Every four years, United Methodist Women members and friends from around the world gather at Assembly. More than 6,000 women and men gathered in Louisville, Ky., April 25-27 for United Methodist Women’s Assembly 2014, where the theme was “Make It Happen.”

Held at the Kentucky International Convention Center, the event included worship, performances, workshops, social gatherings, world-renowned speakers, an Experience Hall, a fair-trade market, exhibitors, a prayer vigil and march for economic justice, a Limitless lounge for young women, a prayer and meditation room, book signings, a film festival, and, most important, the opportunity to be together with thousands of women who want to make life better for women and children around the world. The event also offered an optional pre-event Ubuntu Day of Service and a reunion for the young women who attended the Limitless: Redefine Tomorrow event in August 2012.

This quadrennium’s Assembly featured for the first time an all-female band and a renewed emphasis on being good stewards of the earth’s resources. More than 70 workshops focused on leadership development, spiritual growth, personal wellness and self-care, service and advocacy for justice, and United Methodist Women organizing for growth. We launched a maternal health initiative with the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) and began looking toward our 150th anniversary in 2019 with the Legacy Fund.

Speakers included United Methodist Women president Yvette Richards, United Methodist Women general secretary Harriett Olson, World YWCA president Nyaradzayi Gumbonzvanda, general secretary for the General Commission on Religion and Race Erin Hawkins, general secretary for the Board of Church and Society Susan Henry-Crowe, assistant general secretary for Campus Ministry and College Chaplaincy Bridget Young Ross, and former first lady, U.S. senator and secretary of state Hillary Rodham Clinton, among others.

The scriptural focus of the event was the feeding of the 5,000 in Mark 6:30-44, in which Jesus told his disciples, “you feed them.” At Assembly 2014, participants were fed, then went home to help feed others.
Ubuntu Day of Service at Assembly 2014

by Tara Barnes

More than 600 United Methodist Women members and friends got acquainted with neighbors in Louisville, Ky., during the pre-Assembly Ubuntu Day of Service on April 24. At almost 40 sites throughout the Louisville area, including two in Indiana, Ubuntu participants gardened, sorted, served, landscaped, cleaned, painted and organized, and most important, they learned about the local community.

The day began with an orientation, followed by a worship service and commission.

“Today is not about you,” said Marva Usher-Kerr, United Methodist Women executive for membership, as she addressed the volunteers. “It is about service.”

Ubuntu is a Zulu/Xhosa word for an African philosophy built on respect for humanity. It captures the concept, “I am human because you are human.” I am because you are. This understanding of mutuality forms the base of an Ubuntu Day of Service in which participants not only serve, but learn about systemic injustices that cause the need for service. It’s a day of mission focused on relationships and shared experiences.

“Ubuntu captures the essence of being in mission, whereas a day of service tends to be more ‘doing’ mission,” said Barbara Dugger, Program Advisory Group member and on-site liaison for the Ubuntu Day. “Ubuntu allows us to connect with the communities we are serving. When we work in the community, we’re putting feet to our purpose as we build relationships.”

After the commissioning, volunteers boarded buses and traveled to community centers, churches, child care centers, parks and food pantries to help as needed and to learn more about one another and the folks of Louisville. With a break for lunch, volunteers worked throughout the morning and afternoon and returned to the Kentucky International Convention Center to share stories, reflect on their experiences and close the day in worship.

Tara Barnes is United Methodist Women staff editor.
From the General Secretary

You give them something to eat

by Harriett Jane Olson

As a newly minted attorney, I joined a congregation for the first time as an “adult,” trying to find a place of connection. One Sunday morning the assistant pastor announced that the youth were preparing to go on a mission trip. They needed a certain number of adult advisors, and they hadn’t met their goal. On the way out I spoke to a couple and said, “How great to be part of a congregation that equips youth to engage directly in mission!” I was just making conversation.

That afternoon the phone rang—it was the assistant pastor. She said, “I understand you're interested in going on the mission trip.” I was shocked! I hadn’t said I was interested in going on the mission trip. My first thought was that I would have to take time off from work. I would be out of contact, away from clients and all of my responsibilities (as a first-year attorney). I thought, “I bet there's also preparation—fundraisers and planning and building a spiritual foundation, so that’s more time.” Then I thought, “Those youth are going out to do home repair. I have sketchy home repair skills at best.”

But in the process of walking with the team and being encouraged—and really being needed—I got a little background, some training. I was introduced to the business end of the hammer, and I was also introduced to the snake-bite kit. That was not a happy moment.

We journeyed together and formed spiritual bonds. We learned about the region of the country where we would be serving and the pressures affecting the families we were working alongside of. It was challenging. It was hot. It was problem solving in an arena for which I didn’t feel completely prepared. We experienced emotional highs and lows and learned how to live together in a new and unusual situation.

One evening I took a moment alone outside and looked down the valley. Cattle grazed on the hillside facing me and I thought, “This God is the God who owns the cattle on a thousand hills.” This God doesn’t need my fundraising. This God is the God of abundance. This God is the God who has invited us into God's own work.

I wanted to run and get my journal, but I was with teenagers, and I didn’t know if that would be “cool.” So I didn’t run for my journal, but I remembered that moment. And since then, looking at Psalm 50, where the quote came from, I realize the psalmist sounds a lot like some of the Old Testament prophets and a little bit like Jesus (when Jesus is really worked up).

God doesn’t need our sacrifice. God is inviting us into a covenant of life. I needed that experience—that experience I never really, actually said yes to. I needed to move outside my comfort zone, to accept some different responsibilities (with some training and preparation) and make some connections. It opened me up to the same learning the disciples on the hill needed in Mark 6, the feeding of the 5,000. Jesus was inviting them into God’s own work: You give them something to eat.

In so many ways the feeding of the 5,000 is also the story of United Methodist Women. We are in that process of hearing God, seeing the needs of the community and finding ways that we didn’t even know were possible to accept the invitation to walk with God into mission. This faithful God, this covenant God, this God of abundance is the one who is loving us into the capacity for mission.

We are engaged in that kind of work, seeing the need, understanding it, unpacking it, explaining it, enlisting people in the work—even people who haven’t actually said yes. Preparing them, like the deaconesses consecrated here at Assembly, like our mothers and grandmothers before us, engaging them in training and skill-building and leadership development, confident that God will bless them in ways we can’t even imagine. We have confidence that there will be enough, and maybe even a few basketfuls left over.

Our founding mothers learned of a need and sent a teacher and a doctor to India in 1870, not knowing how they could be supported long term. Mary Scranton went to Korea to educate young women with 88 dollars from Lucinda Baldwin of Ohio. Could that possibly be enough? With other gifts and the surrounding of the community, it was enough to change history.

In the early 1900s, the church, as well as U.S. society, was racially segregated by convention and law. Bell Harris Bennett, leader of the Women’s Missionary Council of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, established the first commission on race relations in 1920 to help Methodist women prepare and respond to the needs that they saw. Two members of the council accepted an invitation from Lugenia Hope to attend the 1920 meeting of the National Association of Colored Women at the Tuskegee Institute. They began to see a way of (continued on page 4)
From the General Secretary

(continued from page 3)

engagement. It was not perfect, or even smooth. It was hard work. People’s worldviews were being changed, but they engaged in it. Women worked in the anti-lynching movement, they worked in direct service, and they worked to change the context in which they lived.

At the General Conference held in Louisville in 1939, the church institutionalized segregation by establishing five regional jurisdictions and one jurisdiction established by race, the central jurisdiction for black Methodists. This was not a comfortable place to be. In 1942 the Women’s Society of Christian Service moved the first Assembly from segregated St. Louis to Columbus, Ohio, so that all women of the church could meet together. We worked on the Charter for Racial Justice and established regional schools as a vehicle for United Methodist women to teach and learn and study together without the formal segregation of the central jurisdiction dividing us. We met in five regions, not in the six jurisdictions outlined by the church. That’s the history.

In 2010 we called together 25 women to participate in a training on human trafficking. We chose to meet in Atlanta because it is an international hub of trafficking and because Atlanta law enforcement and government were working on the issue. We received training, became trainers, and since then have reached 22,300 people in awareness-raising events.

The work is not done. We’re going to continue campaigns like Intercept Human Trafficking around the Super Bowl and Ubuntu Journeys to learn about trafficking and other issues around the world. United Methodist Women members see the need to organize, train, prepare and move forward to respond to the call of God.

Just before Christmas we got a letter from Michael Ferjak, director of the Iowa Department of Justice Human Trafficking Enforcement and Prosecution Initiative. He wrote to say that his staff—whose day job is eliminating human trafficking—was inspired by the work of United Methodist Women in Iowa.

Did you know that in five years we will be celebrating 150 years of United Methodist Women’s mission service? Not every organization has the opportunity to celebrate 150 years. For 150 years United Methodist Women members have been hearing the needs of women, children and youth. We have been collecting resources—resources that may sometimes seem inadequate. What can we do with just five loaves and two small fish, or just 88 dollars to help someone? Can we build the organization and see how others and offer ourselves to God, seeking wholeness. In the next five years we’re going to keep responding to the call of God. So we organize, plan, and keep trying. We enlist others and offer ourselves to God, seeking wholeness. In the next five years we’re going to keep claiming our space.

It’s time to listen to what people need from our organization and see how we can build the organization needed today. We’re going to keep claiming our space. We’re going to keep responding to invitations to partner with others. We’re going to help people to say yes to this invitation, the invitation from God to bring our whole selves into the abundance that God has already created, in the way that God has already planned. Seeing needs, collecting resources, organizing, training, preparing, offering ourselves to be loved and equipped into the mission of God in the world. Through this beloved community gathered here and all around the world, we are going to continue to put faith, hope and love into action. United Methodist Women, are you ready? Let’s go Make It Happen!

Harriett Jane Olson is general secretary and CEO of United Methodist Women.
Assembly 2014, Experience Hall

A woman surveys prayer shawls on display at the United Methodist Women Assembly in the Kentucky International Convention Center in Louisville.

Bekah Forni of Equal Exchange hands out samples of fair trade chocolate to appreciative participants.

Myrna Prentice of the Rocky Mountain Conference works her way through “The Field,” a display that explores social issues related to agriculture.

¡Nuevo! New!

La Iglesia y las Personas con Discapacidades: Toma de Conciencia, Accesibilidad y Activismo
Peggy A. Johnson
$10.00 (M3183)
Este libro creará conciencia en la iglesia acerca de los temas de discapacidad; llamará a la iglesia para proveer pleno acceso a los servicios y oportunidades, y promoverá abogacía por justicia para las personas con discapacidades. A diferencia de otras tipos de experiencias humanas, las discapacidades ocurren en todas las áreas de género, orientación, etnicidad, nivel socioeconómico, edad y cultura. Las discapacidades pueden ocurrir a cualquier persona en cualquier momento. Este libro le animará a identificar maneras en que su iglesia puede hacer mucho más para ser inclusivo. 100 páginas. ¡Muy pronto disponible para la venta!

¿Qué Sucede con tu Alma?
Priscilla Papa-Levison y Jack Levison
$10.00 (M3180)
Este recurso presenta un balance entre las dimensiones internas y externas de la vida cristiana. Organizado en torno a cuatro verbos: orar, aprender, apoyar y transformar. Su lectura lo desafiará a convertirse en un discípulo de Cristo más vibrante. Usted explorará cómo orar y maneras como puede restaurar, reviven y revitalizar la esencia que es usted; aprenderá a ser mentor de otros y ver transformaciones que restauran, reviven y revitalizan nuestras iglesias y nuestro mundo. 120 páginas. ¡Muy pronto disponible para la venta!

www.umwmissionresources.org
Making music happen at Assembly

by Mary Beth Coudal

Amanda Powell started prepping for her work as Assembly music director by asking trusted friends about women musicians from across the United States. With those references, she pulled together the first all-woman Assembly band that’s diverse not only in terms of race and ethnicity, but also in musical style and age—20s to 60s.

“We have a lot of flavors in the pot,” Ms. Powell said. “I’m really interested in music that connects, that has the potential to speak to a lot of different people: jazz, folk, world music, hymns, and since this is Kentucky, bluegrass.”

Members of the band include Danielle Ashley-Grubb, a guitarist and studio production major at State University of New York in Purchase, N.Y.; Lynn Braun, a bassist and director of music at Central United Methodist Church in Toledo, Ohio; Suzanne Byrd, an opera singer, church musician and certified candidate for deaconess from Dallas, Texas; Sarah Lynn Roberts, professor of woodwinds and bands at Tyler Junior College in Tyler, Texas; Sally A. Morris, a writer of hymns and a church musician in Winston-Salem, N.C.; Martha McGuin-Stevenson, a singer, worship leader and choir director at Morningside United Methodist Church in Fort Worth, Texas; Rebecca Garrett, percussionist and director of music at First United Methodist Church in Gainesville, Texas; and Lydia Smith, a drummer and certified Remo’s HealthyRHYTHMS Drum Circle facilitator in New Haven, Conn.

Months ago, Ms. Powell sent every member of the band a binder full of music to learn on their own. A few days before they took the Assembly stage, group members met and rehearsed. Ms. Powell chose the songs by paying close attention to the liturgy. She advises song leaders to “connect with the Scriptures and choose music to take people more deeply into worship.”

After studying the answers to the Assembly registration questionnaire, “What’s your favorite hymn?” Ms. Powell took the top eight favorites and wove them into the plenary worship services.

“We, as a transforming church, try to find music that will speak to you,” Ms. Powell said. “As you plan worship, if the song speaks to you it has the potential to reach others, too. If it speaks to you.”

As for global music, Ms. Powell advises United Methodist Women, “Be open to what’s bubbling up in different communities.”

Ms. Powell is hoping Assembly participants will be inspired and take some of the music home for worship in their local groups, districts and conferences.

Ms. Powell’s history with United Methodist Women goes back 13 years, when, as a student studying at the Shenandoah Music Conservatory, she joined a couple of dozen other young people in the Youth Mission Chorale. Joyce Sohl, then United Methodist Women chief executive officer, helped lead the chorale across Asia.

“That trip has shaped my career and my life,” Ms. Powell said.

Mary Beth Coudal is a blogger and writing instructor based in New York City.

Workshop urges faithful living in a climate-challenged world

by Shanta Bryant Gyan

As weather patterns around the globe dramatically shift due to climate change, environmentalist Bill McKibben, founder of the global climate change movement 350.org, challenged United Methodist Women members to roll up their sleeves and get to work to protect the planet for future generations.

Mr. McKibben spoke via video conference at the town hall meeting titled, “What Are Our Grandchildren Inheriting? Faithful Living in a Climate-Challenged World.”

“United Methodist Women, UMW, always stood for ‘u must work,’ and that’s what we need to do!” said Mr. McKibben, a United Methodist, former Sunday school teacher, and longtime friend of United Methodist Women.

Affirming the Gospel’s call to love our neighbors, Mr. McKibben said activists must take risks and speak truth to power by pressing policymakers to take urgent action on curbing greenhouse gas emissions. Moderated by Pamela Spann, an economist, and Jacqueline Patterson, director of the NAACP Environmental and Climate Justice program, the lively discussion touched on key issues directly related to climate change, such as race, class and gender. Organizing and working with young adults in the climate action movement was also addressed in the discussion.

The 350.org movement, started by Mr. McKibben and seven college students, has evolved into a global movement of activists of all races and ages coming together to fight climate change.

Taking a page from the South African divestment movement to create social change, the 350 movement has also encouraged individuals, universities and others to pull their investments from companies that are the worst carbon emitters. Kathleen Stone, United Methodist Women executive for environmental and economic justice, urged attendees to look at climate change through a justice lens, saying impoverished communities worldwide are the most impacted by climate change.

Shanta Bryant Gyan is a freelance writer and strategic communications coordinator.
Hillary Rodham Clinton, a lifelong United Methodist, speaks to participants at the United Methodist Women Assembly.

Shanta Bryant Gyan is a freelance writer and strategic communications coordinator.
Mission Resources

NEW!
The Church and People With Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility and Advocacy
by Peggy A. Johnson
$10.00 | English (M3182) | Spanish (M3183) | Korean (M3184)

This book calls the church to provide full accessibility to services and opportunities and promotes advocacy for justice for people with disabilities. Unlike other categories of human experience, disability crosses all lines of gender, orientation, ethnicity, socioeconomic position, age and culture. A disability can happen at any time to anyone. This book will encourage you to identify ways that your church can do more to be inclusive. 82 pp.

NEW!
A Place for All: Faith and Community for Persons With Disabilities (DVD)
$25.00 (M3209)

This documentary, produced by Diva Communications, explores the courageous stories of people with disabilities as they succeed in making their faith communities truly inclusive. The DVD also includes lively interviews with leaders of different faith groups. 57 mins. (approximate).

NEW!
Welcoming Persons With Disabilities Into Our Lives: A Study for Children
by Beth Miller
$10.00 (M3200)

This transformative resource for young people explores attitudes and responses toward people with disabilities. This curriculum acknowledges all as children of God, each created in God’s image but unique, each bringing different abilities and disabilities to the community. In God’s kingdom, everyone has a place. As youth become acquainted with the material, they will develop a new understanding of people with disabilities. 71 pp.

NEW!
Disabilities and Our Response: A Study for Youth
by Beth Miller
$10.00 (M3199)

This transformative resource for young people explores attitudes and responses toward people with disabilities. This curriculum acknowledges all as children of God, each created in God’s image but unique, each bringing different abilities and disabilities to the community. In God’s kingdom, everyone has a place. As youth become acquainted with the material, they will develop a new understanding of people with disabilities. 74 pp.

NEW!
How Is It With Your Soul?
by Priscilla Pope-Levison and Jack Levison
$10.00 | English (M3179) | Spanish (M3180) | Korean (M3181)

This resource brings into balance the inner and outer dimensions of the Christian life. Organized around four verbs—pray, learn, mentor and transform—the book will challenge you to become a more vibrant disciple of Christ. 140 pp. Includes participant’s guide.