



The fall of 2023 provided another opportunity for growth in ministry to this community. Christian Men's Job Corps is in the developmental stages. With the groundwork already laid by CWJC in this community, they are hopeful that they will soon be serving men, teaching job and life skills. Connections have been made with those working in re-entry services and there are opportunities to provide CMJC to that community especially. Woody Baker has completed the training to become a site coordinator with CMJC.

This past fall, RCCWJC, the Joyner Farm in Conetoe, and ECU Health in Ahoskie partnered to address food insecurity needs and provided 175 fresh vegetable boxes to families given out at The Gathering Place. This event, in addition to being the location for Fall Fling in Ahoskie, is allowing the community to discover RCCWJC's commitment to their neighbors.

Christian Women's/Men's Job Corps' purpose is to transition men and women from poverty to self-sufficiency in Christ. A current participant at RCCWJC, LaToya, has been transitioning to permanent housing, a more healthy lifestyle and stable finances. Recently, she made a profession of faith in Christ as her Savior. She was baptized with family and friends in attendance to support her on this most important next step in her life on September 29th.



Each birthday creates a desire to look back on the past... remembering the events that have shaped us into our current form. More important than the past, however, is the future that past enables and how God is shaping us. We ask you to join us in prayer in this 25th year—for vision, for willingness to move through the doors that God opens, and for those who God will call to join us in this mission.



2024 Prayer Bookmark

SUNDAY

Congregations and
Individuals Open and
Willing to Respond

MONDAY

Adequate Employment
for CWJC Participants

TUESDAY

Commitment of
Volunteers and Mentors

WEDNESDAY

Community Involvement
in CWJC

THURSDAY

Endurance for Participants
and Leadership

FRIDAY

Completed Short- and
Long-Term Goals

SATURDAY

Family Support for
Participants



Are you interested in learning more about CWJC, coordinating a site, or working as a mentor? Check out <https://christianjobcorps.com/training/> for self-guided courses to get you started! You can also visit www.cwjc.org or contact Cara Lynn Vogel at cwjc@gmail.com for other training opportunities and more information.



CHRISTIAN WOMEN'S
JOB CORPS®
a ministry of WMU®

Throughout
North Carolina
in various settings
and types of
communities, CWJC
is bringing hope for
a brighter future:
Empowering women
in need by providing
resources to help
them move
from dependency to
self-sufficiency.



Ministry Partner Talk

■ Christian Women's Job Corps

Cut out the bookmark to the left and use it in your Bible to remind you to pray for CWJC each week.

■ NC Baptist Nursing Fellowship

March 1-2, 2024: Annual NC BNF Meeting at Camp Caraway

BNF has scholarships available for Student Nurses. Applications are due by May 1 each year. If interested, please send a request to Rowena Mante at rowenamante@yahoo.com or Penny Jones at penjones@wakehealth.edu

■ Hispanic WMU

August's Hispanic Women's Retreat at Camp Mundo Vista hosted nearly 300 attendees! It included powerful inspiration from current UFM President Raquel Garcia, time spent hearing from missionaries, and a missions recognition service for the youth and children (see p. 3). Missionary Clara Huff noted the enthusiasm present among the attendees and remarked that the retreat was "wonderful in every way." God is moving through UFM and mobilizing women to be missionaries in their own communities and abroad!

January 20-29: Mission Trip to Costa Rica.

Contact Raquel Garcia for information at raquelgarcia.09121975@gmail.com



Raquel Contreras gifts Raquel Garcia a prayer shawl at the Hispanic Women's Retreat.

■ Sisters Who Care

Sisters Who Care is always working to build community and invest in those around them. Join their Facebook page to stay up to date on missions projects and conference opportunities.

January 20: Becoming Workshop, Henderson, NC

Contact Elder Lisa D. Jacobs for info or to get involved. ljsevent@gmail.com

■ NC Baptist Ministers' Wives

NC Baptist Ministers' Wives shared a special breakfast together at the NC Baptist State Convention in November. WMU NC had the opportunity to thank the women for the ways they minister to their husbands, families, and churches, and provide door prizes.

Visit the NCBMW website:

<https://ncbminwives.wixsite.com/ncbmw>

Connect on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/NCBMW>



■ Camp Mundo Vista & Camp Caraway

Register today for 2024 Summer Camps! A Camp Experience makes an amazing Christmas gift and is an eternal investment in the spiritual lives of your kids and grandkids.

Visit www.caraway.org to register

Calendar Talk

WMU NC 2023/24
CALENDAR

December 2023

3-10 International Missions Emphasis and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

25-28 Christmas Holidays (*Office closed*)

January 2024

1 New Year's Day observed (*Office closed*)

6-8 National WMU Board Meeting, Birmingham, AL

15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (*Office Closed*)

19-20 Executive Board Meeting, Parkwood Baptist, Concord

20 Sisters Who Care Becoming Workshop, Henderson

February 2024

12-18 WMU NC Heck-Jones Offering and Week of Prayer

18 Focus on WMU

21 Leadership Luncheon

24 Children's Missions Day

March 2024

1-2 Annual NC Baptist Nursing Fellowship Meeting, Camp Caraway

3-10 North American Missions Emphasis & Annie Armstrong Easter Offering

14-15 CBFNC General Assembly, FBC, Greensboro

20 Leadership Luncheon



Do you feel called to lead? Are you currently serving in a leadership role in your church and want to feel more equipped? Do you wonder about the ways God is calling you to serve Him in this season?

You are not alone. We understand how hard being a leader in any capacity can be. We want to come alongside you, to help further equip you to lead and to help you gain clarity on your God-given purpose and calling.

The next cohort group will begin February 2024!

VISIT WMUNC.ORG/LEADERSHIP-COHORT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Women's
Leadership Cohort





Woman's Missionary Union NC

205 Convention Dr | Cary NC 27511

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Tarheel Talk

Woman's Missionary Union

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