

NEW SONG

Listening for the ways God is working
in the Presbytery of South Dakota.

Presbytery of South Dakota Newsletter | November/December 2019

Rops Elected to UN Delegation for PW

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women



Judy Rops of Sioux Falls

By Louise Van Poll

Judy Rops has been selected to attend the Presbyterian Women (PW) delegation to the 64th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) March 9-20, 2020, at the United Nations in New York City.

The U.N. CSW was established in 1946 as a mechanism to promote, report on and monitor issues relating to the political, economic, civil, social and educational rights of women.

The meeting in 2020 will mark the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995.

The Platform imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work.

Since 1995, governments, civil society and the public have translated the Platform for Action's promises into concrete changes in individual countries which have ushered enormous improvement in women's lives.

Participation in the CSW provides a unique opportunity to advocate as people of faith with this global policy-making body where representatives of U.N. Member States gather to "evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide."

Presbyterian Women achieved Non-Governmental Organization status, as accredited by the U.N., after a lengthy process. It was actually eight years in the making from the time the group learned it could apply for that status until its acceptance in 2019.

Rops applied online earlier this fall never imagining she would be selected.

"This is a rare and wonderful opportunity," said Rops. "I have been told that no one from South Dakota has ever attended. I am truly humbled and honored to represent my church (FPC Sioux Falls), my local PW, my Presbytery and my Synod. I look forward to sharing my experiences in the future."

Thousands of women from around the world are expected to attend this event.

Rops is personally responsible for all expenses for this trip.

"The registration is not expensive," Rops said, "But I will need to pay for my travel and hotel (ouch). But I am determined to find a way. Please pray for me as I prepare for this unbelievable journey."

Financial support would be greatly appreciated. Donations may be sent to Judy Rops at 28279 465th Ave., Lennox, SD 57039.





Faith Presbyterian Helps Rebuild Home in Puerto Rico

By Rev. Sarah Hagena

In the summer of 2018, Faith Presbyterian youth and church members began praying and dreaming of a mission trip to help the hurricane battered Island of Puerto Rico. Fundraising began slowly but God and our community provided every penny we needed through generous donations, pizza ranch night, a yard sale/bake sale, eco-maniac garbage cleanup and a food booth.

Just before we were to depart for Puerto Rico, a huge political uprising occurred when the governor's emails were leaked in which he mocked the dead bodies from Hurricane Maria! Thousands took to the streets to call for his resignation and finally he did resign. We were a bit rattled but on Aug. 7 our team of seven arrived at the airport at 5 a.m.

Our first view of Puerto Rico, as we were descending, revealed blue tarps still covering the roof area of many yet unrepaired homes. Two years after the hurricane there's still much work to do to restore Puerto Rico!

After a very long wait for our rental van, we arrived at La Casona De Monteflores – a church manse turned into housing for volunteers. There on a roof terrace with a beautiful view, we prayed and the host church fed us a typical Puerto Rican home cooked meal of rice, beans, chicken and salad. We loved it! The next morning we made our lunches and headed to the work site driving anxiously trying to dodge the cars and trucks that would swerve in front of us with not a moment's notice.

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Matching Gifts Campaign

During this season of giving,
you can double your impact

The Presbytery of South Dakota is inviting everyone to participate in our Matching Gifts campaign. This is a great way to stretch your giving dollars. The Presbytery of South Dakota will match all individual gifts up to \$500, not just for one, but for each ministry you support! The three ministries included in the Matching Gifts campaign are:

- ~ Camping and Faith Formation at Camps Rimrock and Pioneer
- ~ Hope Co-op in Sioux Falls
- ~ Commissioned Ruling Elder training program

Advent and Christmas are wonderful seasons to remember our communities and church families and a gift at this time will make a big difference in our efforts to be a church of action, so please give generously.

To give, or to find out more information about each ministry, please go to the Website.



Obituary

It is with great sorrow that we announce the news of the Rev. Don Barbalace's passing. He had fought a hard battle with cancer over the last year, but unfortunately he was not able to overcome it. He was a strong presence in the life of the Presbytery and his mark on our ministries will remain for years to come.

Per his request we will be establishing a small theological library at the Presbytery Office using the collection of books that he has donated to create this valuable resource. Once established, all will be welcome to check out books from this library as a way of continuing his legacy and impact on our ministries and leaders throughout the state of South Dakota.

For the full obit, visit:

www.georgeboom.com/obituary/donald-don-barbalace

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The journey each day took us by beautiful beaches. We went to work mixing mortar and placing tiles on the floor of the home. Out the window we saw a huge avocado tree tempting, but next door was a sad skeleton home, apparently abandoned after being destroyed by the hurricanes.

It was hot work. For lunch we sat by a lovely beach in the shade and on the way home from work at 4:30 p.m. we put on our suits and jumped in the water to cool off. The next day was about the same, but Saturday was a day for exploration. We visited a tropical rainforest and learned the hard way about fire ants. We visited a couple of beaches for swimming. In the evening we went in to Old San Juan to host the homeowner and our work supervisors for dinner out. One of our women shared her testimony of God bringing her out of a dark life of addiction to find love and hope in Christ! She and Magaly, the homeowner, grew close since both are single moms.

The following day was Sunday and we went to worship at the host church – it was a beautiful service full of music, love, and people who wanted to hug you and kiss you! Everyone thanked us for coming to help rebuild Puerto Rico. That afternoon we visited the castle of San Cristobal. A man claiming to be from Wisconsin said he just needed a few more bucks to get back on a boat home because he had been robbed. One of our group gave him the money but long after he said his boat was sailing he was spotted asking others for “just a few more dollars.” Next day at work one of our supervisors said the same man hit her up for money two weeks earlier! From then on we decided to give only when we knew where the money would go.

Our team worked hard and by Tuesday we had nearly finished the floors in the home. We were told that for a group of mostly youth (four youth, one person 20 years old and two adults) our team did a great job. We are in touch with the project leaders and hear now that the house is finished! As a love gift to Magaly who has no furniture, we are sending donations to buy her a bed. In our time there we never experienced any threats other than crazy driving! And we saw no protests but we did see some angry graffiti from those earlier protests.

We praise God for the opportunity to serve Christ and help Puerto Rico recover. We pray that many more will go to share good news and help the people who still need so much help and have so little in comparison to here in the 50 states.

In researching many possible mission opportunities, we found that the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Puerto Rico was the most cost effective of all programs. Our group was financially challenged but the total cost including airfare, housing, meals and work project costs was about \$995 per participant for one full week.

If anyone is interested in doing a mission trip to Puerto Rico, I can supply the contacts for PDA and La Casona de Monteflores. My number is 605-214-3864.



Above: Malachi Calligan mixing and carrying mortar.

Right: Our group exploring castle of San Cristobal.



Is your church ready for a disaster?

By Louise Van Poll

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance is more than just helping after a disaster strikes. Through Presbyterian Women, PDA also trains and certifies Disaster Preparedness (DP) trainers to help congregations in each Presbytery plan an emergency response to a variety of disasters. Each step in becoming more prepared cultivates encouragement and hope in the face of a crisis. Where there is a plan, people remain calm because they have some control. Fear and panic step in when people feel helpless and overwhelmed by circumstances.

One brief story came from Beth Snyder from the PDA office in Louisville.

“Recently I was at my presbytery meeting. I am good friends with the secretary of the church where we were meeting and as we were talking a church member came in with the news that one of their members was being taken to the hospital and in need of prayer. That member didn’t have a lot of information and my friend didn’t have the son’s cell phone number so she left a message on the home answering machine to please call the church office with more information. I took that opportunity to suggest that she ask for all the members to provide her and the pastor with emergency contact information. They thought that was a great idea and right then prepared an announcement for the church bulletin! One small preparedness step!”

What a great idea. If your congregation has not done this already, make it your resolution to start this list in 2020. I am a certified PW-DP trainer and am available to lead a disaster preparedness workshop in your church or community.



Presbyterian Mission
**Presbyterian
Disaster Assistance**



Human Trafficking: The Hidden Crime

Human trafficking is a hidden crime, and it can happen in any community. Join FEMA January 21 for a webinar featuring a subject matter expert from the Homeland Security Investigations Component of the Department of Homeland Security. This department is tasked with investigating and dismantling human trafficking efforts throughout the country. Learn more and register on our Website:
presbyteryofsd.org/



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