Deaconesses and Home Missioners Consecrated at General Conference

Twenty-six men and women are consecrated deaconesses and home missioners from the floor of the United Methodist General Conference 2016.

by Tara Barnes

Twenty-six deaconesses and home missioners were consecrated Monday, May 16, 2016, on the plenary floor of the United Methodist General Conference. The newly consecrated deaconesses and home missioners come from across the United States as well as the Philippines. The service was a culmination of answering and discerning a call to full-time vocation in lay ministry.

“The deaconess process has been life-changing and life-fulfilling,” said newly consecrated deaconess Robin Ridenour. “The most important part about consecration is that I am becoming part of a family of men and women doing the work of love, justice and service.” Deaconesses and home missioners are laywomen and laymen called to be in a lifetime relationship with The United Methodist Church in full-time vocation in cutting-edge, servant ministry. Nearly 200 women and men currently serve as deaconesses and home missioners in the United States, and 450 serve in the Philippines. Around 50 individuals are presently in a discernment process, engaged in a time of listening to God’s call and fulfilling candidacy requirements, including taking theology classes.

“I’ve been in candidacy for about five years but in formation for this, as it turns out, my entire life. I can’t wait to see what God has in store for me next!” proclaimed Martha Lundgren, a newly consecrated deaconess.

Performing the consecration were Bishop Cynthia Fierro Harvey, Louisiana Conference; Bishop Rosemarie Wenner, United Methodist Church in Germany; and Bishop Pedro Torio, Jr., Baguio Episcopal Area in the Philippines. Joining them were United Methodist Women General Secretary Harriett Olson, United Methodist Women President Yvette Richards, Harris College President Cristina Marñabat, Regional Missionary and Deaconess Emma Cantor, Deaconess Clara Ester and Home Missioner Gary Locklear.

The Scripture focus for the worship service was Matthew 22:1-14, the Parable of the Wedding Banquet.

Ms. Harvey’s message, “Appropriate Attire” proclaims, “Appropriate Attire

From the General Secretary

Responsible Parenthood and Women’s Reproductive Health

You can’t talk about women’s health without talking about women’s reproductive health, and you can’t support healthy families without talking about women’s health. From our childhood and youth, as our bodies are maturing, through our 20s and 30s when the highest rates of childbirth occur, through menopause and beyond, our reproductive system is a key element in our overall health. Women’s health is critical for women and also for the thriving of families and communities.

Something so important should not be overlooked by the church. United Methodist Women proposed an updated form of a resolution on Responsible Parenthood for consideration by the 2016 General Conference. The updated version incorporated global realities that are experienced by women around the world. It addressed so-called “child marriage” and access to all forms of birth control and describes the call for women’s health is critical for women and also for the thriving of families and communities.

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Required," spoke of the "one size fits all" garment of grace we all must wear before we can attend God's banquet, referring to the parable told in the Scripture.

“This parable, like all of Jesus’ parables, is another one of those stories of reversal, when the world’s values are turned upside down," Ms. Harvey said.

“When entering into the story, we are challenged to come as we are but not stay that way. “We have each been personally invited to this banquet. We have been invited and [are] expected to do something that even the world might not be expecting. Will we honor the host by taking the grace-lined garment off that rack and put it on?”

At three stations, the bishops, United Methodist Women and deaconess representatives consecrated the women and men to a lifetime of Christ-like service under the authority of the church. The new deaconesses and home missionaries received their scarf and their mandate.

“They are ready for you," said Ms. Harvey. “There is one here for each of you. So let’s put it on and dance; because there’s a party going on.”

Tara Barnes is editor of response magazine, the official magazine of United Methodist Women.

New Deaconesses and Home Missioners

Logan Alley
(Continued from Page 1)
Baltimore-Washington Conference
Employment specialist, FACETS, employment-based case management services to families in housing crisis.

Robert Boyd Bragan
(Continued from Page 1)
United Methodist Men
New England Conference
Photographers focusing on stories about the human condition with an emphasis on highlighting injustices and the potential solutions to such injustices.

Brenda Brown
Spring Lake, North Carolina
North Carolina Conference
Public affairs and community relations specialist, Social Security Administration, working with seniors, people needing assistance and the homeless.

Deborah Lynn Byrd
Old Hickory, Tennessee
Tennessee Conference
Church coordinator, Andrew Price Memorial United Methodist Church, overseeing office food program, community garden and day ministry for those living without homes.

Melissa Iutzi Calvillo
Dallas City, Texas
Great Rivers Conference
Maternal and child health registered nurse and program coordinator, Lee County Health Department.

Melanie Dewey
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Oklahoma Conference
Community engagement coordinator, Centenary United Methodist Church.

René Grant
Chamblee, Georgia
North Georgia Conference
Administrative assistant, Ebenezer United Methodist Church.

Kim Devon Harris
Canton, Ohio
Mississippi Conference
Assistant teacher, Kids & Co. Child Care Center.

Harriett Jane Olson is general secretary and CEO of United Methodist Women.

Maria Rose McCall Dommerich Hase
Phoenix, Arizona
Desert Southwest Conference
Speech-language pathologist, Scottsdale School District.

Amanda Hower
Barnstable, Massachusetts
New England Conference
Resource development officer, Barnstable County Resource Development Office.

Choon-Yee Lee
New York City
Greater New Jersey Conference
Director of family ministry, Korean Community Church.

Jaimie Lynn Marie LeJeune
NAFHS, Mississippi
Mississippi Conference
Missions and service coordinator, Court Street United Methodist Church.

Martha Louise Lundgren
Topeka, Kansas
Desert Southwest Conference
Client Support Manager, Sunquest Information Systems, and chaplain, health and wellness ministries, St. Mark’s United Methodist Church.

Alethea McGavin
West Richland, Washington
Pacific Northwest Conference
Web ministry, Prosser United Methodist Church.

Halina Mul
North Attleboro, Massachusetts
Greater New England Conference
Community Health Nurse, Women’s National Committee.

Jane Ann Murray
Mount Juliet, Tennessee
Tennessee Conference
Executive of Second Stage C.A.R.E.S. (Christian Association for the Relief of Economic Suffering).

John David Jessup Peterson
Atlanta, Georgia
North Georgia Conference
Department director, consultant, Candle School of Theology, Emory University.

Ruth Pierre
North Arlington, New Jersey
New Deaconesses and Home Missioners

Kaye Celyn Caigle
Tulsa, Oklahoma
Desert Southwest Conference
Community health nurse, Signature Employment.

Brenda Brown
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North Carolina Conference
Public affairs and community relations specialist, Social Security Administration, working with seniors, people needing assistance and the homeless.

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From the General Secretary

(Continued from Page 1)
equate attention to the real-life testimonies of people like the African delegate to General Conference who said that access to abortion was critically needed in areas of conflict where rape is used as a tool of war. When this happens, young girls’ not-yet mature bodies are torn apart by trying to carry pregnancies to term. And upon birth, the child and its young mother are rejected by the community, which deems them both part of the enemy.

Women’s lives matter. Children’s lives matter. Healthy families are something that is worth our planning and our efforts and our fervent prayer. Without resolutions like Responsible Parenthood to elaborate the real-life implications of our Social Principles for many different peoples and contexts, we can lack the resources to understand the powerful impact of the Social Principles. The resolutions call us to action to help us live out the Social Principles and to work for the changes that are needed.

United Methodist Women will continue to work for women’s health throughout the life cycle, for a culture of respect in which women’s choices are honored, for access to procedures driven by medical necessity rather than moral or ethical positions of third parties and for healthy families in which children are welcomed, loved and nurtured.

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United Methodist Women at General Conference

As we reflect and begin to report on General Conference 2016, we’d like to share some of what happened at General Conference from our perspective on our own work.

We have much to celebrate! The church was reminded of the important work of laywomen and their essential leadership as United Methodist Women celebrated 150 years of putting faith, hope and love into action. General Conference voted to make the deaconess and home missioner community an order of the church, approving a mechanism to support them as chaplains. General Conference also celebrated the 60th anniversary of full clergy rights for women—another example of the kind of change that happens in the church and in society when laywomen organize for mission.

United Methodist Women called the church to the next phases of work in racial and climate justice, providing new language and outlining next steps the denomination and United Methodist Women can take. Our resolutions help bring the church’s powerful voice, alongside United Methodist Women, to the critical work of ending mass incarceration, environmental racism and criminalization of communities of color and toward becoming an antiracist, multicultural society with our Charter for Racial Justice. We invite the church to our Mission u events, where we can continue to learn more together for the transformation of the world.

Women and girls were left behind at General Conference. Resolutions on the girl child and the status of women did not even reach the floor. Know that United Methodist Women will continue to work to address the needs of women and girls down the street and around the world.

General Conference also took on the mantle of ensuring abundant health for all. United Methodist Women knows abundant health for all includes women’s reproductive health, just as we have for almost 150 years, since our predecessors sent Dr. Clara Swain to India to serve women and girls.

What happens when women organize for mission? The needs of women, children and youth get on the table, front and center. In the 21st century, United Methodist Women brings critical work to the church and world. Now we are moving forward into our next 150 years of turning faith, hope and love into action.
United Methodist Women members from across the Portland area gathered at General Conference to mark their 150th anniversary with a day of celebration, advocacy, and recommitment to mission with women, children and youth on May 16, 2016.

“United Methodist Women Day” opened with the consecration of 26 new deaconesses and home missionaries, a lay office administered by United Methodist Women and dedicated to service ministries that alleviate suffering, injustice and build the global community through the church. Three Filipina deaconesses were also consecrated.

These helping vocations cover a broad range of needs. This most recent class of deaconesses and home missionaries includes a maternal-child health registered nurse who works with low-income families, a local church food program coordinator and a photojournalist who reports on justice issues and develops materials for community ministry addressing these needs. Also newly consecrated as a home missioner was John David Jessup Petterson, a computer technology consultant who views his work as a special kind of chaplaincy.

“Computer usage can be one of the biggest drivers of emotional and spiritual crises in both secular and nonsecular environments,” he explained.

The morning service dedication was followed by a noontime rally for clean water as a human right across the street from the conference center. Nearly 300 people participated in the rally to oppose the poisoning of natural waterways and public water delivery systems harming communities from Flint, Michigan, to Latin America to Liberia.

Rose Farhat of Liberia spoke at the rally, calling on global partners like United Methodist Women to help pressure Firestone Rubber to repair the damage it has done to streams and rivers in her country.

“Firestone dumped waste into streams and rivers where poor people fish and get drinking water,” Ms. Farhat said. “There’s extreme poverty in this community, so the people now have no clear water source. Firestone promised to provide a water treatment plant to provide clean water, but that has not happened. Pressure Firestone to build those water treatment plants.”

The day culminated with a forward-looking multimedia plenary celebration that shared United Methodist Women’s historic beginnings and followed a continuum of mission outreach, answering the question, “What happens when women organize for mission?”

“What happens when women organize for mission? The needs of women, children, and youth—who are the least of these in every society—not only get on the table, they are placed front and center on the table,” said presenter Yvette Kim Richards, president of the United Methodist Women board.

Young United Methodist Women members were active throughout United Methodist Women Day, advocating for clean water, serving as volunteers and participants, both on and off the stage and behind the scenes of the plenary celebration.

“Women still need to organize for mission in the 21st century,” said Annabelle Bricker, a young United Methodist Women member who participated in the plenary presentation. “In the coming quincentenary, we will focus our mission outreach on maternal and child health, ending criminalization of communities of color, income inequality and climate change.”

Yvette Moore is director of communications for United Methodist Women.
Partnership Between Jewish and Arab Women Through Sindyanna of Galilee

Arab and Jewish women in the Holy Land create handicrafts and promote peace through Sindyanna of Galilee, a peace building and fair trade company in Kafar Kanna, Galilee. United Methodist Women has contributed to the support of Sindyanna for several years, and we recently heard from some of the women on their times of sharing and understanding while they weave and work side by side in the warehouse and the visitor center. Weaver Rawiya Hijirat, in the weekly class, reported that she met Jewish women for the first time and now wants to learn Hebrew.

Noga Mano, 35, a marine biologist from Avtalion in Galilee and a three-year participant in the weaving course, shared her own experience:

I was looking for a place to fill a vacant morning by weaving, and was enthusiastic to meet Arab women. I never felt any anxiety, even in tense times, maybe because it is a meeting between women. The meeting takes place on a direct human basis, we chatter, exchange recipes and try to overcome the difference of language, which is the main barrier between us.

There are tensions between the two peoples, this is no secret, but we are all humans, and can overcome them. We speak a lot about employment and the mentality of the large family. There is a noticeable difference between treatment of women amongst the two societies, and this is expressed even in the pricing of baskets. And we talk about it. We develop personal relations. One of the women hosted us during Ramadan, and we plan more meetings. It is fun to weave, fun to meet and I will be glad when more women join us.

Hadil Hamze, 20, has been a warehouse worker for more than a year. She had this to share:

I used to work in a packaging plant in Tiberia, but there was a lot of friction between Christian and Muslim women, and I could not go on working there. In Sindyanna, I work with Jewish women, but there is no friction at all. Both Arab and Jewish women want to be together without any differences or racism. Since I am here, my Hebrew, which is essential in order to get around, has improved very much.

Sindyanna sent me to an olive tasting course, and I learned many new things I did not know, although my family also has some olive trees, and we harvest them every year. In Kafar, Kanna, there are very few work opportunities; and most employers exploit the workers and pay them much less than a minimum wage. This damages the whole society. Had they paid the full minimum wage, the whole village could develop. A year ago, I began studying business administration in the Open University, and I continue to work. Most of my friends study and want to work because one salary for a family is not enough today, [for] neither Jews nor Arabs. Those who come to the Center support co-existence, fair trade, decent employment to Arab women and helping small producers.

Learn more about the handicrafts created at Sindyanna at Sindyanna.com

Carol Van Gorp is the International Ministries executive for United Methodist Women.

A Prayer for Eve on Women’s Day and Every Day

by Mahima Chauhan

Dear Eve,

You are an ultimate creation of God and a very special being. You are not a rough draft. But a masterpiece of the Almighty created in God’s own image. But it breaks my heart when people call you temptress, disloyal, prone to temptation and evil, untrustworthy.

Even now, from the women in the corporate world to the mothers living in poverty, We, the modern-day Eves, are crying! The serpent is still running in the gardens of our minds, He is filling us with false beliefs: ‘I am not good enough, not pretty enough, not wise or strong enough.’

Yet, to honor you, we affirm that We are powerful, We are empowered, Limitless.

Mahima Chauhan, from India, wrote this prayer during the World Student Christian Federation in Asia Pacific Regional Women Program’s workshop in Bangladesh. The prayer was composed for International Women’s Day, a holiday celebrated on March 8. It is a day of hope and courage, and it is a celebration for women who fight for equality, justice and peace. The day is also a time to call for change. This year, the women of the World Student Christian Federation in Asia Pacific boldly expressed the struggle for hope and womanness in a faith response.
See Something? Say Something!
Louisiana Learns About Human Trafficking

by Linda Trouard

More than 150 United Methodist Women from the Louisiana Conference gathered at the First United Methodist Church of Pineville for the biannual Social Action Program on March 5, 2016, to learn about the topic of human trafficking.

Many women came to a deeper understanding of human trafficking. Everyone left better informed about this scourge on our society and how it can affect all neighborhoods. Louisiana Conference Social Action Chair Melinda Graham started planning the program in the summer of 2015. She contacted speakers from all levels of involvement—from an assistant United States attorney for the Western District of Louisiana; Rusty Havens of the Louisiana Advocacy Lead Team for the International Justice Mission (IJM), who connects Louisiana residents to the heads of local organizations helping those who escape from this form of modern-day slavery.

The five speakers were Assistant U.S. Attorney Earl Campbell, who is also the human trafficking coordinator for the Western District of Louisiana; Russ Havens of the Louisiana Advocacy Lead Team for the International Justice Mission (IJM), who connects Louisiana residents to the heads of local organizations helping those who escape from this form of modern-day slavery.

Each speaker informed the group of the many ways in which people are trafficked and of the signs that someone is involved in the trafficking industry. The group was also given material and information on how to recognize this type of crime.

Ms. Graham and her team provided everyone with a booklet containing information and resources. Many women from local United Methodist Women circles expressed an interest in doing a program on human trafficking in their churches. A love offering was taken, and a generous donation was made to each of the organizations represented by the speakers.

Members of the Board of Church and Society, the local and state units of United Methodist Men and the women of First United Methodist Church of Pineville (the local unit of United Methodist Women) all helped to make this a truly memorable event. As United Methodist Women, we became well-informed about our world and how we can make it a better, safer, and more God-like place for everyone.

Linda Trouard is the secretary of program resources at Louisiana Conference.

Program Empowers Women in Delhi

Neeraj did not have enough money to pay the equivalent of $30 USD a year for her annual university fees. Thanks to the Women’s Empowerment Programme – Disha, a free school in Delhi, India, supported by the International Ministries with Women, Children and Youth of United Methodist Women, Neeraj has returned to school and is now teaching candle making and organizing the school’s recycling program.

Young women like Neeraj from nearby villages succeed in the school’s women-led programs, learning crafts and skills to generate income. The objective of the program, founded by the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK), is to promote gender equality at home and in society at large. Like Neeraj, many of the women come from small communities where one’s caste, religion or faith had limited their potential for advancement.

“By meeting and working together each day, they have learned to work as one community. Women can live with dignity and pride as they have skills which will help them earn a living,” said the Reverend Dr. Ashish Amos, general secretary and director of ISPCK.

This story was compiled from a report by the ISPCK for United Methodist Women.
A Fresh Wind Blowing
United Methodist Women at the Western Jurisdiction Meeting

by Charmaine Robledo

As United Methodist Women looks forward to its 150th anniversary in 2019, the organization of more than 800,000 women shows no signs of slowing down. This was evident during the 2016 Western Jurisdiction United Methodist Women’s Quadrennial Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, from April 22 to 24.

The three-day event was held at the Hilton City Center Hotel and brought together more than 300 women from the eight annual conferences of the Western Jurisdiction on the theme of “A Fresh Wind Blowing.” The theme helped attendees recognize the call of God to mission and ministry.

“United Methodist Women was called to catch the wind, face the wind, align ourselves with the spirit of God,” said Harriett Jane Olson, general secretary of United Methodist Women’s National Office, at the opening worship service. Ms. Olson emphasized in her keynote address, The Reverend Paul Jeffrey, missionary and photojournalist for United Methodist Women’s response magazine, posed the question, “What’s our brand?” He shared a collage of photos of United Methodist Women missions around the world, signifying the importance of the organization’s lasting ministry.

“Are you part of a rather feisty brand,” Mr. Jeffrey said. “You may not have a bouncy logo like Google, but you have a love in your hearts.”

At the closing of the quadrennial meeting, Yvette Richards, president of the national United Methodist Women Board of Directors, spoke about how the Western Jurisdiction has been in mission first-hand, highlighting its 13 national mission agencies. These include the United Methodist Committee on Relief West Depot, the Susannah Wesley Community Center, the Nome Community Center and the Mary Elizabeth Inn.

“You and I were made to catch the spirit,” said Bishop Elaine Stanovsky of the Mountain Sky Episcopal Area, during the closing worship service. “If you’re breathing with God, nothing is impossible…God gives us breath to speak a word of blessing. May our words carry the breath of life.”

According to Juliet Maaksi, Western Jurisdiction treasurer, attendees helped raise $6,290.87 for general mission giving at the Saturday night banquet. An additional $590.70 was collected for the Cross-roads Urban Center at a mini-piano concert with the Reverend David Merkel of the Yellowstone Conference. The outgoing officers for the Western Jurisdiction were also recognized.

The new officers for the 2016–20 quadrennium are President Judi Nibbelink, Vice President Jo Ann Lawson, Treasurer Paula Sadler, Secretary Alethea McGavran and Chair of Nominations Anita Turner. Nomination Committee members are Dixie Jacky, Jana Jones, Maxine Wheel er and Barbara Mitchell.

Murray First United Methodist Women
Layette Project

by Nancy Doty

Each year there are many mothers who cannot provide the essential clothing and baby items needed to care for their newborn babies upon leaving the local hospital. Some do not even have a blanket to wrap their baby in on the trip home. The hospital’s staff said the number of women and babies in need has been growing significantly.

In answer to this developing need, the Murray First United Methodist Women in Murray, Kentucky eagerly accepted this outreach project and since 1995, have been packing layettes containing essential newborn items. The United Methodist Women decided to invite fathers to get involved so a special Father’s Day offering was taken. It has since evolved into an annual church-wide communion offering in October. With monies from the United Methodist Women budget, the church communion offering, book donations from the Murray First Quil ters, baby spoons donated from the Calloway County Homemakers, and donated bottles from Kirksey United Methodist Women, the Layette Project has been a blessing to many new mothers in the region.

The hospital staff calls when their supply of layettes needs renewing. Tiffany Clayton, United Methodist Women Layette Project mission coordinator, said, “Since October, we have been able to provide twenty girl layettes and thirty boy layettes.” She noted that this year, “There must have been a rush on boys.” Clayton points out that each layette would cost a new mother approximately $30.

For 21 years, this United Methodist Women circle has watched the Layette Project work for the good of those who love God and who are fitting into God’s plan.

Nancy Doty is United Methodist Women communication coordinator at Murray First United Methodist Church, Murray, Kentucky.
Mission Resources

**Prayer Calendar 2017**

*Price: $14*  
*M3298*

Within this calendar you will find daily lectionary readings, holidays and special days, daily lists to focus your prayers on mission projects, advocacy issues and birthdays.

**Program Date Book 2016-2017**

*Price: $1.50*  
*M3294 English*

This small calendar booklet helps you to keep track of relevant dates for United Methodist Women, month by month. 24 pp.

**Climate Justice: Call to Hope and Action**

*Price: $10*  
*English (M3265)*  
*Korean (M3266)*  
*Spanish (M3267)*  
*Pat Watkins*

This study invites you to understand climate justice, which means setting right our relationships with each other and the earth. Climate injustice is the result of climate change. The study will challenge you to see what needs to happen for climate justice to become a reality in the world today. The church needs to more powerfully model a way of doing it differently. This will entail not just focusing on the environment, but also asking hard questions regarding financial profit, a growing economy, our independent way of thinking and our understanding of efficiency. 108 pp.

**Program Book 2016-2017 A Call to Community**

*Price: $10*  
*M3294 English*  
*M3295 Spanish*  
*M3296 Korean*

Explore the teachings and people in communities in the Old and New Testaments every month through programs that challenge participants to community formation and faith-filled living.

**The Bible and Human Sexuality**

*Price: $10*  
*English (M3272)*  
*Korean (M3272)*  
*Spanish (M3274)*  
*Ellen Brubaker; Participants Guide by M. Garlinda Burton*

This study explores the Bible and human sexuality as two essential components of our Christian faith. The Bible is part of the foundation of our faith. Human sexuality is part of who we are as human beings, created by God and called good. The study invites us to explore the complexity of the biblical text and our varied understandings of it in light of human sexuality. 156 pp.

**International Ministries Poster**

*Price: M5290*

United Methodist Women organize for mission poster featuring international ministries in action. Free with shipping and handling.