

## *How Shall We Celebrate?*

### Ideas for Special Programs and Projects

*These suggestions are only a place to start. Balance creativity with practicality as you adapt these ideas to fit your circumstances or as you develop other projects. Try to include as many people as possible in the celebrations and develop projects that will have a permanent impact on the church's understanding of its history.*



- *Honor a specific woman's name and memory.* One way is to name a room in the church or a church organization after her. Another is to develop an awards program that honors her memory. For example, an award named for a woman who became a missionary could be given to the Sunday School student who raises the most money for missions.
- *Consider a "woman of the month" program,* with articles in the church newsletter each month for a year. You could supplement the articles by sharing women's stories in the worship service and discussing them in the Sunday School.
- *What about a Women's Hall of Fame?* Accept nominations from Sunday School classes or the entire congregation. (This can be expanded to include women in the Bible and/or women in United Methodist history.) The "Hall" may be an actual photo gallery in a hallway or a classroom, or it may simply be a photo album on display in the fellowship room, with biographical information accompanying the photographs and illustrations.
- *Make women's history part of the worship service.* "History Minutes" are one way to tell some of the stories you are learning. If you are lucky enough to have letters or diaries from some of the women in your church's past, read from them. If you have developed an oral history project, play excerpts from the recordings for the congregation, or ask a longtime member to reminisce about worship services fifty years ago. Have a special Sunday service focusing on women's heritage: sing hymns written by women, discuss the work of women in The United Methodist Church, and commemorate the service of women in your church.
- *Encourage Sunday School classes to study women's history.* Children can interview women, participate in a poster contest, or do research and submit entries for a Hall of Fame. They can add dates from your church's history to the United Methodist women's history time line. Teens and adults can participate in discussion groups. Classes can adopt an historical figure, do research, and present a special program.
- *Prepare an exhibit, PowerPoint presentation, or video* on the contributions of women to your church's history. Use the artifacts available to you to create a visual record of the past.

- *Oral history is a way to make a long-lasting contribution to women's history.* The women in your church have stories to tell, and oral history interviews can capture their history. Although an oral history project is very rewarding, it takes a certain amount of training and a real commitment of time and energy. If you undertake an oral history project, don't forget the men! Their stories, perspectives, and insights are part of the picture, too. (*See "What Was It Like?" in this packet for additional information.*)
- *Share the story through drama.* Living history, reenactments of past events, one-woman dramas drawn from letters and diaries—all of these are ways to bring the past to life. There are a number of books about living history; check with a local library or historical society. An area theater company, college, or high school may be willing to lend costumes and props.
- *Develop a women's history collection for your archives or library.* Encourage people to donate memorabilia pertaining to women in the church. You may gain some valuable exhibit-quality items as well as some important historical resources. Such a project may uncover some missing church records, as well.
- *Look beyond your church.* What about joint celebrations or research projects with other churches in the area? Is there a United Methodist college nearby? People from the library, history department, or women's studies program may be very interested in working with you. Contact your annual conference Commission on Archives and History and the annual conference United Methodist Women; find out how you can get involved in their women's history projects and how they can help you with yours. Finally, don't neglect secular historical agencies in your town or county. You can help each other gain important insights into the history of your church and community by working together on projects.