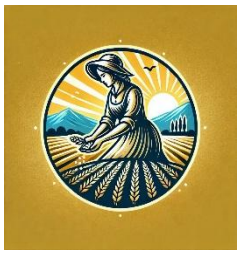
The Sower

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



August, 2026 Kathleen Keefer, Editor

Moderator's Musings

The summer has just flown by; I don't know where it went.

I attended my presbytery's pastor's retreat in the Black Hills and then went down to Sioux City, Iowa, for a mini reunion/retreat to visit the now opened Dr. Susan LeFleche Picot Center in her old hospital.
It was amazing! The restoration was completed within three years, and it now houses community rooms, creative spaces, native artwork, and a small museum dedicated to Dr. Susan.

Maggie Horak and I visited several venues in Mankato, Minn., and have agreed on one to host our 2028 Synod Gathering. The hotel rooms, meeting spaces, and catering are all under one roof. We are also looking into the pre-gathering mini trip. We have a lot of ideas for workshop leaders and speakers but would still love to hear from you if you have ideas of a topic or experience you would like to learn more about. Contact Maggie or I with your suggestions.

During the last PW Synod Moderators meeting, I mentioned our recent project for assembling period packs to take to Synod School. I was asked to write an article for the Horizons Magazine. It should be in the fall edition [with photos].

Churchwide Gathering is coming up next summer! I hope you are saving your money and planning to attend.

There will be a synod gathering time, but I don't know what that will be yet. We always have a great time.

Don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or a chance to visit. I love to drive and love meeting all of my PW sisters within our synod.

In Christ,

Louise

lcvanpoll@gmail.com
605-354-2397
605-354-2397; 601 Kansas Ave SE, Huron, SD 57350

A Prayer “For Autumn”

Gracious God,

I praise you as the
Giver and Renewer of seasons.
The earth’s rhythms
Remind me of
Your faithfulness…
Your love…
Your promises…

The sun rising each morning,
The leaves turning and dropping,
The stars peeking through
Mists of morning gray,
Then greeting me as
The day kisses night.

Amidst the cycle, I find
A rhythm for my soul.
I hear echoes of that
ancient and eternal place
Into which you beckon me,
And I say thank you.

Oh, God, how will you
Show yourself to me today?

I am longing for
A closer connection,
A stronger fire,
A self-forgetting confidence
That fills me and makes me
A whole, abundant person.

I want to find myself so full
Of your loving presence
That it spills and splashes
Over my life’s rim,
Blessing and baptizing
Every trip I make
Every meal I cook,
Every task I do,
Every person I meet,
Every smile I share,
Every worry I carry.

Thank you, God, for lifting me
Over the threshold of this season.

May I watch for the stars tonight
And the sun tomorrow,
Finding you in both.

Amen.

“For Autumn” by Arianne Braithwaite Lehn from her book, Ash & Starlight: Prayers for the Chaos and Grace of Daily Life.

Laughter is Good Medicine

By Judy Rops

I celebrated the milestone of my 80th birthday this summer and it has given me pause. I can't believe it! To share a quote from Peggy Wehmeyer, "Getting old is one of life's journeys few of us sign up for but all of us must take." As you know, aging is a popular topic and has been endlessly explored, researched, and written about.

What does scripture have to say about aging?

The glory of youths is their strength, but the beauty of the aged is their gray hair. Proverbs 20:29

Gray hair is a crown of glory, it is gained in a righteous life. Proverbs 16:31

So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. II Corinthians 4:16

Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you. I will sustain you and I will rescue you. Isaiah 46:4

Gerontologist Ann E Gerike says we can develop a new way of thinking about our physical limitations as we age. After a lifetime of straining to be "the perfect perky ideal," finally our breasts can relax. And that extra weight around the middle (hence the term "middle" age?)—It's just cuddlier body lines! So as birthdays come, don't think of yourself as growing old; you've just reached that vibrant metallic age: silver in your hair, gold in your teeth and lead in your bottom!

Sure growing older is stressful, but using your funny bone to subdue that kind of stress works wonders. When you hear *snap, crackle, pop,* and it isn't your cereal, don't panic. Laughter defuses insults, soothes aching muscles and counteracts the humiliation of what is happening to your body and mind.

Television journalist Dan Rather once asked a 106-year old man to disclose his secret of long life. The old man rocked back and forth in his chair before answering. Finally he replied, "Keep breathing." (My thanks to Angie Nelson for the idea for this devotional. She and I are co-moderators of Presbyterian Women at FPC, Sioux Falls, SD)

IF I CAN…..

If I can do some good today,
If I can serve along life's way,
If I can something helpful say,
Lord, show me how!
If I can right a human wrong,
If I can help make one strong,
If I can cheer with smile or song,
Lord, show me how!
If I can aid one in distress,
If I can make a burden less,
If I can spread more happiness,
Lord, show me how! (Patricia Oliver)

IN MY OWN BACKYARD

Dear Lord, when things get hectic,
And living seems so hard,
I just go out and sit awhile
Within my own backyard.
For there it's quiet and peaceful
Beneath the shady trees
And sunlight thru the branches
Accompanies every breeze.
There are a dozen shades of green
Designed to please the eye,
Chubby squirrels and humming birds,
A golden butterfly.
The honeysuckles perfume
Permeates the air,
And tho' I do not see Him
I know that God is here.
The sky so high above my head
Is an electric blue,
And there are lazy cotton clouds
With nothing else to do
But sail across the heavens,
And yet I know that I
Was given hope whose sturdy wings
Were also meant to fly.
This old world we inhabit,
Is much the worse for wear,
Beauty fades so quickly,
And hearts forget to care
But somehow I've discovered
Within my own back yard
A peaceful sanctuary,
In which I find the lord.
Grace E. Easley

LOVE A SMALL CHILD

Love a small child for all that he is,
And not just for what he can do.
Love a small child for being himself—
Not just an extension of you.
Love a small child;
you'll light up his world,
Love a small child and you will be blessed
By heaven in every way.
Love a small child in all ways, at all times,
And he will learn to understand.
Love a small child with firm, gentle love;
His heart's in the palm of your hand.
Love a small child and delight in his laughter;
Love a small child and be loved ever after;
Take what he gives you and give back all you can,
And you'll have helped build a strong woman or man. MARY J. PATTON

PW visits the renovated Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center

Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte was a Presbyterian Woman! She was strong in her commitment to take care of her people and all others who lived on the Omaha (Umó"ho") Reservation. She was the first Native person to attend medical school and she happened to be a woman! Dr. Susan further taught Sunday School and preached at the First Presbyterian Church in Walthill, NE in the same town where she built a hospital to provide for her Omaha people! She knew what it meant to be a PW!

In June 2022, a group of 28 PW women visited the Dr Susan hospital when the restoration process was just underway. . . the exterior, including the roof, windows and siding had been replaced. The interior was covered with black mold after setting unoccupied for years with a hole in the roof. Fundraising to complete the huge project was slowly progressing and PW in the Synod were encouraged to contribute!

On August 1st, 2026, another group of PW women and a couple of men visited the newly restored hospital. Executive director, Liz Lovejoy Brown spent the day sharing her experiences that brought her to this position, her special relationship with her grandfather, the restoration of the hospital and about the Omaha people. She also provided a tour of the beautiful facility.

Liz's expertise in tribal finance and accounting, background in grant management and social work, advocacy for Native American youth, and passion for the betterment of her people demonstrate her commitment to the mission of the Picotte Center. Expressing her dedication, Liz shares, "I've admired Susan LaFlesche Picotte since childhood. Her passion to help and provide for our people has been a role model for me. I share the same passion and am committed to making a positive impact in our community."

We learned this restoration has brought medical and mental health services back to the community! The center provides space for elders and youth to teach and learn cultural arts. It provides space for preserving cultural heritage, including a beautiful retelling of Dr. Susan's story. It also provides community and medicinal gardens. The hallways are adorned with Native artwork. The Umó"ho" language accompanies English for all signage throughout the center. What an amazing facility that brings so much to the community and carries forward the work Dr. Susan began many years ago!

There is work yet to be done and financial support will help to develop the outdoor amphitheater, maintain the gardens, provide for additional displays and educational elements.

In September, the purchase of Dr. Susan's home will be completed. We had the opportunity to visit with Dr. Vida Stabler, director of the Umó"ho" Language and Cultural Center in Macy, NE, when we stopped to view the exterior of Dr. Susan's house. Dr. Stabler serves on the Board of Directors for the Picotte Center and will soon be vacating Dr. Susan's home.

A stop at the Honoring the Clans Sculpture Garden in Winnebago, NE completed the stops before returning to Sioux City for dinner, followed by a debriefing of the day's experiences!

The mission of the Dr Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center is to honor and preserve the legacy of Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte and the heritage of the Omaha Nation, improve community health and wellbeing, and serve as a catalyst for positive change. It's vision is to be a destination for hope, healing and cultural connection.

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More photos offered by Louise

Scholarships for Native students expand to third college!

Beginning with the Fall 2026 semester, PW Synod is offering a $500 scholarship each for Fall and Spring semesters at Ihanktonwan (Yankton Sioux) Community College located in Marty, SD on the Yankton Sioux Reservation.

Ihanktonwan Community College offers two-year associate degrees and also four-year bachelor of arts or science degrees in a variety of areas.

This is the third college where PW Synod is offering scholarships for Native students, making it a total of six scholarships annually. Your continued support of the PW Synod Native Scholarship Fund will help to sustain these ongoing scholarships into the future.

Contributions can be mailed to: Terri Sherman, PWS Treasurer, 12244 N. 84th Street, Lincoln, NE 68517. Check made out to: PWSLAP; note on memo line: “Native College Scholarship Fund”.

Iglutheca land purchase update and urgent need!

As many of you may have heard, Abram Neumann, executive director of Iglutheca was facing a closure of the tents that provide overnight shelter for Lakota men and women who are unhoused in Pine Ridge, SD. Action on this closure has temporarily been put on hold. Abram is currently seeking available land to purchase for a permanent site. He is also raising funds to purchase this land once it is located. These funds for land purchase are being held separate from the Iglutheca operating budget. . . so contributions should be marked according to intent.

Remember, Iglutheca provides a pathway for homeless Lakota people out of addiction and poverty. It offers the basics: meals, safety, sleep, showers, and community. It also provides case planning and management tailored to each person’s needs, which may include: addressing addiction, mental health, spiritual support, grief groups, health care, housing, GED completion, job search and assistance obtaining vital documents.

Monetary donations can be sent to: Iglutheca, % Abram Neumann, PO box 5005, Pine Ridge, SD 57770. While reestablishing 501(c)3 status, tax deductible donations can be written to: Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center and mailed to the address above. Be sure to write “Iglutheca Donation” on the memo line. Learn more at: https://www.facebook.com/iglutheca or https://www.iglutheca.org/

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Children’s First - Urgent need for a van!

Children’s First (formerly Gather the Children Home) is an emergency foster care home for children ages birth to age 13. It provides a caring, immediate safe environment for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect, until a suitable foster or relative’s home becomes available. Children’s First is once again a 501(c)3 nonprofit agency.

There is an urgent need for a safe, reliable passenger van to transport children in emergency

care to court hearings, medical and behavioral health appointments, school, family visits, etc. The Pine Ridge Reservation covers a large rural area of approximately 4,342 square miles, with limited public transportation and long distances between services. The van will meet a critical need!
Monetary donations should be sent to: Barbara Dull Knife, PO Box 230, Oglala, SD 57764, note on memo line: Van donation.

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PW SYNOD NEWS

----PW Synod is looking for a Search Committee member from Des Moines, East Iowa, Missouri River Valley, North Central Iowa, Prospect Hill or Homestead Presbyteries to serve on its Coordinating Team. Please contact Teresa Bartlett (tbartlett98@gmail.com), Linda Anthony (lmhanthony72@gmail.com) or Judy Bell (jmoinebell@aol.com) with your nominee's name.

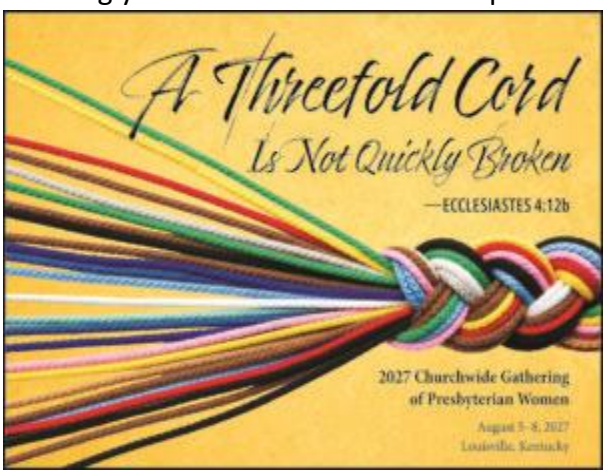
----The online Horizons Bible Study will meet by Zoom on September 21 at 6:30 pm. Join us for Lesson 2. Contact Maggie Horak (mmhlin@outlook.com) to receive the Zoom link.

----New online Justice & Peace (J&P) Book Discussion Group starts next year on January 12 at 6:30 pm with the book "To Do Justice," by Peters and Hinson-Hasty. Kathleen Keefer will facilitate.

SAVE THE DATE FOR CHURCHWIDE GATHERING

August 5-8, 2027 in Louisville

The Gathering Quest email series has begun. Encourage PW friends to sign up so they can prepare, promote and pray for this coming together of Presbyterian Women. Sign up by sending an email to pw_pcusa.org or entering your email in the "News & Updates" box on the bottom right of presbyterianwomen.org.



What happens at the 2027 Churchwide Gathering? Lots! Join in worship—enjoying uplifting music and gifted preachers—with sisters in faith from around the country and the world. Find inspiration in the plenary sessions, which highlight everything from Bible study to mission projects. Learn about your areas of passion and key issues in the world today through educational opportunities (forums and workshops) led by inspiring speakers. Witness the installation of the newly elected leaders. Visit the many exhibits. Shop in the marketplace and bookstore. Take in some of the interesting and fun sites of the city.

Register today to join a book study . . .

Speaking of Indians

by Ella Deloria

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
There is no charge to participate, yet registration is required.

Dates for 2026: August 17th and 31st, September 21st
Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)
Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

Synopsis: Ella Deloria could speak intimately about Indian ways because she belonged to a Yankton Sioux family. A distinguished scholar who studied with Franz Boas at Columbia University, she had the gift of language and the understanding necessary to bridge races. Originally published in 1944, this book is an important source of information about Dakota culture and a classic in its elegant clarity of insight.

Beginning with a general discussion of American Indian origins, language families, and culture areas, Deloria then focuses on her own people, the Dakotas, and the intricate kinship system that governed all aspects of their life. She writes, "Exacting and unrelenting obedience to kinship demands made the Dakotas a most kind, unselfish people, always acutely aware of those about them and innately courteous."

Deloria goes on to show the painful transition to reservations and how the holdover of the kinship system worked against Indians trying to follow white notions of progress and success. Her ideas about what both races must do to participate fully in American life are as cogent now as when they were first written.

Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net
Provide your name, email address, cell phone, and presbytery.
Also, please indicate your afternoon or evening preference.

Register today to join a book study . . .

Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter

by Delphine Red Shirt

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
There is no charge to participate, yet registration is required.

Dates for 2026: November 16 and 30, December 14
Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)
Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

Synopsis: Told in their own words, *Turtle Lung Woman's Granddaughter* is the unforgettable story of several generations of Lakota women who grew up on the open plains of northern Nebraska and southern South Dakota. Delphine Red Shirt has delicately woven the life stories of her mother, Lone Woman, and Red Shirt's great-grandmother, Turtle Lung Woman, into a continuous narrative that succeeds triumphantly as a moving, epic saga of Lakota women from traditional times in the mid–nineteenth century to the present.

Especially revealing are Turtle Lung Woman's relationship with her husband, Paints His Face with Clay, her healing practice as a medicine woman, Lone Woman's hardships and celebrations growing up in the early twentieth century, and many wonderful details of their domestic lives before and during the early reservation years.

Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net
Provide your name, email address, cell phone, and presbytery.
Also, please indicate your afternoon or evening preference.

TOGETHER IN SERVICE

By Pat McKisson, Committee Chair

Are you familiar with all of the great campgrounds the Presbyterian church maintains in our Synod? There are so many opportunities available through these camps to get together, discover new and old relationships, commune with God through bible study and nature, and have a time to reflect on the blessings every one of us has, and will continue to have, from God.

Each camp offer: Youth retreat, Adult retreats, Summer camps, Day camps, Grands camps and Family camps.

Each camp also offers something unique. The following is by no means a complete description of the camp, so go to their website and check them out.

Camp Bearcreek (formerly Wyoming camp) in Wyoming, IA
Phone: (563)-488-3983
Website: bearcreek.camp
Special Programs: Group rentals for family reunions, staff outings, school trips, P.W. meetings, etc.

Lake Shore Center, Lake Okoboji, IA
Phone: (712) 337-3313
Website: lakeshorecenteratokoboji.org
Special Programs
Writer's Corner, Silent Book Club, Spring Quilter's retreat, Maker's retreat, College retreat.

Clearwater Forest Camp in Deerwood, MN
Phone: (218) 678-2325
Website: clearwaterforest.org

Special Programs: Men's retreat, Winter Chrysalis, Ministerial retreat, Seeds of Service-Grands camp.

Calvin Crest Camp in Fremont, NE
Phone: (402) 628-6455
Website: calvincrest.org
Special Programs: Book an event for your group.

Camp Rimrock, Rapid City, SD
Phone: 605-343-7539
Website: www.rimrock.camp
Special Programs: Youth Rally, Pastoral retreat, Women's retreat..

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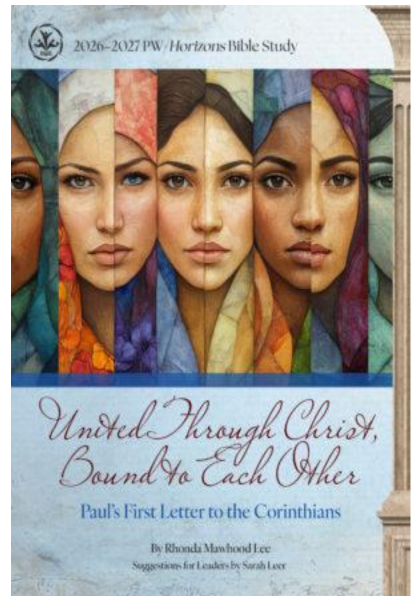
2026-2027 PW HORIZONS BIBLE STUDY

"UNITED THROUGH CHRIST, BOUND TO EACH OTHER
PAUL'S FIRST LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS"
By Rhonda Mawhood Lee

Study Facilitator: Kathleen Keefer



LESSON 2: Monday, September 21, 2026 – "Connected In Christ"

LESSON 3: Monday, October 26, 2026 – "Freedom In Christ"

LESSON 4: Monday, November 9, 2026 – "Living Freely And The Responsibility To Care"

LESSON 5: Monday, December 14, 2027 – "For The Good Of The Community"

LESSON 6: Monday, January 18, 2027 – "Now You Are The Body Of Christ"

LESSON 7: Monday, February 22, 2027 – "Christian Love"

LESSON 8: Monday, March 22, 2027 – "Hope In The Resurrection"

LESSON 9: Monday, April 19, 2027 – "Connected By God's Love"

We meet via Zoom at 6:30 PM CT.

AS CUSTOMARY: An e-mail reminder to the group approximately one week before our gathering and lesson! The email will have the Zoom link.

QUESTIONS? Contact Kathleen Keefer or Maggie Horak

The Synod offers this Bible Study because so many of our groups do not provide this opportunity. If you have a group in your congregation that is great. You are still welcome to participate via Zoom with us.

You can purchase the 2026-2027 Bible study (cost is $14.00) through Presbyterian Women - https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/current-bible-study/. Or better yet, get a subscription to Horizons Magazine, the magazine for Presbyterian Women, and the next Bible study is included. Be sure to speak to PW staff so that your subscription includes the Bible Study. Late subscriptions may not!!

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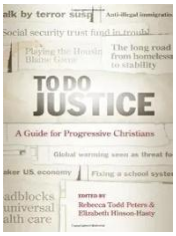
Join other Presbyterian Women from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies for a monthly round table discussion on issues prominent in today's world.
Our Sit & Sip events will be held via Zoom from 11 a.m. to noon Central Time on the last Saturday of each month. So, grab your favorite beverage, get comfortable, and join the conversation!
Our next meeting is on August 29th. No topic has been chosen as yet. If you have an idea of an issue to be talked about, please let me know. You know, sometimes it is just great to be with each other!!
To register, please contact Kathleen Keefer or Maggie Horak for the Zoom link.

JUSTICE & PEACE BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

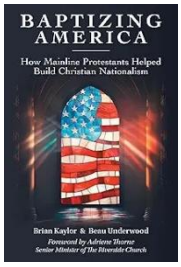
SYNOD OF THE LAKES & PRAIRIES – All are welcome

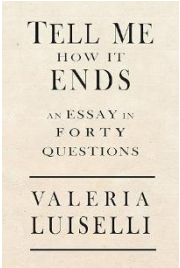
Justice & Peace Book Discussion Group will begin in January, 2027. This will give you several months to obtain the books and read them. We will split the discussion between two meetings of one hour each. We will meet using Zoom from 6:30 TO 7:30pm CT. If you don't get a chance to read them, join us for the discussion anyway! We are great company!! Kathleen Keefer will facilitate. Sign up with Maggie Horak (mmhlin@outlook.com) Summaries of the books are from Amazon.com.



1/12 and 2/9 - *To Do Justice,* by Rebecca Todd Peters and Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty (Christian Life) Encouraging Christians to call for public policies that benefit those most vulnerable in our nation, To Do Justice offers tools for studying complex domestic social problems such as Social Security, immigration, the environment, and public education, and serves as a guidebook to becoming involved in social action. Rooted in Christian tradition, each essay analyzes a contemporary problem from social, biblical, and theological perspectives before providing directions for public policy.

3/9 and 4/13 - *Baptizing America,* by Brian Kaylor and Beau Underwood (Christian Nationalism) In the face of a rising threat to both church and democracy, Baptizing America provides an urgent examination and an enlightening critique exposing the dangerous undercurrents of Christian Nationalism. How can Mainline Protestants spot such practices in their own activities? A crucial call to reckon with influences before it's too late. Christian Nationalism presents an existential threat to both Christ's church and American democracy. Now is the time—before it is too late—to reckon with all the places its pernicious influence arises. On full display in recent elections, Christian Nationalism also exists in sanctuaries where an American flag has been displayed for decades, when we pledge allegiance to one nation "Under God," or when the U.S. is called a Christian nation.

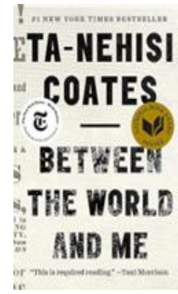




5/11 and 7/13 - *Tell Me How it Ends,* by Valeria Luiselli (Immigration) American Book Award Winner: A "moving, intimate" account of serving as a translator for undocumented children facing deportation (The New York Times Book Review). Nonfiction Finalist for the Kirkus Prize Finalist for National Book Critics Circle Award for Criticism Structured around the forty questions volunteer worker Valeria Luiselli translates from a court system form and asks undocumented Latin American children facing deportation, Tell Me How It Ends humanizes these young

migrants and highlights the contradiction between the idea of America as a fiction for immigrants and the reality of racism and fear—here and back home. General Assembly is June 11-22 in Puerto Rico, no meeting in June!

8/16 and 9/26 - *Between the World and Me,* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (Racism) ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR: The New York Times Book Review, O: The Oprah Magazine, The Washington Post, People, Entertainment Weekly, Vogue, Los Angeles Times, San Francisco Chronicle, Chicago Tribune, New York, Newsday, Library Journal, Publishers Weekly



In a profound work that pivots from the biggest questions about American history and ideals to the most intimate concerns of a father for his son, Ta-Nehisi Coates offers a powerful new framework for understanding our nation's history and current crisis. Americans have built an empire on the idea of "race," a falsehood that damages us all but falls most heavily on the bodies of black women and men—bodies exploited through slavery and segregation, and, today, threatened, locked up, and murdered out of all proportion. What is it like to inhabit a black body and find a way to live within it? And how can we all honestly reckon with this fraught history and free ourselves from its burden?

10/12 and 11/9 - TBA; looking for Women's Rights/Gender Justice/Violence Against Women - trying to find something new. Any ideas? We could even read a Spiritual Growth book???

Look for these books at your local library, PC(USA) Store, Alibris.com (used books, very cheap, Half-Priced books, or Amazon (Kindle)

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Agri Star Meat & Poultry Plant fire, Postville, Iowa, July 28, 2026

On July 28, a fire tore through the Agri Star Meat & Poultry plant in Postville, Iowa, destroying at least three-quarters of the facility. More than 600 people, roughly a fifth of Postville's entire population, were suddenly without work. Local organizers have already identified rental assistance, food, and home supplies as the most urgent needs on the ground.

> *"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me... Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."*
> — Matthew 25:35, 40

Because of complex subcontracting arrangements and informal, employer-tied housing, many of these workers lost their shelter in addition to their income on the day of the fire. Many will not be reached by standard disaster aid or unemployment insurance; many families are facing immediate eviction, hunger, and destitution.
In moments like this, our faith calls us to move beyond sympathy into radical, Christ-like action. When we ask, "What Would Jesus Do?" We know the answer: He draws near to the brokenhearted, opens His arms to the stranger, and feeds the hungry.

Christ's Hands and Feet on the Ground
Members of our fellow JKP congregations in Postville and the surrounding area have already responded to the fire and its aftermath. These faithful folks are working tirelessly, providing support and pastoral care. But their local resources are stretched to the limit. They cannot carry this heavy cross alone; they need their presbyterian family to stand behind them in a unified response of Christian love and solidarity.

Donation Remittance Instructions:
Please make checks payable to John Knox Presbytery with *"Postville Relief Fund"* in the memo line, and mail to:
258 Lodi Street
Lodi, WI 53555
100% of these designated funds will go directly toward meeting the immediate relief needs of displaced families in Postville through our local frontline churches and community partners.
Thank you for leading with courage, vision, and heart. May our collective witness show our Postville neighbors that they are deeply loved by God and this presbytery.
In Christ's Service,
John Knox Presbytery | 258 Lodi Street | Lodi, WI 53555

One of the many cherished institutions we have in the Presbyterian Church USA is the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program. (PDA) People often assume they only support congregations but that is not the case. They care for all our communities and all of Gods children who live within the bounds of our denomination. Within 48 hours of the fire, we were able to submit for and have approved a $7,500 grant to help with the disaster relief effort in Postville Iowa.

In addition to the PDA grant, the John Knox Presbytery leadership working with the Presbytery Council voted unanimously to not just match that grant, but to exceed it. The JKP Emergency Opportunity Grant will be issuing an additional $10,000 grant to support the Postville Community recovery. Agencies on the ground doing the immediate work have been identified and local congregations have made recommendations for distributing funds. Below you will find suggestions.
Northeast Iowa Community Action: rental assistance, consultation on immigration-related legal concerns.
Postville Food Pantry.
Catholic Charities: Rental assistance for those who don't qualify for other benefits, consultation on immigration-related legal concerns.
Immigrant Action Network: Food, rental assistance.
Iowa Legal Aid: Help with unemployment claims, evictions/foreclosures.
The entire community remains in our prayers and we look forward to continuing to support the congregations and all who call NE Iowa home.

August 16, 2026 UPDATE: If you missed the weekend announcement, Agri Star plans to resume limited production this week, and some number of workers are being called back. <**https://www.kcrg.com/2026/08/16/agri-star-plant-postville-looking-resume-limited-production-operations/**> The Agri Star Meat and Poultry processing plant said it's working to resume limited production this week after a fire destroyed most of the plant and left more than 600 workers without jobs.

In a post on Facebook, the company said:
Since the fire at our plant, tremendous effort has gone into cleaning, repairing, and preparing our facility for the next chapter. Thanks to the determination and dedication of many, we are optimistic that we will resume limited production this coming week (contingent upon the successful completion of required inspections). We are deeply grateful to our devoted team members, customers, community members, neighboring communities, vendors, contractors, and everyone who has worked alongside us and supported us throughout this difficult time. Your commitment, encouragement, patience, and willingness to help have made this progress possible. We are thrilled to begin welcoming some of our team members back to the plant! We have begun the call back/text process. Although we still have a great deal of work ahead of us—and rebuilding will take time—bringing members of our team back through the doors and beginning production again represents an important and hopeful milestone. The road ahead will require continued patience, flexibility, and hard work, but we are incredibly grateful and proud to be taking this step forward. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for standing with us. Together, we are rebuilding—and we look forward to sharing more progress in the weeks ahead.
++

Threads of Compassion

Recently, the dedicated **Presbyterian Women of Frankville Community Presbyterian Church** (rural Postville, Iowa) gathered for a Mission Day that beautifully embodied faith in action. This small but remarkably active group spent their time sewing adult clothing protectors for a local senior hospice center, offering a simple yet deeply meaningful expression of care. With steady hands and generous hearts, they transformed fabric and thread into tangible signs of dignity and comfort for some of the community's most vulnerable neighbors. Frankville Presbyterian continues to demonstrate that ministry is not measured by size, but by spirit. Through projects like this, the congregation lives out Christ's call to compassionate service—quietly, faithfully, and with great love. Their Mission Day stands as a reminder that even the smallest acts, stitched together with intention and prayer, can wrap others in warmth, respect, and the presence of God's care.

SINGER

LOVE THE PEOPLE
GOD GAVE YOU
FOR ONE DAY
HE WILL WANT THEM
BACK

Prospect Hill Presbyterian Women

You are invited to attend the Prospect Hill Presbyterian Women's Fall Gathering

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

Sit & Sip: Women Connecting Over Coffee

Reach out to everyone and make new friends across the Presbytery.

Tuesday, September 15, 2026 ~ 10:00 A.M.
First Presbyterian Church
102 Adaline, Cleghorn, IA

OR

Wednesday, September 16, 2026 ~ 2:00 P.M.
Wheatland Presbyterian Church
11697 120th Street, Breda, IA

"Let us love in deed and truth" ~ 1 John 3:18

Refreshments and Fellowship

Missions

Update of Women of the Presbytery

A Stitch in Time

Ecclesiastes 3:7, "A time to tear and a time to mend."

All women of the church are cordially invited to the
John Knox Presbyterian Women 2026 Fall Gathering
9:30 a.m. - Saturday, September 19
Hosted by Grace Presbyterian Church
222 E Broadway St., Winona, MN

Our speaker will be Sharon Falck from Grinnell, Iowa, who runs a program that provides sewing machines, materials and training to the native American reservations in South Dakota. Sharon currently serves as moderator of Presbyterian Women in Des Moines Presbytery.

We will collect donations of fabric, thread, sewing notions, and refurbishable sewing machines to send with Sharon.

Our day will also include Dedication of the Thank Offering.

The host church is fully accessible for visitors with mobility needs.

Lunch cost will be $8. To assist with planning, **please RSVP by Wednesday, September 9** (call or text 563-419-7371 or email ripleyjb56@gmail.com). Indicate if you have any dietary restrictions, or if you have any questions.

Excited to spend the day with you in Winona!

John Knox Presbyterian Women look forward to welcoming Sharon Falck as our speaker for our fall gathering Saturday, September 19, at Grace Presbyterian Church, Winona, MN. Sharon will tell us about the "sewing machine project" she facilitates with her Grinnell, IA presbyterian church to provide sewing machines, fabric, and other materials for Dakota Presbytery.

Our JKPW spring gathering was held Saturday, May 2, 2026 at Community Presbyterian Church, Postville, IA. Our program was presented by Julie Aspenson, Assistant Executive Director of Midwest Mission Bible Training Center in Cresco, Iowa. Joining Julie to share their testimonies were three current residents of the Mission. Midwest Mission Bible Training Center is a Christ-centered, non-denominational organization dedicated to helping people with life-controlling problems, providing a free residential, four-phase discipleship training program for adults who are willing to seek God as the answer. We collected donations of non-perishable "essentials" for the Mission, and after lunch we made May baskets as a surprise to distribute to each of the residents and workers.

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PW Ecumenical Coffee

On Wednesday May 6th, 2026, the Presbyterian Women of Luverne hosted an Ecumenical Coffee, inviting people from our county and our Presbytery. This event has been held annually for many years and is always a Spring highlight. This year our speaker was Rev. Dr. Candace Adams of The Compassionate Way, who told us about the New Worshipping Community she leads in the Brainard/Baxter Lakes Area Region. She serves individuals living in congregate living facilities and a local trailer park who are not connected to traditional churches but are interested in and needing spiritual guidance. We were inspired to expand local mission to include a variety of segments of our communities generally not reached through traditional church ministries.

A service of The Compassionate Way is gifting individuals with Blessing Baskets, addressing the person's needs or spiritual journey. The Luverne PW committed to creating 20 Blessing Baskets to gift the ministry and we exceeded our goal. Each basket was filled with a journal, pen, Bible verse/inspirational stickers, a water bottle/mug, drink mixes and comfort care items, such as a handmade neck wrap that can be heated or cooled, socks, tissues, personal hygiene items, candy etc. We had an overflow of items that Candace will be able to use in additional baskets. The event was attended by 100 people, representing almost every church in the county, several other churches in our Presbytery, and 2 adjoining states.

The event was promoted by our local newspaper and radio station. We are so thankful for our dedicated group of women who worked together to make this event a success AND to the men of our church who helped with clean-up and washed dishes!

Rock County Star Herald WWW.STAR-HERALD.COM

Encouraging compassion

Rock County native brings ministry message to Luverne on May 6

By Lori Sorenson

Rock County native Caroline (Schilling) Adams will return "home" on May 6 to bring her story about "The Compassionate Way" to the community.

Adams will share her message in Luverne at the May 6 Ecumenical Coffee of the Presbyterian Church.

The event is at 9:30 a.m. and includes a light breakfast for attendees.

The Rev. Dr. Adams grew up in Rock County, attending school and church in Ellsworth.

Today she serves as the missionary leader of The Compassionate Way, which ministers to Christians who have found themselves in difficult life circumstances, and she meets with them in non-traditional church settings to reach them where they are.

For example, Adams helps children residing in a mobile home park, dependent adults at an adult daycare center, women in recovery from addiction, and residents at skilled, assisted and independent living facilities.

"The Compassionate Way exists to accompany individuals in under-served populations, offering spiritual care, faith formation, compassionate connections, and tangible expressions of blessings," Adams said about the mission.

"We envision individuals who have experienced Christ's compassion will grow in faith, discover their God-given worth, and extend compassion to others. I look forward to being in Luverne to share about this ministry and to encourage others to exhibit compassion."

Louella Voigt was instrumental in organizing the event and inviting Adams for the First Presbyterian Women who host the annual coffee.

"With her 30 years of experience, she understands the importance of supporting individuals on their spiritual journey," Voigt said. "I encourage everyone to hear her inspirational story."

The First Presbyterian Women are compiling ingredients (yarn, swags, books, etc.) for 20 "blessing baskets" that Adams gifts to people she ministers to.

The First Presbyterian Women have also been making quilts for Adams and The Compassionate Way to give to people who might need them. One of the quilters, Faye Schilling, Luverne, has made 60 quilts so far for the organization.

Voigt encourages the community to attend the May 6 event to meet Adams and hear her message.

"She is an engaging dynamic speaker, and we know her presentation will be excellent," Voigt said.

"She is basically a missionary in Minnesota, serving what the Presbyterian Church calls 'A New Worshipping Community,' people who are not involved in traditional churches, but who are in need of spiritual care — as are all of us."

2026 Fall Gathering of

Presbyterian Women

of the

Presbytery of South Dakota

September 26, 2026

First Presbyterian Church, Sioux Falls, SD

Registration at 9:00 AM followed by coffee and music; worship at 10:00 AM

'Who Is My Neighbor?'

Guided by Matthew 25:35-40

Featuring

aRoche, musician and subject of the book *Hidden Heritage*

⇒ Lauren Vaska, director of *Sharing the Dream,* our mission project for 2027

⇒ Shopping opportunities: items from Guatemalan women, books & more

⇒ Dedication of Least Coin, Birthday and Cents-Ability offerings

⇒ Displays from Presbyterian Women of pictures or short descriptions of

'What have you done for your Neighbors?'

⇒ Information on *Horizons* Bible study and Churchwide Gathering next summer in Louisville

Make plans now to attend

You were not called to DO IT ALL. You were called to make a difference.
LEAD WITH PURPOSE. LOVE WITH COURAGE. SERVE WITH JOY.
Women's Workshop on
Servant Leadership
Lead from your heart.
Don't lose yourself in the service.
Care for others. Care for you.
Lead with wholeness.
BE INSPIRED encouragement for your journey
CONNECT with women like you
GROW in faith, confidence & calling
SERVE with purpose and balance
Refuel. Renew. Rise.
You matter. You are not alone. You can lead and still be whole.
Save the Date!
SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 26TH
2026
9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Come as you are. Leave refreshed, encouraged, and equipped.
Together we will...
DISCOVER THE JOY OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP
SET HEALTHY BOUNDARIES
FIND BALANCE IN GIVING AND RECEIVING
LIVE FROM OVERFLOW, NOT OBLIGATION
BE REMINDED: GOD SEES, KNOWS & CALLS YOU
REGISTER TODAY!
Scan the QR code or use the link to save your spot!
You can't pour from an empty cup.
WESTMINSTER PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
in Casselton
WORSHIP. GROW. SERVE. TOGETHER.

The Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies created a new Facebook page to keep you informed on all the exciting things happening with PWSLAP! The page can be found by clicking on this link: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552522904776 or by searching for Synod of Lakes and Prairies Presbyterian Women on Facebook. Once you find the page, please "Like" it and updates will appear in your Facebook feed.

If you have any items you would like to add to the PWSLAP Facebook page, please send them to Christy Abraham, PWSLAP Facebook Coordinator at christylou71@gmail.com

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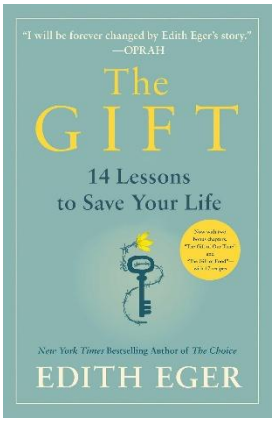
Pages Worth Turning: I recently attended my Presbytery's leadership training. The facilitator of the training was Suzanne Stabile, a frequent course leader at Synod School – which she claims is the best thing going! Here a blurb from her website:

Susan is an experienced spiritual director and retreat leader trained in the Ignatian tradition. She offers retreats and other programs of spiritual formation in parishes, retreat houses and other venues around the country and is the author of numerous publications, including *Growing in Love and Wisdom: Tibetan Buddhist Sources for Christian Meditation* (Oxford 2013). Susan is an adjunct instructor of Theology at St. Catherine University and teaches in the Sacred Ground program for training spiritual directors. She previously held the position of Director of the University of St. Thomas Office for Spirituality and currently serves as a Distinguished Senior Fellow at the University of St. Thomas School of Law. Susan authors the blog, *Creo en Dios!* and also occasionally blogs at Mirror of Justice, a group blog devoted to the development of Catholic Legal Theory. Prior to moving to Minneapolis in 2007, Susan was a member of the adjunct ministerial staff of St. Ignatius Retreat House in New York.
You can find MysticMag's interview with Susan, titled Journeying With God here.
Susan shares her reflections on her journey with God on her blog, in podcasts and videos, in group talks and retreats, and in print and online articles. To find out where you can hear her in person, take a look at the page of upcoming speaking engagements.
Susan talked about Edith Eva Eger and the books Dr. Eger has written. I have chosen to start with The Gift:14 Lessons to Save Your Life. Here is the description from Amazon:



I will be forever changed by Edith Eger's story." —Oprah Winfrey

A practical and inspirational guide to stopping destructive patterns and imprisoning thoughts to find freedom and joy in life—now updated to address the challenges of the pandemic and a world in crisis.

World renowned psychologist and internationally bestselling author Edith Eger's powerful New York Times bestselling book The Choice told the story of her survival in the concentration camps, her escape, healing, and her journey to freedom. Readers around the world wrote to tell her how The Choice moved them and inspired them to confront their own past and try to heal their pain. They asked her to write another, more prescriptive book. Eger's second book, The Gift, expands on her message of healing and provides a hands-on guide that gently encourages readers to change the thoughts and behaviors that may be keeping them imprisoned in the past.

Eger explains the worst prison she experienced is not the prison that Nazis put her in but the one she created for herself: the prison within her own mind. She describes the most pervasive imprisoning beliefs she has known—including fear, grief, anger, secrets, stress, guilt, shame, and avoidance—and the tools she has discovered to deal with these universal challenges. These lessons are offered through riveting and inspiring stories from her life and the lives of her patients.

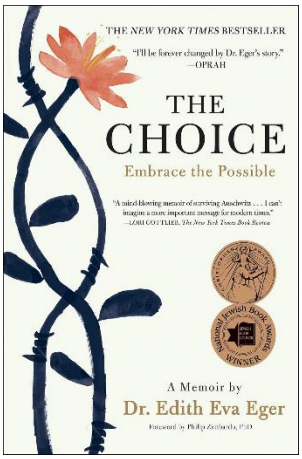
This new, revised edition of *The Gift* contains two new chapters that examine the invaluable insights and lessons Edie learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, a time she used to rediscover freedom even in lockdown and to enjoy the simple pleasures of life, including

preparing and sharing meals with the ones we love. Edie includes recipes for some of her favorite dishes, which have been updated and tested by her daughter Marianne Engle, and explains how food can be a deep expression of love and connection.

As readers seek to find joy and some peace in these challenging times, Eger's wisdom and heartfelt advice is as timely, and timeless, as ever and certain to resonate with Eger's devoted readers and those who have not yet found her transformational wisdom.

Filled with empathy, insight, and humor, *The Gift* captures the vulnerability and common challenges we all face and provides encouragement and advice for breaking out of our personal prisons to find healing and greater joy in life.

I would also suggest another book written by Dr. Eger: The Choice
A *New York Times* Bestseller



"I'll be forever changed by Dr. Eger's story…*The Choice* is a reminder of what courage looks like in the worst of times and that we all have the ability to pay attention to what we've lost, or to pay attention to what we still have."—Oprah

"Dr. Eger's life reveals our capacity to transcend even the greatest of horrors and to use that suffering for the benefit of others. She has found true freedom and forgiveness and shows us how we can as well." —Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

"Dr. Edith Eva Eger is my kind of hero. She survived unspeakable horrors and brutality; but rather than let her painful past destroy her, she chose to transform it into a powerful gift—one she uses to help others heal." —Jeannette Walls, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Glass Castle*

Winner of the National Jewish Book Award and Christopher Award

At the age of sixteen, Edith Eger was sent to Auschwitz. Hours after her parents were killed, Nazi officer Dr. Josef Mengele, forced Edie to dance for his amusement and her survival. Edie was pulled from a pile of corpses when the American troops liberated the camps in 1945.

Edie spent decades struggling with flashbacks and survivor's guilt, determined to stay silent and hide from the past. Thirty-five years after the war ended, she returned to Auschwitz and was finally able to fully heal and forgive the one person she'd been unable to forgive—herself.

Edie weaves her remarkable personal journey with the moving stories of those she has helped heal. She explores how we can be imprisoned in our own minds and shows us how to find the key to freedom. *The Choice* is a life-changing book that will provide hope and comfort to generations of readers.
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Presbyterians have been giving a **Land Acknowledgement** for some time now to give honor to the Indigenous peoples who lived on this land before us. PW Synod meetings/events now begin with a land acknowledgement. Your PWP/PWC meetings/gatherings can begin with one too. An example can be found at www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/land-and-history-acknowledgement

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ARE BOLD – AROUND THE WORLD

CELEBRATING A BOLD PW

"PW are uniquely BOLD" is a short yet powerful two-minute video that highlights the unique and important witness that PW brings to the church and world. Available at youtube.com/presbyterianwomen/videos (PW's YouTube channel), the video debuted at the 225th General Assembly (2022) and is an excellent tool for showing why Presbyterian Women matters. Share a link for the video in your next personal email, church newsletter or minute for mission. Use it as a tool to raise awareness about and invite others to participate in our life-changing organization.

READY FOR DOWNLOADING

"PW Essentials" (formerly PW Manual) is available at https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/PWR23120-PW-Essentials.pdf for downloading. In the future, any changes or new editions will be available in a downloadable format only.

Living in a world without violence against women and children. Pause for a moment of silence on Thursdays at noon your local time to remember and honor those who have died at the hands of sexualized or gender-based violence. Go online at https://www.ecumenicalwomenun.org/thursdays-in-black and commit to the pledge below:
I commit to: **Thursdays in Black.**
In solidarity. In protest. In mourning. For awareness and In hope.

By supporting to wear black on Thursdays, I stand
- In solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in their lives
- 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.

MAKE THE PLEDGE. #THURSDAYS IN BLACK. STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE.

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center in Little Rock is ready to host church mission trips to help replenish the stock of disaster kits

To watch the video, copy and paste the link below into your browser.

https://youtu.be/tBQV9PdoaKY

You can download the Justice & Peace Calendar for the entire year. **Click here to download the PDF.**
Visit the Justice and Peace webpage for more information at **presbyterianwomen.org/justice**.
You can sign up to receive the monthly calendar through the app!!
Click here to subscribe to the PWPCUSA calendar or visit the events calendar webpage
at **presbyterianwomen.org/events** for Justice and Peace observances and other dates relevant to your PW ministry!
https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/2025-justice and peace calendar/

Presbyterian Women in the Congregation Mission Pledge Form

Mission Pledge, PW's Annual Fund

January 1, 2027—December 31, 2027

As Presbyterian Women, we make the following pledge to support the mission of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery, Presbyterian Women in the Synod and Presbyterian Women at the churchwide level, as well as the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Please indicate below the amount pledged to PW at each level.

- To support the mission of Presbyterian Women churchwide $_____
- To support the work of Presbyterian Women in the Synod $_____
- To support the work of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery $_____

Total Annual Mission Fund Pledge from PW in the Congregation $_____

Name of Congregation _____

_____

Signature of the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Congregation

_____

Address

_____

City State Zip

_____

Phone Email

This Mission Pledge form should be completed and sent to the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery (or whoever is responsible for giving) **no later than November 15**. Send all quarterly payments of this pledge to the treasurer of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery by March 10, June 10, September 10, and December 10.

Instructions

1. Enter the pledge amount of support for Presbyterian Women at the churchwide level (including support for the mission of the church worldwide).
2. Enter the pledge amount of support for Presbyterian Women at each level--Presbytery and Synod.
3. Keep a copy of this form for your records and send the original to the person indicated below:

_____

Signature of Moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery or designee

_____

Address

_____

City State Zip Code

_____

Phone Email

Presbyterian Women's **ANNUAL MISSION FUND**

PW in the Presbytery Pledge Form for PWP Moderator

January 1, 2027—December 31, 2027

As Presbyterian Women, we make the following pledge to support the mission of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery, Presbyterian Women in the Synod and Presbyterian Women at the churchwide level, as well as the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery is responsible for reporting the total amount pledged in congregations.

Please indicate below the amount pledged to PW at each level.

- To support the mission of Presbyterian Women churchwide $_____
- To support the work of Presbyterian Women in the Synod $_____
- To support the work of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery $_____

TOTAL MISSION PLEDGE from PW in the Congregations $_____

Name of Presbytery

_____

_____

Signature of the moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery (or whoever is responsible for PW giving in the Presbytery)

_____

Address

_____

City State Zip

_____

Phone Email

Instructions

1. **Keep one copy of this form for your files.**
2. **Mail this Pledge form no later than December 4 to:**
   (a) Treasurer of PW in the Presbytery;
   (b) Moderator of PW in the Synod, Louise Van Poll, 601 Kansas Ave SE, Huron, SD 57350;
   (c) PW Business Office, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396

Send all quarterly Churchwide payments to:
Presbyterian Women Remittance Processing, PO Box 643652, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3652

Quarterly Churchwide payments should be mailed by March 15, June 15, September 15, and December 15, along with remittance forms supplied to treasurers of PW in the Presbytery.

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Dakota – Mod/Rep
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4/23/2026

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