



The Sower



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

November, 2020

Editor: Kathleen Keefer

Moderator's Musings:

What is the topic of the moment - the pandemic, maybe? Or is it politics? Either way, it seems there isn't any good news to be had for love or money. I've stopped listening to the news, since it is so depressing to hear about the pandemic and the divide in our country so continually. It seems like there can't be any hope in sight.

But...that isn't true. The Psalms tell us over and over that God is always with us, that God will be our guide and support in times of trouble, that God's faithfulness will never end. Psalm 117:2 says, "For great is his steadfast love toward us, and the faithfulness of the Lord endure forever." Psalm 33: 20 says, "Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and shield." And, of course, there is Psalm 23, the Shepherd Psalm. These, and many others, tell me that there is hope and that we can weather all kinds of things with God's help.

The following was in a recent communication from my church:

The bishop of the Lutheran churches in Nebraska, Rev. Brian D. Maas, writes, "We have been wandering in the wilderness of this pandemic for over six months now, and we are all tired of it. Constant reminders of it are wearing, as are the daily headlines of disagreement and outright conflict in the culture around us. It's important to remember that God travels this journey with us and sees that we have all we need to endure until we make our way out of it.

This pandemic will end. We will endure and thrive once again, through the presence of the one who says "I will never leave you or forsake you." Be encouraged."

I have to keep reminding myself that there will be an end to the political struggle and to the pandemic. To keep up my spirits, I listen to uplifting music and read books that (I admit it) take me away from reality for a little while. So, keep up your hope. There will be an end and we will be able to make a new "normal" when we are able to be out and about again.

All the things that you all talked about at our Zoom meeting a couple of weeks ago gave me hope that people can overcome the divisions in our culture, be generous to each other, and continue to show the love of Jesus to the world. I give thanks for your witness in the world as you share your care and service with others and I continue to be grateful for each of you. God bless you all.

Sue Medsker-Nedderman
Moderator

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

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



Amazon SMILE

Share and bookmark this link so all your eligible shopping will benefit PW. [http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0473061)

[0473061](http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0473061)

PW, Inc. has received \$2,806.82 from Amazon Smiles as of 9/14/20. So much for so little!!! Please continue to use this for eligible shopping on Amazon.



CHURCHWIDE

NEWS: The Churchwide Gathering Committee 2021 has important information to share. It will be unfortunate, but the

Board of Directors Administration Committee and the Gathering committee members may need to make the decision to

postpone the Gathering due to COVID-19. We will not risk the health of our PWs. We hope this will not happen, but we want to be prepared if it does. A final decision will be made in December, 2020. It will require a decision this soon as we want to be able to be refunded for the amount of money we have already invested in our reservation for the convention location. If it is postponed, there will be a virtual worship service for all PW, national and international. The Board of Directors will meet via Zoom.



PW Gives Day was July 31st and contributions are still being accepted. PW Gives Day received over \$50,000 in donations. Please continue to pray that the work of PW will be

sustained and strengthened.



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 renewed its Zoom services. The PW Synod Coordinating Team has agreed to offer use of its licensed Zoom account to PW coordinating teams, circles, committees for group meetings or bible study should your church not have its own Zoom account. Please contact Lana Schultz (lanaj0@casselton.net) if you wish to schedule a zoom meeting for your PW

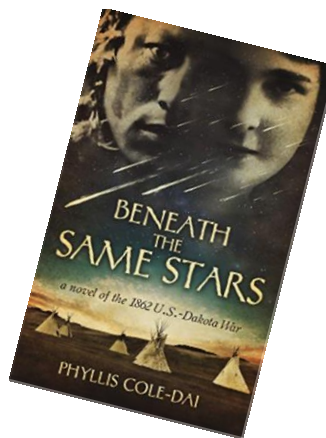
TREASURERS – PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CHECKS FOR MISSION PLEDGE AND OTHER DONATIONS TO: TERRI SHERMAN, 12244 N. 84TH STREET LINCOLN, NE 68517 SHE IS THE NEW TREASURER FOR PWS.

Register today to join a book study . . .

Beneath the Same Stars:

A novel of the 1862 U.S. – Dakota War

by Phyllis Cole-Dai



This book study is sponsored by Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and led by members of the PWS Native American Concerns Committee.

It is open to interested women and men across the synod,
via Zoom videoconferencing (using computer or phone)

There is no charge to participate nor to use Zoom, yet registration is required.

Daytime study begins: Monday, January 25, 2021 at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)

Evening study begins: Monday, January 25, 2021 at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

**Groups will meet every two weeks for five sessions,
Including a session with the author, Phyllis Cole-Dai**



Synopsis: *August 18, 1862.* On the Sioux reservation in southwestern Minnesota, Indians desperate for food and freedom rise up against whites in the region. Sarah Wakefield, the wife of a physician, is taken captive with her two babies. Their fate falls into the hands of the warrior Áske, with whom she has slim acquaintance. As war rages, little does she know how entwined their lives will become.

Beneath the Same Stars is the gripping story of two people, caught between worlds, who are willing to do almost anything to defend those they care about—including each other. But the drama is bigger than themselves. Tragic forces have been set in motion....



Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net

Provide the following information:

- Email address
- Presbytery

- Name
- Phone #
- Afternoon or evening study preference

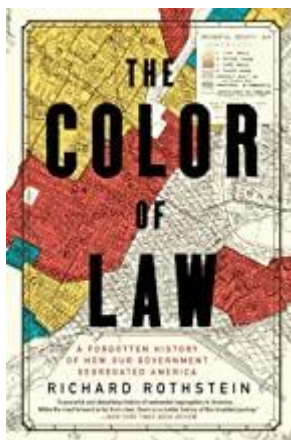
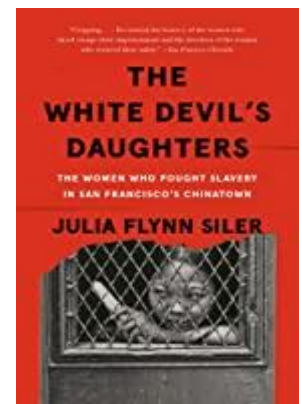
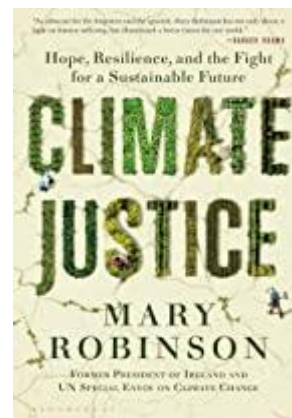
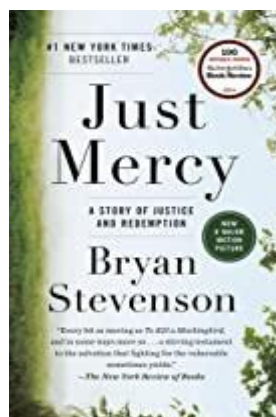
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN IN THE SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES PRESENTS

■ ■ ■

JUSTICE AND PEACE BOOK STUDY GROUP (aka BOOK CLUB)

- Read a new book every two months
- Receive study guide or questions for each book to inform your reading
- Meet via Zoom for a two hour discussion

Here are the proposed books for the 2020-2021:



The books are all recommended by Presbyterian Women. We will be discussing the next book, A Good Provider is the One Who Leaves on December 7th. There will be two times to join the Zoom call, 12:30 – 2:30 pm and 6:30 – 8:30 pm (Central Time). You must be registered to receive the study questions and to join the call due to Zoom protocol. Contact Kathleen Keefer at:

kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com or text: 712542.0039.

You do not need to commit to participate in reading all 6 books or participating in the discussions as you will register for each one separately.

The “CLUB” is open to all regardless of gender.

Look in “Presbyterian Women Read” section of this Sower for synopsis.

2020-21 Dakota Presbytery Partnership Opportunities

PWS NATIVE AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP



The PWS Native American Educational Scholarship recently established by the PW of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies will provide

funds for a Native American student who is attending a Native American College. This new scholarship will provide \$1,000; \$500 each semester the student is enrolled in classes.

The Native American Concerns Committee (NACC) of the PW of the synod will select the college which will receive the funds. The NACC in cooperation with the dean and the financial aids director will establish guidelines for selecting a recipient of the scholarship.

There are several ways funds can be raised for the scholarship. You may wish to make a personal donation, your local PW group or PW of your presbytery may add a line item to their yearly budget or a special day of giving to the scholarship could be designated at your church, PW meeting or PW Presbytery gathering.

Please send your gifts to: Terry Sherman, PW SLAP Treasurer

12244 N. 84th Street
Lincoln, NE 68517

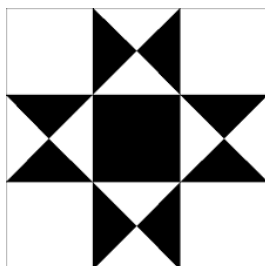
On the memo line indicate PWSNA Ed. Scholarship

May you and your PW's prayerfully consider adding funds to this scholarship

Sharon Falck
NACC Moderator

CALLING ALL QUILTERS

Susie Amos, PW moderator of Dakota Presbytery PW, is working on quilts which will be auctioned at the Mission meeting in August 2021 to raise funds for the Dakota PW.



She has received some blocks but needs many more. The **12 ½ x 12 ½ block** can be any design you choose. Susie asks you to put your name, address and the name of a woman and what she did to influence your life (keep this short)

Please send them to: Susie Amos

P.O. Box 104
New Effington, SD 57255

Bdecan Presbyterian Church – Vacation Bible School

Physical Address: 8194 34TH ST NE Tokio ND 58379

Mailing Address: PO Box 141 Tokio, ND 58379

Bdecan Presbyterian Church, the only Native American Presbyterian Church in North Dakota, is located on the Spirit Lake Reservation in north central North Dakota. An

important way to “keep Christ’s love at our center” for the children is to host 10-12 member mission teams who would lead



Vacation Bible School for a week during the summer.

The 20-30 children in the community love VBS and never tire of it! VBS is so critical for the children for many reasons, including learning about and experiencing God’s love, as well as participating in positive activities when few other activities exist for the children. In addition to VBS, a hands-on mission project could be done, as well as participating in a “cultural night”. Hotel options for lodging are about 20 miles away in Devils Lake.

Won’t you consider putting together a team and taking VBS on the road connecting with children and adults? It promises to be a great learning experience for you too. Contact Rosie Helland for additional information at

bdecanpresbyterianchurch@gmail.com or
(701)294-2283.

Gift of the Kits

During the early months of this pandemic, Church World Service placed a hold on receiving Gift of the Heart Kits. The Kit Depots are slowly reopening and kits can safely be received once again. **There is now a great need for all Gift of the Heart kits!** Recent information from CWS states “Our supplies are nearly gone because spring kit collections simply couldn’t take place; I can’t think of a time when inventory has been so low going into hurricane season (especially one that’s predicted to be as active as this year’s).”

There are a couple of ways to safely provide kits. One way is to assemble kits, perhaps ordering items online if you’re not doing local shopping. Kits can then be taken to a Kit Depot near you based on their info [on this page](#). There are three



When will things go back to normal?

Experts say that’s the wrong question amid COVID-19 By Joel Shannon
USA TODAY Oct. 11, 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has changed the world and left countless people longing for a pre-pandemic way of life. That desire is likely only further straining our mental health.

“Our brains really are very eager to get back to normal, to get back to January 2020,” Dr. Gleb Tsipursky, CEO of Disaster Avoidance Experts and author of a book about adapting to “the new abnormal” of COVID-19. But that’s simply not possible, Tsipursky said.

“Normality” means different things for different people. For some Americans, a return to normal would mean restored health and financial stability. To others, it’s a world with concerts and gatherings, hugs and handshakes.

There’s nothing wrong with hoping for a better, more stable future, New York University psychology professor Gabriele Oettingen. Hope is essential for mental health.

It’s important to accept that, for a time, this disease will continue to upend our daily lives. It’s easy to become preoccupied with

Kit Depots in or near our synod including: Church of the Brethren General Offices, Elgin, IL 60120 (800-323-8039); West Des Moines Christian Church, West Des Moines, IA (515-867-3946); and Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, Lincoln, NE, (402-484-8844). If a Depot isn’t close enough, they can be shipped.

A second way is to “sponsor” the kits of your choice on [this donation page](#). It’s simple, it’s accessible, and it’s a link you can easily share through email/ Facebook if you aren’t yet meeting in person...it gives everyone a way to offer love through this ministry.

“CWS Kits provide hope. Without adequate kits to respond to the fall hurricane season, we would have one less spark to light the way for those facing the struggle.”



“if only,” Oettingen said – to fantasize about enjoying something lost in recent months or what life would be like if the pandemic was over.

A more positive approach: Spend a quiet moment to carefully adjust thinking and expectations.

The goal: Let go of fantasies that aren’t possible or healthy so that you can find new ones that you can achieve. Get specific, she said. Think about exactly what you’re lacking amid the pandemic – What do you really want?

Those who miss face-to-face gatherings are likely longing for social connection. Those who miss traveling might be missing relaxation – or maybe adventure. There are ways to achieve those things even amid a pandemic, Oettingen said. In many cases, it’s an opportunity to uncover something joyful that has been hiding in plain sight. Social connection can be found in virtual

visits with long-lost friends. Relaxation can be found in a quiet walk by a nearby river. Adventure might be found by finally kayaking down that river.

It’s an individual process, Oettingen said: “Get creative in finding something that is feasible for you during the pandemic.” But a happier life won’t happen without action, Oettingen said. So the next steps are critical: Figure out “what is it in you” that stands in the way of accomplishing

this new goal, then make a plan to overcome it. Letting go of your fantasies about a pre-pandemic life isn't only good for your mental health – it's good for your physical health, Tsipursky said.



A Devotion from Proverbs 31 Ministries

“When Everything Overwhelms, How Do We Overcome?” by Grace P. Cho

These days, loss is compounded by more loss. I attend a funeral and watch a mother weep as she buries her daughter. I notice the weariness in people's eyes — in my own eyes — as we try to figure out how to make it through another day. I hear the fear and anxiety that uncertainty brews. I lament in anger for Black mothers and fathers and children who are not safe sleeping in their beds, going for a run, making mistakes and being human.

Each death, each act of violence, each oppressed silencing and each loss feels like waves crashing over me, and I am overwhelmed. I don't know if I can swim to the surface to catch a breath or find a way to the shore. I long for solid ground, to lie still and rest, and I cry out to God — *How much longer, Lord?*

My strength is made weak by the constant barrage of what this year keeps throwing at us, and in my helplessness, I remember Jesus' words to His disciples in John 16:33: “*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this*

world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

[Read full article at:
<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2020/10/10/coronavirus-when-return-to-normal-life/5882898002/>]



I repeat the verse over and over, and in His words, I hear truth and hope. The truth is that we will have trouble in this world. We will face abandonment, loneliness, hatred and death. Out of love and kindness, Jesus wants us to be aware rather than surprised when these things happen; they are to be expected.

Then, He gives this two-fold promise of hope: First, when everything is chaos, we can have peace in Him. Second, we can be encouraged because Christ has already overcome the world. We can get through hard things because we follow a God who has gone through every hard thing and has come out of it victoriously. When we are weary and we feel like we can't take another hit, we can be encouraged. We can overcome. Christ has gone before us, and in Him, our weaknesses are the platforms from which His power shines. Take heart, friend. We have a God who understands, who has endured and who helps us to do the same.

God, thank You for the hope we can have when everything feels like too much. Your promises are more than silver linings; they are anchors of assurance. Thank You for being with us, entering into our pain and empowering us to persevere. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

[Read full devotion
at: <https://proverbs31.org/read/devotions/full-post/2020/10/21/when-everything-overwhelms-how-do-we-overcome>]

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.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN READ...

If you have a book you think everyone should be reading, send the title, author and a brief review to:
kathleenkeeper20@gmail.com



NEW POETS OF NATIVE NATIONS

Edited by Heide E. Erdrich, published by Graywolf Press

This collection of poems written by twenty-one Native poets reveals the confident and unreserved presence of singing, storytelling, dislocated relocation and moments of perception that goes beyond boundaries of poems we have read in the past.

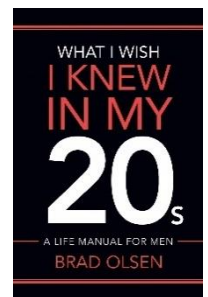


This poetry is a significant method of decolonizing ourselves. Many of the poems focus on the centuries old struggles to save lands, water and other elements of the world which make this work and intertribal event. The creation and labor revealed in these poems make it a watershed anthology, of inventive inspiration, of breath and is definitely a gift the reader will return to many times.

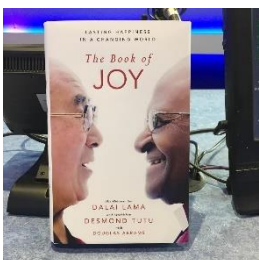
What I wish I knew in my 20's: a Life Manual for Men by Brad Olsen

Brad Olsen relates experiences that he has had along with his friends in a fresh, interesting approach.

He depends on forty years of Christian ministry and presents gems of truth in practical and enticing ways. A chapter in the middle of the book deals with friendship and unity. Who does not need to know how to overcome disunity and increase communication! This book would be a wonderful gift for a grandson, who perhaps is not in his 20's yet, or may be past his 20's, but who can gain insight and confidence by reading and digesting this book.



The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams



In April, 2015, Archbishop Tutu traveled to India to spend a week with His Holiness, the Dalai Lama. They celebrated the Dalai Lama's 80th birthday and looked back on their lives to answer the question of how to find joy in the midst of suffering. This book is the result of their conversations during that time. Almost half the book deals with the eight pillars of joy. In this time of uncertainty and confusion, this book gives insight into joy and attaining it even in circumstances we do not understand or like.

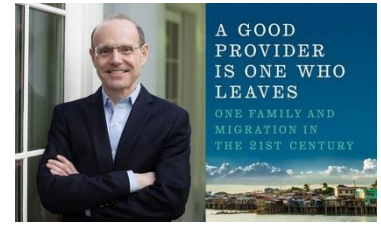
The next book in the Justice & Peace Book Club line-up:

A Good Provider is One Who Leaves – One Family and Migration in the 21st Century by Jason DeParle.

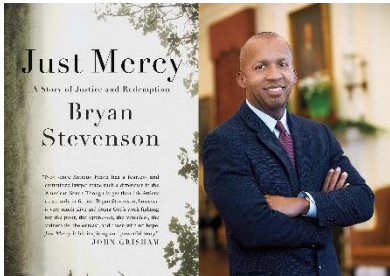
Jason DeParle was a young journalist some 30 years ago. He was seeking to find out what life was like living in the slums of Manila, Philippines. He found a home with the Comodas family in the Leveriza slums (home to 15,000 people) outside the capitol city. Tita was 40 years old, the mother of 5 children. She sold eggs and sugar out of her makeshift home while her husband, Emet cleaned the pool at a government sports complex. He was paid \$50 a month. This was not nearly enough to support his family, especially as the oldest daughter had a congenital heart defect who needed the care they could not afford. Emet got an offer of a job cleaning pools in Saudi Arabia and he took it. He made 10 times the amount he had made in Manila and he sent most of it home to his wife and children.

What followed is an amazing story of the immigrant life. Families living apart for years and still managing to be “together”. Parents, both fathers and mothers, sacrificing for their families. Generation after generation. “DeParle traces the rise of global migration and its impact on both the advanced and developing world.”

Jason DeParle is a Senior Reporter for the New York Times, based in Washington. He writes extensively about issues involving poverty. He is a two-time finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and a recipient of the George Polk Award. His most recent book, A Good Provider is the One Who Leaves was published in 2019. We will be discussing this book on December 7th



In February, we will discuss:



Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson. In 1983, Mr. Stevenson, a 21 year old black man from Milton, Delaware, was on his way to the maximum security prison just outside of Atlanta, GA to visit an inmate on death row. Mr. Stevenson was a student at Harvard Law School and was in a social justice class that offered a one month of study in the field, working on issues of social justice. He had no one with him and as he got closer to the prison, the more nervous and unsure of himself he became. He wasn't even sure he wanted to be a lawyer. But what he experienced that first time entering the prison change his life and lives of many others, forever. Mr. Stevenson became a

lawyer, social justice activist, founder and director of the Equal Justice Initiative and a law professor at New York University School of Law.

The Green Good News: Christ's Path to Sustainable and Joyful Life (2019)

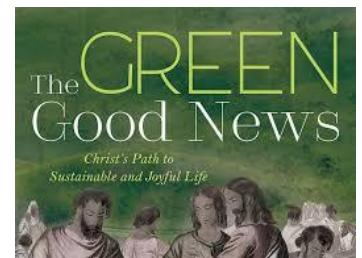
Book review by Rebecca Barnes, excerpts used with permission.

T. Wilson Dickinson has published an excellent book that will be of great importance to the church at large and the ecumenical movement for economic and environmental justice. It will be invigorating to individuals and congregations. As a professor at Lexington Theological Seminary in Kentucky and as a writer, pastor, organizer, Dickinson has created a clear, thought-provoking and hopeful book that is indeed “good news.”

“The Green Good News: Christ's Path to Sustainable and Joyful Life” (2019) explores how Jesus encouraged, challenged, and shared ways for us to create sustainable, holistic, and joyful communities where healing, nourishment, and justice are available for all.

This is the kind of theological and scriptural study we need in our time. While living in the midst of a global pandemic, rampant racism, famines in multiple countries, and many people feeling isolated or alienated, the hope and joy of this book paint a different way of being, a new way we need as much as Jesus' first disciples did. Dickinson's thoughtful explorations of Jesus' words and parables invite us into working towards a healed and inclusive community that is radically just.

If we are willing to take this Christian walk and follow this Savior, what kind of good news might we help come alive in the world? Where are places that we can create joyful community and an alternate vision to empire? Dickinson's exploration of parables, other scripture passages, and the Lord's prayer makes it clear that we are to follow Jesus on paths that engage the world around us for the well-being of all.



To Be Still is Not to be Idle

*Dedicated to my pastor friends and all who are weary
in the midst of a pandemic*

To be still is not to be idle.
Breathe deeply, my friend.
The world needs all your attention
Directed toward the moment at hand.

The one where you exist and matter
Gleaming with goodness and grace,
Because God created you
For this time, for this place.

So yawn if you will, shout if you need
But perceive the real gift inside of today
Bright as daylight, true as an evening shadow
Calm as the night sky, twinkling to say

You, Yes you, a mere mortal
Exist in God's expansive delight
So be still and notice what we,
finely crafted creatures, were made to do right.

Behold each benevolent day,
Relentless against the fear of tomorrow
In earnest goodness receive it well,
A remedy against deepest sorrow.

To be still is not to be idle

It invites a pause and a smile
At the way deep gloom is broken
By the friend's face you've not seen in a while.

To be still is the pathway
Through our fear of being alone
For on this, yes, *this* fine day
You'll find a memory deeply sown

That transfigures even your weary soul
And lifts you up, holds you in love,
Gives you space to be known
Exactly as you are: God's beloved.

We need your attention directed
Into the pulse of this hour
So listen and discover what moves you
And makes you feel empowered

Claim tomorrow belongs to the brave
Because it does, it's true.
And no matter the struggle,
I will be me, and you will be you.

By Emily Munger, Used by permission



Take the Pledge: I commit to Thursdays in Black. In solidarity, in protest, in mourning, for awareness and in hope. By supporting Thursdays in Black, I stand in solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in any form. In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form. In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence. For awareness and knowledge about the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence. In the hope that a different reality is possible. Go to:

<https://www.ecumenicalwomenun.org/> Click on the Thursdays in Black link, scroll down to take

the pledge. Be sure to enter Presbyterian Women as your organization.

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.slaps@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.

Justice and Peace Calendar (see presbyterianwomen.org/justice)

November Native American Heritage Month 8 Caregiver Sunday

13 World Kindness Day

15 Hunger and Homelessness Sunday

20 Universal Children's Day

25 Int'l Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

25–D.10 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence

28 Thanksgiving Day

December

1 World AIDS Day; Giving Tuesday

5 International Volunteer Day

10 International Human Rights Day

10–14 National Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend

18 International Migrants Day

25 Christmas; Orange Day

January National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month

10–16 PW Together in Action Days to End Human Trafficking

11 National Human Trafficking Awareness Day

17 Race Relations Sunday

17 Criminal Justice Sunday

18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day

18–24 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

27 International Holocaust Remembrance Day Remember, every Thursday is an opportunity to participate in Thursdays in Black. See www.oikoumene.org/en/get-involved.



Moderator

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