

Laity Minute
Jan 2019

Happy Birthday!

Yes, you read that correctly. While I realize it is more common to say Happy New Year right now, saying Happy Birthday is actually quite appropriate. You see, 2019 is the 150th birthday of the United Methodist Women.

This is the year that we celebrate the UMW, past, present and future. In March 1869, eight women gathered in Boston. This gathering is considered the beginning of the UMW, which is currently 800,000 members strong. And with all the issues the UMW has chosen to address such as climate justice, economic inequality advocacy and peace building, taking a moment to celebrate is certainly deserved.

Birthdays can bring about all kinds of emotions. I know people who simply dread the day. Others I know try to completely ignore it. Others celebrate with family and friends. Or, if you are like me, I celebrate Birthday Week. But, isn't a birthday a wonderful time for reflection, as well? Shouldn't we take a little time to acknowledge we are bit wiser as we have aged? As we see in Job 12:12, "Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?"

I think about the wisdom of those women back in 1869. I am not sure they knew their actions would turn into the global UMW of today, but I do know that they had one concept in mind and that was mission. This is a concept that has stood the test of time. No matter what new technology was invented, or what new global crisis has emerged, the 150 year old concept of mission has never wavered. The UMW still stands strong on this platform.

The UMW mission is expressed within the initiatives set forth by the UMW. However, it is also conveyed in the purpose of the UMW which reads, "United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church."

I hope you will join me in celebrating the 150th birthday of the UMW through your gifts, support and prayers. Here's to may more years of Faith, Hope and Love in Action.