

United Methodist Women Script  
for 2015 WNCC Annual Conference  
Presented by Tonya Lanier, Conference President  
Saturday, June 20, 2015 at 8:45 am during Laity Session  
Total Time = 7.5 minutes

Bishop Goodpaster, United Methodist Women, members of Annual Conference, friends and guest, I am honored to be here this morning to share a brief account of United Methodist Women happenings. Our written report can be found on page 80 of your Program and Reports book.

As United Methodist Women.....we plan to share our story until the Whole World Hears! So get ready. We continue to put faith, hope and love in action. We want to make it happen by being God's hands and feet. We want to live a life that leads, which is embodied in our unchanging purpose..... which is to be.....

- A community of women

- Whose primary PURPOSE is to know God
- To experience FREEDOM as whole persons through Jesus Christ
- To DEVELOPE a creative supportive fellowship and
- To EXPAND concepts of mission through participation of the global ministries of the church.

Everything we do is measured by this purpose, even our generous giving. While we did not meet our 2014 pledge, we remain number one in Mission Giving for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year. Our conference was able to send over \$909,193.14 to support mission projects for women, children, and youth around the world.

Our gifts assisted:

West Side Community House in Cleveland Ohio

Bethlehem Center of Charlotte

Fighting for the Chaco in China.....

And so much more!!!

Speaking of money, I understand there was a pastor who advised his ladies to put their UMW monies into the building fund or the general fund. I am recommending that he return to UMW 101. But I expect he won't be alone.

We celebrate the chartering of two units both in the Metro District - Aldersgate United Methodist Women and South Tryon United Methodist Women. Each district has been challenged to form at least one new unit by the end of 2015. Our conference goal is to **strengthen membership through education and communication**. We are still growing! So look for a new unit forming near you.

In an attempt to be around for many, many years, United Methodist Women are conducting a 150 Legacy Campaign.

This is a forward-thinking effort dedicated to reinforcing our organization. The funds raised will permanently sustain our ongoing mission for women, children and youth.

When your schedule permits, I encourage you to attend one of our 2015 conference events as we worship and celebrate the ministry of United Methodist Women.

I am happy to report that our Spiritual Growth Retreat was held last weekend here at Lake Junaluska. Over 750 ladies and a few gentlemen were encouraged by Rev. Toni Ruth Smith to "Love as God Loves."

Mission u is a chance to study current issues impacting society. This educational opportunity is open to any and everyone, and for the second year, we will have a residential

youth camp as well. Join us at Pfeiffer University, July 16 thru the 19. If you are not able to attend for the four days, we have a one day overview on Friday or Saturday.

Our Annual Meeting will be at Lake Junaluska, September 11 thru the 13. The keynote speaker for the weekend will be Paul Jeffrey. Paul is a United Methodist Missionary, a photojournalist and serves as senior correspondent for response magazine. He will share what he sees through the lenses of his camera as he documents the work of mission in a hurting world. Our theme is: Images of Mission.

Our Ubuntu day will be held on October 17<sup>th</sup>. Those who register will work at one of our five national mission institutions or two UMAR homes. You get to choose. This zulu term simply captures the concept: I am human because

you are human." It recognizes that each person is part of a community.

New this year we are sharing tidbits about our organization. You may have seen several of our ladies proudly sporting "Ask Me About UMW" buttons, like this one I have on here. When you get close to one of these ladies, I invite you to ask her about UMW. It won't take but a second and each lady has a different tidbit or fact to share. So go ahead, ask. We are eager to divulge great news about United Methodist Women. You will discover that we are more than a catchy phrase or bumper-sticker. We are deeper than a cute t-shirt or whimsical water bottle. For almost 150 years we have been at this mission thing, standing firm and vigilant for the rights of women, children and youth around the world.

At our inception in 1869, the ladies were working for better health care, poverty, domestic violence, human trafficking, slavery. And now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, none of these issues have been eradicated, we are still fighting for better health care, poverty, domestic violence, human trafficking and slavery, just to name a few. Therefore, our work as women organized for mission continues in much the same vein as it did when Isabella Thoburn and Clara Swain first set sail for India.

Let's have all United Methodist Women present this morning to please stand. Thank you ladies.....and gentlemen for your unwavering support. Our group would not be as strong without you.

As President I get calls about lots of good things and some things that make me scratch my head. I must share the

most unusual statement I have heard during my two year tenure came from a unit whose minister told his ladies that they did not have to worry about finding officers for their UMW unit this year, he said because UMW was fading away. The lady that called me said they nicely disagreed with him but wanted me to know what they had to deal with. We both laughed. I promised to put in a request to have him moved .....to another denomination!

With almost 25,000 ladies in our conference who wear the UMW title proudly. We are stronger than ever in our quest for mission. We are yesterday. We are now. We are tomorrow!

Look for an awesome United Methodist Woman near you. She will be energized, passionate, inquisitive and more. She



will be eager to share her UMW story and the remarkable news about what we are doing around our conference, in our district, in our local churches. She will quickly tell you that this mission thing is a gift from God. He blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others.

In closing, until the whole world hears the cries of hungry children, until the whole world hears the unspoken stories of undereducated youths, until the whole world hears the needs of women, United Methodist Women will continue the battle. Like the lyrics in the song, ready yourselves.....ready yourselves, we plan to continue to shine the light of Jesus in the darken night. We plan to make it happen.

Thank you for the opportunity to share at this our 2015 Annual Conference.

For questions or concerns please contact Tonya Lanier,  
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