



## **Detroit Conference United Women in Faith: An Installation Service**

October 26, 2002

I invite all of the Detroit Conference United Women in Faith newly elected officers for 2003 to come down and stand at the front of the sanctuary, facing those gathered here.

You see before you these women who will assume the responsibility of service as your officers. Some are continuing in office, some are beginning a new challenge with another office, and some are new to both the task and title.

Newly elected officers, each of you will no doubt spend the next few months finding your way on the Mission Team. Our greatest reassurance for you is that you are not alone and that there is a creative, supportive community praying for you. With God's help great things can be accomplished, especially if we work together as a team.

As part of your journey to this meeting in the Marquette District, I'm sure you noticed the changing of the leaves as part of the beauty of God's handiwork. Did the different colors of the leaves remind you of the diversity in our Conference? The variety of gifts we can offer? The skills that we can use to help others? When we bring this all together we, too, become part of the beauty of God's handiwork.

No two leaves are alike, even though they are on the same tree. It takes all different leaves, with a variety of shape, texture, and color to make a beautiful autumn landscape, just as it takes a variety of people, sharing their many gifts, to make a just and peaceful world.

In the book, "The Fall of Freddie the Leaf", a Story of Life for all Ages, by Leo Buscaglia, Freddie loves being a leaf. His friend, Daniel, tells him that giving shade is part of his purpose. "What's a purpose?", Freddie asks. "A reason for being," Daniel answered. "To make things more pleasant for others is a reason for being."

Freddie realized that he can provide shelter and a cool breeze in the hot summer sun to make things more pleasant for others. In other seasons of his life he also finds his purpose. – Even when his dried self falls from the tree and joins with water to make the tree stronger as it prepares for another season of regrowth.

As United Women in Faith come in many ages, shapes and sizes, cultural and ethnic backgrounds, degrees of experience in the organization and in the secular world, we remember our UMW Purpose – our reason for being which we can fulfill through the different seasons of our life: We are 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.

Great love and strength have been passed to others through United Women in Faith. How rewarding it is that we have each other to share with and learn from as we fulfill our Purpose.

Newly elected officers, you have been chosen to lead women to new understandings of their faith and mission, into new areas of service. You will be expected to:

Study the [Handbooks](#) and other resources of United Women in Faith;

Read [response](#);

Attend all events of the Conference United Women in Faith;

Nurture and stretch your own faith experience.

Now, as you turn toward the altar, please respond to these questions by replying, "With God's help, I will." (Pause between each question or the answer.) Will you seek spiritual guidance through prayer and Bible study? (Pause) Will you make an earnest effort to attend all meetings and activities planned by your team? (Pause) Will you be intentional in accepting responsibilities and completing them? (Pause)

Newly elected officers, please turn to face those gathered here as I ask them a question. Will you support these women with your prayers, your affirmation, and your cooperation? If so, answer, "With God's help, we will". (Pause for the answer).

Members of the Detroit Conference mission team, I declare you duly installed in office. You have the gift of giving to others and in giving – you, too, shall receive.

When it is time for the newly elected officers to return to their seats, each will receive a colorful candle, formed in the shape of a leaf, to remind them of their journey here today and the journey ahead in service of United Women in Faith as we fulfill our Purpose.

Now, let us pray. O Most Holy One, we come this day with hope, knowing you are with us in all we do through all the seasons of our life. Help us to guide and inspire through our example on our journey. Inspire our hearts to courage when the tasks seem overwhelming. Help us to see a new vision of your justice and peace. Bless our work that it might truly reflect your love for all creation. In the name of Christ, Amen.

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