



The Sower

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

February, 2020

Editor: Kathleen Keefer

MUSINGS FROM THE MODERATOR:

Starting a new year always brings the thought of New Year's resolutions. If you are like me, you may resolve to eat more healthily, exercise more, read the Bible and pray more often, or any number of other things. The thing I always have trouble with is following through on these resolutions.

Making something a new habit takes time and perseverance. It is easy to fall off and return to old ways before something new becomes a habit. I know I do that and I suspect many others do, too. How do you keep up the struggle when there isn't much to show for your efforts? One way is to do the new thing at the same time every day. Another way might be to give yourself a small reward for doing the new thing. Yet another way is to enlist a buddy who will encourage you and give you support, as you will support that person.

What is the thing that you would most like to change in your life? Take some time to think it through and decide what you want to change. Then make yourself small steps toward that goal, but also give yourself some slack if you don't make your goal as fast as you'd like to.

It would also help to ask God for support in working toward your goal. Handing over the burden to God frees you to worry less about how fast you are getting there and takes the burden off your shoulders. God lightens all burdens and leaves you feeling better and more able to work toward your goals in life.

Good luck in your struggle. I'll be praying and struggling right along with you.

Sue Medsker-Nedderman, moderator of PWSCT

Mark Your Calendars:

April 17-19, 2020 - PWSCT meeting

Oct 16-18, 2020 - PWSCT meeting



Charitable giving with Amazon Smile

Peace starts with a smile.

Smile when you use Amazon! When you purchase items from Amazon.com, you can simultaneously donate to PW. Visit smile.amazon.com and select Presbyterian Women as your favorite charitable organization. Shop as you normally would through "regular" Amazon, and a portion of the purchase of eligible items is donated to PW. In other words: you shop, Amazon gives, PW receives. **The total received in 2018 for the Amazon SMILE opportunity was \$1,902.** As you can see, it all adds up and with so little effort. Keep on using Amazon SMILE!

DEVOTION TIME

The Strength of Ten People by Karen Moore from Wellspring 365 Meditations to Refresh Your Soul.

Therefore, the Lord God, the holy one of Israel, says: In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength. Isaiah 30:15

Are you good about lifting weights to strengthen your upper body or to give some tone to the rest of you? Do you meditate and pray to strengthen your soul and your spirit? Bravo for you if you do these things.

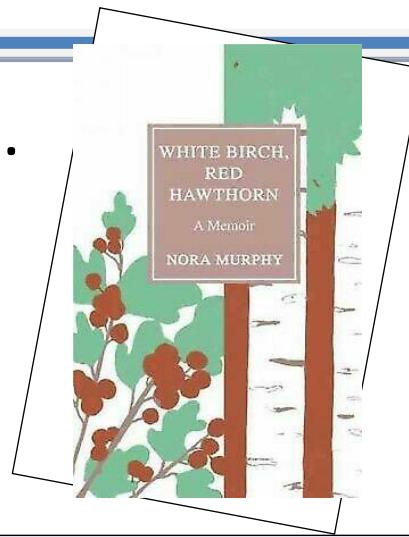
Think about what you admire about a strong person. Some people you know have a kind of Samson strength where they can lift nearly anything, but may still be foolish about the way they conduct their lives. Some people have a deep resolve, an inner strength, that tells you not to mess with them at all because they know who they are and have unshakable faith.

You may not often feel like you have the strength of ten people, but God knows your potential. He knew how to build you and create a strength in you that is undeniable. It doesn't depend on you, it depends on him. Whenever you are weak, God is strong. Show him your spiritual muscles today.

Lord, thank you for the strength you continue to give me to lead others, help others, love others. Raise me up past my weaknesses, to become stronger in you. Amen.

Register today to join a book study . . .

White Birch, Red Hawthorn
A Memoir
by Nora Murphy



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 teleconferencing (using computer or phone)**

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

Daytime study begins: Monday, February 17, 2020 at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)

Evening study begins: Monday, February 17, 2020 at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)

Groups will meet every two weeks for four sessions



Synopsis: "This is conquered land." The Dakota woman's words, spoken at a community meeting in St. Paul, struck Nora Murphy forcefully. Her own Irish great-great grandparents, fleeing the potato famine, had laid claim to 160 acres in a virgin maple grove in Minnesota. That her dispossessed ancestors' homestead, The Maples, was built upon another, far more brutal dispossession is the hard truth underlying *White Birch, Red Hawthorn*, a memoir of Murphy's search for the deeper connections between this contested land and the communities who call it home.

In twelve essays, each dedicated to a tree significant to Minnesota, Murphy tells the story of the grove that, long before the Irish arrived, was home to three Native tribes: the Dakota, Ojibwe, and Ho-Chunk. She notes devastating strategies employed by the U.S. government to wrest the land from the tribes, but also revisits iconic American tales that subtly continue to promote this displacement—the Thanksgiving story, the Paul Bunyan myth, and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books.

In retrieving these stories, *White Birch, Red Hawthorn* uncovers lingering wounds of the past—and the possibility that, through connection to this suffering, healing can follow. The next step is simple, Murphy tells us: listen.



Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net

Provide the following information:

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

Scavenger Hunt through the PW Website!

www.presbyterianwomen.org

(Add your own items that you would like to locate for #17-20)

Created by Marilyn Stone

1. The main page of the PW website features buttons that align with the PW Purpose. What image is on the button for Work for Justice and Peace? _____
2. On the main page of the PW website, where can you find the most recent quarterly newsletter for PW leadership?

3. Locate the slider in the middle of the PW main page. How many different items can be read via the slider.

4. Your circle decides to honor a woman of faith with an Honorary Life Membership pin. Where can you find information about the program, including where to order the pin online?

5. Giving to the PW Annual Fund is a priority for you and your circle. The new website offers a one-stop opportunity for online giving. Where is it? _____

6. You want to give a PW logo apron to each member of your church's kitchen crew. Find the PW logo aprons on the PW shop. How many colors are available? _____

7. You have new PW officers in your congregation and want them to receive PW information electronically. Where would you search to locate the "Data change form"? _____

8. Your PWPCT wants to plan your 2020 PW Spring Gathering around the theme of the January/February Horizons magazine. Where would you search to find the theme of the issue? _____

9. You would like to share the 2020 Thank Offering Grant criteria and application with an agency near you. Where would you search? _____

10. You want to know who your PW Synod Rep to the PW Board of Directors is. Where would you search? _____

11. You want to know who the PW Synod of Lakes and Prairies Thank Offering grant recipient is? Where would you search? _____

12. Your PWP treasurer wants to locate the remittance form for PW in the Presbytery. Where would you search? _____

13. You have been asked to promote the Fellowship of the Least Coin at your PW Fall Gathering. Where will you search for information? _____

14. You would like to learn more about racism resources provided by PW. Where would you search? _____

15. You want to submit your PW in the Congregation pledge form to your PWP treasurer. Where can you locate the 2020 Annual Pledge booklet? _____

16. You want to order a digital subscription of the Horizons magazine for a woman new to PW in your church. Where do you search to order the subscription online? _____

17. _____

18. _____

19. _____

20. _____

PW Resources and More... .

Submitted by Marilyn Stone, PW Synod Rep to PW Board of Directors/Churchwide

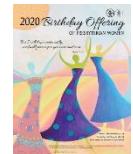
New Horizons Promotional Skit – If you don't receive *Horizons* magazine, you are missing out! Help others learn more about *Horizons!* Check out the new Horizons promotional skit, "Grocery Store Revelations" at: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/horizons-grocery-skit/>

PW Justice & Peace Links on Substance Use Disorder – Check out the recently published Justice & Peace Links on Substance Use Disorder which focuses on responding with compassion to substance use disorder. It includes ways to start a discussion, references to what the Bible and church says, and suggestions of what we might do.

https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2019.1_SUD_Links.pdf

Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday – Whether you celebrate on the suggested Sunday, March 8th or another Sunday, you are encouraged to take time to honor women of faith, those who may have felt their faith falter at times and those who held fast to faith. Give thanks for their persistence – their witness, their words, their actions. We know we stand on their shoulders. Resources are available at: <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/Celebrate-the-Gifts-ResourceFA.pdf>

Birthday Offering – Be creative with how you celebrate and collect the Birthday Offering. With 2019 Birthday Offering receipts, four projects received grants, including one in our synod. You can download material at: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/product/2020-birthday-offering-booklet/>



Churchwide Gathering Update – PW's 2021 Churchwide Gathering will be held August 5–8, 2021 in St. Louis, Missouri! The theme for the Gathering is "Rejoice in Hope" based on Romans 12:12–13, "Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." Registration fee is \$450, so plan ahead and save a little each week/month so that you will be able to join women across the U.S. for this inspirational event!

Download a "save the date" card at: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/2021-churchwide-gathering-save-the-date-cards/>. Gathering trailer at: <https://youtu.be/KBXq0eFyzV4>

February is Black History Month – Check out this website identifying 75 children's books about "Extraordinary Black Mighty Girls and Women". Telling these often unsung stories brings attention to people whose contributions have too often been ignored and historically faced both racial and gender discrimination. <https://www.ameightygirl.com/blog?p=14276>

February 17-23 National Random Acts of Kindness Week – Consider ways you can inspire PW to participate in doing random acts of kindness during this designated week. Who knows, it may well carry over to the next week and the next. . .

PWS Native American Book Study – See attached poster for info on how to register to participate in the next book study. *White Birch, Red Hawthorn: A Memoir* by Nora Murphy

SPEAKERS AVAILABLE FOR GATHERING PRESENTATIONS

Gail Heimbuck from Rocky Mountains (Wyoming) (bbtchr@gmail.com) and Rhoda Frasier from Mid-America (Concordia, KS) (rhodaf805@gmail.com) have offered to come to present programs in our synod to tell about the USAME trip to upstate New York. Our synod did not have a representative on the trip.

Kathleen Keefer from Presbytery of the Missouri River Valley (Clarinda, IA) attended the 63rd UN Commission for Status of Women. She is available to share her experience with your PW. klkeefer@mail.com is her contact.

Susan Medsker-Nedderman is also available as a speaker to relate her experience during the USAME trip to the Bay Area. S.medsker.nedderman@gmail.com

The following PWs have been trained through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance program to be trainers for Disaster Preparedness. They are another great source of women for your Gatherings or Circle meeting.

Linda Barnett, Hendricks, MN; Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys; barnelim@hotmail.com

Maggie Horak, Lincoln, NE; Presbytery of Homestead; mmhlin@msn.com

Kathleen Keefer, Clarinda, IA; Presbytery of Missouri River Valley; klkeefer@mail.com

Linda (Kitch) Shatzer, Washington, IA; Presbytery of East Iowa; revkitch@hotmail.com

Marilyn Stone, Burlington, WI; Presbytery of Milwaukee; mmstone52@att.net

Elizabeth Swee, Moorhead, MN; Presbytery of Northern Plains; bswee@aol.com

Louise Van Poll, Huron, SD; Presbytery of South Dakota; lcvanpoll@gmail.com



Are you being called by God to serve PW in the Presbytery?

Your Coordinating Team needs you! There are many opportunities to serve. Contact your PW in the Presbytery Moderator and find out what you can do to help. We can't do it without you! We need your help to spread the word about how the women of the Presbyterian Church USA contribute to their Community and the World.

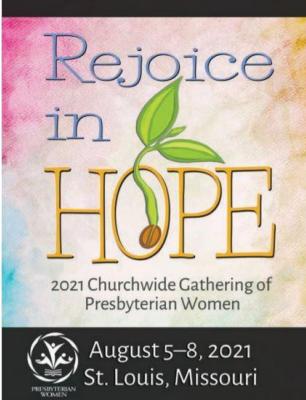


SOWER ARTICLES & STORIES ARE ALWAYS WELCOME!

NEXT SOWER will be the May issue with articles submitted by April 30th to thesower.slap@yahoo.com. The theme will be Together in Service with justice and peace focus on immigration. Please let us know if there are any new PWP officers so they can be highlighted in this issue. PW Annual Fund articles and resources will be included.

NEXT Synod Coordinating Team meeting on April 17-19, 2020 in the LaCrosse/West Salem, Wisconsin area.

SAVE THE DATE!



Are you saving seed money for the **2021 Churchwide Gathering**? If you're saving at home—perhaps in a mason jar, coffee can, fair-trade basket or flowerpot—download this file to print a label or wrapper for your container! This file contains jar/can wrappers on pages 1 and 2 (color and grayscale) and templates that may be printed on sticker paper on pages 3 and 4 (color and grayscale). [Download the savings jar wrapper/label.](#)

Or if you are saving your seed money in a bank account, but want to participate visually, find an old board game and use toy money. Or substitute least coins for dollars that you can later contribute to Fellowship of the Least Coin and/or Cents-Ability.

2020 Birthday Offering Recipients

Horizons, Jan./Feb. 2020

1. \$135,000 to *GAP Ministries of Augusta, Georgia*. By renovating the second floor and adding an elevator, GAP can address other needs of the homeless such as Saturday service, expanded health assistance, and meeting space for partnering ministries.
2. \$75,000 to *Community Presbyterian Child Learning Center* in Payson, Arizona. This grant will help build a modern facility that will increase the number of children served and provide infant care for the first time in Payson, to the Tonto Apache Tribe and neighboring communities.
3. \$75,000 to *Liberty Community Church* in Minneapolis, Minnesota, the first and only African-led Presbyterian congregation in Minnesota. This grant will help renovate the Northside Healing Homeplace and expand programming such as supportive housing, workforce development, care for survivors of trauma and commercial sexual exploitation.
4. \$100,000 to *PREOBRAZHENIYE* in Davydovo, Russia. This grant will help construct an assisted living facility that provides suitable living conditions, constant medical support and an environment where adults with disabilities can realize their rights to freedom of religion and work.

Congratulations to all the recipients!!

Presbyterian Women Churchwide has partnered with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to create **resources** for congregations willing to have [Courageous Conversations](#) about sexual- or gender-based violence. Additionally, PW, with [Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence](#), created a curriculum for men and men's groups, entitled [Men in the Mirror](#). This downloadable 13-session curriculum provides "men and boys with an opportunity to critically assess the conflicting messages that define masculinity and to explore what makes a healthy relationship." Curriculum available at www.presbyterianmission.org/wp-content/uploads/meninthemirror.pdf

LEGISLATION UPDATE ON VAWA

The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) expired in February, 2019. On April 4, 2019, the House passed the VAWA Reauthorization of 2019 reauthorizing VAWA through 2024 and seeks to reform the program in a number of ways, including:

- Expanding Services, Training, Officers and Prosecutors (STOP) VAWA grants to include additional community resources for response to incidences of domestic violence
- Increasing SMART Prevention Grant funding to support youth violence prevention education programs from \$15 million to \$45 million, each year through 2024
- Increasing grants for combating violent crimes on campuses from \$12 million to \$16 million annually
- Supporting training in early childhood programs on domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking
- Expanding gun buying restrictions to include individuals with a misdemeanor conviction of domestic abuse or stalking
- Preserving and expanding housing protections for survivors
- Enhancing law enforcement tools and safeguards for the Office on Violence Against Women within the U.S. Department of Justice

Blog by Brett Matson, www.naco.org, (April 9, 2019).

Senator Dianne Feinstein (CA) introduced the identical language passed by the House to the Senate (S. 2843) on November 13, 2019. Senator Joni Ernst (IA), on November 20, 2019, introduced a different VAWA reauthorization. Senator Ernst's bill:

- Not only excludes vital enhancements to protect LGBTQ survivors for which the field asked but also actively rolls back existing LGBTQ nondiscrimination protections;
- Prioritizes adjudicated abusers' access to guns over the lives, safety, and rights of survivors by leaving out lifesaving, common sense provisions to recognize that the same gun laws that apply to spousal abusers should also apply to dating abusers;
- Takes a big step backwards in addressing the needs of Native survivors;
- Maintains barriers to safety and justice for marginalized communities; and
- Precludes future opportunities to improve VAWA by reauthorizing it for ten years instead of the normal five years.

Blog by Rachel Graber, www.ncadv.org (November 21, 2019).

Leadership

Develop Leaders--For some of us, the title "leader" seems like a perfect fit; for others, it seems like an overly bold proclamation of skills. Yet, in reality, each of us is a leader in some way—perhaps by delegating chores to family members, organizing the church rummage sale, monitoring a PW group's finances or meeting attendance, or coordinating a mission project. Each of us bring our own unique gifts to every task we do!

The following questions will guide you as you assess your gifts and prepare for your next PW project:

- Do you set the purpose for the event and work purposefully?
- Do you prepare and execute a plan?
- Do you care about the well-being of everyone coming to the event?
- Does your plan take into account the diverse needs of the people you'll be serving and/or ministering to?
- Do you prepare a budget based on your assessment of needs?
- Do you communicate?
- Are you a team player?
- Do you delegate?

Feel free to include even more questions to consider—particularly those that speak to your particular leadership gifts. And remember your unique and worthy gifts the next time you discuss leadership or find yourself in a position of influence. www.presbyterianwomen.org

CHURCHWIDE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT GRANT COMMITTEE NEWS

Any woman who is active in the PC(USA) and wishes to participate in the work of Presbyterian Women for personal leadership development is eligible for a grant. Applicants must not have received a grant from Presbyterian Women within the last 36 months, and must have complied with the terms of fulfilling or closing prior grants from Presbyterian Women.

Grants will be awarded to assist Presbyterian women in developing and strengthening leadership skills through participation in leadership education events, including conferences. Reimbursable grants of \$500 are being offered to individuals (domestic), \$1,500 (international) and event/ project grants of \$2,500.

Download and complete an application form for a [PW leadership development grant](#). Send the completed application form with the three required letters of endorsement to:

*PW Leadership Development Grant Program
Attn: Rhonda Martin
100 Witherspoon St.
Louisville, KY 40202-1396*

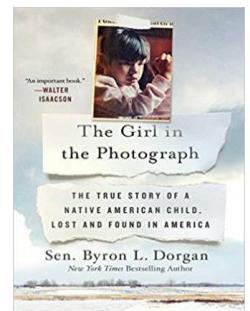
Completed applications must be received in the above office 90 days prior to need. Each recipient of a PW leadership development grant is required to submit a report of their experience of the event that they attend or plan, or the project they complete.

BOOK REVIEWS:

Small Great Things by Jodi Picoult

Ruth is a labor and delivery nurse caring for a newborn baby. Suddenly, she's reassigned. It turns out the parents of the baby are white supremacists and do not want Ruth, who is African-American, touching their baby. As the novel unfolds, characters from different backgrounds come together, with their views and prejudices, shining a light on race, privilege, bias, compassion, and belief in a diverse world. At more than 400 pages, it's a hefty novel, but one that moves quickly and invites the reader into reflection about what we believe about ourselves and one another.

The Girl in the Photograph by Byron Dorgan Senator Dorgan knows how to write a good book, whether it's a best-selling critique of U.S. trade policy or his fiction high-tech thrillers set in western North Dakota. His latest effort is his most important. "The Girl in the Photograph" is, as the subtitle reveals, "the true story of a Native American child, lost and found in America." The book tells a story of tragedy and triumph that is not yet finished, in the context of civil rights denied, a history of injustice, and present-day conditions for native children that are horrific. <https://www.inforum.com/opinion/letters/4879915-Zaleski-Byron-Dorgan%E2%80%99s-latest-book-is-a-must-read>



PW in the Synod News:



ZOOM is a great conference tool for group/committee meetings, especially meetings with 3 or more participants online. One-on-one meetings can utilize the Synod's ZOOM account or can be set up by individuals who have personal ZOOM accounts. Sign up for a free personal account, including unlimited meeting time, at www.zoom.us. If interested in participating in a ZOOM meeting, please contact Lana Schultz (701-238-4538 or

lanaj0@casselton.net) with the date, time and approx. length of the meeting. She will email the meeting invite to you in advance for you to send to all participants. Our current ZOOM license expires on October 26, 2020 so hopefully everyone will experience a ZOOM meeting before soon.

The PW Synod's **Communications** team is looking for members. If interested, please contact moderator Sue Medske-Nedderman (s.medske.nedderman@gmail.com) or Lana Schultz (701-238-4538 or lanaj0@casselton.net).

DAYS FOR GIRLS INTERNATIONAL (DfG)



With sincere thanks to Belinda Breit for introducing me to Days for Girls (DfG) International, I had a tangible purpose for going on a mission trip in January to Sierra Leone with members of my church, First Presbyterian of White Bear Lake. Our church is a big supporter of Rural Health Care Initiative (RHCI) which is making a positive impact on the lives of families in the Tikonko Chiefdom by preventing maternal and child deaths. In addition to training Community Health Workers and conducting clinics in remote villages, RHCI opened Mbao-mi Mothers' Home two years ago so pregnant women would have access to skilled care during labor and delivery. Tailoring and tie-dyeing are offered to women staying at the Home and to past patients. I was intrigued by Belinda's offer to train me to teach the young women at Mbao-mi to sew their own feminine hygiene pads, thus preparing me to be directly involved in two special DfG activities while in Tikonko.

The first activity is close to home for many of our Synod's seamstresses. I helped to distribute 35 hygiene kits that were MADE BY YOU here in Minnesota. On Tuesday, January 14, we visited Fawe Junior Secondary School for Girls and listened as local RHCI staff nurse Julieann introduced the kits to the girls and explained how to use and care for them. Her lesson was reinforced by the chief's wife, Beatrice, who stressed to the girls the importance of attending school and using family planning to avoid early pregnancy. Julieann shared later that she and the other nurse "matron" at Mbao-mi provide each mom with a postpartum DfG hygiene kit along with education on newborn care, breastfeeding and sanitation/hygiene.

A second highlight of the trip was interacting with the women and their young children in the sewing class. They were excited to try the cutting mats and rotary cutters to cut out liners for DfG kits. However, they and I were disappointed that evidently the power supply wasn't adequate to operate either the new serger (donated by an anonymous Minnesotan) or an electric sewing machine safely without speed control: Machines had only one speed.....super fast! It's almost impossible to finish raw edges on the flannel liners with treadle machines. Their tailor-instructor thought he'd be able to locate a transformer or adapter to remedy the problem. And I am convinced that with a continued supply of material, thread and sewing notions arriving 2-3 times a year*, many girls will gain skills leading to self reliance.

Although my main goal in going to Tikonko was to become an informed witness and advocate for RHCI, I was grateful to have skills to share that can positively affect the future wellbeing of Tikonko's wonderful women and children.

*FYI – For more information, see www.rhcimnsl.org. Barrels of newborn and DfG kits, fabric, sewing tools/notions, etc will be shipped March 1. To donate supplies and/or sponsor a barrel (or a partial barrel), contact me at jmc0879@comcast.net or call 612-747-6372.

Photographs – the "new" iron and the sewing machine repair shop!



Jo Anne Collins 1-22-20

PW IN THE PRESBYTERIES

ANNUAL REPORTS



PW Presbytery happenings in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies:

The following reports were submitted to Marilyn Stone, PW Synod Rep to PW Board of Directors/ Churchwide, for her PWS report to national. They are provided here for everyone to enjoy.

The PWSCT attending the October 2019 PWSCT meeting in Luverne, MN.

From I to r. Seated: Judy Bell, Beth Jensen, Janice Letsos, Debi Jensen.

Second row: Janine Brandt, Marilyn Stone, Linda Hora, Kathleen Keefer, Lana Schultz.

Third row: Belinda Breit, Kitch Shatzer, Audrey Fenton, Hope Daugherty, Maggie Horak, Sue Medsker Nedderman, Gloria Rust.

Central Nebraska

In 2019 Central Nebraska Presbyterian Women took a bold step and met with the Presbytery on October 26 to hear several mission co-workers from the US-Mexico border ministry. We heard the Rev. Mark Adams, who is in charge of the ministry on the US side, and Jocabed Gallegos who is the first woman Mexican coordinator for Frontera de Cristo. Carmina Sanchez Cifuentes shared about Café Justo and we were able to purchase coffee that day from Café Justo. In addition, we donated and assembled 53 school kits for Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. -Annabelle Wells, PWP Moderator

Dakota

Greetings from the women from Dakota Presbytery! It has been a slow start for me as a new moderator. I'm so grateful for the constant guidance that I have from Marilyn Stone and numerous other kind ladies who have offered guidance to me. Throughout the year I was able to attend meetings at Tacoma, Washington in July. Our spring presbytery meeting was held in Pine Ridge, SD and our Mission meeting at Goodwill held at Old Agency, SD. Our fall presbytery meeting was held in Frazer, Montana.

At our Mission meeting we were able to meet as a group to plan projects for upcoming events during the year. Some of those projects included making a krazy quilt during the year. Participants were given blocks of fabric to complete and donate toward the quilt project. So far I have 4 squares that have been sewn and turned in.

I would like to share words of gratitude for those who have helped me along the way. It has been such a treasured learning experience for me in being a new leader. The ability to feel the fellowship among those in attendance will last a lifetime for me. Being able to sing our hymns in the Dacotah language has always been a great reward for me. The Lord has blessed me with the opportunity to meet and make many new friends along the way. *-Susie Rivera Amos, PW moderator*

Des Moines

The Fall Gathering of the Women of the Presbytery of Des Moines was held at Trinity United Presbyterian Church in Indianola on Friday, October 12, 2019. Thirty-one women registered for the event.

Reverend Barbara Tooker Todd led the worship service with the message "What a Word Can Do" The monetary offering will go to the Warren County Necessity Pantry as will the personal items that were donated. Juanita Ott, editor of THE GRAPEVINE the PW Presbytery newsletter was awarded a PW Lifetime Membership.

Denise England, Together in Mission Chair, provided materials for all to make Christmas Cards which will be given to the women at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville to mail at Christmas to family and friends.

Following the salad luncheon, served by the women of Trinity, the women of the Presbytery of Des Moines were privileged to hear from Rev. Eugenia Anne Gamble, author of this year's Horizons Bible Study, "Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments". Hearing from her about each lesson was inspirational, informative and all in attendance left with new perspectives.

-Sharon Falck, PWP Moderator

East Iowa

A high point of 2019 for East Iowa PW was the June mission trip to the Bdecan Presbyterian Church in Tokio, North Dakota near the Spirit Lake Reservation at Devil's Lake. Eight women, ranging in ages from 20 to 75 provided 3 days of VSB which included snacks and lunches. The Bdecan Church has been a mission emphasis for us for the last three years and will be for the next several. East Iowa PWers really rallied around this endeavor. Much credit needs to be given to Joe Obermeyer, Youth Coordinator at the Bdecan Church who was our Spring Workshop keynote speaker. His enthusiasm and passion reached out and touched us even though he was not physically with us. Yes that is correct, he wasn't there but we used ZOOM, and it worked. A first for us and the technology was embraced and accepted.

After a hiatus of several years the CT decided to have our fall meeting in the midst of a retreat. We rented a zany AirBNB house in Cedar Rapids instead of going to camp. Our spiritual leader was Loretta Ross, a retired pastor and spiritual director from our presbytery, who introduced us to what spiritual direction is, with a little sampling of practices to get better in touch with our soul life. We all left knowing each other just a little better and refreshed from not only doing our work, but playing a little on the side as well.

Reports coming in from our local moderators are full of stories of self-giving, learning, and mission advocacy. One small PW rejoiced in having **four**, count them, four new members. And we also mourned with another group who has reluctantly decided to disband.

-Kitch Shatzer and Beth Jensen, PWP co-moderators

Homestead

2019 was a great year for Homestead PW. To recap: Two Spring Gatherings were held in the north and south.

We had a wonderful Fall Gathering with 60 women present for an energetic weekend.

Our guests for the weekend were Jenny Lee, PW Churchwide Moderator, Danelle Crawford-McKinney, a member of the Churchwide Racial Equity Committee and Sue Medsker-Nedderman, Synod PW Moderator. Jenny & Danelle were guest speakers on Friday and Saturday activities including communion on Saturday. The weekend included a fun PW fashion style show, dinner on Friday provided by the PWP officers, a nice lunch on Saturday and wonderful music on Saturday.

For the year, nearly \$5,000 was received for different Pledges and offerings from around Homestead Presbytery.

- \$740 was given to Camp Calvin Crest from our Fall offering.
- \$2,000 was given to Good Shepard to transport PDA items to Ferncliff.
- We collected 100 lbs of baby items that we sent to Pine Ridge Reservation.
- We put together over 50 school kits plus extras in the fall.
- A jewelry fundraiser brought in \$65 to go to the Native American Fund.

We will be holding 3-4 Spring Gatherings next year. We are going to make these gatherings more like a coffee hour and not have much for a structured agenda for them. The one held in Lincoln will be a full morning through afternoon event. Anyone is welcome to attend any of these. March 28 – Clarkson, April 4 – Lyons, April 25 – Westminster Lincoln. -Terri Sherman, PWP moderator

John Knox

John Knox Presbytery includes 60 churches in northeast Iowa, southeast Minnesota, and southwest Wisconsin. Of those 60 churches, 32 have a designated PW group. The John Knox PWs continue to meet regularly, engage in Bible study, and generously give and work for mission projects locally, nationally, and internationally. One moderator's comment on her annual report sums it up well: "We are a small group and we are all good friends. We work together well and consider ourselves to be leaders in the congregation for initiating projects and getting things done."

Our Fall Workshop, "What Brings You Joy?" was held September 28, 2019 at Portage Presbyterian Church, Portage, WI, based on John 15: 4, 11. There were 45 registered in attendance. We enjoyed hearing speaker/writer/teacher Stephenie Hovland speak on joy. We collected and dedicated the Thank Offering. Attendees brought materials for our mission project and assembled fabric kits. The kits provide fabric and thread for vocational training programs to teach men and women useful, marketable sewing skills. Forty-seven kits were donated to a worldwide mission project through Lutheran World Relief.

Our Spring Gathering was held at Community Presbyterian Church, Postville, IA on May 4, with 37 in attendance. Birthday Offering was collected and dedicated. Attendees browsed tables with mission project ideas, historian's book, directories, and other PW materials. Theme was the churchwide gathering theme, "Arise, Shine, Your Light Has Come," and we heard a presentation from two attendees at the Churchwide Gathering October 2-5, 2018 in Louisville, KY about their experience. A local college student gave a presentation about her star cluster research, comparing the lightness and darkness of stars and the importance of "letting your light shine." We had worship and communion.

Twelve JKP Women attended the Synod of Lakes and Prairies PW Gathering in Ames, Iowa in July 2019, experiencing an inspiring program of speakers and workshops and the opportunities to learn and to meet fellow Presbyterian Women. JKPW provided a subsidy for each of our women attending. JKPW groups answered the call for donations of beautifully decorated pillowcases and children's clothing kits for Puerto Rico and Dakota/Pine Ridge, materials for the Days for Girls project, and gift cards for the designated organization recipients. -Janine Brandt, PWP moderator

Milwaukee

Grace, Beaver Dam group is continuing work on the Days for Girls project. Some members have trained on using a serger sewing machine to help with the project. Their members coordinated with the youth of the church and donated 150 bandanas for dogs in various sizes to the Dodge County Humane Society.

Linn, Lake Geneva reports little activity going on at this time of year. Many members go south for winter months. They are preparing for the PWP Spring Gathering in May with a focus on suicide prevention.

Apostle, West Allis has three circles. One does hands-on mission projects for The Ships Project. Two circle's projects provided:

- hams for Hope House, a homeless shelter for women and children
- school supplies for local schools
- Church World Service blankets
- hosted Church Women United Christmas Tea and provided Christmas gifts
- hosted a churchwide "Hands on Mission Work Day" where 500 sandwiches were made for Guest House, a homeless shelter for men; "Little Dresses" were stitched; fleece blankets were cut and tied for Exploit No More; pillowcases were decorated for Puerto Rico; and Christmas ornaments were stitched and beaded for the Ships Project.
- hosted a churchwide Birthday Party celebrating the PW Birthday Offering, providing lunch and a birthday cake, along with decorated tables for each month
- took PW "On the Road", visiting one of our local food/clothing pantries, Good Samaritan, which receives financial support from PW and enjoying lunch out

The PWP Fall Gathering was held in September and included a lovely luncheon followed by a presentation by Rev. Lydia Neshangwe, an International Peacemaker from Zimbabwe. It was promoted as open to all in the presbytery and we were grateful that Rachel Yates, our Presbytery Exec attended. -Judy Bell and Helen McMasters, PWP Co-moderators

Minnesota Valleys

The PW's of MN Valley Presbytery had a busy and inspiring year. Our PWPCT met in Windom to finalize the plans for the Spring Presbyterial which was held in Silver Lake in June. Our speaker was Louella Voigt who spoke about Addiction and what the congregations can do to help those who are struggling with this disease and their families. We also heard from the three women who attended the 2018 Churchwide Gathering. They were so pleased to have the privilege of attending and had very interesting reports. June 20-23, I attended the PW Synod Gathering in Ames, IA. It was a very well-organized weekend, with hands-on activities, church

services, outstanding speakers, lots of good food and great fellowship. In September our PWPCT met again to finish year end business and start planning the 2020 Spring Presbyterial, which will be held in Renville on June 2, 2020. Our congregations continue to contribute to their local food shelves, mission projects, birthday parties at the nursing homes, provide & serve meals for the homeless and lonely, sew quilts and distribute them where needed, provide food boxes during the Holiday season to families in need, give financial support to the church camps, and just help out wherever there is a need. -*Gloria Rust, PWP moderator*

Missouri River Valley

The Presbytery of the Missouri River Valley straddles the Missouri River, with 21 churches in Iowa and 23 in Nebraska. Most of the churches are small to very small rural churches, but surprisingly, this is where the most active PWs are! The larger churches no longer have active PW (monthly Gatherings, or Circles) but they still participate in the Mission Pledge, PDA mission projects, PWP Gatherings, etc. The active PWs in the smaller churches seem to meet monthly, have Horizon Bible Studies, do mission projects together. Living in a small town myself, I can see that PW is a big part of the church life and important for social networking.

This past year saw major flooding along the Missouri River. Iowa lost two whole towns to the flooding and these may never be rebuilt. Flood waters can still be seen along Interstate 29. These were once fertile farm lands, but now they are lakes of dirty water and silt deposits. Because of the flooding of the sewage treatment plants along the river, it is believed that this land will NEVER be farmed again. The flooding prompted PW to mobilize and gather Clean up Buckets, Hygiene kits and School bags. These were collected and distributed through the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance Committee of the Presbytery. The Presbytery also received donations from other presbyteries in the Synod and we are grateful.

The PWP hosted a Spring Gathering in April. We listened to the presenter, Sue Medsker-Nedderman as she discussed and showed photos of her US Mission Experience to the Bay Area. We shared sistership, PWP business meeting, and potluck luncheon. In October, we held our 4th Annual Mission Blast. We created 250+ Hygiene kits, 150 School bags, 125 Little Dresses for Africa, plus collected monetary donations for the local PDA Committee.

This PWP is not unlike many other PWPs in that we struggle to get PWs to Gatherings, to be involved with the larger community (Churchwide) and sometimes even within the congregation. Younger women are not interested in attending meetings, Bible Studies, or Gatherings. We thought they would be interested in hands-on mission one day a year and so we developed the Mission Blast. This year's attendance was very small – mighty, but small. So we will be rethinking this during this year. -*Kathleen Keefer, PWP moderator*

North Central Iowa

North Central Iowa PWP is regrouping and looking forward to planning the upcoming PWP Spring Gathering.

-*Linda Hora, PWP moderator*

Northern Plains

Several PW groups in the congregation have reported an increase in younger women attending meetings and participating in activities. These PW groups reason that by "telling their story" about the need for more volunteers or PW activities within the church, i.e. pie social, salad luncheons, will stop. Several younger women have stepped up to help out. Conversation between both generations of Presbyterian women ensued at the events and meeting attendance has increased. On the Presbytery level, these increases have reflected in more inquiries and more participation by invite at the congregation level into Presbytery activities. This has been inspiring for PW on both the congregation and Presbytery levels. -*Lana Schultz, PWP moderator*

Northern Waters

The women have been busy. The cold weather brings concern for the homeless. Many people in our towns have started warming houses. These are public spaces in libraries, old fire halls, old churches, that are open to anyone needing a warm place to spend time. These are open at night. The night temperature threshold is determined by the location, usually 32-0 degrees. Opening times vary according to the rules set up in each town, usually starting at 8-10 pm and closing at 6-8 am. Warm coffee, tea or cocoa are available along with snacks. These are not a place to sleep, just a place to stay warm. PW's help with donations, monetary or items needed to replenish supplies and food used.

Our Mission Pledge revealed 4 churches that are unable to continue to have a PW organization, most of these were due to the aging population of the church. A letter was sent reminding the women that they are always welcome to attend any events sponsored by Presbyterian Women. -*Janice Letsos, PWP moderator*

Prospect Hill

The Presbyterian Women of Prospect Hill held their Fall Gathering at Memorial Presbyterian Church, Cherokee, IA, on September 23rd, 2019. The theme of the gathering was the same as the theme from the summer Synod Gathering held at Ames, - "*Out of the believer's heart shall flow streams of living water*". Reverend Janis Christensen, pastor of Presbyterian United Church of Christ, Le Mars, led the worship service. Our guest speaker was Diane Daniels from Lakeside Presbyterian Church, Storm Lake. She spoke about "*Our Place*", a place for connecting cultures and "SALUD", a multi-cultural health coalition in Storm Lake. 50% of the offering was sent to "*Our Place*" and 50% to the Scholarship Fund at Lakeshore Center at Okoboji.

Audrey Fenton from Faith United Presbyterian Church, Sioux City and Gladys Schmidt from First Presbyterian Church, Manning gave an overview of the 2019-2020 PW/Horizons Bible Study, *"Love Carved in Stone"* a study based on the Ten Commandments (or Words) and how they are described.

The afternoon session included a Cracker Barrel Workshop where ideas were shared and a Hands-On Workshop where 49 pillowcases were decorated. Gladys Schmidt delivered the pillowcases to Lutheran Services of Iowa, a foster care and adoption service in Denison where they were overjoyed to receive them.

Five ladies who attended the Synod Gathering presented a fun and delightful skit "Flood Times".

It was a special day of fellowship and spiritual enrichment for the women of our Presbytery. -Audrey Scholten, PWP moderator

South Dakota

PW met the second Thursday of each month. Meetings were held at 7:00 PM at the church and included a Bible study (from the Horizons magazine), a business meeting, and fellowship. God's Promise (I Am With You) was used January-May. Love Carved in Stone (the Ten Words) was used September-December.

Members gave to the Birthday Offering and the Thank Offering. A general offering and Fellowship of the Least Coin offering were collected at each meeting. PW's Mission Pledge for 2019 was \$360. This includes \$70 given to PWP (PW in the Presbytery), \$30 to PWS (PW in the Synod), and \$260 to PWCh (PW Churchwide).

Mission has been the focus of local and national PW. We gave to the Thank Offering and Birthday Offering. Two holiday meals from PARS were purchased. A big project for 2019 was the Pathfinder Center, near Chamberlain, which helps victims of trafficking. Proceeds from the church rummage sale, and matching funds from the Session allowed a donation of over \$6,000 to be sent.

"Treat money" collected during Sunday fellowship time was put in the Camp/gathering fund. PW gave 6 "care baskets" (or gift bags) to those who were hospitalized or injured. -Mary Jenner, PWP moderator

Twin Cities

This is what happened in the Fall for the Twin Cities PW Team. We had a wonderful Fall Gathering in October at First Presbyterian Church in Kasson MN. We had a wonderful speaker from the DHS/ICE (government) talk about laws of Refugees and Immigrants and detention . What the family's go through and what help we can do in prayers and faith.

In the spring we are having a Spring Gathering at Central Presbyterian Church in St Paul, MN

April 25 2020. We will continue to talk about Refugees and Immigrants with more speakers about what the PW can help with for the families and give them support with prayers and faith. -Michele Gallick, PWP moderator

Winnebago

We had a fall gathering in DePere on Oct. 5, 2019. The ladies there have a strong sewing group, so they planned various stations with projects for us to work on. However, we had a very poor turnout. There was only 2 persons that were not on the coordinating team that came. We have decided that from now on, any meetings for PW at the Presbytery level will happen during Presbytery meetings. That way, women who no longer drive could come with their pastor or others from their churches who are attending Presbytery. Our next Presbytery meeting is on Feb. 8th and the planning committee will meet then and try to plan a spring gathering at the May Presbytery meeting.

We have many churches that no longer have a PW group. And those who do, have members who are in their 60's and older. I'm sorry our news isn't better. -Brenda Breitner, PWP co-moderator

Please let me (Kathleen Keefer) know if there are changes in your PW in the Congregation leadership. I always want to be sure that everyone who wants a copy of The Sower is able to get one. Please forward the Sower to **all women** (not just those who are active in PW Circles or groups!) in your congregation.

Perhaps when see what we are doing, they will want to join us!!



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www.presbyterianwomen.org

Here is a link to the Who-Ya-Gonna-Call? The Who's Who at PW National

https://www.lakesandprairies.org/files/448_pw_national_staff.pdf

The Synod of Lakes and Prairies website, find a link to "The Sower" there too.

<http://www.lakesandprairies.org/>

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