

**MEETING/PROGRAM**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

Program focus \_\_\_\_\_

Leaders \_\_\_\_\_

Host \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of pledge paid \_\_\_\_\_

**DISTRICT/ CONFERENCE EVENT**

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Place \_\_\_\_\_

Program focus \_\_\_\_\_

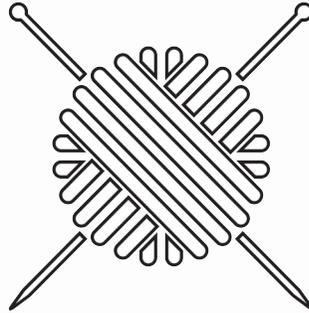
Leaders \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of pledge paid \_\_\_\_\_

*November 2020*

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3 Election Day	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Veteran's Day	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence begins	26 Thanksgiving Day	27	28
29	30					

# November 2020



## World Thank Offering: The Give and Take of Gratitude

### Objective

To understand how our gratitude to God can knit us together in community to share grace in the world through our World Thank Offering.

**BUILD YOUR PROGRAM** *Whether you're meeting in person or virtually, use this space to list the segments with their times that you want to utilize.*

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## 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: See “If Meeting Together Is Not Possible” in the Introduction and “Knitted Together Virtually” suggestions throughout the program.*

### Resources

- United Methodist Women Bible (NRSV)
- *The United Methodist Hymnal*
- Computer and projector with Internet connection, if using online resources

### Materials

- United Methodist Women mission maps from [unitedmethodistwomen.org/maps/mission-maps](http://unitedmethodistwomen.org/maps/mission-maps)
- A shallow bowl with a small amount of water in it
- Flat stones, one for each participant
- Permanent markers for writing on the stones
- Paper and pens for drawing maps
- World Thank Offering boxes or labels from [unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank](http://unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank)
- World Thank Offering boxes from children and youth who have participated in saving this month
- Knitting needles and yarn (ask members in advance for color suggestions, or they can bring their own yarn) for the Knit Together project, or other supplies if your group is doing an alternative project

## Prayer to Gather Us In (2 minutes)

Giver of All Grace, as we turn our hearts and minds to this study, grant us your Spirit so that we may be inspired to find new ways of sharing our gratitude with others. May our time apart be a light on our path in the world, where we work alongside others so that all may know the abundant life you offer. Amen.

## Song Suggestion (3 minutes)

“For the Fruits of This Creation,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 97



## Reflect Together on Scripture (20 minutes)

**Read: John 4:1–42**

### **Breaking the Expectations**

Samaritans and Jews did not mix with each other. They did not consider each other “neighbors.” This happened a long time before Jesus met the unnamed Samaritan woman at the well. Several hundred years prior, Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, after the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians in the seventh century BCE. During the time they were occupied by the Persians, the Samaritans built a shrine on Mount Gerizim so that they could worship God despite not being able to travel to the temple in Jerusalem. Eventually, the disagreement over the location of worship led to strict rules dictating no contact between Jews and Samaritans.

Jewish men were not to begin conversations with a woman they did not know. Jewish teachers did not have public conversations with any woman. And yet, Jesus speaks to this unnamed woman at the well. She is surprised and asks why he would speak to her. Jesus doesn’t answer her question about this violation of social norms. Instead, he reveals himself to her as the source of living water. The man who asked her for a drink of water now offers her fresh running water, and so she asks about that water, not realizing Jesus is offering something else.

### **Moved by Gratitude**

This unnamed woman has the courage and tenacity to continue engaging Jesus in conversation. She knows it is a violation of customs, but that does not deter her. Her mind is full of her own situation, and the needs that drive her to come for water in the middle of the day. Jesus does not offer judgment on her marriages. Could it be that she is caught in a cycle of Levirate marriage, in which a woman is passed from brother to brother after her husband dies? Jesus does not assume that she is sinful, just that she has had five marriages.

Jesus offered her living water, which she did not grasp. But when he offers her life, grounded in the reality of her own life, she acknowledges who Jesus truly is and abandons her water jar to return to town and tell people to “come and see” Jesus. She extends an invitation to them to come and see for themselves, in spite of her own lingering questions. Her words to the townspeople: “he cannot be the Messiah, can he?” reveal that while she still has doubts, she invites others to come and see.

In her gratitude to Jesus for truly seeing her, speaking to her, recognizing her as a child of God who deserved to be spoken to with compassion, she is moved to invite others to come and encounter Jesus. She does not keep this good news to herself. Her joy and curiosity motivate her to invite others to come and see. She runs back to town to share the word of abundant life and grace.



## Experience Together

Use the markers to write on a stone. You can write the name of a person who is important on your faith journey or simply the word “thanks” or “gratitude.” Place the stones in the bowl and see how the water rises. Our praise and gratitude move the water, our prayers help righteousness to flow like a stream.

When the woman at the well realized that Jesus knew her story, she was filled with gratitude and wanted others to come and meet Jesus, who accepts us. Sharing our stories and being known is important on our faith journey. Who shared their faith with you and helped you to understand Jesus’ grace? What people were important along your faith journey? Use the mission maps to explore where people came from to share faith with you. (You can look them up on your mobile device, or use the computer and projector to look at the maps together.) Draw your own map to show the reach of your gratitude. Where have you gone to share faith? What mission projects have you helped to support?



**Knitted Together Virtually:** Although it won’t be possible to put your prayer stones into a single bowl of water, ask a volunteer to combine photos of them into a collage and post it on her Facebook page, tagging the members of the group as well as [facebook.com/UMWomen](https://www.facebook.com/UMWomen). Then watch the ripple effect of your collective gratitude.

## Act Together: World Thank Offering (15 minutes)

For more than 135 years Methodist women have given to the World Thank Offering through United Methodist Women and its predecessor organizations. The World Thank Offering is an opportunity for individuals to respond to God’s abundant grace. When we share our gifts and they are combined with the gifts of others, our contributions make possible the support of National Mission Institutions and international projects and partners to meet the physical and social needs of women, children and youth.

Use the United Methodist Women Mission Maps to explore where your offering makes a difference in the lives of women, children and youth. Post the maps where participants can see. Have each person choose a mission project to explore, either by looking it up on a mobile device, or using the computer and projector to look up the projects together at [unitedmethodistwomen.org/maps/mission-maps](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/maps/mission-maps). Alternatively, maps are available in the March–April 2020 issue of **response** magazine.

Take a few minutes to hear more about how the World Thank Offering makes mission possible.

- Has someone in your group visited a National Mission Institution or an international project? Did they participate in the Ubuntu Day of Service at a National Mission Institution? Ask them to share about their experience.
- Read about the World Thank Offering at: [unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank](https://unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank).

Invite guests and members to bring forward their World Thank Offering collections.



**Knitted Together Virtually:** Invite guests and members to make their World Thank Offering donations online using their smartphones or other digital devices, if they feel comfortable doing so. Pause to allow them time to do this. Tell them to visit [unitedmethodistwomen.org](http://unitedmethodistwomen.org) and go to “Donate” from the menu. Click on “Direct my gift to,” then choose “World Thank Offering” from the drop-down menu. Alternatively, they may mail their checks to the treasurer.

## Knit Together for Your Community Project (5 minutes, or as long as you want to stay!)

Think about someone who shared a story of faith with you. Knit a line or a square to honor them, in the color of their eyes, or in their favorite color. Add this to your Knit Together project.

As you add these pieces to your project, sing “We Are the Church,” *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 558.



**Knitted Together Virtually:** If it’s a challenge to sing and knit at the same time, the facilitator can share a variety of different recordings of “We Are the Church” on her smartphone. Listen to the hymn’s uplifting message as you knit quietly together.

## Closing Litany (3 minutes)

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, be with us in our seeking.

**Many voices:** **Come, Holy Spirit, be with us in our needing, walk with us in our searching.**

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, open our ears and our eyes to the One who is Living Water.

**Many voices:** **Be with us in our wanting and our longing. Open our hearts to perceive the grace freely offered to us.**

**One voice:** Stir up in us gratitude that makes us run to share good news.

**Many voices:** **Give us courage to go out and proclaim, in word and deed, the good news of Jesus Christ. Give us hearts of compassion to be responsible messengers, committed to the suffering people of the world.**

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we are sent out on the journey.

**Many voices:** **Walk with us so we can discover the path of faithfulness and invite others to come and know the grace of Christ. Amen.**



## 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? \_\_\_\_\_

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Which sections did not work well? \_\_\_\_\_

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What special actions or projects grew out of these programs? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are the important issues in your community? \_\_\_\_\_

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Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Mail to:**

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