



# 2025 Pledge to Mission Service Living Waters in Times of Drought: Re-digging the Wells of Our Foremothers

## Introduction

**Through this service,** United Women in Faith members in their units, districts, and conferences will have an opportunity to dig deeper into the power and perspective of Mission Giving. We are called to understand that food and drink for yourself may be a physical matter but as we provide food and drink for others it becomes a spiritual matter. Today, we live amid climate change. Times of drought are coming more frequently. We are called to live into our faith rather than panic from our fears.

Our legacy as United Women in Faith came from our foremothers. We have been given the gifts of their Pledges of Mission. Their lifelong giving reminds us of what it means to live into our faith despite the droughts and famines during our journey. We are reminded by Isaac and Rebekah that each generation is called to re-dig the wells of our foremothers. The Pledge to Mission from our generation in United Women in Faith will become the legacy for the future daughters and granddaughters of United Women in Faith.





## Suggested Pre-Service Activity: Reflection on Mission Giving

Leaders for this service should prepare their hearts and minds by taking time during the weeks leading up to the service to reflect on Mission Giving. They can prepare to share their perspective on giving, grounded in the Wesleyan Quadrilateral of Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. More information about the Wesleyan Quadrilateral is available online here: [umc.org/en/content/glossary-wesleyan-quadrilateral-the](http://umc.org/en/content/glossary-wesleyan-quadrilateral-the).

Living water in times of drought and famine is like a mission impossible. Or is it? Part of our faith journey as well as our Mission Giving is listening to God's call to faith. God does not want our pat answers because we have always "done" our faith and giving the same way since the beginning of time. God wants our response and understanding of **why** we give **what** we give. Our understanding of Mission Giving could use the Wesleyan Quadrilateral to help us reflect on how Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience impact our Mission Giving as United Women in Faith members. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is a helpful way of connecting our faith with our actions. It is a way to mature into our faith.

For me, The Wesleyan Quadrilateral has been pivotal in my spiritual growth. Albert Outler, Methodist historian, theologian, and pastor, was one of the creative souls behind the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. I grew to admire him when he came to Nebraska Wesleyan. I learned how the Wesleyan Quadrilateral called me to dig deeper into an understanding of my faith. This process was repeated when I attended Saint Paul School of Theology. As we become older, we are called to go deeper than a Sunday school/grade school concept of faith. It helps us re-dig the wells of our childhood faith. Living water during a drought and enough food for all in the presence of a famine reminds us how important Mission Giving is as we come to understand the impact of climate change in our lives.



## Preparation

Before the Pledge Service, read through the program, including the Reflection on Mission Giving, the Guiding Scriptures, and the words as well as listen to the hymns and songs being sung. There are several options within the service for each leader to choose what works best for their unit.

## Materials and Resources

- Bible (NRSV or CEB translations)
- *The United Methodist Hymnal*, three copies if possible
- A printed copy of the History of "It is Well with My Soul" ([umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul](http://umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-it-is-well-with-my-soul))
- Have a copy of the lyrics of the song "For Everyone Born" from *For Everyone Born #2*.
- The song "Your Labor Is Not in Vain" performed by Latifah Alattas ([bit.ly/LaborNotVain](http://bit.ly/LaborNotVain))
- Pledge to Mission Cards found online at ([bit.ly/UWFaithPledgeCards](http://bit.ly/UWFaithPledgeCards))
- Photocopies of the Scripture readings and litanies, for each of the readers
- Sticky notes, 3" x 3" size
- Card stock paper
- Computer/laptop with internet access, projector/screen, necessary cords and cables, and audio equipment as needed

## Worship Center Materials

- Bible
- Sand inside a large ceramic bowl with a scoop (this will be the inside of the well)
- Empty bowl that will hold the sand once it is scooped out
- Water in a clear glass pitcher
- Stones/bricks to stack around the large ceramic bowl, giving the appearance of a well
- Basket to collect Pledge to Mission Cards
- Four pieces of cloth in blue, orange, green, and yellow, the colors of the United Women in Faith Logo for the worship center

## Participants

Ask women ahead of time for the following roles:

- Read the Opening Litany
- Four readers for the Digging Deeper Scriptures (Genesis 26)
- Four readers for Where Our Pledge to Mission Dollars Go

Note: If your unit is smaller, you could have four women do all the reader sections.

## Room Setup

### Worship Center

When members come to place their pledge cards in the basket, they will remove some sand from the well with the scoop and place it in the bowl outside the well, symbolizing the action of re-digging a well. They will then pour some water into the well, symbolizing the living water Jesus offers us that never runs out.

Use the four cloths to cover the table you are using for the worship center. Build the “well” with the ceramic bowl with sand in the center, surrounded by rocks. Put the scoop next to the well. Place the extra bowl behind it so it is all or mostly out of sight. Place the glass pitcher of water next to the well. Also include on the table, a Bible, a basket for the Pledge Cards, and any other items you think would be helpful for this setting.

### Room

Set up chairs in rows in the shape of a semi-circle or arc facing the worship center. Also, have a screen in the front to allow for slides or other media to be projected. Allow sufficient space for participants to turn their chairs for conversation during certain activities in the service.

Ensure that audio equipment is provided so that all may hear and participate.

## Activity Centers

Four activity centers are listed below to make available around the room. Determine how many you would like to incorporate in your service depending on the number of participants and the size of your room.

### Center 1

Include a list of all the Guiding Scriptures for women to look up and reflect on. Place these on a table with the three questions of faith listed below:

1. What does this Scripture say about food and drink and what response does God expect of the people of God?
2. Does this Scripture help you respond to how we are being called to re-dig the wells of our foremothers?
3. How are we being called to respond with our faith rather than our fears as we face famines and droughts as we hear the words from the Guiding Scriptures?

#### Guiding Scriptures

Genesis 1:1-2, 9-10

Genesis 26:1-20

1 Kings 17:8-24

1 Kings 19:1-16, 17-21

Psalms 1:1-3

Psalms 65:9-13

Jeremiah 31:15

John 4:1-6

John 4:7-42

Revelation 22:1-2

Revelation 22:16-17



### Center 2

Have the following resources available on a table for participants to read and/or listen to the lyrics and write down words or phrases that pop out to them as they relate to the concepts of living water and times of drought and famine.

Three *United Methodist Hymnals*, each opened to one of the following songs:

- "Cuando El Pobre (When the Poor Ones)," #434
- "Tú Has Venido a la Orilla (Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore)," #344
- "It Is Well with My Soul," #377

Additionally, have a laptop or tablet open to this YouTube video of "Jennifer Hudson | The Impossible Dream [The Voice of UK 2019]" [youtube.com/watch?v=nj\\_kq9ompMw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nj_kq9ompMw).

**Facilitator note:** We do not have permission to broadcast the above video publicly, but participants may watch it in the activity center or on their personal devices.

### **Center 3**

Have copies of the lyrics from "For Everyone Born" available at another table for people to consider the broad places that God calls the people of God to have a place at the table today. Are we more or less accepting of others during times of drought and famine? Who is **left out** of a place at the table when we act out of our fears rather than out of our faith?

**Facilitator note:** Please recycle the lyric copies. We do not have permission to copy and distribute these.

### **Center 4**

Have sticky notes at a table with the following question printed on both sides of a folded card stock paper:

What do you think United Women in Faith needs to re-dig a well in our generation to make living water and food for the journey available for all?

After participants write their responses on the sticky notes, they should place them around the stone well that is on the Worship Center.

### **Handouts**

At each chair place Pledge cards and copy of the Opening Prayer and Litany.





## GATHERING

### Opening Prayer (Unison)

Creator God, you have always been with us. In the beginning, when the Earth was a formless void, you were with us. From generation to generation, you have formed us into being your people. In times of drought and famine, you have been with us. As members of United Women in Faith, you continue to form us into living and being part of your creation. We sense your presence today. You are with us. We are not alone. Amen.

### Opening Litany

**Leader:** Scripture reminds us that God’s children have endured times of drought and famine even before the Hebrews wandered in the wilderness. And even in our wandering, God is our guide and the giver of sweet water and manna—that which sustains us.

**All:** **We are called to live in the faith that God will provide for our needs where we live.**

**Leader:** Communion around the table reminds us of the sacredness of food and drink. As we wander in the wilderness during times of drought and famine, we are called to believe even if we do not see the manna from heaven. We know God will give us our daily bread.

**All:** **We are called to live confidently in our faith and not panic from our fears.**

**Leader:** As Elijah fled into the wilderness, an angel of the Lord touched him and told him to get up and eat. He saw a cake baked on hot stones and a jar of water. That food and drink sustained him on his journey for forty days and forty nights.

**All:** **We are called to be like Isaac as we journey through the wilderness. We look for wells that have dried up or have been filled with dirt and sand and no longer provide living water. There are times when we must re-dig the wells that were dug by our forefathers and foremothers.**

**Leader:** Like the widow at Zarephath, we are called to share our food and drink with others, believing that God will provide the rain on the earth for our families.

**All:** **We are called to live in faith instead of centering on our fears, especially as we face climate change and are fearful for food and drink for all of humanity.**

**Leader:** The Samaritan woman came to draw water from Jacob’s well. Jesus offered her a drink of living water that God provides for us.

**All:** **Jesus reminded the woman at the well that God will provide, and she would never be thirsty. We are called to remember this meeting at Jacob’s Well and the reminder from Jesus that God provides for us all.**



Sing or read aloud one of the following hymns:

*"Cuando El Pobre (When the Poor Ones)," The United Methodist Hymnal, #434*

*"Tú Has Venido a la Orilla (Lord, You Have Come to the Lakeshore)," The United Methodist Hymnal, #344*

## DIGGING DEEPER



### Reader 1: Genesis 26:1-6, 12-20

Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that had occurred in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar, to King Abimelech of the Philistines. The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; settle in the land that I shall show you. Reside in this land as an alien, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will fulfill the oath that I swore to your father Abraham. I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands, and all the nations of the earth shall gain blessing for themselves through your offspring, because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws." . . .

. . . Isaac sowed seed in that land and in the same year reaped a hundredfold. The LORD blessed him, and the man became rich; he prospered more and more until he became very wealthy. He had possessions of flocks and herds and a great household, so that the Philistines envied him. (Now the Philistines had stopped up and filled with earth all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham.) And Abimelech said to Isaac, "Go away from us; you have become too powerful for us."

So Isaac departed from there and camped in the Wadi Gerar and settled there. Isaac dug again the wells of water that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, for the Philistines had stopped them up after the death of Abraham, and he gave them the names that his father had given them. But when Isaac's servants dug in the valley and found there a well of spring water, the herders of Gerar quarreled with Isaac's herders, saying, "The water is ours." So he called the well Esek, because they contended with him.

### Leader:

We are reminded by Abraham and Isaac that each generation must re-dig the wells that were dug before us. When we are filled with contention between others, we can end up working against each other, but we are reminded to keep re-digging the wells until we reach fresh living water.

### Reader 2: Genesis 26:21

Then they dug another well, and they quarreled over that one also, so he called it Sitnah.

### Leader:

When we quarrel among ourselves and others, we are called to figure out how we can share the water so all who are thirsty may receive the living water.

**Reader 3: Genesis 26:22**

He moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it, so he called it Rehoboth, saying, "Now the LORD has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land."

**Leader:**

God has made room for all of us and reminds us that all are welcome and may have a seat at the table to be fed.

**Reader 4: Genesis 26:23–33**

From there he went up to Beer-sheba. And that very night the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am the God of your father Abraham; do not be afraid, for I am with you and will bless you and make your offspring numerous for my servant Abraham's sake." So he built an altar there, called on the name of the LORD, and pitched his tent there. And there Isaac's servants dug a well.

Then Abimelech went to him from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his adviser and Phicol the commander of his army. Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, seeing that you hate me and have sent me away from you?" They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you, so we say, let there be an oath between you and us, and let us make a covenant with you so that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD." So he made them a feast, and they ate and drank. In the morning they rose early and exchanged oaths, and Isaac set them on their way, and they departed from him in peace. That same day Isaac's servants came and told him about the well that they had dug and said to him, "We have found water!" He called it Shibah; therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day.

**Leader:**

God pitches a tent and stays with us as we journey generation after generation. This was true with Abraham and Sarah as well as Isaac and Rebekah. And it is true with us today.

## Reflection Questions

*Depending on the number of people gathered, this can be done as a large group or in smaller groups.*

In light of the Scripture read today, reflect on the following:

- How do the people of God respond to famine and drought as it becomes present in our daily lives?
- As we face our changing climate, how do we respond to limited food and drink?
- Do you see food and drink as a human right?
- Do you believe we are called to provide food and drink for ourselves and others?  
As United Women of Faith members, do you think that our Pledge to Mission funds should help provide food and drink for the "least of these"?





## OUR PLEDGE

### Where Our Pledge to Mission Dollars Go

#### Leader:

Today's Scripture about Isaac digging wells in his ancestral lands reminds us as a community of faith to continually seek sources of living water that will sustain a new generation. Listen to these examples of our Mission Giving at work—digging and re-digging those wells:

#### Reader 1:

Our National Mission Institutions have been present for many generations. U.S. projects and nearly 90 National Mission Institutions, community centers, schools, and residences are located around the United States such as Good Neighbor Settlement House in Brownsville, Texas. The Settlement House gives hope and help to men, women, and children in need. Services are offered to the near homeless and homeless in the Brownsville community. The Big Garden in Omaha, Nebraska, another National Mission Institution, works to reduce hunger by increasing access to fresh, healthy produce and teaching people to grow, cook, and preserve their food.

#### Reader 2:

Regional Missionaries are present all around the world, working for justice and peace. Elmira Sellu, one of our Regional Missionaries, is from Sierra Leone and coordinates women's leadership development in the West African Central Conferences and the East Africa Annual Conference. She works on current issues that affect the lives of women and children.

#### Reader 3:

Our Mission Giving has been at work for generations in support of Mission u. Each year, United Women in Faith prepares for faithful living and action by engaging in transformative educational experiences during Mission u events. For many members, Mission u is the annual gathering that sustains us as United Women in Faith members and connects us throughout our conference and districts as well as strengthens our unit members.

#### Reader 4:

Our Mission Giving supports our advocacy work for campaigns such as Just Energy for All, which supports climate justice. As a large supportive community of faith, we can join our voices to raise the alarm and push for legislative changes as we face increased temperatures and drought-like conditions, unprecedented floods, and famines.

**Leader:** Together in each unit we need to reflect on how United Women in Faith could dig deeper into the many places our Pledges to Mission travel. The questions of faith call us to ask:

1. Is mission possible in times of drought and famine? Is it possible to increase our pledges in these times?
2. What examples of our commitment to the long-term mission and the newer missions do you see from the examples given today? Do you see our Mission Giving at work as we re-dig the wells for our generation as well as for newer generations?

## Our Response to Our 2025 Pledge to Mission

**Facilitator note:** *Alternatively, you can share your personal reflection from the Pre-Activity in place of Rachel's.*

**Leader:** Listen as I share a reflection from Rachel Bachenberg and then think of your own story of what Mission Giving means to you.

When I was a US-2, I was at a District United Methodist Women meeting. The pastor at the church where we were meeting had a foster child who was in the agency where I was serving. He was discouraged because of the increased times his foster daughter was in lock-up facilities. He turned to me and asked me quietly in the back of the Narthex, "Are some people not redeemable?" As a pastor, he felt that he would respond no, everyone could be redeemed. But his foster daughter was extremely difficult to deal with and the situation was discouraging.

As I reflect so many years later, I am asking the same type of questions related to our environment and the future of the earth. Are the droughts and famines coming too fast like a fiery furnace? Are we doing too little too late? Are we not redeemable as people living on Mother Earth? Will our commitment to our Pledge to Mission be enough to provide food and drink for all those who are thirsty and seeking living water and sustainable food?

**Leader:** Are there any here today who would like to add their one- or two-minute reflection to our time?

**Facilitator note:** *Allow for up to 60 seconds of silence for someone to speak up. If no one speaks up, move on. If many, keep it to no more than two or three people to respect the time of all.*

Let us listen to "Your Labor Is Not in Vain," performed by Latifah Alattas as you consider how you will respond to your Pledge to Mission this year.

Play the song found online at: [bit.ly/LaborNotVain](https://bit.ly/LaborNotVain).



### Sing

"It is Well with My Soul," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, #377

**Leader:** Please pick up and fill out your Pledge to Mission Card.


*Play inspirational music, such as hymn instrumentals while participants fill out their cards and bring them to the front.*

**Leader:** Please bring your Pledge to Mission cards to the worship center. You will see the sand and water in the worship center. Place your cards in the basket and then symbolically remove a scoop of sand from the well to re-dig our wells. And then pour some living water into the well to symbolize the living water that sustains us. Please come forward as you are ready.



### Closing Prayer

**Leader:** Living and Loving God, be with us as we make a new commitment to United Women in Faith. Give us bread and water for the journey. Help us be a people of faith, not people who live in fear. Be with us as we journey. Amen



# Call to Prayer and Self-Denial 2024

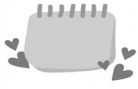
## Introduction

**Welcome sisters in faith,** together we lift our spirits to the Lord, and we declare ourselves children of the Almighty. Through this call to prayer, we call upon one another to dive deeper into our faith and recommit ourselves to care for one another and all of creation and to seek justice and liberation. This call to prayer reminds us that the work of caring for God's creation is part of our Christian covenant, and a form to honor our ancestors and care for our children and future generations.

The work of care, justice, and liberation requires us to deepen our connection within and with others. This means taking time to listen to our hearts, reflect on our identities as children of God, and build relationships and appreciation towards one another and creation. Through prayer, we invite the divine to be present and accompany us through our hopes and struggles and we also let ourselves become instruments of God's love and invite God to guide our actions to also make others participants of God's love. Prayer and action are thus beautiful ways to glorify and worship God. We must continue encouraging one another to accompany our prayers with spaces for discernment and invitations for action toward care, justice, and liberation.

To respond to this call, United Women in Faith has for decades led several environmental and climate justice efforts. Today, we highlight the work of our Just Energy for All campaign, which mobilizes members to tackle the climate crisis by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting 100 percent clean, renewable energy, and a just energy transition. This entails seeking sustainable solutions, equitable investments, and participation from frontline communities in decision-making processes. The urgency of the climate crisis is calling us for unprecedented change and action. As bold women in faith, we will strive constantly for self-renewal and the material and spiritual transformation of the world in Jesus' name.





## Preparation

Before the gathering, read through the entire service two to three times, noting any adaptations that may need to be made to best suit your context. Make a list of materials you will provide and what materials you will ask participants to bring. Finally, think about the craft and the stories that will be told. Whom might you ask to be prepared to share a story to help others feel more comfortable to do so in the moment?

### In advance

Ask participants to bring elements of creation that speak to them for the offering such as rocks, leaves, flowers, etc.

### Materials for the group

- Offering basket
- Markers or acrylic paints: light blue, orange, green, yellow (United Women in Faith colors)
- A small plastic paint palette or surface to pour paint on (one per table/small group)
- Lighter for candles (optional)

### Materials per person

The leader can provide these or participants can be asked to bring these from home.

- Paintbrush
- Permanent marker
- One candle (flame or battery-powered)
- A candle holder that can hold the candle
- A square piece of paper, 8"x8"
- A pen
- A journal

### Worship space

If gathering in person, consider incorporating natural elements that remind you of the joy of creation. If possible, create an altar with live plants, rocks, sand, or other elements. If this will be a small gathering, consider sitting in a circle and having a small altar in the middle. If light adjustments are possible consider dimming the lights to create an inviting environment for contemplation.