

PLEDGE SERVICE 2026

By Water & by Faith

OBJECTIVE

Through this service, United Women in Faith members will use water to explore the relationship between generous giving and faith and make or renew their commitment of financial support to address the women, children, and youth through their Pledge to Mission.

SET THE ATMOSPHERE

Create an altar of blue. Use different-sized bowls or vases of water. Have a Bible open to John 4:1-15 and *The United Methodist Hymnal* open to page 33, the Baptismal Covenant. Candles will also add to the service, allowing those gathered to see the light move through the vases of water.

PREPARATION

To prepare for the service:

- Read through the service in its entirety, making any notes for how this would best work in your context.
- Listen to possible music selections for the service (see list). Decide which ones you will use or make selections of your own.
- Gather all needed supplies (see below).
- Set up the altar.
- Ask a volunteer to read John 4:1-15 during the service.

Supplies

- Pledge cards, downloadable at uwfaithresources.org/prodDetail.cfm?productID=10261&catid=2196 (one for each person)
- Pens
- Markers
- Baskets to hold supplies

SUGGESTED MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Songs with CCLI and OneLicense may be projected on a wall or shared on screen for local use. Please do not record or print out lyrics. YouTube videos are included to provide a tune reference for leaders/musicians only and can be played on individual devices in group settings. CDs should be used whenever available.

Songs About Baptism:

"Take Me to the Water," *Worship and Song*, #3165

"Down to the River to Pray," *Worship and Song*, #3164

"Blessed Assurance," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, #369

"Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, #400

Songs About Renewal:

"It Is Well with My Soul," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, #377

"Living Waters" CCLI License #11221925 (Tune: youtu.be/LA9UfBEHciY)

"Come to the Water" CCLI License #11221925 (arr. Hasseler)
(Tune: youtu.be/JeLFBw-bGxw)

"Amazing Grace (My Chains Are Gone)" CCLI License #11221925
(Tune: youtu.be/Y-4NFvI5U9w)

ONLINE OPTIONS TO PREPARE FOR THE SERVICE

- Set up a small altar in your home with the Bible, a candle, and a small bowl of water.
- Collect needed resources.
- Listen to suggested music to familiarize yourself with songs that identify the nourishment we find in community, communion, and God.



GATHERING

Play a song such as “Blessed Assurance” as women enter. Ask each woman to take a pen and a pledge card. (These items may be packaged and placed on each participant’s chair or table. Baskets or packs of markers should also be close at hand.)

WELCOME

The leader or volunteers can read the following:

Water symbolizes baptism and rebirth, healing and renewal, creation and order. Water is truly a gift. Its ebb and flow, waves and ripples, signify its dynamic and life-sustaining nature. It’s a refreshing, transformative force that renders us anew.

Reflecting on the narratives of water in the Bible fills us with gratitude. From the initial creation where God brought order from chaos to the story of Noah’s ark and the Red Sea parting for Moses and the Israelites, water is a constant life-giving element. In the New Testament, water again takes center stage in Jesus’ baptism, the blind man’s healing, and the Samaritan woman at the well. Water is present as Jesus calms storms and washes his disciples’ feet.

These stories fill our hearts with gratitude, reminding us of the living water God provides. We are reborn through baptism, healed, and renewed through the cleansing flood of God’s grace. We’re grateful for the transformation, the order from chaos, that water symbolizes in our lives.

The Welcome was inspired by Ashley Danyew, “Worship Planning Theme: Water,” Ashley Danyew, accessed June 28, 2024 ashleydanyew.com/posts/2017/worship-planning-theme-water.

Let us begin by remembering our baptism. Please join in reading the bold print.

One: Today we come to the waters,
to renew our commitments
in each other's presence
to Christ who has raised us,
the Spirit who has birthed us,
and the Creator who is making all things new.

Almighty God, the life you birthed in us
by baptism into Jesus Christ
will never die.
Your justice never fails.
Your mercy is everlasting.

ALL: **Your healing river flows.**
Your Spirit blows where you will.
We cannot stop you, God!

One: But sometimes we try.
We try to block the flow,
we redirect the winds of the Spirit,
or we walk so far away from the life-giving Stream
that we do not hear its sound
and we forget its power.
We parch ourselves.

ALL: **We are dry and thirsty, O God.**
Come, refresh us!

One: Come upon us, Holy Spirit!

ALL: **Come upon us, Holy Spirit!**

One: Come upon these waters.

ALL: **Come upon these waters.**

One: Let these waters be to us drops of your mercy.

ALL: **Let these waters remind us of your righteousness and justice.**

One: Let these waters renew in us the resurrection power of Jesus.

ALL: **Let these waters make us long for your coming reign.**

One: Most Holy God, Abba, Father!

ALL: **Glory to you!**

One: Jesus Christ, Savior, Lord!

ALL: **Glory to you!**

One: Spirit of fire, Spirit over the waters, Spirit of holiness!

ALL: **Glory to you!**

One: Eternal God, One in Three, and Three in One!

ALL: **All glory is yours, now and forever. Amen!**

From The United Methodist Hymnal The Baptismal Covenant IV, © 1976, 1980, 1985, 1989 The United Methodist Publishing House All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Each is invited to come to the altar to use the water as a sign of refreshment. As each uses the water, another says to her:

Remember that you are baptized and rejoice!

Online option: After listening to the song, one individual leads with the welcome litany above. Each woman can dip a finger in her bowl and place the sign of the cross on her forehead or the back of her hand.



REFLECTION: THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

In many of the stories we read, water symbolizes renewal and healing. Listen to John 4:1-15 (CEB):

Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was making more disciples and baptizing more than John (although Jesus' disciples were baptizing, not Jesus himself). Therefore, he left Judea and went back to Galilee.

Jesus had to go through Samaria. He came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, which was near the land Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there. Jesus was tired from his journey, so he sat down at the well. It was about noon.

A Samaritan woman came to the well to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me some water to drink." His disciples had gone into the city to buy him some food.

The Samaritan woman asked, "Why do you, a Jewish man, ask for something to drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (Jews and Samaritans didn't associate with each other.)

Jesus responded, "If you recognized God's gift and who is saying to you, 'Give me some water to drink,' you would be asking him and he would give you living water."

The woman said to him, "Sir, you don't have a bucket and the well is deep. Where would you get this living water? You aren't greater than our father Jacob, are you? He gave this well to us, and he drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock."

Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks from the water that I will give will never be thirsty again. The water that I give will become in those who drink it a spring of water that bubbles up into eternal life."

The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will never be thirsty and will never need to come here to draw water!"

Many people are searching for meaning in their lives; there are many for whom God may seem distant. Jesus recognized the spiritual thirst of the Samaritan woman. The woman at the well did not fit the traditional role of women in her time and was the first to encounter Jesus in her community and the first to tell others. Her example is just one of many showing how, despite the cultural expectations, women have been pivotal in the church in every generation.



Discuss

Discuss the leading and key roles of women in the church and in United Women in Faith, in drawing others to God, and in handing on the faith. How can you recognize and offer continued support?

LITANY: HEAR ANEW THE CALL TO MISSION

Please join in reading the bold print.

One: Jesus, I am coming to the well.
I didn't invite you to my home because
I'd be busy like Martha tidying up,
thinking everything had to be just so
and I just want to be like Mary,
taking in the fullness of your presence.

ALL: I'm coming to the well
with eager longing,
deep, yearning intensity,
so absolutely thirsty
to be filled with
your living water
to reach the depths again
of who I am.

One: And I know you ARE the well.
YOU are the divine well
of compassion, extravagant love,
and understanding
that I desperately need.

ALL: You are the healing water
overflowing, unlimited
to shore up my weakness.
You are the calm I need
in the storms of my life.
You are the patience
the courage to risk
the faithfulness
the wholeness
the gracious presence
to others
I so deeply desire.

Together: We offer all we have—our hearts, our minds, our will—as living sacrifices so we can give more than we can imagine. We trust God to bless our gifts and bring forth abundance to put love into action.

Excerpts taken from “Woman at the Well,” by Sister Donna Butler spsmw.org/prayer/woman-at-the-well.

Online option: Put the litany on a shared screen. Ask two people to take the parts of Leader and All. Remind participants to put themselves on mute and read along with the **All** and **Together** sections.

MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TO MISSION

Take the pledge card you received upon entering, complete it, and bring it to the altar to place it in the basket.

In the background play musical selections such as, “Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” or “Living Waters”.

Online option: Ask women to complete their pledge cards and give a copy to one of the following units: local, district, conference, or virtual unit.

Play a minute or two of one of the song selections while participants complete their pledge cards. When completed, ask them to hold their cards in their hands for a moment and pray over it. When they are done, they can “wave” their card in time to the music, as a sign of affirmation that they are trusting God to do miracles through their gifts.

Give online: uwfaith.org and select “Where it is Needed Most” to make your mission gift today or your monthly pledge. Your pledge to mission is the foundation for mission work through United Women in Faith.



CLOSING

Come to the water, the gift of life
Share with one another.
Come to the altar and give of yourself,
Make it possible for others to drink, for others to live.
Know the living water is you,
To share and to nurture, to grow and build
The water is plentiful,
The water is you.
Amen

Closing Song

Choose one of the musical selections suggested for this service.

Online option: Ask a volunteer to read the Closing Prayer aloud. Then, play a worship song or invite someone to sing a hymn of your choice (others can sing along, staying on mute). Encourage women to stand if they are able, to wave and clap their hands and join in on the chorus so that they can experience joy as they boldly pledge their gifts and time to the work of United Women in Faith.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCE

Ashley Danyew, ashleydanyew.com/posts/2017/worship-planning-theme-water
emmanuelthousandoaks.org/womanatthewell

Shannon Priddy is United Women in Faith executive for financial interpretation and Mission Giving.