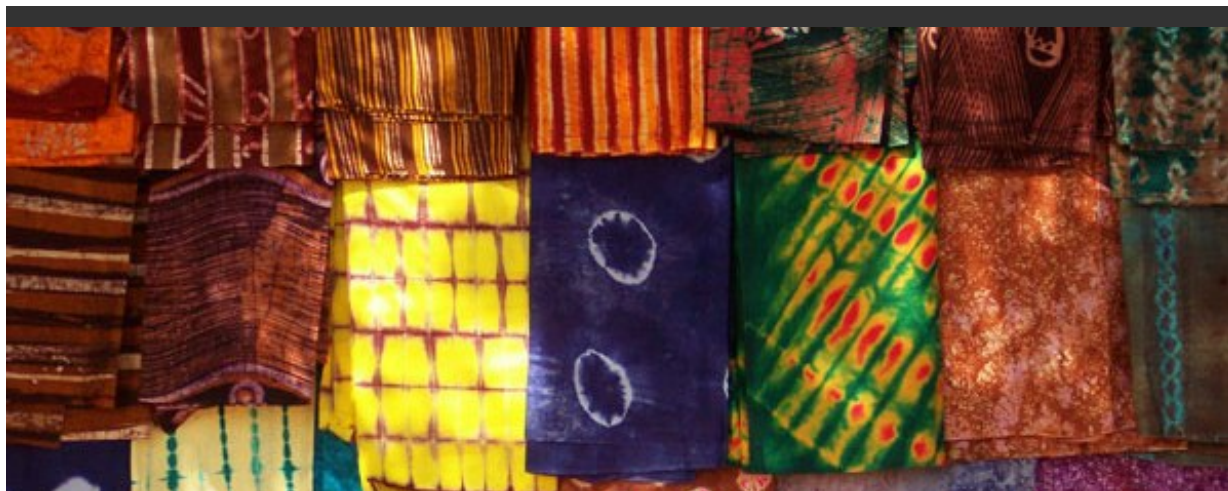


Celebrate International Women's Day 2011: A Ritual

by Diann L. Neu



[Donate](#)

Gather a globe, candle, pitcher of water, bowl, chimes, and flowers.

Telling the Story

- March 8, 1857: hundreds of women workers in garment and textile factories in New York City staged a strike against low wages, long working hours, and inhumane working conditions – one of the first organized labor actions by women in the world. They were attacked and dispersed by police, but returned two years later to form their first labor union.
- 1908: 15,000 women laborers marched through New York City with the slogan “Bread and Roses,” demanding shorter work hours, better pay, voting rights, and an end to child labor.
- 1910: Clara Zetkin, a German Socialist, proposed the observance of International Women’s Day to mark the 1857 strike, and it was accepted by the Women’s Socialist International at its meeting in Copenhagen.
- March 8, 1911: over a million women in Germany, 45,000 in Berlin alone, marched to demand the right to vote.
- 1917: Russian women call for a strike on February 23rd for “bread and peace” to protest poor living conditions and food shortages. This date in the Julian calendar (then used in Russia) falls on March 8 in the Georgian calendar.
- 1975: International Women’s Year proclaimed.
- 1977: The United Nations proclaimed a United Nations Day for Women’s Rights and International Peace that is observed on March 8.
- 2000: The World March of Women 2000 demanded that the UN and its member States take concrete measures to eliminate poverty and ensure a fair distribution of the planet’s wealth between rich and poor, between men and women; and eliminate violence against women and ensure equality between women and men.
- 2011: Solidarity with women sets the tone for our ritual.

Source Facts: United Nations Department of Public Information, *Susan B. Anthony Slept Here* by Lynn Sherr and Jurate Kazickas, and POWR-L email from Susan Franzblau. Wording by Diann L. Neu.

Lifting Up Women’s Lives

What women come to your mind and heart as you think about International Women's Day? Bring specific women from around the world into your consciousness. Hold the globe and locate places where women you know live. Name them and remember their stories. Let us assume that among us we cover this globe, country by country, though some say women have no country.

Blessing of Solidarity

In solidarity with women around the world, we bless the four elements.
As the world needs earth, air, water and sun, so the world needs women.
We unite with you, Sisters of the South, and share our hearth. (*Light a candle.*)
We unite with you, Sisters of the East, and share our music. (*Play the chimes.*)
We unite with you, Sisters of the North, and share our soil. (*Place flowers on the altar.*)
We unite with you, Sisters of the West, and share our wells. (*Pour water into the bowl.*)

Praising Women of the Seven Continents

Praise women of the seven continents for the unique resources they bring to the world.
Praise to you, sisters of Asia, for your strong resistance to oppression.
Praise to you, sisters of Africa, for raising your voices in public squares.
Praise to you, sisters of Europe, for your leadership in peacekeeping.
Praise to you, sisters of North America, for confronting inequities of race and class.
Praise to you, sisters of South America, for struggles that bring about equality.
Praise to you, sister in Antarctica, for your scientific research.
Praise to you, sisters of Australia, for your steadfast demands for justice.

Greeting of Peace

Breathe deeply. Take in the energy of the candlelight. Play the chimes. Smell the flowers. Bless yourself with the water. Send peace to women in your family, in your community, in your country, and around the world. Blessings to you this International Women's Day!

© Diann L. Neu, D.Min., cofounder and codirector of WATER, The Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual, dneu@hers.com

Upcoming WATER Programs...

- **Teleconference with Kate Ott**
Wednesday, March 9 from 1-2 pm EST

Dr. Kate M. Ott is deputy Director of the [Religious Institute](#). She holds a doctorate in Christian Ethics from Union Theological Seminary in New York and teaches ethics and sexuality-related courses at Yale Divinity School, Drew Theological Seminary, and Union Theological Seminary. She is a welcome contributor to WATER's newest book [New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views](#) (Edited by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, Skylight Paths 2010).



Children and youth are our future, the future of feminist Christianity, of feminist ethics, and of our faith communities. Kate Ott will discuss new insights from feminist Christian ethicists about children's moral agency. New understandings of children's moral agency affect how we educate children and youth in our faith communities, as well as how the discipline of Christian Social Ethics discusses moral agency for adults. Specific examples and experiential challenges will be shared with regard to sexuality, racial and economic justice.

HOW TO REGISTER: Email the words "register me" to waterstaff@hers.com by March 8 and you will receive dial-in information.

To listen to past teleconferences on our website, [click here](#).

- **WATERwomen Gather for Ritual**
Wednesday, March 23 at 7:30 pm

Join us at the WATER office, gather a group in your area, or join us in spirit.

With the end of March comes an opportunity to celebrate the coming of Spring (March 21) as well as World Water Day (March 22). Bring a friend and join other

women as we honor the rhythms of the seasons, deepen our awareness of the world's sacred resources, and nourish one another to do our work for peace and justice. The office will be open at 7 pm for tea, conversation, and book borrowing.

Please RSVP to waterstaff@hers.com by the day before so that we can expect you or notify you of any changes.



[Click to view this email in a browser](#)

If you no longer wish to receive these emails, please reply to this message with "Unsubscribe" in the subject line or simply click on the following link: [Unsubscribe](#)

Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics and Ritual (WATER)
8121 Georgia Avenue
Suite 310
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-4933
US



[Read](#) the VerticalResponse marketing policy.