

Grapevine

Sister-Care—Why it matters

by Carolyn Holderread Heggen, West Coast Representative, Mennonite Women USA



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It is not surprising that enthusiasm for Sister-Care is high. Most of us know from personal experience that there are times in our lives when we need to be listened to and helped to find the meaning in our suffering even more than we need food. Women want to find more effective ways of listening and caring for each other in the context of the church. Many are seeing Sister-Care training as a way to do that.

I believe Sister-Care matters and can become a powerful healing resource among us. Why?

1. It is consistent with our theology. We believe God wants to be in intimate relationship with us as humans and that built into our very DNA is a longing to be in community with others. Our Mennonite understanding of the church is that we are a community of wounded people who need each other to be healed and to together become the Body of Christ.
2. It equips women to meet a significant need in our congregations. Life has always been stressful, but current economic hardships, the high mobility of families and increasing levels of addictions compound women's challenges. In times of emotional pain, most Christians turn to someone in their congregation for help. Women usually go to other women for support.
3. It affirms and enhances women's strengths. Because of our socialization—and probably because of our biology—women tend to see life as inherently relational. Many women are skilled in empathy and seem to have a natural inclination and gift for caregiving and empathic listening. Sister-Care builds on these gifts and affirms women's role in helping the church be what it was meant to be—a caring, transformative community.

May Sister-Care become a gift of grace to our congregations and communities. ☐

MW USA Mission and Vision:

Our mission is to empower and resource women and women's groups as we: nurture our life in Christ, study the Bible, use our gifts, hear each other, and engage in mission and service.

Our vision is to facilitate woman-to-woman links locally and globally, through mission and fellowship within our diverse church, embracing women of different backgrounds, and encouraging mutual support, discussion, partnership, and worship.