



# SLIGO WOMEN'S NEWSLETTER

INFORM, CONNECT, EDUCATE  
Winter 2024



[www.sligowomensministry.org](http://www.sligowomensministry.org)

## An invitation to Praise

Mary is visiting her cousin Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist. During the visit, as they share and lean on each other, Mary is overtaken with a spirit of praise. She is sharing with her cousin that the Lord is great, and she is rejoicing with her good news. Mary's song is called The Magnificat, meaning "my soul magnifies the Lord."

A former colleague of mine wrote her own Magnificat, and now at this time of Thanksgiving and Advent, we share it with you and invite you to write your own words of praise. (Joan Francis)



### My Magnificat

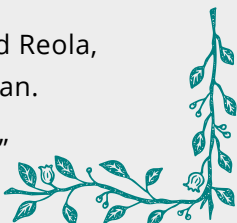



"My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in my creator.  
For he knows and loves me, even when I feel invisible.  
He has helped me to do small and great things,  
He is always helping good to result even when I am wrong.  
He has been in the lives of my mother and grandmothers,  
in the troubles of my sisters,  
and he will have his eye on my granddaughters.  
May they rejoice in his love.

He disowns the proud words of those who speak arrogantly.  
He does not bless those who wish to humble us because we are women.  
His kingdom honors the hungry, the cold, the overlooked,  
the fearful, those who are put in their place.  
He says their place is in his love, their lives have his attention.  
They will not be lost in his memory,  
though they may be forgotten by their people.

He shone brightly on our mother Mary, and on our  
sisters Deborah and Hannah and Magdalene.  
He was pleased by the women who grouped around  
the cross, who waited by the grave.  
He is close beside Ann and Mary, he hears the thoughts of Ruth and Reola,  
he bends down like a mother over Ileana and Margarita and Joan.

His kingdom will welcome and honor them and their sisters."



By Otilie Stafford, March 1999

## Be a Sister



***Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (NIV)***

Sisterhood is a special bond among women, usually marked by support, friendship and encouragement. These verses from Ecclesiastes provide an example of sisterhood and its power. Sisters can lift each other up, share burdens and sorrows, provide strength, and help face life's challenges.

Bonds of friendship create a sisterhood, a community of women who, facing obstacles, work together to overcome, as in the story of the daughters of Zelophehad in Numbers 27. These five sisters courageously approached Moses to request their father's inheritance, since he had no sons. Their boldness and unity led to a change in the inheritance laws for Israel, showcasing how sisterhood can lead to justice and positive change.

Another example of sisterhood in scripture is the close bond between Ruth and Naomi. Though not literal sisters, these women showed the same close bond. We still remember Ruth's declaration that she would leave her own country to go with Naomi. (Ruth 1:16-17) Are you a sister, one who will lend a helping hand or offer a safe harbor to a woman facing challenges? During this season of love and joy, will you take time to look for one who may need a sister, a friend, to encourage, cheer, or just listen? Will you be a sister?

Joan A. Francis

### WOMEN'S MINISTRY VISION, MISSION, AND PURPOSE

#### VISION:

Glorify God by challenging women to know God personally, to grow in Christlikeness, to discover and use spiritual gifts, to love and serve others, and in all we do to reflect the beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ.

#### MISSION:

Empower, nurture, and spiritually uplift women in the church and the community.

#### PURPOSE:

Encourage and support women as they discover their God-given gifts and fulfill their various roles in the church and the community.

## Ways to Care

As women, we usually have well-honed caring skills. But at times we may not know just how to help. In a study from the National Institute on Mental Health, it is estimated that 26% of women in the U. S. have some degree of mental illness. Thus, we may safely assume we all know someone with such a struggle. Here are a few simple ways to provide encouragement and support to our families and friends as they meet life's challenges.

- **Practice active listening.**
- **Do not compare your difficulties.**
- **Ask what you can do to help.**
- **Don't judge.** Put your personal opinions and biases aside.
- **Be patient.**
- **Check in. Keep social contact.**
- **Know when more serious help is needed.** If a person continues to struggle with emotional issues for two weeks or more, encourage them to seek professional help.



Judith A. Upshaw, LCADC, Ed. D.  
Counseling Psychologist

### It's a Basic Need: We Can Help

Many women don't give a second thought to acquiring one of their most basic necessities—feminine hygiene products. They are easily accessible. We may grumble about rising costs, but we go ahead and buy them but imagine being homeless, a refugee, or economically disadvantaged to the point of not being able to purchase this essential item.

There are girls and women in our own community experiencing this right now. This is why Sligo Church's Women's Ministries team has partnered with our local Adventist Community Services [ACS] to provide feminine care packages. ACS staff say this is a top requested item and supplies are always low.

We hope Sligo women and their families will come together this holiday season to help address the shortfall! Our ACS Care Package fundraising goal is \$2,000 by January 31, 2025.

Two ways to give:

- Visit [AdventistGiving.org](https://AdventistGiving.org) (direct link to Sligo Church's portal) > Under "Local Offerings" scroll to the bottom > Click "Add Categories" > Select "Women's Ministries"
- Put your donation (check or cash) in a tithe envelope and mark it for "Women's Ministries – Feminine Care Packages."

In this season of giving, when many in our own church family may be dealing with financial stresses, we appreciate your support of this worthy effort. If you have questions, please contact [womensministry@sligochurch.org](mailto:womensministry@sligochurch.org)



Sligo Adventist School Christmas Program - December 2010



## Christmas Memories and Traditions

Some years ago, a Sligo pastor shared one of her family's beautiful holiday traditions: they saved all the Christmas cards they received, and throughout the year, at the start of each Sabbath, they would select a card and pray for the sender – demonstrating through prayer the love that Jesus revealed to us at His birth.

Our holiday traditions add to the joy of the season – perhaps bringing to mind memories of people and places we love, or inspiring us to share the true reason for the season with others. We have asked a few Sligo members to share their treasured holiday traditions and memories.

*"Growing up in Sri Lanka, I remember that our Adventist church did not celebrate Christmas, but my family celebrated the 'joy of giving.' We did not receive gifts; however, we distributed sweets to our mostly non-Christian neighbors and gave gifts to those in need. We loved being able to do that! We also decorated our home with beautiful flowers and a Christmas tree and also got new outfits to wear to church." – **Elizabeth Abel***

*"In the Philippines when I was young, one of my favorite memories was going caroling during the Christmas season – which was also a way to raise money." – **Ellen Yutac***

*"I spent the first eight years of my life in Jamaica. We visited all church members during the Christmas season since my dad pastored several churches. I always was honored to play an angel in the nativity play! At the end, children collected tokens and sweets prepared by church members. Our Christmas gatherings were at my great-grandmother's home, and her fruit cake, which we affectionately called 'black cake,' always made the meal complete. There were lots of hugs and laughter, and I got a huge smile just thinking about this!" – **Maureen Tapp***

*"My favorite Christmas tradition as a child was the nativity play at church in Lomé Togo." – **Sylvie Johnson***



## Christmas Memories and Traditions continued

*"In India, when I was young, my mum would make three or four different kinds of homemade sweets, and we kids would help clean the house. On Christmas Eve at midnight, we ate one of the sweets (karanji); it was so much fun! My dad also made roast beef sandwiches to eat on Christmas Day."* – **Alka Pandit**



*"Growing up in New Orleans with Honduran parents, our Christmas festivities kicked off on Christmas Eve and continued into the early hours of Christmas Day. We filled the night with laughter, family bonding, music, and indulged in traditional Honduran dishes like nacatamales, along with a variety of local and homemade treats. As the clock struck midnight, the children eagerly opened their presents, and we often found ourselves heading to bed around 3 or 4 in the morning. By noon on Christmas Day, we would gather again to enjoy leftovers, sharing more laughter and joy together."* – **Hazel Marroquin**

*"I grew up in Jamaica where Christmas was celebrated with abandonment. As children, one of the things we looked forward to was the huge package of Cadbury's chocolate, posted all the way from England. I still savour the aroma!!"* – **Mary Macfarland**

*"I grew up in Sligo church and loved the Candlelight Christmas concerts. All the affiliated schools' choirs participated. Singing carols while dressed in the red and white choir robes from the then-Sligo Elementary School was so special. At the end, everyone lit candles and circled the sanctuary, singing "Silent Night" together. It was beautiful and filled my heart with Jesus' love."* – **Carol Jednaszewski**

We wish all Sligo members a peace-filled, Jesus-filled holiday season, praying that the joy of Jesus' birth will fill each of us with the assurance Jesus offers of that day soon when we will be with Him in Heaven.



## Support During a Blue Christmas



We know that the holidays can be a sad time for some – maybe you do not have happy holiday memories, are alone, are mourning a loss, or have financial, family, and other challenges. Sligo Church is here to support you. You are welcome to reach out to any of the pastors for prayer and for information about other helpful resources, including **Heart Lifters**. Call the church office at 301-270-6777 if you would like to speak to a pastor. As the body of Christ, we are called to support one another. Let us support you.





## A Caring Heart

Soft spoken, optimistic and compassionate. These words describe Pastor Hazel Marroquin. When she first came to Sligo Seventh-day Adventist Church more than five years ago, she worked with the Children and Family Ministries. Today she is the pastor for Congregational Care, where she enjoys getting to know the members and connecting people to each other. Most of all, she is a genuine listener.

Pastor Marroquin's previous training and careers have helped mold her for her current position. She studied Business Administration and Accounting, worked in finances, and in customer service, connecting people with resources. Always fascinated with the work of missionaries, she paid careful attention to the Sabbath school mission stories.

## A Calling

After her early working years, she felt that full time ministry was her calling so she earned a college degree in Theology. Starting her pastoral ministry, Pastor Marroquin continued to study and completed a master's degree in Pastoral Ministry and Counseling from Andrews University. Divinely anointed and professionally credential, she serves well as "Chief Carer for Congregational Needs."

## Responding, Motivating

Pastor Marroquin exuberantly responds to a call for help, a cry for support, a plan for motivating and empowering members and, of course, she joins in the celebrations, but most of all, she demonstrates God's love.

She enjoys travelling and led a Sligo tour of the Holy land. Originally from New Orleans, Pastor Marroquin is married to Gilberto Marroquin and they have two adult sons.

Pastor Marroquin is very connected, so feel free to send her an email. And you can enjoy pictures of Sligo happenings on her Facebook page. Thank you, Pastor Hazel, for your compassionate care of Sligo parishioners. May God continue to bless your ministry.



## Glimpses of 2024



Community Dental/Eye Health Clinic



Heart Lifters



Sligo Disability Team



Sligo Church Office



TA Prep 1st Day



Homes of Hope



Fall Fest



Ministry Fair



Women's Ministry



## A Christmas Prayer for Women of Faith

In the quiet of a holy night, The world rejoiced at Heaven's light.  
A Savior born, both pure and true, To bring salvation, born anew.

Through tender hearts, His love is shown, In every gift, His grace is known.  
In kindness, mercy, faith, and prayer, His Spirit calls us to share.

As Mary held her baby dear, We hold His presence, ever near.  
With open hearts, we celebrate, The One who chose to bear our weight.

In every season, may we be A light of hope for all to see.  
With hands that serve, with hearts that sing, We honor Christ, our Savior King.

Let joy and peace fill every heart, As we embrace the Christmas start—  
And share the love that's deep and true, With women of faith, in all we do.

### ONLINE EVENTS

**WOMEN OF THE WORD** | 9:30 AM  
EVERY SABBATH LED BY WOMEN

**PRAYER GATHERING** | 11:00 AM  
EVERY SUNDAY AND 7:00 PM EVERY  
WEDNESDAY

**BOOK CLUB** | 7:00 PM  
2ND WEDNESDAYS WITH KAY  
ROSBURG

#### Women's Ministry Newsletter Team Members

Elizabeth Abel, Joan Francis, Carol Jednaszewski,  
Carolyn Kujawa, Elma LaTouche, Leida Martinez, and  
Heather Oliver.

**April 13, 2025**

women's ministry

**Prayer Breakfast**

with

**Celeste Ryan Blyden**