



The Sower



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

May, 2020

Editor: Kathleen Keefer

Moderator's Musings:

As the COVID-19 pandemic stretches into its 3rd month here in Nebraska, I know many people who are getting tired of staying home and not seeing their friends, attending church, singing with choirs, etc. We all have different ways of coping with this kind of thing, but none of us has been prepared for what it does to our spirits. I am an introvert, so staying home and being by myself are not the hardships they would be to someone who thrives on being with people. I read a lot, watch movies and TV shows, work on projects that have been on hold for.....I don't want to say how long. And my husband and I go for walks and work in our yard to stay active. We are actually losing a little weight, due to not eating out very much. I haven't had any french fries for over a month!

When my spirit has down times, I like to turn to the Psalms for an uplifting message. One of my favorites is Psalm 121, which tells me that God will be with me always, no matter what. I also cook for my church's feeding ministry and I made masks and scrub caps for my daughter in Colorado, who is a medical assistant in a pediatric practice in Pueblo. If I am having a particularly down time, I try to stay away from social media, which is so polarizing and only seems to have negative items posted to it. I don't listen to the news very often and do look at pictures of my grandbabies often. These coping strategies help me to keep a positive focus and get through the days with a minimum of anxiety.

What is your favorite Bible verse or poem or essay that lifts you out of the doldrums and gets you going again? Do you work in your yard, make things for others, call shut-ins that might need to hear a friendly voice, send a letter to a friend who is far away? What do you do to stay busy?

Keep your focus on positive things and remember that God loves you at all times and will uphold you through these difficulties and rejoice with you at the end of this time of anxious waiting.

Be well, do good, and keep in touch.
Sue Medsker-Nedderman
Moderator



Amazon SMILE

Share and bookmark this link so all your eligible shopping will benefit PW.

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0473061>

2021 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women will be in St. Louis, Missouri at the Grand Marriott and St. Louis Convention Center. Registration is \$450.

SAVE THE DATE August 5-8, 2021 and plan to attend CHURCHWIDE 2021!



*Sketch of the Sower comes from: California's Ancient Cornucopia – The Weston A. Price Foundation



Faith Can Bridge the Social Distance

Because I am a hugger, social distancing falls down hard on me. Once distancing started, it multiplied quickly. One Sunday, we were advised to dispense with hugs and handshakes, substituting elbow and fist bumps. The next week, we greeted each other from six feet away, awkwardly attempting “air hugs.” And the following Sunday, the congregation was gone from the pews, worshipping instead, from the safety of their living rooms. I suspect this same scenario played out in offices and businesses across the globe. And all those who thrive on fellowship collectively groaned.

As a first-career nurse, I know the merits of therapeutic touch. The gentle touch of a care provider transmits comfort without words at 2 a.m. in the midst of anxiety-riddled insomnia. The fierce grip of a loved one’s hand during a painful procedure is essential. How does one manage without a literal shoulder to cry on?

Even Jesus demonstrated a healing touch again and again, reaching out his hands to cure blindness, leprosy, and withered limbs. Sometimes, touch astonishingly worked in reverse, as the woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years reached out with her last ounce of strength and touched the fringe of Jesus’ robe. She was instantly restored.

Touch, however, did not turn out to be the primary aspect of Jesus’ ministry. Faith was. A Roman military commander once asked Jesus to heal his paralyzed servant. Concerned that his home was unworthy of Jesus’ presence, he asked Jesus to heal with just a word. Jesus, astounded at the man’s faith, did just that. Healing at a social distance was born. While Jesus’ touch was powerful and poignant, it was not indispensable. Faith reached across the distance where feet could not or would not tread – Jesus’ faithfulness to us and our faithfulness in return.

We are in the middle of a touchless crisis. It is better if we do not shake our neighbor’s hand. It is safer to wave at our elderly parents through the window rather than go inside and give them a hug. Even our smiles are hidden beneath masks. And all of this when we would trade our last roll of toilet paper for a warm embrace to ease our fear and anxiety.

We have reached some decision points. Should we hibernate or should we learn new ways of virtual connection? Do we dismiss words of comfort over the phone as ineffective without eye contact or do we learn a richer vocabulary of distant presence? Will we disparage the necessity of protective equipment or can we move our smiles up to our eyes?

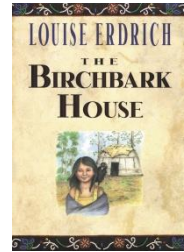
Communicating without physical touch is not a best-case scenario, but Jesus would remind us that faith-filled intent is what really holds us together. We may not be able to literally embrace our friends, but we must believe that our words can bridge that gap. Faith will make us one, even at a distance.

Rev. Sharon Rees is the pastor at Westminster United Presbyterian Church in Minden.

BOOK REVIEWS



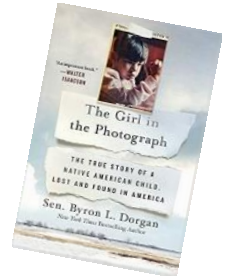
The Birchbark House by Louise Erdrich



Omakayas, a 7 year old Native American girl of the Ojibwa tribe, lives through a year with its joys and concerns. This book for children has many twists and turns but portrays life in the mid 1800's on an island in Lake Superior. Omakayas fights with her brother, Pinch, and plays with the adorable baby brother, Neewo, and admires her big sister, Angeline. The book opens with Grandmother supervising the selection of the birchbark for the their summer home.

Louise Erdrich is a member of the Turtle Mountain Band of Ojibwa and lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This book was a National Book Award finalist and she has authored and illustrated other best-selling books and won numerous awards. I want to get my grandchildren to read this book.

PWS Sponsored Book Study ***The Girl in the Photograph: The True Story of A Native American Child, Lost and Found in America*** by Byron L. Dorgan



It is not too late to join this book study as we continue to learn more about Native American history and culture, as well as promote dialog on this topic! We strive for diverse participants which enriches our discussions.

This book tells the story of an abused girl on the Standing Rock Reservation in North Dakota to the larger story of the U.S. government’s mistreatment of Native Americans. The author uses the harrowing details of Tamara’s life story – which includes sexual abuse, homelessness, untreated PTSD, and attempted suicide – to put a human face on the plight of Indigenous Americans in general.

Join us on Monday, May 11th at either 1:30 PM or 6:30 PM via Zoom. Contact Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net to register. Additional meeting dates are May 18th and June 1st.

If you have read a great book lately and would like to share, please consider writing about it for the next edition of the Sower. We all interested in reading good books!!



Zoom video-conferencing

In these days where face-to-face meetings are not possible due to social distancing, Zoom video-conferencing presents as an option for PW coordinating teams to meet, stay connected and be supportive to one another.

Our PW Synod purchased extended Zoom services with a PW leadership grant. The PW Synod Coordinating Team has agreed to offer use of its licensed Zoom account to PW coordinating teams, circles, committees for meetings or bible study should your church not have its own Zoom account. Please contact Lana Schultz (lanaj0@cassilton.net) if you wish to schedule a zoom meeting for your PW group. To join a meeting, you will need to create a personal (free) Zoom account at zoom.us and click on the "Sign Up. It's Free" icon.



Your PW Virtual Town Square gathering for the **Synod of the Lakes & Prairies** has been scheduled. Please read this email in its entirety and share it with your Synod, Presbyteries and Congregations.

ZOOM GUIDELINES

Since there will be two Synods in this Town Square gathering, there will be many in attendance. Below are a few necessary guidelines we must ALL remember and follow for our time together.

- 1) **When you join the gathering, you will be placed in a holding room and will be permitted to enter the Town Square at your designated time.** You do not have to do anything additional to enter. When the host opens the area, you will automatically be sent to the Town Square.
- 2) **When you enter the town square, you will be able to see one another, but your microphone will automatically be muted upon entry.** Please keep your microphone muted during our time together. If you would like to comment during the meeting, please put your question in the chat box and wait to be called on. Should you be called upon to speak, your microphone will be unmuted for you, by the host. This includes if you are attending the town square via telephone, as well.

3) **Use body language when necessary.** Since microphones will be muted, body language is key to quick understanding. Use head jesters for yes and no questions and hand raises, when appropriate.

4) **Please practice patience!** Please be patient and allow time for microphones to be unmuted. Let us all be positive, encouraging and supportive of one another during this time and we are sure to have a great gathering.

MEETING LOGIN

Presbyterian Women PCUSA is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Synod of the Lakes & Prairies PW Virtual Town Square

Time: **May 15, 2020 • 3:05 PM Eastern Time** (US and Canada)

Click the following to enter the PW Virtual Town Square: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/95672318082>

or dial by your closest location

- +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)
- +1 646 876 9923 US (New York)
- +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)
- +1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 956 723 180 82

We look forward to gathering with you in the PW Virtual Town Square!

Blessings,

Stephanie M. Patterson, MIS (she/her/hers)
Multimedia Associate/Designer

& Racial Equity Committee Staff for PW's Board of Directors
Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA, Inc.

Report your New PW Leadership – Synod, Presbytery, and Congregation

In order to keep your PW leadership informed of "all things PW", be sure to forward a complete list of your PW leadership, including name, email address and leadership role to Patricia Longfellow at patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org.

NEW PW RESOURCES: **"Prayer and Beyond: Faithful**

Response in Times of Trouble" is a timely pocket-sized resource, serving as a reminder of God's presence even in the most difficult times. Though we

experience hardship and disasters, in God we find the courage and the strength to face the difficult times and to persevere. Order

www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop (PWR19205) or

download at www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/prayer-beyond/.

"PW is on the Mark" bookmark comes in two designs and lists racial equity resources recommended by PW's Racial Equity Committee (REC). Available while supplies last at

www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop (PWR20300)



"Justice and Peace Recommended Resources" bookmark contains a list of recommended resources on a wide range of topics—including criminal justice, eco-justice, gender equity, and more! Practical and handy. While supplies last. (PWR20206)

Justice & Peace Links on substance use disorder is now available. This issue raises awareness about substance use disorders (SUD) and suggests ways we can respond with compassion to those struggling with SUD. It includes an overview, insights from scripture on compassion and healing, denominational statements, discussion questions, suggested actions and personal stories whose loved ones have struggled with SUD. Download

https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wpcontent/uploads/2020/01/2019.1_SUD_Links.pdf



Together in Action for

Children's Literacy May 4-10

Even with possible Stay-at-home orders still in place, be creative in finding ways to promote children's literacy. Perhaps you could begin by reading to a child(ren) via electronics, add

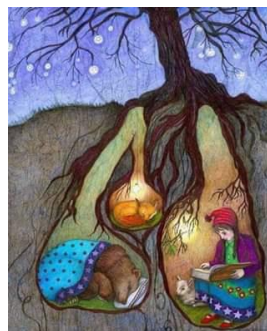
children's books to a "Little Library", or set up a "Little Library" at your church. What can you do in your community on behalf of underserved children, making sure they have books, mentors, extra help with schoolwork and literacy? This is a great time to make plans for later. Plan now to hold a book drive, set up a read-aloud program at your church and invite children from the community, contact a church in an underserved part of town to talk about partnering on a children's afterschool tutoring program, or volunteer at a

community center. For more ideas and a children's reading list, see www.presbyterianwomen.org/justice.

Building Resilience Webinar for Faith Leaders – provided by PDA

This recorded one- hour program is designed to increase participants' understanding of their own signs of stress and to teach in-the-moment tools to engage the relaxation response in body and mind. This webinar is designed for faith leaders in this season of COVID-19 and will engage participants in responding to questions and prompts to help create a personalized self- care and resilience-building plan, with attention to the particular issues facing faith leaders and awareness of the importance of the spiritual life which guides us all. Those attending will build on their experience while practicing new tools that have been shown to be effective in sustaining our capacity to serve in the midst of challenging circumstances. [View/download the webinar recording.](#)

Live Faith Leader Support Webinars - In addition to the *Building Resilience* recorded webinar, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance can offer a live webinar to groups upon request. These webinars can be tailored to the group's needs, with PDA offering a panel of presenters to respond to issues that may include self-care, changing needs of ministry in this time, and responding in times of stress, trauma and bereavement. Please contact Kathy Riley, PDA national staff and Team Lead for Emotional and Spiritual Care at Kathryn.Riley@pcusa.org



Prose poem: "And the people stayed home. . ."

And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still. And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their

shadows. And the people began to think differently.

And the people healed. And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Kitty O'Meara, a former teacher and chaplain in the US, penned this "prose poem" on the lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

NATIVE AMERICAN CONCERNS

A group of people who seem to have been forgotten during the COVID-19 pandemic are the Native Americans. The tribes were to have received \$8 billion in COVID-19 relief fund from the \$2 trillion bill that was passed on March 27, 2020. The Treasury Department has been failing in its dealings with the 574 federally recognized tribal governments, because of a pending lawsuit with the Alaskan Native Cooperation. A letter has been sent by legislators directing them to dispense the funds immediately, but still no action has taken place.

The Native American Concerns Committee of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies PW has been in direct contact with Native American PW members. Here are some of the concerns expressed by those individuals from their respective reservations.

Spirit Lake Reservation in Tokio, North Dakota has seen an increase in the number of people who are using the food pantry at Bdecan Church. Normally they serve around 40 families per month, last month they had 70-75 families who needed food. Many people are unemployed, although the governor has now declared some retail businesses and restaurants may open if they follow CDC guidelines. The casino which employs many from the reservation remains closed. There are no reports of COVID-19 on the reservation, although it seems the people are not doing a good job of social distancing.

The Oglala Sioux Tribal elders on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota instituted shelter-in-place orders on March 27th. LaVonne Looking Elk has not been able to go to the reservation because she lives in Rapid City. The last worship service at Porcupine Church was on January 26th. One person, who had traveled to California and returned, was found to have COVID-19. She left the reservation and is in Rapid City. The shelter-in-place order caused the closing of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center. Here is part of the letter that describes what is happening there:

"This led to the furloughing of the community members of the Lutheran/Lakota Job Corps. They are an integral part of the Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center. They care for many of their immediate and extended families. They do not qualify for unemployment benefits.

The center prays that they will be able to provide a stipend to lessen their financial burden with hopes of calling them back to work when the COVID-19 crisis has passed.

Please keep the Center and the people of Pine Ridge in your prayers. If you are able to contribute funds to support the staff and take care of the recurring expenses of the Center you may mail a check to: **Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center, P.O. Box 862, Pine Ridge, SD 57770.**

To contribute on line go to: **sdsynod.org/donate.**

Choose Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center from the drop down menu and indicate Lutheran/Lakota Job Corps on the memo line."

Fern Cloud, CRE at Granite Falls, Minnesota, stated clerk of the Dakota Presbytery and moderator of the PC(U.S.A) Native American Consulting Committee obtained a grant which will provide funds to the clergy and CRE's of the Dakota Presbytery for emergency food for their families. Several of these people are in the high risk category

Susie Amos a member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate informed the moderator of the NACC of five cases and three deaths related to COVID-19. The people who have been diagnosed with the virus are not abiding by the quarantine order and others, especially the youth, are not following the guidelines for assembling and keeping a safe distance, The Tribal Chair has directed the Tribal Police to monitor the comings and goings of their members more closely. The young people are also vandalizing property.

People are asking for masks, Susie said they need at least 100.

You may send them to: Susie Amos, PO Box 104, New Effington, SD 57255.

Ida Brown at the Yankton Sioux Reservation also needs face masks, but did not indicate the number that is needed as yet. You may send them to: Ida Brown 38630 SD Hwy, 46, Lake Andes, SD 57356. She will also contact the hospital to see what their needs are.

As more needs come in an e-mail will be sent to the Synod Coordinating Teams so they can pass the information along to their PW's and congregations.
Sharon Falck
Moderator of SLAP NACC

Masks are also needed on the Pine Ridge Reservation. They can be sent to: LaVonne Looking Elk at: 3729 West Chicago Rapid City, SD 57702 or

**Sonia Weston at: PO Box 254
Pine Ridge, SD 57770
These will be greatly appreciated.**



SPEAKING OF MASKS...

Mission Opportunity in demand are face masks at healthcare, long-term care, food pantries, and daycare

facilities. This is one face mask pattern of many that can be found online.

You will need:

- Fabric: Quilting cotton, T-shirt, canvas, twill, denim, duck cloth. Any fabric design is placed horizontally.
- Rope Elastic, such as beading cord elastic, or 1/8" flat elastic
- Cut the elastic 7" long. If using beading cord, tie a knot at each end. DO NOT knot the ends of the flat elastic.

You can make two sizes: Adult or Child

1. Cut two 9x6 (Adult) or 7.5x5 (Child) of cloth and put right sides of fabric together.
2. Starting at the center of the bottom edge, sew to the first corner, stop. With the elastic inside the layers, align one end of the elastic along short edge and sew a few stitches forward and back.
3. Sew fabric to the next corner, stop, and bring the other end of the same elastic to the corner in between the layers and sew a few stitches forward and back.
4. Now sew fabric across the top of the mask to the next corner. Again, with 2nd elastic in between the layers, align one end of the elastic along the short edge and sew a few stitches forward and back.
5. Sew fabric to the next corner and sew in the other end of the same elastic in between the layers.
6. Sew fabric across the bottom leaving about 1.5" to 2" open. Stop, cut the thread, and turn inside out.
7. Pin three 1/2" tucks on each side of the mask. Make sure the tucks are the same direction.
8. Sew around the edge of the mask twice.

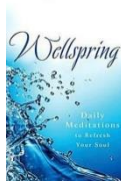
(so easy!!)



Mission Opportunities that are temporarily closed:

Knitting4Peace is a mission opportunity whose offices are temporarily closed due to COVID-19. No items are being collected at this time.

Gifts of the Heart kits--the hygiene, school, and cleaning kits--those collections are not being accepted through May 31st. While kits are not being accepted now, financial donations can be mailed to Presbyterian Church (USA), PO Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. Checks should be made out to Presbyterian Church (USA) and marked "Gifts of the Heart-DR000151"



Devotion from *Wellspring 365 Meditations to Refresh Your Soul* by Karen Moore.

But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Matt. 6:33 (NRSV)

"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." This Scripture from John 1:1 is one that reminds us where to start each day. We start at the beginning. We start with the Word.

Do you ever have a head full of worries and so you climb out of bed, try to shake it all off in the shower, try to cover it over with caffeine, and yet it still lingers? You tackle the problem, you dig in deeper, and you only get deeper into the difficulty. You work this way for hours, perhaps days, and why? Because you forgot where to start! You forgot to go back to the beginning.

In our distress, we finally cry out to God, asking why he didn't help us, only to be reminded that he would have, but we didn't ask. We forgot to start with him. The breastplate of St. Patrick is a magnificent prayer and may be a good one for you to use to begin your day today. It reads, in part, "I rise today with the power of God to guide me, the might of God to uphold me, the wisdom of God to teach me, the eye of God to watch over me, the ear of God to hear me, the word of God to give me speech, the hand of God to protect me, the path of God to lie before me, the shield of God to shelter me."

Let's rise today and start at the beginning, with God.

Lord, thank you for loving me so much that you always give me a place to start again. Be with me and those I love today. Amen.



INTIMATE PERSONAL VIOLENCE IS ON THE RISE DURING COVID-19

As of mid-April "The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, has reported a 700% increase in calls to its

helpline in ONE day!!!! And only 25% more calls received on a separate helpline for perpetrators seeking help to change their behaviour since the start of the Covid-19 lockdown." Domestic violence/abuse is on the rise all over the world! We can & must stop the violence! Our work continues! #ThursdaysInBlack #LinkUp2EndGBV (Stats from: amp.theguardian.com)

REMEMBER TO WEAR BLACK ON THURSDAYS – TOWARDS A WORLD WITHOUT RAPE AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN.

The next issue of the *Sower* will welcome your submissions on Justice and Peace, *Into the Light* Bible Study, Thank offering articles, book reviews, and devotions with a deadline of July 31. Please send to: Kathleen Keefer, Editor at: thesower.slap@yahoo.com

Preobrazheniye Assisted Living Facility for Disabled Adults in Davydovo, Russia
Learn more at www.presbyterianwomen.org/birithday.

PW Birthday and Thank Offerings Applications and Deadlines

Birthday Offering Grant Application - Deadline is May 15th. Application on PW website.

Thank Offering Grant Application - Deadline is September 15th. Application on PW website.

PW Annual Fund (Mission Pledge) for 2019

Three cheers to PW SLAP for being the top Annual Fund contributor for 2019! Thank you – Thank you – Thank you!!

PW GIVING:



PW'S ANNUAL FUND, THE MISSION PLEDGE

"Gifts to the PC(USA) do not fund Presbyterian Women. Only financial gifts to Presbyterian Women's annual fund support Presbyterian Women. In turn, Presbyterian Women supports the denomination through grassroots involvement, mission support and more." (2020 PW Annual Fund packet).

Giving to Presbyterian Women Annual Fund can be completed in many ways: **(1) Through your Circle;** **(2) Through Gifts of Stock, Planned Giving, Endowments--** Contact the Presbyterian Foundation (800-858-6127) for more information; **(3) Over the telephone--** Call 844/797-2872, ext. 5596, to make a one-time or ongoing gift or to learn more about bequests to Presbyterian Women; and/or **(4) Individually by Mail--** Checks • Third-party gifts (Gifts from your financial institution or donor-advised fund) • Employee-match donations. All should be mailed (as a check payable to Presbyterian Women) to Presbyterian Women Inc. PO Box 643652, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3652.

PW Birthday Offering

Remember to give to the 2020 PW Birthday Offering! With the cancellation of PW Spring Gatherings and churches having virtual worship, find creative ways to promote and receive the PW Birthday Offering.

The 2020 Birthday Offering Grant recipients are:
GAP Ministries of Augusta, GA
Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center in Payson, AZ
Liberty Community Church's Northside Healing Space Expansion, Minneapolis, MN



You are invited to celebrate PW Gives Day – July 31st

July 31st will be celebrated as PW Gives Day – a day to celebrate the many ways that Presbyterian Women give to witness to the promise of God's realm. Think of a creative way that you might challenge women in your congregation or presbytery to participate in this special opportunity to support all the work PW accomplishes! In addition to your financial gift, pray that the work of PW will be sustained and strengthened through this special giving.

Ways to give:

Give on line at www.presbyterianwomen.org/give. Please select the annual fund, PW's Mission Pledge, and indicate **PWGDAY20** in the notes box. Contact Carissa Herold by phone (844/PW-PCUSA, ext. 5322) or email carissa.herold@pcusa.org. Mail your gift to Presbyterian Women Inc., PO Box 643652, Pittsburgh, PA 15275-3652. Please indicate annual fund and **PWGDAY20** in the memo line of your check.

CHECK IT OUT...

We have all received an over-abundance of information concerning Covid-19: what it is about, what it looks like, how to seek relief. The following is **COVID-19 Resources compiled by the offices of Compassion, Peace & Justice of the Presbyterian Mission Agency.**



Presbyterian Mission
**Compassion,
Peace & Justice**

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eooxSQ5AkpDwiRQk1SpOF3wqR3Dg-gps_elgF_s8X5U/edit?ts=5e738d47&fbclid=IwAR1dh1BEFynyLuzOQp_Ts_pz9QbVb6IW7idQWbNvMowDZTf3KHMoliUPIP8#heading=h.otc4wr6f8ckj

You will find links (click on the word LINK) after you open the website. There is some new and helpful information for those in need whether that is you or someone you may be helping. Most LINKS refer you to local resources.

For example: *Did you know U-Haul is offering free storage to displaced college students?* Other topics cover food, bills, mental health care, self-care, immigrant assistance, spiritual assistance, prison concerns and so on.



Horizons Bible Study Updates
Love Carved in Stone – Videos for the remaining lessons are available on YouTube for free.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/PresbyterianWomen/videos>

Into the Light: Finding Hope through Prayers of Lament – Join PW as we study lament with our new 2020-2021 Bible study. We lament in order to hope. In this nine-lesson study, Lynn Miller revives lament as a proper theological response to the difficult situations of our world. Bible study books and resources are now available at

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/into-the-light/>

Into the Light Bible study introduction webinars will be offered in June! Stay tuned for registration information. PW in the congregations are invited to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS
for the 2022 Synod Gathering
-- June 16-19, 2022 -- at the
Hilton Garden Inn in Sioux
City, Iowa.

Common reactions to COVID-19 and the #1 stress reliever are:

Concern about protecting oneself from the virus because they are at higher risk of serious illness.

Concern that regular medical care or community services may be disrupted due to facility closures or reductions in services and public transport closure.

Feeling socially isolated, especially if they live alone or are in a community setting that is not allowing visitors because of the outbreak.

Guilt if loved ones help them with activities of daily living.

Increased levels of distress if they:

Have mental health concerns before the outbreak, such as depression.

Live in lower-income households or have language barriers

Experience stigma because of age, race or ethnicity, disability, or perceived likelihood of spreading COVID-19.

#1 stress reliever during COVID-19 is TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF by:

Taking breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting.

Taking care of your body.

Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate.

Try to eat health, well-balanced meals.

Exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.

Avoid alcohol and drugs.

Making time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.

Connecting with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/managing-stress-anxiety.html>)

Maintaining our Spiritual Health **by Annabelle Wells**

Ps. 46:1-3 God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

Ps. 16: 1-2 Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, You are my Lord, I have no good apart from you.

Our trust is in God these days. God is the creator of the universe; God is our redeemer. God is our strength.

Yes, I believe God wants us to use our minds and to keep ourselves occupied and mentally healthy during this time of social distancing. I suspect all of us struggle, some more than others, but God did not create us to socially distance. What helps you to maintain your physical health, your emotional health, your intellectual health, your spiritual health?

Here are some suggestions from the Synod PW CT and other sources:

1. Walk inside, in place, outside, use exercise equipment, etc.
2. Puzzles—word search, crossword, etc.
3. Connect with phone calls, email, text, etc.
4. Write letters/post cards—grandchildren, the ill, the grieving, shut ins
5. Read the Bible, other books, the PW study for 2020-21, etc.
6. Pray
7. Write out a gratitude list
8. Garden
9. Clean a closet, a room, etc.
10. Listen to music, church services online, etc.
11. Repot house plants
12. Kindness 101 CBS—watch on t.v./ look up online (30 min. positives)
13. Find a new recipe to try—cook book or internet
14. Cook or bake and the house will smell good
15. Video chat with g'kids, friends, circle members,
16. Social media blackout—to avoid negatives
17. Virtual coffee with pastor and friends via zoom
18. Sew masks, quilt tops, baby kits,
19. Help with weekend feeding program for children
20. Fix casseroles at church for needy, suffering
21. Sing, play music, listen to music
22. Post a PW page/read PW page
23. Create a new recipe to cook
24. Play games with companion on internet
25. Walk the labyrinth
26. Find one on paper & use a finger to “walk” the labyrinth
27. Journal—express thoughts and feelings
28. Meditate

Virtual tours

29. San Diego Zoo: <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/>
30. Yellowstone National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>
31. Mars: <https://accessmars.withgoogle.com/>
32. Great Wall of China: <https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china>
33. Appalachian Trail: <https://www.nps.gov/appa/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtour.htm>
34. National Parks Virtual Tours: https://www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=trail%20virtual%20tours&fbclid=IwAR37uxTyHzMSXH2AkZNdHbrciDZ7w_C17ldHv02eZV1k0l3skr9jjZCY

Museums

35. British Museum, London: <https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/>

35. Guggenheim Museum, NY: https://artsandculture.google.com/streetview/solo-mon-r-guggenheim-museum-interior-streetview/jAHfbv3JGM2KaQ?hl=en&sv_lng=-73.95902634325634&sv_lat=40.78285751667664&sv_h=30.75703204567916&sv_p=0.06928383072430222&sv_pid=MfnUmHRyOSzMtY3vtYU05g&sv_z=0.9645743015259166
36. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/national-gallery-of-art-washington-dc?hl=en>
37. Musee d'Orsay, Paris: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/musee-dorsay-paris?hl=en>
38. Museum of Art in Sao Paulo (MSAP), Sao Paulo: <https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/masp?hl=en>
39. Open Heritage Sites from Around the world: <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/openheritage>



Fighting the 'shadow pandemic' of violence against women & children during COVID-19

27 April 2020

BY: ANNA MUTAVATI AND MANIZA ZAMAN

By Anna Mutavati, Maniza Zaman and Demola Olajide

Alongside health impacts, the global COVID-19 pandemic has brought a loss of liberties. Restrictions in movement have affected people's jobs and livelihoods.

Despite the many hardships being faced, freedom from violence cannot, under any circumstance, be surrendered – the right to live free from violence is a basic human right. Yet the most vulnerable members of society including children, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly – are suffering during isolation. Many countries are reporting a surge in cases of domestic and sexual violence, also known as gender-based violence (GBV), as well as violence against children. Kenya is following this trend: a third of all crimes reported since COVID-19 arrived were related to sexual violence. To stop this 'shadow pandemic', we must act now.

The United Nations and the Government of Kenya launched a flash appeal this month, seeking \$267 million to respond to the most immediate needs of over 10 million people during the pandemic. Of this amount, \$4.2m is needed to provide lifesaving medical treatment, psycho-social support and legal representation in relation to violence against children and GBV. The gaps in violence prevention and response existed in Kenya before COVID-19. This crisis magnifies these gaps as resources and access to services become even more strained.

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT “GIVE BACK BOX”



www.givebackbox.com/amazon. **How it Works:**

It is much **easier** than you think to make a **difference**.

Give Back Box® provides vendor services to retailers and charities, giving each and every cardboard box a second life to help

people in need. So it is also a 'green' solution! Reuse your online shipping boxes in which you received your purchases, or any other cardboard box you may have, to donate your unwanted household items: such as gently used clothing, shoes etc., to make a major difference in the life of another person. During our Mission week, we collected gently used bras to be sent to **For the Girls**. I went to www.givebackbox.com and printed a free shipping label and dropped it off at the Post Office. Amazing.

Prayer in a Time of Pandemic

May we who are merely inconvenienced

Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors

Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home

Remember those who must choose between preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our children when their schools close

Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips

Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the tumult of the economic market

Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home

Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country, let us choose love.

During this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms around each other,

Let us yet find ways to be the loving embrace of God to our neighbors.

AMEN.

(Author Unknown)

**ALWAYS
CHOOSE
LOVE**

IMPORTANT DATES TO

REMEMBER:

PW Town Hall ZOOM Meeting –

May 15, 2020

PW Gives Day – July 31, 2020

August Sower articles deadline

– July 31, 2020

Churchwide Gathering – August

5 -8, 2021

Synod Gathering – June 16-29,

2022

CARE TO SHARE:

This section will be AVAILABLE for any Presbyterian Woman who would like to offer ideas for devotions, mission projects, or book reviews that others may be interested in. Send these to your Sower editor, Kathleen Keefer:

thesower.slap@yahoo.com

Presbyterian Women (PW) is the national women's organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With more than 300,000 members and 30 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. www.presbyterianwomen.org

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

https://www.lakesandprairies.org/files/448_pw_national_staff.pdf

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies website, find a link to "The Sower" there too.

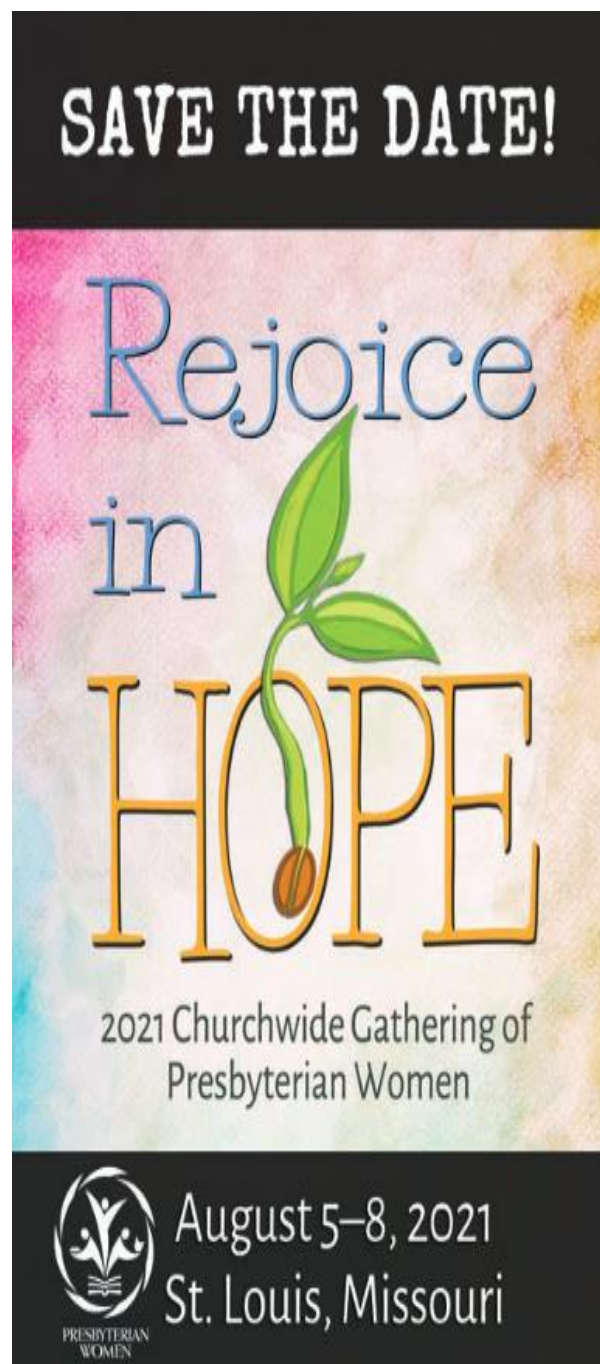
<http://www.lakesandprairies.org/>

"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. thesower.slap@yahoo.com

If you have an e-mail address change, please send the notice of change to the Editor at the above e-mail address. If you know someone wants to subscribe, please send the name and e-mail address to the above e-mail address. If you no longer wish to receive "The Sower", just send that request, yes, to the above cited e-mail address.

Don't forget to continue wearing **black** on Thursdays and **orange** on the 25th day of each month. Dress for Justice And Peace!!



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U. S. Mail

This newsletter is being sent by e-mail to all who have provided an e-mail address. Please forward to the members of your PW or make copies of this **The Sower** and give those in your PW group a copy. Urge them to share it with others. Don't keep this info a secret!!

If you are no longer the moderator or don't wish to receive this newsletter, please let Kathleen Keefer know who the new moderator is or your request to be taken off the mailing list at thesower.slapp@yahoo.com or call 712.542.0039

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