

## *World Thank Offering: The Give and Take of Gratitude*

January 17, 2021 – 3 to 4:00 pm

### **I am thankful for**



#### **Welcome and Prayer to Gather Us In** - Sharon Davis

Giver of All Grace, as we turn our hearts and minds to this study, grant us your Spirit so that we may be inspired to find new ways of sharing our gratitude with others. May our time apart be a light on our path in the world, where we work alongside others so that all may know the abundant life you offer. Amen.

#### **Reflect Together on Scripture:** John 4:1–42

Verses 1-12	Sheila Yater
Verses 13-26	Yvonne Knight
Verses 27-38	Judy Piazza
Verses 39-42	Karen Jones

#### **Breaking the Expectations** – Read by: Denise Pullen

Samaritans and Jews did not mix with each other. They did not consider each other “neighbors.” This happened a long time before Jesus met the unnamed Samaritan woman at the well. Several hundred years prior, Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel, after the fall of the northern kingdom to the Assyrians in the seventh century BCE. During the time they were occupied by the Persians, the Samaritans built a shrine on Mount Gerizim so that they could worship God despite not being able to travel to the temple in Jerusalem. Eventually, the disagreement over the location of worship led to strict rules dictating no contact between Jews and Samaritans. Jewish men were not to begin conversations with a woman they did not know. Jewish teachers did not have public conversations with any woman. And yet, Jesus speaks to this unnamed woman at the well. She is surprised and asks why he would speak to her. Jesus doesn’t answer her question about this violation of social norms. Instead, he reveals himself to her as the source of living water. The man who asked her for a drink of water now offers her fresh running water, and so she asks about that water, not realizing Jesus is offering something else.

#### **Moved by Gratitude** – Read by: Gaila Dury

This unnamed woman has the courage and tenacity to continue engaging Jesus in conversation. She knows it is a violation of customs, but that does not deter her. Her mind is full of her own situation, and the needs that drive her to come for water in the middle of the day. Jesus does not offer judgment on her marriages. Could it be that she is caught in a cycle of Levirate marriage, in which a woman is passed from brother to brother after her husband dies? Jesus does not assume that she is sinful, just that she has had five marriages. Jesus offered her living

water, which she did not grasp. But when he offers her life, grounded in the reality of her own life, she acknowledges who Jesus truly is and abandons her water jar to return to town and tell people to “come and see” Jesus. She extends an invitation to them to come and see for themselves, in spite of her own lingering questions. Her words to the townspeople: “he cannot be the Messiah, can he?” reveal that while she still has doubts, she invites others to come and see. In her gratitude to Jesus for truly seeing her, speaking to her, recognizing her as a child of God who deserved to be spoken to with compassion, she is moved to invite others to come and encounter Jesus. She does not keep this good news to herself. Her joy and curiosity motivate her to invite others to come and see. She runs back to town to share the word of abundant life and grace.

### **Activity / Discussion** – Led By: Linda Schade

If we were meeting in person, we would provide you with a flat stone and ask you to write on it the name of a person who is important on your faith journey or simply the work “thanks” or “gratitude.” When the stones were placed in a bowl of water, we would see how the water would move and flow. It would remind us that our praise and gratitude move the water, our prayers help righteousness flow like a stream.

1. Whose name would you write on the stone? [Can be done silently.]
2. Who shared their faith with you and helped you to understand Jesus’ grace?
3. What people are important along your faith journey?
4. Where have you gone to share faith?

### **Act Together: World Thank Offering**

#### **Discussion on What mission projects do you and UMW support?** Led By: Sharon Davis

For more than 135 years Methodist women have given to the World Thank Offering through United Methodist Women and its predecessor organizations. The World Thank Offering is an opportunity for individuals to respond to God’s abundant grace. When we share our gifts and they are combined with the gifts of others, our contributions make possible the support of National Mission Institutions and international projects and partners to meet the physical and social needs of women, children and youth.

### **View UMW Mission Maps**

Missions supported closer to home: Mary Elizabeth Inn  
Gum Moon  
Susanna Wesley in Hawaii  
Ubuntu Day of Service

## Invitation to Donate

### By Check –

Mail to Flavia Muttera, Treasurer

Address: 1897 Appia Court, Walnut Creek, CA 94598

Donate Electronically: [www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank](http://www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/worldthank)

Give Thanks.  
Give Now.



Click on red box “Give Thanks, Give Now” with a white heart. After clicking on the box, the site takes you to a screen where you can designate your donation amount. It also asks if you are member of United Methodist Women. By clicking on ‘yes,’ the site allows you to give credit to our church, district and conference. WCUMC official designation is **First Walnut Creek**. The site will then bring up the district and conference information and allow you to choose this church by clicking on ‘Select.’

Church	District	Conference	Jurisdiction	City	State	Zip	Choose
First walnut creek	Los rios	California-nevada	Western	Walnut creek	Ca	94597-1903	Select

### Closing Litany and Going Forth - - Sharon Davis and Linda Schade

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, be with us in our seeking.

**All voices:** Come, Holy Spirit, be with us in our needing, walk with us in our searching.

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, open our ears and our eyes to the One who is Living Water.

**All voices:** Be with us in our wanting and our longing. Open our hearts to perceive the grace freely offered to us.

**One voice:** Stir up in us gratitude that makes us run to share good news.

**All voices:** Give us courage to go out and proclaim, in word and deed, the good news of Jesus Christ. Give us hearts of compassion to be responsible messengers, committed to the suffering people of the world.

**One voice:** Come, Holy Spirit, be with us as we are sent out on the journey.

**All voices:** Walk with us so we can discover the path of faithfulness and invite others to come and know the grace of Christ. Amen.