

## UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

What an awesome God we serve. Just knowing Him and serving Him is the greatest blessing we have. This past year the United Methodist Women outdid themselves in their giving and their service to the church, the world and their communities. It is always good to come to the end of a year with the knowledge that much has been accomplished.

Our calendars are laid out a year in advance. So when we begin a new year with new leaders we have guidelines to help us get a good start. January sets the pace for the rest of the year. There are many committee meetings, events, conferences, annual meetings and training to begin again. But the most important task for us as United Methodist women is to be a group of women who know God and grow in His grace. This I believe is what keeps us committed to our task. We "let go and let God".

In the course of a year many prayers are being lifted across this conference as we strive to become whole persons in Christ, expand our mission priorities and develop creative, supportive fellowship with all our sisters and brothers in all parts of the world.

Mission is the priority of the United Methodist Women. I am proud to say that we do a very good job in this area. The women of South Carolina give wholeheartedly through their pledge to mission. Our total pledge equaled to more than a half million dollars. This figure does not include other gifts and commitments. We have the 5 mission projects in South Carolina that are supported by our women. Wallace Family Life Center is owned exclusively by South Carolina United Methodist Women. We have a very strong board in place there now and wonderful things are happening in the community because of the presence of the United Methodist Women.

Our leaders worked hard this year as usual to prepare programs that were educational and meaningful. Capitol Day shows us where we can step out of our comfort zones and make a difference in this world. Our schools are glad that so many of our United Methodist Women are volunteers doing various duties to help our students and teachers. We always look forward to our school of mission. The studies were Shalom-Peace-Salaam, Globalization: Its Impact in our lives and India and Pakistan. Our women work very hard to stay current with world events, changing geography as well as feeding our souls and growing spiritually. Our spiritual retreat was nothing short of wonder and amazement. Rev. Dr. Connie Shelton was our spiritual leader. The power of God's presence was electrifying during the course of the weekend at Lake Junaluska. All were blessed for having come to the Lake.

This was the year for our Assembly which was held in California. What an amazing time we had. The programs were excellent, the speakers the best and the entertainment the likes of which most of us had never seen. The beautiful liturgical dancer that opened the program was magnificent. She was literally poetry in motion. That was the beginning and it just got better from that point. The blessings just kept coming.

Another highlight of the year was "Resurrection Women". A new program from women's division. Our women spent the weekend at Springmaid Beach studying women of the Bible and ways that we as women of today are empowered to go forth in faith and grow in Christ.

Amid all the good times we spent together last year, there were also times of sadness. Dr. Jan Love, our wonderful leader at the Women's Division, said goodbye to us. She had accepted a fantastic position for her (and other women) as she became the first woman to serve as Dean of the School of Theology at Candler. She served us well and it was with much love and gratitude that we bade her God speed. We had a wonderful luncheon for her to show our love and appreciation at the Cotton House in Irmo. She was only with us a short time but she was able to accomplish much for us.

So the history is now written for another year and we feel very good about what has taken place. But no time for the weary. A new year has begun and with the legacy left to all of us by past conference presidents the women of South Carolina are ready to continue our task.

May God continue to bless the United Methodist Women as we continue to lift Him up and do His work.

*Imogene Steele*