UNITED METHODIST WOMEN
PROGRAM BOOK 2019-2020

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE
IGNITED FOR JUSTICE
Let Your Light Shine Mosaic

Enlarge the template/grid above by four to eight times. The 12 squares represent the 12 months of study. The group will use this template to create a mosaic.

Ask: How do you or can you reflect God’s light as a unit?

• As a group, pick out a word or words from the program that best reflect what was learned during that month.
• Using scissors or pinking shears, cut out a paper heart and write the word on the heart.
• Using a glue stick or tape, add the heart to the template square for that month.
• Continue to build your mosaic throughout the year. At the end of the program year, post your mosaic on the wall for inspiration and challenge.
LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE MOSAIC
Over the course of the monthly and special programs, the group will work together to create a mosaic that answers the question: How do you or can you reflect God’s light as a unit? See the previous pages for the template and instructions.

BIBLE STUDY: INSPIRE AND IGNITE
Each program includes a Bible study that explores passages through the prism of light. Time for reflection and discussion are provided through small circles.

BRIDGE: INFLUENCE AND SHINE
This section offers activities that serve as a bridge and help us connect the dots between the Bible study and call to action.

ACT: IMPACT AND SHARE GOD’S LIGHT
Here you are invited to engage in action and advocacy with United Methodist Women. You can use the opportunities and strategies suggested here, or develop your own strategies for ongoing work.

PRAYERS, HYMNS AND CLOSING LITANIES
The programs include prayers and hymns that are related to the current month’s Bible study theme and offer an opportunity for centering and community worship. The closing of each program is a communal prayer.

APPENDIX
This section consists of handouts for some of the activities in the programs, making it easy for the leaders to photocopy and distribute them.

BUILD YOUR PROGRAM
You are encouraged to do the full program to learn and gain a good understanding of each topic. The full program will take 45 minutes to an hour. The approximate time allotted for key segments is indicated after the segment headings. However, if you have less than an hour, use the Build Your Own Program feature in the Preparation section of each program to note the segments you want to use and those that would be most helpful for your group.

Special Programs
A Pledge to Mission and A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial programs are included in the Program Book. They are also available for download from the United Methodist Women website: unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Allow God’s light to break through your lives as you engage and mobilize for justice in the world.
NOVEMBER 2019

WORLD THANK OFFERING: A LIGHT FOR THE WORLD TO SEE

OBJECTIVE

That United Methodist Women members will learn how the collective power of the World Thank Offering is a beacon of light that reveals God’s goodness in dark places.
Preparation

Use the following lists to prepare for the program. Let women know ahead of time that an offering will be collected during this program.

RESOURCES

• The United Methodist Hymnal
• United Methodist Women Bible (NRSV) or Common English Bible (CEB)

MATERIALS

• Sticky notes
• Pens/pencils
• Containers/jars/boxes for World Thank Offering
• Photocopy of “Mission by the Minute” handout (Appendix A) for each participant
• Note cards, at least one for each person
• Four tall candles with candle holders
• Small wooden star for each person
• Names of campaigns based on our four priority issues, each written on a single note card
• Mosaic template, posted on wall, plus scissors/pinking shears, colorful paper, glue stick/tape and pens

PARTICIPANTS

Ask individual women ahead of time to volunteer for the following roles:
• Welcome people as they walk through the door.
• Lead the Bible study, prayers and closing litany.
• Collect the offerings.

ROOM SETUP

If possible, arrange chairs in a circle with a small round table in the middle to serve as an altar. Cover the table with a bright cloth and add at least one battery-operated candle to it. Ask participants to identify something or someone that brings light to them, and invite them to add representative symbols to the altar table each time you gather. Also invite them to write words from the program on colorful pieces of paper that answer the question—How do you or can you reflect God’s light as a unit?—then post them on the mosaic.

BUILD YOUR PROGRAM

Use this space to list the segments that you want to utilize in your program this month.
Bible Study: Inspire and Ignite (10 minutes)

OPENING CIRCLE

Ask each participant to offer the name they want to be called and one sign of God’s light they see splintering the darkness. Remind participants to be brief, keeping their responses to no more than one sentence. As each woman speaks, the other members of the group will offer silent gratitude for the participant’s presence in this circle.

SING

“This Little Light of Mine,” The United Methodist Hymnal, no. 585

(Add on-topic verses including, “Hide it under a bushel, no!” if you like.)

SCRIPTURE READING

MATTHEW 5:14–16

“You are the light of the world.” Present tense. Not when you figure it out, get your life cleaned up or pull the pieces together. You are already salt and light—gifts for the life of the world. You may choose to hide your light but you are in this world to shine.

The “you” in this text is plural. It is a reminder that we cannot be disciples all by ourselves, we require community, a clump of disciples, in order to shine, to become visible signs of God’s grace and glory. We are concrete reminders of God’s power and presence, signposts of the kingdom here, now, among us.¹ Be who you are—light for a world sitting in darkness!

The words that come just before these verses are the Beatitudes, “Blessed are the peace-makers.” And immediately after these verses about being salt and light, Jesus offers a series of statements that begin with “You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you . . . ” These are strong counters to the prevailing culture and religious practices and include some hard-to-live-out truths: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy’ (Matthew 5:43; CEB). But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44; NRSV). Jesus is challenging the way things are for the sake of what God is already bringing about. He is urging disciples to become contrast communities, clear alternatives to the systems and theologies of domination, or as I overheard one writer comment, God’s sign language in a world gone deaf. Jesus invites disciples to create visible alternatives to the structures and systems, theologies and practices that perpetuate a culture of death. Be light. Shine!

(continued)
Tis inspirational story is taken from the Leader’s Guide to the mission study Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship:

Bernice Johnson Reagan tells a story about her work as a young member of the Freedom Singers, a group that shared leadership in community gatherings during the civil rights movement in the United States. They were in a church one night, getting ready to go out into the streets, knowing they would be met by angry policemen with heavy batons, by dogs and water hoses, by stone-throwing mobs. They decided to sing one more song to gather up their courage. One person suggested they sing “This Little Light of Mine.” Another commented that perhaps they should sing, “This Little Light of Ours,” noting the importance of collective witness. But then an older black woman in the back of the church interrupted, saying, “No. I want us to sing ‘This Little Light of Mine,’ because I need to know that you and you and you—that everyone here is committed to letting their light shine. Then,” she said, “we’ll shine so bright, they’ll have to put their shades on just to walk by!”

Their singing solidified their collective courage and shaped their individual and communal commitment, reorienting them from fear fueled by the powers of the white supremacists, to the faith fed by the Holy Spirit already moving among us—the ongoing powerful presence of the God of justice and grace, life and liberation. Their singing was an engagement with powers and principalities, a persistent prayer, a leaning into the kin-dom of God, so that they might shine bright.

DISCUSS

• How might we collectively allow our lights to shine?
• How has your engagement with and support for the work of United Methodist Women allowed God’s light to shine bright in the world?

CLOSING CIRCLE

Ask each participant to take a star from the altar. Invite them to offer their names and one sentence about how they will let their light shine this week. As each person offers her name and response, everyone else offers silent gratitude for her presence in this circle.
CLOSING PRAYER

Divide the group in half by left and right sides of the room to read “Korea” by Sun Ai Park.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Left</th>
<th>Right</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The battered souls and bodies shall be healed;</td>
<td>the hungry shall be fed;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the imprisoned shall be free;</td>
<td>all her earthly children shall regain joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in the reign of the just and loving one</td>
<td>coming for you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming for me</td>
<td>in this time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in this world. Amen.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Bridge: Influence and Shine (10 minutes)

Prepare members for a time of giving. If you have designated containers, jars or boxes for today’s offering, invite members to bring forth those receptacles with joy and singing. To print out or order collection boxes or to make a contribution, please visit unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank.

Consider singing another refrain of “This Little Light of Mine” as women bring forth the containers.

Much of our work through United Methodist Women is rooted in shining a light on issues that are often overlooked or ignored. From human trafficking to domestic violence, United Methodist Women members have always served as torchbearers, illuminating the darkness that hides injustices like economic inequality, mass incarceration, threats to the climate, and maternal and child health issues.

Our individual callings toward justice are just as important as our collective one. Our lived experiences draw us toward the issue(s) that matter to us most—and it is in that spirit we call forth women who are willing not only to engage and learn about these social justice issues, but also engage in dismantling the systems that uphold them through our words, actions and giving.

The World Thank Offering is one of five channels of Mission Giving. This channel of mission giving allows for people to give out of God’s abundance with spontaneous gifts of gratitude and thanks. These funds are used to fund mission and advocacy nationally and internationally.
Act: Impact and Share God’s Light (15 minutes)

This call to give is a call to remember in many ways. We remember the names and stories of the women who committed themselves to the work of United Methodist Women, despite social, political and even religious resistance. We remember the names of the women whose commitment to our national and international initiatives have propelled us forward to engage and mobilize for justice. We give thanks to them in both word and deed. Today we sow seeds on their behalf.

OFPERRING

Take four candles and candleholders and place them on the table. In front of each candle, place a note card with the name of one of United Methodist Women’s four campaigns listed below:

- Just Energy for All
- Interrupt the School-to-Prison Pipeline
- A Living Wage for All
- End Maternal Mortality

Our World Thank Offering observance will be a time of meditation and prayer. Use the note cards to write down the name or names of women, children and youth you know who have been impacted by one of our four social justice priority issues: climate justice, criminalization of communities of color, economic inequality, and maternal and child health. You can also write down the names of whole communities, groups or neighborhoods that have been impacted by these issues. Once you have completed your note card(s), lay them on the altar nearest to the candle representing the issue that most impacts them. Cards will be spread all across our worship table when we are done.

Then, place your World Thank Offering into the container, declaring, “My individual gift adds to the collective impact of United Methodist Women. I give this gift to shine an even greater light in the world around me.”

You can play soft music or sing “What Does the Lord Require,” from The United Methodist Hymnal, no. 441, as women put the name(s) of the remembered on note cards and their offerings in the container. When the offering ends, pass out copies of the “Mission Dollars by the Minute” handout and proceed to the next section. The World Thank Offering is one of the channels of Mission Giving reflected in the “Mission Dollars by the Minute” handout.

Our call to be the hands and feet of Jesus to eradicate these injustices in the world is a weighty task, however, if we focus on the people within our reach, we can begin to chip away at the impact of these injustices one person at a time. Every gift we share has immediate impact. Take a look at the “Mission Dollars by the Minute” handout. When we see how our mission dollars break down to the very second, we rejoice in knowing that in every moment we have the opportunity to change the lives of women, children and youth around the world.

We raise about $1 million dollars through the World Thank Offering each year. Let us give thanks to God.
**PRAY**

Father Mother God, we are grateful for the opportunity to give. We join with women, children, youth and men around the world who give toward this special cause. We know that our gifts, big or small, act as torches that illuminate the goodness in the world. Thank you for the opportunity to be torchbearers, women who spread the goodness of God through giving. Amen.

**TAKE ACTION**

As we move from a time of giving to closing, consider the following actions to take after today’s program:

- Consider making additional gifts in the names of those who you called today to further the work of United Methodist Women through the Legacy Fund.
- Rally members in your local church to create a special offering for the initiative that matters most to you. Collaborate with other United Methodist Women members to create a special opportunity for giving in the name of our beloved organization.
- As the holiday season approaches, consider buying from local women artisans and businesses as an act of giving.
- Tip restaurant servers generously. Until we win One Fair Wage for tipped workers, the federal minimum wage is only $2.13 per hour and they depend on tips to pay the rent! Advocate for One Fair Wage at: onefairwage.com.

**Closing Prayer** (unison; 2 minutes)

O God of justice and love, move us to see not only the needs around us but also your people whom you love and care for. May we give out of the abundance of our hearts in gratitude for what you have so generously given to us. Through your son Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Endnotes**

1. Please note the use of “kin-dom” in place of the traditional “kingdom.” This term was first coined by Ada Maria Isasi-Díaz. It emphasizes relationality, community and equity as the basis of God’s reign.

## Appendix A

**Handout: Mission Dollars by the Minute: United Methodist Women Mission Giving**

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<th>2018</th>
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Credit: unitedmethodistwomen.org/missionminute