

Courageous Past

BOLD FUTURE

SINCE METHODISM'S EARLIEST DAYS, CLERGYWOMEN HAVE BEEN PART OF THE CHURCH. IN 1761, SARAH CROSBY BECAME THE FIRST WOMAN LICENSED BY JOHN WESLEY TO PREACH. AT ITS 1956 GENERAL CONFERENCE, THE FORMER METHODIST CHURCH VOTED TO GIVE WOMEN FULL CLERGY RIGHTS. TODAY, NEARLY ONE-QUARTER OF UNITED METHODIST CLERGY ARE WOMEN.

TO COMMEMORATE THIS HISTORIC 50TH ANNIVERSARY, THE GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS AND ROLE OF WOMEN AND THE GENERAL BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND MINISTRY SUGGEST 50 WAYS TO CELEBRATE.

50 WAYS

TO CELEBRATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF FULL CLERGY RIGHTS FOR WOMEN



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- During Women's History Month in March, honor clergywomen in your congregation, district, or conference.
- Find out the number of clergywomen in your annual conference, and publicize their names on your Web site, in your church bulletin or newsletter.
- Take a clergywoman to lunch.
- Invite teen girls to your next clergywomen's gathering.
- During Lent, hold a daylong prayer vigil for clergywomen.
- During Pentecost, host a festival celebrating the Holy Spirit's movement in the lives of women in ministry.
- Write a litany for worship in which you name ordained women in your conference.
- Serve on a mission team that honors a clergywoman.
- Have your Sunday School class read a book about clergywomen.
- Allow girls ages 12-17 to spend time "shadowing" a clergywoman so they experience the day-to-day life of an ordained minister.
- On Mother's Day, celebrate *Jean Alnor* and *Kay Alnor Moyer*, who in 1988 became the first mother and daughter to be ordained together as United Methodist clergy.
- Learn the names of the 16 active and four retired women bishops. In 1980, the United Methodist Church was the first modern, mainline church to elect a woman as bishop, the late *Marjorie S. Matthews*.
- Create a scholarship in honor of the first clergywomen in your conference.
- Research *Miriam Visot*, the first Hispanic woman district superintendent in Puerto Rico. Share what you learn with a study group, Sunday school or Bible class.
- Visit www.umc.org and search *Historical Firsts for Women Clergy* to learn about the journey of United Methodist women in ministry.
- Invite a woman pastor from the Central Conferences (those outside the United States) to preach at your next district or annual conference.
- Sponsor a listening event where clergywomen of color talk about the challenges they face.
- Donate books by or about clergywomen to your public, local church, or conference library. Authors to consider: *Delores C. Carpenter*, *Bishop Judith Craig*, *Angella P. Current*, *Patricia J. Thompson*, and *Carol Marie Herb*.
- Ninety of the 500 Korean American pastors are women, but fewer than 10 percent serve in Korean-language churches. Invite a Korean clergywoman to speak at your church.
- Write a note of appreciation to a woman elder, deacon, district superintendent, local pastor, missionary, teacher, or bishop who has influenced your life.
- Use music, art, stories, and drama to explore themes of women in ministry.
- Visit www.gcfa.org/RacialEthnicGender.html to get statistics related to clergywomen.
- In 2003, the Association of Theological Schools reported that women made up 31 percent of all master of divinity students. Get a name from your conference office and write a note to a United Methodist woman in seminary.
- Encourage your conference to increase its contribution to the Ministerial Education Fund, which benefits the 13 United Methodist seminaries.
- Get the names of women who have benefited from the Ministerial Education Fund from your Board of Ordained Ministry. Invite one or two to speak at a class or gathering.
- Invite someone to speak to United Methodist Men about how men can support the work of clergywomen.
- Celebrate clergywomen and laywomen of color during Black History Month in February, Asian-Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May, Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15 to October 15, and Native American History Month in November.
- Ask a clergywoman to preach at your church.
- Visit the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women's Web site at www.gcsrw.org to learn about women in ministry.
- Ask your conference newspaper or Web site to publish a series of articles or an ad celebrating the 50th anniversary.
- Invite a Native American clergywoman to talk about traditional Native American spirituality and Christianity.
- Learn about United Methodist clergywomen around the world at www.umms.umc.org.
- Make a clergy stole or altar cloths as a tribute to clergywomen.
- Celebrate the work of clergywomen who serve as hospital, military, or prison chaplains, missionaries, teachers, campus ministers, pastoral counselors, or conference or general agency staff.
- Write a prayer or poem honoring women in ministry to use in your newsletter or worship.
- Help children in your church to make and display posters celebrating clergywomen.
- Plant a tree in your churchyard in honor of women in ordained ministry.
- Send a note to your conference Board of Ordained Ministry thanking them for encouraging women seeking ordination.
- Offer to share the load of a clergywoman: run errands, do their taxes, baby-sit, prepare a meal, volunteer to help with worship.
- Ask your conference Board of Ordained Ministry to let congregations know of women ministry candidates so you can pray for them.
- Honor a clergywoman with a gift in her name to the Advocacy for Women Endowment. Call the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women, 847-869-7330.
- Offer to buy a copy of *Courageous Past—Bold Future* by Patricia J. Thompson, available from the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry in spring 2006, for a woman in ministry.
- Send a donation to the Georgia Harkness Scholarship Award, for women over 35 preparing for ministry as a second career. Visit the Division of Ordained Ministry Web site at www.gbhem.org/Harkness.html.
- Contact the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry's Office of Loans and Scholarships for a copy of the *Women of Color Scholars* booklet. It profiles scholarship recipients.
- Place flowers on the altar to honor the ministries of ordained women.
- In your study groups or gatherings, explore what sexism is, how it affects both men and women, as well as the ministry of the church.
- Visit the Anna Howard Shaw Center at Boston University School of Theology, *Anna Howard Shaw* was a Methodist minister, medical doctor, and suffragist.
- Develop a dramatic portrayal of a historical figure such as *Maud K. Jensen*, *Marjorie Swank Matthews*, *Anna Howard Shaw* or *Leontine T.C. Kelly* to present during worship, for Sunday school class, or at another gathering.
- Offer to pay registration fees for a clergywoman to attend an event that will encourage her spiritual growth.
- Visit the national clergywomen's Web site sponsored by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry at www.gbhem.org/clergywomen.