Program Resource 2027 for Small Groups & Circles

An Unfolding Welcome:

HOSPITALITY AS SACRED GIFT & SHARED PRACTICE



ESTHER PARAJULI

2027 Program Resource

An Unfolding Welcome:

Hospitality as Sacred Gift & Shared Practice

Esther Parajuli



United Women in Faith

An Unfolding Welcome: Hospitality as Sacred Gift & Shared Practice: United Women in Faith Program Resource 2027 by Esther Parajuli

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United Women in Faith

Vision

Turning faith, hope, and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

Mission

United Women in Faith seeks to connect and nurture women through Christian spiritual formation, leadership development, creative fellowship, and education so that they can inspire, influence, and impact local and global communities.

Purpose

To be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.

United Women in Faith



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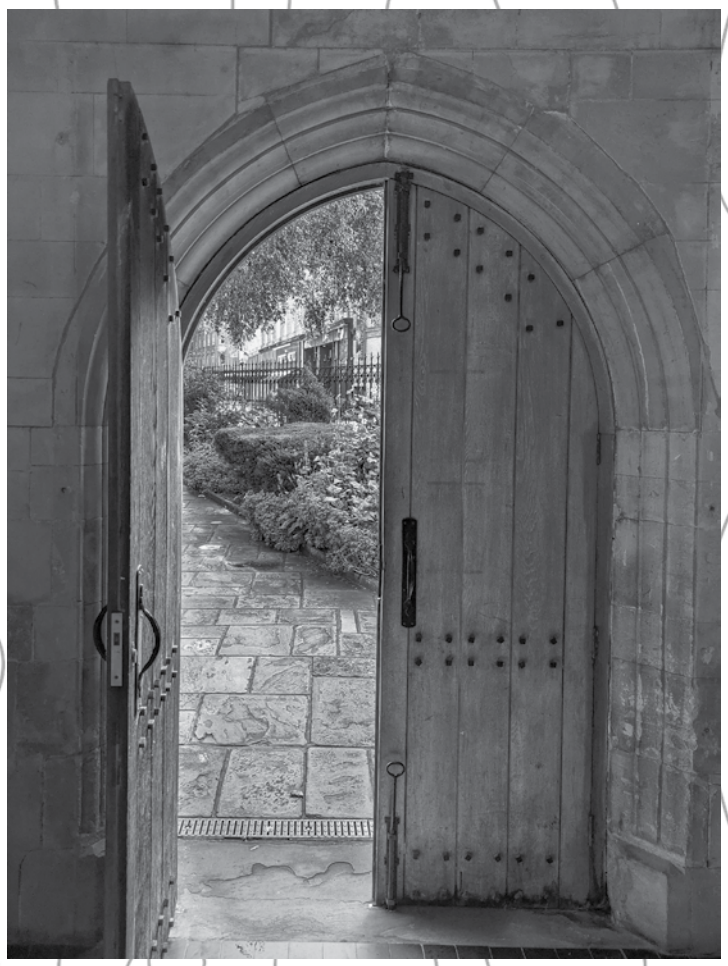
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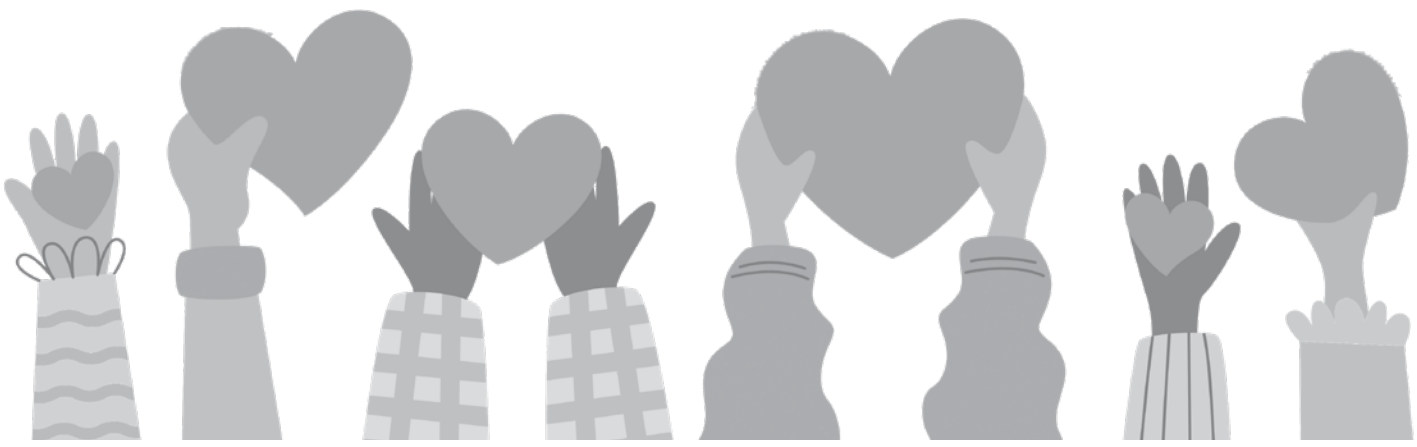




2027

A CALL TO

PRAYER & SELF-DENIAL



Rooted in Faith, Committed to Racial Justice

by Darlene Alfred and Mikele Haskins-Delmore



Introduction

Greetings and welcome to the 2027 A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial.

This year's theme centers on and supports the longstanding racial justice work of United Women in Faith, and particularly the Charter for Racial Justice. The Charter serves as the cornerstone of United Women in Faith's work, just as we view Jesus as the cornerstone of our faith. It serves to uphold the foundations of justice and equity among all of God's people and has been a core part of our identity.

Our foremothers authored the Charter for Racial Justice because they believed. Today, we still believe! They witnessed the injustices imposed upon people who were marginalized, disenfranchised, and voiceless, and knew that change was necessary. Time and again, they began with humble means, an indefatigable spirit, mighty hearts, and even mightier courage, transforming faith into action. These courageous trailblazers, much like our sisters today, held an unquenchable fire—bold, fierce, and radiant, lighting the path for all who follow!

We are continually called to recommit ourselves and to show our belief with our actions. We are called to remember the works of women such as:*

- Sarah A. Dickey, who in **1863** was called to educate newly emancipated people.
- Kim Seji, who in **1899** became the first Bible Woman in Korea.
- Élida García de Falcón, a Spanish-speaking woman, who in **1944** began translating the Program Book into Spanish.

- Author and lawyer Pauli Murray, whose **1951** book *States' Laws on Race and Color*, commissioned by the Woman's Division, became the groundwork for the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling on Brown v. Board of Education.

*Information and dates courtesy of United Women in Faith's Racial Justice Timeline.

This year's A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial offering will support the United Women in Faith's ongoing work for racial justice in and around our local communities.

Before the Service

- Ask members to bring photos of women who have modeled faith for them.
- Ask members to bring their copy of the Charter for Racial Justice, if they have one already.
- Ask members to bring their copy of the Racial Justice Timeline, if they have one already.
- Download and print copies of the Charter for Racial Justice, Racial Justice Timeline, and Racial Justice Engagement Opportunities available online (**uwfaith.org/racialjustice**).
- Have enough copies of the Charter for Racial Justice and the Racial Justice Timeline for each member present to read or review that did not bring their own copy.



Materials

- Past copies of **response** magazine
- Photos of women who have modeled faith for you
- Newspaper or magazine articles of local women who have made a difference in the community
- Multi-colored markers
- Sheets of posterboard
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Glue sticks or tape
- Candles
- Small bowl and glass of water on each table



Volunteers

- Identify 2-4 members to serve as readers for pre-selected sections of the Charter for Racial Justice.
- Identify 2-4 members to reflect on dates in the Timeline that touched their lives or the lives of friends, family, and loved ones.
- Identify 2-4 members to read the Opening Prayer.
- Identify 2-4 members to read the Scripture Reading and Litany.



Music (options)

- Select pre-recorded songs or hymns for the service.
- Select pre-recorded music to stream softly in the background.
- Download or purchase tracks if a live musician is not available.

Facilitator note: When selecting music, please be aware of copyright laws before playing music or printing lyrics in a group setting.

Room Setup

- If possible, use round tables to make it easier to share in small groups (maximum of four to a table).
- Have copies of magazines, photographs, newspaper articles, scissors, construction paper, markers, glue sticks, and tape at each table.

Welcome (3-5 minutes)

Welcome, today we will explore the Racial Justice Timeline and the Charter for Racial Justice. We will have an opportunity to learn more about United Women in Faith's racial justice history, review moments in history that shaped our organization, and identify moments that have shaped our communities. The Charter is the guiding document outlining our commitment to anti-racism, while the Racial Justice Timeline provides historical context and key moments, showing the evolution and ongoing application of the Charter's principles. When we look at the actions and struggles in racial justice within the church and society, the Charter serves as the "what," and the Racial Justice Timeline serves as the "how or when."



Opening Prayer

Leader: Holy and Compassionate God, open our eyes to every place where injustice hides—around us and within us.

Reader 1: Plant our feet firmly in the Charter for Racial Justice's call, that we may face racism in all its forms with steadfast courage, deep humility, compassion, and understanding.

Reader 2: Mend the tears and brokenness that divide us and turn fear into understanding, hatred into love, and despair into rising hope.

Reader 3: Guide our voices to truth, our hands to healing, and order our steps to the work of justice, so that all your children may flourish in freedom and peace.

All: **Amen.**

Time of Reflection

Take turns at each table to pour water into the bowl, offering thanks and calling the names of women who have made a difference in your family/community, advocating and fighting for racial justice. Before each pour, members may recite:

"Holy Spirit, thank you for the life and work of your bold servant (*name*). May her boldness and sacrifice not be forgotten."



Song

The following are suggested songs. The links are to give a tune reference. Please check copyright permissions before reproducing music.

- "Do What the Spirit Say Do" (**youtu.be/rzvTEjp2XgE**)
- "Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round" (**youtu.be/D2wdkDaipNo**)
- "Ella's Song" (We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest) (**youtu.be/1tG1dNJh2rw**)



Scripture: Hebrews 12:1-2 (CSB)

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy that lay before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

A Litany for Justice & Perseverance

Leader: We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, our mothers and sisters and grandmothers who marched, prayed, resisted, organized, and hoped.

All: **We remember that we do not struggle alone.**

Leader: They ran the race before us, naming truth in dangerous times, standing up, speaking up, and fighting when it cost them everything.

All: **Strengthen us by our sisters' witness.**

Leader: So let us lay aside every weight—
the weight of indifference, the weight of fear, and the weight of comfort that keeps us silent.

All: **Free us to run toward justice.**

Leader: Let us cast off the sin that clings so closely—
the sin of racism and greed, violence and exclusion, and the systems that deny your image in one another.

All: **Unbind us, O God, for the sake of love.**

Leader: And let us run with perseverance the race set before us: the long road of equity, the unfinished work of liberation, and the daily practice of mercy.

All: **Strengthen us with endurance when the path grows difficult.**

Leader: We fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who chose solidarity over safety and justice over power.

All: **Keep our eyes on the way of Christ.**

Leader: For the joy set before him, he endured the cross, bearing suffering, rejecting shame, and trusting that death would not have the final word.

All: **Teach us courage rooted in hope.**

Leader: When the race feels too long, when progress feels too slow, when resistance wears us down,

All: **Remind us why we run.**

Leader: We run for those who are marginalized, for those denied dignity, and because love demands movement.

All: **We will not grow weary in doing good. Surrounded by witnesses, freed from what binds us, and fixed on Christ, we commit ourselves again to the work of justice, until all may run in freedom.**

WE BELIEVE! WE BELIEVE! WE BELIEVE!

Amen.

About the Call to Prayer & Self-Denial

For more than 157 years, United Women in Faith members have taken action to turn faith, hope, and love into work on behalf of women, children, and youth in every corner of the world.

As an annual part of our action, United Women in Faith invites women to gather and participate in A Call to Prayer and Self-Denial. Our gifts this year will support our racial justice advocacy campaigns to end mass incarceration and interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline. Our gifts will also support the work to continue our work related to the Charter for Racial Justice.

> *We commit ourselves again to the work of justice, until all may run in freedom.*

History of the Charter for Racial Justice

United Women in Faith first adopted the "Charter of Racial Policies" in 1952. Our foremothers worked tirelessly over the years at multiple levels of our predecessor organizations, to adopt, revise, update, implement, and share the Charter. It was adopted by The United Methodist Church in 1980.

The Charter is now included in *The Book of Resolutions* and is regularly updated and readopted at General Conference.

Let us affirm the Charter together:

We celebrate the diversity of God's good creation. As a sisterhood of grace, we are called together by a shared mission: faith, hope, and love in action. We believe that we are all God's beloved children, united in one family.

We affirm our ongoing commitment to the principles outlined in the Charter for Racial Justice.

We recognize racism as a deep sin and a clear rejection of the teachings of Jesus Christ. We grieve the many ways that racism has harmed our relationships with God, with ourselves, and with each other. We pledge to continue to work for the elimination of racism at all levels: individual, interpersonal, institutional, cultural, and systemic.

We pray for God's strength on this journey.

Activity: Create Your Own Charter for Racial Justice Timeline (30-45 minutes)

Explore the copies of the Charter for Racial Justice and the Racial Justice Timeline at your tables. Then work together using the materials you brought and at your table to create a personal racial justice timeline that reflects your lived experiences.

One person from each table will present to the larger group.

Offering

Your gifts today support our advocacy campaigns to end mass incarceration and interrupt the school-to-prison pipeline as well as build members' capacity to implement the Charter for Racial Justice at all levels of United Women in Faith.

Offertory Prayer

Holy and Loving God, all that we have and all that we are come from you. As we offer these gifts, we bring our hope, courage, and commitment to justice. Bless them for supporting the work of United Women in Faith in ending mass incarceration, interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline, and restoring pathways of dignity and equality. Please strengthen those harmed by racial inequity and all who labor for a world for all your people.

God, we ask that you shape us to not only pray for change, but to become instruments of it. We offer these gifts in faith and gratitude in the name of your son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Closing Song

Sing one of the following songs:

- "For Everyone Born," *The Faith We Sing, #2249*
- "For Courage to Do Justice," *The United Methodist Hymnal, #456*



Sending Forth

Go forth with unwavering strength, anchored in the truth of who you are and the sacred calling that stirs your soul.

Walk protected in every step, wrapped in grace that shields your spirit, steadies your feet, and fortifies your resolve.

As you confront injustice, may discernment and wisdom be your constant companions.

As you raise your voice, may it thunder with truth, tempered by compassion, shaking the foundations of oppression.

As you labor for equity, healing, and liberation, may you never waver in the power and purpose of your presence.

Go with hearts unshakable, hands ready to build, and hope as your armor.

And may the One who strengthens, shields, and empowers you march beside you—undaunted, unbroken, unstoppable.

Amen.

Resources for more information on racial justice

- American Civil Liberties Union (**aclu.org/issues/racial-justice**)
- Poor People's Campaign (**poorpeoplescampaign.org**)
- Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America (**csrea.brown.edu**)
- General Commission on Race and Religion (**gcorr.org**)
- NAACP (**naacp.org**)

Darlene Alfred is a native of Detroit, Michigan. She organizes and facilitates leadership retreats and workshops on domestic violence awareness, mass incarceration, and diversity and racism in the church. She has partnered with various leadership programs in the community for youth/young adults, focusing on health, education, and embracing our cultural differences. She and her husband currently live in Central Texas, have three adult children, 10 grandchildren, and own a real estate brokerage where they have worked side by side for over 25 years.

Mikele Haskins-Delmore is a member of the Baltimore-Washington Conference and serves on the board of United Women in Faith, where she is committed to supporting faith-based outreach and advocacy. She is passionate about empowering women, strengthening communities, and creating meaningful opportunities for service and connection, particularly in the area of social and climate justice.

Welcome to the 2027 Daily Prayer Guide

As followers of Christ, we are welcomed into God's kin-dom.

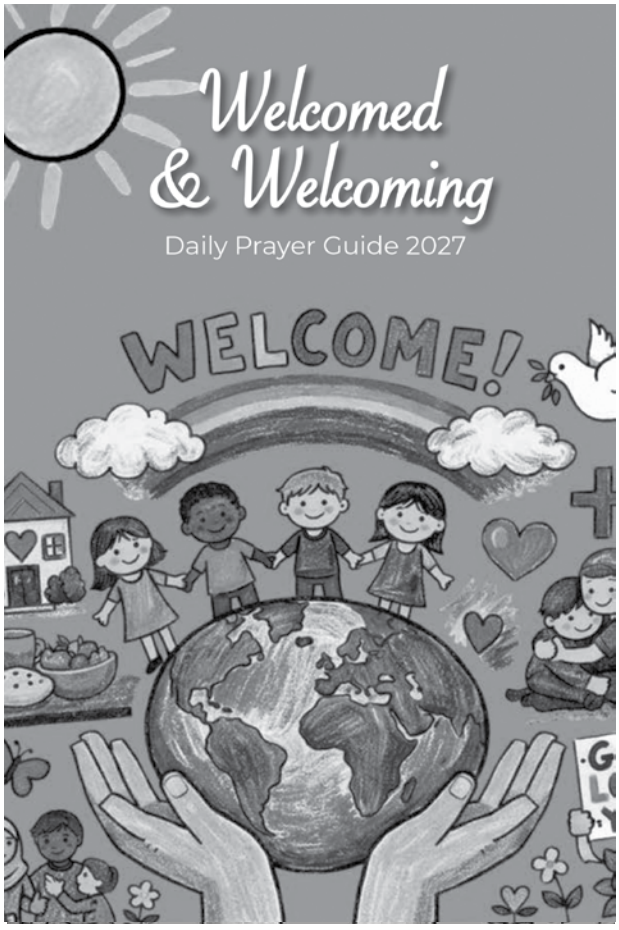
The 2027 Daily Prayer Guide reminds us that God's hospitality is the foundation for all welcome. God's welcome is not only a gift to us but also a call to action: "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Romans 15:7, NRSVUE).

The Daily Prayer Guide includes many features to lead you through the year:

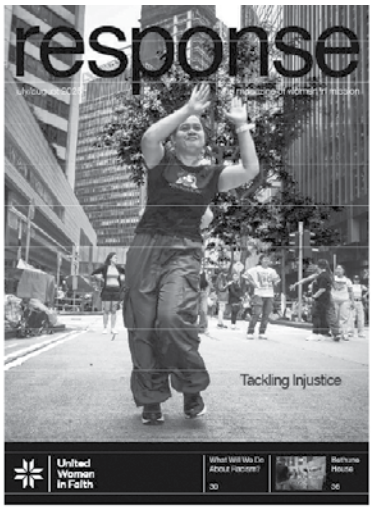
Weekly pages with children's art, inspiring reflections, prayers, holidays, advocacy days, and lectionary readings.

A directory of mission personnel affiliated with United Women in Faith and Global Ministries. And more.

Use the QR code to order your Daily Prayer Guide today!



United Women in Faith







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UWFaith *Digital*

Come connect with your sisters, make new friends, and experience your favorite print resources through an online digital platform.

Additional Content:

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- **Multimedia** to complement your resources
- Free **downloadable PDFs** if you prefer to print your materials
- **Monthly Community Gatherings** on UWFaith Digital are a time to experience the upcoming Program Resource program with the author
- Regular **educational and inspirational content** from the Reading Program, Faith Talks, Voices From the Field, and Soul Care

Community:

- **Free access** to the United Women in Faith network
- **Opportunities to engage** in fellowship, networking, and community building with sisters from across the country and around the world
- Activity feed that lets you read **inspirational messages**, respond to polls, ask questions, and engage with the community
- **Discussion groups** you can join according to your interests, or groups to support your leadership roles
- Online space to share ideas in a **safe environment** created just for you

Go to uwfaith.org/digital to connect with the United Women in Faith community or subscribe to one of the paid resources.

United Women in Faith

UWFaith *Digital* **Resources and Community—in one secure space**

The 2027 United Women in Faith Program Resource, *An Unfolding Welcome: Hospitality as Sacred Gift & Shared Practice*, explores how hospitality begins not with our initiative, but with God's. This Program Resource approaches hospitality as a formative practice grounded in Scripture and expressed through sustained communal life. Rather than limiting hospitality to acts of welcome or table fellowship, it examines how hospitality takes shape across households, congregations, institutions, and public life.

Monthly programs are organized into four quarterly themes: The Web of Hospitality, Hospitality That Risks Disruption, Hospitality as Responsibility, and Hospitality as Public Witness. Each program is designed to last a minimum of 60 minutes and integrates Scripture, reflection, soul care, silence, and prayer. Framing notes introduce each quarter, and practical guidance supports facilitators in preparing and adapting sessions for different contexts. Join and participate in local programs to grow in faith, participate in action, and connect with sisters!

You can also experience this resource and monthly Community Gatherings in an online platform via UWFaith Digital.



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