Our Stories: A Living Timeline

The DIY (do-it-yourself) Guide for United Methodist Women
Table of Contents

Introduction to the Living Timeline / 3

Living Timeline Examples / 4

Collecting Our Stories for the United Methodist Women’s 150th Anniversary / 6

The Importance of Storytelling for the A Living Timeline / 8

United Methodist Women Stories to Tell / 9

Five Tools for Effective Storytelling / 11

Specifications for Living Timeline Submissions / 12

How to Display a Living Timeline / 13

Creating a Facebook Page / 14
Introduction to the Living Timeline

The United Methodist Women Living Timeline started out as a multimedia digital and offline exhibit. Artwork, poetry, videos and essays were submitted by members to honor United Methodist Women members who have done extraordinary work putting faith, hope and love into action. Some tributes were of active members who were bright lights within their units and communities, while other tributes honored those members no longer with us.

The stories were displayed on the United Methodist Women’s Facebook page, Pinterest and at the 2014 We Make It Happen United Methodist Women’s Assembly in Louisville, Kentucky.
Living Timeline Examples

Here are some examples of Living Timeline submissions from the We Make It Happen Assembly 2014.

Marina “Marie” Gipson
United Methodist Women member
Seekley Chapel United Methodist Church
Tishomingo, Oklahoma

Dedicated to Agnes Hudson,
Retha Kitchen, Martha Byrd
United Methodist Women members, James River District,
Virginia Conference, Fort Grove United Methodist Church, Stony Creek, Va.
Grace Prince
United Methodist Women member
The first Spiritual Life Chair for the South Central Jurisdiction.
She worked with the organization when it was the Women’s Division and Board of Missions, New York, N.Y.

Yvette Diaz
United Methodist Women descmmittee
EPA Conference, Southeast District

Susan Coe
United Methodist Women member
St. David United Methodist Church
Chester, Penn.

Joyce Winston
United Methodist Women member
Virginia Conference President
First Fox Hill United Methodist Church, Hampton, Va.
Collecting Our Stories for United Methodist Women’s 150th Anniversary

For nearly 150 years, United Methodist Women members have done God’s work to ensure women, children and youth live better lives. The next five years leading up to the 150th Anniversary will be a time of celebration! It will also be a time of reflection, a time to ask ourselves, What will our legacy be? What more needs to be done?

Now is the time to regard our work, look around and remark on the brilliant ways members, leaders and units have contributed to God’s call for us: to put faith, hope and love into action.

Photos: Left and center are vintage photos of United Methodist Women and predecessor organizations. The photo on the right was taken in 1979. Theressa Hoover (right) and Mai Gray (center), chief executive and president of the Women’s Division, respectively, greet Lee Tae-young, affiliated with Ewha University in South Korea. Photo by John Goodwin for the Board of Global Ministries.
Who should collect the stories?

Ideally, a United Methodist Women conference communications coordinator will organize the units and circles within her district and conference and help guide members with the process of collecting stories to create Living Timelines. Conference communications coordinators should work with the units and circles to identify members who are tech savvy or willing to learn in order to help those who may not be so confident with the technical duties associated with creating a multimedia project.

A SUGGESTION: Ask young women who are experienced with computer technology to help with the Living Timeline. By helping to capture our stories, they may be inspired to become the next United Methodist Women trailblazers.
The Importance of Storytelling for the Living Timeline

Telling our stories to each other is easy because we are sisters in Christ and understand our work in mission. However, for our stories to grab the attention of outside audiences such as The United Methodist Church, faith-based organizations and the news media, we need to learn how to become master storytellers. Our work needs to be widely known to various audiences and Our Stories: A Living Timeline is one way to show the impact United Methodist Women has historically had on social justice, racial and women’s issues.

Leading up to the 150th Anniversary, we want the story of United Methodist Women members in mission to go viral. Yes, we help raise money for mission and serve the goodies at coffee hour, but we have put faith, hope and love into action as changemakers for millions of women, children and youth for 150 years!

Photos: Spontaneous justice action during National Seminar 2015. After hearing that plans were underway to close the pediatric inpatient unit at John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County, a hospital that serves a low-income community of color, United Methodist Women members attending National Seminar in Chicago joined Dr. Richard David and other hospital staff to protest the decision.

Photo by Christine Geovanis.
United Methodist Women
Stories to Tell

History of Your Unit/Circle

Encourage your local units to create Living Timelines about their history.
• Chronicle the founding members’ steps and their mission.
• What global mission initiatives were started in the beginning?
• What mission work did members do within the community?

It is important to look back at the accomplishments of our units and/or circles. Doing so allows us to gauge the progress we have made in the lives of women, children and youth. It also helps us to assess how much more work still needs to be done.

Ultimately, it will give our sisters in Christ (other United Methodist Women local members) an opportunity to see different areas of mission work being carried out in our communities, country and world.
Your Unit/Circle’s Mission Story in the Present

• What is presently happening within your local units?
• What does mission work look like now for the local unit and for the community the local units serve?

Just as it is important to look at past accomplishments, it is meaningful to share the current mission work being done now.

What are individual United Methodist Women local members doing to put faith, hope and love into action? Lift up the stories of one or two members that demonstrate exactly how individuals make a difference.

The Trailblazers Within Your Unit/Circle

There may be a unit leader or member who should be lifted up or remembered for their exemplary work or leadership role. Sharing tributes about United Methodist Women trailblazers demonstrates the power the individual spirit can have on some of God’s most needy people.
Five Tools for Effective Storytelling

1. Watch Andrew Stanton’s TED Talk, “The Clues to a Great Story.”
http://www.ted.com/talks/andrew_stanton_the_clues_to_a_great_story
is the writer of Wall-E and Toy Story. While watching the video, notice two important points in his talk:
   a) Make me care intellectually, emotionally and aesthetically.
   b) Drama is anticipation mingled with uncertainty.

2. Listen to and watch StoryCorps for examples of great storytelling.
www.storycorps.org

3. Think in terms of one story and one experience that dramatically highlight the work you do.

4. What’s the hook? Determine the story’s hook. A “hook” captures the audience with a thought or an object that spurs the story. Introduce the conflict right away, after the hook. How did your unit/circle affect change in a person’s life? How did that transform you and/or your unit/circle?

5. What is the best medium? Stories come alive depending on the medium chosen. Mediums are: artwork, video, audio, journaling, or written expressions such as essays, articles and poetry. Take into consideration which medium tells the story best.
Specifications for Living Timeline Submissions

Chose which way to tell the story and then follow the submission guidelines:

Video
- The video should be no more than five minutes long and smaller than 1.75 GB.
- Save videos as either MP4 or MOV. If your video is in a different format, refer to video software instructions on how to convert the video file to MP4 or MOV.

Word Documents
- Written expressions such as essays and poetry should be saved as a JPEG.
- First save the document as a .pdf. Export the .pdf as a .jpeg/.jpg and then save. The file size should not exceed 100 KB.

Images
- Artwork can be viewed as an image.
- Save the artwork or written expression as a 300 dpi JPEG. Make sure that the file size is no bigger than 100 KB for the web.
- If you need to resize the photo, make sure the width follows one of these sizes: 720px, 960px, 20148px.
How to Display a Living Timeline

The Living Timeline submissions should be displayed so that other United Methodist Women members can view them. Because thousands of United Methodist Women members like Facebook, each unit or circle will present their Living Timeline submissions on a Facebook page they create.

It will be important for units to collect as many submissions as possible before starting their Facebook pages. It is also important to understand that a unit’s Living Timeline Facebook page is actually “living” because the unit will be creating, collecting and displaying their submissions until after the United Methodist Women’s 150th Anniversary.

Each unit or circle will need to create a specific Living Timeline Facebook page regardless of whether they currently have a Facebook page for the unit/circle. The only posts on the Living Timeline Facebook page should be Living Timeline submissions from members.
Creating a Facebook Page

Creating a Facebook page is relatively easy, but the unit may want the help of a tech savvy person to get them started. The name of the Facebook page should reflect the name of the unit or circle. If the unit is St. Francis United Methodist Women, it should be named “St. Francis United Methodist Women Living Timeline.” Here is an instructional video on how to create a Facebook page: www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7IT4s538co

Photo shows how the Facebook page for Our Stories: A Living Timeline should look.
Questions About Our Stories:
A Living Timeline

Conference communication coordinators should choose how many questions to field from units about creating submissions or creating and maintaining Living Timeline Facebook pages.

Conference communication coordinators and members alike should feel comfortable contacting:

**Anissa New-Walker, United Methodist Women PR and Marketing Consultant for additional questions and help.**

Anissa can be contacted at: livingtimeline@unitedmethodistwomen.org