

UMW NH District Minutes
Fall Meeting
September 30, 2017
Wesley United Methodist Church
Concord, NH

Theme "Homelessness is No Laughing Matter"

Thirty four women gathered to learn, worship and eat together.

1. **Registration and Gathering** -- Guests arrived on a bright rainy day to an autumn decorated Hanna Hall, picked up their schedule for the day and donned name tags. In-gathering items were received for the Family Promise program. Coffee, sweet breads, and fruit were provided and conversation abounded.
2. **Welcome** — NH District UMW President Linda Theriault gave greetings and thanked us for coming as we assembled in the sanctuary. Ruthie Page, our Spiritual Growth coordinator, led us in devotions, beginning with singing: "This is the Day." Ruthie introduced the topic of the day: homelessness, commenting on all that has happening in the world, hurricanes and other reasons causing new homelessness across the country. Scriptures read were: Matthew 8:20, Luke 9:58, and Proverbs 22:9. Singing of "Majesty" and "On Eagles Wings" rounded out the devotions.
3. **Speaker 1** – Nancy Fransen introduced **Rev. Lena Mark**, Pastor of Peterborough United Methodist Church and West Rindge UMC. She is a board member of Hundred Days Cold Weather Shelter and Drop in Center in Keene, NH, and is soon to become a case manager for the shelter and resource manager for the drop in center. Lena began with statistics on homelessness of children the US and NH. Family homelessness is on the rise. She defined terms like "double up" and "wet shelter". The shelter in Keene was described as the shelter of last resort. On a 211 call if there is no room in Concord, Manchester, or Nashua, Keene is the last stop. It is a wet shelter and is not federally funded. She spoke of the large number of homeless with disabilities. Touching stories were told of the shelter "family" and how they care for each other. Lena stated that homelessness does not define character; it is a circumstance, where all your belongings are in one backpack. She concluded with a call to action that was presented at a December vigil honoring the homeless who died during the year in Keene. There is hope when you have nothing, all are worthy. Lena ended with questions and answers.

4. **Speaker 2** – Julie Runnels introduced Rev. **Jonathon Hopkins**, Concordia Lutheran Church, Concord, NH, who is on the board of directors of Family Promise in Concord, NH. Family Promise is a program for homeless families (with a child under 18). The program is nationwide. A local Family Promise program requires at least 13 faith communities that want to use their building to help the homeless. Congregations provide hospitality, dinner, two overnight volunteers and breakfast for a week about four times a year. During the day participants go to school, work or look for a job. A day center is available to do laundry, take showers, and provide resources. A social worker helps them to set goals. Usual duration of being in the program is a year. Participants are required to save 70% of their income for finding a place to live. In the question and answer, the experiences of volunteers were discussed expectations vs. reality.
5. **Secret Sister Cards** -- Linda Theriault handed out blank cards in envelopes to gather information for a Secret Sister exchange to take place between now and the spring meeting. The cards were gathered at lunch and offered to participants at the conclusion of the meeting.
6. **Special Guest** – Linda Theriault introduced the New Hampshire District Superintendent Rev. Taesung Kang and his wife Mina who joined us for lunch. Rev. Kang spoke about the UMW, blessed our in-gathering and said grace before lunch, giving thanks for all we take for granted.
7. **Lunch** – Soup and harvest salad and pumpkin cake were served, prepared by Sara Lutz Blackburn, President of Wesley Concord UMW and her husband Rick Blackburn.
8. **Music and Motion** – After lunch, guest instructor Theresa Beldin, led us in gentle exercise with stretching and relaxing.
9. **Breakout Sessions** – In the afternoon, participants alternated between two group activities: **Card making** led by Pam Aldrich and Ruthie Page who provided supplies, instruction and inspiration for us to create a card; and **Clowning Around** led by Poppyseed (Betty Strong) and Floppy (Carol Ann) provided a participatory introduction to clown ministry, and a clown's special view of the world.
10. **Slide show** -- We returned to the sanctuary to a musical presentation of photos and created by Jodi Austin showing engaging photos from the spring tea party and other lively moments from past meetings. We are called to love everyone.

11. Special Guest – Roberta “Bobbi” Bragan, New England UMW Conference President greeted us and complemented us on the quality of our meeting, and asked us to be open to serve on the district and conference UMW. She invited us to the Conference UMW annual meeting in Bangor, Maine, the UMW Assembly in Columbus, Ohio, and Mission U next summer at SNHU in Manchester, NH.

12. Business meeting –Treasurer’s report -- The treasury balance as of September 30, 2017 was \$1,488.34. Treasurer, Nancy Patton presented the proposed budget for 2018. It was discussed that travel money is available for team members and vouchers are available. Travel money has not been used very much. The budget was approved unanimously. **Social Action Coordinator appointment** -- The district executive team presented Sylvia Greene of Wesley UMC, Concord NH as a appointee for district Social Action Coordinator. Motion was made and accepted to affirm the appointment.

13. Closing Worship – Music by “Electric Praise” praise band from Wesley UMC. The offering collected, \$418.00, will go to the Hundred Nights Cold Weather Shelter in Keene, NH (www.hundrednightsinc.org). A meaningful Communion service was led by Rev. Peter Hey. The scripture was John 13; a selection from the book The Great Spiritual Migration by Brian McLaren was read. We ended singing “Go now in Peace”

14. Adjournment: 3:15 pm

Our next officer’s Meeting is _____ at _____.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Neal, acting Secretary