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ARTICLE ONE

TITLE: Giving on a global scale

Imagine the global impact when 12.5 million United Methodists mobilize for action! Since its beginning half a century ago, The United Methodist Church has provided opportunities for people to support ministries, not only in their home congregations, but also worldwide.

“The Special Sundays in The United Methodist Church intended to illustrate the nature and calling of the church are celebrated annually. The special Sundays are placed on the calendar to make clear the calling of the church as the people of God and to give persons the opportunity to contribute offerings to special programs.” (Par. 262, The Book of Discipline 2016)

Special Sundays are more than opportunities to collect money. Through generous gifts on special Sundays, United Methodists express their commitment – reaching out to communities, relieving suffering, educating, promoting peace and justice, honoring traditions of First Nations and sharing the love of Jesus Christ with God’s people around the world.

United Methodist congregations celebrate six churchwide special Sundays with offerings:

- Human Relations Day encourages outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico through community developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services and work with at-risk youth. Historically, this special Sunday is celebrated on the Sunday before the birthday observance of Martin Luther King Jr.
- UMCOR Sunday enables the United Methodist Committee on Relief to reach out through worldwide ministries of food, shelter, health and peace. This special Sunday is observed on the Fourth Sunday in Lent.
- Native American Ministries Sunday nurtures mission with Native Americans and provides scholarships for United Methodist Native American seminarians. This special Sunday is celebrated on the Third Sunday of Easter.
- Peace with Justice Sunday advocates for peace and justice through a broad spectrum of global programs. This special Sunday is observed on the First Sunday after Pentecost.
- World Communion Sunday provides scholarships for U.S. racial- and ethnic-minority and international students, both undergraduate and graduate levels. This special Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday in October.
- United Methodist Student Day furnishes scholarships and loans for students attending United Methodist-related and other accredited colleges and universities. This special Sunday is observed on the last Sunday in November.

Each special Sunday unites The United Methodist Church around the world through collective action. Through these observances, United Methodists gain diverse opportunities to serve and to share the love of Christ with God’s people around the world.

To read more about Special Sundays and The United Methodist Church, visit:

<http://www.umc.org/how-we-serve/special-sundays>

ARTICLE TWO

TITLE: Connected by calling

In Madras, India, many years ago, children shared a three-stanza song. The first verse said, "It's love that makes the world go 'round." The second stanza added, "It's you that makes the love go 'round." And the third verse encouraged, "So, pass it on, that love is free for everyone." Those are important words. It takes all of us to change our world.

The United Methodist Church works collaboratively all over the globe to fund hundreds of ministries every year. The message? "Together, we do more."

And it's true. Through churchwide special Sundays with offerings, United Methodists accomplish much more than we could do individually. On designated days throughout the year, United Methodists around the world join in giving to specific causes. We are connected through a common theme of giving and a desire to serve and share God's love with everyone around the world.

Together, as a church, we:

- Discuss and learn about generosity;
- Put our beliefs into action;
- Provide relief for those suffering from the results of war and natural disasters;
- Support peace and social justice efforts; and
- Create educational opportunities through scholarships.

Remember, none of us represents a single church. We are part of a network of congregations who come together under the same calling: to give collectively to a single cause, inspired by the love of Jesus Christ.

And we accomplish great things! In 2018, United Methodists raised tens of thousands of dollars for disaster response locally and internationally. We put students through college, distributed small-business grants to places like Just Bakery in Atlanta which pays living wages to a vibrant and diverse community of refugees, and taught people of all ages about peace and social justice.

Indeed, it's love that make the world go 'round.

If you're inspired and want to give, or if you simply want to learn more, visit umcgiving.org

ARTICLE THREE

TITLE: The impact of collective giving

The impact of 12.5 million United Methodists in 136 countries on churchwide special Sundays with offerings is widespread. Each special Sunday has a specific theme that participating congregations support collectively.

Behind each special Sunday is a story of hope and restoration.

Have you heard of Exodus House in Oklahoma City?

Exodus House offers a place where formerly incarcerated people work to rebuild their lives. They receive treatment for drug or alcohol abuse, find employment and begin to heal. It offers affordable rent so they can save money to pay fines and fees associated with their time in prison.

Robin Wertz, a former inmate, is now a case manager at Exodus House. "We want to see people become productive again," Wertz says. "We want to see them rebuild their lives."

Exodus House and those it serves benefits from the special Sunday called Human Relations Day. This observance calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with one another.

Exodus House does just that. Its mission is to help former inmates become functional members of society through support, tough love and welcoming arms.

This is just one story among many depicting the impact of generous giving on United Methodist special Sundays. Many lives are blessed, restored, healed, taught, loved and served.

With the collective giving on United Methodist churchwide special Sundays, one cannot help but be inspired and moved. Special Sundays successfully tie the act of giving from a distance to boots-on-the-ground serving. They give everyday people an avenue for action fueled by the love of Christ.

Special Sundays unite United Methodist churches around the world so that, together, we can serve the world.

To read more stories or to give, visit <https://goo.gl/kwS9CQ>