Pledge to Mission Service 2021

Knitted Together and Reaching Out

By Susan Williams*

Objective

To envision God’s kin-dom1 and see how knitting our pledge dollars together can transform the world.
Preparation

Prayerfully meditate on the pledge service. Reflect on the community that will gather for the service and that it be educational and inspiring. Familiarize yourself with the virtual options available for the program.

• Review the entire service and practice all activities.
• Review resources and response magazine articles for examples of mission work taking place.
• Set up Mentimeter word cloud activity (mentimeter.com, or similar online application to create an online group word cloud), or chose an alternate activity.
• Create PowerPoint presentation or handouts (see content to include below).
• Create a list of possible answers to questions so presenter will be able to stimulate participants’ responses.
• Recruit a song leader or piano player to assist with music.
• Find a volunteer to read scriptures and lead prayers.

Materials Needed

• Name tags
• Colored markers
• The Faith We Sing
• The United Methodist Hymnal
• Computer/laptop, Internet access, projector and screen, plus adapter to connect to the projector
• Poster-size sticky paper or newsprint
• Copies of response magazine
• Copies of United Methodist Women member stories from Appendix C
• Large ball of yarn
• Four pairs of scissors
• Pledge cards (one for each person), found online at unitedmethodistwomen.org/donate/resources
• Pens, pencils or permanent markers
• Sticky notes (3 x 3 inches)
• Music player and calm background music
• Microphone and speakers for larger groups
• Bible (CEB, the Message or NRSV)

Room Setup

If possible, hold the Pledge to Mission Service program in a large open space. Set up the worship center with room for the entire group to sit in a circle around or in front of it. At the front of the room set up the projector and screen so all can see. Reserve wall space to post newsprint during activities. Arrange chairs and tables in groups of six so that everyone can see and easily turn to work in smaller groups.
Worship Center

Set up a worship center towards the front of the room with space for participants to gather. Decorate the table with a large cross, battery-operated candle and fabrics in bright colors that reflect the energy of United Methodist Women members. Include a Bible open to one of the Bible passages studied in this program, small bowls of water, a basket and the Prayer Calendar open to the date of this event on the table.

Knitted Together Virtually: The facilitator should set up the worship center on a table in front of her where everyone can see it on-screen.

PowerPoint Presentation/Handouts

Prepare a PowerPoint presentation or handouts with the following information.
• Prayers
• Scriptures
• Lyrics to song
• Embodied Prayer instructions
• Copies of questions from Mission Dollars at Work activity

Knitted Together Virtually: The facilitator can either create a PowerPoint presentation and share it on her screen, or scan the handouts and e-mail them to the participants before the program.

Gathering (8 minutes)

Knitted together by God’s love and grace, United Methodist Women is a community of faithful, committed women. Today, we will envision the possible. How is God calling us to love our neighbors? How are each of us called to knit our talents, skills and resources together to bring about a brighter tomorrow? As we gather here, may God provide new insights, abundant energy and increasing confidence that we are each called to be in mission for women, children and youth. Please join me in our opening prayer.

Opening Prayer (unison)

Lord, we gather here, away from our busy lives to focus on you. The world’s chatter and our fears can distract us from your abundant love. Send your calming peace. Free us to hear your voice, to see your power and strengthen our faith today.

Holy Spirit, journey with us. Help us to trust you with our whole being. Grant us grace when we cling so tightly to what we have. Help us to tear down the barriers that separate us. Give us the courage to stand up, like the unnamed women of the Bible who refused to let oppressive systems prevent them from following your call. Inspire us to serve alongside our neighbors. Give us generous hearts that we may be a blessing to the unnamed women, children and youth around the world. Amen.
Scripture Reading
Matthew 22:36–39 (CEB):

“Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?” He replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.”

Song
“Gather Us In,” The Faith We Sing, no. 2236

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Litany: Women Called to Act in Love
Today's litany is from the song “Women Called to Act in Love”; the words are by Laurie Zelman.

Divide participants into two groups, A and B. Pass out handouts of the litany, then invite them to read it aloud.

Group A: Women called to prayer and study
Group B: Women called by God to Serve

Group A: Women called to works of justice
Group B: Called by God to act in love

Group B: In the company of sisters
Group A: Seeking strength in prayer and praise

Group B: Faith and hope and love in action
Group A: Finding God in many ways

Group A: Grant us courage, send us vision
Group B: May we know God's heart this day

Group A: Share the tears that God is shedding
Group B: And refuse to turn away

All: Dwell in us, Holy Spirit! Bring us to the greatest needs! Cast out fear and mend division, show us where the promise leads, the promise leads!

Credit: © 2019 Mark A. Miller & Laurie Zelman. Used by permission. Song commissioned by United Methodist Women for 150th anniversary.
Activity: Loving Our Neighbors Word Cloud (12 minutes)

Prepare the word cloud ahead of time using mentimeter.com or a similar online application to create a group online word bubble so that the website and code are ready for participants. Make a PowerPoint slide that lists the menti.com website and the three-digit code for your group activity.

During the next activity we will take a few moments to vision what the world would look like if human beings followed God’s plan for the world. Use your smartphones to visit menti.com and enter the three-digit code for our group. (Leader: Read the code displayed by the projector.)

Take a moment for people to locate the site and enter the code. If not everyone has a smartphone, ask participants to partner with someone who does.

Project the Menti website on the screen so everyone can see results as they are entered. As people enter words into the system, they will automatically appear on the screen. Remind members the more often a word is entered the larger it will appear. Begin to review answers, which are appearing on the screen. Pause and review before going to the next question.

Each of you should enter three words or phrases into the Menti website to answer each of the following questions, creating three different word clouds.
1. What would the world look like if we followed the call set forth in Matthew 22:39?
2. Who are our neighbors?
3. What causes suffering, pain or hardship for our neighbors?

If available, post the word clouds on the church website or Facebook page.

Alternative Activity

Use this if technology for the word cloud activity is unavailable.
• Hang a piece of newsprint on the wall so all can see it.
• Ask the group to come up with three words to describe what the world would look like if we loved our neighbors as ourselves. Take a moment to allow participants to think.
• Ask participants to share their ideas with the larger group.
• Write answers in all directions around the paper. Use different colored markers. You may need more than one scribe to keep up with the ideas generated.
• Ask participants to raise their hands if they had the same words. Creatively highlight words that were lifted up by more than one person.
• Repeat this activity with the remaining questions:
  • Who are our neighbors?
  • What causes suffering, pain or hardship for our neighbors?
Activity: Mission Dollars at Work (12 minutes)

Scripture Reading
Matthew 25:35–36 (CEB):

I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you gave me clothes to wear. I was sick and you took care of me. I was in prison and you visited me.

Discussion
Break into small groups of three to six people. Discuss how mission dollars are being used to fulfill Matthew 25:35–36. Throughout the activity, the leader should walk around encouraging the groups to generate a wide variety of ideas.

Throughout our history, United Methodist Women members have heard the call to respond to Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbors. United Methodist Women has worked to change lives, one woman, one child, one youth at a time, creating communities of love. Now, we will take a few moments to explore how United Methodist Women members at all levels of the organization are currently putting faith, hope and love into action. In your small groups, generate ideas how United Methodist Women units, conferences or the national organization is responding to God’s call. At the conclusion of the activity, each small group should have multiple ideas they will be able to share with the larger group. Introduce all available materials the groups can use (below). Share questions the small groups can use to explore (below). Have sticky notes available for individuals to jot down their thoughts.

Resources
Using your smartphones or other devices, access the following Web pages:
• United Methodist Women: unitedmethodistwomen.org
• United Methodist Women grants: unitedmethodistwomen.org/about/financial-documentation/2018grantsdisclosure
• Available articles in response magazine online: unitedmethodistwomen.org/response/articles

Also explore the stories and testimonies in Appendix C and in paper copies of response and the Prayer Calendar.

Discussion Questions
• How is the work of United Methodist Women building God’s kin-dom today? Find examples from all different levels of United Methodist Women: local units, districts, conferences, the national office as well as National Mission Institutions and international partners.
• Is United Methodist Women mission work still needed as we look towards the future? Where?
Activity: Creating God’s Kin-dom Web² (10–15 minutes)

This activity will symbolically create God’s kin-dom web of love for the world. The goal is to create a web using yarn that reflects where United Methodist Women are the hands and feet of God, bringing light into the world. We all have a vital role in addressing social issues of our time. The God’s kin-dom web will help us understand and visualize the relationship between Mission Giving and putting love into action around the world. As individuals, we cannot do it all. However, when we knit together our resources and skills for others, we have the ability to bring about real and meaningful change in the world. When we work together, United Methodist Women can work toward God’s kin-dom here and now.

Ask the group to form a large circle. The participants should stand shoulder to shoulder, facing the inside of the circle. One person should have a large ball of yarn.

The members of the group will share several ways local units, districts, conferences, national and international United Methodist Women are putting faith, hope and love into action. Each person should come to the circle with multiple ideas. The yarn web should be held at waist height.

The facilitator explains how the activity will work:

1. Start with the ball of yarn in one person’s hands. She will share one idea about how United Methodist Women efforts are putting love into action. While holding on to the end of the string, the first person will toss the ball of yarn to another person in the circle.
2. Continue as the person catching the yarn shares her idea. The first connection in the web is now made.
3. Continue to toss the yarn ball until everyone has had an opportunity to share one idea.
4. Remind the group to include national, district, conference or local unit efforts if any category is missing.
5. Continue the process for a second round.
6. Continue for a third round that focuses on how individuals have put love into action.

Each time the yarn is passed, the web expands and builds stronger connections.
Knitted Together Virtually: Ask each participant to bring a piece of paper, and a pen to the study.

1. The facilitator asks the participants to draw a large circle on their pieces of paper, then draw as many dots as there are people in the group, arranging the dots around the circumference of the circle. Then they should add the first name or initials of each participant next to a dot, on the outside of the circle.

2. Explain that they will create and document a symbolic God’s kin-dom web together. When it is their turn, they will share an area of ministry, then pantomime tossing a virtual ball of yarn to another participant, saying her name as they do so. As they do this, the entire group draws a line from the tosser to the receiver and also adds the name of the ministry the tosser mentioned next to her name. Then the receiver becomes the tosser, and so on around the circle.

3. To begin the exercise, the facilitator will call out the name of the first tosser.

4. When everyone has had a turn, all of the dots of the kin-dom web diagrams will be connected, and each name will be accompanied by the name of a ministry.

The kin-dom web the group has created together represents the many ways that United Methodist Women is in ministry with women, children and youth. If participants like, they can take a photo of their kin-dom web and post it on their Facebook feed with a caption explaining the meaning of the exercise, tagging other members of their church and also facebook.com/UMWomen.

Debrief

Discuss the following with the group:

1. What ideas surprised you?
2. What partners or women are missing from the web?
3. Do you feel more could be accomplished if there were more women or resources available?
4. How do you see yourself in the web? What is one thing you will commit to do to strengthen the web?

Our relationships are intertwined and connected. If a string is missing or pulled too tight, it affects everyone else. What happens if we cut a string? If one person’s string is cut, the relationship is broken, it affects all.

Optional: As a remembrance of how women, children and youth around the globe are woven together, scissors will be passed around and each of you can cut a section of the web. Remember to hold on to the two edges of the string until everyone has gotten a piece.

At this point, whether cut or not, lay the web on the floor.

In the first activity, we envisioned what God’s wonderful world could look like if we loved our neighbors. Through God’s kin-dom web, we explored what United Methodist Women is currently doing to be God’s hands and feet. In the closing activity, we will pause and discern how God is calling each of us to join in the work.
Song (2 Minutes)

*During the singing, participants can transition back to their seats.*

“Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed),” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 583 (verse 1 only)

**Credit:** “Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed).” Words by Cesareo Gabarain. tr. Raquel Gutiérrez-Achon and Skinner Chávez-Melo. Words and music ©1979, 1989, Cesareo Gabarain. Published by OCP. All rights reserved. Used with permission. OneLicense #A-709087.

Commitment Pledge (14 minutes)

**Embodied prayer**

Written by Erin Day, local pastor, Alaska Methodist Conference

You may stand or remain seated for the embodied prayer. The prayer will be spoken three times out loud. The spoken part is in **bold**. We will do the prayer one final time without speaking any words and only using the hand motions.

*Demonstrate the hand motions before beginning the prayer.*

Let us pause for a moment. Slowly, let’s take three deep breaths: breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out. Let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart as we pray together.

**God of good gifts**

(Lift both hands straight upward to heaven, then back to body at the heart, then extend outward away from body as though offering a gift.)

**Sometimes, we hold too tight**

(Clench fists skyward, extend slightly to emphasize “hold” – “too” – “tight.”)

**Remind us to open our hands**

(Move fingers to temples, then open palms outward and upward.)

**We release, we release, we release.**

(Cup your left hand at the heart level, right hand makes a “scattering seeds” motion with each repetition of the word “release,” moving slightly clockwise each time.)

After the fourth repetition, the group pauses for a moment and then says together: **Amen**.

Today, we have explored God’s call to transform the world. We have envisioned what the world could look like if we released God’s gifts in our communities. We have examined how United Methodist Women puts love into action at all levels of the organization. Individual pledge
commitments fund the outstanding work we are able to do. Please take a moment and consider how God is calling you to financially support United Methodist Women in the upcoming year through your pledge.

Distribute pledge cards. Pause for a moment for personal reflection and play quiet background music for one minute.

When the group is ready, ask them to silently form a circle around the altar; as they do so, they can place their pledge cards in the basket.

Song
“We Are Called,” *The Faith We Sing*, no. 2172


Remembering Our Baptism
The bowl will be passed around the circle. When it is your turn, you will face the person on your right, dip your finger into the water, and make the sign of the cross on your neighbor’s forehead while saying, “In baptism, you [name] beloved child of God, are called to be in mission and ministry.” We will continue around the circle until all have had a turn. After everyone has participated we will all say in unison: “In baptism we are all called to be in mission.”

In advance, create a safe sign a person can use if they do not wish to be touched and share it with the group. For example, a person can be blessed by having their neighbor make the sign of the cross in the air in front of their face while repeating the words.

**Knitted Together Virtually:** Ask each participant to place a small bowl of water in front of them before the study begins. The facilitator will call the names of two women (the first is the giver, the second the receiver). The giver will dip her fingers into her bowl of water and make the sign of the cross in front of her as she says to the receiver, “In baptism, you [name] beloved child of God, are called to be in mission and ministry.” And so on around the circle until all have had a turn. After everyone has participated, we will all say in unison: “In baptism we are all called to be in mission.”
Closing Prayer

*To be led by a volunteer or leader.*

Lord, bless these women and their gifts. We are the unnamed women called to be your hands and feet. Each day, remind us to put Faith, Hope and Love into Action in our communities. Knit us together with other United Methodist Women as you transform our lives as well as the lives of the unnamed women, children and youth around the world. As we leave this place, help us remember you walk this journey with us and provide all that we need. Amen

Song

“*I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me,*” *The Faith We Sing,* no. 2153

**Credit:** “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me,” Words: African American Spiritual. arr. Wendell P. Whalum (1932–1987). ©The Estate of Wendell Whalum. All rights reserved. Used with permission.

*Susan Williams is an active member of Anchor Park United Methodist Women in Anchorage Alaska. She is a past vice president and treasurer of the Alaska Conference. From 2016–2020, she has served on United Methodist Women’s Board of Directors representing the Western Jurisdiction. Susan is retired from the Anchorage School District where she oversaw the 21st Century Community Learning Centers. She has 30 years of experience working or volunteering with not-for-profit organizations in the Anchorage area.*

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
Stories for the Pledge to Mission Service

The stories in this section reflect the diverse ways mission dollars are used within United Methodist Women to put faith, hope and love into action.

**Limitless: Young Women’s Event**

*Nicole Nokness, Cal-Pac Conference Team*

Limitless has provided me with countless opportunities in my personal, professional and spiritual life with Christ. Not only have I grown as an individual, I have grown to know more about God and have found a sisterhood to support me. Limitless has taken me to a whole new level from being mentored to becoming the mentor for other Limitless young women. It has taken me to events that were life changing and part of a much bigger picture. I have signed petitions, been at rallies and found new ways to speak for important causes. Never in a million years would I have thought that I would be part of a rally for a living wage with other United Methodist Women sisters—twice! This organization is empowering and makes me want to serve more in my community through United Methodist Women.

My Limitless journey began when God called me at a time that I was figuring out what I wanted to do with my future. It started in 2012 with the national United Methodist Women Redefine Tomorrow event in North Carolina, and I was excited again in 2016 when I was called to help with Limitless in my California-Pacific Conference. My light comes from those before me who have mentored me to be the United Methodist young woman I have become. It is because my mentors passed their light to me that my own light shines bright and strong today. I am proud to be counted as a member of United Methodist Women!
Reading Program

**Katie Willis, Program Advisory Group, Missouri Conference**

“Then we can spend our time in prayer, preaching and teaching” (Acts 6:4, TLB). This makes me think of the Reading Program in the scope of preaching, teaching and learning. The United Methodist Women Reading Program has a variety of books on various topics that help me fulfill the mission of United Methodist Women, which is to help women, children and youth financially and [turn] love into action. When I read the books on the Reading Program list, I am called to action, whether its in prayer, giving to mission, advocacy or going on a mission trip to help women, children and youth.

I truly felt this when I read the book *I Am Malala*, which was in the Reading Program. This book helped me as a call to action in praying for women in Pakistan, where they are persecuted daily. It even furthered me to donate or think about other ways to help these women. I am proud to be a member of United Methodist Women. Prayer is very important, but giving money to mission helps women where it is needed most. The Reading Program challenges me to extend my love in action further.

UMW Districts in Action

**Shanae Als, Program Advisory Group, New York Annual Conference**

The United Methodist Center in Far Rockaway, also known as the Far Rockaway Mission, provides meals, clothing, a food pantry and fellowship to residents of this area of Queens, New York, that was ravaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Located in the Long Island West District of the New York Conference, the mission was started in 1982 and prides itself on recognizing the value of every person, no matter who they are or where they come from.

United Methodist Women members within the district are one of their most faithful supporters, providing meals to ensure that the community has access to two meals every day of the week. The mission makes sure those in need have access to the food pantry. Though most in the area have fully recovered from the 2012 superstorm, lower income households and communities of color bore the burden of the storm and still live with the lingering effects. In addition to providing weekend meals, the Long Island West District United Methodist Women support the mission through offerings, serving on the board, and in long-standing volunteer positions that support the day-to-day operations needed for God’s kingdom on earth. The Far Rockaway Mission embodies Micah 6:8, doing exactly what the Lord requires of us; to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with our God. The Long Island West District United Methodist Women is proud to support a worthy cause with mission dollars at work right in our community.
National Mission Institutions

Claire Woods, Murphy-Harpst Children’s Centers, Inc., Cedartown, Georgia

When our residents turned 18 or “aged out” of care, they would find themselves living in the community without a support system or the skills necessary for a successful adult life. Murphy-Harpst introduced the Transitional Living Program. TLP was created with the goal of bridging the gap for foster youth in residential care to independent living. Young adults aging out of foster care are immediately placed at a disadvantage. Nearly 90 percent of foster youth enter into the criminal justice system. According to the Department of Health and Human Services, 47 percent of young adults who aged out of foster care are unemployed. This is because they don’t have the life skills and support system to be successful, independent adults.

Choosing to stay at Murphy-Harpst and participate in TLP improves a young person’s chances of success by equipping them with the life skills and confidence they need to face adulthood. Skills like learning how to create a budget, pay bills, how to grocery shop and cook meals, and how to resist negative peer pressure. These life skills are building blocks to a successful future, including getting a GED or applying to college.

Confidence is one of the most important outcomes of TLP. Once young people feel confident in their skills, they begin to see themselves as in control of their life. Recently a 17-year-old resident LaShaun* got a job working for a local restaurant in Cedartown. He takes pride in his job and always shows up for his shifts excited to prove himself. After a difficult start, he has grown as an employee and now hopes to become a manager one day. He recently told a TLP staff mentor, “I used to think the only life for me would be on the streets. Since getting my job at the restaurant I realize that I can be more than that. One day I want to be a restaurant manager, and maybe own my own restaurant.”

*Not his real name.

Local Unit Mission

Mollie Bynum, Turnagain United Methodist Women, Anchorage, Alaska, and Northgate United Methodist Women, Irving, Texas

The Northgate United Methodist Women unit in Irving, Texas, learned from members who travel from Alaska each year about the need for “welcoming” blankets for new residents at AK Child & Family, a United Methodist Mission Institution. An Anchorage-based facility, AK Child & Family is a residential psychiatric treatment center that offers help to young people from all over the state of Alaska. The Center helps build strong, positive, healthy lives for its clients. The welcome blankets are fleece throws knotted together, which are given to each person as they enter the treatment facility. The blankets show the troubled teens that AK Child & Family is a kind place to be.
United Methodist Women Special Events

**Lia Slemons**, Just Energy for All Participant, St. John UMC, Anchorage, Alaska

Thinking about climate and energy can make me feel like I’m pushing a rock up a mountain that will soon not only roll back down, but crush me along the way. When I’m motivated, reducing my personal energy use and serving on our congregation’s Earth Stewards team feels like just the thing to do. I am a steward for creation, where I feel God. When I’m faced with setbacks, I have taken extended breaks from thinking about it, because it is too enormous to tackle. When the opportunity to join United Methodist Women members from all over the country to study Just Energy for All came up, I felt called to elevate my approach from personal to communal motivation. Attending the United Methodist Women training linked me arm-in-arm with sisters and teachers.

Stepping jet-lagged off the plane immediately placed me in the arms of a faith and action community. I was welcomed with hospitality. I needed both to hang on to the energy system and reframe: access to clean energy is a human right, it is inextricably linked to access to education and health. In our country that promises universal primary education, 500,000 schooldays a year are missed due to ozone pollution from the burning of fossil fuels. Asthma and other health impacts disproportionately harm children, the elderly and low-income neighborhoods. Eroding shorelines in Alaska threaten communities who also rely on sea ice for culturally- and economically-sustaining subsistence. We need systematic change. Now I know some of the groups who know the system enough to change it—when we advocate and work together.

At the summit, we set strategic goals. Upon my return, I reached out to people about my church’s efficiency improvements. I spoke before the congregation about investing in solar power.

I am still struggling to keep up and share the work while balancing time with my family, work and volunteer tasks. The difference is I take heart in small tasks toward a new energy system, rather than growing discouraged by teeny steps. I can feel the Illinois wind at my back. I can feel the warmth of sisters with decades of faithful service thanking me for coming from Alaska—an inspiring place that happens to be my home. Just Energy training shifted my tackle mentality to one of present faith in solidarity with wondrous women working for justice for people and the planet.
Work with Indigenous People

**Mary T. Newman**, Program Advisory Group, Tennessee Conference Coordinator, Committee on Native American Ministries, Tennessee Conference, UMC

Have you ever heard the song “North to Alaska,” or have you seen the movie by that name? Do you know what United Methodist Women have to do with Alaskan reindeer? In 1906, Mrs. R.H. Young, Bureau Secretary of Alaska and the Women’s Home Missionary Society, purchased 100 reindeer to preserve and protect the tradition of reindeer herding. Livelihood through hunting and fishing was being wiped out by mining. What a powerful grassroots way to make a pledge to the future.

In the Tennessee Conference, I speak about our Native American brothers and sisters and opportunities to be in relationship. There are United Methodist Women circles that had been collecting winter clothing to send to reservations. When they approached me about a way to distribute them more effectively, I began to be the point person to receive their clothing drive. I am able to share locally and within the jurisdiction with Native American Indian Association as well as with Cherokee, North Carolina. They get many calls for aid and it has become an annual connection. Another circle is in relationship with Mississippi Band Choctaw. The women there praise their fellow sisters in Christ. When United Methodist Women circles are in relationships, it encourages pledging.

United Methodist Women are everywhere, with great hearts. They stand with the goals from the Act of Repentance. They stand with Standing Rock and the Water Protectors—a movement started by a young girl. A Native American saying that is used a lot is that nothing is finished until the hearts of the women are on the ground. But, we as United Methodist Women members lift up our hearts across the world and we are strong. That link can’t be broken as we stand in the gap for our sisters.

Working Together to Help Neighbors

**Jeannie Hall**, Program Advisory Group, Mountain Sky Conference, UMC

The former Yellowstone Conference was made up of mostly rural, small units, with a handful of “larger” congregations, all of which worked diligently to set goals for Pledge to Mission that would include using funds to assist programs within their boundaries. Over the years, the conference mission/leadership team supported the Intermountain Children’s Home, a residential treatment facility for children and teens with complex emotional challenges, located in Helena, Montana.

The conference mission/leadership team encouraged a relationship with the work that was taking place at the Blackfeet United Methodist Parish (BUMP) in Browning, Montana. Working with the pastor there, funds and goods were conveyed, coming from units throughout the conference. Conference President Stacey King began to cultivate the engagement of women from the parish. Through scholarships and financial support, women from BUMP were able to attend...
jurisdiction meetings and assembly. This support led to the establishment of a United Methodist Women unit in Browning. The conference mission/leadership team worked to ensure the success of the unit. As the unit grew, conference mission/leadership team members were able to learn more about the realities of living on the Blackfeet reservation. In fall 2019, the unit was the site for the fall district meeting, providing housing, meals and a program on missing and murdered indigenous women that was deeply moving. The support of BUMP is a wonderful example of Pledge to Mission funds used to put faith, hope and love in action.

Community Outreach for Children

**Elizabeth Leyva**, National Director, Texas Rio Grand Conference

I have been involved with United Methodist Women since I was 12 years old. I believe United Methodist Women has love for others, they see the needs, they see outside the church. They love action. They go out and plan how they can help. We do the work others don't even think of doing. We are seeking justice, mercy, giving hope and sharing love.

My husband and I lived out of town. We bought some land there. There was no water, no telephone or electricity available. When we moved out there, very few people were around. Within a few months, the community was full. Many poor people and immigrants were moving in. People were building their homes from wood they would find or however it could be done. We saw them work hard and were good at what they did. One day I saw children playing outside. It was a schoolday. I asked them, “Why are you not in school”? They looked at me and didn't know if they should answer me. One of them said, “We don't have shoes nor clothes to start school. The kids will laugh at me if I go this way.”

I talked to First United Methodist Church Weslaco and La Santisima Trinidad Iglesia Metodista Unida United Methodist Women. All I could hear was “Oh no this can't be happening. Let’s do something about this.” I invited them to come and see what is happening in the *colonia* (hidden community). They also heard that the children would share their shoes so the other one could go to school. It was hard to see and hear what was happening. The United Methodist Women members worked hard to get what the children needed. It made a difference in the lives of the children from the colonia. They were proud of their new shoes and clothes and were excited to go to school. We started a children’s Bible school on Fridays in our backyard in the colonia under a tree. And many other beautiful programs for children. The churches got involved, helping in many ways. I remember Nelly Vasquez and her sister Ilda Gonzales helping us with teaching and bringing refreshments with joyful hearts. United Methodist Women is where the need is. United Methodist Women loves action.
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