

MISSION HELPING CHILDREN
2007 Annual Meeting Pledge Service
Western North Carolina Conference United Methodist Women

Processional of Mission personnel – processional hymn – THE SUMMONS

All assigned Treasurers will come up on stage immediately following the processional. As Sherry & I go to podiums, move quickly to stand together in groups, mid-stage, as follows: (See stage layout)

Group #1 – Virginia Braswell, Donna Parsons

Group #2 – Delores Meadows, Connie Drye

Group #3 – Mary Ann Detter, Nancy Reigel

Group #4 – Elizabeth Lookabill, Irish Spencer

Group #5 – Martha Phillips, Shirley Gardner

Group #6 – Julia Willis

Sharon will be at the podium microphone at stage left, and Sherry Sink will be at the small podium microphone at stage right. When everyone is in place, Sharon will begin:

Sharon Smith: Our theme for this weekend is “Through the Eyes of a Child.” A special emphasis of United Methodist Women is children, because women care for children. It is our belief that if children are raised with safety, security, food, shelter, education, and basic human rights, these children will grown to be loving and secure adults. United Methodist Women believe deeply in responding to Jesus’ mandate to “care for the least of these.”

POWERPOINT SLIDE #1:

Sherry Sink: The late country singer Patsy Cline, in 1958, released a song titled “Eyes of a Child.” It began: “If I could see the world, through the eyes of a child, what a wonderful world this would be. There’d be no trouble and no strife, just a big happy life, with a bluebird in every tree.”
The chorus was: “I could see right, no wrong. I could see good, no bad. I could see all the good things, in life I’ve never had. If I could see the world, Through the eyes of a child, What a wonderful world this would be.”

Sharon Smith: Children do not often have a voice in this world, so United Methodist Women care for them and advocate on their behalf. You see this

commitment globally through community centers, educational opportunities for refugee children, homes for street children, advocacy against sexual exploitation and child labor, educational institutions and much more. United Methodist Women are involved in more than 100 mission institutions and in more than 100 countries around the world.

Stage Direction: Group #1 – Move to the two microphones, and be ready to begin following the next section.

POWERPOINT SLIDE #2:

Sherry Sink: As United Methodist Women, we participate in the Five Channels of Mission Giving. Our giving supports these national and international mission institutions that provide opportunities for us to see Through the Eyes of a Child. Our mission dollars allow children to grow and to flourish.

Virginia Braswell: Many times, when wanting to help others, we aim too big. We forget that sometimes the smallest thing can be the biggest help. Byron is a wonderful school-age poet who attends the Ashland Center after-school program at the March-Newberry Association in Chicago. The staff realized that the only thing he needed was a quiet room – a space to express himself through poetry. This allowed the young man a place to nurture his talents and stay focused. Now he attends high school and has received the Creative Communication’s Young Poets Award. Sometimes, it’s the little things that help these young people find what they need to accomplish their goals.

Donna Parsons: My first day at Epworth Village in Nebraska, I heard someone screaming and looked up to see Terry, a nine year old boy. Several weeks later, I encountered this same angry boy. Struggling to communicate, we had a rough evening. After finally getting him to bed, he poked his head out of his room and asked if I would pray with him. Doubting his sincerity, I went into his room. He was kneeling beside his bed, so I knelt beside him. He began: “Dear Jesus, thank you for this lovely day and for the food we eat, and the place we have to sleep. Please help my momma not to steal no more, and when she gets out of jail to want me back home with her, so we can be happy together forever. Please Jesus, help me to get home. In Jesus, name. Amen.” Children and families turn to Epworth Village because of emotional and behavioral issues that have overwhelmed their resources as a family. Terry is currently in a happy, safe, stable place to call home.

POWERPOINT SLIDE #3:

Stage Direction: Group #1 returns to their spot on stage, and Group #2 moves to the microphones.

Sherry Sink: Who can look in the face of a child – any child – and not remember that this face is a reminder that God, the Creator, has not despaired of humanity. Whether parent, grandparent, aunt, or simply a responsible adult, each of us is called to give voice to the voiceless in our midst – the children.

Delores Meadows: Like a lot of little guys, George, six, and Calvin, seven, were spending a lot of time playing and hanging out on the streets – that is until their grandmother literally dragged them to the Neighborhood Center of the United Methodist Church in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She put them into the Center’s after-school program. At first, the boys were not happy. They did not like obeying the classroom rules or saying grace before eating their snacks. For a while, they seemed to do everything they could to misbehave and get themselves kicked out. After about six months, a staff member felt a tug on her arm after a tutoring session. It was George, waving a crayon drawing of Christ on a cross. Alongside it, he had written a prayer: “God bless everyone, black and white. Love, George.” George insisted that the staff person make photocopies to put on the public information table in the main entrance. Then he said, “Everybody needs to know that God is at the Neighborhood Center.”

POWERPOINT SLIDE #4:

Sharon Smith: Mark 10:14-15: Jesus said: “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.”

Connie Drye: Almost all growing communities need a community center – a place where services help vulnerable people, especially children, flourish in spite of economic hardships, while advocating for policies and systems to enhance that community. When he first came to Moore Community House, in Biloxi, Mississippi, five year old Mark was extremely shy and small for his age. His mother credits MCH for supporting him with a strong foundation. He is now a successful architect. In 2005, Moore Community House’s facilities were destroyed by Hurricane Katrina.

They are currently rebuilding to serve the many families who remain in Biloxi.

POWERPOINT SLIDE #5:

Stage Direction: Group 2 returns to their places on the stage and Group 3 moves to the microphones.

Sherry Sink: Five year old Cheryl was getting ready for school and she asked her mother, “You know God loves us, right?” Her mother replied that he sure does, and asked her why she said that. Cheryl replied, “Because he tells me all the time. He’s holding my hand right now.” Her mother was flooded with warmth, and knew that God, our comforter, was with her.

Mary Ann Detter: Although repeated testing and meetings with school officials yielded no solutions to her learning problems, Becky Paupard’s daughter Amanda was not successful in completing kindergarten and first grade. Becky brought Amanda to Friendly Center, in Toledo, Ohio, and things began to change. The Center was able to cut through the red tape. They arranged for family counseling sessions and for the testing that Amanda needed. The director at the Center says, “Everyday, I see tiny miracles here, and I say a little prayer of thanks. Everyday, I see people working hard to turn their lives around.

Nancy Reigel: Meet James, who had two inexperienced guides in his mother and father. His mother lost her battle with drugs that led to her incarceration. When James was four, his father put him in the pre-kindergarten child development center at the Bethlehem Center in Winston-Salem, NC. It was discovered that James had a severe speech problem. His communications skills were similar to a two-year old. James began to exhibit disruptive behavior, a challenge met by the staff. Exercising patience and devotion, the staff got James up to speed. Working with him everyday, they helped him make strides toward reaching his full potential. The Center also provided resources to help James’ father build his parenting skills. James is just one of many children who benefit from the nurturing staff, volunteers, and other supporters of the Bethlehem Center.

POWERPOINT SLIDE # 6:

Stage Direction: Group 3 returns to their places on the stage and Group 4 moves to the microphones.

Sharon Smith: Sometimes we get so busy with everyday life that we forget about the

little things in life. We forget to see things through the eyes of a child. Do you look at an insect in wonder, or sigh when looking at the beauty of nature? We can learn so much from children. Sometimes we just need to say “I love you, God” for the world he has created, and pray that we won’t forget how to see the world through the eyes of a child.

Elizabeth Lookabill: Nine year old Fardowsa’s family came to Kansas City as refugees from war-ravaged Somalia. Now nine family members – two parents and seven children – live in a subsidized apartment. Her father cleans cars at the airport, sometimes working two shifts, while the mother cares for the children. Fardowsa was enrolled at Della Lamb Elementary Charter School where she learned to read. As the oldest child, her responsibilities include translating the mail, explaining medical instructions given by the doctor, assisting with grocery shopping, and other aspects of survival. Just as her family depends on her language skills, many families depend on Della Lamb Community Services to help them adjust to a new country, laws, cultures, and surroundings. The institution cares for low-income families in Kansas City, in addition to international refugees and American families of all cultures.

Irish Spencer: At 5:30am, the campus of the MacDonell United Methodist Children’s Services, in Houma, Louisiana, begins its day. By 10am, the social services staff are conducting therapy sessions and family visits. They plan & organize comprehensive care for young people, like nine year old David, who came to the residential program for treatment. He experienced traumatic events in his troubled home that prevented him from adjusting to the school environment, and he became a threat to himself and others. Over nine months, with the intensive care provided at MacDonell, he regained control of his behavior and emotions. That progress allowed him to return to his mother’s care. She participated closely with her son’s treatment team. She, too, has made tremendous progress. David has maintained a successful adjustment at home and school and is making a new start for himself.

POWERPOINT SLIDE #7:

Stage Direction: Group 4 returns to their places on the stage and Group 5 moves to the microphones.

Sherry Sink: God has given us the responsibility to care for the physical, spiritual and emotional needs of our children.

Martha Phillips: For thirteen year old Carly, trouble was the main course in her abusive, dysfunctional home. Her way of dealing with it was to be extremely quiet. And although her demeanor was reserved, her outward appearance demanded attention: lots of eye makeup, spiked hair, and flashy clothes. Most of the time, she walked around barefoot. Initially, she came to Alpine Community Center in Texas to pass the time and maybe get some help with her homework. Then the ballet class caught her attention and she was able to enroll. The once quiet, unfocused girl slowly transformed into a beautiful, graceful, confident dancer. To maintain her place in the ballet class, Carly had to fulfill a commitment to do well in school. Her long-term goals include returning to the Center to teach dance to the underprivileged children.

Shirley Gardner: When he first came to St. Mark's Community Center in New Orleans, eight year old Jamar was a skinny, quiet child. Due to poor reading skills, he was placed in a special-education class. The reading teachers helped him overcome a learning disability and develop self confidence. With help from the staff, he transitioned into the mainstream curriculum at the local high school. At 6'4", the sixteen year old used his abilities on the basketball court. His coach encouraged him to consider attending college and took Jamar and others to visit different colleges. He is now enrolled at Southern University.

POWERPOINT SLIDE # 8:

Stage Direction: Group 5 returns to their places on the stage and Group 6 moves to the microphones.

Sharon Smith: God help us to remember that every child is a gift from you.

Julia Willis: My name is Charmayne. I want to tell you about my stay at Cunningham Children's Home, in Urbana, Illinois. As a young child, I constantly moved from one place to another. I had no one to really care about me. Before Cunningham, I was filthy and dirty because my caregivers cared little about what I looked like. I wore unclean, wrinkled clothes that were too small, until a staff member, took me under her wing. She helped me realize I had a lot of good qualities and looks were not everything. She helped me learn to take care of myself; how to relate to others, and she showed me that no one is perfect. Through all of this, I developed self-respect. As a result of the loving and caring acts from the staff at Cunningham Children's Home, I have

matured into a very different young lady today. I currently live in a foster home and eagerly anticipate graduating from high school.

POWERPOINT SLIDE #9:

Stage Direction: Group 6 moves back to their places on the stage.

Sherry Sink: The history of United Methodist Women and our predecessor organizations has been to give gifts to mission in support of women, children, and youth. Our commitment to this mission remains unchanged. The life blood of its support is through our Pledge to mission dollars.

Sharon Smith: Giving is a way for UMW to give expression to their faith. This morning, you have heard stories of children who benefit from your mission giving. Your pledge to mission giving insures that ministries to women, youth, and children will continue around the world through the work of the United Methodist Women.

Sherry Sink: Dear God, we thank you for the organization of United Methodist Women and for the many ways in which the lives of children are touched through the mission giving that supports our mission projects. We ask for your guidance in that the mission dollars given will be used wisely and where they are needed the most. We ask your blessing on all of the lives touched by our mission dollars. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Stage Direction: Treasurers exit stage. Please go to your assigned seats; as the Love Offering is the next item on the program.

General Information for the Pledge Service

1. If you have clothing in the 5 rainbow colors, please wear it. Do not purchase something if you do not have it.
2. Speak loudly and clearly into the microphone.
3. Be enthusiastic! Smile!
4. The purpose of the pledge service is to educate.

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU DO!!