



MARY AND MARTHA MAIL CIRCLE UMW

Christ United Methodist Church - Mobile, Alabama

MAY 2015

Member Involvement

Circle Coordinator
Vera Moore

Birthday Cards to MMM Circle
Patsy Adams

Birthday Cards to Missionaries
Melissa Motes

Weekly Prayer Focus
Norma Spiller

Children's Sabbath Planning
Notalsia Whiting

Get Well Cards MMM Circle
Glenda Contos

UMCOR Health Kits
Glenda Contos

Bake Sale Workers
Dawn Seese
Glenda Contos

Bake Sale Bakers
Dawn Seese
Glenda Contos
Melissa Motes
Angel Dahlgren

Bake Sale Posters
Kerry Cohen

Safe Haven Workers
Glenda Contos

Soup Sale Workers
Glenda Contos

Soup Makers for Soup Sale
Glenda Contos

*Please let us know if some
have volunteered and not
been listed.*

A Day for All Who Mother

by Julie Taylor with Tara Barnes

Growing up I remember thinking of Mother's Day as a time to make something special for my mother. It was a pleasant day for being with and celebrating my own mother. I later expanded my understanding to include my grandmothers and aunts. After I moved away from home, I marked the day with long distance phone calls and other ways to honor the occasion. Commercials on television touted their wares for "remembering moms on Mother's Day." Many of those pulled (and still pull) at the heartstrings and sought to create an obligatory need to purchase items.

As a young adult, something about this holiday changed for me. Perhaps it was because I was making my way in this world as a single woman. Perhaps it was because I was working to be recognized as a legitimate adult despite not being married. Perhaps it was because the nuclear family I grew up with was far away, and no one in my community saw me in relation to them. I grew keenly aware of my singleness and my childlessness. I accepted, even celebrated, who I was, called by God to do the work I was doing. But casual comments by others created some conflicting feelings.

I arrived at my church one Mother's Day when I was in my 30s and was greeted at the door by a smiling older woman with a carnation on her lapel.

"Happy Mother's Day!" she said. Then, "Oh, I'm sorry. That doesn't apply to you."

I was stunned.

"But I have a mother," I replied. She just smiled and pushed me into the sanctuary for seating.

I sat mulling over her response feeling inadequate and disturbed. I thought this holiday was for celebrating your mother, not about being a mother. Her statement bothered me for weeks, as she targeted me not for who I was but for who she apparently thought I was not.

The next year, I hesitated about going to church on Mother's Day but then decided the previous year's comment was an isolated incident. As I entered the church foyer I approached a different woman with a carnation on her lapel and smiling at the door. She extended her hand to welcome me.

"Happy Mother's Day!" she said. Then, "Oh, I'm sorry. That doesn't apply to you."

Not again!

I did not mumble this year but stated evenly, "I still have a mother" before releasing her hand and walking into the sanctuary. I don't remember anything about the service, just how I felt—in pain.

I did not attend church on Mother's Day after that until 10 or more years later. And to this day I still hesitate.

I wouldn't say these women's comments caused irreparable damage. I attribute it to ignorance and insensitivity and speak to it when I can. Not everyone can "get over it," though. For women who have lost children, for women with fertility issues, for women who have chosen not to have children and so many more categories, these kinds of statements have done real damage.

Mothers are to be honored. But women's worth should not be measured by whether or not they have children. Be aware of the weight of such statements as "God favored" someone with a child. Does this mean a woman unable to have children is proof of God's disfavor? In John 9, the disciples ask Jesus whose sin caused a man's blindness—the man's sin or his parents' sin? Jesus replies, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him" (John 9:3).

My mother wanted so much to be a mother, and it brought her great joy. I treasure

United Methodist Women

shall be a community of women whose **PURPOSE** is to know God and 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.

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

- May 1 Shirley Townsend-Jones (CCW)
 May 2 Kathy Kuhn (D)
 May 3 Killingsworth, Columbia, SC
 May 4 Costa Rica: Women's Economic Development
 May 5 Lokamba Kahudi (MI)
 May 6 France: Project Vie (Project Life)
 May 7 Janjay Innis (US-2)
 Kim Pratt
 May 8 Carla Warnock (M)
 May 9 Cheryl Robinson (D)
 May 10 Sherlette Lee (D)
 May 11 Ellen Hoover (M)
 May 12 USA: Washington Office on Latin America
 May 13 USA: The Center for Victims of Torture
 May 14 Kristen Brown (M)
 May 15 Children's Fund for Christian Mission
May 16 Hikari Chang (RM)
 May 17 McCurdy School, Espanola, NM
 May 18 Nora Marker (D)
 May 19 USA: Urgent Action Fund
 May 20 Nandona Chikomb (M)
 May 21 Mark Abbott (M)
 May 22 Jeanne Roe Smith (D)
 May 23 Moore Community House, Biloxi, MS
 May 24 Robin Minick (D)
 May 25 United States: Hesperian Foundation
 May 26 Lourdes Magalhaes (NPHLM)
 May 27 Joanne Finley (D)
 May 28 Donna Pewo (CCW)
 May 29 Honduras Mission Initiative
May 30* Navajo Center, Farmington, NM
 May 31 Neighborhood Center, Camden, NJ

***Saturday, May 30, 2015**

- 9:00 General Meeting - Hospitality Room
 9:30 UMCOR Workday - Health Kits (See page 4)
 Brunch ~ Bring a brunch item to share
 Bring your own cup (green day)
 Hostess - Lydia Circle
 Prayer Calendar - Esther Circle
 Response - Crossroads Circle
Community Building - Mail Circle

Response Moments

Responsively Yours by Harriett Jane Olson

Joining United Methodist Women gives us the chance to be actively involved in something larger than ourselves. From the very beginning, founders and leaders of the foreign and home missionary associations that laid the groundwork for our organization yearned to be involved in something "useful." They did not neglect faith development, family responsibilities or their involvement in their local congregations; however, they found in the women's mission work a chance to learn about the situations of women in their own cities and towns and around the world and then to be open to God's leading to live out their discipleship in witness, service and advocacy.

I hear similar things as I travel around from place to place and talk to United Methodist Women members about what excites them, what they want to do more of and how they see our organization's role in our denomination and in the world. "I want to make a difference," someone will say. Or "I want to be involved in something bigger than myself and in causes beyond institutional survival."

I've been thinking about these aspirations as I read about the hopes and dreams of today's younger women. One of the things that we all have in common is we want to make a difference.

I've also been thinking about this as we prepare for the 2015 spiritual growth study [Created for Happiness: Understanding Your Life in God](#). Like me, you probably see "top 10" lists of things promised to bring happiness or wholeness or balance to your life. I don't treat these lists as gospel, but I think they are interesting for what they tell us about the yearnings of our era. These lists attract readers because many of us are not as happy or whole or balanced as we would like to be. It's interesting to me that these lists so often encourage readers to develop the spiritual aspects of their lives, to value relationships, to notice and learn about the world and its wonders and its needs and to be engaged in matters bigger than themselves.

Of course, it's possible to get caught up in the planning of aspects of our work that seem very mundane. Have we circulated the information that the team will need to review to make a good decision? Can everyone find a way to get to the meeting? Have we tied the theme to the displays and the activities so that we make the connections? Have we cared for people who need a special diet? But how powerful it is when it all comes together.

In the grand scheme of things, we care about all of the seemingly small things because we're engaged in something larger than ourselves. Because we see the needs of the world and the abundance of God and we feel the call to get involved and to make a difference. Happy indeed are we, who can respond to God's call, engage in our own process of transformation, connect with our sisters and make a difference in the world.

Thanks be to God.

Missionary of the Month**Hikari Chang****Happy Birthday May 16!**

The Rev. Hikari Kokai Chang is a United Methodist Women's Regional Missionary serving as administrative and program director of the Wesley Foundation in Tokyo, Japan. Regional missionaries are placed and supported by United Methodist Women.



The Wesley Foundation is an independent organization engaged in activities of public benefit in Japan. It has strong ties to United Methodist Women and the General Board of Global Ministries. Rev. Chang was appointed in 2012 to lead the foundation toward official recognition as a public benefit entity under Japanese law. The foundation has a building with facilities for promoting educational and social activities in partnership with churches and other nongovernmental organizations.

Hikari Kokai Chang was born in Japan and retains Japanese citizenship, although she is a member of the New York Annual Conference. She has served pastorates in Wakefield, Massachusetts, and Armonk and Oceanside, New York. She holds both Bachelor of Divinity and Master of Divinity degrees from the Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, and a Master of Sacred Theology degree from the Boston University School of Theology. At Boston, she specialized in pastoral care and counseling.

Born into the family of a pastor of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan), she was deeply nourished in faith by her parents and members of the congregations her father served. Interested in relations between religion and culture in Japan, she enrolled in the Tokyo Union Seminary and in the course of her study felt called to the ordained clergy. She was commissioned as a Kyodan local pastor.

Feeling the need for more training, she enrolled in Boston University in 1986, there meeting the man she would marry, the Rev. Hak-Soon Chang, a native of South Korea. She became an elder in the New England Annual Conference in 2003 and later transferred to New York. Local church ministry, she says, made her increasingly appreciative of the diversity of cultures as God's rich blessing.

She understands mission as "sharing God's love in the world" and believes each Christian is called to mission. "Throughout my life," Hikari says, "I have experienced God's unmistakable presence and amazing works in many different cultures. So I embrace these experiences and stories as a gift from God as I serve in mission."

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her. Mothers play an important role in church, society and families. But not all women who mother have children, yet their mothering helps others just as much. Some single women (and men) without children have been surrogate mothers to young people in ways that helped transform them into mature adults. There are men who have had to be both mother and father in the family. There are women who have sought adoption and been mothers in a way that a biological mother could not. And not all women who do have children are mothers, or at least aren't good ones.

Mother's Day, then, for me, is more about celebrating all -mothering instincts. It is about remembering my own mother and enjoying her gifts to me even as I miss her presence in my life. It is about thinking of my grandmothers and aunts and other women in my life who helped me along the way. As a single young woman far from my own mother, I had a number of surrogates—and I still do although I am no longer a young woman. I call these women sisters now, but I am grateful for their "mothering." I remember that Mother's Day is about the other women who care for children and youth and marginalized and elderly persons with generosity and joy and compassion. That is what Mother's Day is about.

This Mother's Day, pause for gratitude at what you have received. Let it remind you of those who mothered you. May it be a day you commit to be more compassionate and ferocious in your love for others.

Mother's Day is really not about having children or about the consumeristic celebration that media bombard us with but about something deeper and wider and stronger. It is about the grace of nursing soldiers on both sides of war because they are hurt and need care, as Ann Reeves Jarvis, mother of Mother's Day founder Anna Jarvis, did during the U.S. Civil War. It is about imploring society not to take the call to war quietly because it will mean death and destruction for some people's (and thus all our) children. It is about seeking the attributes of motherhood, like the gift of love described in 1 Corinthians 13. It is about seeking a society in which everyone is nurtured in a compassionate and thoughtful way so that they experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ no matter who they are. It is about being who you are for whatever reasons you have and allowing everyone else to do the same. That is what I remember about my mother—unconditional love, unstoppable love, faithful and ferocious love. I will celebrate that on Mother's Day. Join me.

Julie Taylor is United Methodist Women executive for spiritual growth.

Tara Barnes is editor [Response](#) magazine.

Time Out

Time is precious, fleeting by as we go through every day.
Time is what we know won't change, God planned it just that way.
Take one day at a time we hear so many people say.
Be sure each day to take time out to listen to God and pray.

*Poem by: Norma Spiller
4/13/2015*

Supplies needed for health kits:

NEW HAND TOWELS

15"x25" to 17"x27"

No kitchen, cleaning or microfiber towels, please.

NEW WASHCLOTHS

Do not wash hand towels or washcloths.

COMBS

Sturdy, at least 6 inches long. No pocket combs or picks.

NAIL FILE OR CLIPPERS

No emery boards or toenail clippers.

BAR SOAP

3 oz. or larger only.

No Jergen's or Ivory brand soap, please.

Do not remove packaging.

TOOTHBRUSHES

Adult size only. Do not remove packaging.

ADHESIVE BANDAGES

6 per kit; ¾" to 1"-size Common household band-aids.

Money toward the UMCOR Kits is always appreciated as well as the above items.

Service Projects 2015

Your involvement with service projects will be published here as you report them to us and shared with CUMW treasurer, combined with others from CUMC and throughout the organization.

- Mobile Inner City Mission - purchased Boston Butt
- Walk MS - Kim Johnson walked for her mother.
- Cakes for Celebrate Recovery monthly
- Food for grieving families
- Ronald McDonald House
- Hopeful project bags
- Organ Fund

Please let us know when you are involved in any service or community project.

Remembering Mother

A gift to mission honoring mother is a nice addition to the token gift presented to a living mother or tribute to mothers held in our memory.

[Legacy Fund](#)

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is one choice.

or

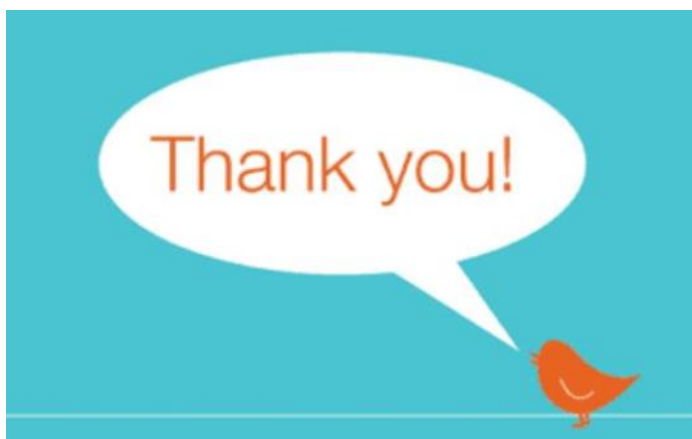
[Maternal and Child Health](#)

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Phyllis Allen, CUMW Treasurer will help you make your gift.

Sincere thanks to those Mail Circle members who made contributions to [150 Legacy Fund](#) in my honor. I am truly honored and appreciative of your gifts.

Vera Moore



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
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