



SPECIAL SUNDAYS

OF THE

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

The Special Sundays in The United Methodist Church are intended to be illustrative of the nature and calling of the church and are celebrated annually. The special Sundays are placed on the calendar to make clear the calling of the church as the people of God, and to give persons the opportunity of contributing offerings to special programs.

Six special church-wide Sundays provide for **church-wide offerings** to do deeds expressive of our commitment:

- Human Relations Day
- One Great Hours of Sharing
- World Communion Sunday
- United Methodist Student Sunday
- Peace with Justice Sunday
- Native American Ministries Sunday

Three special Sundays are **without offering**:

- Heritage Sunday
- Laity Sunday
- Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday

Four church-wide Sundays:

- Christian Education
- Golden Cross
- Rural Life
- Disability Awareness

The special Sundays approved by General Conference shall be the only Sundays of church-wide emphasis. The program calendar of the denomination shall include only the special Sundays approved by General Conference, special Sundays approved by ecumenical agencies to which The United Methodist Church is officially related, and the days and seasons of the Christian Year.

Because of the diversity of history and heritages experienced by the central conferences, they shall not be required to observe all of the special days listed above. The central conferences are authorized to observe other special days appropriate to their unique history and heritages.

Annual conferences may determine other special Sundays with or without offering. Special Sundays with offering shall be approved by the annual conference upon recommendation of the annual conference council on ministries in consultation with annual conference council on finance and administration. Special Sundays without offering shall be approved by the annual conference upon recommendation of the annual conference council on ministries.

Six special church-wide Sundays with offerings shall be celebrated in each United Methodist Church.

Purpose

The purpose of the church-wide offerings shall be determined by General Conference upon recommendation of the General Council on Finance and Administration, after consultation with the Council of bishops and the General Council on Ministries. The purpose of these funds shall remain constant for the quadrennium, and the net receipts shall be distributed on ration to the administering agencies by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration. The funds shall be promoted by the General Commission on Communication in cooperation with the agencies responsible for the administration of these funds.

Human Relations Day

Human Relations Day shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the Sunday before the observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. birthday. This Sunday occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God's light to the world. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other. The purpose of the day is to further the development of better human relations.

“It doesn't matter where we work, what we do, how many degrees we have or where we grew up. What matters is having the willingness to serve God in the most unusual places.”

The Human Relations Day offering makes it possible for community developers to turn lives around and make a change for the better. The Human Relations Day offering helps church-based community developers work in racial and ethnic-minority communities in the United States and Puerto Rico. The offering also ensures a second chance for youth offenders.

Why do we celebrate this offering on the Sunday before the observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday? Because as United Methodists we believe in the development of better human relations and we seek to empower others to become the whole persons God intended.

The 1972 General Conference established Human Relations Day to “recognize the right of all God's children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other.” Every one of God's children deserves justice and equality. Every one of God's children deserves to open doors to success.

One Great Hour of Sharing

One Great Hour of Sharing shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the Fourth Sunday in Lent. Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination, and awareness of the hurts of the peoples of the world. One Great Hour of Sharing calls the Church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt.

The observance shall be under the general supervision of the General Commission on Communication. Insofar as possible, the planning and promotion of the One Great Hour of Sharing shall be done cooperatively with other denominations through the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., it being understood, however, that receipts shall be administered by The United Methodist Church. Net receipts from the offering, after payment of the expenses of promotion, shall be remitted by the treasurer of the General Council on Finance and Administration to the General Board of Global Ministries, to be administered by the United Methodist Committee on Relief. With funding from One Great Hour of Sharing, the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) supports these and many other life changing ministries:

- When spring storms bring tornadoes and floods to the United States, UMCOR provides immediate emergency aid and long-term rehabilitation and recovery.
- West African farmers learn skills to increase out put through education, appropriate technology, new products and new markets.
- United Methodist hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa, India and the Philippines are revitalized with training, new equipment and improved facilities.
- Volunteers at the UMCOR Depot in Louisiana pack and ship containers of donated health a school kits to people around the world.

- Shelter, food, water, medicine and hope go out each week somewhere in the world for those affected by war, famine, earthquake, flood or fire.
- Refugees and immigrants in the United States receive a caring welcome through church-based ministries of sponsorship and counseling.
- Programs to reintegrate war-displaced persons and strengthen civil societies offer healing to communities in the Balkans and Afghanistan

World Communion Sunday

World Communion Sunday shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the first Sunday of October. World Communion Sunday calls the church to be the catholic inclusive church. In connection with World Communion Sunday there shall be a church-wide appeal conducted by the General Commission on Communication in accord with the following directives: Each local church shall be requested to remit all the communion offering received on World Communion Sunday and such portion of the communion offering received at other observances of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper as the local church may designate.

United Methodist Student Day

United Methodist Student Day shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the last Sunday in November or another Sunday appropriate to the local church. United Methodist Student Day calls the Church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge. The offering receipts support the United Methodist scholarships and the United Methodist Student Loan Fund. The funds shall be administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry.

Peace with Justice Sunday

Peace with Justice Sunday shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the first Sunday after Pentecost. Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit calling for God's shalom. Peace with Justice witnesses to God's demand for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world. The observance of Peace with Justice Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Church and Society.

Native American Ministries Sunday

Native American Ministries Sunday shall be observed with an offering, preferably on the third Sunday of Easter. This Sunday serves to remind the church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society. The observance of Native American Awareness Sunday will be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Two special Sundays without church wide offering shall be approved by General Conference upon recommendation of the General Council on Ministries after consultation with the council of bishops. The program functions assigned to the general agencies are carried out by the respective agencies through normal functions to be implemented.

Heritage Sunday

Heritage Sunday shall be observed on April 23, the day in 1968 when The United Methodist Church was created by the union of The Evangelical United Brethren Church and The Methodist Church, or the Sunday following that date. It falls during Eastertide, the season in which we remember the Resurrection and triumph of our Lord. Heritage Sunday calls the Church to remember the past by committing itself to the continuing call of God. The observance of Heritage Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Commission on Archives and History. Any general agency of the Church which desires to recommend a theme for a give year for this Sunday may do so one year prior to the observance for which the recommendation is made. This recommendation is to be made to the General Commission Archives and History, and the decision of the annual

theme of this Sunday shall be made by the voting members of the General Commission on Archives and History.

Laity Sunday

Laity Sunday shall be observed annually, preferably on the third Sunday in October. Laity Sunday calls the church to celebrate the ministry of all lay Christians, as their lives are empowered for ministry by the Holy Spirit. The observance of laity Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Discipleship. Any general agency of the Church that desires to recommend a theme for a given year for this Sunday may do so two years prior to the observance for which the recommendation is made. This recommendation is to be made the General Board of Discipleship, and the decision of the annual theme of this Sunday shall be made by the voting members of the General Board of Discipleship.

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday

Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday shall be observed annually, preferably on the second Sunday in November since the date is close to Thanksgiving and is viewed as time to come together around the issues of life and Thanksgiving. Congregations are encouraged to support Organ and Tissue Donor Sunday by including the topic in their worship services. Worship resource materials are available at all of the not-for-profit donor programs in the United States.

Christian Education Sunday

Christian Education Sunday shall be observed on a date determined by the annual conference. It calls the Church as the people of God to be open to growth and learning as disciples of Jesus Christ. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received for the work of Christian education within the annual conference. The observance of Christian Education Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Discipleship.

Golden Cross Sunday

Golden Cross Sunday shall be observed annually on a date determined by the annual conference. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received for the work of health and welfare ministries in the annual conference. The observance of Golden Cross Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Rural Life Sunday

Rural Life Sunday shall be observed on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Rural Life Sunday shall call the Church to celebrate the rural heritage of The United Methodist Church, to recognize the ongoing crisis occurring in rural areas of the nation and world today, and to affirm the interdependence of rural and urban communities. The observance of Rural Life Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the general Board of Global Ministries. Anyone who desires to recommend a theme for a given year for this Sunday may do so one year prior to the observance for which the recommendation is made. This recommendation is to be made to the General Board of Global Ministries, and the decision of the annual theme of this Sunday shall be made by the voting members of the General board of global Ministries. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received for the purpose of strengthening the nurture, outreach, and/or witness of congregations in town and rural areas.

Disability Awareness Sunday

Disability Awareness Sunday shall be observed annually on a date to be determined by the annual conference. Disability Awareness Sunday calls the Church to celebrate the gifts and graces of persons with disabilities and calls the Church and society to full inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. If the annual conference so directs, an offering may be received and the funds used by the annual conference to promote the work of creating architectural and attitudinal accessibility in local churches. The observance of Disability Awareness Sunday shall be under the general supervision of the General Board of Global Ministries.

Wesleyan Homes Sunday

Each year, the United Methodist Churches take an offering to support those residents of Wesleyan Homes who are in great financial need. Over the past 40 years, Wesleyan Homes has cared for thousands of older adults. Today residents are provided with retirement living, long term medical care, and specialized care for persons suffering from Alzheimer's disease. These services are provided in two facilities located in High Point, NC and Troy, NC. Wesleyan Homes are located throughout the United States.

As a ministry of the United Methodist Church, our mission has always been to provide care for older adults without regard to their ability to pay. No resident has ever been asked to leave one of our facilities because of their inability to pay the full cost of their care. Today some of our residents require more assistance than ever because their incomes have not kept pace with the Increasing cost of health care. In most instances, these persons have outlived their savings and family resources. More than 40 percent of our residents will require some type of charitable assistance this year. Wesleyan Homes is YOUR ministry to older adults. Please give generously to help Wesleyan Homes provide Charitable Care and love when it's needed most.