

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN HANDBOOK

2021–2024

TAKE ON THE TASKS OF UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

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TAKE ON THE TASKS

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

While he [Jesus] was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.

—Mark 14:3

The woman who anointed Jesus was a woman of action and faith. She saw the need for Jesus to be appropriately honored and filled it, even if it meant breaking cultural taboos and risking her most precious possession.

When we take on any mission task we look through the eyes of faith at the needs around us, within our group, church, community, country and the world. Then, we look at what we have: our unique talents, resources and creativity, and then we listen to the call of God. When we find the places where these intersect we find our way to fulfill the Purpose. Like the woman with the alabaster jar, sometimes this means breaking with tradition to appropriately honor Christ by addressing the needs that we see.

ASSESSING YOUR CONTEXT

How your group functions will be influenced by women's lives today. Each group should take time to talk about what membership means, discern God's call in the United Methodist Women's Purpose, and celebrate, vision, plan and organize in ways that will work best for your setting.

RECALL: OUR PURPOSE

Start your assessment by reexamining our Purpose, mission tasks and the vision. As you discuss needs and expectations, think about how you can work together to live out the Purpose within your group. Recalling our Purpose, consider:

What is most meaningful to you as United Methodist Women members? What is your reason for being?

OUR PURPOSE

United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

- To be a community of women.
- To know God.
- To experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ.
- To develop a creative and supportive community.
- To expand concepts of mission.
- To participate in global ministries.

Your United Methodist Women's group works in a setting that is unique. Your community and your congregation may have changed over time. When you go about the work of assessing the needs of your organization and your community and how you will engage in mission, keep in mind the contributions and needs of members. They bring hope, expectation and anticipation as gifts, talents and resources, as well as responsibilities, burdens and need for fellowship. Consider:

- What has changed in your group, church or community, for example in the past 10 years?
- What are needs you see in your group, church and community? Which of these do you feel called to address?
- How do you verify what you believe are the needs?
- What gifts and contributions can your members make to address these needs?
- What leadership roles do we need?
- What types of functions need to be accomplished by the leadership team? What will be the tasks? Are they realistic or feasible? Should additional roles be added to them?
- Look at your list of answers to question 2. Will this type of leadership team move you to where you need to be? Why or why not?
- Who will identify the leaders? Which ones will be nominated by the committee on nominations? Which ones can be short-term? Should any of the responsibilities be shared between two people?
- How do you value other forms of leadership? How will you identify other leaders? Could "non-members" be among your leadership?
- What new ways of working may be needed in order to include short-term, emerging and diverse perspectives and leadership styles? How will this move you toward our Vision/Purpose?

PREPARE: TASKS FOR MISSION

The following are some suggestions for planning and organizing the work of your group.

VALUING OUR MISSION

Take time to honor what you have accomplished together.

- Plan at least one program each year in which you look back to celebrate what you have accomplished.
- Honor the contributions of the organization's leaders and members. Consider honoring them with a Special Mission Recognition pin.

- Remember to evaluate what you do well and what you would like to do better in the upcoming year. Reflect on and pray about how God has been at work among you.

ORGANIZING FOR MISSION

Evaluate your group's structure in light of your activities and events to ensure you are organized in a way that will help and support you as you take on the tasks at hand.

- Set aside a time to go over the year's plans and ensure that there's leadership for all initiatives and events.
- Review events and programs to see what they involve and invite a variety of people.
- Inventory your work to see the many ways you are/could be involved in God's mission.
- Assess how many times women were personally invited to participate.

PLANNING FOR MISSION

Plan for mission events and other programs well in advance.

- Designate a person or team of people to organize the event or program. Consider the gifts and passions of different group members before inviting them to take leadership.
- Consider whom you might ask to join you in this work through both planning and participation. This may include other United Methodist Women's groups, women in other Methodist denominations, other faith-based groups or community organizations.
- Publicize your event using a range of media: newsletter, Sunday bulletin, bulletin board, social media, website, email, phone calls, personal invitation.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

United Methodist Women is a supportive community that builds, expands and strengthens relationships by inviting others to participate in our work and mission, and joining others in participation in their work.

- Visit and establish a relationship with a nearby United Methodist Women's group, or women's groups of other faith expressions.
- Enlist non-members to share experience and expertise in planning and presenting a program or educational opportunity.
- Engage with other groups in your congregation that share common interests, e.g., youth group, United Methodist Men, mission or church and society committees.
- Attend United Methodist Women district and conference events.

ACT: LIVING THE VISION

The vision of United Methodist Women is to “turn faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.” Living our vision is expressed in the five vision statements which provide a framework for planning and action:

- We provide opportunities and resources to grow spiritually, become more deeply rooted in Christ and put faith into action.
- We are organized for growth, with flexible structures leading to effective witness and action.
- We equip women and girls around the world to be leaders in communities, agencies, workplaces, governments and churches.
- We work for justice through compassionate service and advocacy to change unfair policies and systems.
- We provide educational experiences that lead to service and advocacy in order to transform the world.

LIVING OUR VISION

Growing spiritually
Organizing for growth
Developing leaders
Serving and advocating
Educating for change.

Using the multifaceted vision statements, here are some actions that can lead us into living the vision. What other ideas do you have?

LIVING OUR VISION: GROWING SPIRITUALLY

Growing spiritually helps us to better understand how we can be a part of God’s mission in the world.

- Use the meditations and other resources on United Methodist Women’s website **unitedmethodistwomen.org**.
- Pray using the Prayer Calendar.
- Plan programs that encourage spiritual growth among the group.
- Connect prayer and Bible study to issues being addressed.
- Build a prayer network among members.
- Create prayer partners with other groups in the church and United Methodist connection (youth, scouts, men’s groups, district team, mission interns, Global Justice Volunteers, deaconesses, home missionaries).
- Organize the spiritual growth study and develop the “what it means for us” list as a result.
- Use resources in United Methodist Women’s Bible to help the group see more deeply into the biblical text.

LIVING OUR VISION: ORGANIZING FOR GROWTH

Organizing for growth asks us to plan, work and involve members, leaders and others in ways that expand our resources and deepen our witness and advocacy.

- Collaborate with other congregational, ecumenical and community groups for effective outreach, service and advocacy. Consider using the Welcoming Event Toolkit available from **unitedmethodistwomen.org/member-toolkit**.

- Invite new and existing members to complete the myUMW form online at **unitedmethodistwomen.org/myUMW** and get their membership card.
- Create and share your “elevator speech” about the work of United Methodist Women with women in The United Methodist Church and beyond.
- Cultivate partnerships with local stakeholders (i.e., community leaders, government and schools).
- Connect with potential members, inactive members, and emerging leaders in your congregation on issues of common concern to plan and carry out action strategies.
- Share leadership with emerging leaders, and include members and non-members in service opportunities.
- Provide opportunity for potential and current members to participate in the Pledge to Mission, Legacy Fund, and other giving opportunities to insure the continued witness and mission of United Methodist Women.
- Create fundraising plans that both educate members, the congregation and community on the Purpose, mission and vision of United Methodist Women; and that expand the opportunity to give on behalf of women, children and youth.
- Host a recruitment drive to bring and engage new women based on their interests.
- Ensure that each event has an opportunity for joining built in.

LIVING OUR VISION: DEVELOPING LEADERS

Explore ways to support women as they seek to become leaders within United Methodist Women, the congregation, and in the general church and larger community.

- Seek out and support participation in leadership development and educational opportunities at the district, conference and national levels.
- Provide financial support for new, potential and current members and leaders to participate in educational and leadership development events.
- Be open to new forms of leadership and participation in the organization.

LIVING OUR VISION: SERVING AND ADVOCATING

Act on your belief by participating in ministries of service and advocacy.

- Study and work for justice on behalf of women, children and youth through the current social justice priorities. Choose at least one of these emphases to focus on as a group.
 - **Mass incarceration/criminalization of communities of color**, with a particular focus on the Interrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline campaign.
 - **Climate justice**, with a particular focus on the Just Energy for All campaign.
- Use your United Methodist Women’s Day to uplift and share the broader work around leadership, service and advocacy.
- Sign up to receive Action Alerts to stay informed about issues of justice on **unitedmethodistwomen.org/actionalerts**.
- Partner with a National Mission Institution or community organization where you can volunteer regularly and encounter issues affecting the people they serve.

- Highlight issues of justice in the church newsletter and include church members in advocacy opportunities.
- Plan an Ubuntu Day of Service in your community.
- Engage in district and conference opportunities.

LIVING OUR VISION: EDUCATING FOR CHANGE

Learn about mission and how you can be a part of it in new ways.

- Take advantage of learning opportunities through United Methodist Women such as Mission u, the Seminar Program, the Reading Program and **response** magazine.
- Consider inviting and supporting new or potential members, and your pastor to participate in district, conference or national educational opportunity.
- Consider working with your district to attend a seminar locally or at the Church Center for the United Nations in New York City.
- Determine what issues you would like to learn more about that would help equip you for service.
- Use this year’s mission study in your group to learn more about current social issues.
- Invite and include your church members to participate in a mission study and attend your conference Mission u.

PUTTING THE ASSESSMENT TO WORK

Use the information that you glean from these discussions to plan and organize for the year. How does your proposed plan line up with the Purpose and Vision statements? Is it balanced? Is it feasible? How are you incorporating the “Living the Vision” statements found in the “Know Your Mission Organization” section?

CREATING A LEADERSHIP TEAM: CHOICES

After completing assessment and planning, consider how the group should organize. It should reflect ways to care for one another, reach out to others, learn together, develop leaders, grow spiritually, nurture the membership, and faithfully use the monetary gifts given for mission.

The United Methodist Women’s Constitution and Bylaws prescribes that a group should elect a president, secretary, treasurer and chair of nominations; and a vice president as specified as part of the leadership team at the local level. These roles are essential to maintain organizational functions and financial accountability, but the leadership team can name its leadership in other ways that are meaningful to the group and its way of working together.

LEADERSHIP TEAM CHOICES

The leadership team can organize and name its leadership in ways that are meaningful to the group, its context and ways of working together.

A group might prefer a less formal structure naming the leader a “coordinator” or “chair.” Rotating chairs or shared leadership might be suitable for another group to meet their needs. Various other leadership opportunities to fulfill the mission tasks and Purpose are highlighted in Table 2 on the next page.

Table 1 below illustrates what the **administrative and fiduciary roles and functions**¹ might look like with these several models:

Table 1

Possible Titles	Roles and Function
President Coordinator Chair Co-chair	Convener and official organizational representative; chairs meetings, general coordination of the work of the organization; shares fiduciary responsibility with treasurer. ²
Program coordinator Vice president (specified at local level)	Convenes meetings or actions that may be needed in the absence of the president; coordinate the work of the organization with the president; takes on specific tasks and roles such as program planning
Treasurer Financial manager	Keeps financial records, receives and distributes funds, provides financial reports. ²
Secretary Record keeper	Keeps member lists and records of meetings; communicates information to groups; shares fiduciary responsibility with treasurer. ²
Chair, committee on nominations	Coordinates the committee's work in identifying potential leaders.

It is up to your group to determine how mission tasks and functions should be carried out through various leadership roles. These roles can be determined after assessing your context and needs. Some groups are evaluating and streamlining or combining roles and tasks. Some have found a team approach helpful to share leadership, plan and implement their program. Shared leadership might include experienced, new and emerging leaders for short time periods for specific tasks in positions that are not tenured. Other groups function well with elected and tenured leadership roles that have been in place for many years. This flexibility respects the diversity of United Methodist Women members, their varied contexts and leadership needs.

1. Specific responsibilities and duties are listed in the “Constitution and Bylaws” section of Handbook: unitedmethodistwomen.org/members-leaders/2021-2024-handbook/2021-2024-constitution-and-bylaws.
 2. See Handbook, “Funding the Mission” section.

Table 2 below suggests functions, possible titles and roles to fulfill the United Methodist Women’s mission Purpose and tasks.³

Table 2

Possible Titles	Roles and Functions
Communications coordinator Communications manager Communications team leader	Coordinate publicity and promotion in the group, church, community; prepare news releases.
Secretary for program resources Program resources manager Secretary (assigned task)	Coordinate material resource procurement and distribution: promote current program resources; order and distribute materials as determined.
Mission coordinator for spiritual growth Spiritual life leader	Offer opportunities for the group to connect biblical and theological study to mission issues and actions; regularly include spiritual growth resources and practices in the group’s experience.
Mission coordinator for social action Social action team leader Service and advocacy leader	Bring justice issues of concern to women, children and youth to the attention of the unit; facilitate advocacy action planning; promote the United Methodist Women social justice priorities.
Mission coordinator for education and interpretation Education and interpretation team leader	Inform and promote mission giving and mission education opportunities within United Methodist Women.
Membership growth coordinator Membership, nurture and outreach coordinator Membership coordinator	Ensures each active member is officially signed up on myUMW; maintains membership lists; develops ways to attract, welcome and maintain new and current members.
Legacy Fund liaison	Interpret and promote the Legacy Endowment Fund, secure gifts and provide opportunity for members to fundraise to fulfill pledges and other giving opportunities. (See also the section titled “Funding the Mission.”)

3. See “Act: Living the Vision,” above, and the “Know Your Mission Organization” and “Roles and Responsibilities in the Organization” sections of Handbook for additional ideas on leadership roles.

TIPS

This section contains tips and information to help members as they participate in the work of the organization. These are merely suggestions for your use. Feel free to use and adjust them as needed.

MEETING TIPS

Many local organizations have monthly meetings in which they go over the business of the organization and participate in a program. Districts and conferences have annual meetings that also have program and business portions. In addition, executive committees (or leadership teams) for local, district and conference organizations meet regularly to conduct the business of the organization and plan programs.

Setting the Tone

Be sure to set the tone of the meeting by how you welcome people, affirm differences and handle questions as they arise.

- Welcome all attendees and be especially aware of those who are new to the group.
- Open and close the meeting with prayer or a short meditation.
- Affirm the ground rules at the beginning of each meeting so that everyone is on the same page.
- Ask members to express their opinions honestly and concisely. Enable all participants to express their views.
- Encourage creative problem-solving. Discourage competitive behavior in which one side emerges the winner and the other side becomes the loser.
- Keep focus of discussion on the task. If the group wanders, guide it back.
- Plan time for personal sharing, perhaps informally during a refreshment break or formally as part of the meeting's agenda.
- Express appreciation for good work accomplished by or for United Methodist Women members. Celebrate one another's contributions!

Planning

Plan each meeting ahead of time. Give members advance notice, send out an agenda and find ways to invite new people to attend. Consider how to welcome newcomers and how you will invite them to participate.

Create an Agenda or Meeting Plan

Every meeting needs a game plan, whether it's a meeting of three committee members or a convention of several thousand delegates. Know your agenda and stick to it.

Have an agenda or list of items for the meeting available to all participants: via email, printed agenda, on newsprint or on a slide

As you consider your agenda, think through the transitional places in the meeting and agenda and decide what you will say.

For example, during a discussion or before a vote, you can say, “The question before us is [state the exact language, including amendments that have been adopted]. Is there further discussion?” Or, “Is there any new information?” Or, “Does anyone have anything else to add to our discussion?”

Annual Meetings

An annual meeting is held to conduct the business of an organization. The form and content of the program need not be limited but should include the official business. Consider member needs, areas of interest, special mission focuses and any special acknowledgements or remembrances. (See further tips in “Program Planning” on page 22.)

The business session should include:

- Treasurer’s report.
- Adoption of budget.
- Presentation and adoption of pledge.
- Nomination report and election of officers.

It will help the meeting progress smoothly if you make available copies of standing rules, budgets and other business matters in the program so that participants have them at hand. Making the presenters aware of their allotted time in advance and keeping time during the session are important so that the meeting ends on time.

Meeting Facilitation

Facilitation is something we do every day—in some instances it is informal, such as a conversation around the dinner table, and other cases is more formal, such as working as a group to achieve a required outcome, common goal or purpose. The following are some tips to help make facilitating a meeting go smoothly.

Agenda: It is important that everyone involved understands the purpose of the session and the expectations. Providing a clear agenda helps this process.

Comfort and information: Set time limits and schedule breaks and mealtimes. Make sure everyone knows the location of bathrooms and the cafeteria, break or snack room—remember that hungry and tired people do not work well.

Group introductions: Make sure that all present know one another. Set aside time for introductions with specific instructions and a time limit. The facilitator should take the lead in the introductions to set the tone.

Ground rules: Explore some working guidelines that will invite collaboration and cooperation. Ensure that all participants agree to these rules. Some examples of potential rules are as follows:

1. Be punctual.
2. Focus on the business at hand—no emailing, texting, or internet surfing, unless you are looking up a topic for the group.
3. Respect confidentiality.
4. Conduct no side conversations or business.
5. Make decisions as a group, not in conversations away from the meeting.

Endorsement and evaluation: Listen actively to all contributions and avoid endorsing any one idea or suggestion as well as making comments that sound like approval or evaluation, such as “that’s a great idea.” Remember that all ideas and contributions are valuable.

Participation and involvement: Make sure that all persons participate to their level of comfort. Be ready to encourage some persons to speak up and others not to dominate.

Decision-making

Decisions can be made by consensus building or parliamentary procedure. Before you determine which process you will use, become familiar with the group’s decision-making style. Consider the following:

- Size of group.
- Type of meeting (business, creative planning, problem solving).
- Formality of group.

When to use consensus building:

- Smaller, less formal groups.
- Effective in creative thinking and planning.
- Cooperative and not competitive.
- Verbal agreement, not by vote.
- Decision must be acceptable to all, although all might not fully agree.
- Leader must keep group on the task or discussion.

When to use parliamentary procedure:

- Business decisions that need to be recorded in minutes.
- More formal or large group.

When you are conducting the meeting, keep these rules or agreements in mind during the session:

- Be sensitive to time and lengthy and dominating contributions.
- Allow for flexibility in parliamentary rule. Productive discussions are the goal in a meeting.
- Invite those who have not spoken to contribute to discussion in seeking consensus.
- Rely on your own good judgment to strike a balance between group participation and procedures.

Consensus Building

Consensus is a mutual agreement among team members that all legitimate concerns of individuals have been addressed by the group and everyone agrees to support the decision. It is important to remember that a consensus does not mean that everyone agrees. It does mean that all members have had an opportunity to express their opinions and feel that the group has listened to them. Consensus building is most easily achieved in small groups where everyone will have the opportunity to voice their opinion.

The following are some basic steps when reaching a decision by consensus. During this process always ensure all voices are heard. Give the quieter members of the group an opportunity to speak. Work to keep the discussion on task, but do not disregard the opinions given.

1. Identify the areas of agreement.
2. Clearly state differences.
 - State positions and perspectives as neutrally as possible.
 - Do not associate positions with people. The differences are between alternative valid solutions or ideas, not between people.
 - Summarize concerns and list them.
3. Fully explore differences.
 - Explore each perspective and clarify.
 - Involve everyone in the discussion—avoid a one-on-one debate.
 - Look for the “third way”: Make suggestions or modifications, or create a new solution.
4. Reach closure.
5. Articulate the decision.
 - Ask people if they feel they have had the opportunity to fully express their opinions.
 - Obtain a sense of the group.
 - At this point, poll each person, asking, “Do you agree with and will you support this decision?”

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is the name given to the set of rules governing the decision-making process used by a deliberative assembly. Parliamentary procedure defines how a democratic organization works—how its members make decisions, how its leaders run the organization to meet the needs of its members, and the rights of members and nonmembers. Parliamentary procedure is vital to the fair operation of organizations operating on democratic principles. Parliamentary procedure is better used in larger groups or formal meetings. It is based on the principles of justice, courtesy, good order, and a guarantee of rule of the majority and protection of the rights of the minority.

The following are some basic principles to use when reaching a decision using parliamentary procedure:

- Parliamentary procedure exists to facilitate the transaction of business and to promote cooperation and harmony.
- All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations.
 - The majority has the right to decide.
 - The minority has rights, which must be protected.

- A quorum must be present for the group to act.
- Full and free discussion of every motion is a basic right.
- Only one question can be considered at any given time.
- Members have the right to know at all times what the immediate pending question is and to have it restated before a vote is taken.
- No member can speak until recognized by the chair.
- No one can speak a second time on the same question as long as another wants to speak a first time.
- The chair should be strictly impartial.

Use the following steps when a motion is brought before the group:

1. A member makes a motion.
2. Another member seconds a motion.
3. The chair states the question on the motion.

Use the following steps when considering a motion:

- The members debate the motion (unless no member claims the floor for that purpose).
- The chair puts the question to a vote.
 - The chair restates the question.
 - The chair takes a vote:
 - “All in favor of the motion, say aye.”
 - “Those opposed, say no.”
- The chair announces the result of the vote. A complete announcement should include:
 - Report on the voting itself, stating which side prevailed (and giving the count if a count prevailed).
 - Declaration that the motion is adopted or lost.
 - Statement indicating the effect of the vote or ordering its execution.
 - Where applicable, announcement of the next item of business or stating the question of the next motion that consequently comes up for a vote.

General Information for Meetings

Decision-making steps:

- Restate the question or topic before putting it to a vote or final consensus.
- Vote on specific actions, not vague concepts.
- Ask for specific wording.
- Clarify the topic as needed when moving toward consensus.

Minutes: Minutes may be voted on without a motion. Prior to the vote, ask if there are any corrections to the minutes. If there are none say, “Hearing none, the minutes are approved as printed.” If there are corrections, instruct the recording person to make them and announce, “The minutes are approved as corrected.”

TEAM BUILDING

For groups that will continue to work together over a period of time, it is important to provide opportunities for team building. Groups that see themselves as a team are more cohesive and are more likely to work together to accomplish their purpose or task.

For new groups, plan for time(s) for group members to get to know one another, but be sensitive and aware of group interest and need. The following are some ways to create team-building opportunities:

- Plan icebreakers and openers that help new members feel comfortable in the group. (Search online for ideas.)
- Create a mentor system that pairs new members with experienced ones.
- Find out about member's gifts, interests and work styles through one-on-one conversations and observation.
- Use team-building exercises with groups of 30 or less.
- Use seating arrangements such as circles or U-shapes that encourage conversation and eye contact.
- Break large groups into smaller groups for discussion and feedback.
- Use nametags for new or large groups or when new members are present.
- Create an atmosphere of collegiality, trust and openness so that group members can openly share success as well as concerns and questions.
- Mutually agree on group ground rules or ways the group will work together.
- Use prayer, spiritual disciplines and the United Methodist Women's Purpose as a foundation for the group's reason for being. Do not use prayer to manipulate conformity or compliance.

ADD YOUR OWN NOTES HERE

TEN LEADERSHIP SKILLS¹

- Reflect on your own experience and ways of being and doing.

Do I understand how my own identities have shaped and shape my understanding of self and way of doing things? Am I willing to question myself and others for fuller self-understanding? Am I committed to reflection, study and action that lead to transformation?

- Be open to contribution of others.

As a leader do I have a multicultural, multilingual and antiracist perspective? Do I value what I hear even if I disagree? Do I appreciate cultural experiences other than my own? Do I read, view art, listen to music or experience worship with persons who are older, younger or of a different cultural, racial-ethnic or language group than I am?

- Practice collective leadership.

As a leader, do I have the ability to collaborate, to work in partnership with others? Can I work for justice for those in my group and also work to build a broader coalition for justice? Do I see the interconnectedness of issues and “isms” and the many faceted approaches to solutions?

- Support the growth of others.

Do I truly listen to another’s story? Am I sensitive to the pace of others in creating community and strengthening relationships and not freezing people in time, offering both compassion and challenge?

- Realize the diversity in our communities.

Am I aware of the different contexts in which people live; for example, how the economic crisis affects persons of color, immigrants or people whose first language is other than English? Do I understand that there are multiple stories and multiple identities within individuals in our human community?

- Value persons over being right.

Do I practice listening that appreciates individual uniqueness in order to overcome distrust and disagreement? Do I emphasize strengthening relationship over rules that isolate us from one another?

- Speak up.

Am I able to speak up or intervene when I hear, see or read misleading, stereotypical or hateful comments or statements and actions made about persons of another racial or ethnic group?

1. Gathered from the work of Angela Glover Blackwell, Stewart Kwoh and Manuel Pastor, *Uncommon Common Ground* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010); Stephen D. Brookfield and Stephen Preskill, *Learning as a Way of Leading* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009); Parker Palmer, *Healing the Heart of Democracy: The Courage to Create a Politics Worthy of the Human Spirit* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011); Stephanie Spellers, *Radical Welcome* (New York: Church Publishing, 2006); and Melanie Morrison, Allies for Change, alliesforchange.org.

PRESENTATIONS

Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers.

—1 Timothy 4:16

You may be asked to give a presentation at a meeting, event or other function. The following are some tips about making presentations in general and on behalf of United Methodist Women.

Preparing for the Presentation

- **Event:** Find out as much as you can about the whole event: what it is about, who will be attending, when it is taking place and any special considerations you need to take as a presenter (technology, time, etc.).
- **Objectives:** Ask why you are being asked to address a specific topic and how it relates to the rest of the event and the attendees.
- **Audience:** Learn about who is attending the event, including how many, their expectations and how your presentation will benefit them. Find out and prepare for persons with special needs.
- **Location:** Find out where the event is being held and what arrangements need to be considered in your preparation. Will you be making your presentation in an auditorium, classroom, sanctuary or living room?

Preparing the Presentation

- **Record your ideas:** Set aside time to jot down as many ideas as possible on the topic you have been asked to address. Use this list to identify your main ideas and then develop supporting ideas and information.
- **Prepare a basic outline:** Use your list of main ideas and supporting ideas to create an outline. This will give you an idea of the content and scope of your presentation. Review the outline and ask if it is in line with the objective you were given when you were asked to prepare the presentation.
- **Research your topic:** Make sure what you are saying is supported by the latest information/data on the topic you are presenting. The Internet is a great source of information; however, you should verify that you are using a legitimate source and check to see the date the information was published. The importance of this varies by topic. For example, historical data does not need to be current, but if your presentation is on social media, you will want to use information that was made available in the past 12 months.
- **Make it relevant:** Ask yourself if your audience can relate to your presentation. Your topic might be familiar or of interest; however, how you present the material can make all the difference. You will want to make sure that your examples and illustrations are something your audience can relate to.
- **Use common language:** Use everyday language in your presentation. If you need to use technical terms and jargon, make sure to use them in context or share the definition.
- **Choose your media:** Explore the best media to use with your presentation and start making a list of equipment that you might need.

- **Select visual aids:** Use visual aids to support or reinforce your presentation; however, avoid reading the content on the visuals to your audience.
- **Rehearse ahead of time:** Go through your entire presentation at home a few times and note any areas where you might stumble over words or struggle with the supporting visuals and work out any issues. Time your presentation to ensure that you are within the time limit allotted to you. Once you are at the site, check the microphone and any needed equipment and go over your presentation (if you are able). This will help you to evaluate any potential problems—physical or technical—and make adjustments as needed.

Giving the Presentation

- **Take a moment:** After you have rehearsed, organize your notes, sit quietly for a few minutes and be in prayer.
- **Introduce yourself:** Even if you already have been introduced, take a moment to introduce yourself before you begin. Take time to add something relevant about yourself as well as to establish a relationship with your audience.
- **Use the microphone:** Make sure to use a microphone if the group is larger than 20 people. Remember that the microphone is not just for you—it is for the listener. This will allow for the variation in your voice to come across to everyone there.
- **Keep it conversational:** Keep your tone conversational, make it personal and share why being there is important to you.
- **Credit and acknowledge others:** Acknowledge and credit persons for your information as appropriate.
- **Be aware of your body:** Be aware of your stance, where you put your hands and your posture. Do you feel confident? Does your posture communicate your confidence? Some nervousness is natural as long as is not paralyzing. Avoid gestures or mannerisms that are distracting.
- **Make eye contact:** Make sure that you make eye contact with persons in different areas of the room.
- **Keep them engaged:** Research on how our brain works confirms that we pay attention in short spurts of five to seven minutes. Help people stay focused by using visuals that are posted, projected or passed among participants. Include exercises such as asking them to write, speak to one another or invite responses. You might want to consider incorporating music or other arts as well.
- **Be aware of your audience:** Watch to see if your audience is engaged. Some distractions may be caused by something beyond your control, such as the room being too cold or work being done on the street right outside the door; in this case acknowledge these occurrences and make them feel free to do what they need to be comfortable.
- **Be available:** Make sure to be available for feedback, comments and questions after you finish your presentation. Make sure to continue projecting confidence and satisfaction, but remember to also be humble and gracious.

Using Visuals in Presentations

Use visuals to:

- Focus attention.
- Reinforce a visual message. Worship imagery can be used to provide a spiritual focus for a topic.
- Add variety.
- Illustrate complex information.
- Provide another learning method.

Check your visuals and ask:

- How would this visual be effective?
- Is this the best method for the size of the group (e.g., newsprint, slides)?
- What other ways could it be used?
- How else might information be presented without just talking?

Determine what can help make your visuals useable:

- Consider using an electronic slide for groups over 30. Newsprint cannot be seen from a distance.
- Use two television monitors for every 25 people when showing videos and DVDs, or project them onto a large screen.
- Look at and talk to your audience, not to the slide or newsprint.
- Test the visibility of your newsprint or slide from several angles in the room, including seated positions. Test it in the lighting you will use at the time of your presentation.
- If a full report is needed, consider a handout. For example, spreadsheets and financials cannot always be seen on slides.
- Display your visual only when talking about it.
- Wait to distribute handouts until you come to that point in the presentation so that your audience is not reading them while you are talking.
- Remember that less is more:
- Use block print or simple fonts (at least 20 points in size for large screen projection).
- Avoid light marker colors that can't be seen at a distance.
- Use the visual to emphasize words, not entire paragraphs.
- Remember the "5 by 5" rule: up to five bullet points or lines per slide or newsprint sheet and five words across per line.
 - Use font sizes that are at least 20 points in size on slides.
 - Avoid fast-moving slide effects or unnecessary animated slide transitions.
 - Use simple slide backgrounds. Lighting changes colors and contrasts.
 - Check visuals in advance on site and make adjustments.

Finally, prepare and practice using your visuals in advance. Check out visual presentation websites for more ideas and how-tos.

PROGRAM PLANNING

The total program of United Methodist Women is mission, so all programming has a mission emphasis. Whether it is a circle meeting, a local organization program, a district or conference event, include one or more of the following:

Support for Mission

- Spiritually by prayer and Bible study.
- Financially with a Pledge to Mission and other Mission Giving.
- Intellectually through education about mission and mission projects.

Action for Mission

- Involvement in both compassionate service and justice issues.
- Being intentional about the use of the world's resources.
- Strengthening the community.

Participation in Mission

- Learning about the changing needs in mission.
- Living a life of praise and thanksgiving.
- Developing a relationship with missionaries, mission partners or projects at home and around the world.

What to Consider When Program Planning

Take the following elements into consideration when planning a program or event.

- Type of event.
- Number of participants.
- Length of the program or event.
- Expense and budget available.
- Who will be attending.
- Goal of the program.
- How the goal will be achieved.
- What the content will be and how it will be conveyed (activity, lecture, video, etc.).
- What resources are available.
- How you will publicize and invite others to attend.
- What you will do to follow up after the program or event.

The Seven Steps of Planning model may be helpful to you as you plan your meeting. Developed by Jane Vella, founder of the Jubilee Popular Education Center (now Global Learning Center), this model focuses attention on the learner, not the teacher, through “dialogue education.” The Seven Steps of Planning model can be applied to a wide variety of planning projects, learning sessions and events.

- *Who* is coming, and what are their expectations? Who are the leaders and what are their expectations?
- *Why* is this needed? What is the situation or what are the needs that ask for this program or event? When will these sessions take place? (How much time?)
- *Where* will the event take place? What is the site like? How flexible is it?
- *What* for? What will those who come be able to do, know or understand when the event is over?
- *What* specific information do the members or attendees need at this time? What is the content?
- *How?* What activities should we plan will so that the attendees learn the specific information (the “what”) or achieve the objectives (the “what for”) that we planned?

Step 1: Goal Setting

Those tasked with program planning should consider the goals of the unit as a whole as they set their program goals. Use these goals to guide the group as they plan programs for the year. When setting program goals, remember the Purpose and ask questions like “Why are we doing this?” “What is this for?” “How will this improve our support for, action for, and participation in mission?”

Step 2: Calendaring

Those who are planning the programs for the year should meet with the leadership team to look at the “givens” in the organization’s calendar. Determine what are the regular, routine things that happen such as organizational and subgroup meetings, World Thank Offering, Call to Prayer and Self-Denial, pledge services, district and conference dates, and ecumenical and community events.

Special events such as spiritual growth retreats, mission trips and mission studies can be spaced throughout the year. Note that the Call to Prayer and Self-Denial observance can be done anytime in the first three months of the year. You will want to decide which date is best for you within that time frame.

Step Three: Program for the Year

Review the annual United Methodist Women Program Book. Develop a list of possible programs for the year. You may wish to select a theme for the entire year or use various United Methodist Women’s resources to select program topics. Assign a program topic and persons who will be facilitators for developing the program for each meeting or event. Make the programs relevant to the needs of the membership. Look for topics that will be interesting to the women in your organization and church. Develop programs that are exciting, fun and energizing. Good programs build membership, but poor programs can defeat good membership work and drive people away.

Consider which resources will enhance the program. Look at the resources available through unitedmethodistwomen.org and the United Methodist Women Mission Resources (umwmissionresources.org). Also consider **response** magazine, workshops and special training events as well as conference and district meetings as potential resources. You might want to survey the women to see what interests them, or what they need.

13 Steps to Sustainable Program Planning

Principle 1: Accessibility

Ask if your meeting venue complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and ask the facility manager to show you how during your site inspection. When surveying meeting space possibilities, make sure rooms are accessible to people with disabilities.

Principle 2: Affordability

Offer carpooling options for participants in order to provide no or low-cost transportation options for your event.

Principle 3: Carbon Footprint

Choose a meeting venue that minimizes travel and encourage carpooling and/or public transportation through your registration process.

Principle 4: Healthy Food and Beverages

Serve fair trade (and organic if possible) tea and coffee at your meeting.

Principle 5: Just Economic Opportunities

Ask vendors, hotels and others you contract with to sign a statement attesting that they do not engage in or benefit from the use of child or slave labor or human trafficking.

Principle 6: Local Solidarity

Use the local solidarity checklist to assess if there are opportunities to be in mission at your event.

Principle 7: Multigenerational Inclusion

Offer child care to participants, making sure that at least two unrelated adults are present at all times with the children.

Principle 8: Paper Use

Ensure any printed items are double-sided and duplicated on paper made with post-consumer recycled content.

Principle 9: Racial Justice

Include a statement in your contracts, speaker agreements, attendee code of conduct, and, if relevant, exhibitor terms and conditions that expresses your intention to host an event that combats all forms of racism and oppression.

Principle 10: Toxin Reduction

Be creative and wise about nametags. Invite participants to bring their own nametag (reusing one they already have). If you are supplying nametags, if possible reuse ones you already have. Be careful of the use of ribbons and other petroleum-based enhancements. If you need to buy more, choose a type that does not use PVC and eliminates unnecessary components like holders and pouches. Encourage attendees to turn in their name badge for reuse.

Principle 11: Waste Reduction

Choose a meeting venue that provides recycling for plastic, paper, glass and metal.

Principle 12: Water Use

Avoid or eliminate the use of individual bottled water. Encourage attendees to bring their own bottle for refilling and provide pitchers of water or bubblers and promote use of water fountains.

Principle 13: Well-being of Participants

Provide a quiet space for meditation and prayer at the event. This may be a physical space and/or formal times on the agenda that are set aside for this kind of activity.

From unitedmethodistwomen.org/sustainability.

PUBLICITY AND PROMOTION

Share what is happening with United Methodist Women to engage members, inform others and involve newcomers. Events, meetings and news all should be shared with the wider community. There are a wide variety of media to help you do this.

Among Members

Use the United Methodist Women's bulletin board, email, phone trees, newsletter, Sunday bulletin, website or social media to share information and events with United Methodist Women members. You may want to share items like the following:

- Invitations to events.
- Meeting announcements.
- Meeting minutes.
- Opportunities.
- The monthly calendar.
- Information such as Action Alerts, educational opportunities, social actions or other items.

At Church

Use the church bulletin board, newsletter, Sunday bulletin, announcement time during service, website or social media to share what is going on with United Methodist Women. You may want to share items like the following:

- Invitations to events.
- Meeting announcements.
- Opportunities.
- The monthly calendar for the local organization.
- General information about United Methodist Women, Action Alerts, educational opportunities, social actions or other items.

In the Community

To share the work of United Methodist Women with your neighborhood, town or community, you can use a website, social media like Facebook or Twitter, flyers, banners, contact with local press (especially community announcement boards) or displays at local events. You might want to share items like the following:

- Invitations to events.
- Opportunities.
- General information about United Methodist Women, Action Alerts, educational opportunities, social actions or other items.

News Releases

Before a United Methodist Women event, call local reporters or religion reporters personally and see if they would be interested in a story about your event. They may send a reporter or they may want you to send them a news release. In either case, it's a good opportunity to tell the story of mission to people outside your local organization and church. When writing a story or pitching it to a reporter, keep these things in mind:

- Who, what, when, where, why and how need to come at the beginning of the story or pitch.
- Tell why this is important to the community.
- Timeliness is everything. Old news is no news.
- News releases should be no longer than two double-spaced pages. Always include contact information for someone so the reporter can call for more information.
- Use an inverted pyramid style with the most important information at the beginning of the article.
- If the event invites or involves members of other United Methodist churches and United Methodist Women organizations, call your conference office and invite the conference communicator to write a story about the event.

The following information briefly covers three aspects of digital communication: email, social media and cell phone.

Email

- **Be clear and concise:** Make sure the subject line reflects the content, action requested and/or purpose of the message.
- **Respect people's time and bandwidth:** If your message is short and easy to download, people will be more likely to read it. Make sure to put in the main content of your message at the beginning.
- **Use appropriate language:** If you question whether your message is too emotional, don't send the message; save it and review it later. Remember that no one can guess your mood, see your facial expressions, etc., in email—all they have are your words.
- **Avoid ALL CAPS:** Writing in all capital letters is the online equivalent to shouting or screaming.
- **Make a good impression:** Your words and content represent you. Review and edit your message before sending it.
- **Obey copyright laws:** Don't use others' images, content, etc., without permission. Do not forward emails or use website content without permission.
- **Consider your audience:** Use distribution lists appropriately and with permission.
- **Do not send unsolicited material:** Do not post or email unsolicited information or opinions advertising messages, jokes and/or chain letters to individuals or as spam (electronic junk mail to a wide audience).
- **Attach thoughtfully:** Always double-check that the attachments are included and give the reader a brief description as well as the size of the file.
- **Respond with restraint:** Choose not to respond to “flames” or personal attacks.
- **Remember where you are:** Use personal and business/work email with permission.
- **Reply carefully:** Reference previous messages and set your default reply to “reply to sender” instead of “reply to all”—this is the cause of many messages being sent to unintended audiences.
- **Do your homework:** Many times it is easier to send an email and ask someone else for information, forgetting that they may have to do research to get it. Unless that other person is the only source of information, you should be able to research the information yourself.
- **Avoid prolonged exchanges:** If a topic cannot be resolved quickly through email, a phone conversation may be more effective.

Social Media

- **Consider the purpose of the forum:** The purpose of your use will determine what forum to use and how. (For example, a blog is where you might want to journal about an event, and Facebook is where you might want to announce and invite others to it.)
- **Remember everything you do is public:** Everything posted in a social media forum is public and accessible to all. Just because the post goes on a private page does not mean that it cannot

be accessed by others, at any time. Do not post personal information such as addresses, phone numbers and years of birth.

Cell Phone

- **Think about when to take and make a call:** Is it an emergency or a call that you have been expecting? Don't forget those around you or in your company—a simple “Excuse me but I have to take this call” or “Do you mind if I take this call?” goes a long way. Then find a private place to conduct your conversation. Keep your call brief or make arrangements to continue the call at a later time and return to your present company.
- **Think about where you are:** Carrying on phone conversations in a public place can be annoying, disruptive and dangerous. Texting can help: Sending a text message is a great way to let callers know when you are not available to take a call—some cell phones have the capability to send a preset text when a call is not answered.

ADD YOUR OWN NOTES HERE
