

## Women's Ministry 2007-2008

### **Theme: "Hands Together - One in Christ.**

Theme Text: Ephesians 4: 1-6 and Philippians 2: 1-2

Theme Hymn: Bless Be the Tie That Binds

Theme Chorus: They Will Know We Are Christians

Theme Symbol: Clasped Hands

The hands of a little girl reach out to write her ABCs with much focus and care. Applying makeup and fixing hair keeps the hands of teenage girls busy for a lot of hours in a day. A mother's hands work non-stop preparing dinner, washing laundry, and driving for the carpool. Working women find their hands multi-tasking in the office, their home, church and community. Older women find enjoyment and exercise using their hands to crochet or knit. A woman's hands are a miracle! Whether well-manicured or rough from work and negligent, our hands are capable of countless acts of kindness.

One of the greatest uses of our hands is when we join them with others in a common cause. Hands joined in prayer connect us with each other and the Holy One. Hands joined together while building a house for the homeless connect us to something beyond ourselves. Hands joined together with women around the world through Church Women United or World Day of Prayer connects us deeply with each other. Hands joined together with Cumberland Presbyterian sisters in countries like Colombia, South America results in a livable income for families led by women who are the head of their household. ***Hands Together....One in Christ!***

The Apostle Paul encourages us to lead a life worthy of God's calling, which is marked by some very other-focused traits -- humility, gentleness, patience, tolerant love and peacekeeping! Giving attention to these traits will go far in creating a loving fellowship or community, thus our focus "One in Christ." This coming year, Women's Ministry will spend time unpacking what it means to be "One in Christ" as we study, pray, and work together. We will encounter others that we may not agree with, but we will still be guided by our oneness in Christ – one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God. The wonderful thing about being "One in Christ" means that we can still hold hands while not quite exactly agreeing upon perspectives and ideas. ***Hands Together....One in Christ!***

The Apostle Paul was also smart enough to know that even church people would disagree and have conflict with each other. Therefore, in Philippians 2:1-2, he turns his attention from adversaries outside the church, to the church members in Philippi. He encourages them (and us) to allow God's Spirit to bind us together in unity and Christian love; to seek the other person first. ***Hands Together....One in Christ!***

There is a beautiful story told of a young teen girl who lost her arm in an accident. Self-conscious, she did not go to school or church for an entire year. Finally, she was ready to go out into the world. She was going to Sunday School, so her mother called the teacher and explained the situation. Unfortunately, that Sunday the regular teacher got sick and forgot to tell the substitute about the young girl. At the conclusion of the lesson on inviting others to church, the substitute led the class in doing the hand motions to the familiar children's poem: "Here's the church, Here's the steeple, Open the door, and see all the people!" The young girl's eyes filled with tears. Another student realized how she must be feeling and knelt beside her. With one hand apiece, they supported each other, making the church, steeple, and people. Together they illustrated what real unity means in the midst of great diversity. And so it will be for Women's Ministry this coming year. Let us look for ways to show the world that we are Christians by our love for each other and those different from us. ***Hands Together....One in Christ!***