



The Sower

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



August, 2023

Kathleen Keefer, Editor

Moderator's Musings:

Greetings from South Dakota!

I have been busy with Presbytery meetings, PW Presbytery meetings and serving pulpit supply in my presbytery. I do love to travel, so if your group is holding a fall gathering or get-together, let me know! I'd love to be a guest and meet more of my PW sisters in the Synod face-to-face.

At the last Co-ordinating Team meeting we approved and put into the bylaws a new position: Facebook Coordinator. This person will serve under the Communications Committee and will be the administrator of our FB page: receiving, approving, and posting all items to our Facebook page from the PW groups in our Synod.

Please contact me if you are willing to serve in this position or know someone who is qualified.

Other opportunities to serve and have fun doing it are on the Synod Gathering Committee. I am so excited to announce that Maggie Horak and I have begun the process and have a tentative location lined up in Watertown, S.D. Just waiting for room confirmations before we sign a contract.

We have committee chairs lined up for music, a pre-gathering tour, registration, and others, but we need a chair to arrange four workshop leaders and to work on publicity and other published materials such as bulletins and registration booklets. Of course, there are also other committees we will need help with, such as hospitality and decorating. If you are interested in helping with any of these committees or know of any resource for speakers or workshop leaders, please contact Maggie or me. This is going to be so much fun! Don't miss out on the opportunity to be in on the ground floor.

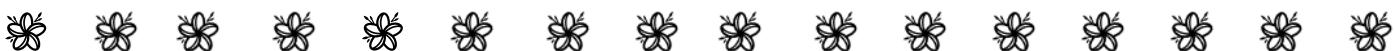
Also, Kathleen Keefer and I are going to start a Synod-wide monthly Zoom meeting in September for any and all women in our Synod to meet and discuss issues pertinent to our life and times in the church. We call it the *Synod Sit and Sip*. You are invited to log in with your choice of beverage as we discuss topics such as Gun Violence, Hospitality, Immigration, Women's Access to Healthcare, Racism and White Privilege, LGBTQIA+ Issues, and more. We will pick the first topic with a book or article to read or a movie to watch prior to the meeting to get our conversations flowing. Then it will be up to you to direct where our discussions go.

As Presbyterian Women, we have a thirst for knowledge and a love of community service/mission work, and we can support each other as we learn the truth and facts and delve into these issues in depth in a non-threatening format where all sides will be heard and respected. Because that is what we Presbyterians do, and I am so proud to call myself a Presbyterian.

God's blessings on you all,

Louise Van Poll

Synod Moderator



EXCITING NEWS!! PWSCT is looking for **volunteers to serve on the 2025 Synod Gathering Committee**. Still needed: workshop chair; help with publicity, registration and Gathering bulletin, worship bulletins. If interested, contact PWS Moderator, Louise Van Poll (lcvanpoll@gmail.com) with your ideas, suggestions, and willingness to serve.

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TOGETHER IN SERVICE

By Pat McKisson, Committee Chair

'Answering the call to be the hands and feet of Christ in the World.'

Have you ever thought how the donations you make to CWS can make such a difference! Here is an example of what all contributions can accomplish. Below is CSW's first quarter update on the work they have accomplished with your help.



Thank you for being the hands and feet of Christ!

When you assemble CWS Kits, host a Best Gift event or a Blanket Sunday offering, you are helping others and sharing God's love. We've gathered a few recent stories to share how you are bringing hope, help and a physical reminder of God's love to neighbors around the world. With gratitude, Matthew Stevens, Director of Congregational Campaigns
Thanks for all you do!

1) You are transforming lives through CWS Kits and Blankets

During 2022, your participation in this life-giving work has stretched across the globe. Here is just a sampling of where CWS Kits and Blankets have been shared with grateful recipients in the United States and with our neighbors in US territories and other countries.

U.S.A. Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Washington DC, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky
Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, No. Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio

Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington

Global Armenia, Georgia, Moldova

Responding to Disaster

When a natural disaster happens, the road to recovery and safety may be a long one, and no one should walk it alone. Generous donors walk alongside our neighbors to ensure they have the supplies they need. Kits distributed to disaster relief victims include:

Clean Up Buckets, Hygiene Kits, Period Packs, Blankets, and School Kits

Kits were distributed for California Fire Response, Florida Hurricane Ian Response, Kentucky Flooding Response, and Mississippi Flooding Response.

Serving Neighbors who are Homeless

When tough times happen, a kind and loving response makes a difference. That's why the CWS Blankets and Kits program was created—to remind someone facing a difficult time that they are not alone. Caring donors ensure that someone who needs comfort not only receives a warm blanket and other supplies they might need, but they are also given unconditional kindness, respect, dignity, and love.

Kits distributed to our unsheltered neighbors include:

Hygiene Kits, Period Packs, and Blankets.

Kits were distributed in Louisiana, Maine, No. Carolina, Ohio, Utah, and Washington.

Welcoming New Neighbors

When neighbors around the world are forced to leave their homes and begin a new life in various parts of the United States, they often travel with a few materials possessions. Compassionate donors help welcome our newly arriving neighbors and provide essentials like food, water, blankets, and hygiene supplies.

Kits distributed to our new neighbors include:

Hygiene Kits, Welcome Backpacks, Blankets, and Period Packs.

Kits were distributed in Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia..

Caring for Our Communities

The desire to reach out and build relationships within the local community by sharing CWS Kits and Blankets are two of the many ways our generous donors share a hope-filled world.

Kits distributed to our local communities include:

Hygiene, Welcome Backpacks, Blankets, Period Packs, School Kits, and Clean-Up Buckets.

Kits were distributed in Arizona, California, District of Columbia, Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Virginia..

Kits were distributed in Arkansas, Colorado, No. Carolina, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Texas, and Washington.

Supporting Students' Education

Starting a new school year is exciting, but for children who don't have school supplies, it can also be terrifying. That's where compassionate donors come in---you share your resources with children so they can start the school year with the supplies they need to thrive.

Kits were distributed to local partners include:

Welcome Backpacks, School Kits, and Period Packs.

Kits were distributed in Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, No. Carolina, Ohio, New York, and Texas.

Sharing Compassion and Hope. CWS Blankets/Testimonial

Mary Catherine has worked for CWS for 20 years. As a mother of two, she fondly remembers wrapping her children in a cozy, warm blanket. That same feeling of warmth and love is felt each time she sees our neighbors wrap themselves in a CWS Blanket.

By providing a CWS Blanket for less than \$10, you provide comfort and concern for our vulnerable neighbors in need.

Mary Catherine has seen our blankets on cots in shelters after a disaster or used to hang to make a partition between two areas in a refugee camp. She has seen families wrap all of their belongings into a blanket as a makeshift suitcase.

She is grateful for everyone who supports CWS Blankets ministry because you are giving a tangible sign of compassion and hope.

CWS Superheroes/Spiderman's Story

Spiderman is one of CWS' youngest supporters. Although he doesn't wear a cape, like many of the superheroes we know, his actions are heroic.

Almost everyone is familiar with Batman, Superman, and other popular superheroes.

But not all superheroes wear capes...

"My grandma teaches me to love all people. She helps with the blanket program at our church," shared one of CWS' youngest supporters. A nine-year-old superhero in the making, Spiderman.

After many years of, faithfully, hosting a Blanket Sunday and making CWS Kits—Spiderman's church requested blankets and kits to share with the hundreds of individuals and families in their community who are in need.

"I like helping out at our church. It's fun and important." He said. "This year, I get to help her pass out the blankets to other people!"

Some of those people are children, like Spiderman. And he wants them to know how much he and others care. "I just want to make sure the other kids have everything they need."

Each year, Spiderman and others at his church share a meal and offer essential items like CWS blankets and kits to neighbors in need. As they share love they are also restoring hope—just like a superhero.

TOGETHER IN SERVICE

By Pat McKisson

'Answering the call to be the hands and feet of Christ in the World.'

ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE WITH GOD'S HELP: *The story of Kara and her dream.*"

My Story:

I met Kara VanderKamp, Founder, President, and Executive Director of Remember Niger Coalition, when she came to my church in 2009. After hearing her message I told her to 'sign me up' to volunteer my time and energy to her cause. I served on the first board of directors and have taken 3 trips to Niger to visit the schools. I helped establish the Sponsorship program, which started with 30 sponsors in 2009 and now in 2023 there are over 391. My experience with Remember Niger has been nothing but fulfilling, motivating, and rewarding.

Kara's Story:

Kara is the executive director of the Remember Niger Coalition, which was founded in 2009, after she spent two years living in Niger and working as an educational consultant.

She has a master's degree in international educational development from Teacher's College, Columbia University, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

Her dream started in October 2008, when Kara returned from a three-year assignment with the PC(USA) in Niger, West Africa, where she worked with the Evangelical Church of Niger as an educational consultant. Her experience in Africa also included a teaching assignment in Kenya with the Reformed Church in America, just before her appointment to Niger.

Inspired by her Nigerien colleagues' vision to positively transform their communities and country through education, Kara assisted in the opening of two new primary schools. After her years in Niger, Kara saw that there were more community leaders and members who had the desire to create high quality schools for their children. It also became



clear that they would need more partners and more funding in order to make their plans a reality. Kara returned to the United States and started RNC with the help of dedicated and compassionate partners.

She now lives in Niger. In this way, she is able to spend more time interacting and building partner relationships as well as being better situated to monitor and evaluate the projects.

The Mission of RNC is *Unifying people and mobilizing resources to expand quality educational opportunities in Niger.*

RNC accomplishes this mission by supporting and empowering leaders in Niger in their endeavor to establish and improve the quality of schools.

Where they began:

In 2009: 3 school communities with 400 students.

- 1) Tsibiri which was a primary school and the only boarding school.
- 2) Zinder which had Pre-K only.
- 3) Aguié which had Pre-K only.

Where they are:

In 2022: 18 primary and secondary school communities with over 4,000 students

Remember Niger partners with community leaders who seek to establish high-quality schools for children and youth in their communities. Partners own and operate their schools, which means they are invested in and committed to their success.

Remember Niger works to ensure that our partners have the tools and infrastructure they need to be successful. They do this by strengthening the capacity of the partner schools through the construction of school buildings, teacher training, the establishment of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) resource centers with libraries, computers and other resources, a healthy meals program, solar powered well construction, and more.

Students come from a variety of family situations and religious backgrounds. There are economic diversity within each of the schools we support. There are those students and families who can afford to pay tuition, but also those who cannot such as well as disadvantaged students, including orphans, students with disabilities and girls.

Every year, nearly 250 students graduate and for the past nine years, the schools have had a 90% pass rate on the national exam students must pass to matriculate to middle school.

There is so much more to say about the work of Remember Niger. So, if you are interested in learning more visit their website at www.rememberniger.org.

MISSION HELP NEEDED FOR GOD'S CHILDREN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN UGANDA

by Pat McKisson, Chair of TIS

Can you help Missouri River Valley P.W. be the hands of feet of God in helping their neighbor in our world?



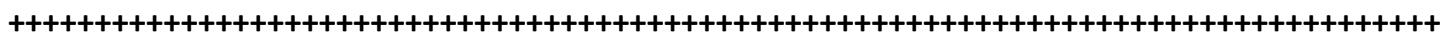
It is the intent of the P.W. of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Together in Service committee to help in our communities and throughout the world by letting everyone know of different needs and projects. Sometimes, our sisters in Christ have a mission that they are committed to but find they could use some extra help. That is why we all are a part of P.W. We are one in Christ and if we can help one another, that is what we do.

Here is how you can help.

Missouri River Valley supports a school in Uganda and the girls attending are reaching the age where they are in need of sanitary products. The school is in a remote village and Days4Girls is not interested in supporting them. We have sent items to them before, but now we don't have the women to make them. Can any of your P.W. groups help?

We need: washable/reusable sanitary pads. No need to have bags/backpacks, just the pads. We will purchase the underwear and make the cycle calendars to send with them. We have a nurse at the school who does the training. Thanks so much!! Kathleen Keefer

[- kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com](mailto:kathleenkeefer20@gmail.com)



OPENINGS ON THE PW SYNOD COORDINATING TEAM

SCT OFFICER POSITIONS OPEN TO ALL PW SLAP

The PWS Search Committee is looking for **ONE MORE search committee member**: from Central Nebraska, Dakota, Homestead, Northern Plains or South Dakota. If you or someone you know would be interested in any of this open position, please contact Hope Dougherty at hdougherty2018@gmail.com and Susie Amos at kunshisusie@yahoo.com.



SCT COORDINATOR POSITIONS OPEN TO ALL PWP MODERATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

The PWSCT is looking for a **Facebook Coordinator**. The Facebook Coordinator will receive and approve all items to be posted. If you or someone you know would be interested in this position, please contact PWS Moderator, Louise Van Poll at lcvanpoll@gmail.com

Thank you to **PWS Together in Service Committee**—Pat McKisson from Twin Cities Presbytery, Audrey Fenton from Prospect Hill Presbytery and Janine Brandt from John Knox Presbytery—for creating and sharing the first **TOGETHER IN SERVICE MISSION BOOKLET**. This is a wonderful mission resource with info on the Matthew 25 pill bottle collection, Gifts of the Heart kits, Hands-on projects, Shelter Care Kits for adults and children and Native American Concerns Partnerships. Updates will be made throughout the year so send any new mission ideas, suggestions, opportunities to your PW Presbytery Moderator and ask her to share them with the Together in Service committee. If you would like a copy of this Mission Booklet, ask your Presbytery Moderator to email or mail you a copy. **Just a note from the National Board – The Mission Relations Board is using this document as a template for a national directory/resource list for all PWs. Thank you to Pat, Audrey and Janine!! Great Job! Thank you also to our Representative to the Board of Directors and chair of the Mission Relations Board – Sue Ingels!!**



The New **SYNOD SIT & SIP** will be facilitated by Kathleen Keefer and Louise Van Poll. To see what this may look like, please read the Kitchen Table Talk article found in the November/December 2022 issue of Horizons Magazine, page 35. The first Sit & Sip is scheduled for September 30th at 11 AM Central Time. We will be discussing “What the PC(USA) says about reproductive justice.” You can register by contacting either Louise or Kathleen via their email addresses. Once you register, we will send you the documents used in the discussion.

Update from Bdecan Presbyterian Church, Tokio, ND by Donna Preston

Chandra Anderson started May 1st as their Ministries and Outreach Coordinator. She has been busy working with the food pantry and clothing closet, leading church worship, working with Nebraska Mission Team and 1 st Presbyterian Church – Rochester, MN Mission Team. and planning for backpack giveaway and fall events to include winter wear giveaway late Oct/early Nov.

The Nebraska Mission Team came from 2 Presbyterian churches in the Lincoln, Nebraska area. They had 2 adults and 6 middle school and high school youth.

They arrived the first part of June on a Saturday, attended worship and potluck on Sunday then held bingo and visited with church members and children. On Monday, they held a day of VBS for the children of the church. Tuesday, they did some service projects around church and clothing closet plus had a tour of the reservation and heard from Elder Louie Garcia about the culture. They returned home on Wednesday.

1st Presbyterian Church of Rochester, MN came the 3rd weekend of July providing hotdogs and chips for the people attending the food pantry giveaway. They also provided crafts for the children to take home. They had the opportunity to meet and visit with people from the reservation. Then Sunday, retired Pastor Larry Boutilie preached during worship followed by potluck lunch and activities for church members. VBS was provided for church children on Monday.

Both groups are planning to return next year to do VBS again. We have another group showing an interest in a 3rd VBS next summer.

A person will be visiting the church in the middle of October to start planning. It's exciting that now Chandra is working at the church, mission teams will be able to provide VBS for the children of the church and hopefully, there will be mission teams who can do some much-needed work at the church and food pantry. Anyone interested can find more info at bdecanchurch.com.

2023 USA MISSION EXPERIENCE—

I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. —Gen. 28:15

Congratulations to Julie Miller from John Knox Presbytery, Louella Vogt from Minnesota Valleys Presbytery and Kathleen Keefer from Missouri River Valley Presbytery! These women will represent our Synod at the U.S.A. Mission Experience from October 13-23, 2023. During this faith-deepening and relationship-building trip, the group will visit partners in Phoenix, Tucson, and the Arizona-Mexico border, focusing on immigration and refugee issues, violence against women and children throughout the immigration process, and challenges facing indigenous people living in Arizona. Keep the group and their journey in your prayers.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ARE BOLD – AROUND THE WORLD**CELEBRATING A BOLD PW**

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

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS GIVING

The **Honorary Life Membership** program honors that faithful servant of PW on every level and to the church with the gift of a certificate and pin. The Honorary Life Membership pin symbolizes values held dear by Presbyterian Women. In addition to recognizing those dedicated women among us, the funds derived from Honorary Life Memberships support the PW Leadership Development Grant Program in many forms. Grants from this program enable individuals to engage in leadership development opportunities such as the (1) Churchwide Gathering, (2) Ecumenical Advocacy Days and (3) the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Encourage your PWs to participate in the Honorary Life Membership program.

**DELVING INTO JUSTICE**

The Justice & Peace Book Discussion Group continues to meet online from 5:30-7:30 p.m. (Central Time). You can register at presbyterianwomen.org/justice to join in the book discussions.

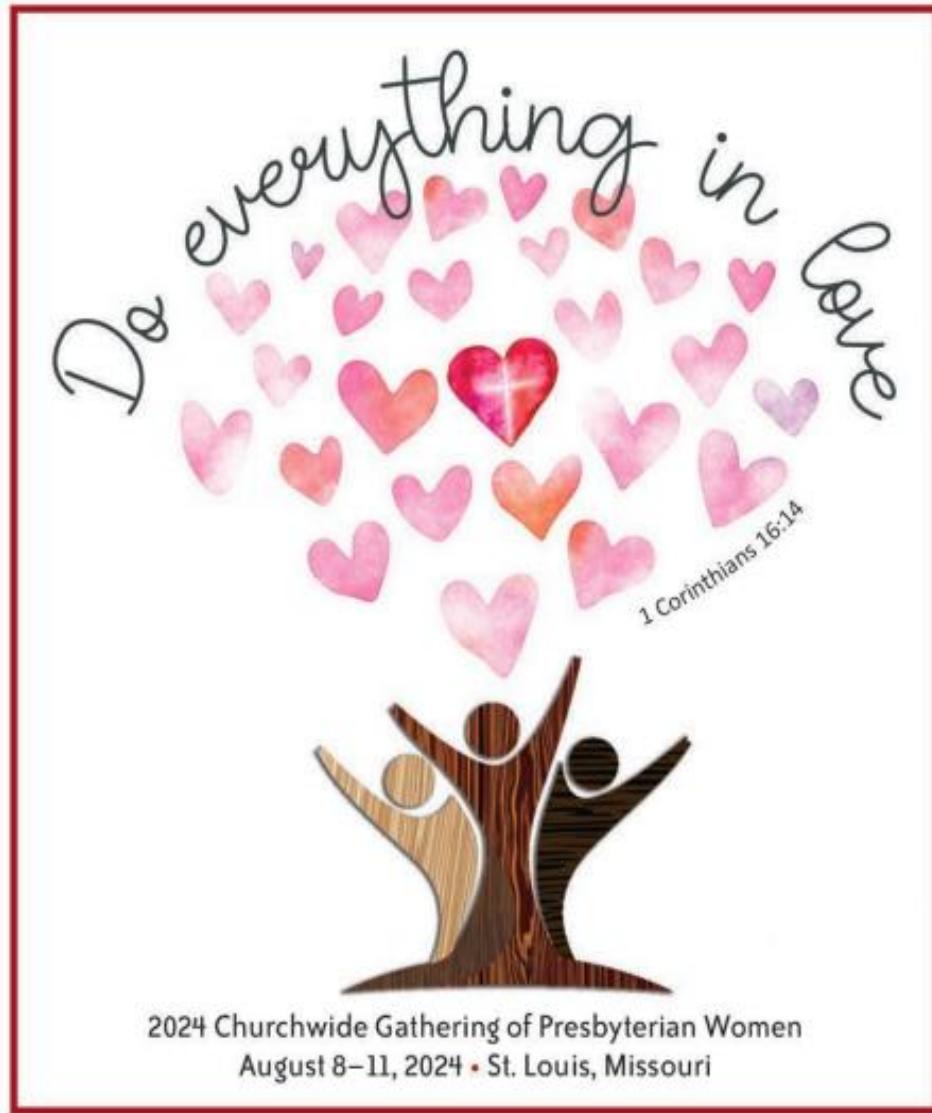
During the next Justice and Peace Book Discussion Group on September 11, 2023 we will be discussing: [Violence Against Women: What Everyone Needs to Know by Jacqui True](#). Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a longstanding problem that has increasingly come to the forefront of international and national policy debates and news: from the US reauthorization of the Violence against Women Act and a United Nations declaration to end sexual violence in war, to coverage of gang rapes in India, cyberstalking and revenge porn, honor killings, female genital mutilation, and international trafficking. To sign up for this and other free discussions, visit presbyterianwomen.org/justice for information on specific dates for this year’s J&P book discussions and for a downloadable flier to share.

On November 13, we will be discussing the movie “Wind River” which focuses on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women, Girls and Two Spirit People (Madison McKinney has agreed to help facilitate!!)

Showing Kindness to the Environment

The PW of Linn PC in Lake Geneva Wisconsin, has been recycling grocery bags into sleeping mats and pillows for the homeless for several years. This year they have added a new direction for their recycling. The NexTrex Company, a nationwide company, offers an opportunity to recycle all manner of flexible plastic. Cooperation has been established between NexTrex and retailers in every state to accept flexible plastic. Register with the company, and within six months weigh and collect 500 pounds, and receive an attractive, and sturdy bench. Linn will place their bench near a newly installed labyrinth on the church grounds. An Eagle Scout in the congregation has been generous enough to take on the labyrinth as his community project. Other churches in the area have met the challenge and placed their benches in their memorial gardens.

It is amazing how quickly the challenge can be met. Just put out the word to the congregation, friends, neighbors and family to save their plastics. The list of items to save are grocery bags, bread bags, bubble wrap, ice bags, Ziploc bags salt and birdseed bags, etc. Go to the NexTrex.com website for details and help save the environment.



Save the date to gather in person and in faithful community
at the 2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women,

August 8–11, 2024

Details to come!

presbyterianwomen.org/gathering

Pine Ridge Mission Trip

Hope Dougherty and two other members of Manitowish Waters Community Presbyterian Church are joining with six members from United Presbyterian Congregational Church in Ashland, Wisconsin are traveling to South Dakota on September 8th to work with Re-Member, a nonprofit organization that has been focused on the Oglala Lakota people of Pine Ridge since June of 1998.

Re-Member provides a service and learning experience, combining projects with cultural immersion. The projects that volunteers work on are intended to improve living conditions for families on the reservation, mainly by helping meet the basic need for adequate shelter, outhouses for those without indoor plumbing, ramps for the disabled, beds for people sleeping on floors and skirts for trailers susceptible to South Dakota's unpredictable weather. Some of us may be chopping wood, others may be building shelves, and whatever else we can help with. We are carpooling, traveling to and from Pine Ridge, so please pray for safe travels and an awesome experience for all of us!

Peace and Blessings,

Hope Dougherty PW Moderator, Northern Waters

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.

A TRIENNIUM THEME WORTHY OF COMMITTING TO: Living in a world without violence against women and children. Pause for a moment of silence on Thursdays at noon your local time to remember and honor those who have died at the hand of sexualized or gender-based violence. Go online at <https://www.ecumenicalwomenn.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.



Let us not grow weary in our work toward a world absent of violence and terror perpetrated because of one's gender. Instead, let us be heartened by the courage taken, community of support built, and ceaseless action taken by girls, young women and women - and in our thoughts, words, and deeds join them, not only on this day of international celebration of women, but every day.

MS. CASEY HARDEN, GENERAL SECRETARY,
WORLD YWCA

Chosen by God

Throughout scriptures we have read again and again that God has chosen the least and the most unlikely of his Children to be leaders. To be sure, they were most often reluctant leaders – “Why would God choose me, of all people?”

Ask yourself ‘am I prepared to be one of God’s leaders?’ Of course your answer may be a resounding ‘NO’. “How could I, myself make a significant difference?”

Look around; over and over again we see just one individual having a negative impact on the world around him or her. Are these folks just speaking more loudly, or are they more important than you or I? We are all equal in God’s eyes. If you are like me, you may have suffered with an inferiority complex. I am not as smart as others. I couldn’t possibly get up and speak in front of others. I am not as well educated as others. Some of us had those feelings reinforced by adults or peers as children – and we believed them. Remember those questionnaires when you were asked who in your past has had a positive influence in your life? Perhaps it was a parent, a teacher, a neighbor or some other mentor. Which are you? Do you reinforce the negative, or lift up with encouragement? We are all loved and called by God for some special purpose.

Recently I was visited by my five year old great granddaughter. She asked a simple question about a neighbor/friend of mine, and asked this friend’s name. Just at that time I had one of those embarrassing ‘senior moments’ and could not recall my friend’s name. Little Jane did not judge me. She simply, in her quiet way, said “That’s OK Grandma, That’s OK”. This small child showed more grace and compassion at that time, than most of us expect from others. So what’s the point? God may, or may not be calling any one of us to be a great leader. Perhaps He is just calling us to be that person of influence who encourages and lifts up someone when they need it most. Yes, we as individuals can make a profound difference in this chaotic world, if we open our hearts to God’s call



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>

Register today to join a book study . . .

***Braiding Sweetgrass:
Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge,
and the Teachings of Plants***

by Robin Wall Kimmerer



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

It is open to interested women and men across the synod, via Zoom

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

Dates for 2023: August 28, September 18, October 16 and 30

Daytime study begins at 1:30-2:30 PM (CST)

Evening study begins at 6:30-7:30 PM (CST)



Synopsis: As a botanist, Robin Wall Kimmerer has been trained to ask questions of nature with the tools of science. As a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, she embraces the notion that plants and animals are our oldest teachers. In *Braiding Sweetgrass*, Kimmerer brings these two lenses of knowledge together to take us on "a journey that is every bit as mythic as it is scientific, as sacred as it is historical, as clever as it is wise" (Elizabeth Gilbert).

Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, a mother, and a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices. In a rich braid of reflections that range from the creation of Turtle Island to the forces that threaten its flourishing today, she circles toward a central argument: that the awakening of a wider ecological consciousness requires the acknowledgment and celebration of our reciprocal relationship with the rest of the living world. For only when we can hear the languages of other beings will we be capable of understanding the generosity of the earth, and learn to give our own gifts in return.

Register by contacting Marilyn Stone at mmstone52@att.net

Provide the following information:

Name

Email address

Phone #

Presbytery

Afternoon or evening study preference



2023 PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN JUSTICE & PEACE CALENDAR

August through November, 2023

We are called to share god's love with the world, by being god's hands in the world. we answer god's call to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). Remember, every Thursday is an opportunity to participate in Thursdays in Black. See oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black

AUGUST

- 6 Hiroshima Day; pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/hiroshima-day-prayer
- 9 International Day of the World's Indigenous People; un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day
- 15 Day of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula; pcusa.org/resource/sunday-prayer-worship-for-peaceful-reunification-78123
- 19 World Humanitarian Day; worldhumanitarianday.org/ or en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Humanitarian_Day
- 20 Public Education Sunday; presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/child

SEPTEMBER - National Hispanic Heritage Month [Sep 15–Oct 15]; hispanicheritagemonth.gov

- 1 World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation; creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html
- 3 Season of Peace begins; presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/season-peace
- 4 Labor Day; iwj.org/resources/plan-labor-day-service
- 8 International Literacy Day; en.unesco.org/commemorations/literacyday
- 11 J&P Book Discussion Group online, 6:30–8:30 PM (Eastern) on Violence Against Women: What Everyone Needs to Know by Jacqui True (New York: Oxford, 2021). Register at presbyterianwomen.org/justice
- 17 Global Week of Action Against Gun Violence begins
- 21 International Day of Peace; presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking/2010/08/celebrate-the-international-day-of-peace.html
- 22 Native American Day; pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/nativeamerican/pdf/celebratingnativeamerican.pdf and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_Day

OCTOBER - Domestic Violence Awareness Month; ncadv.org/take-action; nomore.org; presbyterianwomen.org/justice or presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa; Fair Trade Month; fairtradefederation.org/celebrate-fair-trade-month; National Disability Employment Awareness Month; dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam

- 1 World Communion Sunday; presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/world-communion-sunday
- 9 National Indigenous Peoples' Day; presbyterianmission.org/story/celebrating-indigenous-peoples-day
- 11 International Day of the Girl Child; unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child
- 11 National Coming Out Day; hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day
- 15 Children's Sabbath: Educate a Child, Transform the World; pcusa.org/news/2015/8/14/educate-child-transform-world.
- 16 World Food Day; fao.org/world-food-day/home/en
- 24 United Nations Day; un.org/en/observances/un-day

NOVEMBER - Native American Heritage Month; archives.gov/news/topics/native-american-heritage-month or nativeamericanheritagemonth.gov

- 6–12 Children's Book Week; everychildareader.net/cbw
- 12 Hunger and Homelessness Sunday; presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/hunger
- 13 World Kindness Day; randomactsofkindness.org/world-kindness-day
- 13 J&P Book Discussion Group online, 6:30–8:30 PM (Eastern) on Wind River (2017 film featuring Jeremy Renner and Elizabeth Olsen). Register at presbyterianwomen.org/justice
- 20 Universal Children's Day; un.org/en/observances/world-childrens-day
- 23 Thanksgiving; americanindian.si.edu/sites/1/files/pdf/education/thanksgiving_poster.pdf or presbyterianmission.org/resource/just-living-alternative-thanksgiving-ideas
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women; un.org/en/events/endviolenceday or unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action
- 25–D10 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence; unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/take-action/16-days-of-activism



should be.

Because my faith in God is strong

My life is filled with hope.

When problems rise and threaten me

He gives me strength to cope.

I won't lose heart or be depressed,

Because God's love is true.

And he will help me find success

In everything I do.

Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls

and looks like work. - Thomas Edison

A knowledge of the Bible

without a college course

is more valuable

than a college course

without a knowledge

of the Bible.

When God measures man, he puts the

tape around the heart, not the head.

WORDS TO PONDER

Laughter is the sunlight of the soul.

God has for you,

A light for every shadow

A plan for every tomorrow

A key for every problem

And a balm for every sorrow.

Blessed is God, Who has had mercy on us
and fed us from His rich gifts, through His Grace
and love for mankind, always, now and forever
and unto ages of ages. Amen

Don't keep the faith.....spread it around!

Do all the good you can

In all the ways you can

As long as ever you can

By all the means you can

In all the places you can.

—John Wesley

Friendship doubles our joy and divides our sorrow.

To experience God's love and not give it away

Is like holding onto an unopened gift.

Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends

For it is one of God's best gifts.

The true measure of loving God

Is to love him without measure.

—St. Bernard

More Words to Ponder

Submitted by Hope Dougherty

Written by Dancing Faith

<https://www.facebook.com/LostinePC/>

I think Jesus disdained causes
 He didn't line up with any group
 Not the Sadducees, or Pharisees
 Not the Zealots or the Essenes
 Not the collaborative movement which went along with
 Rome (it's the money stupid)
 Or the movement that wanted to eradicate all the Romans

Jesus didn't have much time for movements
 because he only had eyes for people
 People who happened to be Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots
 and Essenes
 Noble and common
 Rich and poor
 Powerful and powerless
 Healthy and ill
 Confident and confused
 Faithful and faithless
 Righteous and holy messes

And when he saw people
 Who were hurting, questioning
 Lost
 Despairing
 (whether they knew it or not)
 Jesus stopped. And healed. And loved.

He did what he could to make people safe
 Accepted and welcome
 He did what he could to bless
 To guide
 To transform
 He did not just work to help them become who and what
 They were created to be
 Children of God

But he worked to make sure they were fed, clothed, and
 housed
 To make sure their thirst was quenched
 Be it spiritual or physical

And when he went on his way
 He left people who were changed
 (or if not changed, sad and thoughtful)

Yes, I know, there are places for movements
 And causes

But sometimes our allegiance to causes can leave us blind to
 people

We can be so into stopping abortion
 We lose sight of mothers and fathers, and children already
 born
 And we can become cruel and destructive

We can be so into gun rights
 The environment
 Animal Rights (pick your cause)

That we fail to see people
 We fail to see their fear, their pain, their anger
 And we end up discarding them
 Diminishing and marginalizing them
 Hurting them
 Without compunction
 After all, "the cause!"

I don't know sometimes how to balance it out
 I don't know how to see the people who are wrapped up
 In beliefs, attitudes and actions
 That violate love

It is difficult to stop and truly see them
 It is difficult to love them
 It is difficult to treat them with love

But Jesus did
 He stopped and talked with kindness to the rich young man
 The tax collector
 The Roman soldier
 The members of the Sanhedrin
 The lepers
 The afflicted
 The poor
 All
 How do we do it, Jesus?
 How do we see those who cross our paths
 How do we see them as your beloved children
 As our brothers and sisters

How do we not let our causes
 Our divisions
 Our own sense of right and wrong
 Good and evil
 Get in the way of love?

Jesus stopped. And healed. And loved. Not causes, but people. Madeleine L'Engle
 "I love mankind, it's people I can't stand!" Linus (Peanuts)



Introducing Presbyterian Women's *Build a Bouquet* FUNdraiser

PW's *Build a Bouquet* campaign invites us to celebrate all the individuals and programs that help Presbyterian Women bloom in so many spectacular ways and places. Funds received through this campaign will build PW's Annual Fund, which supports all PW ministries and programs, at all levels of the organization.

Bouquets

Beginning in May 2023 through the Churchwide Gathering in August 2024, gifts to Presbyterian Women's *Build a Bouquet* campaign will be recognized with a virtual bouquet. Bouquets will be digitally displayed at the Churchwide Gathering and via other PW communications.

Seven bouquet options + one community garden are available!

Flower	Amount
Carnations	\$10.00
Lillies (memorial)	\$10.00
Tulips	\$25.00
Daisies	\$35.00
Sunflowers	\$45.00
Mixed bouquet	\$55.00
Roses	\$100.00
Community garden	\$500.00

For each gift to the PW *Build a Bouquet* campaign, a card (in honor or in memory of) will be available to print and mail, download and email, or email directly with a personalized message.

Build your bouquet (or learn more) at presbyterianwomen.org/bouquet.

Or, send a check with additional information (the bouquet option you choose, your name and address, email address and telephone number) to: Presbyterian Women, Inc., Remittance Processing—Giving, PO Box 643652, Pittsburgh PA 15264-3652.

Presbyterian Women's Annual Fund (the Mission Pledge) makes possible every mission, program and resource of PW, including the Churchwide Gathering. Give now to support Presbyterian Women's witness in the world.

[**GIVE TO PW's ANNUAL FUND**](#)



2023 JUSTICE and PEACE Book Discussion Group

Group

FEBRUARY 13
WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIANITY
A HISTORY OF SLAVERY AND ANTI-BLACK RADISM IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
WILLIAM YOO

SPECIAL WEBINAR WITH AUTHOR

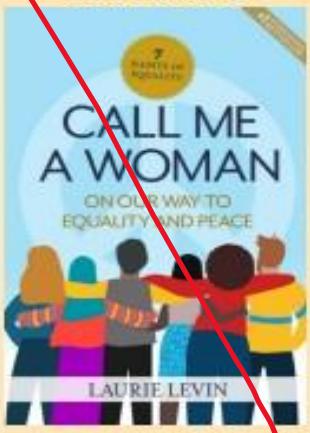
DISCUSS THE BOOKS WITH OTHERS VIA ZOOM.
• The *J&P Book Discussion Group* is open to all!

DISCUSSION GROUP MEETS EVERY OTHER MONTH
• Read and discuss any or all books that appeal to you. Registration will be needed to join the discussion on Zoom.

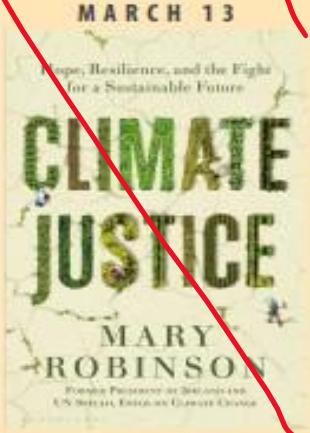
RECEIVE STUDY GUIDES TO INFORM YOUR READING
• Questions for discussion or reflection will be sent with your registration confirmation.


To register, scan the QR code with your smart phone or go to presbyterianwomen.org/justice.

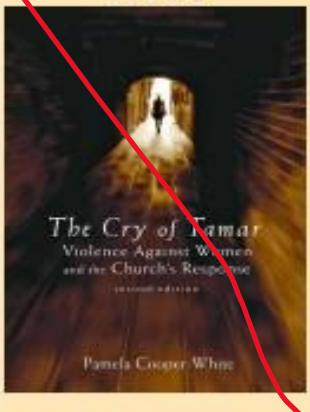
Reading Selections (6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Eastern Time)

JANUARY 9


CALL ME A WOMAN
ON OUR WAY TO EQUALITY AND PEACE
LAURIE LEVIN

MARCH 13
Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future


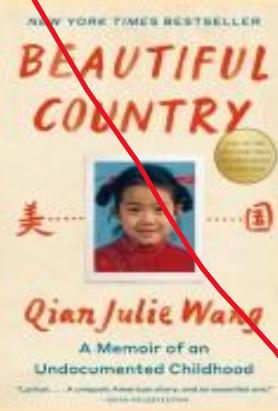
CLIMATE JUSTICE
MARY ROBINSON
Former President of Ireland and UN Special Envoy on Climate Change

MAY 8


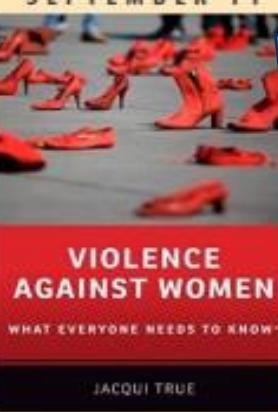
The Cry of Tamar
Violence Against Women and the Church's Response
PAMELA COOPER WHITE

NOVEMBER 13


2017 Movie
"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR"
★★★★★
WIND RIVER
From Taylor Sheridan, Writer of *Deadwood* and *Hell or High Water*
JAMES WOODS, ELIZABETH DEAN
"GRIPPING"
15

JULY 10
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER


BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY
Qian Julie Wang
A Memoir of an Undocumented Childhood
"Luminous...A compelling, American story of love and resilience." —KAREN HILL, *Entertainment Weekly*

SEPTEMBER 11


VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
WHAT EVERYONE NEEDS TO KNOW
JACQUI TRUE

Selections are recommended by the Justice & Peace Committee of PW's Board of Directors.

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August, 2023

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