Small Pillow, Big Difference
Retired Missionary Jerri Savuto finds comfort and healing in handmade, love-made pillows.

by Jerri Savuto

I recently visited an American Cancer Society office located at Texas Health Presbyterian Hospital in Plano, Texas, to choose a free wig, as the chemotherapy treatments I am undergoing to treat cancer have caused me to lose my hair. While there the lovely woman who took care of my daughter and I asked if I had a port (a small medical appliance inserted beneath my skin near my chest that holds a catheter connected to a vein to make chemotherapy treatments easier and more comfortable). She asked if I could use a small pillow to place over my port while sleeping on my left side, as wearing a seat belt would be great, away from my chest, which women who sew and create these pillows mean so much to others. Help to sleep is huge, as is healing in handmade, love-made pillows.

I was given the opportunity to choose one I liked. I was thrilled. The staff woman also told me about heart-shaped pillows that woman with breast cancer use. I asked if I could see and try one as I have a collapsed lung and have trouble sleeping on my left side, the side I normally did sleep on. I tried the pillow and it was perfect for helping me to get comfortable. I again chose which one I wanted (chili peppers!).

When I got the pillows home and my daughter, granddaughter and I were unpacking them we noticed a note on them. The note stated that the pillows were made by the United Methodist Women of First United Methodist Church Frisco in Frisco, Texas. I was so pleased and excited as I felt that connection and knew what those pillows mean to so many woman. And the port pillow works even better than my neck pillow for recliner naps!

I am so grateful to the women who sew and create these pillows in cheerful colors and patterns, and I cannot adequately express how much I am using them and how they have helped me in the car and sleeping in bed and on the recliner. What a wonderful ministry. Thank you, thank you, thank you! Your work means so much to others. Help to sleep is huge, as is to wear your seat belt!

I also imagine a United Methodist Women in which women of every racial and ethnic group know that they are viewed as welcome sisters and that their gifts of leadership, service and advocacy are welcomed. I imagine that we get better and better at observing cultural differences appreciatively and incorporating the gifts of leaders who operate with many different styles.

Jerri Savuto is a retired missionary with the General Board of Global Ministries of The United Methodist Church currently living in McKinney, Texas.
Prophetic Witness at the White House

United Methodist Women members protest family deportations on Capitol Hill in an act of civil disobedience.

by Tequila Minsky

United Methodist Women members joined more than 100 immigration advocates for a day of advocacy that included civil disobedience in Washington, D.C., July 31. Among those arrested in the civil disobedience action were Deaconess Cindy Andrade Johnston of Brownsville, Texas; Rita Carter, social action coordinator for Iowa Conference United Methodist Women; and Janice Gintzler, social action coordinator for Illinois Conference United Methodist Women.

The “Prophetic Witness at the White House” started early with morning civil disobedience training that packed the meeting room at the United Methodist Building, just steps from the Capitol. By the end of the day, 112 had been arrested outside the White House in a peaceful action protesting President Obama’s deportation policies and calling for just immigration reform.

“The morning training was reassuring,” Ms. Johnson said of the session that included prayer, legal guidance, logistics and a step-by-step description of the planned arrests. “The action went like clockwork. Once at the police station, it took 45 minutes.”

Ms. Johnson, a second generation American from Mexico, participated in the action after years of witnessing the impact of U.S. immigration policies in her work.

“I was a teacher for 30 years, from elementary to high school,” Ms. Johnson said. “A lot of my students were undocumented or part of their family was undocumented. I witnessed the hardships that families endured from their status.”

Ms. Johnson said the U.S. government is “playing politics” rather than enacting just immigration policies, particularly in the current crisis in which many are seeking asylum as refugees. “Our government says our borders are not secure. Not true. The people coming across are turning themselves in. They’re fleeing violence in their country,” she said.

Ms. Johnson works with immigrants and asylum seekers with nonprofits along the border. The number of teachers, accountants and other professionals among the refugees she has encountered in her work has surprised her.

“The coyotes [highly paid border crossing guides] target people who can pay,” she said. “The women I spoke with have had violence directed toward them or their families, including gangs extorting protection money. There is no justice system to go to in their countries.”

The women Ms. Johnson met in the course of her work came from Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador.

Ms. Carter came to the event with her retired husband, the Rev. Brian Carter, in response to a call from the General Board of Church and Society for the “No More Deportations” campaign to put pressure on President Obama to stop the deportations.

“We had a caravan of three cars, 10 adults and two children, driving from Des Moines—24 hours straight to Washington,” Ms. Carter said. “I believe the time is now to speak up for immigrants. Lots of people have spoken out, but there is so little action.”

Both Ms. Johnson and Ms. Carter say United Methodist Women’s long-time advocacy and education around just immigration reform helped prepare them for the day’s action.

“It focused me on the issue and helped me understand how important it is to keep going,” Ms. Carter said.

Seventeen-year-old Kaija Carter (no relation) of Iowa also participated in the protest, “I’m tired of seeing friends and family being torn apart,” she said. “I come to stand together with these people of faith and push for the acceptance of all people.”

For Ms. Gintzler, participating in the Capitol Hill action meant a 24-hour bus ride to Washington, D.C., to witness to her United Methodist faith. This was not her first act of civil disobedience—Ms. Gintzler was arrested in Chicago while protesting the Keystone Pipeline last year—but getting arrested nonetheless stretched her comfort zone.

While protesting in the day’s hot sun and waiting through three amplified warnings from the police before they were actually arrested, “I was thinking about Jesus on the cross,” Ms. Gintzler said.

While waiting to be arrested, Ms. Gintzler met a young woman DREAMer, a person with temporary legal status afforded minors in school based on the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act. More than two dozen of those arrested were undocumented. “This takes extreme bravery for someone undocumented and those temporarily documented to participate in civil disobedience and get arrested,” Ms. Gintzler said.

Despite Ms. Johnson’s years of working with immigrants—and more recently asylum seekers—the ecumenical day of witness revved up her commitment to work for immigration justice.

“The civil disobedience action reinforced my resolve, particularly alongside all these people and faith leaders acting in the same way,” Ms. Johnson said. “I’m going back to the work I do with energy and renewed commitment.”

United Methodists traveled to the ecumenical action from Mississippi, Iowa, California, Michigan, Ohio, Illinois, Virginia, Texas, Hawaii, South Carolina and Pennsylvania.

Talking About “The Things That Make for Peace”

United Methodist Women and partners host an International Day of Peace symposium at the Church Center for the United Nations.

by Linda Bloom

When the U.N. Peace Bell rang across the street from the United Methodist-related Church Center for the United Nations, those gathered in the center’s chapel rang their own small bells in response.

Video clips of people ringing bells from the Philippines to the Democratic Republic of Congo followed, along with messages of peace. One video message from an Iraqi woman pleaded for urgent international action for those suffering in her country. “Let’s build up peace in Iraq that will enhance world peace,” she said.

The U.N. General Assembly has declared the International Day of Peace, celebrated on or near Sept. 21, “to be a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.”

To mark the day, United Methodist Women and other religious and nongovernmental groups organized a symposium, “The Things That Make for Peace.” Morning speakers and afternoon workshops focused on the intersection of basic needs—food, water and health—with issues of gender, climate insecurity and conflict.

“In today’s world, we’re emphasizing the inextricable links of peace and just development,” said Harriett Jane Olson, top executive of United Methodist Women.

“We will share and examine what are those things that make for peace, real peace, peace that can last.”

Growing Out of Conflict

yadzayi Gumbonzvanda, top executive of the World YWCA and moderator for the morning event, grew up in rural Zimbabwe during the war. “I am a daughter of conflict,” she said. “I know what it means.”

She also recognizes what can help end such conflict. “I lead a global market of 25 million women and girls,” she explained. “Their everyday work is one of the things that make peace happen.”

Helen Clark, administrator of the United Nations Development Program, had just returned from a visit to Lebanon, where the spillover effects of conflict are threatening to engulf that small country.

Currently, Lebanon’s population of under 4.5 million is hosting just under 1.2 million refugees. “Per capita, it hosts far more refugees than any other country in the world,” Ms. Clark noted. “And there are huge concerns there over whether the country’s stability will hold with the Syria conflict continuing and spilling over into Lebanon itself.

“We see, as you do, peace and stability as a prerequisite for human development,” she said. “We see these conflicts taking scarce resources away from development and costing developing countries hundreds of millions of dollars a year.”

Women and girls also are bearing the costs of conflict, said Lakshmi Puri, deputy executive director for UN Women.

“Women continue to be disproportionately affected by conflict situations and are often excluded from development planning despite the fact that women head, on an average, 40 percent of households in post-conflict settings,” she said.

“Women’s knowledge, wisdom and commitment to future generations, Ms. Puri pointed out, is what makes them such critical peacemakers and peace-builders, but also conflict preventers.”

Week of Action in New York

The symposium marks the beginning of a week of action before the opening of the United Nations General Assembly’s 69th Session, including the People’s Climate March Sept. 21, the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, Sept. 22-23, and the U.N. Climate Summit, Sept. 23.

“Everything discussed there will have a bearing on whether our world is capable of building a peaceful, equitable and just future,” Ms. Clark said.

But Bill McKibben, a United Methodist and well-known activist from Middlebury, Vermont, calls next week’s gathering of world leaders “the side-show to the main event.”

More important, he told symposium participants, was Sunday’s climate march in midtown Manhattan. “It’s going to be by far the largest demonstration about climate change the world has ever seen,” he said. “It’s going to be filled, among other things, with people of faith.”

Mr. McKibben, whose 350.org movement is one of the march’s organizers, said that a video message from former South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and a call from Cardinal Timothy Dolan for area Catholics to join the march shows “a spirit moving and it is beautiful to see.”

Linda Bloom is a United Methodist News Service multimedia reporter based in New York. Follow her at www.twitter.com/umcscribe or contact her at (646) 369-3759 or newsdesk@umcom.org. This article first appeared Sept. 19, 2014, on umc.org. Reprinted with permission.
Mission u in Minnesota

Minnesota Conference United Methodist Women host Mission u.

by Theresa Riecke

The Minnesota Conference Mission u was held in July at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota. Since the switch from School of Christian Mission to Mission u we have used Mission u: Learning Together for the Transformation of the World as our theme.

We offer two ways to participate in Mission u: a more traditional “school” that gives everyone eight hours in two studies and a one-day event that offers one and a half hours in all three studies. Our study leaders led about 180 participants in the studies offered: How Is It With Your Soul? The Church and People With Disabilities and The Roma of Europe. Our traditional school offers participants a relaxed atmosphere in which they can participate in different activities in addition to the studies. Participants can visit the bookstore where they can purchase current study books or books from the United Methodist Women Reading Program. Participants can also browse multiple displays located throughout the hallways. There is also a Discovery Action room where attendees can participate in hands-on activities related to the current studies. The location of the event also allows participants to explore the campus, where they may view the St. John’s Bible, visit the pottery studio, go swimming or view the sapling sculpture by environmental artist Patrick Dougherty.

Eastern Pennsylvania Hosts Mission u

Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Women members gather for inspiration, information and fun at Mission u.

by Sharyn Bearse

More than 100 members of the Eastern Pennsylvania United Methodist Women gathered the weekend of July 25-27, 2014, to attend Mission u, which began its life many decades ago as the weeklong School of Christian Mission. Many attendees remember attending Schools of Christian Mission, including Eastern Pennsylvania Conference United Methodist Women President Barbara Drake, whose mother was dean in 1957.

The first night’s worship focused on The Church and People With Disabilities: Awareness, Accessibility and Advocacy, one of three in-depth weekend studies. The worship leader suggested that attendees advocate for a change in church bulletins to say “Rise in spirit or in body” rather than the standard “Rise if you are able.” That met with immediate approval from the audience, and many women vowed to advocate for this change.

The study aimed to increase awareness of issues by discussing attitudinal and architectural barriers encountered by individuals with disabilities. It also hoped to create more advocates to help the church become more welcoming and accessible to those with disabilities. Leaders in studies on disability included Bishop Peggy A. Johnson; the Rev. Kirk VanGilder, assistant professor of religion at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C.; and Deaconess Barbara Skarbowski, chairperson for the Disability Concerns Committee of the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference and secretary for the Disability Ministries Committee of The United Methodist Church.

Other weekend studies included How Is it with Your Soul? Two groups, one led by the Rev. Michael Johnson and the other by Deaconess Nancy Van Antwerp, focused on four verbs: pray, learn, mentor and transform. The leaders challenged the women to become more vibrant disciples for Christ.

The group discussed biblical texts, Wesley and the early Methodists, faithful women past and present, and spiritual practices.

The weekend’s third study focused on The Roma of Europe. Leader Praveena Balasundaram, United Methodist Women program resource editor and co-editor of United Methodist Women News, told the group that the Roma are the single largest minority group in Europe. They have been enslaved, shut out, shunned and even killed. Some 2.5 million were exterminated during Hitler’s reign of terror. Attendees learned about Roma lifestyle and spirituality and investigated ways the church and other organizations are working alongside the Roma.

These studies are available at www.umwmissionresources.org.

Sharyn Bearse is United Methodist Women communications coordinator for the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference.
First Saturday Breakfast Popularity Keeps Growing

United Methodist Women members in South Dakota begin breakfast fundraiser to help children attend camp.

by Cathy Nelson

There's a taste-tempting reason to take a little drive out toward Smithwick, South Dakota, on the first Saturday morning of every month. A grand breakfast buffet, prepared by members of the Prairie View United Methodist Church, awaits those who venture out that way.

The breakfast consists of scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, French toast, sweet rolls, gravy and biscuits, and orange juice and coffee—all for donations only.

The First Saturday Breakfast was started in 2006 by three women who were members of the Buffalo Gap United Methodist Women's group. Judy Cox, Colleen Bowker and Mary Anderson were looking for a way to support the United Methodist camping program and to pay for children to attend the camps when they cooked up the idea of having a monthly breakfast. With the help of a number of other members of the church, the idea was off and running. Customers from all over the local area began showing up for breakfast each month.

The breakfasts continued after the four United Methodist Churches of Buffalo Gap, Oelrichs, Smithwick and Oral decided to close and become one congregation. They built Prairie View United Methodist Church and held their first service on Easter Sunday in 2010.

Ms. Cox said the number of people coming out for breakfast has increased since moving into the new church. To give you an idea of the number of people who enjoy the monthly feast, she said about 22 dozen eggs are scrambled and served.

“The breakfast attendance has grown,” she said. “We average about 140 people each time.” On the first Saturday of August, 161 happy people went through the buffet line.

All the net proceeds from the breakfasts are used to send children and adults to camps, such as Storm Mountain Center, which is a United Methodist Church camp near Rockerville.

“Each year more people have attended the camps,” Ms. Cox said. Since the breakfast began “there have been 22 campers, including adults, who have attended camps.”


SHARE THE HISTORY, WORK AND JOY OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN!

These materials are great resources for potential members and friends and for members who want to know more. Make them available in your church and meeting areas and share them with others! Brochures are also available for download at www.umwmissionresources.org.

United Methodist Women: On a Path for Mission

This booklet tells the story of United Methodist Women in mission, including our history, work, place in the church, worldwide connection, and how we fund mission. A great resource for current, new and potential members who want to learn more! (13 pp.)

Free for shipping and handling
English (M5219)
Spanish (M5240)
Korean (M5241)

We Are United Methodist Women

This basic brochure describes what United Methodist Women is, what it does and how it does mission. Great for new and prospective members and friends.

Free for shipping and handling
English (M5218)
Spanish (M5242)
Korean (M5243)
Sierra Leone United Methodist Women Struggle to Respond to Ebola

Beatrice Fofanah, center, national coordinator of Sierra Leone United Methodist Women, and her sister, Kezia Williams, center right, United Methodist Women president, Wakefield Grace United Methodist Church, meets with national office staff, left to right, Carol Van Gorp, Andris Salter and Donna Akuamoah.

by Yvette Moore

Sierra Leone United Methodist Women is responding to the Ebola outbreak in their nation while struggling to be a supportive community for members, reported the women’s national coordinator in a Sept. 30 meeting at United Methodist Women national office in New York City.

Beatrice Fofanah, national coordinator of Sierra Leone United Methodist Women, said the organization has been purchasing and delivering rice to families, including those in some of the quarantined areas, even as members contend with the crisis themselves.

“United Methodist Women members, just like all the rest of the women in Sierra Leone, are feeling the impact of the Ebola crisis because the impact is so overwhelming,” she said. “The country was recovering after war. Now we’re back to zero. … Government hospitals are closed because caregivers are dying. All of the schools are closed so our children are not going to school. Food is a major crisis. Ebola started during the farming season but people had to abandon their farms. Our borders are closed so food doesn’t come into the country as it should. Prices have skyrocketed. People are dying from other diseases, because if they exhibit any Ebola symptoms, no one will touch them.”

Ms. Fofanah said there is also a ban on the assembly of groups.

“We only defy the rules to go to church and Bible study because that is what is going to see us through,” Ms. Fofanah said. “And even when we go to church, there’s no hugging, no shaking hands.”

Sierra Leone United Methodist Women’s outreach is a part of the denomination’s comprehensive Ebola response effort, Ms. Fofanah said. Working with the United Methodist Committee on Relief and other faith organizations, The United Methodist Church of Sierra Leone spearheaded an interfaith response, which, among other efforts, has included:

- Aggressive media and community group campaigns to educate the public on the causes, symptoms and prevention of Ebola.
- Work with paramount chief and other community leaders to disseminate information about ways to prevent the spread of the disease.
- Aggressive training of religious leaders and workers at faith-based health facilities.
- Distribution of 800 sets personal protective equipment (PPE), including garments, boots, shoe covers, headgear, gloves, goggles, facial mask, etc., for health care workers.

“As more hospitals close and health care workers die or refuse to go to work, Bishop John Yambasu has said our United Methodist health facilities must remain open and be there for the people,” Ms. Fofanah said. “There are so many groups trying to respond. We are walking together as United Methodists to respond to this crisis.”

United Methodist Women gave a grant to Sierra Leone sisters for their work with Ebola orphans. Indiana United Methodist Women also gave a grant for crisis work in that country.

Yvette Moore is editor of response.

Living Timeline

I was one of the many little girls who accompanied her mother to her United Methodist Women meetings. I thought I was a member of the unit by virtue of being her daughter. I shall remember her voice praying and advocating for the voiceless. She planted the seeds of prayer, service and mission. She nurtured them with love in action and I blossomed into her legacy. She embodied Faith • Hope • Love in Action and is my inspiration!

Lois Moreland-Dean

To submit your story to the United Methodist Women Living Timeline and learn more, visit www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/assembly/timeline.

Share Your Story

How does your United Methodist Women group put faith, hope and love into action? How is United Methodist Women a part of your Christian journey? When was United Methodist Women a community of hope or encouragement for you? We want to hear your story! Submit your article and high-resolution photos to news@unitedmethodistwomen.org and see it published in a future issue of United Methodist Women News!
A Shower of Blessings
Ives Chapel United Methodist Women host a baby shower for local children’s organizations.

by Joy A. Uthoff

Ives Chapel United Methodist Women in Baldwin City, Kansas, selected EmberHope as one of their mission outreach programs for 2014 and chose to host a “Shower of Blessings” to help supply the 87-year-old organization with needed basic essentials for its children’s programs. Based in Wichita, Kansas, EmberHope is a United Methodist agency providing foster care programs, residential care, child specific adoption recruitment and family consultation service as well as STRIVE, a new division to reach at-risk youth.

This support mission was born in the 1920s as the Kansas Methodist Home for Children. In 1960 the agency name was changed to Methodist Youthville and in 1979 it became United Methodist Youthville. In 2013 the organization’s name was changed to EmberHope.

Invitations with a list of basic essentials needed by EmberHope in their caring for more than 500 children in foster care, many between the ages of 0-3, were sent to every woman congregant at Ives Chapel United Methodist Church inviting them to a baby shower. Guests were asked to bring the gifts unwrapped.

The evening began with the United Methodist Women president providing a brief history of EmberHope. Baby games were enjoyed and prizes awarded. Tables were decorated with a diaper cake, baby in cradle, yellow ducks on stemware and bowls of floating candle flowers. Refreshments and fellowship followed as well as the opportunity to browse the gift tables overflowing with items provided by the guests.

It was an enjoyable and rewarding evening for those who participated, and the United Methodist Women members were very pleased with the gifts brought for the children of EmberHope’s mission and the support of the women who answered the call to faith, hope and love in action.

Joy A. Uthoff is a member of United Methodist Women at Ives Chapel United Methodist Church in Baldwin, Kan.

Gifts donated by Ives Chapel United Methodist Women to local Methodist children’s agency EmberHope after Shower of Blessings fundraiser.

“Diaper cakes” served as centerpieces for Ives Chapel’s Shower of Blessings. They were made and provided by a United Methodist Women member and served a dual purpose by providing useful baby items.

Welcome!
United Methodist Women Welcoming Event Toolkit

Looking to welcome new members to United Methodist Women? Our new resources can help! Visit www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/member-kit to download Welcome! United Methodist Women Welcoming Event Toolkit and watch the accompanying video of members who have hosted welcoming events.
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Don’t forget stocking stuffers! Temporary tattoos, notebooks, pens, water bottles, key chains, iPad covers, sticky notes, buttons and more!

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