



MARY AND MARTHA MAIL CIRCLE UMW

Christ United Methodist Church - Mobile, Alabama

JULY 2014



General Conference 2016 will take place May 10-20, 2016, at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland. Women who want to participate in this policy making body should begin making plans now.

Assembly Workshop: Fresh Approaches to Reading the Bible

Glory E. Dharmaraj, Interfaith Mission Institute of the Asian American Federation

This workshop explored fresh approaches to reading the Bible and facilitating Bible studies. Learning and using the key components that constitute a contextual Bible study, participants will engage in ways of reading the Bible as a means of grace and a tool for transformative spirituality.

What Is the Issue?

When there are contradictory interpretations of a particular story in the Bible, do we tend to read it in terms of a mere "either-or" approach, or is there a third possibility you would like to explore?

Process

In this workshop, we stretched our understanding by exploring:

- * The key themes of the story
- * Issue at the heart of the story
- * Cultural contexts or social locations of the characters in the story
- * Pains of the present and past, if any, you sense in the characters of the story
- * Raising awareness of the issue at the heart of the community or communities involved in the story
- * The voice of God in the story
- * Persons responding to God's voice

Using a nesting doll as a tool, in this workshop we also explored:

- * The relevance of the realities of the story in today's contexts for the readers
- * Social locations of the readers of the story today
- * Listening to the voice of God of shalom
- * Naming the challenges
- * Finding ways together to address challenges
- * Exploring ways to receive gifts from the margins and give gifts in this process

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General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church which meets once every four years. The conference can revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs.

It is our responsibility to see that United Methodist Women are elected as lay delegates. Alabama-West Florida Conference is allowed five (5) clergy and five (5) lay delegates to General Conference. An additional five (5) clergy and five (5) lay delegates will be chosen to complete the Jurisdictional Conference delegation. Four (4) alternate clergy delegates and four (4) alternate lay delegates to the Jurisdictional Conference will also be elected.

United Methodists who wish to serve the larger church in this way may be nominated at their district meeting, which will be held prior to February 15, 2015. Each district will select no more than five (5) lay nominees. These nominees will be asked to provide to their district office a photograph and a profile sheet. A lay delegate, without regard to age, shall have been (1) a professing member of the UMC for at least the last two years and (2) an active participant in the UMC for at least the past four years, and shall be (3) a professing, active member of a church within the bounds of the Alabama-West Florida Conference.

Dawn Wiggins Hare and Maggie Jackson led a workshop at Assembly 2014. The one-and-a-half hour workshop detailed the importance of women at General Conference. The workshop attendees learned about the process for getting elected and how delegates set policy for the general church. It urged attendees to prayerfully consider running as a delegate or supporting other women for this leadership role. This opportunity is open to members of United Methodist Women who are also members of a local United Methodist Church.

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General Conference is a global and multilingual event at which almost 40% of the delegates participate primarily through translators. General Conference theme 2016 will be

Therefore, Go,

which comes from the commission in Matthew 28:19-20 and our denominational mission to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."

Selections From the Prayer Calendar
+ *Mary and Martha Birthdays*

- JUL 1 A. Kay Clifton (D)
 JUL 2 Susan Brunk (HM)
 JUL 3 Virginia Baker (D)
 JUL 4 Randy Joe Hildebrant
 JUL 5 Yuko Boyle (M)
 JUL 6 David L. Wildman (S)
 Glenda Contos
 JUL 7 Ann Farris (D)
 JUL 8 James J. Rollins (S)
 JUL 9 Sarah Capers (D)
 JUL 10 South Korea: Sunlit Sisters Center
 JUL 11 Becky Warnock (D)
 JUL 12 Shirley Manning Knepp (D)
 JUL 13 Pamela Domer (D)
 JUL 14 Sun Lae Kim (M)
 JUL 15 Cynthia Celballos (M)
 Kelli Dye
 JUL 16 Nancy C. Garrison (D)
 JUL 17 Deirdre Zimmerman
 JUL 18 Laura Curry (D)
 JUL 19 Ji-Eun "Esther" Kim (M)
 JUL 20 Helen McChill (D)
 JUL 21 Jennifer Boydston (D)
 JUL 22 Andrew Donaldson (M)
 Patsy Adams
 JUL 23 Lithuania: Pagalbos Centras
 JUL 24 Colleen Caldwell (D)
 JUL 25 Ellen Dizon (D)
 JUL 26 West Side Community House,
 Cleveland OH
 JUL 27 Charissa Bredwow-Shawcross (CCW/
 D)
 JUL 28 Gladis Lobato (D)
 JUL 29 Poland in Mission Together
 JUL 30 Nicaragua: Accion Medica Cristina
 Renea Burns
 JUL 31 Beverly Barte (M)

Response Moments
* *selected by Vera Moore*

Connect to Our Future!

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. Romans 15:7

by Yvette Richards - President - United Methodist Women

United Methodist Women, when we stand side by side we are stronger. We are God's vessels to make this world a better place. What better way than through mentoring the next generation?

My mentee is Elizabeth "Pooh" Mack. At our Missouri Conference United Methodist Women annual meeting the two of us were asked to lead a workshop together on mentoring. Working with Elizabeth, I heard her thoughts and learned about her experiences and what excites her about being part of United Methodist Women. I witnessed her leadership ability firsthand when I left her to conduct the workshop herself so I could attend to a problem! The name of our workshop was "Encouraging the Love of United Methodist Women in Young Women." In the workshop we presented the "I WILL" challenge: Invite, Welcome, Include, Lead, Love.

Are you willing to open your heart, mind and soul and make a difference in the life of another? Take the I WILL challenge and discover what it means to be a mentor and gain new skills and tools to effectively work with others.

Before working with a new group or individual, it's important to understand what you want to accomplish. Don't set boundaries, and avoid prejudice. Be willing to see through new eyes. Remember that it's everyone's goal to be in mission for women, children and youth around the world.

The Bible says, "And let us be concerned about one another in order to promote love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24, HCSB). Here are a few suggestions for bringing United Methodist Women to life for new or potential members:

- * Send a response subscription as a gift or in a care package.
- * Help provide a scholarship to attend Mission U or Leadership Development Days.
- * Invite and bring them to a United Methodist Women event or program.
- * Contact your local campus ministry and meet with them. Maybe start a young women's circle.
- * Support your conference's Limitless team for young women.
- * Invite the younger members to plan and execute a program or event.
- * Contact your local veterans association and see if you can collaborate on service and advocacy together.
- * Be flexible on the dates, times and location of your meetings!

Invitation to be shared: United Methodist Women is an important organization for the world today. Join us, and I can guarantee you your life will never be the same.

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It might appear being a delegate would be fun. There is joy in serving but it also requires 10 days of dedicated work from early in the morning until late into the night. This is the time spent in Portland. Prior to that you will read, study, and discern the pros and cons of quantities of petitions and how these, if adopted, will affect the church and its mission.

Those wishing to be considered as a delegate to General Conference should let their pastor know of this desire. If it is too late to begin making preparation for 2016 then begin now to make preparation for 2020. Delegates from Alabama-West Florida Conference will be elected from those well known throughout the conference. United Methodist Women gives name recognition to their members. These are women who are active not only in UMW but also active the local church.

Not able to go to Portland in 2016? You may participate by submitting petitions. Detailed instructions for Petitions to the 2016 General Conference, The United Methodist Church are provided in the Assembly Workshop Take-Away, [Instructions for Petitions to the 2016 General Conference](#). This document gives detailed guidance as to how you may submit petitions digitally by e-mail, CD, USB drive, or through the General Conference website.

A tour of Petitions to General Conference 2012 will enable you to see the subject, nature and outcome of petitions that year. At <http://calms2012.umc.org/Menu.aspx> enter the one keyword, *women*, to see a listing of all petitions containing that reference. Notice several of these refer to United Methodist Women with the notation "Plenary Adopted." This is indication the documents were well prepared and easily accepted by the body. Notice also petitions succeed or fail in committee. Clarity of the document assists the committee to establish a clear understanding of the petition. After selecting your concern, compare it to what is currently in The Book of Discipline, discuss it with friends, and educators and then write the document. It may be that it may be something other members of the Mary and Martha Mail Circle or the group as a whole would like to support. Share it with us.

A number of United Methodist Women petitions 2012 were the documents which led to the organization becoming autonomous by a vote of vote of 889 to 20. That is, no longer Women's Division of General Board of Global Ministries but its own organization, **United Methodist Women**.

Whatever your choice as to how you will participate in General Conference 2016, put it at the top of your prayer list beginning now. There are deep, hard, heavy

and hurtful things to be discussed again in 2016 as in previous General Conferences.

About the Leaders of the Assembly Workshop: Taking Leadership at General Conference

Dawn Wiggins Hare is the general secretary of the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women (COSROW). She is a graduate of the University of Alabama School of Law and is a licensed attorney in the states of Alabama and Florida. Prior to being elected general secretary, she served as circuit judge for the 35th Judicial Circuit in Alabama. She served as delegate General Conference in 2008 and in 2012. She has held numerous leadership positions at Monroeville United Methodist Church, Baypines District, Alabama-West Florida Conference, the Southeastern Jurisdictional Conference and the general church.

Maggie Jackson is a former director of United Methodist Women from the East Ohio Conference. She served as director of the department of social work at Cleveland State University for 18 years and is the former vice president for Christian Social Action for United Methodist Women's national policymaking body.



The above is a photo from "my" (Vera Moore) General Conference 1992 held in Louisville, Kentucky. What a privilege to experience the workings of the body! It was not easy - I can still remember my head spinning from all the heartfelt petitions presented to us. The committee work, mine was (Local Church) met hours and hours listening to the pros and cons of the petitions assigned to us. Excellent speakers, members of the committee, gave insight to the issues contained within the petitions but it was my responsibility to prayerfully vote from my experience in the local church and knowledge of The Book of Discipline. I am ever grateful for the experience. Thanks be to God!

This publication is the monthly virtual meeting of the Mary & Martha Mail Circle, United Methodist Women at Christ United Methodist Church, Mobile, Alabama. Our Circle is just like each of the other Circles of Christ UMW with the exception that we do not have monthly meetings other than by this "virtual" program, devotion, prayer calendar/concerns, and Response moments. We make annual pledges to mission and participate in the projects of CUMW in all ways possible. We attend General Meetings as we are able. We constantly keep each other and each woman of UMW in our prayers.

Questions? Contact: Circle Coordinator, Vera Moore - 888-248-1680 or email - vmoores4474@gmail.com

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- * And engaging in God's mission as United Methodist Women (church in the world)

Mission Spirituality

As United Methodist Women members, our DNA is programmed for mission spirituality.

Our core mission is ministry with women, children and youth. This is what we do. How we do it involves spiritual undergirding. It includes exploring ways of reading the Bible through the lens of women and the least of these, and resisting forces that deny fullness of life promised by Jesus the Christ to everyone (John 10:10).

There are intersections of gender, culture, race, language, ethnicity, class, disability and more that we need to take into consideration while reading the biblical stories individually and collectively. To realize fullness of life, it is vital to include various voices at the table while reading the Bible. If any voices are left out, may we expand the table of hospitality to include the voices of the least of these?

"Mission spirituality is always transformative."

Transformative spirituality is "energy for life in its fullness, and calls for a commitment to resist all forces, powers and systems which deny, destroy and reduce life." (From Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes, Ed. J. Joseop Keum.) Mission spirituality is all about fullness of life.

About the Workshop Leader: Fresh Approaches to Reading the Bible

Glory E. Dharmaraj is executive director for the Interfaith Mission Institute for the Asian American Federation. She is retired director of spiritual formation and mission theology for United Methodist Women and author and co-author of several books including *Concepts of Mission*, *Mutuality in Mission*, and, most recently, *A Theology of Mutuality*. Dharmaraj has led workshops, mission studies and retreats at various levels for many years.

Litany on Receiving Gifts From Each Other as used in the Workshop

God's people, what gifts do you bring to the workshop?

Right: We bring the gift of deep listening.

Left: The gift of receiving insights from the experiences of the adult learners.

People of faith, what gifts do you bring?

Right: Willingness to make room for learning and waiting.

Left: Creating space for praying and studying for transformation to occur.

Called people of God, what gifts do you bring?

Right: The commitment to naming the forces and systems that deny shalom.

Left: The commitment to naming the God of shalom.

Children of God's promise, what gifts do you bring together?

Right: Hearts and hands ready for sowing seeds of transformation.

Left: Hearts and hands ready for tending and cultivating the seeds of transformation.

Pilgrim people, what gifts do you bring?

Right: Our own selves in response to the gospel of love in Jesus Christ.

Left: Our own selves, with the faithful people of all ages, tongues, races and abilities, in becoming a new community of witness to Christ's kin-dom.

Thanks



Your kindness brighten my day.

Your help with our flood relief and recovery was very much appreciated. I cannot thank you all enough for what you did for us. We still have a ways to go but we will make it.

Love,
Myra Martin

Service Projects 2014

Your involvement with service projects will be published here as you report them to us

- Gift to Mission in memory of Elizabeth Olson.
- Gift to Open Door Ministries - display cases
- Gift to Crossroads - meals at McKemie Place
- Gift to member - flood victim
- Gift to member's friend - hardship, illness.

and shared with CUMW treasurer, combined with others from CUMC and throughout the organization.