



The Sower

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



September 2025

Kathleen Keefer, Editor

Greetings from Huron, S.D.

I do not have much to say about missing women or trafficking. I know trafficking goes on, especially along I-90, especially during hunting season, but I am not aware of anything in my town. But the smaller towns around me, with a bar and not much else, advertise 'exotic' dancers. This is just a euphemism for prostitution. Some women are happy with this arrangement as it gives them a steady income. But others say they are locked into servitude like the old company store. They owe so much to the bar owner for room and board, that they can never get out from under and give all their money from tricks to him.

Huron is a small town, with a population of 12,000, in a state with a low population. But what I do know is fear.

Although South Dakota has been spared ICE raids, except after Kristi Noem's appearance at Madison, S.D., which hosted a protest and ICE came in the next day, still we feel fear.

Last winter, as grocery prices went up, our local food pantries saw an uptick in clients. So much so, they needed security to keep order in line. People were so afraid that the food pantry would run out of supplies they were fighting in line. Fast forward to today, and the lines are much smaller. People are afraid to come for help, legal or illegal, because ICE might sweep them up. Even if you are legally in the U.S., you will be deported.

A friend of mine owns rental houses. One house had not paid their rent, so she went to investigate. It was filled with women and children, the youngest just 8-days old. The husbands had all self-deported to Guatemala. I'm sure these men held jobs at Dakota Provisions [which supplies your turkey meat] or Jack Links [which supplies your jerky]. What will these women do? How can we help them?

Our farms are quickly losing their farm hands. Who will milk the cows? Harvest the crops? Pick the beans? Butcher the cattle?

Without those workers, our food supply will be seriously disrupted because U.S. citizens do NOT want to pick fruit, vegetables, or work on the kill side of a turkey plant or hang meat strips in a cooker.

Our immigrants, both legal refugees or not, are all afraid to go to work, or school, or church, or to facilities that give aid like the Salvation Army and thrift stores and food banks because there is now no due process, and a green card means nothing.

Meanwhile, Congress clawed back money appropriated to the Dept. of Labor to help seniors find employment. I have had four workers through this program and three were women. They lost their funding on July 1 but were operating on private funding until Sept. 7, when they had to shut down. My two employees are devastated. How will they pay their rent? Mortgage? Property taxes? I don't know, and neither do they.

Neither one of them will be able to find work because of their health issues and SS and disability pay will not cover their expenses. And I have lost two valuable workers because the county will not pay for another employee. It seems women are bearing the brunt of the downsizing.

At the Synod Gathering and my Presbytery of South Dakota Fall Gathering, we learned of period poverty and injustice. I just recently learned of the numbers affecting Gaza alone [in the Horizon's Sept./Oct. issue]. It is staggering! These women cannot get supplies. There is not enough water for drinking and cooking, let alone washing pads and bathing. These women are using whatever they find in a refuse heap: rags, peelings, leaves. Keep contacting your legislators. Keep fighting for justice wherever you can. Lord, have mercy on us when we stand before the throne.

Yours in Christ,

Louise

Louise Van Poll, PW Synod Moderator
lcvanpoll@gmail.com



SOJOURNERS

Verse & Voice



September 9, 2025

Verse of the day

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who

consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God.

- 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Voice of the day

As the church, we must do better to become community that offers more hope than judgment to those who experience oppressive inner turmoil.

- Jean Neely, "[Suffering Is Not a Sin](#)"

Prayer of the day

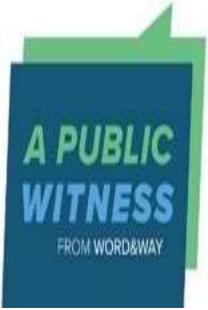
Merciful God, console us in our struggles so that we may, in turn, become a community of hope and compassion.

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Cited by Axios, Religion News Service, Salon, Slate, Sojourners, The Atlantic, The Hill, & more!

From the Word&Way e-newsletter [A Public Witness](#) Below is a guest piece from Christi Harlan. A 32-year member of the First Baptist Church of the City of Washington, D.C., she is the author of [Mr. President, The Class Is Yours](#), containing the first-ever transcripts of the Sunday School lessons taught by President Jimmy Carter. She also published the backstories of the lessons and the church in [Normal Lives: President Jimmy Carter and His Church](#). Learn more about her books at [ChristiHarlanWriter.com](#) and in her 2024 [Dangerous Dogma interview](#).



Award-winning reporting & analysis on faith, culture, & politics

The Sunday School curriculum prescribed a lesson from Acts 21-23 and the title, “The Cost of Concern,” focused on the fallout from Paul’s disruptive visit to Jerusalem. The teacher pivoted to a more contemporary concern.

“We live in a time of challenge and of trial: trial of ourselves, of our standards, of morality, our commitment to the elements of life taught by and exemplified by Christ. The Christian church is divided, searching for an alleviation of division,” the teacher said. “Our nation is examining its own soul, the characteristics that describe an American, our relationship with other countries, the cohesion that should bind us together in a spirit of Christian fellowship.”

The teacher was President Jimmy Carter, and his concerns — eerily fitting for 2025 — were part of the Sunday School lesson he taught on Sept. 9, 1979, at the First Baptist Church of the City of Washington, D.C.

Over the next 40 minutes, Carter stuck largely to the assigned text, starting with Paul’s cordial reception by James (the leader of the Jerusalem church and its thousands of members), Paul’s visit to the temple, and his inflammatory embrace of gentiles. Things went sharply downhill from there, with Paul in chains while facing death threats from Jewish extremists and eventually hustled to Caesarea by the Romans for the sake of peace in Jerusalem.

Carter concluded the lesson with a harsh assessment of the Christian church in Jerusalem. In retrospect, his comments could be read as raising alarms about the conservative Christian movement that would campaign against his re-election and eventually drive him from the Southern Baptist Convention.

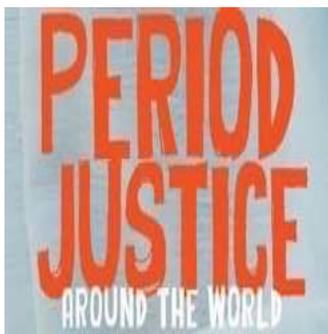
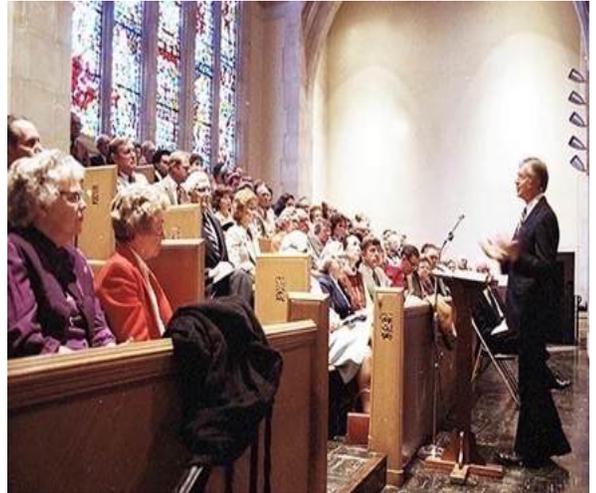
Forty-six years later, his comments can also be read as a contemporary caution against silence and inaction in response to the rise of Christian Nationalism and an administration deliberately dismantling the wall separating church and state. This is what President Jimmy Carter said as he closed his Sunday school lesson in September 1979:

“One question came to me as I studied this lesson. Where was James?

Yeah, where was James? Where were those thousands of Christians? You don’t hear one word about the Christians in Jerusalem in these three chapters of Acts when one of the top Christian leaders was under physical attack. You don’t hear that James came to the colonel and said, “Please release this man. He’s okay.”

And you don’t see 500 Christians coming forward to stand in front of the Roman barracks and saying, “Let us walk with you to Caesarea to make sure nothing happens to our brother Paul.” As a matter of fact, never again in the New Testament is a Jerusalem Christian church mentioned, and I’m not sure it survived.

There’s no record of the Jerusalem Christians ever going outside the city limits of Jerusalem to witness for Christ or even to witness within their own city. It’s as though the Christian church in Jerusalem itself died with this incident, because of timidity or cowardice, I’m not sure.”



Advocating for Period Justice

By Judy Rops

Having a period is not a luxury. Half of the population menstruates. We all know plenty of people that have a period. But not everyone knows that two in five people struggle to purchase period supplies due to lack of income. This is called period poverty and chances are you know someone who has experienced this need—a neighbor, a student, a co-worker, a friend.

The average woman spends nearly seven years of her life menstruating. In the U.S., 25 million women live in poverty, but food stamps don't cover menstrual products. In fact, women in poverty may have to choose between buying food for their children and buying period products.

Period poverty by definition refers to the lack of access to menstrual products and related resources due to systemic inequalities, meaning disparities in wealth, opportunities and privileges. Poverty injustice is a broader term that encompasses the systemic issues that contribute to period poverty, including discrimination, stigma and lack of education.

In other words, period poverty is the symptom, while period injustice is the disease.

Is there period poverty in your community? Does your school, your library, your food bank, your church have free period supplies in its bathrooms?

Toilet paper and soap are provided for free in public restrooms, advocates say, so why not period products? More than 75% of people surveyed agree that period supplies should be available free of charge at public schools according to a 2024 poll from Alliance for Period Supplies. Still, less than half of all U.S. states have passed legislation to fund or require free period products in bathrooms. What does your state provide? We know that without period products, female students are more likely to miss class and fall behind in school.

There are many resources available to study the issues of period poverty and period injustice. A good book is *Period. End of Sentence.* by Anita Diamant. You may remember her as the author of *The Red Tent*, another excellent book to discuss. Previously mentioned in this article is Alliance for Period Supplies or PERIOD. The menstrual movement.

Your PW may want to begin by collecting period supplies (wipes, tampons, pads) and put them in a basket or box in your bathrooms at church. Check to see what your school or library provides? Once you have collected supplies, you will have fun distributing them and begin to realize how great the need is.

The menstrual activism movement is a broad global effort that challenges menstrual taboos and aims to ensure that everyone who menstruates has access to dignity, appropriate healthcare and equal participation in society. It encompasses various initiatives, including advocating for affordable and accessible menstrual products, destigmatizing menstruation and promoting menstrual equity.

By addressing period poverty and period injustice, we can work towards creating a more equitable society where everyone has access to the resources they need to manage their menstrual health with Dignity.

Dancing Faith 2 from Hope Dougherty

We want God near
 More, we want God near Us!
 We want God to be OUR God.
 But we want God on our terms
 We want a God we are comfortable with
 Who gives us what we want
 And think we need
 God Bless the USA
 God smite our enemies.
 We do not want God to shape and form us
 We want to make God over
 In our image
 We do not want a God who uses us
 To love the world
 We want a God we can use
 To control the world
 So we read the Bible
 And we pontificate
 God says! God wants!
 And in the name of God
 We act.
 With arrogance and sometimes
 Even cruelty
 No wonder people do not want God near, not really
 Because the God who draws near
 Cannot be controlled and used
 This God is wind and fire
 When God shows up, the earth reels and rocks
 The heavens thunder (Psalm 18)
 When God shows up, there is silence
 Nothing but a still, small voice (1 Kings)

Or there is, breaking through the darkness
 The sound of a baby crying
 No wonder we are confused.
 Perhaps that is why
 Because we are a bit slow to understand
 God chose to arrive in human likeness
 In Jesus, God came
 Not with noise, not in power (at least not power as we understand it)
 But as a servant
 God came with love and forgiveness
 With compassion
 With (gasp) empathy
 And said, "This is who I am.
 I am Love
 And I need you to be love"
 This is the gift of God.
 This is what God leaves in our hearts.
 Love
 When the heavens thunder and the earth rocks and rolls
 When the seas rise and the hurricanes roar
 When tyrants come and go, and come and go again
 When we forget who we are (children of God)
 And grasp for power and wealth
 God draws near
 God dwells within us
 Not as anger and wrath, power and domination
 But as compassion
 And in the quiet of our heart, we hear the voice of Jesus say
 Love
 Love as I have loved

“Let Your Light Shine” Synod Gathering
Rev. Teresa Bartlett – Homestead PW Moderator

Homestead Presbytery was well represented at the PW Synod gathering in Watertown, South Dakota, June 13 to 15th with 7 women attending. The gathering was well attended with over 100 women participating in plenary sessions and various workshops, sharing around meals, and singing. Rev. Elona Street- Stewart, Lakes and Prairies Synod Executive, wove the event theme “Let Your Light Shine” into her worship sessions. Marilyn Stone led an informative and well attended pre-gathering trip to Native American congregations in the area, Thursday. Gathering participants were able to choose from a variety of workshops including one by Glenna Haller on her experience at the Commission on the Status of Women in New York earlier this year. We also were able to hear from a PW Birthday Offering Recipient, Red Cloud Housing, a company who is developing and building energy and cost-efficient housing on Pine Ridge Reservation and sharing what they have learned with other groups. A hands-on workshop was preparing school bags for Church World service. Over the course of the weekend 120 bags were filled. The last day the bags were packed into Maggie Horak’s car for delivery to Good Shepherd to await transport Fern Cliff, the CWS depot. Terri Sherman, Maggie Horak and Teresa Bartlett are all serving on the Synod Co-ordinating Team and participated in various ways during the event. Old friends were celebrated, and new friends were made as we celebrated the work of Presbyterian Women. Congratulations to the Synod planning team for a well planned and run event.

Completed School bags ready to be packed for transport.



The loading crew, see any familiar faces?



Let Your Light Shine - Gathering

John Knox Presbyterian Women attendees from Frankville Community Presbyterian Church, Postville, IA; First Presbyterian Church, Maynard, IA; and Westminster Presbyterian Church, Madison, WI at the 2025 Synod of Lakes and Prairies Gathering of Women, Watertown, SD

Nine John Knox Presbyterian Women had the privilege of participating in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Gathering of Presbyterian Women "Let Your Light Shine!," June 11-15, in Watertown, South Dakota. Presbyterian Women are truly blessed and give as God has given to us. PWs from Frankville and West Union, IA sent along bags full of baby layette and personal care items, gift cards, and 51 school bags to add to the generous donations collected at the Gathering. I feel blessed to represent JKPW on the Synod level, and thank you for the support you give me to attend. The Gathering was a wonderful time to renew and make new friendships, learn, laugh, share stories, and discern God's will for us as we continue to Let our Lights Shine.



Presbyterian Women Synod Gathering, Watertown, South Dakota June 2025

Reflections from the Gathering by co-chair, Maggie Horak:

With cool June weather and RAIN, RAIN, RAIN---the PW Synod Gathering in Watertown, SD was a blessing for all that attended! Thank you to everyone that made the Gathering a Spirit-filled, heart-warming, and amazing time together! Special thanks to **Marilyn Stone** for arranging the pre-Gathering trip: the speakers, places, time, food, and details that made that time not only an educational opportunity, but a wonderful PW memory! Special thanks to keynote speaker **Elona Street-Stewart** for her plenary messages that were spirit-filled, simple and life affirming words. Thank you to **Fern Cloud**, the artistic director for the Gathering that gave amazing interpretation to 'don't hide your light under a basket' for the stage decoration. And thank you to **Kristi Holler** for her amazing musical leadership in providing amazing music to each plenary session. Hallelujah!

It was an honor to work with PWS Moderator, **Louise Van Poll** and PWP South Dakota, **Judy Rops**, and PWS Treasurer **Terri Sherman**. This little band of 4, led by the Spirit, and served in love to our Creator God. And a special thank you to **Helen McMasters** that created finger labyrinths for each attendee. **Pat McKission** provided 'hands-on' mission opportunities---thank you for the opportunity to serve with our hands, finances & creativity. **PW Skit troupe**: thank you for the drama & comedy that let us see ourselves as others view us and laugh! Big thanks to **Sue Medsker** for stepping in at the last minute 😊

The speakers, offering recipient representative and workshops --- I could go on & on.
A most special opportunity to 'serve with gladness' at the appointed time & place.

I look forward to Churchwide Gathering August 2027 and next Synod Gathering June 2028. 'God-willing & if the creek don't rise' as my Grandpa used to say. There's room for everyone to help with the next Gathering. Please talk with Louise Van Poll or Maggie Horak to join the team!

This is a picture from the Gathering that God showed me to keep meet centered to His service. A peaceful reminder that we are not called to perfection, but called to service in the 'Kindom'!



PHOTOS FROM THE GATHERING...



Pre-Gathering Mini-Mission Trip



The Gathering



TOGETHER IN SERVICE – HOW YOU LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

By Pat McKisson, Committee Chair

Your Light could not have Shone More Brightly at the P.W. SLAP Gathering
As I reflected on the events from the gathering in June, my heart overflowed with joy and love for everything you did to make the TIS workshops such a success. Your commitment to being the hands and feet of Jesus was definitely demonstrated

through these hands-on projects. The missions we worked on were threefold. One was to tie fleece blankets, the second to sew on pom poms to baby hats, and the third to collect and pack kids kits with school supplies.

The results were overwhelming! Tied fleece blankets totaled 27. Six (6) of the blankets were given to Jenkins Living Facility, a skilled nursing facility in Watertown SD, and 21 were given to a street outreach ministry, Access Ministry. The blankets were delivered in person and both facilities were genuinely excited to receive the gifts.

Baby hats that were lovingly made totaled 65.

Kid's Kits completed totaled 79, plus there were extra supplies that will go to make up complete kits through PC(USA) Gifts of the Heart.

All I can say is Presbyterian Women are AWESOME! I send a huge 'Thank you' to each and every one who helped.

Blessings and Peace to All -and- Keep Your Light Shining!





End Human Trafficking
 COVENANT COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 1806 WESTON AVE., SCHOFIELD, WI 54476

Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Program & Community Outreach
Saturday, October 25

Human Trafficking is a horrendous crime and is in every county of the state, our communities and online. Learn more about Human Trafficking and what we can do make our community a safer place. Together we can make a difference.

INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCH MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND!
***TO REGISTER, FILL OUT THE BACK OF THIS FORM, OR CALL/TEXT RUTH WRYSINSKI: 715-409-0582**

OCTOBER 25 VOLUNTEERS NEEDED IN THESE AREAS

8:45 - 9:30	Greeters and Registration: Greeters for both doors and registration table.
8:45 - 9:20	Coffee and Muffins: (Colleen Geurink)
9:30 - 11:00	Program: Terra- Damascus Road, Women's Community and introducing any other local advocates.
11:00 - 11:30	Outreach Volunteers Only: Receive your route and folders with Anti-Trafficking materials. Done in teams and visiting 6-8 local hotels, motels, or gas stations.
11:00 - 12:00	Lunch: All attendees are invited to lunch, including subs, chips, sides, and dessert!
12:00 - 2:00	Outreach Volunteers: Do the outreach in teams and then return the contact sheet to church, or call.

Break Every Chain Anti-Human Trafficking Program and Outreach.

Covenant Community Presbyterian Church Schofield WI is in the Winnebago Presbytery. We will be hosting our 4th Anti-Human Trafficking Awareness Program and Community Outreach on Oct. 25, 2025. Churches in the Winnebago Presbytery, area churches, and community members are invited to attend. The program will include a virtual and in-person option. Followed by outreach to motels, hotels, and gas stations. We have speakers from Oshkosh, Damascus Road Project, and Women’s Community, Wausau, speaking about the horrendous crime of Human Trafficking. This crime takes place in every county of our state, in our communities and online.

Our Outreach will take place after lunch when volunteers go out to every gas station, hotel, and motel in our county and hand out Human Trafficking awareness materials. This packet includes RED FLAG cards that help people identify a potential victim and how to report a concern. We notify our local law enforcement, and they support our efforts and said that they would rather check out the concerns people have than miss a potential crime.

Learn more about Human Trafficking and what we can do make our community a safer place. There are professionals in your community and in your county that work on Anti-Trafficking and abuse. We encourage you to call them and set up a program for your congregation or for the community.

I would be happy to answer any questions that you may have about our program or share what we have done in the past programming about Anti-Trafficking.

Together we can make a difference.

Ruth Wrynski, Peace and Justice Committee, Winnebago Presbytery. text or call and leave a message (715-409-0582)

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN 70



The seventieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 9 to 20 March 2026.

- **Priority theme:** Ensuring and strengthening access to justice for all women and girls, including by promoting inclusive and equitable legal systems, eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices, and addressing structural barriers
- **Review theme:** Women’s full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (agreed conclusions of the sixty-fifth session)
- **Learn more here:** https://www.unwomen.org/en/how-we-work/commission-on-the-status-of-women/csw70-2026?mc_cid=0f1489fc5e&mc_eid=ba66d87ef7

TOGETHER IN SERVICE BY PAT MCKISSON, COMMITTEE CHAIR

Joining our Presbyterian Women in Serving Our Neighbors — Together.
No matter who you are or how you serve, there are options for you.
What is God calling you or your PW group to do?

Ideas for Doers:

- Provide a cleaning day for kitchens or bathrooms at a women’s crisis center.
- Plan a gardening day to spruce up the entry area and grounds of a local ministry.
- Send cards or bring treats for those celebrating a birthday in a shelter.
- Form a group that reads and tutors at a local school.
- Lead a monthly Bible study or sing-along at a senior residence.



Ideas for Makers:



- Tie fleece blankets for new chemo patients.
- Sew baby hats for newborns.
- Sew walker bags or lap blankets for assisted living residents.
- Knit prayer shawls for people who are seriously ill.
- Crochet mats from plastic bags for people sleeping outdoors.
- Create fidget aprons, lap mats or twiddle muffs for people with dementia.
- Sew finger puppets and small pillows for children in hospitals and shelters.
- Make dolls or stuffed animals given through foster homes, police, or fire departments.

Ideas for Gatherers:

- Paper or cleaning products for shelter residents starting their own homes.
- Menstrual hygiene products for people who need period supplies.
- Health kits for ministries to homeless individuals and families.
- Books, games, stuffed animals for children in crisis centers.
- Christmas stockings for shelters, prisons, and children’s hospitals.
- Basket of hand-made and purchased baby items for new parents.
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Gift of the Heart Kits.



The list can go on and on. All you have to do is choose one to accomplish an act of kindness to the least of God’s children. Continue to Let Your Light Shine in all you do!



THE FALL GATHERING of Homestead Presbyterian Women
on September 27th, at Westminster Presbyterian Church,
2110 Sheridan Blvd
Lincoln, Nebraska 68502
Phone #402.475.6702

Check-in and Coffee from 9:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Meeting from 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 a.m.

Hybrid meeting, in person and via Zoom.

If you receive the Homestead newsletter, Circuit, you will receive the Zoom link.

If you need the Zoom link email [-tbartlett98@gmail.com](mailto:tbartlett98@gmail.com) by September 25th.

All women of your churches are cordially invited to the



JOHN KNOX PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN FALL WORKSHOP
Saturday, September 20, 2025
at First Presbyterian Church
121 W. Florence Street, Cambria, WI

For the Love of Orphans

*“Religion that God accepts as pure and faultless is this:
to look after orphans and widows in their distress.” ~ James 1:27*



Our speaker will be Megan Elmore, founder and director of “For the Love of Orphans,” supporting the Mansa Fountain of Blessings Orphan Care Center in Mansa, Zambia, Africa. www.fortheloveoforphans.org

Cash donations will be gratefully accepted. Other needs include decorative pencils, lightweight socks, boxer shorts for boys and underwear for girls (kids sizes M-XL and adult size S).

At this meeting we will also dedicate the Thank Offering, and we will hear suggestions for future JKPW gatherings different start time, having an overnight option, moving to one per year instead of two, etc. Please come prepared to share your thoughts and opinions.

The Cambria church has a wheelchair accessible entrance, a wheelchair accessible parking lot, and a wheelchair accessible restroom. Lunch cost is \$8. To assist the with their planning, **please RSVP by Friday, September 12** by calling or texting 563-419-7371 or email ripleyjb56@gmail.com. (Indicate if you have any dietary restrictions.) Thanks, and we look forward to seeing you!

PW Presbytery Moderators/Representatives to the PW Synod Coordinating Team:

*The next PWS-CT meeting will be held **October 17-19, 2025 in Grinnell, IA.***

Please mark your calendars to attend now!

Meeting

I'm in the process of finding hotel accommodations for the meeting & communicating with the host church PW.

Current hotel practices require a minimum of 10 rooms in a reservation block to obtain any type of reduced rate. Additionally, if we make a reservation and the attendee is unable to attend: hotels are charging a minimum of 1 night stay OR the entire reservation cost for the unoccupied room.

Note: if attendance is less than 10 rooms for the group, the hotel will be identified and each attendee will be responsible for making and/or canceling their own room reservation.

The Zoom/hybrid meeting style will continue.

When the CT meeting notice is posted, [I would greatly appreciate your prompt response.](#)

Thank you,

Maggie Horak, PWS Vice Moderator

Mini-Golf for a Cause!

PUTT FOR THE PLANET

SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER

Supports:
Red Cloud Renewable's clean energy work on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation

Location:
Old Town Putt
244 N College Ave, Suite 112,
Fort Collins CO 80524

Additional Opportunities To Support Red Cloud Renewable

Limited Edition T-Shirts:
Buy 3, Get 1 Free

Silent Auction:
2 Tickets to the Sold-Out Bonnie Raitt Concert @ Red Rocks

NFL Squares:
Buy squares for the Denver Broncos & LA Chargers Game

Bonus Game:
Poker Putt!

Sponsor Giveaways, Raffles & More

Red Cloud Renewable **NOON - 6:00 PM** OLD TOWN PUTT

HANDS-ON TIS MISSION PROJECT FOR P.W. SLAP CT MEETING**WHEN: FRIDAY OCTOBER 17, 2025****TIME: 2:30-5:00 P.M.****WHERE: FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GRINNELL, IOWA**

It's time to start collecting for our next TIS hands-on project.. The hands-on part will be making sure each bag contains only those sizes and items needed, completing a card for each kit and putting them into large Ziplock bags. The TIS team is asking you to get the word out regarding the Welcome the Child Layette kits project.

“Welcome the Child” is a special ceremony that is held for newborns, teaching the Lakota cultural traditions of protecting the baby’s fontanel (soft spot) from harm or sickness, and the sacred connection to walking in balance. This ceremony offers a way to celebrate the birth and offer support with cultural teachings and parenting skills (nutrition, nurturing baby care, build/maintain healthy relationships). A baby layette is given to each new mother as a part of the ceremony.

Please ask each P.W. group in your presbytery if they could put together at least one kit with all the items listed. Of course, more than one kit would be appreciated! We want to have at least 40 kits or more for the ceremony.

Guidelines for assembling the kits:

--Each kit must be in size 6 months only, no 3-6 month or 6–9-month sizes included.

--EXCEPTION: If you find 6–9-month sizes for clothing (sleepers, onesies, outfit, socks, hat), the kit can be made up of only this size of clothing.

--DO NOT BRING ANY BABY ITEMS NOT ON THE LIST.

--Gift cards or cash/check can be accepted if you are unable to shop for the items.

Please contact Pat McKisson with any questions.

--Each kit must be put in a separate bag and marked:

1) Size 6 months or Size 6-9 months, and

2) Whether for a girl or boy.

--Please be sure to take off all tags and anything plastic that could irritate baby’s skin.

Each layette kit includes:

2 - Receiving Blanket

1 - Baby Blanket (any kind)

2 - Sleepers

2 - Onesies

1 - Outfit

1 - Baby Hats (knitted, crocheted, or purchased)

2 - Pairs of Socks

2 - Bibs

1 - Wash Cloth

1 – Hooded towel

Thank you for your support of this project throughout your presbytery. Any questions, please contact any of the TIS committee members. Continue to Let Your Light Shine, Pat McKisson, Chair of TIS Committee

**IS GOD CALLING YOU INTO LEADERSHIP?
OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEADERS ON THE SYNOD COORDINATING TEAM**

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies PW Search Team is looking for women who support PW’s purpose and want to engage as Jesus’ hands and feet to the world. If you have skills of organization, technology, love reaching out through mission and enjoy the company of others and working together, there is a place for you on the Synod Coordinating Team. Any woman who is active in her local congregation whether or not there is an active PW in the church can participate in the mission of Presbyterian Women. PW’s connectional structure allows women to participate as deeply or broadly in the organization as desired.

Opportunities to serve Presbyterian Women on the Synod Coordinating Team include Vice Moderator, BOD Representative, and a representative for Area Two Search Committee(John Knox, Northern Waters, Winnebago, Twin Cities). See the PW Essentials Guide at PWR23120-PW-Essentials.pdf (presbyterianwomen.org)(See pages 14-17) for the job description for each position. The slate of officers will be presented at the spring 2026 board meeting. The new officers will serve a three-term, the positions will begin in the spring of 2026.

Presbyterian Women are busy, from local concerns to national engagement, Presbyterian Women, guided by the Holy Spirit, are at work, guided the PW purpose of strengthening the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnessing to the promise of God’s kingdom, join with other women from around the Synod in this work. The Search Committee asks each woman to pray about these opportunities and consider being a part of the Lakes and Prairies Co-ordinating Team.

The Search Committee is Teresa Bartlett, Chair (Area Three) Hope Dougherty,(Area Two), and Linda Anothony (Area One).

The Search Committee welcomes self-referrals of interested women or if you know of women in your church or Presbytery who would be a great fit for one of these positions, please share their name and or contact information, email or phone number, with one or more members of the Search Committee their emails are below.

Synod of Lakes and Prairies PW Search Committee

Hope Dougherty: Hdougherty2018@gmail.com Teresa Bartlett: teresabartlett98@gmail.com

Linda Anthony: lmhanthoy72@gmail.com

+++++

4 years since Taliban took Kabul, millions of Afghans have been sent back

Story by Trisha Mukherjee ABC News 8/16/2025

Deportations are happening fast and furious in the U.S. and around the world. Thousands of Afghan immigrants are being deported from Iran and Pakistan back to dangerous conditions in their home country. “Once inside Afghanistan, returnees’ face difficult conditions. In addition to the Taliban restricting women’s rights by banning their movements outside of the home without a male guardian and by restricting their access to education past age 12, around a third of Afghans don’t have access to basic drinking water, according to Unicef. The World Food Program reported that 3.1 million Afghans are on the brink of starvation. In April 2025, the U.S. Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction announced that it was cutting nearly all assistance programs to Afghanistan. The U.K. reduced its aid to Afghanistan by 19%. Zahra, a journalist living in Afghanistan who asked ABC News to use only her first name due to fear of persecution by the Taliban, said she has witnessed the devastating consequences of health facilities’ closures. She said there was a pregnant woman who needed medical help but couldn’t go to her local clinic, which had shuttered due to aid cuts. The expecting mother could not immediately secure a male chaperone to travel to the nearest open clinic, as mandated by the Taliban. As a result, according to Zahra, both the woman and her baby lost their lives.

Zahra said that Afghans have done their best to support returnees, despite having very few resources themselves. ‘Even if I have one extra pillow, I should give it to others,’ she told ABC News. ‘It’s enough if we eat lunch and skip dinner to give this meal to another.’”

Researchers Sound Alarm On Immigration Policies' Effect On Kids' Mental Health

Story by Jamie Kenney Scary Mommy 8/12/25

As hundreds of kids work hard adjusting to life after COVID, “Researchers from the School of Medicine at University of California Riverside recently looked into the effect of U.S. immigration policy and practice on the mental health of children. Their work, published in *Psychiatric News* in July, found children who have been separated from their parents, or who simply live with the possibility of such separation, can experience ‘profound emotional harm. The mental health of immigrant children is inseparable from the conditions in which they live, grow, and imagine their futures,’ the study observes in its conclusion. This has resulted not only in worsened mental health outcomes, but withdrawal from public life (including school), sleep and appetite disturbances, emotional dysregulation, and developmental regression. Immigration enforcement becomes a formative, often traumatic, force in children’s lives.”

2025 Thank Offering Recipients

Shalom Village tiny home duplexes in Centralia, WA-- \$50,000

Sleep in Heavenly Peace provides beds for kids in Omaha, NE-- \$ 5,000

Play area fencing in Campton, KY-- \$33,935

Safe, healthy foods for all at Lynchburg, VA-- \$22,800

Leadership development for racial equity in Lexington, VA-- \$25,000

Church and community kitchen in Spencertown, NY-- \$50,000

Enhance our technology infrastructure in Jamaica, NY-- \$ 6,000

Leadership and vocational skills lab in Sheridan, WY-- \$14,362

Empowering Futures: Community garden kitchen training programs for foster care youth in McKinney, TX-- \$45,800

Shower every Friday at First Presbyterian Church in Hammond, LA-- \$ 5,000

TOTAL 2025 THANK OFFERING \$257,897

2025 Calendar Reminders

9/27 Sit ‘N Sip on mis/disinformation by Zoom at 11 a.m.

9/29 Horizons Bible Study—Lesson 2 online at 6:30 p.m.

10/13 Horizons Bible Study—Lesson 3 online at 6:30 p.m.

10/17-19 PWSCT meeting at Grinnell, Iowa

(PWP Moderators to bring layette sets. Details in newsletter)

11/15 Annual Fund pledge from PWC Moderators to PWP Moderator (Pledge form in newsletter)

11/20 Deadline for The Sower

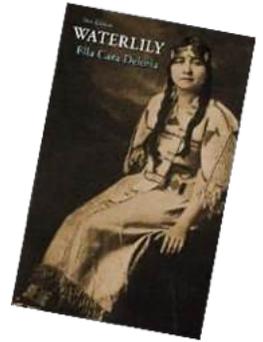
11/24 Horizons Bible Study—Lesson 4 online at 6:30 p.m.

12/1 Annual Fund pledge from PWP Moderator to PWS Moderator

Register today to join a book study . . .

WaterLily

by Ella Cara 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 2025: September 22 and 29, October 13
Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)
Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

Synopsis: When Blue Bird and her grandmother leave their family's camp to gather beans for the long, threatening winter, they inadvertently avoid the horrible fate that befalls the rest of the family. Luckily, the two women are adopted by a nearby Dakota community and are eventually integrated into their kinship circles. Ella Cara Deloria's tale follows Blue Bird and her daughter, Waterlily, through the intricate kinship practices that created unity among her people.

Waterlily, published after Deloria's death and generally viewed as the masterpiece of her career, offers a captivating glimpse into the daily life of the nineteenth-century Sioux.

"Though set and written in the past, this is a significant novel for our times. Waterlily is not only about traditional cultures and women's culture, but is round with meaning, science, knowledge, and love, which we can learn from today. It is a dynamic book, a page-turner from the true historical past." LINDA HOGAN, author of *People of the Whale*.

Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net

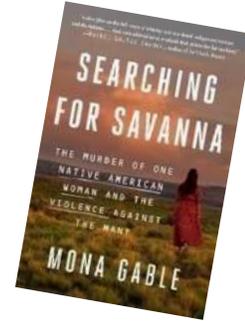
Provide your name, email address, cell phone, and presbytery.

Also, please indicate your afternoon or evening preference.

Register today to join a book study . . .

***Searching for Savanna:
The Murder of One Native American Woman
and the Violence Against the Many***

by Mona Gable



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 2025: October 27, November 3 and 17
Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)
Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

Synopsis: In the summer of 2017, twenty-two-year-old Savanna LaFontaine-Greywind vanished. A week after she disappeared, police arrested the white couple who lived upstairs from Savanna and emerged from their apartment carrying an infant girl. The baby was Savanna's, but Savanna's body would not be found for days.

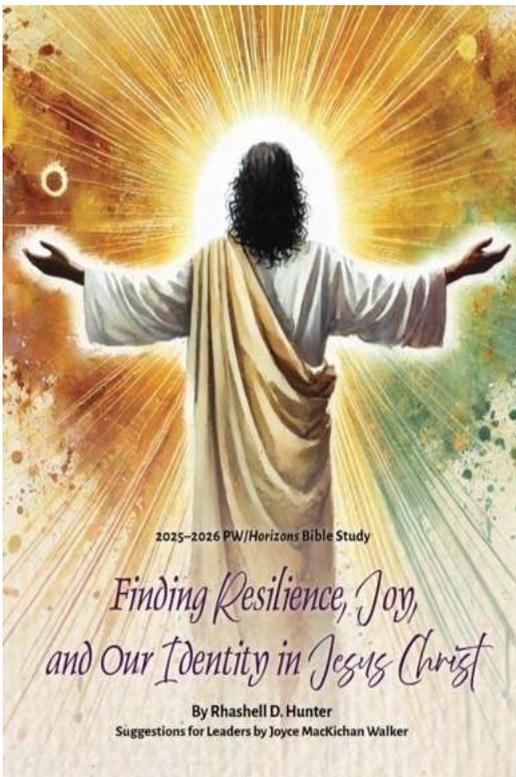
The horrifying crime sent shock waves far beyond Fargo, North Dakota, where it occurred, and helped expose the sexual and physical violence Native American women and girls have endured since the country's colonization.

With pathos and compassion, *Searching for Savanna* confronts this history of dehumanization toward Indigenous women and the government's complicity in the crisis. Featuring in-depth interviews, personal accounts, and trial analysis, *Searching for Savanna* investigates these injustices and the decades-long struggle by Native American advocates for meaningful change.

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.



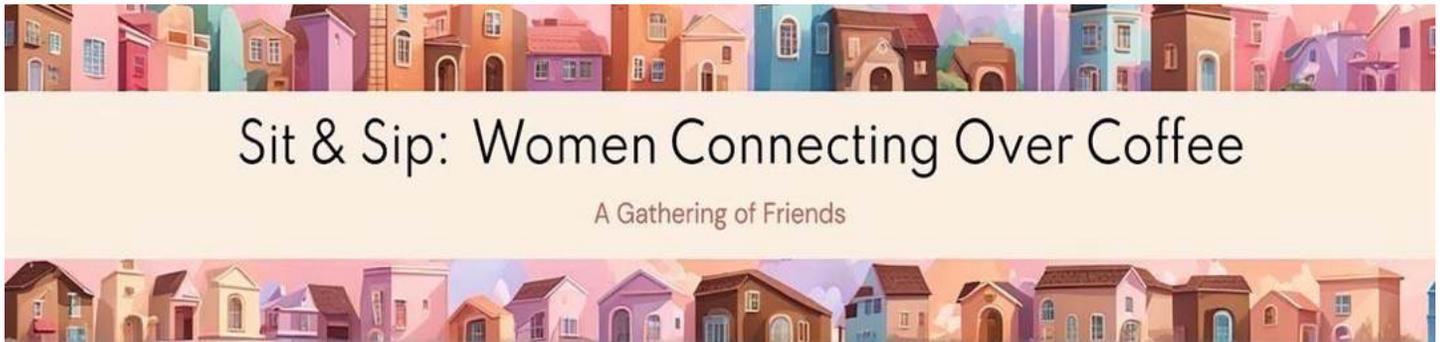
2025-2026 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN HORIZONS BIBLE STUDY

FINDING RESILIENCE, JOY AND OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS CHRIST

We will meet on the following dates: September 29; October 13; November 24; January 26; February 23; March 30; April 27; May 18 at 6:30 pm CT

You must register to receive the Zoom link by sending an email to kathleenkeeper20@gmail.com

You can purchase the Bible study (cost is \$14.00) through Presbyterian Women - <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/current-bible-study/>



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. So, grab your favorite beverage, get comfortable, and join the conversation!

Our next meeting is on September 27th. We are continuing our discussion of the PCUSA document "Honest Patriotism." It will surely provide even more valuable insights. Here is the link to the document for easy access:

[<https://pcusa.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/Honest-Patriotism.pdf>]

To register, please contact Kathleen Keefer at [kathleenkeeper20@gmail.com] Zoom link.

SPRING/FALL GATHERINGS: If your PW Presbytery is making plans for a Fall Gathering and is looking for a speaker, contact a USAME participant to lead a presentation on the USA Mission Experience to the Arizona-Mexico border:

Julie Miller: jam1150@hotmail.com

Louella Voigt: louvoigt@hotmail.com

Kathleen Keefer: kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com

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



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



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 hand 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>



Click here to download the **Justice & Peace Calendar** with live links:

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/2025-justice-and-peace-calendar/>

SEPTEMBER

- National Hispanic Heritage Month [Sep 15–Oct 15]; hispanicheritagemonth.gov
- 01 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation; creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html
- 01 Labor Day; dol.gov/general/laborday/history
- 08 International Literacy Day; en.unesco.org/commemorations/literacyday
- 21 International Day of Peace; pcusa.org/worship-with-us/yearbook/september-21-2024
- 26 Native American Day; pcusa.org/resource/native-american-day

OCTOBER

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month; ncadv.org/take-action; nomore.org; presbyterianwomen.org/justice or pcusa.org/resource/domestic-violence-worship-resources
- Fair Trade Month; fairtradefederation.org/celebrate-fair-trade-month
- National Disability Employment Awareness Month; dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam
- 05 World Communion Sunday; pcusa.org/resource/resources-world-communion-sunday
- 11 International Day of the Girl Child; unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child
- 11 National Coming Out Day; hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day
- 12 Children’s Sabbath: Educate a Child; childrensdefense.org;
- 13 Indigenous Peoples’ Day americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/columbus-day-myths
- 16 World Food Day; fao.org/world-food-day/home/en
- 24 United Nations Day; un.org/en/observances/un-day

NOVEMBER

- Native American Heritage Month; archives.gov/news/topics/native-american-heritage-month or nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov
- 03–09 Children’s Book Week 2; everychildareader.net/cbw
- 08–16 National Hunger & Homeless Awareness Week; pcusa.org/how-we-serve/justice-peace/hunger
- 13 World Kindness Day; randomactsofkindness.org/world-kindness-day
- 20 Universal Children’s Day; un.org/en/observances/world-childrens-day
- 20 Transgender Day of Remembrance; glaad.org/tdor
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women; un.org/en/observances/endingviolence-against-women-day
- 25–D10 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence; unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-againstwomen/take-action/16-days-of-activism
- 27 Thanksgiving; pcusa.org/resource/thanksgiving-prayers

DECEMBER

- 01 World AIDS Day; pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/aids-awareness-day-observed-conjunction-with-national-hivtesting-day-0
- 05 International Volunteer Day; un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day
- 10 International Human Rights Day; un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day
- 18 International Migrants Day; un.org/en/observances/migrants-day
- 25 Christmas; pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theologyworship/worship/christian-year/christmasnativity-lord

Presbyterian Women in the **Congregation** Mission Pledge Form
Mission Pledge, PW's Annual Fund
January 1, 2026—December 31, 2026

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: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

Presbyterian Women’s ANNUAL MISSION FUND (Mission Pledge)

PW in the Presbytery Pledge Form for PWP Moderator

January 1, 2026—December 31, 2026

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 3 to:
 - (a) Treasurer of PW in the Presbytery;
 - (b) Moderator of PW in the Synod; and
 - (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.

Current PW-SLAP Coordinating Team Officers – changes are highlighted 2025

Moderator

Louise Van Poll (2028)
601 Kansas Ave SE
Huron, SD 57350
605-354-2397 lcvanpoll@gmail.com

Vice-Moderator

Maggie Horak (2026)
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402-429-0523 mmhlin@outlook.com

Treasurer

Terri Sherman (2027)
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terrisherman99@gmail.com

Secretary

Lana Schultz (2028)
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701-238-4538 Cell lanaj0@casselton.net

Historian (Open)

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Search Committee

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Hope Dougherty (2026)

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hdougherty2018@gmail.com

Linda Anthony (2028)

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Lmhanthony72@gmail.com

Churchwide Bd. Dir. Rep.

Sue Ingels (2026)
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Appointive positions:**Together In Service**

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White Bear Lake, MN 55110
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patriciamckisson@gmail.com

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Omaha, NE 68102
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kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com

Inclusive Caring Coordinator

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Sower Editor

Kathleen Keefer (see above)

Communications Coordinator

Lana Schultz (temp. Zoom Coord)
P O Box 891
Casselton, ND 58012
701-238-4538 Cell lanaj0@casselton.net

Zoom Coordinator

Maggie Horak (after 4/2026)
mmhlin@outlook.com

Facebook Coordinator

Christy Abraham Christylou71@gmail.com

Native American Concerns

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Ernestine Ireland
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LaVonne Looking Elk
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Rapid City, SD 57702
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Emma Grey Bull
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Agency Village, SD 57262
605-268-3008 (cell)
elgreybull92@gmail.com

2028 Synod Gathering Comm. Louise Van Poll lcvanpoll@gmail.com

Terri Sherman
terrisherman99@gmail.com

Effective 6/15/2025

PWSCT Moderators/Reps.**2025-26 CHANGES ARE HIGHLIGHTED**

Central Nebraska Moderator/Rep
VACANT

Dakota – Mod/Rep

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PO Box 141
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gmail.com

Des Moines - Mod/Rep

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East Iowa – Rep.

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revkitch@hotmail.com

Homestead - Mod/Rep

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795-2911 tbartlett98@gmail.com

John Knox – Mod/Rep

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563-419-7371 Cell
ripleyJB56@gmail.com

Milwaukee Co-Mod/Reps

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Minnesota Valleys – Rep.

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MO River Valley – Mod/Rep Kathleen

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North Central Iowa

Moderator/Rep
VACANT

Northern Plains–Mod/Rep

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Term: 2027

Northern Waters-Mod/Rep

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hdougherty2018@gmail.com

Prospect Hill – Mod/Rep

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Audrey Fenton–Rep.

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Winnebago – Co-Reps.

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Ruth Wrynski

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715-842-8410
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As of 6/15/2025