United Methodist Women Board Holds 2018 Annual Meeting in NYC

By Yvette Moore

United Methodist Women board of directors affirmed the implementation of the organization’s strategic plan and adopted a $16.4 million budget for 2019 during its annual meeting in New York City, October 4 to 6.

The 2019 budget included $3.9 million for national and international mission partners helping women, children and youth, $1.2 million for national and international mission partnerships to help women, children and families; $46,000 in scholarships to 14 U.S. seminary students; and $239,340 in international scholarships to 41 students in 18 countries.

Board members also approved themes for the 2021 mission studies. The 2021 mission study themes are:

- **Spiritual growth:** The Moral Witness of the Church
- **Geographic:** The Two Koreas
- **Issue:** Mass Incarceration (a two-year study that started in 2020)
- **Youth and children’s studies:** Living as Christians in a Violent Society

The launch of United Methodist Women’s 2018 Census at unitedmethodistwomen.org/census2018 was also announced during the board meeting. Questions in the census, open from October 9, 2018, to March 30, 2019, are designed to inform national, conference and district programs and the implementation of United Methodist Women’s strategic plan.

Directors received national staff progress reports on the strategic plan to position United Methodist Women as a clear leader in the church and wider community; to engage current and potential members for spiritual growth, leadership development and membership expansion; and to mobilize members for action and service. The progress reports included findings and recommendations of an independent audit of United Methodist Women’s communications; membership survey results and insights from other data;

(Continued on Page 2)

From the General Secretary

Responding to the God of the Unexpected

by Harriett Jane Olson

One of the songs we sang at Assembly, refers to Jesus as “God the unexpected infant.” Because the story is so familiar to us and so beloved, it is impossible to appreciate the truly unexpected nature of the incarnation. Yes, the people were waiting and yearning for the Messiah, but even the prophecy reported to Herod, which referred to Bethlehem as the place of Messiah’s birth, mentions that Bethlehem is not “least among the rulers of Judah” (Matt 2:6). They were not expecting a child of a poor couple, born in a stable. How strange it must have been to hear that Jesus, the Son of God, was born in such a vulnerable human condition—this one who had been present since the foundation of the earth!

On the other hand, perhaps all the gifts of God are presented in unexpected ways, to marginalized people who might otherwise count themselves as far from the centers of power or holiness. After all, we believe that each of us carries God’s own image and we know all about our own frailty and limitation. Perhaps we also count ourselves very far from both power and holiness.

What a gift it is to know that, from the beginning, we are made in God’s image, capable of responding to God’s outreach love. In Jesus’ birth, God’s love is being made visible and being extended to us. Our response to this amazing outreach of God is not that we truly understand or that God’s other ways of reaching out to us become predictable or expected. Our response to God’s action, like the responses of Mary and Elizabeth, are wonder and praise as we say “yes,” over and over again, to nurturing God’s gifts and showing God’s love to others. This is the reason that United Methodist Women members have been giving, serving and advocating for women, children and youth around the world for almost 150 years.

Merry Christmas!

Harriett Jane Olson is general secretary and CEO of United Methodist Women.
2018 Annual Meeting
(Continued from Page 1)
and updates on member involvement and the campaigns on Climate Justice, A Living Wage, Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and Maternal and Child Health.

In her address to the board, Harriett Jane Olson, United Methodist Women chief executive officer, envisioned members involved in their local communities in new ways as the strategic plan comes to life. She imagines stories of local units offering spiritual growth and service opportunities to young women at the college in town, of members standing alongside women workers organizing for better pay at the local processing plant, and of members working with school administrators and students on ways to prevent students from being exiled to the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

"These scenarios may sound somewhat familiar—they are not a big stretch from what is going on in a few places in United Methodist Women today," Olson said. "What if these stories, and more like them, about outreach and new relationships and new units became the story? What if every conference or every district had stories like this of United Methodist Women innovating in new ways in the places where they serve?"

"The work of the strategic plan is to find ways to support innovation, to make it easier to invite new people and for new units to form and for women at every level in the organization to know herself as loved by God and to respond to God’s call to mission service. There are so many ways for us to express the love of God to the world, so many needs that affect women, children and youth and marginalized persons."

“Can’t you see United Methodist Women as a place where our spiritual senses are heightened, where we gather strength and are equipped for action and where person-centered, community-changing work is grounded in the love of God?”

Board President Shannon Priddy told the directors and all members to expect and welcome new styles of leadership as United Methodist Women step up to their role as leaders in the church and communities. She urged them to embrace new leadership tools while remembering the importance of building relationships.

"Leadership looks different today than it did just five or ten years ago," she said, ticking off a list of job demands and electronic communications tools. "If it excites you and scares you at the same time, it is probably worth doing.

"[But] Women who don’t know United Methodist Women are not just going to show up because you made a flyer and sent it out by email. Women want to be invited in, to share in community."

"The answer is relationship building, breaking down barriers in communication and meeting people where they are.

"This is United Methodist Women, and this is the work we are doing today and getting ready to do tomorrow," Priddy said.

Yvette Moore is director of communication strategies and marketing for United Methodist Women.

United Methodist Women Celebrates KKFI

"Wow! Someday I want to study here!" Annie, a 12-year-old, shouts as she sees the University of Santo Tomas in Manila for the first time. Annie comes from the Pulilan dump community. The university is a place of higher education, close to her community, and at the same time, quite far from the reality of her family's poverty.

"Teach them to dream," is my mantra as a community developer," said Christian Love Daroy-Gagno, mission intern with KKFI, Kapatatnan Kaunlaran Foundation, Inc. "I know I cannot free all of the children like Annie from poverty, but if I can put a dream in their hearts...and help keep that dream alive, there is a chance that something good will happen."

KKFI is a long-time mission partner with United Methodist Women, going back to the 1960s. According to Carol Van Gorp, United Methodist Women National Office Executive for International Ministries, "The establishment of a center in 1950 for the community where women, children, youth and families could gather in a Christian environment to learn and share experiences has thrived due to the on-going thrust of the organization's goals and objectives."

"The work of United Methodist Women continues to be in solidarity with KKFI. Although United Methodist Women supports the organization financially, even more essential is the supportive work of mission interns and missionaries such as Emma Cantor, Regional Missionary for Asia and a Deaconess of the Philippine Central Conference. Cantor "stands with KKFI as the connecting link of our solidarity together," said Van Gorp.

Harriett Olson, CEO of United Methodist Women, celebrated KKFI with a letter on the eve of their recent anniversary:

United Methodist Women proffers our respect for your continued and sustained efforts to reach women and youth through training in livelihood skills, leadership development and community interaction. Your commitment to justice through service and advocacy is the strength of your methodology and the core of your vision. We willingly and gratefully stand in solidarity with you and all who serve women and their families in service to Christ.

United Methodist Women will continue our solidarity with KKFI as you walk forward into the future with the constant commitment to women and youth empowerment that has been your promise and accomplishment for the past 65 years.

Undergirded by the foundation of United Methodist Women and the support of missionaries such as Christian Love Daroy-Gagno and Emma Cantor, children like Annie may find the road from an impoverished neighborhood to a college is more than a dream. It is a reality.

This story included reporting from KKFI, Mary Beth Coudal and Carol Van Gorp.
Pray for the World with the United Methodist Prayer Calendar

by Christie R. House

I received your letter and the 2018 Prayer Calendar upon my arrival from the Council of Bishops meeting. This is a very important resource for prayer and understanding of our worldwide ministries. Thank you very much. God bless you.

-Bishop Pedro M. Torio Jr., Philippines Central Conference, Baguio Episcopal Area

The United Methodist Prayer Calendar has been published, in one form or another by one Methodist or Brethren agency or another, since 1947. The earliest known Methodist-related annual calendar containing missionary birthdays and U.S. and overseas mission areas was published by the Woman’s Society of Christian Service, a predecessor of United Methodist Women. Since then, it has had a devoted following of prayer advocates who expand their daily devotions beyond their families and friends to include mission ministry and missionaries of The United Methodist Church.

The Prayer Calendar 2018 considers the theme of “Sacred Places” -- places made sacred by our interactions with God and with one another. These may be physical places, metaphorical places or spiritual places where we meet God and one another in prayer.

In addition to the daily listing of missionary, deaconesses and Global Ministries and United Methodist Women staff members’ birthdays, the calendar features prayers from the global church, weekly mission witnesses written by missionaries, deaconesses, home missionaries and mission institution staff members, and a daily mission-related focus. The back pages of the calendar list the active missionaries with their work addresses and emails. Retired missionaries are also listed, along with staff members of the two mission agencies. The mission witnesses that follow are all from the 2018 calendar.

God of Grace and Love, in this time of great division, I pray that we citizens of the world may learn to navigate a balance between hope and cynicism. As we endeavor to walk the path of Jesus, may we remember in our call for justice for all people to always temper it with mercy. Amen and Amen!

-Beaneine Reynolds, retired Deaconess, Sun Lakes, Arizona

Mission Witness: Prayer Calendar 2018, Week of May 27

We were walking the dusty path (20 minutes) to church. Lost in memories of comfortable cars and smooth roads in the United States, we caught up with a group of ladies also walking. We greeted them with “Jai-mashi” (Praise the Messiah) and asked where they had walked from.

They named a village far to the east of us—they had left home at 7 a.m. to walk three hours to Tansen. The church here is a true community of believers—and people walk extreme distances to come to worship. For us, the dusty road was suddenly sacred ground.

-Deborah Dornon, Global Ministries Missionary, Tansen, Nepal

Mission Witness: Prayer Calendar 2018, Week of September 3

A sian young Christian women are not a majority in the society. So, we sometimes feel vulnerable and small. Yet when we come together in prayer, in holding hands of sisters, we surely experience a sacred presence of Divine God among us.

-Hikari Chang, United Methodist Women Regional Missionary, Wesley Foundation, Japan

Mission Witness: Prayer Calendar 2018, Week of June 3

After moving into my new home, every day I had frogs or lizards in my bathroom. I went to the street to find someone who would help to get them out since I am very afraid of lizards and frogs. I had made many friends before we found the hole where the lizards and frogs were coming in. I see this was God’s way to help me to break the ice in a new community.

-Tsetsegdari Munkhbaatar, Global Mission Fellows International, Grenada

Mission Witness: Prayer Calendar 2018, Week of June 17

I was very sad when a lady I flew to the city from the village couldn’t be treated and I had to fly her back to wait to die. Before the flight she approached me and said, “Don’t worry, I am going home, but I will make sure to tell God what you have done for me.” I don’t cry very easily, but I did at this encounter.

-Gaston Ntambo, Global Missionary Pilot, Wings Global Ministries Missionary, Democratic Republic of Congo

Mission Witness: Prayer Calendar 2018, Week of June 24

Thank you so much for sending the Prayer Calendar. It means so much to me because I use the Prayer Calendar every day when I do my devotions.

-Margaret R., Texas

Christie R. House is the editor of New World Outlook magazine. During the 1980s, she served as assistant editor for the Prayer Calendar. These stories are reprinted, with permission, from New World Outlook, Winter 2018.
Mission u 2018: responses from participants

MISSISSIPPI Conference

My School of Christian Mission Memories

By Gloria McAlpine

My, oh my, how the years from 1975 to 2018 have flown by. I was a mere 25 years old when I first set out to the crystal sandy beachside of Arlean Hall to attend my first School of Christian Mission. Excited, apprehensive and full of great expectations, I arrived at the hall in a car of seasoned ladies who were determined to teach me the way, sharing prayers and stories, listening and participating in those wonderful studies. I returned every year to enjoy the cooked breakfasts and dinner, the hand-made sandwiches and snacks, the early morning and late evening walks.

Even more important was bringing those studies home to my church, my district and the changes they made in my daily walk with God. The goodbyes on the last day were always filled with a promise, to “see you next year.” I soon earned the job of driving the ladies to the coast for the school. Since my early days the school has changed location: First to Millsaps College, then Rust College, Decatur and presently to Cabot Lodge. I also enjoyed being the school nurse for several years. I even brought my six-month-old granddaughter to the school at Millsaps. She is now a United Methodist Women member at my church.

I will always be indebted to the school for my enrichment in so many different subjects. The warm, friendly comfort of the women and the knowledge gained from the studies are like magnets that keep you coming back every year. I don’t mind using my vacation days to enjoy school and learn in the cozy atmosphere of the hugs, smiles, great stories and knowledge of Mission u, formerly known as the School of Christian Mission. It offers a great sense of sisterhood and education comparable to a B.S. degree, and is an opportunity to be instructed by God-filled teachers and staff. Mission u is a great family reunion time.

Gloria McAlpine is the president of the Meridian District of the Mississippi Conference.

Dakotas Conference

Mission u this year has called me to action, to make a point of contacting my representative and senators about immigration issues, and to encourage the fair food program. Reminded me again and again of all the needs there are. I will take action on what I can do. Mission u has opened my mind to so many issues, so educational and so fun to be in fellowship with UMW sisters.

—Cindy Yeager, Mission u for Dakotas Conference, University of Jamestown in North Dakota, Jamestown, North Dakota

Louisiana Conference

(Below) The youth from Louisiana reported that they had one regret after their first Mission u experience. Mission u was not long enough. The young people enjoyed sharing laughter and fellowship at the Louisiana Conference Wesley Center in Woodworth, Louisiana, this summer.

Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Each worship gathering, class instruction, meal fellowship, ministry in music, gathering for play has infused me with the presence of God. Presentations bringing awareness to Native American issues, tribal music and an overall unique feeling, grounded in our Native American culture, is an integral part of the experience that speaks to me as a Navajo woman.

—Gloria Moore, Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference

Pacific Northwest Conference

(Below) Youth planned the vespers service at Mission u 2018 for the Pacific Northwest Conference, which was held in Central Washington University in Ellensburg, Washington. (Right) Youth led vespers on the theme of being the light in the world. They shared prayers and songs, Bible verses and interpretations of God’s word.
Florida Conference's Mission u

By Yvette Hammett

Families, pastors and students immersed themselves in a weekend of mission study, focusing on spiritual growth, social justice and covenant living.

Mission u took place at Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach July 12-15 and was open to all wishing to study the covenant relationship practiced by The United Methodist Church.

“I think that Mission u is a wonderful way to rekindle or deepen one’s faith,” said Sharyn Ladner, assistant dean for Mission u. “We are offering a Christian educational program grounded in social action and spirituality—Wesley’s acts of mercy and acts of piety.”

Hosted by Florida United Methodist Women, Mission u offers pastors the opportunity to earn continuing education credits, while individuals and families come together to explore this year’s topics.

The study builds on the concept of the covenant relationship, which is a daily and deep commitment to walk with God.

“Last year, they dealt a lot with what is a covenant and what the Bible says about covenants being made,” Mission u dean and conference lay leader Paulette Monroe said.

“We relate it to our time. The study explores the spiritual definition of a covenant and how that applies to us in the modern church today. It explores the way God has called us to live in a covenant relationship.”

The social justice course focused on money matters. “When I went to the study, it asked questions about how we use our dollars that God has given us in serving others and giving. Or are we selfish with it? This is a new one,” she said.

There also was a repeat of last year’s geographical study on the missionary conferences in the United States.

“We take in Alaska, the Red Bird Missionary and Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conferences. This makes it a two-year study,” Monroe said. “For me, and I’ve been doing this for so long, it gives me a greater perspective on how to be in mission with others.

“It teaches me to go beyond the walls of the box I’m in, out in to a larger area and do mission. We teach our kids that, as well, at Mission u. We always do a mission trip to get kids involved in the community, to go out and serve others.”

Ladner said Mission u has been life-changing. “I was not sure how I felt about missionaries back then, and this is the reason why I chose this mission study,” she said. “I felt the need to learn more. It was remarkable that my study leader, a pastor, was herself a product of United Methodist Women education in her native country, Liberia.

“I learned so much, not only about United Methodist Women’s work in mission, but also about the history and founding of UMW and the history of mission in the church. I ended up leading the Joy to the World study back in my district. I’ve been attending Mission u ever since.”

The Mission u studies are cutting edge. An example would be “The Bible and Human Sexuality.”

“The pastor who taught this class at Mission u in 2016 told me that the topics covered in this study should be taught in every church—and just last year he led the study at his church,” Ladner said.

When she was asked to serve as assistant dean to Mission u three years ago, it was a call to leadership she had been resisting.

“I know it may sound trite to say it was ‘A God Thing,’ but I truly believe that it was,” she said. “I look forward to following Paulette Monroe next year as Mission u dean. Paulette is phenomenal, and I hope to be able to live up to her level of service.”

Mission u includes a children’s program from pre-K through grade 12. Children study the same topics as adults, but on their level. Monroe said she expects 65-70 youth to participate.

This year, young attendees took a field trip to a nearby church where students have built a community garden and distributed food in the community.

“The kids worked in the community vegetable garden,” Monroe said.

“The children had what they called a marketplace where they made little things and sold them or asked for donations and the money was left in the community for some mission project,” she added.

Mission u alternates location between Bethune-Cookman and Florida Southern College in Lakeland for the yearly conference. Participants stay on campus and share meals and worship, in addition to classwork.

“There is no better place to learn what mission is all about. Until you actually sit in on it, be a part of it, you won’t get a true perspective of what it is really all about,” Monroe said.

Yvette Hammett is a freelance writer based in Valrico, Florida.
A Fair Trade Partnership

This holiday season, United Methodist Women is partnering with Global Goods Partners (GGP), a not-for-profit social enterprise, to create market access for fair trade products handcrafted by women artisans around the world.

Global Goods Partners shares United Methodist Women’s commitment to advancing economic equity for women and supporting trade relationships that respect producers’ rights to receive fair living wages and to work in a safe and healthy environment. GGP provides sustainable jobs for women—widely proven to be the key to community development and family well-being. Since 2005, GGP has partnered with over 60 artisan groups in more than 20 countries throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas, helping to design and bring to market the fair trade, handcrafted products they produce. Each artisan who creates products for GGP earns reliable, fair living wages.

GGP offers a wide selection of handcrafted products, ranging from hand-knit children’s toys to beaded jewelry. For each order a United Methodist Women member places on the GGP website, United Methodist Women will receive a donation equal to 15 percent of the total purchase. GGP was also the featured fair trade shop at our 2018 Assembly last May.

Once you select your items at globalgoodspartners.org, enter “UMW” on the checkout page in the box below the message, “Is this a gift? Add a gift message OR enter affiliation.” Your online Christmas shopping through GGP makes it easy for United Methodist Women members to shop your values and support your organization at the same time.

United Methodist Women and Global Goods Partners have partnered for more than a year to bring fair trade to women all over the world.

(globalgoodspartners.org)

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Holding Institute Community Center
Advocates for Immigrants

By Justice for Our Neighbors

The Holding Institute Community Center in Laredo, Texas, a United Methodist National Mission Institution, in covenant with the United Methodist Women, supports the local immigrant community and provides humanitarian relief along the U.S.-Mexico border.

More than a third of Laredo residents live below the official poverty line, over twice the nationwide rate of 12.7 percent. There is a dearth of nonprofit legal providers serving low-income people in this border community and none that offer immigration legal aid. As you would expect, the area is rampant with notario fraud, unscrupulous individuals who seek to take advantage of vulnerable immigrants seeking rights.

In other words, it was the perfect place for National Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON), a United Methodist immigration ministry, to send a group of JFON attorneys and interpreters for an intensive two days of free immigration legal clinics. “It was an honor to be part of this group,” says Bethany Jackson, attorney for Tennessee JFON. “I was impressed by how the Holding Institute is able to offer much-needed services and, in particular, kindness, on a shoestring budget.

“I would like to thank National JFON for making this experience possible,” she adds. “I learned so much and was able to witness how the immigration crackdown has impacted families who have, for generations, lived and worked on both sides of the border.”

Justice for Our Neighbors (JFON.org) is a network of 17 sites across the country that provides free or low-cost immigration legal services for low-income immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Plan an Anniversary Celebration

As the 150th anniversary of United Methodist Women approaches, celebrate all the ways you’ve made life better for women, children and youth.

by Sandy Wilder

In just a matter of months, United Methodist Women will celebrate its 150th year as women organized for mission. How will you celebrate? With whom will you share the story of United Methodist Women in the coming months?

March 23, 2019, our 150th anniversary date, is a Saturday, so consider organizing a celebration of United Methodist Women that lasts for the entire weekend. Activities might include a service day, a unit program, a 150th birthday party or special event, a retreat, or participation in the Day of Giving (March 23). On Sunday, plan a worship service conducted by United Methodist Women, a festive luncheon, or a prayer service.

You can plan a “fun-raiser” and announce the amount raised at a 150th birthday party. What is a fun-raiser? It is an activity your unit, circle or conference creates to raise money for the Legacy Fund Endowment Campaign. Remind members that every woman needs to have a valid will and that in their wills they can easily plan for a gift of any size to United Methodist Women. Could we get 150 bequest commitments from each conference in our anniversary year?

Promote the legacy of your United Methodist Women community and global work by sending a story to your local newspaper or pitching a news story to your local news station.

Challenge all your members to “stretch” during the anniversary year by giving an amount every month during 2019 to the Legacy Fund. A commitment of $20 a month to the Legacy Fund can be our modern-day “two cents a week and fervent prayer” pledged by our founders.

Honor your leaders by presenting them with the special 150th Mission Recognition pin or the 150th Anniversary necklace.

Continue your 150th celebrations in 2019 at Mission u, annual conference, conference and district annual meetings and all conference, district and local events next year.

Legacy Fund Resources

Where do you find the resources you need for your Legacy Fund displays and anniversary celebrations?

First, contact your conference Legacy Fund Liaison. She can provide commitment envelopes, blank “150” note cards, a one-page handout describing the Legacy Fund, and many other promotional materials. If you don’t know who your conference Legacy Fund Liaison is, ask the Legacy Fund team by emailing legacy150@unitedmethodistwomen.org.

Second, Legacy Fund resources are available in the Legacy Fund Toolkit located on the Legacy Fund website: unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacy-fund-toolkit. The Fun-Raiser brochure can be found at the Legacy Fund website: unitedmethodistwomen.org/150/funraiser.

Announce Your Plans

You may already have your 150th birthday celebrations planned, and if so, share your ideas and photos with Emily Marshall, EMarshall@unitedmethodistwomen.org, at the national office so we can in turn inspire other members with your creativity! What a privilege to be faith, hope and love in action at this time in the history—and future—of United Methodist Women. Happy Sesquicentennial!

Sandy Wilder is a former staffperson and consultant for United Methodist Women.
Mission Resources

**Practicing Resurrection: The Gospel of Mark and Radical Discipleship**
This spiritual growth study presents this well-known Gospel of Mark through voices and experiences that are often relegated to the margins. In five chapters, the study examines different passages in Mark and challenges readers to discover what radical discipleship looks like in their own context. **M3331 $10**

**Marked: A Mission Journey with Jesus | A Children’s Study**
Children ages five to twelve are invited on a journey where they will discover the power of God through this fast-paced Gospel of Mark. **M3330 $10**

Print a BOOKMARK as you take your spiritual journey with Jesus in the mission study. *FREE* download from the estore!

**2019 Prayer Calendar**
Our beloved calendar helps put your faith, hope and love into action with a daily mission focus, birthdays of people in mission, holidays and space to plan your schedule. We celebrate 150 and 200 years in mission of United Methodist Women and General Board of Global Ministries, respectively, featuring children’s art provided by the national and international partners in mission with them. **M3320 $14**

**Who Do You Say That I Am? Meeting Jesus through the Eyes of Mark | A Youth Study**
The study guides youth through the Gospel of Mark, helping them to define who Jesus is to them, who he says he is in scripture, and how this impacts how we live our lives. **M3329 $10**