CREATING POSSIBILITIES
Members of the North Georgia Conference gather for a Legacy Fund tea hosted by Sue Raymond.

Photo: Christi Campos

CONTENTS

General Secretary and CEO’s Report • 4
President’s Reflection • 8
2019 Highlights • 10
Spiritual Growth • 12
Leadership Development • 14
Transformative Education • 16
Service and Advocacy • 18
Campaigns • 20
Climate Justice/Just Energy For All • 22
Mass Incarceration/ School-to-Prison Pipeline • 24
Economic Inequality/ Living Wage 4 All • 26
Maternal and Child Health • 28
Treasurer’s Report and Charts • 30
2020 Budget Narratives • 36
Legacy Update • 46
Ways to Get Involved/Where to Find Us/ Resources • 48

Members of the North Georgia Conference gather for a Legacy Fund tea hosted by Sue Raymond.

Photo: Christi Campos

Cover photo: United Methodist Women
In 2019 United Methodist Women celebrated 150 years of mission service with reflections on the work and the impact of our organizations and its predecessors. As we looked back, we became aware of how much our current work reflects and connects to those roots. We celebrated women committed to growing spiritually and following God’s call through service and through advocacy. We celebrated the way United Methodist Women and our predecessors navigated changes in the church and in society, surviving world wars, church mergers and massive cultural changes.

In every era, women came together to follow God and create new possibilities for themselves and for the communities that they served. A hundred years ago, our predecessors were working with migrant women and girls to provide welcome and safety all around the United States. Today, United Methodist Women joins with others to advocate immigrants. We have been creating possibilities for women, children and youth around the world as we mobilize assets that our predecessors gave and stewarded. This takes place with endowments in the United States that continue to support national and international projects as well as the care for retired missionaries and deaconesses. It also takes place in locations in Tokyo, Japan, where funds given by our members support the Wesley Center and its projects for young women in Japan and work with schools our predecessors founded. In Seoul, South Korea, where similar funds support the Scranton Women’s Leadership Center that provides seminars and scholarships for young women from many countries. Both centers work with United Methodist Women’s Regional Missionary in the Philippines for mutual support, women’s education, peace and similar important endeavors.

Reflecting on our history has been a provocative backdrop for the work of our leaders on strategic planning. We are looking ahead toward possible changes in the church, at the same time as we are preparing for new ways of gathering and supporting each other and new ways of organizing for service and advocacy. Surveying members and non-members, as well as working with the Program Advisory Group, have yielded many learnings. Testing and implementation phases of this work will follow soon.

During this year, we continued to prepare, creating new possibilities through fundraising for the Legacy Fund, which reached the 50 percent mark on our ambitious goal. We will continue building the fund as we move into the sustaining phase of the campaign so that in the future current giving can connect directly to projects, while the Legacy Fund supports the core expenses of the organization.

In addition to the shared work in Asia, we are working with Regional Missionaries and women leaders in Africa to create more possibilities there. Following a consultation in Mozambique and extensive planning, we launched a pilot...
project in three regions to support women’s leadership, livelihood and spiritual growth. We look ahead to learning alongside and supporting our sisters as they apply, adapt and share this work.

Of course, our members and United Methodist Women units across the country continue to invest themselves in service locally, feeding, clothing and standing in solidarity with people in need. We also continue to grow spiritually through individual study and events like Mission u and Leadership Development Days as well as praying together, using the Prayer Calendar (either in print or online—creating more possibilities). And we continue to work for justice, advocating for a living wage, just and clean energy for all, speaking out against mass incarceration of people of color and working to address deficiencies in maternal and child healthcare—especially for women of color.

We seek God’s guidance and blessing as we continue to work and serve, creating more possibilities for women, children and youth around the world.

“As we looked back, we became aware of how much our current work reflects and connects to our roots. We celebrated the way United Methodist Women and our predecessors navigated changes in the church and in society, surviving world wars, church mergers and massive cultural changes.”

—Harriett Jane Olson

Photo: United Methodist Women

Harriett Jane Olson
General Secretary and CEO
United Methodist Women
Looking Back with Praise: Looking Ahead with Faith

By Shannon R. Priddy

Celebrating 150 years in mission for women, youth and children is a great way to spend a year! It’s also a great way to set your eyes on the future.

When I visualize the women gathering on that dark and stormy night in Boston, 151 years ago, I picture them reading Esther 4:14, “Maybe you were made queen for just such a time as this.” And then saying, “maybe we were given this opportunity, this knowledge, this privilege for such a time as this.” We are United Methodist Women for such a time as this.

We spent this year talking about the history of United Methodist Women, learning the struggles of our foremothers, recognizing the same struggles today and celebrating 150 years of service to women, youth and children. From those early beginnings of sending a teacher and nurse to India to today, United Methodist Women members support more than 90 National Mission Institutions and projects and partners with mission partners serving women, children and youth in nearly 100 countries.

Each day, you are encouraged to share your story. And no two stories are the same. Like the myriad fabrics used to create a patchwork quilt, each of our stories creates the work of United Methodist Women. From Mission Giving to the four priority issues to building the Legacy Fund, you choose how you want to be a leader in United Methodist Women, in the church and the world.

What I learned in 2019 is that it is up to each one of us as leaders to be the change we want to see in the church and in our communities. It is time to use what we have learned as members of United Methodist Women and step up as leaders in the church and in the world. The past 150 years taught that women organized for mission are essential for the church to be the church. Today, God is looking for women committed to turning their faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children, youth and neighbors who’ve fallen on hard times and been pushed aside. God is calling you to organize for mission for such a time as this. It is time to answer the call for such a time as this.

Thank you for making our anniversary celebration a success—through your storytelling, your special events and your giving to The Legacy Endowment Fund. Thank you for all that you do, every day, for such a time as this.

Stay safe and stay in love with God.

“IT is time to use what we have learned as members of United Methodist Women and step up as leaders in the church and in the world.”

—Shannon Priddy
SPIRITUAL GROWTH
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
TRANSFORMATIVE EDUCATION
SERVICE AND ADVOCACY

Work of My Hands exercise helped women to identify their talents, skills and potentials. About 32 United Methodist Women members and Regional Missionaries from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean took part in a one-week Training for Transformation at the Grail Center in Kleinmond, South Africa, October 1-7, 2019.

Photo: United Methodist Women
Spiritual Growth

- Launched Faith Talks, a monthly podcast that interviews women leaders about United Methodist Women programs and issues of the day from a Christian woman's perspective.
- Provided spiritual growth opportunities through print and website resources as well as online courses and Bible study/worship as all national trainings and events, including seasonal devotions such as Advent and Lenten reflections.
- Published Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship, the 2019 spiritual growth study book by Janet Wolf.

Faith Talks

In April United Methodist Women launched Faith Talks. This monthly podcast includes conversations with United Methodist Women members that explore themes that empower listeners to put faith, hope and love into action. Hosted by Jennifer R. Farmer of Spotlight PR.

The podcasts grapple with current events such as immigration and global migrations, including the areas of focus for United Methodist Women, as well as spiritual issues such as what radical discipleship looks like through the lens of the Gospel of Mark.

Member engagement ranges from 200 plus to 800 participants. Following the live event, the podcast is available as a free download. Commenting on the talk, Deb Dunlop, a first timer noted, “It was the first time I have participated. The topic interested me, the speakers clear and concise, the information helpful. I will tell other United Methodist Women about my positive experience and will participate again.”

Likewise, a first time listener, Adele Ahanotu from Downs UMC United Methodist Women in Oakland, Calif., said "I enjoyed so much today’s Faith Talks! Wonderful speakers! Today’s Faith Talks was so calming, reassuring, validating. I especially enjoyed the confidence of the speakers and their thoughtfulness and thoroughness with which they work in their respective areas. I learned a lot—which is always my measure of an activity or project. This was my first time listening and I do plan to listen again to Faith Talks!"

“Faith Talks is so interesting, it makes you think outside the box.”

—Daryl Joe, Faith Talks listener
Leadership Development of Young Women in China

by Nile Sprague with Tara Barnes

Editor’s note: To protect the young women and the work of the Amity Foundation, full names and specific locations have been omitted so that we can share the story of the students and work supported by United Methodist Women members’ giving.

In Guizhou Province in southwest China, a young woman named Wu is studying foreign languages at Guizhou Normal University. She is learning to speak English, she said, so she can communicate with different people around the world. Wu, 20, attends school with the help of the Amity Foundation’s University for Girls program, supported by United Methodist Women. She is studying Spanish as well.

She lives in an underdeveloped village in Guizhou Province, where her parents and grandparents are farmers. She has an older brother and younger cousin who live with her. She wants to become a teacher.

“It just want to improve myself and determine as much as I can. I want to try some new things,” she said. “I want to learn as much as I can, learn more and more from different people.”

She’s able to do this in part due to a scholarship from United Methodist Women through the Amity Foundation.

“In some villages, many students are very worried about their fee for school, and many students lose their chance to study because they don’t have the money,” she said.

“For me, education is more than just to make a living. It’s also spiritual support for me. I can learn, plan my future and find spiritual support.”

—Gong, University for Girls student in Guizhou Province, China
Transformative Education

• Held Mission u with 8,474 participants. Attendees were approximately 85 percent adult women, 15 percent adult men or youth and children of any gender.

• Published adult, children and youth resources for the 2019 mission study:
  • Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship: The 2019 mission study book explores what it means to live a life of radical discipleship today using the Gospel of Mark as the foundation. Author Janet Wolf explores the timeless issues of poverty, gender, justice, liberation, equality and others using Mark as a guide. The stories of the women in Mark are a particular focus in this study.

• More than 40 deaconesses and home missioners traveled to Vancouver, Canada, for Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean. At this event, they learned about local social justice issues, the First Nations people, led and participated in workshops, worshiped together and visited various ministry sites in Vancouver.

Radical Discipleship

Spiritual growth study author Janet Wolf shares her experience writing Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship:

When United Methodist Women asked me to write a book on the Gospel of Mark, I hesitated. I’m not a writer—at least that’s not how I think of myself. I love interaction, dialogue and thick conversations, but when writing, no one is talking back to you.

Two reasons prompted me to say yes. First, I love United Methodist Women and firmly believe United Methodist Women offers hope for the resurrection and salvation of The United Methodist Church. Second, I have come to find life through participatory Bible study. In partnering with communities in Nicaragua and South Africa, in housing projects and shelters for battered women, inside jails and prisons, in the streets and alleys I have repeatedly encountered the radicality of the scriptures, the troubling, transformative texts and the invitation into abundant living, kin-dom loving, here and now.

Transformation from encountering the bible as an outdated but comforting book about individual salvation, which is best interpreted by pastors and seminary professors, to a book that cannot be contained, that climbs down out of the pulpit and into the community, is ongoing. Whether it was seeing the texts move from the sanctuary to the streets during the civil rights movement or hearing it anew as a single mom listened into life by women confronting unjust systems through nonviolent community organizing, I have been broken open by the contradictions between sermons I had heard, Sunday school classes I had been in, my own long-held beliefs about Scripture and this provocative, powerful, prophetic gospel.

It is my hope that we will immerse ourselves into the biblical texts, wrestling with the sharp edges, expecting to be confronted, challenged and changed. It is my hope that the biblical texts and the book will ignite communal dialogues about what it means to put flesh on faith.

Adapted from an article in the May/June 2019 issue of response.

“It is my hope that the biblical texts and the book will ignite communal dialogues about what it means to put flesh on faith.”

—Janet Wolf, author of Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship
Launched new digital monthly Action Alerts and targeted emails for specific campaigns. Action Alerts have been redesigned to be shorter, more current and to include specific suggestions for actions that members can take.

Created and widely distributed the Four Campaigns Poster and infographics. The poster also includes an explanation for why we engage in the work of social justice.

The Wesley Community Center in Savannah, Georgia, continues to offer low-income and homeless children scholarships to its Early Childhood Education Program with financial support from United Methodist Women.

Provided the Wesley Community Center in Corpus Christie, Texas, with a grant to support its program to at-risk children living in homeless shelters and transitional facilities.

Support from United Methodist Women continues to help Neighborhood Services Organization in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, provide living accommodations for families who find themselves homeless with nowhere else to turn.

An emergency grant from United Methodist Women enabled the Wesley Community Center in Dayton, Ohio, to provide food, water, clothing and other necessities to more than 100 low-income families impacted by tornadoes that struck the community in May 2019.

The Big Garden is a United Methodist Women-supported National Mission Institution in Omaha, Nebraska, that has the mission of creating community gardens and eliminating food insecurity. One of the elementary schools where we teach garden classes has a large number of students who are immigrants and/or refugees from Central and South America. Last spring Nathan Morgan, The Big Garden executive director was substituting for one of our educators when a class of first graders came out to the garden. A little girl immediately took his hand to give him a tour of the garden. She explained how much she enjoyed being outside and planting peppers and tomatoes. She pointed out with pride the individual seedlings that she had planted herself. When asked why she liked to garden so much, she talked about how much fun it was and how good the food tasted. And then she said, “The garden protects my family from being hungry.” Through more conversation she elaborated: “We used to buy things, we don’t buy very many things anymore.”

We later learned that her father had lost his job and the teachers had agreed that she could harvest from the garden and take whatever produce was available home with her on Fridays. The garden was helping her family have enough food to get through the weekend. Her story underscores just how important this work is.”

“The garden protects my family from being hungry.”

—First grader in The Big Garden program in Omaha, Neb.
United Methodist Women continues to work to end maternal mortality, attain a living wage for all, interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and ensure energy that is just for all. As United Methodist Women members of the 21st century, we are called to be bold in our witness, working to dismantle systems of oppression and build a better world, together. United Methodist Women’s four national campaigns are a way for us to work together on shared goals across lines of difference and geographic distance.

CAMPAIGNS

CLIMATE JUSTICE/ JUST ENERGY FOR ALL

- Climate Justice campaign: JUST ENERGY FOR ALL
- Advocates for clean, renewable energy through a just and equitable transition.
- 100% Climate Justice
- Be stewards of God’s creation: Work with companies and governments for clean, renewable energy through a just and equitable transition.
- TAKE ACTION: unitedmethodistwomen.org/climate-justice

500,000 school days missed

ECONOMIC INEQUALITY/ LIVING WAGE 4 ALL

- Economic Inequality campaign: A LIVING WAGE FOR ALL
- Advocate for municipal and state legislation that builds the base for a living wage for everyone.
- 6X: African American girls are six times more likely to be suspended than white girls.
- 500% increase in incarceration in the United States over 40 years.
- TAKE ACTION: unitedmethodistwomen.org/living-wages

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH/ ENDING MATERNAL MORTALITY

- Maternal and Child Health campaign: END MATERNAL MORTALITY
- Call on health care workers, lawmakers and advocates to fund maternal mortality review committees and implement recommendations in hospitals and communities.
- 26.4% increase in maternal mortality rate in the United States since 2000.
- TAKE ACTION: unitedmethodistwomen.org/maternal-child-health

MASS INCARCERATION/ SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

- Mass Incarceration campaign: INTERRUPT THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE
- Move local decision makers to address the criminalization of children and youth of color and reduce racial disparities in school discipline.
- TAKE ACTION: unitedmethodistwomen.org/racial-justice
Climate Justice

- Trained 100 United Methodist Women leaders and allies from 29 conferences in 2 national Just Energy for All trainings held in Springfield, Illinois, and Nashville, Tennessee. Staff from NAACP, Vote Solar, We Own It, and Green for All helped to design and resource these trainings.

- Launched the Just Energy for All 101 three-part webinar series, which gathered United Methodist Women leaders from 46 conferences. The training included why we should care about just energy for all, as well as what it is and how we can advance in all in our communities, states and country through United Methodist Women.

- Trained hundreds of people through workshops at Leadership Development Days, the Program Advisory Group meeting, National Network of Korean United Methodist Women and the New Mexico United Methodist Women Annual Meeting.

- Presented workshops on Just Energy for All and Climate Justice to the larger United Methodist Church and various ecumenical spaces including: MARCHA annual meeting, United Methodist Creation Care Summit, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, Sojourners Leadership Summit and Presbyterians for Earth Care.

- Supported young peoples’ demand for climate justice by becoming a movement partner of the youth-led Climate Strike and participated in the September 2019 Climate Strike.

“Eliminating the federal methane requirements that Administrator Wheeler has proposed will directly affect my community, my family, my grandchildren because in Denton there are nearly 500 gas wells inside the city limits. […] We need to keep the regulations on methane as a standard against those, who out of greed, would put profit above people.”

—United Methodist Women director Cynthia Rives in her testimony in opposition to rollbacks on methane waste at her hearing conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency in Dallas, Texas

Faith Organizations Deliver Petition to Ford Motor Company Headquarters Urging Automaker to Support Clean Car Standards

On Tuesday, July 2, 2019, Interfaith Power & Light, the United Church of Christ, and United Methodist Women delivered a petition signed by over 4,000 people of faith and over 700 clergy and faith leaders to Ford Motor Company’s headquarters to denounce the automaker’s lobbying of the Trump Administration’s proposed rollback of fuel economy and greenhouse gas emissions standards, popularly known as the Clean Car Standards.

The petition asks the automaker to publicly state its support for the Clean Car Standards that it previously committed to and promised to support in 2012. Over the past few months, local and state affiliates of the national faith organizations have met with Ford dealerships across the country to let them know that people of faith in their communities want to be able to purchase fuel-efficient cars from Ford and oppose any effort to weaken the popular and working standards agreed upon in 2012.

“We are calling on Ford, with their past statements on environmental responsibility and the need for climate action, to lead the automakers back to a responsible position that publicly stands by the current Clean Car Standards without compliance loopholes that would erode the benefits of the standards,” said Leah Wiste, the executive director of Michigan Interfaith Power & Light. “As people of faith and conscience, we are called to protect our common home. That’s why we condemn this effort to weaken the nation’s Clean Car Standards.”

“Pollution from cars disproportionately harms the most vulnerable among us: children, the elderly, the infirm and the poor,” said Rev. Campbell Lovett, United Church of Christ in Michigan. “We are called to serve those less fortunate. Clean Car Standards protect health and improve human life. That is why we are here today at Ford Headquarters.”

This petition delivery and meeting request comes on the heels of a contentious June 20, 2019, Congressional hearing over the rollback, where key rollback architects, EPA’s Bill Wehrum and NHTSA’s Heidi King, were asked hard-hitting questions about the devastating role that it will have on public health, the environment, consumers and even the auto industry itself.
Mass Incarceration/School-To-Prison Pipeline

- Participated in a holy disruption that brought together 19–37-year-old leaders to study Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools, build community, deepen spiritual practices and strengthen collective and personal capacity to interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Led virtual learning live webinars, in-person workshops and events on the school-to-prison pipeline, connecting with conference, districts and units in Oklahoma, New York, Texas, Florida and Nebraska, as well as leaders around the country gathered for YOUTH 2019 and United Methodist Women Leadership Development Days.

“You can be bitter, or you can make this a better world by helping others caught in the same cycle that seems so hopeless. So I’ve turned all this frustration into a passion. Now I’m fighting for social justice, not just for my daughter but for others going through the same pain.”

— Cynthia Morrison Holland, mother of an incarcerated child

A Mother’s Pain

by Michelle Bearden

Cynthia Morrison Holland is not unlike you or me. She is a doting and loving mother who wants the best for her children. But these hopes and dreams are waylaid as her youngest daughter sits in jail, away from her family, her community and her own hopes for her life. Morrison’s daughter is the product of an overzealous criminal justice system and structural racism left unchecked.

“For a long time, I prayed I would just wake up and none of this had ever happened,” Holland, 62, said. “Then I finally had to accept the truth: This is how it is, and I have to trust God that things will work out the way they’re supposed to.”

The journey has been heartbreaking, exhausting, expensive and lonely. “In our case, it’s not just Michelle serving a life sentence. It’s our whole family,” Holland said. “Something like this impacts the whole household, even extended family.”

“You can be bitter, or you can make this a better world by helping others caught in the same cycle that seems so hopeless,” Holland said. “So I’ve turned all this frustration into a passion. Now I’m fighting for social justice, not just for my daughter but for others going through the same pain.”

She believes she and her daughter wouldn’t be in this nightmare if they weren’t African-American women with limited financial means. “Michelle is guilty of poor judgment, not murder,” she said. “In the end, these mandatory sentencing laws mainly affect black and brown people, who end up serving much longer lengths of time.”

The mother who once wouldn’t speak about her daughter’s mistake and disproportionate punishment is no longer silent. She’s accepted speaking engagements in public forums, and she’s spoken privately with strangers, helping people understand the system that unjustly harms communities of color and the true burden it costs not only society, but also families. It gives her great comfort to help others on a journey she knows too well.

And though she’s had so many letdowns regarding her daughter’s case, Holland is not ready to give up hope. Last spring, while she attended Justice Day at the Capitol, she met a lawyer who specializes in post-convictions. That attorney is now looking into Morrison’s case.

Adapted from an article in the November 2019 issue of response.
Initiated the Paid Family and Medical Leave campaign (LivingWage4All) in partnership with Family Values @ Work. Members across the country participated in the Mission u action, which included a postcard campaign calling for paid family leave.

Held United Methodist Women educational events at the state and local levels, including the West Ohio Annual Meeting, North Texas Annual Meeting and the Western North Carolina Conference meeting with two districts.

Highlighted our longtime commitment to Economic Justice at Mission u with the second year of the study, “What About Our Money?” The 2019 supplement focused on living wage and retirement concerns in the context of Bible study. Members learned more about this legacy through United Methodist Women engagement in economic justice compiled for Women United for Change: 150 Years in Mission study.

Paid Leave Helps Families by Ellen Bravo and Wendy Chun-Hoon

Adriana in Chicago fought hard for a $15 per hour minimum wage. But when her baby was born, her hourly wage fell to $0 per hour. With no paid leave, she had to return to work within two weeks.

Anne in Minneapolis had a good-paying factory job, except she didn’t have sick time to care for her kids. As a mother of seven, she missed work to care for sick children just six times over the course of a year, but it was enough for her to be fired.

Staci in Detroit worked for a large telecommunications firm, where she got good performance reviews and promotions. But when her 4-year-old daughter had a stroke and Staci insisted on being at her side in the hospital, she wound up having to rely on public assistance after losing her job and her home.

For these women, having access to paid sick days and paid family and medical leave is a matter of job security and family stability. Paid time to care can make the difference—not just for the short haul, but also for long-term success. It can help provide the foundation for families to avoid debt, retain assets and build wealth.

Being a good parent or following doctor’s orders doesn’t just cost people their pay—for many, it means loss of a job. Overall, one in seven workers has lost a job to recover from illness or care for a family member. Because women still bear major responsibility for caregiving, working mothers take an even harder hit. Almost one in five has lost a job due to sickness or caring for a sick child. Both statistics provided by a 2013 Oxfam report.

It’s clear that unequal access to paid leave exacerbates inequality and reinforces gender and racial stereotypes that make it harder for the individual to obtain a living-wage job. Fortunately, there are policies that can make a significant difference. One critical piece is affordable family and medical leave. Thanks to the work of broad and diverse coalitions in our Family Values @ Work network, 6 states and the District of Columbia have already passed bills that will bring paid leave to 30 million people. More wins are on the horizon. Driving these campaigns are people who have lived the harsh reality of zero weeks of paid leave—individuals who became activists when they realized that what they could not change on their own, they could change if they worked together.

Adapted from an article in the May/June 2019 issue of response.
Building a Strong Community

by Richard Lord

Tanisha Biggerson was homeless. She was sleeping on the streets. She was also four months pregnant.

By the beginning of the eighth month of her pregnancy, she was living in her own apartment.

The drastic changes in her life resulted from the support and assistance she received from Wesley Community Center, a United Methodist Women-supported National Mission Institution in Dayton, Ohio. United Methodist Women members are among the members of the center’s board of trustees, and United Methodist Women at the national, conference and local levels help support it financially.

Through its Baby Ready Program, the center works with underserved pregnant women to augment their ability to successfully care for their children. The women who participate receive the basic framework to raise their children in a stable, secure environment.

“If it weren’t for the program,” Biggerson explained, “I wouldn’t be where I am today. I was so stressed all the time. Nothing was right. Nothing was in place. Since I started coming to Wesley, I’ve been able to relax.”

—Tanisha Biggerson, mother

Maternal And Child Health

• Maternal and Child Health has been an annual meeting focus in several United Methodist Women conferences, including North Texas, Kentucky and Desert Southwest.

• Maternal and Child Health was featured in the December 2019 United Methodist Women monthly podcast, Faith Talks.

• Members are encouraged to take action in regard to specific legislation that would make the United States a safer place for mothers and children by contacting their local congressional representative on the matters of:
  • The Mothers and Offspring Mortality and Morbidity Awareness (MOMMA’s) Act (H.R. 1897, S. 916)
  • Modernizing Obstetric Medicine Standards (MOMS) Act (S. 118)
  • Ending Maternal Mortality Act of 2018

“Children read at the Wesley Community Center in Dayton, Ohio, a United Methodist Women-supported national mission institution.

Photo: Richard Lord

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“Children read at the Wesley Community Center in Dayton, Ohio, a United Methodist Women-supported national mission institution.

Photo: Richard Lord
Treasurer’s Thoughts

United Methodist Women is a sisterhood for me. Women in our connection have been a part of the village that nurtured me and made me who I am. Therefore, it was an honor to step into the role of national treasurer in October 2019. I bring my gifts in leadership and finance, yet there is much for me to learn as I start this new journey. One thing that I know is that our financial strength is indicative of the love we have for those whom we serve. We will continue to build this legacy so that for years to come this sisterhood will remain a beacon of hope for women, children and youth. Amen and may it be so!

—Tamara Clark

Tamara Clark, Board of Directors meeting, Oct. 4-6, 2019, Drew University, Madison, New Jersey. Photo: United Methodist Women

“One thing that I know is that our financial strength is indicative of the love we have for those whom we serve.”

—Tamara Clark

Tamara Clark, CPA
Treasurer and CFO
United Methodist Women

Photo: Minha Aamer at Goykphoto
Conferences That Met or Exceeded Their Pledges in 2019

Listed by jurisdiction with percentage given beyond the pledge of the 56 conferences, 20 met or exceeded their pledges in 2019.

NORTH CENTRAL
- East Ohio 3.54%
- Illinois Great Rivers 5.63%
- Michigan 3.05%
- Minnesota 34.01%
- Northern Illinois 2.02%
- Wisconsin 13.38%

SOUTH CENTRAL
- Missouri 36.33%
- Rio Texas 3.77%
- Texas 17.48%

NORTH EASTERN
- Peninsula-Delaware 23.71%
- Susquehanna 3.39%
- West Virginia 5.03%

SOUTH EASTERN
- Kentucky 2.32%
- North Carolina 0.43%
- South Carolina 26.35%
- South Georgia 8.03%
- Tennessee 18.07%

WESTERN
- California-Pacific 2.93%
- Desert Southwest 41.04%
- Yellowstone 1.05%

Photo: United Methodist Women
Office of Transformation

Sally Vonner, Transformation Officer

We are expecting another fruitful year in 2020. In addition to staffing and program resourcing, the Transformation budget request includes funding to begin development of a five-year transition plan with a launch for phase one implementation at Assembly 2022 and full implementation in 2024.

The Transformation budget request also reflects the extension of innovation work begun in 2019 to lay the path for sustaining United Methodist Women into another 150+ years. Our 2020 budget requests for Position, Engage and Mobilize position us to tell the United Methodist Women story in more places and spaces, to clarify what it means to be a member and how to engage more women through new and creative membership pathways and to then mobilize them for leadership and action.

POSITION

In 2020, Position will focus on rolling out and implementing the organization’s new and improved brand, with a comprehensive message and visuals created with the benefit of a full year of research and testing by a crew of branding experts and staff led by Mission Partners, our key consultant for this work.

The 2020 Position budget will cover:

- Completion of the new website begun in 2019.
- Creation and distribution of materials to market and publicize United Methodist Women.
- New and/or innovated programs, mission outreach and advocacy and service opportunities to current members and beyond.
- Programs to reach new target audiences identified in the branding process.
- Events.
- Ongoing work with messaging, branding, marketing and promotion of United Methodist Women in the wider community.
- Paid advertising to promote United Methodist Women, our value proposition, mission priorities campaigns and events.
ENGAGE

The intention for 2020 is to continue to build the infrastructure that will sustain the organization for the next 130 years and beyond. Engage work will center on testing new concepts and continued innovation on current events and piloting new mixed events, testing the new membership design and targeted giving model with newly identified target markets, and creating online and print resources for new and current membership.

The budget increases slightly for Mission u as we are innovating at the conference and dean levels to include staff, board travel and anti-oppression trainers (Q1 2020). In addition, the increase allows for innovations on conference-level programming, 2021-2022 curriculum development (Q3 2020), consultant support for study development and review, as well as plenary and program development (Q2 2020).

Distance learning has reduced its budget for software as Bridge platform will be included in the IT department budget.

Membership Resource Development funds have increased as a result of the Resource Development Team review to determine which existing resources to revise or discontinue and which new ones to develop. Creation of membership resources for current members and selected materials for newly defined targets will be a focus Q3 and Q4 2020.

MOBILIZE

In 2020, Mobilize continues the work of moving women to new levels of leadership and action to build a thriving organization and change the world.

Throughout 2020 we will be devoted to:

• Supporting our four national campaigns with member-focused programming and an emphasis on connecting faith with action through theological and biblical explorations, education, advocacy and organizing as needed for campaigns, be they local, state, federal or corporate.

• Continue our ongoing commitment to racial justice and sustainability by cultivating and equipping leaders to serve as Be Just Be Green Jurisdictional Guides and members of Charter for Racial Justice support teams.

• Equip conference leaders not only through training on basic responsibilities but also through building relationships with staff liaisons, Program Advisory Group (PAG) liaisons and other leaders across the connection to share best practices and learn from one another.

• Develop our United Methodist Women leaders, through Leadership Development Days, to lead in the general church and take advantage of the opportunity to connect with General Conference delegates and represent the concerns and purpose of United Methodist Women as the church moves forward.
Connectional Office

Sung-ok Lee, Connectional Officer

In 2020, the Connectional Office will continue to work with conference leadership and the national PAG, resourcing, training and supporting these groups for strategic leadership in annual conferences and General Conference. A toolkit prepared for General Conference will be used for StepUp to Leadership in the Church, particularly for General Conference, which is now taking place in 2021. Resources for a briefing with women delegates to General Conference was prepared for February 2020, during Leadership Development Days. A similar toolkit, including webinars, will be developed to coordinate connections with Central Conference women delegates. The Connectional Office will lead the work of strategizing for legislative advocacy with United Methodist Women delegates and allies leading up to General Conference 2021.

The office will continue to develop and maintain relationships with agency partners, caucuses and ecumenical partners in 2020. It will manage and coordinate national office invites in a strategic way that maximizes and balances staff/PAG speaking opportunities and supports the development of skills and confidence of United Methodist Women leaders who will participate in key events and represent the organization.
INTERNATIONAL MISSION

The Europe/Eurasia Regional Consultation originally scheduled for October 2020 has been postponed to October 2021. Several preparatory meetings, held remotely, will continue to be held to solidify the consultation. Development of the Africa United Methodist Women Network and relationship building, capacity building and action planning will continue in 2020. The office will begin using multimedia resources that capture the story of mission with women, children and youth globally. We will continue to provide support to women's desks: Salary support for 11 women's desks in priority countries, Regional Missionary program/women's program with the women's desk coordinators; for pilot countries, and program work for Latin America and the Caribbean. Eurasia work will continue in 2020. Vocational training and economic empowerment events will be conducted by Regional Missionaries and the priority country teams. Grants will be provided for emergency relief due to COVID-19, women's economic development projects, gender empowerment and leadership cultivation.

Global leadership development will include two components: 1) to impact the global United Methodist Church and enhance women's leadership in the church, and 2) to provide knowledge and skills for United Methodist Women to become advocates in the world.

OFFICE OF DEACONESS AND HOME MISSIONER (D/HM)

In 2020, the Office of D/HM will continue to provide education and professional development for deaconesses and home missionaries, required studies for candidates, as well as discernment events to bring new people into lay ministry. The Office of D/HM is committed to eliminating barriers for people in lay ministry and offer scholarships to offset the cost of required studies. The year 2020 is particularly significant in that the largest class of candidates for D/HM, 32 persons, are prepared to be consecrated on May 11.

The Office of D/HM will administer several programs, including Fenton Memorial Deaconess Home, self-care, financial planning, D/HM Exchange Program, cutting-edge grants, personal development grants, D/HM Coaching, and a Nurture and Care Team.

It will engage in conferences and meetings and hold membership in professional organizations, which include DOTAC, DIARKONIA, NADHM, and Committee on Deaconess Home Missioner Service.

The Office of D/HM will continue to connect with other agencies in The United Methodist Church and be present at annual conferences to raise visibility, educate others on the work of D/HM and expand relationships.
2019 has been a year of change, very drastic change, some so drastic that many of us have been shaken to the core.

In Acts 16:25–34, I’ve often wondered what Paul said after the earthquake to keep those who were imprisoned from escaping. We know what was said to the jailer, but what did he say to the prisoners? How did he capture their hearts? Was it because they saw Paul and Silas as one of them? Or did they see something new on the horizon and they wanted/needed to be a part of it? We don’t know. What we do know is that many were saved that night, not just the jailer and his household but many who were held by chains were saved as well.

As United Methodist Women celebrates the 150th anniversary of women in mission, it is necessary to save the texture of history and renew the work with enough changes that shake the core but capture the essence of the work of United Methodist Women.

- Staff development will prepare United Methodist Women staff for a new future. Coaching United Methodist Women through ways to thrive in the midst of change. Preparing United Methodist Women to stand firm when the earthquakes shakes.
- Information technology will provide United Methodist Women with the most up-to-date technology that will move us through the changes ahead and provide United Methodist Women with the technology to share God’s message in many forms.
- Events management will organize logistical and creative programming tools to move us through new and exciting ways of being a vital organization.
- Communications along with Position will position and promote United Methodist Women through these changes. They will showcase our work using social media: Facebook, Twitter, podcasts; and rebranding as some of the tools.
- Human Resources along with staff development will engage talents needed to train staff through different scenarios to become a healthy organization.
- CCUN will provide ecumenical partners, build relationships and contacts through United Methodist Women’s work at the United Nations.
- The team is tasked to align all work with Position, Engage and Mobilize.

Our work is to better position United Methodist Women in church and society to impact women, children and youth around the world.
The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign: Together, we are building our legacy!

by Emily Marshall

2019 was a wonderful and celebrative milestone year for United Methodist Women. Communities of women hosted special events and activities around the country, lifting up the incredible women who built the foundation and mission movement in 1869 that is now United Methodist Women 150 years later. These recognition endeavors served as venues where women gathered, prayed, celebrated and promoted giving to The Legacy Fund, a permanently invested endowment that will forever be a source of income for United Methodist Women in the years and decades to come.

The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign, launched in 2014, is the mechanism to grow the endowment with fundraising continuing in 2019 and beyond to surpass our $60 million goal. Earnings accrued on the endowment will underwrite core expenses to ensure United Methodist Women can make even more of a difference in the lives of women, children and youth in communities around the world for the next 150 years. It is an investment in our future!

2019 was a productive year, launching Legacy Builders, a new monthly giving program, with Every Member Campaign (conference gifts), major and planned giving programs that expanded the bandwidth of opportunities for member giving and engagement with the campaign. Whether choosing to make a planned gift, monthly gift, major gift or pledge (payable over five years), one-time gift or multiple gifts, members have multiple options to consider in making a gift to The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign.

The impact of member engagement and gifts to The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign in 2019 is outlined below, highlighting how United Methodist Women members continue to lift up, Together, we are building our legacy!

On March 23, 2019, the Day of Giving we exceeded $500,000 in gifts to The Legacy Fund.

“\[\text{I decided to become a member of the 1869 Society and leave a planned gift to The Legacy Fund through my estate that will support the ministry that has helped me be the whole person that I think Christ has called me to be as a woman of faith, United Methodist Women member.}\]”

—Planned Giving Donor, Sue Raymond, National Director

The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign

Surpassed the $30,000,000 mark of the campaign.

LEGACY UPDATE

• 150th Anniversary Celebrations, events were held around the country prior to and after March 23, as United Methodist Women units, districts and conferences celebrated Day of Giving and United Methodist Women’s 150th Anniversary.

• Cultivation Events, member-hosted home events such as Legacy Teas and other gatherings where visiting national staff shared updates on The Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign.

• Every Member Campaign, giving and promotion activities directed to the campaign.

• Planned Giving/1869 Society, recognizing members and supporters who have made a planned gift by designating United Methodist Women/The Legacy Fund in their estates, life insurance policy and/or retirement plans.

• Major Gifts, engagement and connection to members and supporters with the capacity to make significant gifts to the campaign.

• Legacy Builders, new giving initiative for members to make an online gift of $18.69 or more each month.

• Endowment Earnings, effective and thoughtful stewardship by Wespath of The Legacy Fund portfolio contributing to robust earnings on the endowment fund.

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Planned Giving Donor, Sue Raymond, National Director
Photo: Christi Campos

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Ways To Get Involved

Opportunities to be involved with United Methodist Women are everywhere. Most United Methodist churches have a United Methodist Women group where you can personally experience the mission and opportunities that are available to you through the organization.

Learn about opportunities for leadership development, spiritual growth and mission through local United Methodist Women groups and at unitedmethodistwomen.org. United Methodist Women annual Program Book (unitedmethodistwomen.org/program-book) offers regular programming with Bible studies and ways to engage in the work of United Methodist Women.

Subscribe to response and Action Alerts to be informed, inspired and ready to act on the issues that affect women, children and youth by visiting unitedmethodistwomen.org and clicking on response and Action Alerts.

Make mission possible by giving to United Methodist Women through a variety of ways. To give online, visit unitedmethodistwomen.org/donate.

WHERE TO FIND US/ RESOURCES

United Methodist Women Website
unitedmethodistwomen.org is our primary website. Here, you can find the latest news and information about United Methodist Women members, programs and initiatives. You’ll also find promotional and educational items for download, as well as links to our other sites and our Mission Resources e-store.

Facebook
facebook.com/UMWomen
If you’re on Facebook, be sure to “like” and “follow” United Methodist Women so that our posts will appear on your home page.

Twitter
twitter.com/UMWomen

E-store
Go to umwmissionresources.org to purchase resources or check out free downloads of educational and informational materials.

Prayer Calendar
The Prayer Calendar helps put faith, hope and love into action with a daily mission focus, birthdays of people in mission, holidays and space to plan your schedule. You can also follow Prayer Calendar via Facebook: facebook.com/umwprayercalendar and Twitter: twitter.com/UMWomen

Faith Talks
Faith Talks (unitedmethodistwomen.org/faithtalks) are monthly conversations with United Methodist Women. Each conversation explores themes and resources that empower us to put faith, hope and love into action.
The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.