

Synod women advocate for women at UN Commission on the Status of Women

New York -- Jan Beran of the Presbytery of North Central Iowa and Cathy Manthei of the Presbytery of Milwaukee will travel to United Nations headquarters in New York City as part of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s delegation that will advocate for gender equity with the 58th United Nations Commission on the Status of Women that runs March 10-21.

The Commission is a functional commission of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and is the principal global policy-making body dedicated exclusively to gender equality and advancement of women.

As a member of the Presbyterian delegation, Beran and Manthei will join Christian colleagues from around the world partnering with Ecumenical Women, an international coalition of church denominations and ecumenical organizations. Groups concerned for gender justice from around the world participate in the Commission.

The priority theme for the 58th Commission is "challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls." Responding to the priority theme, Ecumenical Women is advocating for four themes to be included in the outcome document of the Commission. These are foci on (1) poverty and hunger; (2) access to quality education, employment and decision-making; (3) full access to health, including sexual and reproductive health services; and (4) transformational shifts in social norms in response to violence against women and girls.

"It is exciting to see Presbyterians from the United States and ecumenical partners from around the world come together in New York to advocate for four areas that are important parts of the Justice and Peace focus of the Presbyterian Church," said Ryan Smith, Presbyterian Representative to the United Nations and Co-Chair of Ecumenical Women.

Presbyterian participation in the Commission is coordinated by several PC(USA) ministries: Presbyterian Women, Young Women's Ministries of the Racial Ethnic & Women's Ministries/Presbyterian Women's ministry area, and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations of the Compassion, Peace and Justice ministry area.

The PC(USA) holds special status with the Economic and Social Council, providing access for the church to engage with the Commission.

The Commission traditionally concludes with recommendations to the United Nations and world community intended to achieve gender equity.