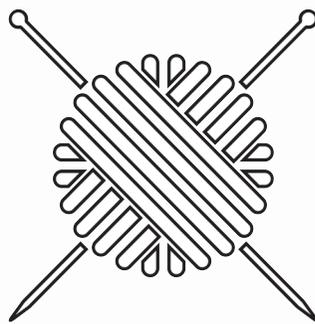


A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial 2021



She Leads: Empowering Women to Make a Difference

By Grace Musuka*

Objective

To highlight United Methodist Women programs and encourage women to continue to give thoughtfully in order to make a difference in the lives of women, children and youth around the world.



Preparation

Use the following lists to prepare for the program. Prior to the program, ask readers and helpers to assist with the readings and activities in this program. Arrange the room so that all participants can see each other. Familiarize yourself with the virtual options available for the program.

Materials and Resources

- United Methodist Women Bible (NRSV)
- *The Faith We Sing* or *Worship and Song*
- One sheet of copy paper cut in half crosswise and transparent tape
- Items for worship center (see below)
- Globe
- Basket to receive gifts

Worship Center

Set up a worship center at the front of the space with the following items:

- Table to serve as altar
- Items from different parts of the world, at least one representing each continent
- Offering basket

Welcome

Today, we gather to celebrate in this observance and give prayerfully and sacrificially. Women, children and youth across the world have felt the love of God through A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial funds that have been given to countless women gathered in circles of care. As United Methodist Women members, we bow to meet God in prayer and then rise to give of ourselves that God's vision of an abundant and beloved community for all can be realized. The kin-dom comes as we live into the light of God's vision for humanity, mutuality and seeing oneself in the eyes of another.

Opening Song

Begin your time together with one of the following hymns:

“They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love,” *The Faith We Sing*, no. 2223
“For Everyone Born,” *Worship and Song*, no. 3149



Scripture Reading: Numbers 27:1–8

Reader 1

Then the daughters of Zelophehad came forward. Zelophehad was son of Hopher son of Gilead son of Machir son of Manasseh son of Joseph, a member of the Manassite clans. The names of his daughters were: Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah. They stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders, and all the congregation, at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and they said, “Our father died in the wilderness; he was not among the company of those who gathered themselves together against the Lord in the company of Korah, but died for his own sin; and he had no sons. Why should the name of our father be taken away from his clan because he had no son? Give to us a possession among our father’s brothers.”

Moses brought their case before the Lord. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: The daughters of Zelophehad are right in what they are saying; you shall indeed let them possess an inheritance among their father’s brothers and pass the inheritance of their father on to them.

Reader 2:

In Numbers 26, a census had been taken among the children of Israel. The Lord had spoken to Moses on how to apportion land for inheritance. According to Numbers 26:33, Zelophehad had no sons and the instruction he received from the Lord did not specifically include women. This is when the daughters of Zelophehad made their request, “Give to us a possession among our father’s brothers.”

Reader 3:

When the leaders received this request, Moses knew exactly where to take it. The Lord responded positively. What a great achievement!!! Women began to own an inheritance because Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah and Tirzah spoke up.

Reader 1:

This text shows us that God values us as women. We were created in God’s image. We are equal heirs to God’s kin-dom even here on earth. We need to speak up and make our case known.

Learn and Reflect

As we move into our next 150 years of bold mission work, United Methodist Women continues to care for vulnerable women, children and youth. The programs offered by National Mission Institutions and international partner organizations promote leadership development and the well-being of underserved women, children and families. Projects include, but are not limited to: GED and ESL, job readiness, life skills and livelihood training, scholarships and microenterprise programs.



Briefly discuss: Where have you experienced inequality in leadership positions?

Training for Transformation is an example of how we can transform the mindset of women and men so that everyone will see that we are created equal. After consulting with our Regional Missionaries, United Methodist Women identified three countries in which to pilot a women's leadership development program: the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Sierra Leone. Thirty-two women—including representatives from five Annual Conferences, Regional Missionaries and United Methodist Women staff—met for the initial training, where they learned to identify their skills, train other women, and how to best assess their churches' and communities' needs.

When women are trained for transformation good things follow:

- Improved education standards for themselves, their families and their communities
- Better care of their children and the people in their community
- Increased confidence and knowledge to address current issues, and skills that will enable them to stand for justice

Reader 2:

Today's offering will support programs that transform the lives of women, children and youth. We continue to advocate for the work of our eight Regional Missionaries. With our support, programs that lift up women leaders, like Training for Transformation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique and Sierra Leone, will bear fruit.

Activity

This activity will illustrate how a half sheet of paper is strong enough to hold up books. Create a short cylinder by rolling up the paper so it is about 1.5 inches in diameter and 5.5 inches tall; secure it with tape. Stand the cylinder up on a table, then see how many books you can carefully stack on top of it.

This piece of paper on its own cannot hold up books, but when it is transformed into a cylinder it becomes stronger. Think about women leaders and how when they are surrounded by a circle of support and are given needed resources and tools, they are able to do great things! Lifting up women leaders and giving them a place at the table can transform communities and the lives of women, children and youth worldwide.



Knitted Together Virtually: The facilitator should demonstrate this activity for the participants on her screen. Do a trial run before the program.



Discuss

1. Just as the daughters of Zelophehad saw that they were being left out, what are some ways that women are being left out today?
2. Who was in the daughters' circle of support?
3. What are some ways we can be the circle of support for women today?

Your gifts today to the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial will bring more women to the table of leadership.

From Reflection to Action

Allow time for groups to share their responses with everyone gathered.

Reader 3:

When we boldly make our requests, God will listen and act. Let us observe the plight of those around us, and do something about it. God will give us wisdom to act. James 4:2 says, "You do not have because you do not ask." Zelophehad's five daughters had the faith and courage to ask for their inheritance and they received it. The impact of their bold challenge to inheritance laws carries through to today.

Reader 1:

God's love for all, male and female, was made clear through the daughters of Zelophehad. God listened and God acted. Just as Moses used his position to bring their case forward, so can we use our resources to lift up women around the world to empower them for their communities.

Reader 2:

As members of United Methodist Women, we have a history of being bold. Our foremothers journeyed to lands far from their families. Distance, challenges and culture differences did not deter them. We just celebrated 150 years of bold and courageous mission; let us remain faithful to the call.

Reader 3:

If we do not work for change, then who will? Our task is to support our National Mission Institutions and international partner organizations that promote leadership development and the well-being of underserved women, children and families. Our call is to transform communities so that all will be heard, all will have a place at the table, and it starts with empowering those who are so often overlooked to shine as leaders.



Offering

Invite women to bring their offering to the altar or ask volunteers to pass collection baskets to those gathered.



Knitted Together Virtually: Instead of passing an offering basket, the facilitator can invite participants to make their donations online (visit unitedmethodistwomen.org and go to “Donate” from the menu, then click on “Direct my gift to” and choose “Call to Prayer” from the drop-down menu) or mail them in to their treasurer.

Song

“For Everyone Born,” *Worship and Song*, no. 3149

Closing Litany

Leader: God our parent, giver of wisdom, awaken us to the needs of women, children and youth around the world.

ALL: Use our gifts of prayer and giving to make a difference in the world.

Leader: We come to you to seek your vision and presence as we collect gifts for your work around the world.

ALL: Use our gifts of prayer and giving to make a difference in the world.

Leader: Hold us with your powerful hand as we give gifts for your work in the world. So that only you may be glorified.

ALL: Only you can enable us. We pray.

Leader: Now that we have committed these gifts through A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial, may they alleviate the suffering of people near and far so that only you may be glorified.

ALL: Be glorified, O God. And continue to empower us with eyes, ears, mouths, hands, feet and bodies that represent Christ in this world. Hear our prayer. Amen.

**Grace Musuka is a United Methodist Women Regional Missionary serving the work and leadership of United Methodist Women organizations in Central Africa. She is also the team leader of the Training for Transformation Country Team in the Democratic Republic of Congo.*

Notes:



Evaluation

Please complete and mail this evaluation form to help us continue to create effective and meaningful programs.

Which sections of the Program Book worked best for you? _____

Which sections did not work well? _____

What special actions or projects grew out of these programs? _____

What are the important issues in your community? _____

Your Name: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Group Name: _____

Mail to:

Communications, Attention: Program Book Editor
United Methodist Women National Office
475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor
New York, NY 10115