



The Sower

*Newsletter for the Presbyterian Women in
the Synod of Lakes & Prairies*

July 2014

Editor: Karen Bartel

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS by Marilyn Stone

The 2015 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women is now less than a year away! The countdown is on and hopefully YOU are planning to attend this inspirational and informative event to be held June 18-21, 2015 at the Hyatt Regency in Minneapolis, MN. The theme, "One Body, One Spirit" is based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, which reads, "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free – and we were all made to drink of one Spirit."

At its April 2014 meeting, the PW Synod Coordinating Team set a goal of having at least 125 persons from our synod attend the PW Churchwide Gathering! That averages out to eight persons per presbytery – I think we can surpass that number! Do you have this event on your calendar? Are you finding creative ways to share information about the Gathering with congregations in your presbytery? Check out the gathering website, www.presbyterianwomen.org/gathering often for up-to-date details and resources. Start creating a list of all who will be attending so that we can start counting up toward our goal!

What are your TOP TEN REASONS for attending the 2015 PW Churchwide Gathering? Do any of these appear on your list also?

TOP TEN REASONS FOR ATTENDING THE 2015 PW CHURCHWIDE GATHERING:

- 1) Location – Location – Location! The Gathering can't get much closer since it's happening in our synod!
- 2) Discover what PW is doing in and around the world!
- 3) Explore mission opportunities – national and international!
- 4) Gather resources – PW related and much, much more!
- 5) Expand one's leadership knowledge and skills
- 6) Nurture one's faith through worship and plenary speakers
- 7) Be challenged and uplifted through workshops and presentations
- 8) Meet and learn from international participants
- 9) Increase understanding of current issues in the church and the world
- 10) Be part of an inspirational and informative churchwide event

Since our synod is hosting the 2015 Churchwide Gathering, there will be a multitude of volunteer opportunities available. Check the next issue of the newsletter for additional information on volunteering and be prepared to sign-up!

Hopefully you are finding opportunities to relax and recharge during these delightful days of summer. Several areas within our synod have been impacted by severe storms and flooding. Let us reach out as able to assist and certainly with our prayers.

May you enjoy God's simple pleasures each and every day!

Marilyn Stone, PW Moderator, Synod of Lakes and Prairies

Presbytery Highlights

Faithful Women Fall Retreat – Presbytery of South Dakota

Where: Joy Ranch (just outside of Watertown)

When: Overnight on Friday to Saturday, October 3-4 Begin: 1:00 p.m. and End: 3:00 p.m.

What: “On Retreat with God”

Who: Leaders are Rev. Pat Hammond and Kristi Holler

Cost: \$135.00.....If you room by yourself, less if you have a roommate(s); plus three meals.

Divide \$110 for the room by the number of roommates. Example: \$55.00 each for two in a room

For more information: Trudi Nelson, PWP Moderator, nelsont@svtv.com

Discovering & Celebrating our Gifts Retreat – East Iowa Presbytery

Where: Camp Wyoming, Wyoming, Iowa

When: Overnight on Friday to Saturday, August 15 & 16, beginning at 4:00 pm Fri and ending by 4:00 pm Saturday

What: Learn from the experiences of the Women of the Bible, enjoy fellowship with other women and time in nature.

Cost \$25. For more information, contact Beth Jensen, bejensen@live.com

Ask Ms PW

Dear Ms. PW,

What is the PW Honorary Life Membership Award?

PW Moderator

Dear PW Moderator

An Honorary Life Membership in Presbyterian women is conferred upon an individual each year in recognition of faithful service in any area of the church’s work.

A description of the pin received is: The caring supportive hands represent women who seek to build an inclusive community of Presbyterian women. The leaf represents growth of our personal and corporate response to Jesus Christ as we nurture our faith. The dove indicates our work for peace in our lives and throughout the world, shown in the globe. At the center of the design is the cross, by which our sins are forgiven and we are freed to live in Christ, who is at the center of our lives. The overall design is that of a butterfly, symbol of newness in Christ and the emergence of a new creation...Presbyterian Women.

If you wish to receive more information on this award you may call 800-524-2612, Monday through Friday 9 am to 7 pm EST. Ask for the free Honorary Life Membership brochure PDS number PWR07410.

Ms PW

Editor’s Note: the form to order this honor/pin is at website <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/pw-honorary-life-membership-form/> ; the brochure is at <http://store.pcusa.org/PWR07410>

Susan Jackson-Dowd named executive director, Presbyterian Women

By Mary Cook Jorgenson
PW Churchwide Moderator
At the March 2014 meeting of the Churchwide Coordinating Team, Susan Jackson-Dowd was named executive director of Presbyterian Women, Inc. .



Susan has served PW for 19 years, stepping into the role of communications coordinator in 2000. Following Ann Ferguson’s retirement as program coordinator last year, Susan worked closely with elected leadership and PW staff to merge the program and communications staffs into a single PW staff. Susan’s leader-

ship and support of PW was essential to bringing about a cohesive and sustainable

staffing model. Susan has also coordinated efforts to reduce administrative costs. Susan is working with the denomination to negotiate new service and lease agreements, reducing inventory and updating print practices, while completing transfer of personnel to PW, Inc. Susan travels extensively for PW, presenting workshops and keynotes, leading installation services and facilitating groups. She has presented PW to church and ecumenical partners throughout the United States and globally. Susan serves as chair for the World Day of Prayer USA board and as consultant for the International Least Coin. She has a bachelor's degree in journalism/radio television, a master's in Christian education and a doctorate in leadership education. Susan serves as an assistant professor in Spalding University's doctor of education program in Louisville. She teaches dissertation writing and systems theory. Susan and her husband, Scott, are members of Highland Presbyterian Church, Louisville, Kentucky. Don't miss the upcoming Churchwide Gathering plans! Keep informed at: <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pwgathering/>

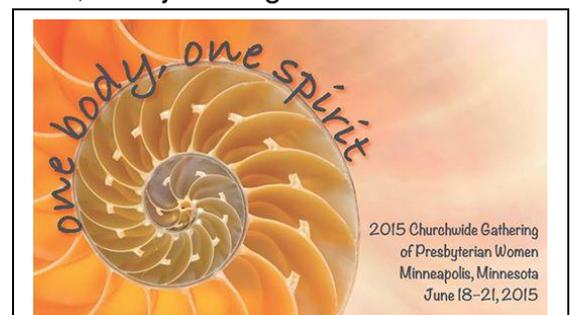
What is the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women?

The Gathering, held once every three years, is an opportunity for Presbyterian women from across the country (and around the world!) to gather for worship, education, community-building, fun and renewal. Participants will enjoy workshops, tours, forums, plenary sessions with inspiring speakers and worship. PW's triennial Business Meeting also takes place during the Gathering, where budget, leadership and programmatic emphases will be decided.

In 2015, the Gathering will be held June 18–21 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Themed “One Body, One Spirit,” the 2015 Gathering will be an opportunity for worship and community, education and fun—all exploring 1 Corinthians 12:12–27: for just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.



Dear PW Leaders,

Legacy Christmas, the joint project offering a CD of treasured carols in support of the Birthday Offering and Living Waters for the World, has been an overwhelming success the first time out of the gate, with \$100,000 in net proceeds raised for mission! We deeply appreciate the 440 circles and presbytery teams who offered the CD on consignment this past fall. Your positive feedback to the music and the cause has been inspiring and the results speak for themselves.

So – *DRUM ROLL PLEASE* - the second Legacy Christmas CD, titled “Legacy Christmas, Nativity Carols and Hymns” is now in production! The same musicians and vocalist Alyth McCormack of The Chieftains are returning, along with the exciting addition of acclaimed vocalist and songwriter Julie Lee. (Julie has written songs for Alison Krauss and was a featured artist on NPR’s All Songs Considered this past fall.) Like the first record, the new CD will feature classic songs of the church passed down through the ages, including Silent Night, While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks, and What Child is This?

Both CDs will be available for consignment this fall, and may be offered separately or together. We hope to see all of our former consigners return and hope many more of you elect to join us in this wonderful example of partnership to support God’s work among women, children and their families.

Stay tuned . . . our next communication later this summer will include a sample preview from the new record!

Marilyn Stone, PWS Moderator



Leadership Chairperson, Sue Kimball, sent this article. It’s absolutely great, and there is no limit on your imagination for ways to interest Alzheimer Patients and to help them keep up their skills.

Alzheimer’s Sensory Blanket Project

A hands-on mission project presented by Margaret Magill at the Spring Connection

This project is too good to keep it “a secret,” so Margaret is sharing it with others. The information was from a local Hospice unit that found that Alzheimer’s patients like to feel different textures and keep their hands busy fiddling with things on a small lap quilt. Most local nursing home Dementia Units or Activity Departments would welcome some of these for their residents.

Find: lots of scraps of ribbon, rick-rack, lace, buttons, zippers, snaps, pockets, Velcro, appliqués, small empty thread spools, etc. Collect: several different pieces of fabric for 12” blocks. Terry cloth, burlap, velvet or suede, denim, polyester, prints, flannel- anything will work, but some may not wash very well, so keep that in mind. The different textures of each block provides tactile stimulation along with whatever you add to each piece that may also provide motor exercises (if moving or 3D).

Cut: 6- 12" blocks and sew all sorts of colorful things on them from your scraps. We put on denim jeans pockets (so that something could be stuffed inside the pocket), shaped frilly lace into a heart shape on a block. We themed some quilts: camouflage and flannels for men; patriotic; all pinks/purples for women; we even did a Christmas one with reds and greens.

Sew: 6 blocks together in two rows (three in a row, in two rows) after they have been decorated. Put on a simple backing. Fleece is good. We did not put a batting in the center but you can, for more stability. Sew the decorated blocks and the backing with right sides together—leave an opening of a few inches to turn it. Stitch in the ditch around the six blocks to hold the backing in place and around the outside edge. The size is actually 24"x 36" but it's just the right size to hold on their laps.

The more 3-D you can make the decorations, the better. Example: We cut a cuff off a western shirt and sewed it on a block so that Alzheimer's patients could snap and unsnap while they were sitting. We sewed a piece of cord in the seam of one block, then put a small wooden thread spool on the cord, and finally attached the other end of the cord on the opposite side of the block- this allowed the spool to slide back and forth along the cord- something we understood later that one of the patients loved.

Adaptive Leadership Aide – an amended copy is attached along with this newsletter for the PWCs to use as a leadership training event. Attaching it makes it easier to reproduce for use. When using it, allow for an hour of instruction, small group discussion and large group recap.

2014 Mission Projects

Submitted by East Iowa Presbytery

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of East Iowa has adopted Mission Starfish Haiti as its 2014 Mission Project. We are fund raising and many have decided to sponsor a child in the school. Many churches in East Iowa have also decided to sponsor this Mission, including several Presbyterian churches.



An article is attached with a great deal of background material and pictures showing some of the construction projects. The Founder of Mission Starfish Haiti is Silentor Esthil-Henderson, who was adopted by a man from East Iowa and brought to the States to go through a miraculous healing process to save a leg. Losing a leg in Haiti would have been condemnation to a life as a beggar. Even as small child, Silentor was very adamant against it being cut off.

After living in the United States for 15 years, Silentor returned to his native Haiti in 2011 and built a Christian school for children in his hometown of Gonaives under the name Mission Starfish Haiti. The Starfish School serves 236 children from kindergarten to fourth grade with plans to add fifth grade this Fall. All the activities and programs are aimed not only at educating children who had no hope of attending school, or didn't have a chance to get more than 1 or 2 years in the public schools, but also at elevating the economic opportunities of their families and community. Haitians helping Haitians, one Starfish at a time.

Follow Mission Starfish Haiti on Facebook, or find the website at www.mshaiti.org or see videos on YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaVHfjiloqQ

-Issues that need our prayers-

Khartoum, Sudan: Meriam Ibrahim, the Sudanese Christian woman whose death sentence for apostasy was overturned was freed again after being detained on accusations of forging travel documents.

Wearing a traditional white and green dress, Ibrahim, 27, walked out of a Khartoum police station carrying her newborn baby hours after lawyers said she was ordered released. Ibrahim and her husband, who is disabled and was seen being carried by two men, got into a vehicle with their other child and sped away, followed by police cars and two vehicles with diplomatic plates.

Ibrahim was sentenced to death over charges of apostasy. A daughter of a Muslim father, Ibrahim was raised by her Christian mother. She married a Christian, Daniel Wani, who holds American citizenship and is from South Sudan, in a church ceremony in 2011. As in many Muslim nations, Muslim women in Sudan are prohibited from marrying non-Muslims, though Muslim men can marry outside their faith. By law, children must follow their father's religion.

Sudan's penal code forbids Muslims from converting to other religions, a crime punishable by death. The court in the capital, Khartoum, had also ordered that Ibrahim be given 100 lashes for having sexual relations with her husband. The sentence drew international condemnation, with Amnesty International calling it "abhorrent." The U.S. State Department said it was "deeply disturbed" by the sentence and called on the Sudanese government to respect religious freedoms.

Amid an international outcry against the sentence, Ibrahim was acquitted by Sudan's Court of Cassation and freed Monday. However, she was detained the following day along with her family when they tried to leave Khartoum's airport en route to the United States with what authorities described as forged travel documents. Sudan's Foreign Ministry said that it summoned South Sudan diplomats to protest the issuing of travel documents to Ibrahim, who has Sudanese citizenship. The U.S. State Department said it was a "very fluid situation" and it couldn't confirm whether Ibrahim had been released.

"We are in communication with the Sudanese Foreign Ministry to ensure that she and her family will be free to travel as quickly as possible," State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf told reporters in Washington. "From our perspective, Miriam has all of the documents she needs to travel to and enter the United States. It is up to the government of Sudan to allow her to exit the country."

Sudan introduced Islamic Shariah laws in the early 1980s, a move that contributed to the resumption of an insurgency in the mostly animist and Christian south of Sudan. The south seceded in 2011 to become the world's newest nation, South Sudan. Sudanese President Omar Bashir, an Islamist who seized power in a 1989 military coup, says his country will implement Islam more strictly now that the non-Muslim south is gone. A number of Sudanese have been convicted of apostasy in recent years, but they all escaped execution by recanting their new faith. Religious thinker and politician Mahmoud Mohammed Taha, a critic this interpretation of Shariah, was sentenced to death after his conviction of apostasy. He was executed in 1985 at the age of 76.

Ibrahim's case first came to the attention of authorities in August, when members of her father's family complained that she was born a Muslim but married a Christian man. She insists she was never a Muslim, but was raised as a Christian from the beginning.

By Bill Andress, Trinity Sudan Ministry
Sudan Advocacy Action Forum, Coalition of Advocates for South Sudan



A Different Kind of Mission Project

Submitted by Linda Barnett

At the 2009 PW Churchwide Gathering I was looking for socially responsible investment opportunities and discovered Oikocredit. When I sold my house I invested with them – Oikocredit is recommended by PC(USA). Oikocredit invests in microfinance opportunities in developing countries. I was familiar with microfinance through the Seed Sowers Mission of First Presbyterian Church, Sioux Falls. I'd been donating money to that mission for some time. But Oikocredit was different. I didn't donate; I invested and received 2% interest on my investment. A win-win situation! I got to help others while helping myself.

In April I had the opportunity to travel to the Dominican Republic with Oikocredit and visit with some of those who benefit from the money I invest. I met co-op managers, cocoa bean farmers, a barber, women who run a small store and a bakery, and others. What a thrill to hear their stories and understand how microfinance – and Oikocredit – help them in their work and lives. If you or your organization currently has money in a CD, I encourage you to check out Oikocredit and help people in developing countries with that money. Like a CD, it is invested for a year at a time and you choose the interest rate – from none to 2%.

For more information check out www.oikocredit.org or e-mail Linda Barnett at barnelim@hotmail.com or call Linda at 507-275-4053. See the Oikocredit ad in the 2013-2014 Horizon Bible Study on page 67 for more encouragement.

Social Media and Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian pastors Katie Mulligan (New Covenant) and Karen Sapio (Claremont) were in an online study group that included the Horizons Bible Study author the Rev. Dr. Margaret Aymer Oget. "Dr. Aymer suggested the online group as a way of connecting our sense of call to social justice work with PW, an organization that has been working on these concerns for decades," said Mulligan. As a younger pastor she knew that some women worked and had children and felt PW was inaccessible to them. "To get connected again in a place that wasn't necessarily in church was really exciting," she says. Sapio, who has been a pastor for more than 20 years, also knew of Presbyterian Women groups and wished they had younger members. She says she "saw energy beginning to develop around this idea. Suddenly we were reinventing our DNA online." Within an hour the women decided they would use their social media contacts "hoping they could find 15 women to do the Horizons Bible Study virtually."

There are Pilot groups out there using each of the four social media platforms. Varying in size, each has 10 to 15 active members who are posting conversation, sharing reflections and creating a sense of community. Sixty-seven-year-old grandmother Abbie Watters, who is in the blog-based Bible study, which seems to work well for those not so conversant with social media. "For those of us who are older it isn't quite as fast. We've had time for meaningful thoughtful reflection, that has spilled over into conversations on Facebook. This is driving all of us to take a look at who we are as Presbyterian women. It's opening doors for us to welcome all women, regardless of their faith, and schedules, into our circle." Hum. Are you ready to Twitter or Facebook?

PW in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies (SLAP) has a presence on the SLAP Webpage, <http://www.lakesandprairies.org/> and if you search on Presbyterian Women on Facebook, there are many, many, even some from the UK and Canada. Is your PWP/PWC using social media?

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Note: “m” indicates PWP Moderator
“r” stands for PWS Presbytery Representative

Learn about Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women (PW) is the national women’s organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With more than 300,000 members and 25 years as an organization, PW is organized at all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Learn more about PW and consider joining your local group. It’s a good read at our website.

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pw/>

Here is a link to the Who-Ya-Gonna-Call? The Who’s Who at PW National

<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/pw-staff-who-ya-gonna-call/>

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies website,

<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/mid-councils/lakes-prairies/>

“Like” Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on Facebook!!!

“The Sower” publishing dates are January, April, July & October. If you have an article or would like to have an article or information on any particular subject, please send the Editor your article or question by/before the first of each of the above cited months.

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