

February, 2019

Acts 16:14-15

*A certain woman named Lydia, a worshipper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.*

Dear Lydia Team,

The General Conference 2020 Host Team joins me in sending greetings and gratitude for your efforts in welcoming United Methodists from around the world to Minneapolis in 2020. You and your stitching groups are such an important part of this warm welcome, and we are so thankful for the dedication and commitment you have displayed as we strive to provide each delegate, alternate delegate, bishop, bishop's spouse, and dignitary with a handmade purple scarf as a gift of hospitality. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

First, the good news... due to the generosity of so many across both the Minnesota and Dakotas Conferences, we have 10,000 scarves pledged... many of them are already finished! This is an enormous milestone and **exceeds** our initial goal of 5,000 scarves. Well done, one and all!

We are asking all coordinators to share this news with your stitching teams. As a review, here are some reminders about the creation and construction of the scarves:

- Scarves can be knitted or crocheted by hand, using a pattern of the stitcher's choice (or see <https://www.minnesotauc.org/lydiaproject> for some sample patterns.) **Finished dimensions of each scarf should be 6-7 inches wide, and 60 inches long.** Yarn selected should be acrylic so that it can be washed if necessary. Fringe is optional; if you do decide to add fringe, please do so after the scarf measures 60 inches.
- Yarn should be purple – not lavender, please, and no variegated yarn. We have referenced the Minnesota Vikings or the Minnesota artist Prince as a way to help select colors, but **the REAL reason purple is our theme color is because of Lydia in Acts 16. Not only was she well known for her purple cloth, she practiced radical hospitality** – and radical hospitality is our goal in Minneapolis.
- We understand that for some of you, obtaining enough purple yarn is challenging. If you'd like to order in bulk, here is a website that might be of help: <https://www.smileysyarns.com/shop/#>. I have not personally used their products but know that some of our churches have had good luck with finding suitable yarn – the only challenge is that there is a minimum purchase of \$50. This might be a good time to rustle up some sponsors in your congregation – people who don't knit or crochet, but who want to be involved in some way – maybe they would buy and donate yarn.
- **Each scarf needs to be laundered and tagged** before being packaged to bring to the 2019 Annual Conference (more on that in a minute). This will help avoid issues with allergens for any of the recipients.
- In October, tags were sent to the coordinator at each church, based on the number of scarves pledged from that church. Attach a tag to each scarf using purple yarn, ribbon, or raffia. **On the tag, name the person who did the stitching and their church, city, and state (no state abbreviations, please).** More on tags in a minute, too.
- Encourage your stitchers to employ the “mom test” when evaluating their work – if it's something they'd be proud to give to their mom, it's likely to be suitable for a guest at General Conference.

**Now, about PACKING:**

- Each scarf should be packed individually in a gallon-sized Ziploc baggie. BUT... ***please don't put your scarves in bags until a week or two before Annual Conference!*** We've learned that yarn may deteriorate when stored in plastic so we want the scarves to be un-bagged until just before you travel to your 2019 Annual Conference. Thank you for this extra step which will make a bit of last minute extra work. If you as the coordinator will not be coming to Conference, make arrangements for your pastor or lay delegate to bring them on your behalf.
- We are asking that scarves be **packed in groups of 20 in the lidded boxes that reams of paper come in** (from Office Max, Staples, or wherever your church office purchases copy paper). In the spring you will receive directions for how to label the boxes. (You might need to gather boxes from multiple sources for this purpose – for example, 100 scarves will need 5 paper boxes.) We chose these boxes because they are readily available,

they are uniformly sized which will make packing much easier, and because even when full they won't be terribly heavy.

- We are grateful for the offer of storage space provided by Main Street Church in North Branch, MN. Can you imagine having a place big enough to hold 350 – or maybe up to 500 - paper boxes between Annual Conference 2019 and General Conference 2020? This is a wonderful gift and we are so grateful for their help!
- Before you pack away every single scarf, though, please save one out of the box(es). We will present and bless the scarves at both 2019 Annual Conferences by asking **one person from each stitching group to symbolically bring a scarf forward during a special time in the worship service**, as a way to represent all the stitchers who have been joining in this hospitality effort. More detail will arrive in the spring – for now, this is just something to keep in mind as you are thinking about the packing process.

#### Other Random Bits of Information:

- If you need more tags, please email me: [maryanne.korsch@gmail.com](mailto:maryanne.korsch@gmail.com).
- **When you email, please include your name, your church (plus city and state), and the address to which the tags should be mailed.** Some churches use a street address, others use a PO box for mail delivery. We can avoid time delays, confusion, and duplicate mailing costs by ensuring that the address is correct the first time.
- Keep a count of the people participating in this effort. Eventually we will want to publicize the total number of scarves, the total number of stitchers, and the total number of churches participating in this project.
- If possible, we'd love **a few digital photos** of the members of your group working on these scarves. This will be part of a slide show during the presentation and blessing of the scarves. In addition, is there an interesting or meaningful story that you can share about the creation of the scarves within your church? If so, we'd love for you to share a brief recap so that we can share it with others!
- In March, each site coordinator will receive a **template for a label that will be put on the outside of each box**. We are asking you to print as many labels as you need (if you are packing 80 scarves, for example, you will need four boxes and will print four labels) and affix the label as directed.
- Finally, many people have asked what the plan will be for extra scarves, should there be any. We are searching for places the extras could be donated throughout Minnesota and the Dakotas so we are sure that **all scarves are well used** – either here at home or around the world.

Again, the GC2020 Host Team joins in gratitude for the work that you are leading in your local congregations. Feel free to use this project to enrich the spiritual growth of your members by encouraging prayer for the recipients of the scarves, learning about the work of Lydia, or discussing the work of General Conference and how it impacts us all in our local churches.

Grace and Peace to you all,

Rev. MaryAnne Korsch  
Deacon, First UMC, Duluth, MN and member of Host Committee for GC2020  
[Maryanne.korsch@gmail.com](mailto:Maryanne.korsch@gmail.com)  
218.343.8813