



# The Sower

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



February, 2026

Kathleen Keefer, Editor

Hello from windy [and cold] South Dakota.

I went to Seattle to visit my granddaughter and while I was there it was warmer here, 61 degrees! But I came home to zero- degree weather. Oh well.

Currently, my heart is most concerned about what is happening in Minneapolis. Our GA Stated Clerk the Rev. Jihyun Oh issued a video of encouragement and support to all our people in the Twin Cities. [The link is below.] For the PC USA this is not a political issue but a theological one.

Jesus calls us to treat the alien and sojourner as ourselves. Even in the Old Testament, God called his chosen people to treat the alien and others among them the same. They were to enjoy the Sabbath, participate in the Passover and when the priest gave the offerings for the atonement of sins, it included the non-Israelites.

God and Jesus never turned their backs on the visitor in their midst, the alien, the Gentile, the outsider. But all were treated as equals. That is what we are called to do as Christians. We are all created in the image of God and deserve the dignity and respect that we offer to God.

The PC(USA) has a long history of public statements supporting immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees.

In 1947, the Presbyterian Church (US) published a statement saying, "No policy of government is either right or wise that denies help to the homeless and hungry ... world-wide relief and re-habilitation [resettlement] are an essential part of the gospel." These values have been reiterated and further enshrined in explicit policy positions dozens of times by various general assemblies in the nearly 80 years since.

The Stated Clerk is the senior ecclesiastical officer of the denomination and is tasked with ensuring that the policies established by the church's General Assembly are upheld and carried out by the various ministries of the denomination, both internally and in public life. The Stated Clerk does not speak for the denomination as a whole but can make public statements in the name of their own office and on behalf of the General Assembly, in accordance with its policies.

Oh has participated in several public actions regarding immigration protections since beginning her tenure as Stated Clerk in 2024. Earlier this month, she signed on to an ecumenical letter to the U.S. Congress calling for humane immigration policies in relation to the DHS budget.

Oh said, "Each person in discipleship to Jesus Christ is called to discern how to live out their faith in action within the world. The General Assembly of the PC(USA) has also discerned over time how best to offer a communal witness to God's love and justice.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has continuously affirmed the rights and dignity of refugees and asylum seekers with long-standing policies of the General Assembly."

And all God's people said, Amen.

In Christ,

*Louise*

Louise Van Poll

605-354-2397

lcvanpoll@gmail.com

Click here to watch the Stated Clerk's message:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TCG8c8Xa\\_snKNWwTDR9waDpa7ZtKB5Mq/view?usp=drive\\_web](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1TCG8c8Xa_snKNWwTDR9waDpa7ZtKB5Mq/view?usp=drive_web)

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**The Fast Life**

- Fast from judging others;
- Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
- Fast from fear of illness;
- Feast on the healing power of God.
- Fast from words that pollute;
- Feast on speech that purifies.
- Fast from discontent;
- Feast on gratitude.
- Fast from anger;
- Feast on patience.
- Fast from pessimism;
- Feast on hope.
- Fast from negatives;
- Feast on encouragement.
- Fast from bitterness;
- Feast on forgiveness.
- Fast from self-concern;
- Feast on compassion.
- Fast from suspicion;
- Feast on truth.
- Fast from gossip;
- Feast on purposeful silence.
- Fast from problems that overwhelm;
- Feast on prayer that sustains.
- Fast from anxiety;
- Feast on faith.

- Author Unknown

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We must distinguish between our beliefs and how we live – our operative faith. Beliefs are ideas in the head, cognitive expressions, maps of the world, our best conceptualizations of how things are, our credos. Faith is in the gut and the heart; it is trust in action, a disposition to behave as if something were true...

Sam Keen, Hymns To An Unknown God

Don't talk of love, show me.  
Eliza Doolittle, My Fair Lady

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The Bible says,  
The Creeds insist,  
I believe

A lot of us, it seems,  
Believe  
We hold in that somewhat vacuous  
Space in our heads  
Notions of a God

We might be right,  
We might be wrong  
But we believe

And we hold on to those beliefs tightly  
Desperately  
As the winds of change buffet us,  
As the world threatens to suck us into its maw  
And consume us

Faith, that is a different thing.  
Faith moves beyond our desires and fears  
Into the kingdom of trust

If we believe in God, but do not trust God  
We will be fearful hoarders  
We will walk through life defending  
Grimly hanging on to things past  
Traditions

And worse  
Entrenched biases  
Old patterns that do not work

Because belief without faith  
Leaves us fearful

We are afraid of failure or losing  
Worried that we did not do enough  
Cannot do enough  
Do not have enough

Life is trying to follow the rules  
And looking over our shoulder at  
Retributive people  
And a vengeful God

But if we have faith, if we trust  
That God has this  
That God has us

We are freed  
To catch the joy as it flies  
To take risks,  
To give, and forgive  
To welcome  
To love

We live faith  
Faith is what we do  
It is living life forward

Living as if  
The kingdom is near  
Already, almost, here

Belief without trust is a burden.  
Belief, powered by faith and trust  
Is Gospel

This is the question we must ask  
As we wake and face another day

Do I have faith?  
Do I trust God enough  
To live as though Love wins,  
Each and every day?  
Author: Dancing Faith 2  
Submitted by Hope Dougherty, ICC

**First Nations Version of Psalms 23**

Grandfather is my shepherd. My lodge will always have plenty.

He gives me rest in tender sweetgrass and guides me near quiet and peaceful waters.

Through these good medicines, he brings strength to my body and healing to my soul. He shows me the good way to walk with firm steps on the road of life, to bring honor to his name.

Even if my path takes me through the canyon of darkness and gloom, I will fear no evil, for you are close by my side, keeping my eyes straight, my path safe. Your walking stick and chief's staff bring comfort and peace to me.

You prepare a feast for me as my enemies watch. You honor me with a headdress of many feathers. My cup is filled to overflowing with life-giving water.

Your goodness and love, which remain strong and true, will chase after me on the path of life all of my days. Grandfather's longhouse will always be my home.

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Lying in bed is widely considered a wonderful, luxurious, and necessary part of life that provides significant physical and mental benefits. It is more than just sleeping. It is a sanctuary for recharging, resting and escaping the stresses of daily life. But not all beds are created equal.

**The Blessing of the Beds** (Unknown author)

Bless the beds that hold the physically weary laborer.  
 Bless those who wait for beds at the borders.  
 Bless the beds that hold those waiting for eternal rest.  
 Bless those who minister to those who are sick in bed.  
 Bless those who face an empty side of the bed.  
 Bless the beds of children who have surrendered willfulness to innocence.  
 Bless those on beds of dark depression waiting for hope.  
 Bless the beds where love creates life.  
 Bless the beds that are mats on dirt floors.  
 Bless the beds where dreams are wrestled.  
 Bless the beds of birds and beasts, nests and caves and forests.  
 Bless the garden beds that nurture seeds and plants to fruitfulness.  
 At the end of day and at the dawn of new day, may all beds be blessed!  
 In the days and weeks to come, make your own list of beds to bless.

Respectfully submitted by Judy Rops

**TOGETHER IN SERVICE**  
**By Pat McKisson, Committee Chair**

‘Answering the call to be the hands and feet of Christ in

The Community,  
Our Church,  
Our Nation, and  
The World.’

Spring is just around the corner when all things awaken from their long winters rest. We, too, as P.W. are awakened to the possibilities of what we can do in this upcoming year. The needs of our neighbors are great because of economic turmoil, and the impact of legislation which has made deep cuts and major structural changes to Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act marketplaces, and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. These changes are impacting health coverage, food insecurity, and financial hardship for a substantial number of our neighbors.

As Presbyterian Women we are asked to respond to God’s love for us by offering our many gifts to ensure wholeness for all. We bring Christ’s love to the world.

What can we do?

First, keep doing what you always do. You can also:

- Support your local food shelves and/ or volunteer to work there.
- Organize a clothing drive for those in need.
- Offer to drive an immigrant to a court appointment.
- Help a single parent with childcare so they can go to work.
- Donate money to an organization to help people with rent, food and basic necessities, utilities to keep the lights and heat on, and transportation to get to work, school, or court hearings.

Together in Service we can and will make a difference for those in need. May it be so.

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**OPERATION SURGE MINNESOTA**  
**THE SIEGE OF THE TWIN CITIES AREA**

By Pat McKisson, Chair Together in Service Committee

I was asked to write something about what I experienced in the past 3 months since the Department of Homeland Security started Operation Surge in the Twin Cities in Minnesota. I can best explain by telling you how I felt and still feel: My emotions have been all over the place. I am sad and bewildered one day, and the next hopeful for a resolution to this surge. On one hand, I know that the agents are doing their job and support them, on the other hand, I loathe the fact that the agents who are here do not adhere to the guidelines established to accomplish a mission.

- Intense anger at having my cities overrun with agents in masks carrying assault rifles, batons, and chemicals they released upon peaceful protestors.
- Extreme outrage because of the brutality of the men and women sent here.
- Disbelief and again extreme outrage at the killing of two innocent citizens who did nothing wrong, of armed agents breaking down doors to enter homes without a legal search warrant, and agents stopping and breaking car windows and pulling people out and throwing them to the ground and three, four or five agents then pinning the person down while ‘subduing’ and handcuffing them.
- Fear for the safety and non-violent arrests of everyone they were looking for, and for those who chose to peacefully protest. And for those who are here on legitimate visas that work in the fields and other jobs that none of our unemployed citizens don’t want to do.

- Overwhelmed with an unbearable heaviness and despair in my heart because there was so little I could do.
- Discouraged because people I know or love are telling me that the people being detained have it coming to them, they are the 'worst of the worst'. But time will prove they are not.
- Sad because there are so many people who genuinely believe that what we are going through is right. They show no compassion, sympathy, or love for their fellow man.

They are not doing as Jesus said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself". He has taught us to love ourselves even with all the sins we have committed, so why can't we extend that to our neighbors?

- And yes, I also felt hate for those who have brought so much pain and suffering to our communities. I know this is not what I should hold in my heart and will admit that my faith has made me see that I should pray for all these people, not hate them.
- On a positive note, I felt pride as I saw all of our communities come together to help their neighbors in any way they could. From stocking food shelves, to volunteering to take food to families too afraid to leave their homes, to people willing to drive children to school so they feel safe, to a group called SafeHaven who waits outside the Whipple Building at night to watch for, welcome those released, and give them jackets, gloves, hats, and a ride home.

There is still good in our world!

This is how one man in our community described what has happened.

- It's fear for those without papers.
- It's fear for those who are U.S. citizens who are stopped and harassed and detained at the Whipple Building only to be released hours later.
- It's detainees being released late into the night without their belongings, without jackets, without a way to get home.
- It's open businesses with locked doors.
- It's whistles, horns, and shouting.
- It's sirens passing.
- It's helicopters and drones hovering over your house all night.
- It's groceries stacked in a gym for families who are no longer safe at home.
- It's neighbors disappearing without a trace.  
It's worry for the children and the trauma seeing their parent taken never to be seen again.
- It's armed men breaking down doors and detaining the wrong person.
- It's armed men going into schools, and hospitals, into hallways outside courtrooms waiting for those who are going through the process of becoming a citizen.
- It's the constant intimidation, bullying, taunting, and name calling by agents.
- It's people not leaving their homes because they are afraid. No one is safe.
- It's inspiration from the elders and Indigenous brothers and sisters.
- It's air thick with burning sage.
- It's flowers laid gently at memorials for Renee Good and Alex Pretti.
- It's candle wax melting down your glove at vigils.
- It's voices singing "Amazing Grace".
- It's air thick with tear gas and other chemical agents.
- It's you and a hundred other people crying together in public.
- It's the clergy from every denomination protesting peacefully.

In ending, I can say that yet with all these emotions, we the people will continue to fight the good fight, continue to protest peacefully, and hope that justice, compassion, and love prevail by being as courageous as we can.

Remember this, real strength is not blind obedience. Real strength is the courage to speak when something is wrong even when the one you challenge holds power.

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### 2025-26 PWS Native American Partnership Opportunities

The following PW Synod sponsored Native American partnership opportunities are verified by the PWS Native American Concerns Committee (NACC). If you have questions, please contact NACC chair, Marilyn Stone at [mmstone52@att.net](mailto:mmstone52@att.net) or 262-763-0918 (home – leave a message). When mailing items to any of the places listed below, please include a self-addressed and stamped postcard that can be returned to you as acknowledgement that items or donations were received.

#### College Scholarships for Native Students

##### Sisseton Wahpeton College, Sisseton, SD AND Oglala Lakota College, Kyle, SD

Financial contributions are being received by PW Synod of Lakes and Prairies to create a sustaining Native student scholarship fund. These funds will make it possible to grant \$500 scholarships each semester to a Native student attending Sisseton Wahpeton College and another student attending Oglala Lakota College. Criteria for selection is in place. Ongoing funds are needed to sustain granting scholarships each semester for each college. First scholarship was been awarded Fall 2023.

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



##### Iglutecha (ee-gloo-teh-chah) – a Lakota word meaning "to renew yourself" PO Box 5005, Pine Ridge, SD 57770

Iglutecha, a 501(c)3 organization in Pine Ridge, SD, has as its mission to provide a pathway for homeless Lakota people out of addiction and poverty. Iglutecha offers the basics of meals, safety, sleep, showers, and community. It also provides case planning and management tailored to each person's needs, which includes: addressing addiction, mental health, spiritual support, health care, housing, income and assistance obtaining vital documents. Meeting basic needs is a huge advantage as it enables individuals to plan for their next steps. Monetary donations are needed to sustain these critical services.

Monetary donations can be sent to: Iglutecha, % Abram Neumann, PO box 5005, Pine Ridge, SD 57770

Learn more at: <https://www.facebook.com/iglutecha> or <https://www.iglutecha.org/>

#### Sweetgrass Wačanga

##### Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault Prevention & Shelter Services (Lake Traverse Reservation)

Sweetgrass Wacanga offers a safe shelter for women and children affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. It provides emergency shelter, counseling, legal advocacy, and support services to help survivors rebuild their lives. Wacanga Community Closet provides clothing for women, children, and infants free of charge.

Items needed are: women's and children's socks, personal care and hygiene items, feminine care products, baby items and baby hats.

Mail monetary donations & items to: Sweetgrass Wacanga, 392 Rehab Street, Agency Village, Sisseton, SD 57262

Learn more at: <https://www.facebook.com/sweetgrass.wacanga/>



##### Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center PO Box 36, Walthill, NE (Omaha Reservation)

The Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Hospital has been restored to serve as a medical and behavioral health center, as well as serving as a hub for creativity, skill=building, and entrepreneurship, offering a space for community members to learn and showcase their talents. The Picotte Center further offers a technology center, community and medicinal gardens, as well as activities to engage the

youth in opportunities both culturally related and educational, empowering the Native youth through learning, creativity, and community.

Funding is needed to grow their cultural and educational programming, and to provide medicinal and vegetable gardens.

Mail contributions to: The Picotte Center, PO Box 36, Walthill, NE 68067

Learn more at: <https://www.facebook.com/picottecenter> OR <https://picottecenter.org/>



**Red Cloud Renewable**  
**P.O. Box 1609, Pine Ridge, SD 57770**

Red Cloud Renewable (RCR) empowers Native American communities by offering vital education in solar installation, sustainable building practices, and weatherization techniques. Through these initiatives, they equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement renewable energy solutions, construct environmentally friendly structures, and improve the resilience of homes against harsh weather conditions. This impactful work directly benefits Native American communities by fostering self-sufficiency, reducing energy costs, and promoting sustainability, thereby enhancing the overall quality of life for Native people.

On Pine Ridge Reservation, the need for safe, sustainable housing has *never* been more urgent. Families face a housing crisis where the number of people needing homes far outweighs the number of homes available. At the same time, the lack of career opportunities continues to hold many back from stability and self-sufficiency.

Through our Sustainable Building Program, Red Cloud Renewable is working to change that — one project, one person, and one home at a time. Thanks to the generous support of both the Maxwell Hanrahan Foundation and **Presbyterian Women**, construction is underway on a new hexagonal home made from cellular concrete — a durable, energy-efficient alternative to traditional materials. This innovative build will provide shelter for a tribal member in need while training an all-Native workforce to lead the future of sustainable construction.

Each trainee is earning their OSHA 30 certification, gaining hands-on experience, and building real skills that lead to long-term careers. When the project is complete, every participant will leave not only with their certification but also with their own tools of the trade — ready to build brighter futures for themselves, their families, and their communities.

Contributions can be mailed to: Red Cloud Renewable, PO Box 1609, Pine Ridge, SD 57770

To learn more, visit RCR website at: <https://www.redcloudrenewable.org/>; to see photos, visit RCR Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=red%20cloud%20renewable>

**Bdecan Presbyterian Church – Vacation Bible School AND Work Teams**  
**Chandra Mendieta, Ministries and Outreach Coordinator**

Mailing Address: PO Box 141 Tokio, ND 58379

Phone: (701) 230-1560 Email: [bdecanpresbyterianchurch@gmail.com](mailto:bdecanpresbyterianchurch@gmail.com)



Bdecan Presbyterian Church, the only Native Presbyterian Church in North Dakota, is located on the Spirit Lake Reservation. An important way to “keep Christ’s love at our center” for the children is to host 6-12 member mission teams who would lead **Vacation Bible School** for a week during the summer. The children *love* VBS and never tire of learning about and experiencing God’s love, as well as participating in positive activities when few other activities exist. In addition to VBS, a hands-on mission project could be done, as well as participation in a “cultural night”.

Work teams are once again needed to accomplish much needed repairs to the food pantry and other areas around the church and grounds. Express your interest by contacting Chandra (see contact info above)



**Gather the Children Home - Wakanyeja Gluwitayan Otipi (Emergency Foster Care)**  
**Pine Ridge Reservation, Porcupine, South Dakota**

*Gather the Children Home* is a culturally appropriate emergency foster care home for children ages birth thru age 12. It provides a caring, immediate safe environment for children removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect, while a suitable foster or relative’s home becomes available.

Items needed include: baby layettes, twin-sized tied-fleece blankets, twin-sized quilts, birthday kits (contains cake mix, frosting, candles, napkins, small paper plates and small age-appropriate toy). Boys sweatpants, shorts and underwear

sizes 6x-12 are needed. Also, ongoing financial support paying for monthly internet and phone expense or some other monthly expense.

Items can be sent to: Gather Our Children Home, House #32, Porcupine School Road, Porcupine, SD 57772

Monetary donations should be sent to: Barbara Dull Knife, PO Box 230, Oglala, SD 57764

Learn more at: <https://wakanyejaotipi.org/>

Updated 11/2025



Dear friends,

I'm honored to share some beautiful news from Pine Ridge.

Our Founder and Executive Director, Chief Henry Red Cloud, has been named the 2026 recipient of the Dr. Espanola Jackson Energy Justice Award from Vote Solar, a national honor that recognizes leaders of color devoted to environmental and energy justice. This recognition is deeply humbling for him.

For Henry, the work has always been about our Elders and our children here on the Pine Ridge Reservation. He carries the stories of families who have faced winters afraid the heat will be shut off or that the next utility bill will be more than they can manage. That is why every solar installer training at Red Cloud Renewable ends with a community install for a family in need. When solar goes onto a home, it brings warmth, safety, and a little more peace of mind to people who have carried too heavy a burden for too long.

This award also speaks to Henry's lifelong commitment to energy sovereignty. Reservations are called sovereign nations, yet many Native families still live at the mercy of outside utilities and rising energy costs. From the beginning, his vision has been to return real power to Indigenous communities, so Native nations can shape their own energy future. Through Red Cloud Renewable, he has welcomed Native learners from many tribal nations, trained them in solar and clean energy, and sent them home with skills that bring jobs, opportunity, and affordable power to their own people.

None of this has happened alone. You have walked this road with us. When you chose to support Red Cloud Renewable, you helped keep Elders warm, helped young Native people gain tools and purpose, and helped make it possible for Henry to live out his calling to serve his people and share this vision across Indian Country.

So when he receives the Dr. Espanola Jackson Energy Justice Award, your belief, generosity, and prayers are part of that moment. This is your celebration as well.

If you feel moved to honor this milestone in a tangible way, you are welcome to help us continue the work by supporting the next class of Indigenous solar installers and the next community solar installation for a family in need by **making a gift in celebration of this award.**

***Whether or not you are able to give right now, your presence in this community is already a gift.***

## ***Wóphila Thánka***

***Follow us on social media for daily updates and more awesome photos, videos and testimonials!***

Rev. Teresa Bartlett

Homestead Presbytery Moderator

## Gather Around the Table

Gathered around a table, whether for a regular family meal, a special celebration like a holiday, birthday or anniversary, memories are made, stories are shared. Sharing a meal with others is one of the primary ways relationships are established and deepened. Face to face across the table from our companions, watching their body language, hearing their tone of voice, looking into their eyes, are all vital elements of communication and relationship building.

In Jesus' day sharing meal with someone was a sign of respect, of one's willingness to be seen in fellowship together, it was a very public endorsement. Jesus didn't meet with just those who were deemed his social equals or who could further his cause, in fact he warned against such types of self-serving hospitality (Luke 14:12-14). The gospel of Luke tells us with regularity how Jesus gathered with diverse people for meals, eating not only with his disciples, but also priests, prostitutes, pharisees, even street people. The Pharisees and Sadducees, who drew some of Jesus most pointed criticism, also received his presence and welcome.

Jesus' diverse choice of meal companions made some people angry. The religious leaders are quoted several times in the Scriptures saying "*Look at him! This man eats with sinners*" (Luke 15:1-7). It wasn't just the religious leaders that talked about Jesus' table companions under their breath, the common citizen also criticized his keeping company with religious leaders and hated tax collectors like Zacchaeus.

Gathered with his disciples at the Last Supper Jesus was at the table with one who would betray him – yet Judas was not excluded. Jesus rose from the table, wrapped a towel around him, knelt like a servant, and began to wash his disciple's feet. The act is even more radical in its counterintuitive kindness, Jesus extended hospitality even to the one who would betray him. Jesus' action is a reminder we are to be the *washers of feet* not only for those whom we deem worthy or with whom we agree, but also for those we are offended, angered by, or disagree, those we are least inclined to welcome to our table. Thus, whatever reason we would have as a condition of welcoming or serving another person be it race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender, religious or political affiliation needs to be reexamined considering Jesus' hospitality to shape our own.

Jesús teaches inclusion not exclusion, welcome, and relationship. Jesus' openness was seen by many as a liability, perhaps because it threatened their ideas of who was within God's graces and who was outside. The religious leaders and faithful Jews considered themselves on the inside, the poor, disabled people, women, Gentiles, the Romans were outside God's grace. We can find ourselves making judgements about others, classifying people as in or out of God's grace, welcome or unwelcome.

We often give into fear and division because we fail to look for what we have in common, we decide it's best to build fences rather than tables. Fences can protect us; fences also can isolate and divide. Consider the metaphorical "tables" you are around in your vocation, your church, women's groups, social, civic, and political groups. Who is at the table, do they look like you, think the same way, believe the same way? Who should be at the table? We may think we are diverse, that we are welcoming but are we really? Is there room at the table for others? When was the last time you had a sincere face to face conversation with someone who believes differently than you about a topic?

Jesus wasn't into fences he was into tables. At Jesus' table all were treated with dignity and all left the table with their dignity intact even if Jesus sometimes had harsh words for them.

No matter how inclusive or open we imagine ourselves to be, Jesus will always challenge us to stretch further than we are comfortable with, to seek greater diversity. Building a bigger table is not just for us but welcoming those on differing sides of our religious and political perspectives, to foster understanding and relationships. We don't have to be enemies because we disagree, we should be respectful and thoughtful in our discourse, something which we could use more of.

Presbyterian Women know about making room at the table, providing hospitality that equally embraces everyone. Gathered around a table we can offer welcome, connect with others, and recognize our common humanity and work to bridge disagreements. Jesus often used the act of sharing a meal, breaking bread as a way of letting people know that they were seen, heard, known and respected, Presbyterian Women can and should do the same.

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# MISSION OPPORTUNITY



Synod School is held annually at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa the last week in June. With the weather-related disasters in the US and around the globe, the Mission Team from Synod School is encouraging participation in preparing Gift of the Heart Kits. Their goal is 800 Hygiene kits, 375 Kid's kits, and 500 Period packs.

**Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes & Prairies administrative team invites all congregations to participate in preparing/packing the Period Packs. At the time of this newsletter, it is the highest requested and lowest inventory kit.**

Below you will find the items to be included in each kit. Please include ONLY the SPECIFIC items on the list. Because these kits may be shipped internationally, uniform weight is appreciated.

PWS Moderators have a Coordinating Team meeting April 17-19, 2026 in Lincoln, Nebraska. **You can send completed kits along with your Moderator/Representative and it will get shuttled to Synod School.** If you or someone from your Presbytery is attending Synod School in Storm Lake, July 25 to July 30---please have them delivery the kits to BOXANNA. She's Ferncliff Camp/PDA Warehouse's truck that will be transporting the Synod of Lakes & Prairies Gift of the Heart kits collected during Synod School.

### Period Packs (Menstrual Hygiene Kit)

In many parts of the world, people who menstruate live in period poverty — lacking access to necessary period care supplies. During the menstrual cycle, these hygiene materials are especially important to healthy practices. Not having supplies like sanitary napkins, tampons, soap, and disposable plastic bags can create challenges that lead to unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Now you can help people who menstruate living in period poverty. The Period Pack provides the essentials they need to feel clean, be healthy, and live with dignity during the menstrual cycle.

- One 1-gallon size resealable bag
- Two 2 oz. bottles hand sanitizer
- Three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- 5 regular tampons
- 5 super absorbency tampons
- 12 pads (Unscented. Long super ultra-thin.)
- Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger. No Ivory or Jergen's soap. Do not remove from packaging.)
- One pack of flushable wipes (Unscented. 42 count.)
- Six fragrance-free laundry sheets (placed in small, Ziploc bags. Example)

#### Assembly Tips

- Place all items in the plastic bag, remove air, and seal.
- All items must be new.
- Do not enclose personal notes, money, or extra items in the kits.

*If you have any questions, please contact Maggie Horak*

**If you/congregation/presbytery would like financially support this opportunity: Please make checks payable to PW SLAP and send to PW Treasurer Terri Sherman BEFORE July 1 st .**

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## (As part of ICE reform), **Companies are ditching business with ICE**

The backlash against ICE has grown beyond US borders. Story by Hanna Ziady, CNN 2/3/26

Capgemini, a major French consulting and information technology company, said Sunday it will sell a US division that does business with Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Meanwhile, Emily Lowan, the leader of the Green Party in British Columbia, has taken aim at Canadian billionaire Jim Pattison. Last week, she called on Canadians to [boycott](#) the businesses owned by the Jim Pattison Group, which include grocery chains, packaging firms and car dealerships among others, unless he “cut his ties” with ICE. On Friday, Jim Pattison Developments, which is part of the Jim Pattison Group, [said](#) it would no longer proceed with plans to sell a warehouse in Ashland, Virginia, to the US Department of Homeland Security. The industrial facility was to be used to “support ICE operations,” according to a letter last month from the Department of Homeland Security to officials in Virginia.

Hootsuite has faced demonstrations over the work it does with ICE’s public affairs office. Protestors gathered outside the company’s Vancouver headquarters on Friday, calling on it to stop doing business with ICE.

American companies are also taking action to distance themselves from ICE. The owners of a property in Oklahoma City are “no longer engaged with the Department of Homeland Security about a potential acquisition or lease,” according to the city’s mayor David Holt. “I commend the owners for their decision and thank them on behalf of the people of Oklahoma City,” Holt [wrote on X](#) last week.

### PW Synod News

The **PWSCT Search Committee** this year is looking for a Search Committee representative from Area 3—Homestead, East Iowa, Des Moines, Prospect Hill, Missouri River Valley, or North Central Iowa Presbyteries. If interested, contact Teresa Bartlett, Judy Bell or Linda Anthony.

**PWP Moderators’ annual reports, narrative or in report form**, are due March 1 to PWSCT Secretary, Lana Schultz, for distribution to the PWSCT. This is a great way to share the good news and great works of every PWC/PWP in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies.

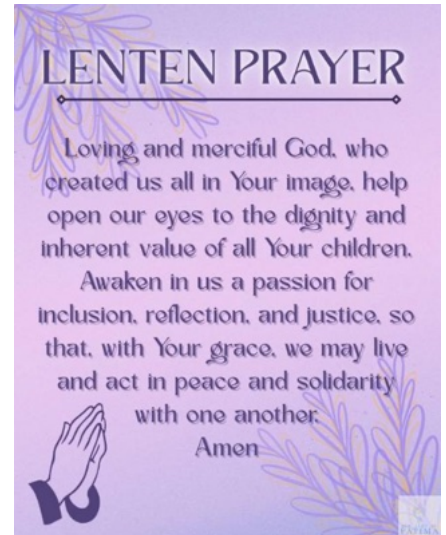
**The next PW Synod Sit ‘N Sip** is March 28 at 11 a.m. by Zoom. Recent conversations have been focused on ICE reform. If you would like to join with a beverage and a comfy chair, contact Lana Schultz, [lanaj0@casselton.net](mailto:lanaj0@casselton.net), for the Zoom link.

**The next online PW Synod Horizons Bible Study** is set for March 30 at 6:30 p.m. on Lesson 7. Invite others and make it a watch party. Contact Lana Schultz, [lanaj0@casselton.net](mailto:lanaj0@casselton.net), for the meeting link.

The PW Synod’s Facebook page will keep you informed on all the exciting things happening with Women on Facebook. If you have any items for the PWSLAP Facebook page, please send them to Christy Abraham, Facebook Coordinator at [christylou71@gmail.com](mailto:christylou71@gmail.com)

**PWS SPRING CALENDAR**

- March 6 World Day of Prayer
- March 8 Celebrate Gifts of Women
- March 8 DST- set clocks ahead 1 hour
- March 20 Deadline for hotel reservation-Lincoln, NE
- March 28 Sit ‘N Sip online at 11 am
- March 29 Palm Sunday
- March 30 Bible Study online at 6:30 pm Lesson 7
- April 2 Maundy Thursday
- April 3 Good Friday
- April 5 EASTER SUNDAY
- April 17-19 PW Synod meeting in Lincoln, NE
- April 17-19 Bring assembled Period Pack Kits
- April 22 Earth Day
- April 27 Bible Study online at 6:30 pm Lesson 8
- May 5 Nat’l Day of Awareness & Action for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls & Two Spirit People
- May 10 Mother’s Day
- May 18 Bible Study online at 6:30 pm Lesson 9
- May 20 Sower deadline
- May 24 Pentecost Sunday
- May 25 Memorial Day



*Our Lady of Fatima Roman Catholic Church, Curepe, Trinidad*



*See you in Milwaukee, WI -- June 22 - July 2, 2026*



LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

# 2027 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women

—

The 2027 Churchwide Gathering will be an exciting faith-filled time for Presbyterian women to gather for worship, education, community building, fun and renewal.

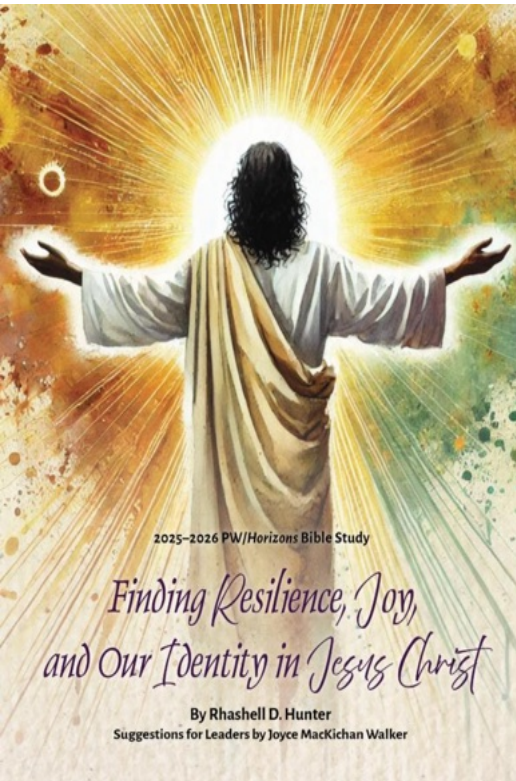
**August 5-8, 2027**

**Save the date and stay tuned!**

[presbyterianwomen.org/gathering](https://presbyterianwomen.org/gathering)

## Homestead Presbyterian Women's Spring Gathering

The Homestead Presbyterian Women will gather April 25th at York Presbyterian Church; the theme will be "Abounding Hope" from Romans 15. Coffee from 9:30 [a.m.to](#) 10:00 and the meeting starts at 10:00 a.m. We are looking forward to hearing from speaker Ellie Sizer from Mission Heart in Central City. We have a potential second speaker, but it is not confirmed as of yet. More details will come out in our Homestead Circuit newsletter in March. Information will be posted on the Homestead Presbytery website or contact Moderator Teresa Bartlett at [tbartlett98@gmail.com](mailto:tbartlett98@gmail.com).



## 2025-2026 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN HORIZONS BIBLE STUDY

### FINDING RESILIENCE, JOY AND OUR IDENTITY IN JESUS CHRIST

**We will meet on the following dates: March 30;  
April 27; May 18 at 6:30 pm CT**

You must register to receive the Zoom link by  
sending an email to [kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com)

You can purchase the 2025-2026 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.

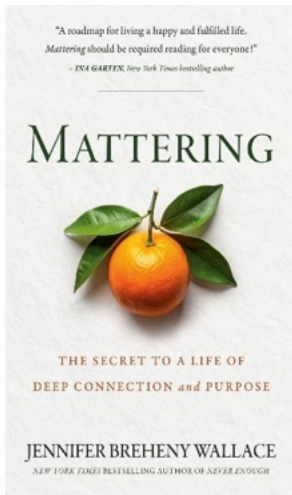


Join other Presbyterian Women from the Synod of Lakes and Prairies for a monthly round table discussion on issues prominent in today's world.

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 March 21st. No topic has been chosen as yet. If you have an idea of an issue to be talked about, please let me know.

To register, please contact Kathleen Keefer at [[kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com)] Zoom link.



**Pages Worth Turning:** I have just started reading this book, but already I know that I am going to recommend it to everyone! The book is entitled: Mattering: The Secret to a Life of Deep Connection and Purpose by Jennifer Breheny Wallace. And since I haven't read the whole book, I have taken the summary from Amazon.com:

**From award-winning journalist and bestselling author Jennifer Wallace comes *Mattering*—a landmark book that introduces a transformative new framework to confront the loneliness, burnout, and lack of purpose so many of us face today.**

In this groundbreaking work, Wallace makes an urgent case: mattering—the feeling that we are valued and have an opportunity to add value—is a core human need, as essential to our well-being as food and water. And yet, in today's world, that fundamental need is going unmet, with perilous consequences. As mental and social health crises surge, we often blame social media, the pace of modern life, and polarizing politics. But beneath these issues lies a deeper crisis, what Wallace calls “an erosion of mattering.”

With her signature warmth and insight, Wallace weaves together research and deeply moving stories of mattering lost and regained. From burned-out employees to overwhelmed caregivers to people grappling with grief or struggling through a destabilizing transition, *Mattering* explores how our lives are transformed when we are reminded, in small and intentional ways, that we are valued and that we have value to offer. Wallace provides the essential elements to building what she calls our “mattering core”: recognizing your impact, being relied on (but not too much), feeling prioritized, and being truly known and invested in. Strengthening this core helps us reconnect to our sense of purpose, deepen our relationships, and navigate life's uncertainties and challenges with greater resilience.

For readers of Brené Brown, David Brooks, and Adam Grant, *Mattering* is a rare, culture-shifting book that offers both a diagnosis and a remedy. With a clear road map and actionable takeaways, Wallace reveals how to unlock this powerful force within ourselves and how to build cultures of mattering in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

*Mattering* is both a call to action and a blueprint for living a meaningful life and creating a world we so urgently need.

**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](mailto:jam1150@hotmail.com)

Louella Voigt: [louvoigt@hotmail.com](mailto:louvoigt@hotmail.com)

Kathleen Keefer: [kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefe20@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](http://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](mailto:christylou71@gmail.com)

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](https://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

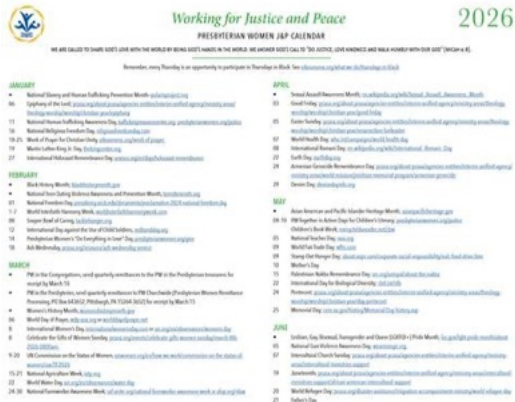
Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center in Little Rock is ready to host church mission trips to help replenish the stock of disaster kits

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.](#)

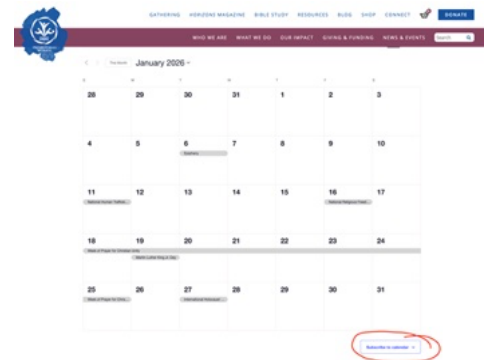


Visit the Justice and Peace webpage for more information at [presbyterianwomen.org/justice](http://presbyterianwomen.org/justice).

**NEW IN 2026!** 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](http://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/>



**PWS Coordinating Team meeting, April 17-19, 2026**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**PROCESS CHANGE:**

**PLEASE READ CAREFULLY, Action required  
if attending CT meeting**

Coordinating Team members attending the April 17-19, 2026 meeting in Lincoln, Nebraska must make their own reservation using the hotel link at the bottom of this document.

**Register before March 20** to get the block rate for your room

Hotel reservations after March 20 will not get the group rate

If you register for a **single room**: you'll be responsible for ½ of the cost of the room

If you register for a **double room**: find a roommate and one person makes the reservation with both names.

*You may seek reimbursement for hotel by submitting voucher at the meeting.*

**[Book your group rate for Presbyterian Women](#)**

You will find the information for your online reservation link below. If you have questions or need help with the link, please do not hesitate to ask. We appreciate your business and look forward to a successful event.

**Event Summary:**

**Presbyterian Women**

**Start Date: Friday, April 17, 2026**

**End Date: Sunday, April 19, 2026**

**Hotel(s) offering your special group rate:**

- **Fairfield by Marriott Inn & Suites Lincoln Southeast for 143.00 USD - 153.00 USD per night - Last Day to Book : Friday, March 20, 2026**

**[Book your group rate for Presbyterian Women](#)**



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](mailto:lcvanpoll@gmail.com)

**Vice-Moderator**

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Judy Rops (start 4/18/2026)

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**Treasurer**

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**Secretary/Historian**

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Judy Bell (2029)

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Maggie Horak (start 7/1/2026)

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**Sower Editor**

Kathleen Keefer (see above)

**Communications Coordinator**

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Maggie Horak (after 4/2026)  
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**Facebook Coordinator**

Christy Abraham [Christylou71@gmail.com](mailto:Christylou71@gmail.com)

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[elgreybull92@gmail.com](mailto:elgreybull92@gmail.com)

**2028 Synod Gathering Comm.**

Louise Van Poll  
Terri Sherman  
Maggie Horak  
PWP Moderator for gathering site

Effective 11/16/2025

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

Moderator/Rep  
VACANT

**Dakota – Mod/Rep**

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**Minnesota Valleys – Rep.**

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Moderator/Rep  
VACANT

**Northern Plains–Mod/Rep**

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Term: 2027

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As of 11/15/2025



The Sower, a quarterly newsletter of the Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Lakes and Prairies.

Kathleen Keefer, Editor

[Kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:Kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com)

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