

## A Dozen Ways to Celebrate Special Sundays

Here are 12 ideas for making United Methodist observances of the six Special Sundays with Offerings more meaningful and memorable.

### Human Relations Day (*Sunday before the observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday*)

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. opened doors for many people. Think of doors in your community that you can open: tutoring children and teens, teaching English to immigrants, donating new socks or gently worn coats to a homeless person or helping with housing issues.

Reflect on these words of Delia Ramirez, former executive director of "The Center for Changing Lives," Chicago: "It doesn't matter where we work, what we do, how many degrees we have or where we grew up. What matters is having the willingness to serve God in the most unusual places." Ask other church members to list "unusual places" where they can make a difference. Work to make it happen!



### One Great Hour of Sharing (*fourth Sunday in Lent*)



Invite someone who benefited from or was part of the response of the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) to a natural disaster to visit your church. Ask the guest to speak briefly during worship or Sunday school to tell what a difference UMCOR, through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, made.

Create relief-supply kits to help care for people affected by natural or human-caused disasters. The kits provide necessities to people who lack ready access to essential supplies and offer vital support for UMCOR's work around the world. Select from seven choices: bedding, birthing, health, layette, school and sewing kits and cleaning buckets. Find details at [www.umcor.org](http://www.umcor.org).

### Native American Ministries Sunday (*third Sunday of Easter*)

Design a worship service using *The United Methodist Hymnal* to incorporate Native American hymns or hymns with Native American translations, such as "Amazing Grace" (378), "Great Spirit, Now I Pray" (78) and "Jesus Loves Me" (191).

Worship with a Native American United Methodist congregation. They are located in the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference and in annual conferences across the United Methodist connection. If you can't get together in person, consider Skyping.



## Peace with Justice Sunday (*first Sunday after Pentecost/Trinity Sunday*)



Identify people in the congregation who promote peace and ask them to share. For example, ask a schoolteacher who deals effectively with bullying in the classroom to lead a session on preventing and combating bullying — on the playground and in the boardroom. Read Isaiah's words, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger who announces peace" (Isaiah 52:7a, NRSV).

Distribute slips of paper and pencils to the congregation. Ask each person to write one idea for living peacefully, such as letting a driver merge in heavy traffic or buying a meal for someone down on his or her luck. Encourage them to dedicate their commitment to live their promise by placing the paper in the offering plate.

## World Communion Sunday (*first Sunday in October*)

Invite members and friends to bake large and miniature loaves of bread that represent their heritage. Use the small loaves during Holy Communion. Sell the large loaves after worship and add the proceeds to the World Communion Sunday offering.

Be ecumenical. Share worship, including Communion, — and, perhaps, church school — with a neighboring congregation of another denomination. Divide the leadership among clergy and laity. Include key elements from each group's worship experience. Sing "One Bread, One Body" and other hymns that emphasize that we are all members of God's family. Follow the service with a time for fellowship.



## United Methodist Student Day (*last Sunday in November*)



Plan your celebration for a time when college students are home. Contact the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry to learn if anyone in your congregation received a United Methodist scholarship or loan. Ask recipients to speak briefly during the worship service or to a Sunday school class to tell what a difference the scholarship made.

Sponsor a fundraiser to supplement the Student Day offering. Consider a spelling bee with entry and admission fees. Or ask participants to collect pledges of 25 cents to \$1 for each word they spell correctly.

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