

# Pledge Service: Finding, Giving and Living Peace

by Inelda González and Ilda Vásquez

**U**nited Methodist Women's Pledge Service explains the connection between giving and mission and provides a space for women to pledge their gifts for the upcoming year.

**Focus Scripture:**

James 3:17-18

**Focus Image:**

Worship center table with cloths of the five colors of Mission Giving (red, orange, yellow, blue and green); a cross; two candles; a Bible opened to the Focus Scripture; the *Prayer Calendar*; a *Response* magazine and a *New World Outlook* magazine; a basket for pledges. On the walls or tables place photos that depict finding peace, giving peace and living peace.

**Prayer for Program Planner(s):**

Creator God, be with us as we find peace, give peace and live peace. Give us the gifts of peace in order to make our world more peaceful. Amen.

**Preparation:**

- Assemble the items needed for the Focus Image.
- Recruit the women needed to take part in the program.
- Pass out United Methodist Women's Member-

ship Joys resource that includes the pledge card. (Available in English, Spanish and Korean from the Mission Resource Center/free for shipping and handling. See page 81 for ordering information.)

- Write Prayer and Litany on newsprint large enough for everyone to see or copy these parts for everyone.

**Set-Up:**

- Arrange room with chairs for participants.
- Set-up the Focus Image with the items mentioned.
- Place the pictures on the walls and/or tables that depict finding peace, giving peace and living peace.

**Program:**

**Leader:** Read James 3:17-18

**Hymn:** "For the Healing of the Nations," No. 428, *The United Methodist Hymnal*

**Leader:** Our program today is for finding peace, giving peace and living peace through United Methodist Women's Mission Giving. As members of United Methodist Women, we give our time, talents and prayers because we're followers of

Jesus Christ, and are responding to the mandate given to us through scripture.

### Prayer

**All: O Lord, open my eyes that I may see the needs of others; open my ears that I may hear their cries; open my heart so that they need not be without succor; let me not be afraid to defend the weak because of the anger of the strong, nor afraid to defend the poor because of the anger of the rich. Show me where love and hope and faith are needed, and use me to bring them to those places. And so open my eyes and my ears that I may this coming day be able to do some work of peace for thee. Amen.**

**Reader 1:** Like the women who followed Jesus and the early congregation in Macedonia, United Methodist Women members have responded to the needs of women, children and youth. Because we live in a world filled with violence and war, how do Christian women find, give and live peace?

**Reader 2:** Women in the Philippines continue their struggle for peace, equality and the advancement of women. Issues of justice and human rights are of particular concern to women there. Female workers work in factories 12 hours a day. They are underpaid and have no benefits. Isolated from families, communities, friends and husbands, these women live and sleep 10 to a room. But in a situation that could be hopeless, there is hope. A coalition of national women's organizations based in the Philippines has a large and increasing membership, and has become the voice of female workers, urban poor, professionals and others in the struggle for women's development and equality. And they find peace.

**Reader 3:** Born on Aug. 11, 1897, and consecrated as a deaconess March 14, 1927, Dolores Diaz was born in Rio Grande, Texas. She served at various national mission institutions: Homer Toberman Mission in Los Angeles, Calif.; Valley Institute in Pharr, Texas; Wesley House in Key West, Fla; and

Whosoever Community House in San Antonio, Texas. And she gives peace.

**Reader 4:** Phoebe A. Reynolds, a deaconess commissioned Nov. 10, 1963, was born Sept. 7, 1934 in New York City. While serving as a US-2 young adult missionary and teaching at Sager Brown School in Baldwin, La., she received the call to become a deaconess. She was even a little missionary as a child when she "corralled" other children in the community to go to Sunday school. Phoebe served as director of community activities at St. Matthew United Methodist Church in Chicago, Ill. She also served as program consultant at the Ecumenical Institute in Chicago, Boston, Mass., and Washington, D.C. While there, she led intergenerational activities and spoke to various groups, witnessing to God's power and love. And she lives peace.

### Litany for Those in Iraq

**Leader:** A girl dies not of illness but from lack of medication.

**All: Help us to see her as our sister, God.**

**Leader:** A youth shakes his fist at us and shouts, "Killers!"

**All: Help us to see him as our brother, God.**

**Leader:** A hungry family splits a chunk of bread five ways, savoring each morsel.

**All: Help us to see them as our kin, God.**

**Leader:** An old woman grieves for the Iraq of her childhood. Once proud and prosperous, her country now waits.

**All: Help us to see her as a wise one, God.**

**Leader:** Show us ways to support those who seek peace and those who do not.

**All: Melt our animosity and our fears so that we might embrace the world with your strong and loving Spirit. Be with us as we pursue life. Amen.**

**Hymn:** "Let There Be Peace on Earth," No. 431, *The United Methodist Hymnal*

### Activity: Peace Identification

**Leader:** Go to the tables and/or walls to choose two or three pictures that show a different

“peace” in each. When finished, take the pictures to your seat. Once everyone is back at their seat, each person will share what “peace” is depicted in your pictures.

**Reader 1:** United Methodist Women’s Mission Giving starts small with individual pledges, unit fundraisers and giving through other United Methodist Women channels. But, like the mustard seed and bit of yeast, it grows and provides for many, letting them know that whatever the situation, God is still with us.

**Reader 2:** United Methodist Women’s Mission Giving is truly a different mode of being able to travel to places where otherwise we could never go. We can attend to the needs in Africa, minister to those in India and bring God’s love and peace to those at war. Mission Giving can carry us to communities in our nation and around the world to speak where our voices cannot be heard and to teach and preach where we may never go. Our giving reveals the depth of our consecration.

### **TAKE ACTION:**

Reach out to a United Methodist Women Mission Giving-supported national mission institution and volunteer to work with them and bring peace to those in need. Find a complete list of national mission institutions at [www.umwmision.org](http://www.umwmision.org) or in the back of the *Prayer Calendar*.

### **Litany:**

**Leader:** If we fail to hear the cry for justice from the oppressed, we are deaf.

**All:** If we withhold our resources from reaching out to the hungry and the starving, we are heartless.

**Leader:** If we fail to see the uprooted masses of refugees, the migrant, the homeless, we are blind.

**All:** If we fail to speak out on behalf of the voiceless, powerless and penniless, we are mute.

**Leader:** If we fail to stand up for truth, peace and

reconciliation, we are infirm.

**All:** Although we claim ourselves to be wholesome, we ought to cry out, “O Son of God, have mercy on us.”

### **MISSION FOCUS:**

United Methodist Women-supported national mission institutions are located around the country and provide life-sustaining programs to women, children, youth and the marginalized. They include schools, colleges, shelters, community centers, women’s residences, child care centers and residential child care and support services. An example is Good Neighbor Settlement House in Brownsville, Texas, which provides a variety of services to migrants and other impoverished neighbors. A feeding program serves dozens of hungry and homeless people every day at the center. A complete list of national mission institutions is printed in the back of the *Prayer Calendar* and at [www.umwmision.org](http://www.umwmision.org).

### **Pledge:**

**All:** “As a member of United Methodist Women, I celebrate and commit to supporting United Methodist Women’s local, national and global mission outreach.”

(Softly play “Help Us Accept Each Other,” No. 560 of *The United Methodist Hymnal* as the leader speaks and participants place their pledge card in the basket.)

**Leader:** As you are ready, come forward and place your pledge card in the basket at the worship center. As you make your commitment to God’s mission, think of the ways you and your unit will promote and advocate for peace in its many forms.

**Hymn:** “Help Us Accept Each Other,” No. 560, Verses 2 and 4, *The United Methodist Hymnal*  
**Closing Prayer**

**All: Creator God, bless these gifts and givers as we commit to carry out your mission for peace throughout the world. May we always remember how to find peace, give peace and live peace in our daily lives. Amen.**

**Action Ideas:**

- Identify populations in your community who are seeking peace. Find ways to partner with them and build relationships with them through a food drive, mentoring an individual/family or participating in a prison fellowship.
- Reach out to a United Methodist Women Mission Giving-supported national mission institution and volunteer to work with them and bring peace to those in need. Find a complete list of national mission institutions at [www.umwmision.org](http://www.umwmision.org) or in the back of the *Prayer Calendar*.

**Resources**

- The September 2009 issue of *Response* magazine contains maps of Mission Giving-supported projects and stories of United Methodists in the United States and around the world who need peace. To subscribe, call 877-881-2385. Back issues are available for purchase from the Mission Resource Center. See page 81 for ordering information.
- *Concepts of Mission* (In English: 2820-2005-01/\$7.50, in Spanish: (2992-1999-01)/\$1). Available from the Mission Resource Center. See page 81 for ordering information.