

From the Conference President

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Dear United Women in Faith Sisters in the TWK Conference,

I am writing to express my heartfelt thanks for all you have given to our sisterhood. In these uncertain times, your prayerful and financial support is changing our world for the better in ways our foremothers may have only imagined. In 1869, when those eight women in Boston grew a network and funds large enough to send Isabella Thoburn and Clara Swain to India, they began a legacy of love that you help to continue through your pledges and gifts to mission.

How are your mission dollars at work?

Perhaps you've recently read on the United Women in Faith website or in **response** magazine about how our deaconesses demanded justice in the Philippines and how their work led to the arrest of a ruthless president. Did you see the story about Imayam Social Welfare Association in India, where we're helping to decrease the school dropout rate and let young women know they don't have to fall victim to child marriage and abuse? Mission Giving made that possible!

Right here in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference, we have a shining, living example of what your mission dollars can do — the Bethlehem Centers of Nashville (BCN). This isn't just a program. It's a place where lives are transformed, leaders are born, and hope becomes reality.

Steve Fleming is the inspiring Chief Executive Officer of BCN. Steve's story begins when he was just four years old, stepping through the doors of BCN as a child in need of guidance and opportunity. Thanks to the support of BCN — fueled by mission dollars like yours — Steve graduated high school and attended college on a scholarship made possible by the very center that first welcomed him.

But Steve's story didn't end there. With a heart for service and a passion to give back, he returned to BCN — this time as a staff member. And in 2014, the boy who once walked through those doors as a child became the CEO. Today, Mr. Steve is a force for change, shaping the lives of the next generation just as his life was once shaped.

A few years ago, Charlene Richardson and I visited BCN with a team from the legacy TN Conference United Methodist Women. Our mission: help a young man organize his office for the upcoming summer program. But what we found was something extraordinary. In

conversation, he revealed he too had grown up coming to BCN. His dream? “To be like Mr. Steve.”

This moment was more than heartwarming — it was a powerful, living testimony to what happens when communities invest in people. Because of your support, seeds planted decades ago are now bearing fruit — not just in Steve, but in every child who dares to dream bigger because someone believed in them first.

This is what transformation looks like. This is what mission looks like. And this is why your giving matters.

When your pledges and gifts to mission are combined with those from sisters from within our conference, we fuel a mission that transforms lives! But there is more work to do and more love to share. Will you share your love by fulfilling your pledge early this year and/or increasing your giving, thereby helping our conference meet its yearly pledge? The need to make mission possible is as great as it has ever been. I know that together we can fill some of the gaps left by these difficult financial times.

With your pledge, you are in loving solidarity with thousands of women of faith who are ensuring the continuity of United Women in Faith’s vital mission efforts here and around the world.

Thank you for all you do to put love into action. Please reach out to your district treasurer to fulfill your pledge early, increase your gift, or donate online. (Our conference will be credited for online gifts!)

In deepest gratitude,

Karen Saunders

President

Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference United Women in Faith