March 8 has been designated International Women's Day by the United Nations – and the day is recognized and celebrated in many countries around the world. The growing international women's movement, which has been strengthened by four global United Nations women's conferences, has helped make the commemoration a rallying point to build support for women's rights and full participation in societies around the world.

This year, women and men have taken part in an avalanche of marches and campaigns for equality and justice. This unprecedented global activism is being fueled by movements such as #MeToo and #TimesUp, by worldwide protests against discrimination, sexual harassment, and violence, and by campaigns for reproductive rights, equal pay, and women’s political representation. In December 2017, “The Silence Breakers” – women who broke their silence and spoke out on sexual assault and harassment – were named TIME magazine's Person of the Year.

As Unitarian*Universalists, we must cherish this momentum and channel the energy into transformative action. Drawing on the resilience of rural and urban women activists worldwide, it is time for us to stand up and speak out in the face of harassment, discrimination, and the rollback of hard-won rights. Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls is the unfinished business of our time, and the greatest human rights challenge in our world.

We ask Unitarian Universalist congregations to consider dedicating a Sunday offering or collection to the important work of the International Women’s Convocation near March 8 or in May around Mother’s Day. This packet provides resources for Unitarian Universalist congregations to plan a worship service that honors International Women’s Day and support IWC in its mission to empower women and girls worldwide.

Please contact us at admin@icuuw.com with any questions or concerns.

We all have the capacity to change the world. This International Women’s Day or Mother’s Day join us in celebration, action, and transformation!
The International Women’s Convocation (IWC) is a nonprofit organization focused on global women’s rights and empowerment, inspired by the First International U*U Women’s Convocation (USA, 2009). Its members include U*Us as well as other people of liberal religious faith, led by U*U women. IWC’s international board includes women from India, the Philippines, Romania, and the U.S; its advisory board, the Global Sisters Leadership Council, represents Australia, Bolivia, India, Japan, the Philippines, Romania, and the U.S.

We are a global partnership of U*U women who work for women’s empowerment through U*U connections around the world.

Micro-Lending Program in Africa

Entrepreneurial training and small business loans to women entrepreneurs in Mutundwe, near Kampala, Uganda

Leadership Development Worldwide

Global Sisters Groups: a decision-making process establishing priorities for IWC programs

✓ Provides women with leadership tools and skills
✓ Identifies and prioritizes issues
✓ Addresses issues through action-planning

Convocations and Gatherings
Connecting Women Worldwide

USA (2009); Philippines and Romania (2012); Bolivia (2015); USA (2017)
We Invite Your Support
to Honor International Women’s Day on a Sunday near March 8, 2019

- Talk about women’s issues from the pulpit, including the opportunity for women to lead or take part in worship;
- Raise awareness to women’s issues;
- Work for women’s human rights;
- Join a network through our global faith community;
- Learn about the International Women’s Convocation’s work worldwide;
- Support the International Women’s Convocation and women’s projects

Proceeds will support International Women’s Convocation’s work internationally

Projects IWC has helped design/direct, co-sponsor or raise funds for include:

- A micro-loan program in Mutundwe Village, Kampala, Uganda
- A five-module leadership school and grants to local empowerment projects in Transylvania
- A six-module leadership development program in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, India
- A violence awareness and prevention program in UU communities in the Philippines
- A violence awareness and prevention program in UU communities in India
- A pilot leadership development program in Bolivia
Celebrate International Women’s Day by committing to work together with the International Women's Convocation to provide women with a brighter future — a future where women have a voice, are equal participants in power structures and decision-making, and make a difference that benefits whole societies.

Global Initiative for Women’s Leadership

Plate collections will benefit IWC’s Global Initiative for Women’s Leadership Fund

Honoring Barbara Kres Beach, the founding president of IWC, the Global Initiative for Women’s Leadership (GIWL) supports programs that provide culturally sensitive leadership training, networking opportunities and resources, as well as build capacity for sustainability and long-term success.

Culturally sensitive development happens when women team up and agree on their priorities. Training programs for the GIWL are built by women who are ready to make equality, empowerment, and community their priority, passion, and action.

Resources and support. The Global Initiative Leadership Team links in-country participants and facilitators with mentors, resource specialists, and funding match-makers. The Team—in and outside the country—plans together; identifies resources; activates the project; and finally, takes stock to ensure that goals have been reached.

GIWL focuses on program sustainability, requiring looking beyond short-term goals, toward a long-range vision: building capacities, strengthening women’s community, civil, business, and political participation, and advancing gender equity.
Resource Packet for International Women’s Day 2019

- Sermon ideas and topics, prayers and meditations
- Adult and youth education discussion materials
- Testimonials of women who benefited from IWC’s programs
- Testimonials of what IWC accomplishes worldwide
Prayers and Meditations

At its annual meeting and conference on August 18, 2018, UNOSZ, the Association of Unitarian Women of Romania, launched the first book of prayers and meditations written by women in UNOSZ’s 108 years of existence. Dedicated to the 450th anniversary of Unitarianism and the world’s first edict of religious freedom, the publication includes prayers, poems, and reflections from U*U women worldwide. Half is devoted to contributions from Hungarian-speakers; the other half - the international section - contains works by U*U women from the non-Hungarian speaking world, in the original language and translated into English and Hungarian. UNOSZ and IWC have collaborated on this project from publicizing the call for contributions to editing the English texts and their Hungarian translations.

To honor 2019 International Women’s Day or Mother’s Day, we offer a sample of the diversity and richness of the contributions from U*U women worldwide.

**Collaboration**
Submitted by Vivien Allen and Tina Huesing, New Zealand
Based on Maori [native people of New Zealand] proverbs.

We see women with their baskets going to the market to buy food.
We see women with their baskets taking a meal to a sick neighbor.
We see women with their baskets full of wool, working on a piece of clothing for the new baby.
We see women with their baskets full of pamphlets organizing for a better tomorrow.

Women working together all over the world for a better world for all.
Naku te rourou nau te rourou ka ora ai te iwi
With your basket and my basket the people will live.

Te Aroha (Love)
Te Whakpono (Faith)
Te Rangimarie (Peace)
Tatou tatou E (for one and all)
Let it be.
A Prayer in Affirmation of Women
Rev. Heather Janules, USA

Spirit of life and love,
Source of creation from whom all blessings flow,
We take this moment to breathe.
We take this moment to listen.

In our listening, there is not just silence
But, as the poet proclaims,
“the old brag of our hearts:
I am, I am, I am.”

Together, we pray for each and every one of us.
I am a child, I am a girl, I am an adult.
I am a mother, a lover, a wife.
I am a sister, a daughter, an aunt and grandmother.
I am single, I am a professional, an artist, a leader.
They call each of us “woman” –
I am, I am, I am.

We take this moment to breathe.
We take this moment to listen.
In our listening, may we hear the struggles
Of living as women in our world,
The struggle to be safe, to live joyously, to be free.
And may we also hear
the quiet yet persistent drum beat of courage across time.

God of all that is and ever shall be,
Bless each and every one of us,
All those known by the name of “woman”
And all those who are not
Bless us so we may one day celebrate
The reign of joy and freedom for all,
The day when each heart beats in unity,
When each heart beats in peace.

Amen.

1 A reference to a quote in The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath: “I took a deep breath and listened to the old brag of my heart: I am, I am, I am.”
Mother’s Day Meditation
Rev. Diane Rollert, Canada

Oh Mother of all,
You are an image of beauty:

The Buddha’s mother giving birth
painless holding the branch of a tree.
The Madonna with her child of infinite promise,
She the icon of maternal perfection.

Yet it never is so simple.
We who are mortal mothers know.

We know how far we fall
from our own expectations of maternal grace.

So let us give thanks this Mother’s Day,
for mothers who have tried their best,
who have loved,
who have wished to love and be loved,
who have stood by their children in quiet hours
and in times of pain and transition,
in times of joy and celebration.

May we sing a song of love and compassion
for those reaching out to mothers
who can no longer answer
or who never could respond.

May we sing a song of love and compassion
for mothers who cannot be
with their children on this day.

May we sing a song of love and compassion for women
who dream of motherhood that never comes.
May we be mindful that this day
can also bring painful memories of loss and disappointment.

If we have known the blessings of love
may we pass on what we have been given,
Be it small or expansive,
be it precious or imperfect.

Oh Eternal Mother,
May your love be wide enough to hold us all.
May you bring us peace.

Amen.
Infinite Song
Renee Hills, Australia

Music of Life,
Singer of Earth
Hear us now as we give birth
To a song of grief and mirth
Lament for loss of giving essence
To patriarchy, discord, shame so senseless,
Yet rhythmic joy follows the insistent call
To harmony, healing-strength encircling all.
May we roar the infinite song of hope and love
Symphony soaring to release the dove.
Chorus of ancient mothers, unborn daughters
Singing together a new Earth order.

White Ribbon Pledge for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Children
Compiled by Unitarian Women from the Unitarian Union of Northeast India
Sent by Elgiva Dora Shullai

In a world full of many types of violence, violence against women and children is one of the worst.
We pledge that we will stand against violence of this kind.
We pledge that we will never be part of violence against women and children.
We will also report to concerned authorities if we find these types of crimes being committed.
We pledge to respect and support human life in any kind of situations.
We pledge to work together for the betterment of our society so that we can progress in peace and goodness.
God will be with us and help us. Amen.

Sisters on a Journey
Pamela Griner Leavy, France

We gather in a circle, sharing our triumphs, sadness, pain, and hope.
Women together, praying for peace, remembering our worldwide sisters, dreaming of a different life:
no wars, goodbye to violence, hunger, or meaningless death; midwifing justice, praying for hope for all.
We are sisters on a journey, singing out as one.
Some Inspiring Women and Girls We Celebrate in 2019

Sheryl Sandberg (1969 -), technology executive, activist, and author – 50th birthday
As a distinguished technology executive, author and influential philanthropic leader, Sandberg is an inspirational figure who strives for a commitment to equality. Written with humor and wisdom, Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead is a revelatory, inspiring call to action and a blueprint for individual growth, empowering women worldwide to achieve their full potential.

Quotes from Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead:
We need to shift from thinking 'I'm not ready to do that' to thinking 'I want to do that -- and I'll learn by doing it.'

A truly equal world would be one where women ran half our countries and companies and men ran half our homes.

Claudette Colvin (1939- ), pioneer of the civil rights movement – 80th birthday
In 1955, as a brave 15-year-old in Alabama, Claudette refused to give up her bus seat to a white passenger and was arrested - nine months before the widely known act of resistance by Rosa Parks that sparked the Montgomery, AL bus boycott in 1955. A year after she was arrested, Colvin became one of four plaintiffs in a segregation case that reached the Supreme Court. Colvin testified in federal court in the Browder v. Gayle case, and her testimony helped the court reach its verdict – that segregation on Montgomery buses was illegal.

...as a teenager, I kept thinking, Why don’t the adults around here just say something? Say it so that they know we don’t accept segregation? I knew then and I know now that, when it comes to justice, there is no easy way to get it. You can’t sugarcoat it. You have to take a stand and say, 'This is not right.' And I did.

Anne Frank (1929-1945), diarist – 90th birth anniversary
Anne dreamed of being remembered as a writer – but she would never have a chance to discover how profoundly influential her words would be to millions of people around the world. Her diary, written as she and her family hid from the Nazis in an Amsterdam attic, reminds us of the Holocaust's unspeakable inhumanity and her belief in humans’ essential goodness: "In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.” Anne died in a concentration camp just three months before her 16th birthday. Eleanor Roosevelt famously called her diary – published by Anne Frank’s father two years after her death -- "one of the wisest and most moving commentaries on war and its impact on human beings that I have ever read."
Adult and Youth Education Materials

Sheryl Sandberg (1969 -) wants young girls to know that they can go after their dreams – and be leaders. For books to encourage girls to go after their dreams, check out the reading recommendations for children and teens in the blog post, "Big Dreams for a New Year: Books to Inspire Your Mighty Girl in 2018," at https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=10834

On Claudette Colvin (1939- ) pioneer of the civil rights movement
Philip Hoose’s National Book Award Winner Claudette Colvin: Twice Toward Justice introduces us to Colvin's fascinating story. Recommended for ages 10 and up, Hoose presents the first in-depth account of an important yet largely unknown civil rights figure, skillfully weaving her dramatic story into the fabric of the historic Montgomery bus boycott and court case that would change the course of American history.

Claudette is also one of 13 trailblazing women featured in Chelsea Clinton’s picture book She Persisted: 13 American Women Who Changed the World, for ages 5 to 9. For more books about courageous girls and women of the U.S. Civil Rights Movement, check out this post on "40 Inspiring Books on Girls & Women of the Civil Rights Movement" at https://www.amightygirl.com/blog?p=11177

On Anne Frank (1929-1945), diarist
There are educational resource materials available at https://www.annefrank.org/en/education/
To introduce children to Anne Frank's remarkable story, please see the picture book The Tree in the Courtyard: Looking Through Anne Frank's Window for ages 5 to 8, the illustrated biography Who Was Anne Frank? for ages 7 to 11, and Anne Frank: The Anne Frank House Authorized Graphic Biography, suitable for children from 12 years old.

Anne Frank Remembered: The Story of the Woman Who Helped to Hide the Frank Family introduces adults to the fascinating story of Miep Gies, the woman who hid the Frank family in Amsterdam during WW II. Anne Frank: The Biography is an indispensable volume for all those who seek a deeper, richer understanding of Anne Frank and the brutal times in which she lived and died.
#MeToo

The MeToo Movement, founded in 2006 by activist Tarana Burke in order to raise awareness and understanding about sexual assault in underprivileged communities of color, spread in October 2017 as a hashtag used on social media. The dozens of women who stepped forward to tell their experiences of sexual misconduct by Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein galvanized millions of women worldwide to break the silence about their own stories of sexual assault and harassment. The #MeToo movement is not only a much-needed conversation about the sexual harassment and assault of women, but an examination of the roles of power and patriarchy in perpetuating the objectification and oppression of women and girls.

Violence? Here? Never!

Sermon given by Laura Nagel, Program Director, International Women’s Convocation

Unitarian Universalist Church of Monterey Peninsula, July 29, 2018

I’m going to talk about violence in our interpersonal relations.

I had an epiphany while my husband Harry and I were in Africa last spring. Many of the animals we saw are organized in groups around a dominant male. The hippopotamus is among the most dangerous animals in the world as it is highly aggressive and unpredictable. They live in groups or pods with one dominant male. When one of the females gives birth to a baby male, she must hide it away in the surrounding bushes to keep the dominant male from killing it. Young male lions must leave the pride as adolescents to avoid a similar fate.

Many mammals, particularly primates, our close relatives, practice infanticide as a sexual strategy. My epiphany was that aggressiveness in the male is universal. In war, the plunder of male soldiers historically includes the rape of women. So many women immigrants to this country seek amnesty from personal violence. It is something we all live with and must work together to control.

It also made me appreciate living in the United States where there is some recognition that uncontrolled violence hurts everyone, women, children and, though less frequently recognized, other males who become schooled in toxic masculinity. I am a heterosexual female. So, I like men. But you may hear these days about the ills of patriarchal heteronormative socialization. (How’s that for a mouthful?) Let’s pull that apart to try to understand what is right about it and how sometimes it goes wrong.
When I was five, I learned my first lesson about boys and violence. I was walking home from my first day of school when a boy from the neighborhood told me I stunk. Now, I knew I smelled bad because of the permanent my mother gave me at the beginning of the school year to make my hair curly. Still he had a nerve calling it out to everyone. Since I was a head taller than he I thought to push him down in the ice plant. He might have been smaller but he had several brothers and he took fighting to a whole different level. I was very quickly eating that ice plant until I called uncle. That wasn’t the end of my fighting career, just the end of my fist fighting with boys.

My second Lesson happened when I fell for an older man. He was 7 and he moved in next door. His reputation preceded him - he was dangerous. And so began my fascination with dangerous men. The first time that I was included in his gang of boys we went walking through the woods slapping the bushes with big sticks until I looked down and saw I was covered with stinging bees and those boys were high-tailing it while I went crying home to mama who washed the dead bees out of my wild hair. On my second “date” with this fellow I was invited to tag along, just the two of us, again into the woods, where this time he waylaid a much younger boy and made him take his pants down, as I stood by dumbfounded and afraid—not going to be the first time you hear this phrase. I wanted to run away but he insisted we sit right in front of the boy’s house from where his mother quickly came and marched us both home. I got in a boatload of trouble. Lesson Two: Mess with dangerous men and you could go to prison.

Lesson Three was when I was 15 and on my first date with a boy who asked me to go horseback riding out in Pebble Beach. When we rode out of the corral, my horse went left while his wanted to go right. This led to a major melee outside the corral as he pulled out a whip he’d brought and beat the rearing horse into submission. Lesson learned: Just stay away from violent guys.

There were other lessons too painful to recount. I’m grateful that I somehow managed to find Harry who has always been my and our family’s protector. I’m sorry to say that my learned response was not to rise up against male bullying, but rather to be frightened, to learn how to bide my time and escape, and to try to figure out ahead of time if the guy had it in him to harm me. Because these types can be quite charming, you’re never sure what will set off the violence. I’m not proud of this adaptation, I’m only saying how it is with me.
But there is reason for hope. We can be optimistic about the continuing rise of political freedom and the decline of violence around the world. According to Harvard professor Steven Pinker, author of The Better Angels of Our Nature: Why Violence Has Declined, "Violence has been in decline over long stretches of time, and we may be living in the most peaceful time in our species' existence." That’s taking the long view. In the short view, right here in the USA, I wish we were making more progress.

I am the Program Director for the International Convocation of Unitarian Universalist Women, and I just returned from General Assembly in Kansas City, where we sponsored a #MeToo workshop. I learned that twenty-five years ago, in 1993, we passed a Resolution on Violence Against Women in which we promised that UU congregations and individual UUs would work to recognize the pervasive nature of violence against women and to confront the emotional and physical violence in our own families, congregations, and communities.

However, even now, according to the most recent statistics from the National Center for Disease Control, nearly 44% of women in the U.S. experience some form of sexual violence in their lifetime. The #MeToo Movement was formed by Tarana Burke to help cisgender and transgender girls and young women of color face patterns of policing, interpersonal, and institutional violence in their schools and communities.

Though it was good that they did, it is a shame the only women who spoke up at the Academy Awards were white. Instead, look to the Time Magazine Person of the Year award - which went to women and men of all races and classes who spoke out about harassment and violation they had experienced on the job.

At the Third International Women’s Convocation held at Asilomar last year, my co-presenter, Carol Galginaitis did yeowoman’s work as Volunteer Convener of the stream on Violence Prevention. During the Convo those in that stream met in small groups to discuss the problem and how it had impacted our lives. There were several women from our congregation, and it surprised us to learn how many had been impacted by physical and emotional violence. We never talk about it, never share these experiences with others, though they profoundly altered our lives. We committed then to bring this to you, our community, because we feel it shouldn’t be cloaked. The family seems to be the last bastion of secrecy when it comes to violence and abuse.
We can and should help each other. One Sunday in 2008 a man walked into a UU church in Knoxville, TN with a rifle to kill two people, including 60-year-old longtime church member and usher Greg McKendry, who deliberately stood in front of the gunman to protect others. It was a youth service where the murderer, the abusive partner of one of the congregants, wounded seven other people until five of the ushers restrained him.

*The New York Times*, in a recent series of editorials on domestic violence, noted “a disturbing pattern.” That in mass killings, the violence of male shooters almost always begins at home. Nearly half of women killed in the United States are killed by a current or former romantic partner. More than [20% of children](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/0000012000/0540000000) are exposed to family violence. “And it’s that trauma — the horrors witnessed by young people — that echoes most loudly across generations.”

I hope we resolve today not be silent on this issue any longer; to know that it’s out there; to commit to speak up when we see bullying or threatening behavior; and to press forward together to make things better for our children and grandchildren.

**For other Unitarian Universalist resource materials on #MeToo, please see:**

- [#MeToo sermon (Dec 2017) by Rev. Jessica Clay, First Parish Brewster, MA](#)
- A prayer for “Me,Too” by Molly Brewer

**Other educational resources:**

- The Educator’s Room, *Stopping Sexual Harassment in Schools: What the #metoo Movement Means for Educators*
Testimonials from U*U Women around the World

For more than 40 years we, women in Transylvania, did not have the opportunity to look out into the world. We were under a very oppressive regime. We did not have information about the lives of other women in other countries. After 1990, democracy brought us new life styles, changes in mentality, and an overwhelming number of choices. Many of us did not know how to keep up with the rhythm of this new world and locked ourselves in rather than face reality. Years ran by and many of us were drifting in the whirlpool of otherness, unable to embrace the opportunities of the present. In 2012, with the help of IWC, there was a sea change: The Second International U*U Women’s Convocation in Transylvania offered a crutch to all the women who hadn’t been able to start walking on the path of the changing world – and to women who couldn’t keep the balance. We brought the world to Transylvania and offered a unique opportunity for women to step in. More than 500 Unitarian women gathered and let their voices be heard. They were given the platform to talk about their wishes, dreams, and needs.

Thanks to IWC, women’s empowerment has become the main issue of our national Unitarian women’s organization (UNOSZ). The convocation sparked ongoing empowerment and leadership training programs for women and strengthened Unitarian women’s organizations of Transylvania. The Unitarian women from Hungary organized themselves into an association and started offering programs to their members. The experiences of the leadership school inspired the idea of a leadership handbook, which is being prepared for publication. We are very grateful for the fruitful collaboration with IWC, and for all the encouragement and assistance we have received over the years.

The IWC is an international women's organization led by U*U women that brings together women from different parts of the globe in one platform to share common goals, problems, hardships, and stories. The sharing goes to show that women, no matter rich or poor, white or black, educated or illiterate, all have similar problems. There are five priority areas concerning women worldwide that need to be addressed: leadership, education, health and reproductive justice, prevention of violence, and economic development. In a span of few years, IWC has been able to carry out work in these areas in various countries (Philippines, Romania, Uganda, and India). The world needs global organizations to take up the enormous task of working to achieve gender equity. IWC is one such organization. This young organization needs the support and cooperation of other experienced, financially sound, and like-minded organizations to help further their cause.
As a woman UU leader, I will categorically say that the presence of an international women’s group – the International Women’s Convocation – is of great importance. It is essential because it is a home, a community, and a support group to international UU women. No one belittles providing this community because women in general find inspiration, hope, and strength in communities. In this community, a woman finds wholeness, security, and better understanding of self. This inner security is badly needed by a woman like me.

We are in a world or a society where patriarchy reigns, dominates and dictates. In my case – as a lone UU woman leader in the Philippines or perhaps in Southeast Asia – the International Women’s Convocation helps me make my voice stronger, wiser, and long lasting or sustainable. I know there is a group that I could go to just in case I am lonely, hurt, or I feel useless as a woman.

I am speaking from my experience of living amidst Roman Catholicism, patriarchy, and orthodoxy. The support that I have received and continue to receive makes me stronger and makes my ministry lasting and more potent. Congratulations IWC! More power to you!

As a former IWC board member who is currently working with two other former IWC board members on a women’s empowerment project in a western Kenyan village, it feels very supportive to know that IWC is there to add strength to the project if needed. We are taking it very slowly, waiting for the initiative to unfold from the village women. If and when this occurs, we know that IWC will be absolutely be there for us.

Likewise, I fully applaud the efforts being put in place both in the Philippines and Bolivia to support our sisters there. Gaining solidarity and understanding from these efforts can only amplify those programs being put forth in our own country, especially for women who are choosing to run for elected office.

I see the role of IWC to be a connective tissue in the fabric of women’s issues throughout not only our UU world-wide networks, but also with other non-UU women’s groups globally. IWC has the potential to act as a hub with their pulse on the many ways that all of us can deepen our resolve to raise awareness of the rising feminine spirit — and act on those insights.

With gratitude,
Sharon Van Duizend, Falls Church, VA, USA
International Women’s Convocation: The Twenty-First Century UU Vision of International Women’s Consciousness-Raising Encircling

Australia Bolivia Czech Republic
France Germany Hungary
India Japan Philippines
Poland Switzerland
Transylvania Uganda USA

Floating amorphous expanding
Convocations gatherings events
Global cyber networks

Forging robust cauldron
Brewing and stewing
Power and glory of
Sisterhood energies passions

Birthing better lives and communities
UU and beyond
For women and those they love

Seng Kynthei, the women’s organization of the Unitarian Union of North East India (UUNEI) is appreciative of and grateful for the continued support of the International Women’s Convocation. In 2014, Seng Kynthei signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IWC, mutually committing to strengthening our ties and working together to improve women’s lives in Meghalaya. Subsequently, with the support of IWC through a UU Funding program grant, Seng Kynthei has carried out a 6-module leadership school and several follow-up trainings across all the districts of UUNEI. These empowerment programs have cemented our commitment to improving the lives of Khasi women and their families; now we are leading efforts to end violence against women and girls and to continue to strengthen women’s voices and leadership in our congregations and in our community. The ongoing success of women’s projects around the world is dependent on continued support from partner organizations such as the International Women’s Convocation.

Julie Steinbach, Claremont, CA, USA

Elgiva Dora Shullai
IWC Board Member
Global Sisters Coordinator
Seng Kynthei, UUNEI
Quotes from IWC Program Participants

“The Violence Against Women and Children program that we attended in March 2016 was very helpful to us. It gave us a new way of handling or taking care of our children. We were educated about our rights as women and we understood our role as women, wives, and mothers. This program is a great help to our lives – we hope that it can continue so that we can build violence-free communities.”

Awake Women and Men through Knowledge and Education (AWAKE) participants, Aquino, Philippines

“I consider myself very fortunate to have gotten the opportunity to attend the leadership training program led by the Seng Kynthei Women’s Wing of the Unitarian Union of Northeast India, supported by the International Women Convocation. The experience was life-changing. It added a new dimension to my learning experiences and empowered me with tools to help me see the world through new and improved lenses. Furthermore, it gave me the ability to scale new heights...it motivated me to reach my full potential.”

Baladiangti Nongbri, participant
Six-module Leadership School, Shillong, India