

Don't Let Go of the Sisterhood of Grace

How do you look at the seasonal changes in our landscape? Do you see the colorful leaves and consider how God blesses us with beauty in nature? Or do you think of the leaves as a chore that is forthcoming? Hmmm. Perhaps you do both. In Middle Tennessee, we have conversations about how changeable the weather is. In fact we may start some days with air conditioners blasting, but end up digging out our thermal underwear.

Change is not always comfortable. Our seven districts had to address change last year because of redistricting to five districts in the conference. We now know that the conference will have to figure out what to do about the approved merge of our Tennessee Conference with the Memphis Conference. This means our two UMW conferences will unite and become one conference with a new name.

You may ask, "What does that have to do with me?" As United Methodist Women, we can either be like the person that looks at the changing leaves and says, "Thank you, God." Or we can be like the person that dreads the work ahead in raking those leaves, and says, "Oh dear, more leaves."

The recent change involving our district has been difficult to work with. As a district officer, planning the events and meetings has been a challenge to find a location where it is not too far to drive so we can have a great attendance. On the other hand, increasing our district has given me the opportunity to meet UMW sisters I never would have met if it weren't for the change. Optimism can be contagious, but so can its opposite. We need a cheerleader for the changes we are going through!

Several years ago, Brenda Gardner was in charge of promoting the Reading Program for the conference UMW. At conference events she would emerge from the back of the room waving a fan that identified what she was there for. After she got our attention, she would share something about the reading program. It was light-hearted and fun. It was effective. I think we should encourage Brenda to come to all district functions once again to be our joyful spirit leader.

I can envision it now... she would come in the room waving her little fan with the words JOYFUL SPIRIT in bold colors on it. Don't you think this would put a smile on our faces? Being part of a Sisterhood of Grace means we lift one another up. Don't ever stop. Be a joyful spirit - even when you end up raking leaves.

With blessings,

Lois Azar