



# The Sower

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



August, 2021

Editor: Kathleen Keefer



### TO SUNSET

To-night the west o'er-brims with warmest dyes;  
Its chalice overflows  
With pools of purple colouring the skies,  
Aflood with gold and rose;  
And some hot soul seems throbbing close to mine,  
As sinks the sun within that world of wine.

I seem to hear a bar of music float  
And swoon into the west;  
My ear can scarcely catch the whispered note,  
But something in my breast  
Blends with that strain, till both accord in one,  
As cloud and colour blend at set of sun.

And twilight comes with grey and restful eyes,  
As ashes follow flame.  
But O! I heard a voice from those rich skies  
Call tenderly my name;  
It was as if some priestly fingers stole

In benedictions o'er my lonely soul.

I know not why, but all my being longed  
And leapt at that sweet call;  
My heart outreached its arms, all passion thronged  
And beat against Fate's wall,  
Crying in utter homesickness to be  
Near to a heart that loves and leans to me.

**Emily Pauline Johnson** (10 March 1861 – 7 March 1913), also known by her [Mohawk](#) stage name **Tekahionwake** (pronounced *dageh-eeon-wageh*, literally 'double-life'),<sup>[1]</sup> was a [Canadian](#) poet, author, and performer who was popular in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Her father was a hereditary [Mohawk](#) chief of mixed ancestry and her mother was an English immigrant. To read more about Emily Pauline Johnson please go to: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E. Pauline Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Pauline_Johnson)

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



## Presbyterian women kicks off its 2021 business meeting

The first online triennial gathering celebrates innovative ministry during challenging times

by Gail Strange | Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — On Wednesday, [Presbyterian Women](#) opened its 2021 Business Meeting and online Churchwide Gathering with greetings by the 2018-2021 board leadership team of Moderator JyungIn Lee; Joy Durrant, Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace Concerns; and Jo Ann Burrell, Vice Moderator for Mission Relationships.

The gathering, which continues Thursday, is PW's first online Triennial Business Meeting.

Prior to the start of the business and worship, participants began with a land acknowledgement led by PW board member Danelle Crawford McKinney. In her acknowledgement, McKinney said, "Long before settlers came to what is now known as the United States, people were inhabiting this land, providing for their families and future generations."

"Native people were intricately connected to the land, which they knew as Mother Earth. Mother Earth was a living being, and she nurtured and cared for the nations as only a mother could — providing nourishment and support, as well as teaching her children the importance of taking care of the land for future generations. This land was meant to sustain all during times of plenty and times of scarcity."

McKinney acknowledged that the Doctrine of Discovery was created to justify "ownership" of these lands.

"Anyone who believed in Christian doctrine was privileged by the doctrine to do whatever it took to establish their claim over land they wanted," she said. "To this day, the same systemic racism at the foundation of the Doctrine of Discovery is still used to justify claiming land and shielding those who seek to wipe out families and tribes occupying the land."

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has officially repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, McKinney noted, and "seeks to continue to recognize conscious and subconscious racism and systemic racism in every order of our business within the Church."

### The Judgment of the Nations

Using [Matthew 25:31-46](#) as a scriptural basis, the preacher during worship, the Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter, former director of [Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries](#), said, "This year's [Celebrate the Gifts of Women](#)

[resource](#) suggested honoring women who work to disrupt systemic poverty."



the Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter

"It's hard to disrupt systems of poverty," Hunter said, "but when women can earn at least a living wage, when systems of 'toxic charity' are replaced with partnerships, when disadvantaged children are educated, when people have food to eat, then families, communities, and nations are lifted."

"During this pandemic, millions of women have left the workforce to take care of children, other family members or because they had high-touch jobs and that work stopped. In the United States alone, 1.8 million fewer women are in the labor force than before COVID-19. And despite labor shortages in many industries nationwide, many women remain unemployed."

Hunter says children from low-income families face an opportunity gap. "Systemic poverty is a cycle of reinforcing mechanisms that cause poverty, once it exists, to persist," she said. "It persists across generations unless there is outside intervention. It is nearly impossible for many to break the cycle of poverty because these families don't have access to economic, social, or even political resources. But many of us do have this access, and we have a voice."

According to Hunter, in the PC(USA), "We believe that poverty can be significantly reduced by identifying its root causes and looking for solutions to these causes. We have worked hard, but there is still much to do to shift church ministries from historically patriarchal and paternalistic models of charity to collaborative models of respect, mutuality and support."

"The church's approach to addressing poverty — and racism, sexism, classism and gender identity discrimination — must continually be reformed and decolonized," Hunter said.

### Letters tell the story of PW's efficacy

The 2018–2021 Secretary and Historian for PW, Helene Warren Church, then reported correspondence received by the organization. The correspondence highlighted the critical support and partnerships of Presbyterian Women, Inc.



Photo by Alex Perz via Unsplash

A letter from the [Fellowship of the Least Coin](#), a global ecumenical prayer movement for justice, peace, and reconciliation long supported by Presbyterian Women, included these words:

“Dear beloved Presbyterian Women (PC[USA]) Sisters, “Warmest greetings and hearty congratulations on your Triennial Business Meeting! God surely looks upon you with great joy as you continue to commit to loving this world that God so loved!

“Allow us to take this opportunity to convey our deepest appreciation and many thanks to PW for partnering with the International Committee for the Fellowship of the Least Coin (ICFLC) in its treasury work, and for providing a conduit in managing finance transactions on our behalf. Especially, we thank you for “sending” one of your own, the competent and wise one, Mary Martin, to help us out in this important work of responsibly managing the FLC Offerings and finance work. “You are a consistent and faithful accompanier of the Fellowship of the Least Coin (FLC) since its birth up to this day. Praise and thanks, God, for you! We covet your continuing commitment to work with us, to bear more passion and grace in witnessing to the world — through living out the FLC spirit of unceasing prayer, of gracious receiving, and generous giving — especially at this critical time and onwards. God’s strength and courage be poured on you!

Our hearts are full. Thank you ever so much.”

In another letter, Gemechu Beyene, the principal of [Gidada Theological College](#) in Dembi-Dollo, Ethiopia, thanked PW for the 2020 Thank Offering grant of \$43,650 to construct a dormitory for the college’s female students. Construction was completed on the Gidada Theological College Ladies Dormitory in May 2021.

The board of [Shower the People](#), a nonprofit organization in San Luis Obispo, California, received a 2018 Thank Offering grant of \$44,000 from Presbyterian Women. The nonprofit’s board president, Gwen Watkins, reported that Shower the People got its start in 2018 due to the generous award it received from a Thank Offering grant.

With PW’s assistance, the organization purchased a mobile shower for people experiencing homelessness in San Luis Obispo County, Watkins wrote.

“After buying and outfitting our three-unit shower trailer, we started shower operations in November of 2018,” Watkins

wrote. “Since then, we have provided over 6,000 showers to the homeless in their community.” Shower the People closed in 2020 for two months due to the pandemic, then restarted in June 2020 with new protocols, including full personal protective equipment for all volunteers. Currently Shower the People operates four days a week at three different sites. “The need for showers among the homeless remains great,” Watkins wrote to PW.

Presbyterian Women also partnered with the [Cottage Village Coalition](#), a tiny house community for low-income residents in Cottage Grove, Oregon that received a 2018 Birthday Offering of \$100,000.

“Thanks to Presbyterian Women,” wrote the organization’s Bruce Kelsh, “for getting us started, believing in our tiny house village project, and helping us make this amazing project possible.”

## Presbyterian women elects new leadership ‘for such a time as this’

2018-21 board leaders are also honored during PW’s first-ever online triennial gathering

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — Thursday’s second day of [Presbyterian Women’s first-ever online triennial meeting](#) saw goodbyes to the board leadership team and hellos to brand-new leaders; inspired preaching by the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency (see a report [here](#)); a smattering of votes; talks by invited guests, including [one by a California pastor who’s also the mother of a child born during the pandemic](#); and words of appreciation by the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Read a report on comments made by the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II, by clicking [here](#). During the first-ever online triennial gathering, PW’s 2018-21 moderatorial team — Moderator Jyungin Lee; Jo Ann Burrell, vice moderator for mission relationships; and Joy Durrant, vice moderator for justice and peace concerns — were all celebrated for their three years of service.

Lee said she’s grateful so many PW members attended [Virtual Town Squares](#) “to connect with each other during the early days of the pandemic, when many felt isolated. The faces I encountered and the stories I heard on Zoom screens will remain with me for a long time.” She thanked both “the fabulous PW staff” and Burrell and Durrant. “Let us rejoice in hope,” Lee said.

“We are in this in-between time,” Burrell said. “It is a time of what we used to be and a time of considering what we want to be.”

“During my term,” Durrant said, “I have been especially reminded of how all levels of Presbyterian Women have the unique ability to build on the work of women who have gone on before ... As so often happens in Presbyterian Women, I stood on the shoulders of wise, diligent and prayerful women who paved the way for me.”



Nancy Taylor, executive director of the [Presbyterian Historical Society](#), said that as partners with PW collecting and preserving materials documenting the organization at all levels of the church, “our purpose is your purpose.”

“Our collections are vital to the work of justice, peace and building inclusive, caring communities — not only through examining the records themselves but also through acknowledging and interrogating the many gaps that represent missing and silenced voices,” Taylor said. PW’s nearly 200 voting representatives approved the upcoming budget for 2022-24. Total budgeted revenue is about \$7.59 million, down about \$1.5 million from the previous triennium. Expenses are projected to be about \$7.53 million, a decrease of about \$1.2 million from the previous triennium.

Voting members approved, although not by the required 2/3 margin for a bylaw change, a proposal that would have substituted “kin-dom” for “kingdom” in PW material. It approved a bylaw change to modify the names of “people groups” represented on PW’s board of directors. They unanimously approved the most recent audit.

Voting members elected these board leaders for the 2021-24 triennium:

- Moderator, the Rev. Kathy Reeves, Manistee, Michigan
- Vice Moderator, Kathleen L. Keefer, Clarinda, Iowa
- Finance Chair, Susan Ochs, Norton Shores, Michigan
- African American Member at Large, Jan Grimes Lewis, Augusta, Georgia
- Asian American Member at Large, Sue Liu, Princeton, New Jersey
- Hispanic/Latin American Member at Large, Letty Heredia, Hillside, New Jersey
- Korean American Member at Large, Chol Sik Kim, Hinesville, Georgia
- Middle Eastern Member at Large, Adina Yacoub, Whippany, New Jersey
- Native American Member at Large, Gina Enos, Sacaton, Arizona
- Young Women’s Representative at Large, Mary Kate McAlister, Charlotte, North Carolina
- Young Women’s Representative at Large, Rachel Potts-Wells, Louisville, Kentucky
- Search Moderator, Bonnie Thompson, Tucson, Arizona
- Search Committee, Northeast and Boriquen Region, Lorraine J. Cuffey, Elizabeth, New Jersey
- Search Committee, Southeast Region, Tami White Richardson, Lexington, South Carolina
- Search Committee, East Central Region, Erin Focke, Cincinnati, Ohio

- Search Committee, Western Region, Laurie Pell, Puyallup, Washington
- Search Committee, West Central Region, Christy Abraham, Lincoln, Nebraska

‘The race that is set before us’

Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri was co-moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018).

It fell to Ruling Elder Vilmarie Cintrón-Olivieri, Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018), to install the new leaders. Reflecting on Hebrews 12:1-3, Cintrón-Olivieri said those gathered for Thursday’s installation “are also running our own race ... We have been called for service for such a time as this and we honor those who ran the race before us — mentors, innovators, reformers, conveners, teachers, preachers, activists, coaches, prayer partners, listeners, motivators and so many others ... Trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us run the race before us and not grow weary, but persevere in faith.”

Reeves, the new moderator, traced her family’s long history of service through Presbyterian Women, including her grandmother, mother and sister. “Presbyterian Women has always been a steady and loving presence in my life,” Reeves said.

“We must listen to understand, not just to respond,” said Keefer, the new vice moderator. “We are Presbyterian Women. We have a long history of listening to deeply understand problems in the world, then creating solutions and working together to improve lives. Our work is cut out for us.” Then [Reeves] Keefer borrowed Cintrón-Olivieri’s words from three years back: “Presbyterian Women must be bold, bodacious and unapologetic.”

Reeves brought Thursday’s business meeting to a close with this benediction: “Now, since it is time to get up and go, you shall go in passion and power; God will provide. Go in love and strength; God will provide.”

## If it’s rooted in God, our hope is sure and certain



The Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett preaches during the Presbyterian Women’s triennial gathering  
by Mike Ferguson |  
*Presbyterian News Service*

The Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett is president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. (Contributed photo)

LOUISVILLE — In the early church described by Paul in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter of his letter to the Romans, authentic love was in short supply and friction between Gentile and Jewish followers of Christ was apparent everywhere.

“Where the church stands on social issues,” the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency told the triennial gathering of Presbyterian Women Thursday in a sermon on [Romans 12:12-13](#), “creates friction, and no small amount of frustration, even now.”

Moffett thanked PW for being among the groups and agencies, congregations and mid councils to accept the [Matthew 25 invitation](#). There are congregations, she said, who refuse to embrace the Matthew 25 calling because of two of three of its focuses — [dismantling structural racism](#) and [eradicating systemic poverty](#). “Some churches do not want to talk about racism,” Moffett said. “But racism is talking with all of us. It is screaming in our ears.”

When it comes to eradicating systemic poverty, some churches are “committed to treating the symptom by curing the disease,” Moffett said, including advocating on behalf of those who are poor. “They act boldly and compassionately.” But others “insist in only feeding those who are hungry and clothing those who are naked. They are not willing to change the conditions that create poverty.”

“If the Matthew 25 focus on dismantling structural racism and eradicating systemic poverty is too controversial, then perhaps following Jesus is also,” Moffett said, noting the term “poor” is mentioned nearly 200 times in the Bible “and, with few exceptions, it refers to those who are economically and materially poor and the injustice perpetuated against them.” In Matthew 25, Jesus judges all nations by how they treat those who are living in the margins, Moffett said. “People create racist systems that cause people to live in the margins ... These systems also intersect with gender bias, the oppression of women, people who are differently able, older adults and folks in the LGBTQ community.”

“Different is not deficient,” Moffett said. “Color does not make us right any more than being in a donut shop makes us a donut. Racism is a sin. It goes against the Christian principle to love your neighbor as yourself.”

Moffett told her hearers she’s “grateful for women who know about hope. Women who rejoice in hope, who laugh in the face of fear, who smile when confronted by obstacles, who cry when overwhelmed by the issues of our day — not the cry of ultimate defeat or surrender, but a purpose-driven cry. A cry that releases lament, that washes away the debris that keeps our souls from seeing God’s hand in every situation. I am grateful for women who may face seemingly insurmountable challenges, but, in the words of activist the Rev. Jesse Jackson, ‘keep hope alive.’”

Moffett said she praises God for “women who blazed trails and made paths where there was none to follow.” Those women include the Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, “who navigated the waters of rejection, gender bias and racism”; Maria Fearing, who sold all her belongings to finance her first

mission to the Congo in 1894, becoming the first Black mission co-worker in that region; and Lucy Craft Laney, who refused to give up hope when the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church did not grant her funds to educate African American children. But Mrs. F.E.H. Haines, then president of the denomination’s Women’s Department, came into Laney’s life and advocated for her.

“Thank God for our mothers and grandmothers, daughters and sisters, aunties and nieces of every color, hue and persuasion — women who rejoice in hope,” Moffett said, echoing the gathering’s theme. “They inspire me, they encourage me — and I dare say you as well.”

## A Purdue-bound bus was always a welcome sight in the Nelson household

The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II tells Presbyterian Women why they’ve always held a warm spot in his heart



by Mike Ferguson |  
Presbyterian News  
Service

The Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II is Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

LOUISVILLE — The Rev.

Dr. J. Herbert Nelson, II told [the triennial gathering of Presbyterian Women](#) Thursday he has fond childhood memories of the bus pulling up to [St. Luke Presbyterian Church](#) in Orangeburg, South Carolina, the church where his father was the pastor. The bus was there to transport Nelson’s mother to PW’s national gathering at Purdue University.

“It was always a time I was grateful you were taking my mother away for a time,” said Nelson, the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), speaking to the online gathering from the Presbyterian Center in Louisville, Kentucky. “She was the disciplinarian in the life of our house. My dad and I had a great time doing things we would never share with her for the rest of her life.” It was members of Presbyterian Women who would “oftentimes, and not with a loud voice but behind the scenes, be the changemakers at St. Luke Presbyterian Church,” Nelson said. “We see the continued work of women stepping forward at the local and national levels,” mentioning specifically PW’s executive director, Susan Jackson Dowd, as one of the women “who guide us in many ways. I have been thankful for their support.”

Especially during the difficult times we’ve been experiencing, “I’ve seen women just step forward and do significant work over and over again,” Nelson said. “They remind us how to

bring about change in the life of society, the world and even the church — and remind us that somehow or another it should be done with love. That’s a message that’s much needed in the world today.”

More and more cities, including Louisville, are suffering waves of violent crime, some being perpetuated by and against children, Nelson noted. Presbyterians “are offering ourselves as a vision and the possibility of hope in a world in need of much visioning and certainly a great deal of hope,” he said. “I believe that we will continue to see that through the active engagement of not only Presbyterian Women but men and women across the nation. We will continue to hold onto the Christian heritage we share and to walk by faith, not sight.”

With a denominational headquarters building conceived by its donor three decades ago as a potential downtown anchor, “we have some responsibility in a place where 12-year-olds are carrying guns and are part of the high murder rate we are seeing right here in Louisville ... What is the role of the church? How do we deeply connect? It is a time we have to be more vigilant than we have before.”

It’s up to Presbyterian Women and others to “remind us we still have a debt to pay — the debt of the cross,” Nelson said. “It’s about the redemption of the world.”

Nelson thanked Presbyterian Women for “lifting up the banner to be leaders in this denomination and helping us find a way to take that which seems to be a great struggle and find ways by which we allow it to be a great hope.”

“Remember — we are walking by faith in these days, in some places quite frankly we have never been before,” Nelson said. “I pray that as we talk together as Presbyterians, with other denominations and the unchurched, there is a kinship God calls us to, to love our neighbors as ourselves.”

“I stand here today proudly serving this denomination and, more importantly, being in the midst of Presbyterian Women,” Nelson said. “God’s blessing in the days ahead.”

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## BDECAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TOKIO, ND UPDATES



### FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry has been running very smooth this past 6 months. We serve on the average 60-70 families per month. Depending on what we can order from Great Plains depends on how many pounds we are able to give out. They have been

very generous with food through USDA by helping with no charge items we order. All we pay is the shipping charges. This has been a great help with the budget for us. We have done some moving around and rearranging of the food pantry which makes it more convenient to fill boxes and easier to stock shelves in our building. Fargo church was very generous to donate another freezer to us so we could order more meat and give out more of a variety of frozen foods. We have changed our hours at the pantry to work one long day the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month from 12-7, so with more hours we distance ourselves and no one has to wait in line. The people who do not work are able to come during the day and the working ones come in the evening. We prefill boxes so we can just have them sign in and then go with their items. It has really worked well this winter so people don’t have to wait outside in the cold or in their cars.

We have had a really good turn out of help to unload the truck on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday for our delivery, so we can usually get it all put into the back room for storage or on the shelves. There are usually 8-10 people who are here to help out. We also have 4 of us who work on the day we give it out so we are able to take breaks and still keep the shelves full and boxes made up ahead of time. We have been able to have the clothing pantry open on the same day as the food pantry so they can pick up anything they need from that building also. When we have new items come in, I have 3 people from the church that are willing to come over and put the things out so the items are there for taking. We have had a good supply of winter coats and other winter wear for them to go through. We also have had a good supply of blankets for taking. Thanks to the Grafton Church and Donna’s friend from Grandin the blanket supply has been very good. With so many people out of work it has been a real God send to the people on the reservation.

### WORSHIP

We have been very fortunate with being able to hold worship services and Sunday School in the church. We have had to cancel and quarantine twice due to members contracting Corona Virus outside the church, but have had no one pass it on from coming to church. Only 6 of our members came down with it and only 2 had to be hospitalized for a short time. We have been holding Lenten Services on Wed. nights, with a soup and sandwich supper at 6 pm and Worship following at 7pm. It has been quite well attended. We have been studying the characters associated with Jesus during his crucifixion. It has prompted the members to ask if we could have a Bible study because they enjoy the midweek service time, and said they will miss getting together. So, we are considering this for fall.

### CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

We have not had KICK but have been holding Sunday School for the children that attend church services. The ladies take turns leading and doing projects to decorate the bulletin boards. We had a Halloween Party which was well received.

We social distanced the best we could and wore masks and all had a good time. We also showed a movie "The Star" which we showed for the kids before Christmas along with pizza and popcorn. It was a well- attended event and did a gift exchange for Christmas with the kids. No covid was reported after these events.

#### WINTER WEAR GIVE AWAY

Our winter wear give away was harder this year because we could not use the rec center and had to do it at the church. We had to run it 3 different times in November and we ended up giving out 60 boys outfits and 41 girls outfits. So, we still outfitted 101 in the end but had to run it more often. It worked out ok though because we could social distance this way.

#### DONATIONS

We want to thank all the individuals, organizations, and churches who donated to the Bdecan Ministry Team and our projects at this time. It has made all of our projects possible and has been a real blessing to everyone here at Bdecan. We have kept our pantry's well stocked and been able to serve many people with hope for another season.

#### GOOD NEWS

We have also had some good news from Bdecan. Louie and Hilda have become grandparents to a baby girl. She will be baptized on Easter Sunday along with other new babies here at the church. We also had 2 other baptisms this fall which Rev. Thiele, from the Lutheran Mission Church preformed. We also have had 5 men who are regularly attending worship which is an increase of 3. We only had Bob and Louie and now we have decided to try to possibly start a men's breakfast in the fall on Saturday once a month. We are hoping to attract more for that. We were unable to have mission teams come this past year. We are hoping for vaccinations to happen all around the U.S. so we can look forward to having our friends from Rochester and others back for Bible School and work projects. We are getting vaccinated in this area very quickly so we hope all will be back to normal by fall. Bob and I have ours completed and have been well since we arrived here. Praise the Lord.

Submitted by Rosie Helland,  
Youth and Outreach Coordinator  
Bdecan Presbyterian Church



**TREASURERS** – PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND YOUR CHECKS FOR MISSION PLEDGE AND OTHER DONATIONS TO:  
TERRI SHERMAN,  
12244 N. 84<sup>TH</sup> STREET  
LINCOLN, NE 68517  
SHE IS THE TREASURER FOR Presbyterian Woman in the Synod.

**Justice & Peace** Book Club will continue but it will hopefully look different. I am hoping that we will be able to open the Book Club to all PWs in the country!! Please look for an announcement to come after the Churchwide J&P committee meets in mid-September. We will **delay** the reading of the next book until October. The next book is Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance by Edgar Villanueva.



From the 2021 Thank Offering of Presbyterian Women Packet

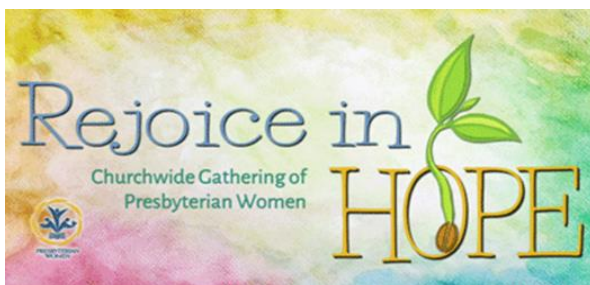
[www.presbyterianwomen.org/thank](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/thank)

"Faithful givers have responded to Eliza Clokey's call to give a 'thank offering to her Lord.' Over the last 33 years, Presbyterian Women has granted nearly \$27 million to more than 1,600 different projects at home and around the world through the PW Thank Offering. More than 40% of the selected projects are related to health ministries." This year's recipients are:

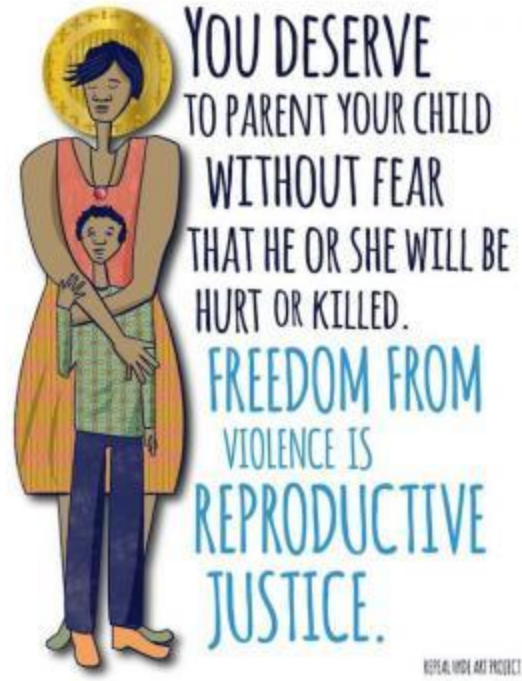
1. Hagar's Community Church, Tacoma, WA \$50,000 to support this new church development inside the Washington Corrections Center for Women.
2. Nature Preschool, Banner Elk, NC \$10,000 to support a needed preschool and after-school programming for children of families forced to work "off the mountain."
3. Operation Desert Drop, Concord, NC \$12,000 to support a food desert outreach program delivering food to families who lack reliable transportation in high-need neighborhoods.
4. Springwood Presbyterian Church, Whitsett, NC \$50,000 for a kitchen renovation so women can cook healthy snacks and meals for developmentally delayed adults at Peacehaven Farm, as well as family food boxes and emergency frozen meals for neighbors.
5. Habitat for Humanity, Orlando, FL \$5,000 to provide 100 households with mentoring on reducing debt,

saving money, improving credit to become eligible for home ownership.

6. New Hope Harbor, Warm Springs, GA \$20,000 to purchase kitchen appliances in a new building that serves women finding freedom from addiction.
7. Cancer Assoc. of Anderson, Anderson, SC \$42,360 to provide a cancer patient vehicle and driver for patients with no available transportation to their cancer-related appointments.
8. Presbytery de Cristo, Douglas, AZ \$27,000 to create programming to strengthen children's academic, social, emotional and spiritual development, including programming for parents in nutritious cooking, food cultivation and conflict resolution in one of the most impoverished communities in Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico.
9. Children's Advocacy Center, Hammond, LA \$7,350 to build a sensory wall and calming corner for children traumatized by abusive incidents.
10. First Presbyterian Church of Grand Haven, Orange Walk, Belize \$15,600 to help complete a new building for a cost-free daycare center that serves 50 children of single parents.
11. Santiago, Guatemala \$50,000 to provide funding to train and support Guatemalan teachers to reach 3,200 mostly indigenous children living in areas where schools have no books or resources.
12. Chasefu Theological College, Chasefu, Zambia \$45,000 to build a women's hostel as housing is only available to men and the college wishes to train female farmers and increase female pastoral students.



If you missed this year's Churchwide plenary session and worship from August 5, you can view both on YouTube at <http://ow.ly/TIHH50FMdm2> (sound starts after 30 seconds). At the plenary session, Bible Study author Merryll Blair talks of her background and the background of this year's *Horizons* Bible Study *What My Grandmothers Taught Me, Learning from the Women in Matthew's Genealogy of Jesus*—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba and Mary.



When we speak of justice, we cannot forget Reproductive Justice which includes external as well as internal factors that exist around reproduction and physical health. Reproductive Justice is (1) freedom from interpersonal and domestic violence relationships; (2) freedom from fear your child will be hurt or killed; (3) freedom to choose not to parent regardless of the circumstances and how much money you make; (4) freedom to have health care regardless of your gender identity; and (5) freedom from being judged negatively due to a mental health diagnosis. Denying access to health care denies human dignity. *Unpacking Reproductive Justice*, by Shanea D. Leonard, *Horizons Magazine* (Mar./Apr. 2021).

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Keep Zoom in mind for your circle, planning, and committee meetings, i.e. Synod Coordinating Team committees are to meet and report before October 15, 2021. Contact Zoom coordinator Lana Schultz ([lanaj0@cassilton.net](mailto:lanaj0@cassilton.net)) to get your meeting on the Zoom schedule.







Amazon SMILE Share and bookmark this link so all your eligible shopping will benefit PW.  
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0473061>

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE 2022 SYNOD GATHERING – JUNE 16-19, 2022 – AT THE HILTON GARDEN INN IN SIOUX CITY, IOWA!



“Blessing Bags,” a mission opportunity of a church and its PW in central North Dakota, with assistance from a PWP mission grant, were put together to reach out to those living in cars, youth “couch surfing” with friends and those threatened with homelessness. The bags consisted of bottled water, flushable wipes, chapstick, deodorant, masks and a ten-dollar gift card to McDonalds, Taco Johns or Burger King, which were located in areas accessible to the homeless. As the weather got colder, hand warmers, scarves, socks, gloves, stocking cap and mylar blanket were added. In addition to PW members carrying Blessing Bags in their cars and handing them out to individuals in need, Blessing Bags were distributed to police depts., soup kitchens, and shelters. Some responses from these facilities were:

“We were grateful to be able to give everyone a Blessing Bag even those persons turned away when our facility was full. No one left empty handed.”  
“Individuals were grateful to receive the bags, especially the masks and meal gift cards, as now they could go inside for a meal because they had a mask.”  
In its report to PWP, the PW concluded, “this very rewarding project opened our eyes to those sometimes unseen, but always present individuals who struggle for their safety, dignity and security each day, allowed us, in a small way, to help meet the needs of God’s people.”

DEVOTION  
Good News of the Gospel

For many of us, these seem like very dark times. We wonder “Where is the Good News?” when we are surrounded by so much suffering. That wondrous, loving God of ours sent his son to live among us, feel with us, and suffer with us. He was sent to show us how to live as loving, caring individuals. We are to care for the sick, the homeless, the hopeless. As Presbyterian Women among other things, we study and increase our knowledge of the needs of this global world in which we live. As followers of Christ, we are called to respond to these needs.



That is just part of the story. Yes, Christ was sent to live among us and teach us how to be good disciples. As the Son of God, Christ is referred to as God’s Beloved Son. True, but we, also, are each and every one of us, created in the image of God, and have been adopted as children of God. This makes us brothers and sisters of Christ, walking with Him in the warmth of God’s love. Yes, we too, are God’s beloved; loved unconditionally. Regardless of our failures, our poor choices, our insensitivity, our self-centeredness, through His infinite love, God forgives us. He sent his son to live among us and to die an agonizing death on the cross to take on these sins of ours. What greater love than that?

The Good News of the Gospel (gospel is the Greek word for good news) is that the grace, mercy and love of God is showered down on each of us every day. This is not a sprinkling shower, but a soaking shower that reaches the very depth of our souls. It is a love that cannot be shaken, a love that endures, a love that is unconditional. You and I, every one of us is a Beloved Child of God.

Helen McMasters, May, 2021

Register today to join a book study . . .

***Madonna Swan:  
A Lakota Woman's Story***  
as told through Mark St. Pierre



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, yet registration is required.

**Dates: September 20, October 4, and October 18**  
**Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)**  
**Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)**

**Synopsis:** In *Madonna Swan: A Lakota Woman's Story*, Mark St. Pierre skillfully weaves together his interviews with Madonna Swan-Abdulla to capture the indomitable spirit of a Lakota woman as she celebrates the joys and endures the sufferings of her remarkable life on the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation in South Dakota.

Born in 1928, Madonna Swan endured an appallingly difficult life on the reservation in the first half of the twentieth century. In her narrative, Madonna details her life - her earliest childhood memories, the Lakota traditions taught by her grandparents, the daily struggle against poverty and prejudice, and her education at Stephan Mission, South Dakota.

Stricken with tuberculosis at age sixteen, she survived nearly seven years in Sioux Sanitorium, a place where most Sioux victims of TB quickly expired. Madonna's strength of spirit and determination to live carried her through the *chanhu sica* bad lungs--and into a life, free of disease. She survived to marry, have a family, go to college, and teach in the reservation's Head Start program. A symbol of courage for all women, Indian and non-Indian alike, Madonna Swan-Abdulla was named North American Indian Woman of the Year in 1983.

Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at [mmstone52@att.net](mailto:mmstone52@att.net)

Provide the following information:

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| - Email address | - Name                                  |
| - Presbytery    | - Phone #                               |
|                 | - Afternoon or evening study preference |

**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](http://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](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](mailto: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.*

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