



# The Sower



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

February, 2021

Editor: Kathleen Keefer

### **Moderator's Musings:**

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Winter is here. As I'm writing this, a freezing drizzle is falling in Hastings, Nebraska, coating the roads and sidewalks with a layer of ice. Driving and walking are hazardous and the temperature is falling. Definitely winter. It is not my favorite season, simply because it is cold and the weather is often dangerous.

But there is an upside to having to stay home. I get more things done - cooking and baking, projects that were started and never finished, and reading (yay, reading). I'll soon be painting the walls in a room that I'm repurposing. I have friendship bread starter that will need to be used to bake bread tomorrow. I'm going to make some food to freeze, so that I can just take it out and heat it up when I need a meal. And did I mention that I can read more books?

Many of us have seasons where we draw in on ourselves and work on long-delayed things that "should" have been done earlier, but that were put off. These are times for doing things, yes, but also for introspection and ordering our lives as we really want them to be. They are times to think about what is going on in our lives and if we want to continue on the same path. A recent happening in my own life has put me on a new path and I'm having to figure out what I want and how to get that done. These are times when we can draw on the strength of our faith to let us know that God will be with us always, no matter how things change or stay the same.

As I bake or paint or read, I know that God is with me, wrapping me in loving arms, shielding me from harm. I take comfort in knowing that and knowing that it is the same for others, too. May it be a comfort to you also.

Sue Medsker-Nedderman  
Moderator

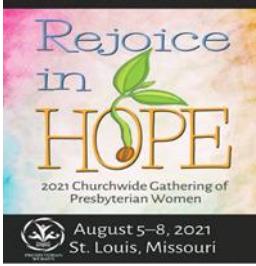
\*Sketch of the Sower comes from: California's Ancient Comucopia – The Weston A. Price Foundation

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

PW, Inc. has received **\$3041.26** from Amazon Smiles as of 11/20/20. So much for so little!!! Please continue to use this for eligible shopping on Amazon.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS for the 2022 Synod Gathering – June 16-19, 2022 – at the Hilton Garden Inn in Sioux City, Iowa.**

SAVE THE DATE!



## CHURCHWIDE NEWS:

A final decision has not yet been made regarding the Triennial Churchwide Gathering scheduled for August, 2021. The Administrative Committee of the Board of Directors met in December, but a decision could not be reached as the

information needed had not been available. As of today, February 3, 2021, that information still has not been received. Please keep making plans as though it were going to happen. As your Synod Representative, I will let you know as soon as I know!

## ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING IS STILL AVAILABLE!

Zoom video-conferencing presents an option for PW coordinating teams to meet, stay connected and be supportive to one another in our continuing days of social distancing. Our PW Synod renewed its Zoom services.



The PW Synod Coordinating Team has agreed to offer use of its licensed Zoom account to PW coordinating teams, circles, committees for group meetings or bible study should your church not have its own Zoom account. Please contact Lana Schultz (lanaj0@casselton.net) if you wish to schedule a zoom meeting for your PW.

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

## God's Light

*Mighty God, grant us courage. When we quake on the brink of unknown; when we fear the unfamiliar, when we are stymied by the unchanged, grant us courage. Remind us of your presence, that we might proceed with boldness and courage. And rouse us to work, according to your will, deliverer of this day and Hope of our tomorrow. Amen.*



I don't remember where I saw this, but it spoke to my heart! In these unprecedeted times, we need to stay strong in our Faith, knowing that we are all in God's hands. All of us, we need to pray for forgiveness and we need to pray that we can forgive those who seek to destroy, because, yes, these are creations of God also. We need to pray that God's Light overpowers the darkness in ours and other's lives, in hearts, in minds. We need to remember that God did not create fear. When we let God's light shine through us, then we heal not only ourselves, but others who see the light. We are strong, we are survivors, we will get through the bad and the good, because we are united with the only one who has absolute power! Hope Dougherty, Moderator of Northern Waters PW Presbytery

**Congratulations** to Kathleen Keefer on her nomination as Vice Moderator on Churchwide's Board of Directors. With pride and support for her nomination, we wish her every success and lift her up in leading Presbyterian Women everywhere through "a time for every matter under heaven." Ecc. 3:1.



Note from Kathleen: If you would like me to offer presentations for Circle or Gatherings, please be in touch with me: [kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com) I would love to "travel" to see you via Zoom.

# THESE DAYS

Daily Devotions for Living by Faith

From *These Days*, "Turning" by Paddy Eastwood (March 16, 2021)

*Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. Psalm 51:1*

In this season of Lent, we are called to repent.

"Repentance" means both a turning from and a turning to. When we repent, we turn away from sin and darkness, from self-serving attitudes and behavior, and turn toward the light, committing ourselves to a life lived in and with Jesus Christ, a life of purpose and service. Trusting in God's steadfast love, we can acknowledge the brokenness of our lives and of the society in which we live and recommit ourselves to Jesus Christ and the life to which he calls us. Merciful God, keep us oriented toward the light of Jesus Christ.

"For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it." *The Hill We Climb*, by Amanda Gorman, National Youth Poet Laureate.



Each of us can participate in THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE LEAST COIN (FLC) movement by regularly praying for peace, justice and reconciliation, and setting aside your least coins and allowing your everyday

life and faith to be richly blessed! 18 FLC grants, each up to \$4,000, were gifted in 2020 to women's and children's programs in Northern Ghana, Zambia, Tanzania, USA, Philippines, Bangladesh, Japan, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, East Timor, France, Palestine, Serbia, Chile, Puerto Rico, Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Horizons Magazine*, November/December 2020 (pgs. 24-26).

**Justice & Peace** has a Book Club which meets the second Monday every other month. The next Zoom Book Club chat is February 8 at either 12:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. We will be reviewing the book (also movie) Just Mercy. Anyone can join in all or some of these Book Club events. If interested, please contact Kathleen Keefer: [kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com)

Please see the attached flyer for more information and to share about upcoming books and possible studies for next year.

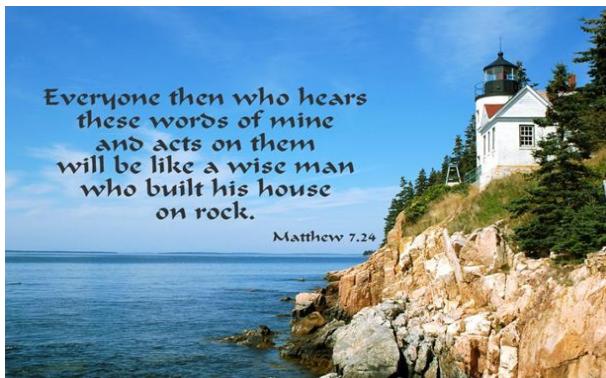
## Our Native American Concerns Committee

**is now in its 7<sup>th</sup> Book Study.** Marilyn Stone facilitates this study, every other week, on the book "Beneath the Same Stars" by Phyllis Cole-Dai. Everyone is welcome to participate by Zoom at either 1:30 p.m. or 6:30 p.m. by contacting Marilyn Stone [mmstone52@att.net](mailto:mmstone52@att.net). In March, the book study at 6:30 p.m. will welcome a visit from the book's author. Please see the attached flyer for more information and to share!

["Qualities That Define a Good Leader \(13 Personal Traits\)"](#) by Lauren Clarke, 6Q Blog The thirteen leadership qualities that every good leader should strive for, are:

- Honesty
- Delegate
- Communication
- Confidence
- Commitment
- Positive attitude
- Creativity
- Inspire
- Empathy
- Accountability
- Enthusiastic
- Focus and drive
- Responsible

These qualities are the foundation of a good leadership. While some of these leadership qualities may be more naturally present in the personality of a leader, it is definitely something you can develop and strengthen over time.



Dear Lord  
Help me to be quiet and still  
and to wait on You...

To listen for Your Voice,  
calling in the wilderness of life

May Your Spirit be both My Rock and My Shield

That I may walk in your Light  
and live in Your Truth

This day and every day  
Amen

--Elizabeth Mills, *In the Stillness*

### Scripture

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell—and great was its fall!”

--Matthew

7:24-27



### Reflection on Scripture

Matthew 7:24-27

The difference between the “wise” and the “foolish” builders is not a matter of intellect, but whether they are willing to hear in Jesus’ words the revelation of God’s will, and to act on them. ...a provocative picture is called to mind, showing the crucial difference between doing and not doing the will of God.

—M. Eugene Boring, Brite Divinity School

### Thoughts

God sent Jesus to ignite in us a vision of the best of all possible worlds, and to show us that we could live there.

Jesus taught that life is more than having our own way, or getting what this world has to offer. He reminded us that everything we need for health and wellbeing is supplied in abundance by God. He reminded us that God surrounds us with people to love and enjoy, and to partner with in establishing peace and justice. And at the end, Jesus showed us that not even death can separate us, for in the world built on God’s design, all will realize that God-created life never ends.

The best of all possible worlds is not what we have today. The best of all possible worlds is not anything we are capable of designing by ourselves. The best of all possible worlds is the one that God designs and the one that Jesus modeled for us.

The promises of God in Jesus are sure, not like the shifting sands of the contemporary scene. We can be part of building a new future as we build on the rock.

—Barbara Todd



**Consider...**while you read over the words to three verses of the hymn “*How Firm a Foundation*,” the goodness of God in establishing a good future upon the teaching of Jesus:

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,  
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!  
What more can He say than to you He hath said,  
to you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?  
“Fear not! I am with thee; O be not dismayed,  
for I am Thy God and will still give thee aid.  
I’ll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,  
upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.”  
“The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,  
I will not, I will not desert to his foes.  
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,  
I’ll never, no never, no never forsake!”

--found in Rippon’s *Selection of Hymns*, 1787

**Benediction:** In all your doings, be you blessed. It has been given you to usher in a world unseen, unheard, yet truly there.

ACIM

--Schucman and Thetford,



## The incalculable loss of Native American elders



The coronavirus has ripped through Native American communities at a ferocious pace, and the death of many elders [is inflicting an incalculable toll on the languages and traditions that are passed on through the generations.](#)

“It’s like we’re having a cultural book-burning,” said Jason Salsman, a spokesman for the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in eastern Oklahoma. “We’re losing a historical record, encyclopedias. One day soon, there won’t be anybody to pass this knowledge down.”

My colleague Jack Healy, who covers rural America, writes that among the Muscogee elders who have died were *mikos*, traditional leaders who knew how to prepare for annual green-corn ceremonies and how to stoke sacred fires their ancestors had carried to Oklahoma on the Trail of Tears. The virus has claimed fluent Choctaw speakers, a Tulalip family matriarch, and members of the American Indian Movement, a group founded in 1968 that became the country’s most radical and prominent civil rights organization for American Indians.

The virus has killed Native Americans at roughly twice the rate of white people, and the disparity is highlighting what critics call a tattered health system and generations of harm and broken promises by the U.S. government.

Now, tribal nations and volunteer groups are trying to protect their elders by delivering meals and medical supplies, and putting elders and fluent Indigenous language speakers at the head of the line for vaccinations.

But the effort is facing huge obstacles. There is deep mistrust of the government in a generation that was subjected without consent to medical testing, shipped off to boarding schools and punished for speaking their own language in a decades-long campaign of forced assimilation. NYT, January 12, 2021, Jack Healy

Click here to go to the full article: [Tribal Elders Are Dying From the Pandemic, Causing a Cultural Crisis for American Indians - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

## Peace Presbyterian Church Twin Cities:



We have been very busy at church with making masks. We turned our little library in the church to a pantry for families in the community. In March, we went to Sunday morning church service on zoom and Facebook. In missions we have been supporting Alliance Housings with other groups to fund rent assistance for the families they serve.

We have been trying to keep a positive outlook for the church family and the community too.

Peace Michele Gallick Leader

## Linn PW in Lake Geneva Wi,

Milwaukee presbytery has initiated a spiritual practice which was explained in an article in the Presbyterians Today Jan/Feb issue. It was the star that led the Magi to the manger on Epiphany. The Epiphany Star Words are unassuming words written on unassuming cardboard stars.

Random words are written on these stars. A list of 100 random words were compiled. Individuals select stars randomly by selecting a number between 1 and 100, the corresponding word is written on a star for them.

These stars are then posted in your home where they can be easily seen daily. These words are to be prayed over, focused on, and the Holy Spirit

allowed to lead you somewhere unexpected over the next year. The mystery is the path on which this word - your word- may lead.

The response has been gratifying and has extended beyond the church to neighbors and extended family. If the results are affirmative, new words may be chosen for another year.

Helen McMasters, Milwaukee Presbytery



**John Knox Presbyterian Women dedicated PDA Gift of the Heart School Kits at their fall 2020 Zoom gathering. The school bags had been already been sewn by the Frankville, IA PW using fabric leftover from a previous JKPW project. Congregational PWs either collected school supplies for donation locally or contributed monetarily to the Moderator for purchasing supplies to fill the bags. A total of 64 school kits were completed. One boxful was sent directly to PDA (Ferncliff) and the remainder were sent directly to schools in the Cedar Rapids, IA area that was hit hard by the derecho this past summer. They were distributed through the principal at Johnson STEAM**



Academy, a contact recommended to us by Pastor Kristin Hutson who worked with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance in the area. Gracious thank yous have been received.

It was also noted that the moderator received a boxful of darling dresses from Judy Timmens (First Presbyterian PW, Highlandville, WI) so those were sent to the Little Dresses for Africa organization for distribution.



**Caring** is a gift you give the other person. And Christian women are good at caring. The pain that sometimes results is a value-added premium to let you know that you are alive and well, that you still have a tender heart. Sympathy is nothing other than your pain in my heart.

We cannot always head off disaster. Sometimes we discover that the light at the end of the tunnel really is the headlight of an oncoming train. Even so, I've found that the best thing to hold on to in this life is each other. When even that fails, we can be assured that God is holding on to us.

I try to take the cold water thrown upon me, heat it with enthusiasm, and use the steam to push ahead. On the long journey, I seek to love and to live in the strength of the Lord. At the end of each day, before turning down the covers, I turn all my problems over to the Holy Spirit. I'm grateful the Holy Spirit stay up late to

handle them. Then I lay down, secure in the knowledge that broken things become blessed things if I let Christ do the mending!

~ written by Barbara Johnson in "Joy for a Woman's Soul: Promises to Refresh Your Spirit"



## The First Presbyterian Church of Luverne

PW celebrated Mission Sunday Emphasis on November 15. Because of COVID-19, the soup and dessert meal after the service was changed to a "soupless" Soup Dinner! People could contribute to the fundraiser instead of the normal free will offering for the meal. Also the pictures are a display of items from the congregation that were donated to go to local places in the area. The offering (\$760.00) was split between the local Food Shelf, Child Guide, and PDA. A unique way of doing things but it turned out very well!



Presbytery of Minnesota Valleys; Gloria Rust, PW Moderator

They say that a picture is worth a thousand words!  
Here are two new advertisements produced by the  
United Nations – for more information:  
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/end-violence-against-women>

Please feel free to share these images!



## Justice & Peace – Violence Against Women.

We know that violence against women is a continuing problem around the world. One in three women experience violence, physical and sexual during their lifetime. I happened to be rereading old Horizons Magazines and I read an article about Guatemalan women and their struggle with Intimate Partner Violence (IPV). I was moved by what they learned when they came together to combat sexual violence from a faith-based perspective. The article was written by Emily Wilkes who attended a mission trip to Guatemala. "I learned in Guatemala that reconciliation is first an inner process of recognizing God within us – recognizing that we, as women, also bear the image of God. When we are reconciled to the beauty of God within us, our reality comes into focus. We see that we are not alone in our experiences. We see that we deserve more than to be trapped in a cycle of violence. We begin to recognize when others are trapped and seek to disrupt the violence internalized within others. When we see the image of God in ourselves, the image of God in the other comes into sharper focus. We see beauty. We see that violence is not what God wills for us. In Guatemala, our hearts were cracked open in heartbreak, filled with beauty and hope, *esparando* (waiting and hoping) for God to weave our hearts together in solidarity and love. *From Horizons Magazine, January - February, 2016 p.16*

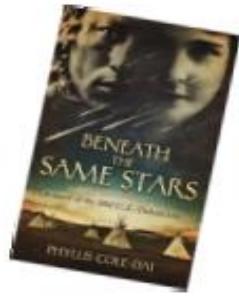
The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the United Nations will continue this year. Last year, it was canceled at the last minute due to the pandemic. This year it will be virtual. PW has asked those who were supposed go last year, to attend virtually this year and most agreed. The dates of the CSW – 65 are March 15 through March 26. There will be training for the PW and PCUSA delegates on March 13<sup>th</sup> and training through Ecumenical Women on March 14<sup>th</sup>. I will again be attending, though not as a PW delegate but as a PCUSA or Board delegate (TBD). And again, I would love to present information to your groups about the CSW and what I has accomplished. During this time of Zoom meetings, it is especially easy to participate with you no matter how far away you are from Omaha!! I look forward to speaking with your circles, PWP Gatherings, etc. [kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com)

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world. Harriet Tubman

Register today to join a book study . . .

***Beneath the Same Stars:***  
*A novel of the 1862 U.S. – Dakota War*

by Phyllis Cole-Dai



This book study is sponsored by Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and led by members of the PWS Native American Concerns Committee.

**It is open to interested women and men across the synod,  
via Zoom videoconferencing (using computer or phone)**

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

**Remaining dates: February 1, February 15, March 1, March 15  
Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)  
Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)**

**Author, Phyllis Cole Dai will join us on March 15 at 6:30 PM**



**Synopsis:** *August 18, 1862.* On the Sioux reservation in southwestern Minnesota, Indians desperate for food and freedom rise up against whites in the region. Sarah Wakefield, the wife of a physician, is taken captive with her two babies. Their fate falls into the hands of the warrior Ćaske, with whom she has slim acquaintance. As war rages, little does she know how entwined their lives will become.

*Beneath the Same Stars* is the gripping story of two people, caught between worlds, who are willing to do almost anything to defend those they care about—including each other. But the drama is bigger than themselves. Tragic forces have been set in motion....



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

**Provide the following information:**

- Email address
- Presbytery

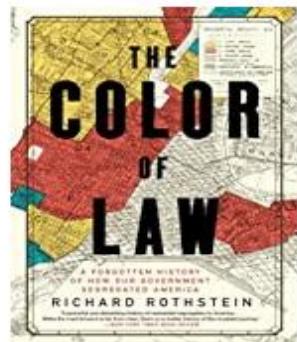
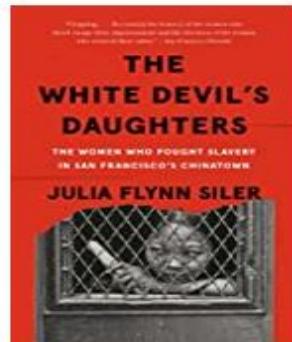
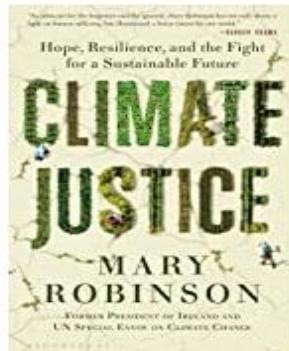
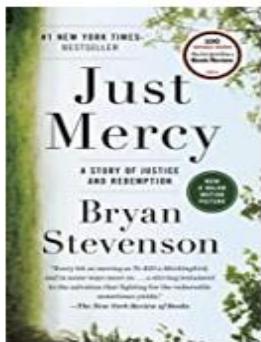
- Name
- Phone #
- Afternoon or evening study preference

# THE SYNOD OF LAKES AND PRAIRIES PRESENTS...

## PW JUSTICE AND PEACE BOOK STUDY GROUP (aka BOOK CLUB)

- Read a new book every two months
- **Receive study guides or questions for each book to inform your reading**
  - Meet via Zoom for a two-hour discussion

### Books remaining for the 2020-2021 season:



The books are all recommended by Presbyterian Women. The book Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson will be discussed on February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021. There will be two times to join the Zoom, 12:30 – 2:30 pm and 6:30 – 8:30 pm (Central Time). You must be registered to receive the study questions and to join the call due to Zoom protocol. Contact Kathleen Keefer at: [kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com)

You do not need to commit to participate in the next 4 book discussions as you will register for each one separately.

The "CLUB" is open to all regardless of gender.

Possible Books for 2021-2022: Decolonizing Wealth: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal Divides and Restore Balance by Edgar Villanueva (suggested by Co-Moderators of PC(USA)); Caste by Isabel Wilkerson; Trust Women: A Progressive Christian Argument for Reproductive Justice by Rebecca Todd Peters; Hillbilly Elegy by J. D. Vance; White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo and Poverty in America by John Iceland Some of these are from the PW list, others are not! If you know of a book we should read, please let me know!!

**Take the Pledge:** I commit to Thursdays in Black. In solidarity, in protest, in mourning, for awareness and in hope. By supporting Thursdays in Black, I stand in solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in any form. In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form. In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence. For awareness and knowledge about the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence. In the hope that a different reality is possible. Go to: <https://www.ecumenicalwomenn.org/> Click on the Thursdays in Black link, scroll down to take the pledge. Be sure to enter Presbyterian Women as your organization.



Presbyterian Women (PW) is the national women's organization of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). With more than 300,000 members and 30 years as an organization, PW is organized at all levels of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Learn more about PW and consider joining your local group. It's a good read at our website.

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

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

[https://www.lakesandprairies.org/files/448\\_pw\\_national\\_staff.pdf](https://www.lakesandprairies.org/files/448_pw_national_staff.pdf)

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

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

"Like" Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies on Facebook!!!

"The Sower" publishing dates are January, April, July & October. If you have an article or would like to have an article or information on any particular subject, please send the Editor your article or question by/before the first of each of the above cited months. [thesower.slap@yahoo.com](mailto:thesower.slap@yahoo.com)

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