

Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, ME.
Small Group Session Plan

International Women's Day March 8

Note: This session was written for International Women's Day, March 8, 2022, by Rachel K. Small of Wednesday Small Group Ministry to acknowledge the status of women and current key issues, challenges and accomplishments.

Opening Words:

Count all the Ways You're Beautiful

Count all the ways you're beautiful;
Your soul and your spirit,
Your brilliant body
And all the wonder within it.
Your heart full of love,
Your mind full of care,
Your eyes full of awe,
Your lungs full of air.
Your chest full of pride,
Your muscles full of strength,

Your brain full of questions,
Your compassion, immense.
Your hands that can comfort,
Your words that can soothe,
Your conscience that roots you
In the good, right and true.
You are a miracle,
Unique through and through.
So count the ways you're beautiful
And always be proud of you!
-Ms. Moem

Check in

Topic

History of International Women's Day, November 19, 2020. (Excerpts):

<https://www.internationalwomensday.com/Activity/15586/The-history-of-IWD>

International Women's Day (IWD) has been observed since the early 1900's - a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.

1908 Great unrest and critical debate was occurring amongst women. Women's oppression and inequality was spurring women to become more vocal and active in campaigning for change. Then in 1908, 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter hours, better pay and voting rights.

1909 In accordance with a declaration by the Socialist Party of America, the first National Woman's Day (NWD) was observed across the United States on February 28. Women continued to celebrate NWD on the last Sunday of February until 1913.

1910 A second International Conference of Working Women was held in Copenhagen. A woman named [Clara Zetkin](#) (Leader of the 'Women's Office' for the Social Democratic Party in Germany) tabled the idea of an International Women's Day. She proposed that every year in every country there should be a celebration on the same day - a Women's Day - to press for their demands. The conference of over 100 women from 17 countries,

representing unions, socialist parties, working women's clubs - and including the first three women elected to the Finnish parliament - greeted Zetkin's suggestion with unanimous approval and thus International Women's Day was the result.

1911 Following the decision agreed at Copenhagen in Denmark in 1911, International Women's Day was honoured the first time in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland on 19 March. More than one million women and men attended IWD rallies campaigning for women's rights to work, vote, be trained, to hold public office and end discrimination. However less than a week later on March 25, the tragic 'Triangle Fire' in New York City took the lives of more than 140 working women, most of them Italian and Jewish immigrants. This disastrous event drew significant attention to working conditions and labour legislation in the United States that became a focus of subsequent International Women's Day events. 1911 also saw women's [Bread and Roses](#) campaign.

1913-1914 On the eve of World War I campaigning for peace, Russian women observed their first International Women's Day on February 23, the last Sunday in February. Following discussions, International Women's Day was agreed to be marked annually on March 8 that translated in the widely adopted Gregorian calendar from February 23 - and this day has remained the global date for International Women's Day ever since. In 1914, further women across Europe held rallies to campaign against the war and to express women's solidarity. For example, in London in the United Kingdom there was a march from Bow to Trafalgar Square in support of women's suffrage on March 8, 1914. [Sylvia Pankhurst](#) was arrested in front of Charing Cross station on her way to speak in Trafalgar Square.

1917 On the last Sunday of February, Russian women began a strike for "bread and peace" in response to the death of over 2 million Russian soldiers in World War 1. Opposed by political leaders, the women continued to strike until four days later the Czar was forced to abdicate and the provisional Government granted women the right to vote. The date the women's strike commenced was Sunday February 23 on the Julian calendar then in use in Russia. This day on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere was March 8.

1975 International Women's Day was celebrated for the first time by the United Nations in 1975. Then in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed on any day of the year by Member States, in accordance with their historical and national traditions.

1996 The UN announced their first annual theme "Celebrating the past, Planning for the Future" which was followed in 1997 with "Women at the Peace table", in 1998 with "Women and Human Rights", in 1999 with "World Free of Violence Against Women", and so on each year until the current.

2001 By the new millennium, there was little activity occurring for International Women's Day in most countries. The world had moved on and, in many spheres, feminism wasn't a popular topic. Something was needed to re-ignite International Women's Day giving it the respect it deserves and to raise awareness amongst the masses. There was urgent work to do - battles had not been won and gender parity still had not been achieved.

Questions

1. How has your awareness of women's rights changed since you were younger?
How have the issues changed and what stays the same?
2. What is the impact of women's status on you today – here and now?
3. When have you taken power as a woman? How have you used power?
4. Have you been discriminated against because you are a woman? How was that for you?
5. How do we use the energy that we feel over the injustices to move toward equality for women and men?

Likes/Wishes

Closing Words

Her Time

She has been feeling it for awhile now—that sense of awakening. There is a gentle rage simmering inside her, and it is getting stronger by the day. She will hold it close to her—she will nurture it and let it grow. She won't let anyone take it away from her. It is her rocket fuel and finally, she is going places. She can feel it down to her very core—this is her time. She will not only climb mountains—she will move them too.

—Lang Leav

Additional Resources

Celebrating UU Women in History, By Lauren Walleser, UUA February 16, 2016,
<https://www.uua.org/pressroom/stories/celebrating-uu-women-history>

Notable Women Biographies: Notable Unitarian and Universalist Women, Helen Zidowecki, (Ed.) Unitarian Universalist History and Heritage Society, 2012
<http://uuhhs.org/womens-history/notable-women-biographies/>