



The Sower

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

January 2016

Editor: Karen Bartel

Message from the Moderator

Happy New Year to all! As I reflect on this past year and look forward to the new one, I ponder what it is I want to be intentional about in the weeks and months ahead. Isn't this often what we do at the beginning of a new year as individuals, organizations, churches, and even Presbyterian Women? Am I or are we on target with our goals? Are we accomplishing what we intended? What's missing or what needs more effort?

One area I have determined that I want to be more intentional about in 2016 is being a stronger voice for those who have no voice. I want to speak up more often at the time when I see individuals ignored, intimidated, or otherwise dismissed. I want to stand up more often for people who are victims of poverty, human trafficking, war, racism, domestic violence, bullying. . . those who are hungry, homeless, thirsty for safe drinking water, refugees and more.

I realize it is not only important to speak up, but it is of equal importance the words that are spoken. Using words that build-up, words that help create a factual visualization, and words that lead to solutions are most helpful when expressing support for others.

Presbyterian Women provides so many opportunities to become informed and respond to individuals without a voice in our communities, across the U.S. and around the world. I can't help but discover new ways with every issue of Horizons, each lesson of the Horizons Bible Study, the Quarterly News for PW Leaders, through our PW coordinating teams at synod, presbytery and congregational levels, and the upcoming PW Synod Gathering, too. Together, our voices joining others, we can make a difference in the life of our neighbor beside us and around the world.

What are you planning to be more intentional about in 2016 to make today matter. . . for you and your neighbor?

Blessings, Marilyn Stone, PWS Moderator

Ask Ms. PW

Dear Ms. PW,

How can women stay connected to Presbyterian Women if their churches leave the denomination or if their PW groups disband?

Dear PW Moderator,

This can be a painful time and bring discomfort to members in a congregation facing a split from the denomination. One option is to find a new church with a PW group. However, in rural areas, there may be few or no other PC (USA) congregations or the congregation may not have PW groups. Another option is to put your membership in the presbytery while looking for another PC (USA) church if you wish to stay in the denomination. Women who are not in PC (USA) congregations can be members of PW simply by supporting PW and its witness in the world. You can continue Presbyterian Women's work individually or with one of PW's many secular or faith-based partners. Consider the following organizations: Living Waters for the World (www.livingwatersfortheworld.org); Church Women United (www.churchwomen.org); The Children's Defense Fund (www.childrensdefense.org); Heifer International(www.heifer.org). These are just a few of many.

If your PW is considering disbanding or church is seeking dismissal, stay in touch –with PW in your presbytery, synod and churchwide. National PW staff is available to support groups or individuals in navigating the legal and financial implications of disbanding or dismissal, as well as options for staying connected to PW through Churchwide Gatherings, programs, resources and more. Contact Susan Jackson Dowd, (susan.jackson-dowd@pcusa.org or 844-797-2872, ext.5368.

For more detailed information go to Horizons Magazine, Sept./Oct. 2015 issue, article; Presbyterian Women Astride and Divide by Sarah Kennerly. Ms. PW

Suggested Reading

“Dream New Dreams: Reimagining My Life After Loss”

By Jai Pausch

A remarkably frank, deeply moving , and inspiring memoir by Jai Pausch, whose husband Randy, wrote the bestseller The Last Lecture while battling Pancreatic cancer. Jai shares her emotional journey from wife and mother to full-time caregiver, then widow fighting to preserve a sense of stability for her family, while coping with her own grief and the challenges of running a household without a partner.

A valued read for anyone who has cared for and lost a partner in life. Jai stresses the importance and difficulty in dreaming new dreams, finding a new focus or purpose in life, discerning God's call as you enter a new chapter in life. Helen McMasters

Editor's Note: Changes in Moderator positions that should receive "The Sower" should be sent to the PWS Secretary:, Jean slapsec2016@hotmail.com .

Please include as copy furnished to:
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Anyone who wants to either stop or start a subscription to "The Sower" may just send a request to the Editor, Karen thesower.slap@yahoo.com

THE POWER OF PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN



Program Highlights will include:

Morning and Evening Worship
Selection of workshops
Great Room which includes Bookstore,
Ten Thousand Villages and a hands on mission project.

Bible study
Meet the Speaker sessions

Who should Attend:

Women of all ages who would like to join in Christian Fellowship and looking for a spiritually enriching experience.

Choose from a variety of workshops including a new look at Presbyterian Women of Today and what they are doing. Listen to Keynote speaker Susan Jackson Dowd, enjoy Worship with the Rev. Dr. Carolyn Visser, join Kristi Holler in music, sound and dance, and let Rev. Stephanie Anthony challenge you in the new bible study, "Who is Jesus".

KEY NOTE SPEAKER: Susan Jackson Dowd, Executive Director of Presbyterian Women — Susan works with the Presbyterian Publishing Corporation with Presbyterian Women/*Horizons*. She has a bachelor's in journalism/radio television, a master's in Christian education and a doctorate in leadership education.

WORSHIP LEADER: Rev. Dr. Carolyn Visser

Ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder) June 28, 1992 in Houston, TX. I have served in three congregations. She is presently Honorably Retired and living in Monroe, SD. She is a certified spiritual director and labyrinth facilitator.

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Rev. Stephanie Anthony

Stephanie Anthony has been the pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Hudson, Wisconsin since 2008. Prior to this call she served as the associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Among her favorite aspects of ministry is digging into scripture with diverse gatherings of the people of God.

MUSIC DIRECTOR: Kristi Holler

Kristi Holler was born and raised in the Sioux Falls South Dakota area. Kristi's life work includes church ministry and music ministry; & she is a passionate animal lover! Kristi earned a Master of Divinity at Sioux Falls Seminary in 2006, & a Master of Theology at Columbia Theological Seminary in Decatur, Ga. in 2007.

Accommodations at the Ramkota

All events for the Gathering will be held at the Ramkota. All participants will reserve their own rooms. Just give them the dates and tell them you are with Presbyterian Women. We have 50 standard rooms with 2 beds blocked off for our use. Room Rate: \$85 / night plus taxes for 1-4 in a room.

Registration: Watch for information on the synod website and in future mailings.

For further information contact: Joan Berglund at (402) 440-5478
Terri Sherman at (402) 525-6008
Kay Olson at (605) 366-2578

TWELVE WAYS TO PROMOTE SYNOD GATHERING

SPREAD THE WORD

We need your help to bring together women for fun, nurture, education, leadership development, Bible study and so much more that makes us the Gathering. Word of mouth is the best way to encourage others to attend. Share your enthusiasm!

Say it! Tell your friends and tell them about past exciting gatherings! Encourage them to go on an adventure with you.

Invite three friends to share a room or invite some new friends who haven't had this great experience!

MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT PW AND CHURCH AND PRESBYTERY MEETINGS!

Be sure to share the date, location, theme, and cost. Have your group do fund raisers and offer scholarships.

RECRUIT YOUR PASTORS!

Use the skit we have prepared or create one of your own.

Send notes to friends. Yes, even invite friends who aren't Presbyterian!

Write articles for your newsletters. Create excitement! Sioux Falls is a fun place to visit and our hotel even has a waterpark so bring the family.

Put an article in your local newspapers.

Provide flyers at every meeting that you attend.

Put the promotional flyer on your church bulletin board.

Use Life Savers (candy) for SAVE THE DATE!

Create a bulletin board.

LOOKING FOR GOOD REASONS TO COME TO THE SYNOD GATHERING

Get motivated by Susan Jackson-Dowd our Executive Director for Presbyterian Women in Louisville.

Listen to the Rev. Stephanie Anthony review the new bible study, "Who is Jesus" by Judy Yates Siker.

The Rev. Dr. Carolyn Visser will lead us in worship at all the plenaries and Kristi Holler will delight us with her musical talents.

Rev. Danelle CrawfordMcKinney will be with us to talk of the Native American tradition to share stories, songs and messages that honor those who have gone before us and teach us of the importance of Christian spirituality in our lives.

Rev. Alika Galloway will keep us informed on how sex trading and trafficking occur and its impact on its participants and the role of the Church in addressing this tragedy.

Sixteen workshops are being offered and 3 films covering a variety of topics. Check the registration book for details.

Fern Cloud will enlighten us with "Wisdom of the Grandmothers", sharing thoughts and teachings of Dakota women.

Lastly but not least, get acquainted with old friends and meet new ones!

News from Missouri River Valley Presbytery

I went kayaking for the first time this morning. It was a little after 7 – much earlier than I usually see the light of day and I was pleasantly surprised to see that the sun had not risen very much. A reminder that fall is indeed on its way. Standing Bear Lake was quiet and still – until the wind came up at least. It was peaceful to be out on the water. I was with a group of four other women who kayak together regularly and they taught me the rules of kayaking :

1. If you came today to get exercise, it's not going to happen
2. We row out to the middle and talk. The current/wind moves us, we go with it and occasionally row back to the center.
3. When you want to go out on your own, away from us, go ahead. This is a great time for you to pray, take in the beauty of God's world and recharge. We will keep an eye on your kayak to make sure you haven't tipped.
4. When returning to shore, get up some steam so that you ram your kayak up on the beach.

I was reminded of the Joan S. Gray and her book, *Sailboat Church*. In her book she asks: "Is your church a rowboat church or a sailboat church?"

Rowboat churches depend largely on human effort. When church budgets shrink and membership declines, rowboat churches frantically row harder against a current, often frustrated and disappointed at their efforts. Sailboat churches, on the other hand, take up the oars, hoist sails, and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them. Arguing that churches should be "sailboats," Joan S. Gray encourages readers to shift concern from the many daily, practical concerns of their local church to fresh ideas that can be found using the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The book includes forty days of sailing prayers, quotes from Scripture, brief reflection questions, and an extensive bibliography that is arranged by theme. Perfect for groups to read together, this book will help leaders reframe their church's mission and practice with the Holy Spirit as their guide." ⁱ

We can look at Presbyterian Women in light of her idea of rowboat v. sailboat. The number of active women in PW is declining. Circles are getting out the oars and paddling harder and harder just to stand still against the current. I think we should think of ourselves as kayak PW – perhaps not sailboat. We paddle out to the center, sit and talk and allow God's grace to fill us and wash over us. If we need to strike out on our own, to pray or get closer to God, we do and we are mindful of others around us that have done the same. We take care of each other and love each other. We get gentle nudges by the current, the wind (the Holy Spirit) moving together toward a different shore. When it's time, we paddle like crazy to crash upon the shore. Joan S. Gray is a teaching elder, living in Atlanta, Georgia. She was the Moderator of the 217th General Assembly of the PC(USA)

Joan S. Gray; *Sailboat Church*, Westminster John Knox Press, Louisville, KY 2014

Kathleen Keefer
MRV PW Moderator

The attached PW Synod Gathering Registration Booklet does contain the latest changes to the schedule.

(Special note: The phone number for hotel registrations has changed to be the one for the local hotel.)

Anti-trafficking effort in Ames

Presbyterian Women, along with other church women's groups, has for several years been educating themselves about sex trafficking in the USA and beyond. Some PW groups are involved in providing trafficking victims shelter, financial support, or advocacy. Jan Beran is leading a group called Protecting our Children whose major purpose is to prevent recruitment into trafficking by educating the public and particularly those who work with children about the reality of trafficking even in rural areas. We have had three programs featuring a federal prosecutor from southern Iowa, an Iowa State University sociologist, a foster adoptive mother of four victims of trafficking, a local law enforcement officer and a criminal investigator from the Attorney General's office.

One of the forums focused on social media and its connection to trafficking. These forums are held at the Ames, Iowa Public Library and are available to anyone in the area. Protecting Our Children is part of a coalition that includes people involved with youth. This group, Central Iowa Services Network, connects many individual and groups that work with youth in Iowa such as Teens Against Trafficking, Salvation Army, Network Against Human Trafficking, and many more.

We are distributing a documentary, Any Kid, Any Where, made by Breaking Traffick of the Quad Cities in Iowa. It features three young Iowa survivors of trafficking and is useful for groups ages 12 and older. We have supplied these videos to schools, the public library and other groups. If the reader has an interest in obtaining one, please email at gberan54@gmail.com.

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

Ecumenical Advocacy Days is a program that PCUSA Office of Public Witness, Compassion Peace and Justice plans and coordinates with other major church denominations. This office works to implement General Assembly decisions related to peace and justice. One of the ways they do this is to invite church members from throughout the country to attend a Friday training day (usually March or April) at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church followed by two days of training joining others from other churches. Then on Monday, attendees from each state go to Congress and advocate with their elected lawmakers on particular issues of peace and justice. My husband and I and daughter-in-law attended last year. Outstanding Christian pastors and church workers briefed and challenged us to witness to our faith through becoming informed regarding justice issues. Break-out sessions provided more opportunity for learning. This spring the focus was on our criminal justice system. We are pleased to be able to say that the advocacy of so many people from all over the country has had an impact. A partisan bill has been drafted that will ease the burden in our prisons, give judges more discretion in sentencing and helps families.

If you want to learn more about this significant program, go to ga_washington_office@pcusa.org. This year's event will be April 12-18. The theme will be Racism, Class and Power. To learn more specifics go to Ecumenical Advocacy Days. While the training is three days, we just went to the Presbyterian day and felt we learned enough and did not register for the full three days.

**The Synod Gathering Team recommends that you get your hotel reservations
In as quickly as possible.**

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“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://www.lakesandprairies.org/>

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

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