PLEDGE TO MISSION SERVICE 2017
A COMMUNITY UNITED BY GIVING

By Vickie Newkirk
Preparation

Prayerfully consider the community of women gathering together for this service; may this time be informative and inspiring.

MATERIALS

Gather the following items to use during the program:

- Basket.
- Battery-operated candle.
- Battery-operated tea lights, one per participant (optional).
- Cross.
- Mission maps from the February 2016 issue of *response*.
- Pledge to Mission cards (further information at www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/donate/resources).
- Small sticky notes.
- Tablecloth for the worship center.
- *The United Methodist Hymnal*.
- *United Methodist Women Bible*.
- World map attached to tri-fold poster board or globe.

PARTICIPANTS

*Before the meeting ask individual women to help with the following roles:*

- Welcome participants as they arrive and give them a tea light (optional).
- Lead songs.
- Read ministry program descriptions (four readers are needed).

ROOM SETUP

- Set up the worship center using the tablecloth, cross, open Bible, candle and basket.
- Set up the display table with the world map or globe.
Opening

Leader: Welcome! Today is a great day to be a part of United Methodist Women! This is the day the Lord has made!

ALL: We will rejoice and be glad in it!

Leader: As I light the Christ candle, let us be mindful of Christ’s presence in this place. “Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I will be also.”

PRAY

Creator God, we praise your name for the blessings of this day, for this community of women with whom we share our faith journey. Help us to be fully present now, clear our busy minds to hear your Word, feel your presence in our midst. We are here because of you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

SING

“Jesus, United By Thy Grace,” The United Methodist Hymnal, no. 561.

Bible Study and Reflection

READ MATTHEW 25:35–36

REFLECTION

Reflect on the following and then share with a neighbor.

Reflect on a time, a season in your life, when you have experienced the need for community. Perhaps a time in which you experienced hunger, thirst, emptiness.

Reflect on a season in your life when you have had the opportunity to be community for others.

READ JOHN 13:34–36

REFLECTION

United Methodist Women offers more than a meal, a visit, a prayer shawl. As followers and disciples of Jesus Christ, we offer and share our faith, our hope and our love of Christ. This is the why of all that we do to live into this scripture—to live into our Purpose.

We are reminded in Isaiah 43:1 that God is claiming us, redeeming us, calling us by name into this life of community.

Are there opportunities for us, personally and collectively, to be a community for others now?
Litany

Leader: United by God’s grace, this community of women,

ALL: Gathers together with faith, hope and love to know God, to 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.

Leader: United by God’s grace, this community of women,

ALL: Is led by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to feed the hungry, share a cup of clean water to those who thirst, clothe the naked, care for the sick, visit the prisoner.

Leader: United by God’s grace, this community of women,

ALL: Is able to undergird more ministries together than we could ever possibly do alone!

Leader: United by God’s grace, this community of women,

ALL: Provides support to more than 90 National Mission Institutions in the United States, more than 100 international mission programs in over 80 countries, 8 Regional Missionaries, and active and retired deaconesses and home missioners.

Mission Pledge

As each reader shares, she will place a small sticky note on the map or globe, marking where the ministry is located.

Reader 1: My Pledge to Mission supports Cookson Hills Center, Oklahoma, where God changes people! Darrell served 16 years in prison. Upon his release, unable to secure employment, he returned to selling drugs. Apprehended and in drug court, the judge called Cookson Hills for help with Darrell. “Working here [at Cookson] keeps me away from people who do drugs. I always knew God had a place for me. I just didn’t know where it was,” Darrell shared.1

Reader 2: My Pledge to Mission provides for the ministry of our eight Regional Missionaries: Andrea Riley Soares, Latin America; Catherine Akale, Africa; Emma Cantor, East Asia, Pacific; Hikari Chang, Japan; Grace Musuka, Central Africa; Finda Quiwa, Sub-Saharan Africa; Serna Samuel, Caribbean; Elmira Sellu, West Africa Central and East Africa Annual Conferences.
Reader 3: My Pledge to Mission encourages those working together at Wesley Community Center, Dayton, Ohio. Director Yvette Kelly-Fields shares, “Our intergenerational Work Experience Program unites seniors and young pregnant moms. Five days a week, our moms serve lunch, lead physical exercise programs and provide social interaction with our seniors, who mentor the young moms, providing wisdom, sharing insight and their life’s knowledge. The moms receive invaluable support! This is community: no hand-outs, only hands up!”

Reader 4: My Pledge to Mission helps Nome Community Center, Nome, Alaska. Danielle Slingsby, Director, shares, “In Alaska, community is in our culture. Youth fish with their Inupiat and Yupik elders to subsist, by bringing in the fish. The elders offer valuable insight on the best ways to have success. In this perfect harmony of giving and receiving, youth provide the elders nourishment; elders preserve the knowledge of tradition in the youth.”

Pass out issues of response and invite others to share article highlights, marking the location on the map. To find a relevant article, look for the Mission Giving interlocking circle symbol at the end of the article.

Other examples that could be included:

- Murphy-Harpst, Cedartown, Georgia: Building bonds, where United Methodist Women members in North Georgia support Murphy-Harpst children with their prayers, time, giving and hope.

- Education in the Philippines: With the help of a scholarship from United Methodist Women, Princess Zarla J. Raguindin can be a voice for the silenced in the Philippines.

- Deaconesses and home missioners, called by God, in their respective vocations, embrace a covenant community, rooted in scripture, to serve in ministries of love, justice and service throughout the United States.

NOTE: If response magazines are not easily accessible, show a video on Mission Giving: www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5A-R-qhwZA.

Leader: Together, our Pledge to Mission is helping to build hospitals, schools, libraries, play areas. By God’s grace, we prayerfully advocate for education, maternal and child health, disaster relief, basic and advanced skills training, opportunities for leadership development and spiritual growth, changes needed in public policy and reflection on whether we are just and green in our lifestyles. Every mission dollar has a story!
Personal Prayer (in silence)

I need you now, Precious Lord, to help me determine my Pledge to Mission giving. Help me remember in my daily living to “Live simply, so others in your world may simply live.” Amen.

Allow for personal time to complete Pledge to Mission and to place it in the offering basket.

ALL: Creator God, you have called us into community with you, with our sisters in United Methodist Women, and with our global neighbors. Accept and bless our pledges we offer now in your name; as they reach those in need, so may they grow. Amen.

Sending Forth

All gather in a circle around the Christ candle.

Optional: If you decide to use tea lights, invite participants to light their candles to symbolize their own lights uniting with the Christ light and the community.

Leader: I invite you to take a step closer to the Christ candle. As we step in, we draw closer to Christ, and closer to one another! This is community!

United by God’s grace, this community of women, United Methodist Women, has for nearly 150 years remained faithfully committed to fulfilling the mission work of Jesus Christ!

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Vickie Newkirk served on the United Methodist Women Board of Directors from 2012–2016. She is also a director of Lucille Raines Residence in Indianapolis, Indiana.

GOOD TO KNOW:
In 2015, United Methodist Women members raised $13 million for mission with women, children and youth around the world.
Photo credit: United Methodist Women


2 Yvette Kelly-Fields, Wesley Community Center, Dayton, e-mail to author, January 15, 2016.

3 Danielle Slingsby, Nome Community Center, Alaska, e-mail to author, January 12, 2016.
