

Hitting  
The



April 9-10, 2021

Presbyterian Women Spring Gathering on Zoom  
Keynote Speaker: Sheri Dittman

Hosted by the Valley Chicas of the Rio Grande Valley

### Workshops:

(Zoom links to the workshops will be emailed out with  
registration confirmation)

\*Chair Yoga

\*Bible Study overview

\*Mental Health in the Pandemic

\*Child Abuse & the Pandemic

\*Church Outside the Box

\* The Healing Power of Harp Music

\* +Meet the Offering recipients

\*Signing Liturgy for online worship

### Schedule:

Friday, April 9: 5:30 – 6:00 pm- Zoom tutorial

6:00 pm– 7:30-ish \*\*Day 1 Let the festivities begin!

-Our annual Business Meeting will be on Friday evening.

Saturday, April 10: 9:00 am – 12:30 pm Day 2 of festivities & Workshops

\*\*For our Friday Fun Night Kick-Off, we ask you to create- and wear during our time together- a mum (we're in Texas, y'all) and/or hat/bonnet that represents you and/or your interests.

+Su Casa de Esperanza, Inc & Young Christian Latina Leaders. (In lieu of a registration fee this year, we encourage you to send your \$65.00 towards our offering recipients.) Make checks payable to Presbyterian Women of Mission Presbytery and mail to: PWMP Treasurer Melanie Petru 108 CR 333 Shiner, TX 77984

Virtual Spring Gathering 2021

## Ready to have some fun?



**The Valley Chicas would like you to create a mum (after all, we are in Texas!) or a hat/bonnet that represents YOU!**



**Do you love gardening?  
Collect spoons? Love rainbows?**

**Find a fun and creative way to display it on a mum or hat!**



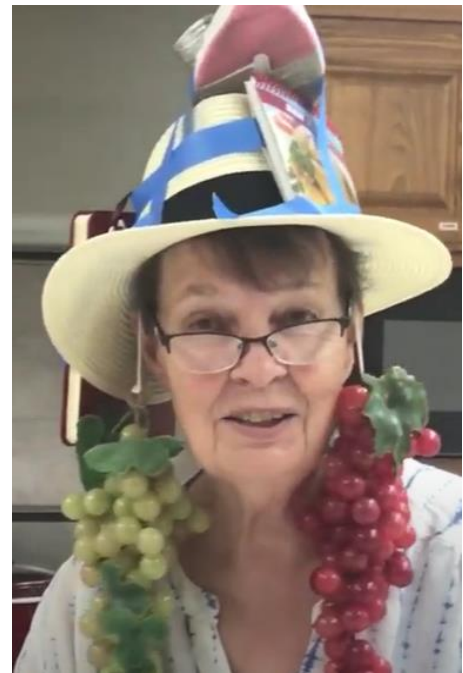
**After you have created your work of art, take a photo of yourself wearing it and email it to:**

**[SpringGathering2021@yahoo.com](mailto:SpringGathering2021@yahoo.com)**



**Please send your photos by  
Thursday, April 1st**

**We will have a mum & hat fashion  
slideshow Friday evening (April 9<sup>th</sup>)  
to show off our lovely creations!**



**As a fun bonus, each person that submits a photo of themselves wearing their mum or hat will have their names put into a drawing for a fun handbag from the Guatemala Store!**

# 2021 PW Virtual Spring Gathering

## Offering Recipients



Su Casa de Esperanza is a non-profit family life program created to provide education to impoverished families living in a South Texas colonia (low-income areas along the Texas-Mexico border) for the purpose of enhancing their opportunities for fulfilled, abundant lives.



## The Young Christian Latina Leaders Program

The Young Christian Latina Leaders (YCLL) program was created with the intent to inspire and empower Latinas ages 12 to 25 who want to pursue higher education, explore the technology field, and seek fellowship, community service and spiritual growth. Through events hosted by YCLL, these young ladies develop leadership and problem-solving skills while networking with women in leadership positions at universities and notable companies.



If you'd like to donate, please make checks payable to Presbyterian Women of Mission Presbytery and mail to:

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# WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS & Presenter Bios



## *Hitting the Reset Button*

Keynote Speaker: Sheri Dittman

Who couldn't use a reset button? Pandemic aside, life itself can be overwhelming, with family, household, career, friends, appointments and commitments. Let's gather and reset together using Scripture, music, girl talk, and resting in God's Zoom Holy Space.

Sheri is a ruling elder in the PCUSA and Commissioned Pastor at First Presbyterian Church, Brownsville, Texas. She graduated from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley with a Bachelor of Business Administration and holds a Master of Arts in Christian Education from Union Presbyterian Seminary. Along with serving her community, Sheri has served in many capacities of the church, and at the presbytery and synod level. She and husband Eric have 4 beautiful children, 2 wonderful "bonus" children (their children's spouses), 5 extremely well-behaved fur-babies (NOT!), and a loud-laughter filled-fun-wouldn't change it for the world house when everyone is together.



## **2021 Horizons Bible Study** **“What My Grandmothers Taught Me”**

Presenter: Liz Anzaldua



Join me as we explore the Genealogy of Jesus. The Gospel of Matthew opens with these words, “An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” Do we stop there, skip the next 15 verses and pick up the story with the birth of Jesus? Or do we read the genealogy of who was who’s father. But wait, Matthew doesn’t just list the men.... He includes 5 women... Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba, and Mary – Matthew names these women for a reason. Join me for this workshop as we learn together the stories of these 5 women; their importance to the lineage of Jesus and why Matthew thought to list them.

**Liz** serves as a Ruling Elder, church treasurer, Bible Study leader and worship leader at El Divino Salvador Presbyterian Church in Corpus Christi. She is also active in the life of Mission Presbytery, currently serving on General Council as the Corpus Christi Region Representative. She is married to Andy, her soul mate and Christian partner. They have one son and daughter-in-law, Andrew and Lindsey, who live in Austin. In her spare time, Liz loves to read, work in her garden, scrapbooking and beading.

## **Church Outside the Box**

Presenters: A Panel from New Hope Presbyterian in La Feria, TX



New Hope Presbyterian Church “arose from the ashes of a dying church,” says Commissioned Pastor Beth Truax. This workshop highlights lessons learned and the congregation’s willingness to be open to change, to rethink things, and to open their imaginations and do church differently. Come and hear stories from those patterning themselves after the Acts church and how they are now adapting to this Covid pandemic.

*Come to this workshop & hear more about our Spring Gathering Offering Recipients:  
Su Casa de Esperanza, Inc and Young Christian Latina Leaders.*

## **Su Casa de Esperanza, Inc**

Presenter: Belinda Simons, Executive Director



Su Casa de Esperanza is a non-profit family life program created to provide education to impoverished families living in a South Texas colonia (low-income areas along the Texas-Mexico border) for the purpose of enhancing their opportunities for fulfilled, abundant lives.



**Belinda Flores Simons** is the executive director of Su casa de Esperanza. She graduated from the University of Texas-Pan American with a Bachelor of Science in Mathematics and a Master of Education in Counseling and Guidance. She has 43 years of experience in the field of education. Belinda is a Pharr, Texas native and resides there with her husband, Dennis, and their daughter, Danica. She believes that parents are a child's first and most influential teachers and that education is the best inheritance that parents can give to their child. As Executive Director, she oversees the programs offered in the Las Milpas and Progreso centers.

## **Empowering Young Latinas - an Overview of the YCLL Program**

Presenter: Monica Isabel Martinez



The Young Christian Latina Leaders (YCLL) program was created with the intent to inspire and empower Latinas ages 12 to 25 who want to pursue higher education, explore the technology field, and seek fellowship, community service and spiritual growth. Through events hosted by YCLL, these young ladies develop leadership and problem-solving skills while networking with women in leadership positions at universities and notable companies.

**Monica** is an educator, graphic designer and photographer. She has been in the educational technology field for over 25 years. She holds a master's degree in Educational Technology and is also a Google Certified Innovator. Throughout her career, she's presented at conferences all over the world, has led edtech events, helped train teachers on the integration of tech, and has helped lead efforts for a more equitable and anti-racist world. Her recent work includes the Young Christian Latina Leaders (YCLL), Latina Speaker Series, Our Voice Alliance, ISTE's Equity Forum, and The Liberated Educator program. Her work with YCLL focuses on inspiring and empowering young Latinas ages 12 - 25 through events and workshops on building confidence, leadership skills and getting support for going to 4-year universities. You can learn more about this project at [bit.ly/YCLL4Latinas](https://bit.ly/YCLL4Latinas) and more about Monica at [mpowerdesigns](https://mpowerdesigns.com).





## Chair Yoga for the “not-so-nimble”

Presenter: Kassie Schneider

In this chair movement series, you can expect to find movement from Yoga, Pilates, and Tai Chi wrapped into a flow of self-discovery. Guided movement meditation will open a flow of energy through all parts of the body that may be blocked.

**Kassie** is a 31-year-old mother of 4 and celebrated 6 years of marriage. She is a psychology major, Reiki practitioner and has just recently completed a 500 hour intense comprehensive pilates training program (did you catch the 4 children sentence??)! She has been teaching movement of all styles and types for 10 years and love helping others connect to their own individual bodies. Intentional movement with purpose is her hope for her clients and in return they create an awareness that will follow with them throughout life.



## A Path to Resiliency: A Mental Health Clinician’s Insight into the Impact of COVID-19

Presenter: Ashley Dittman, MS, LMHC, NCC

COVID-19 has thrown us, as society, for a particularly challenging loop; creatures who are programmed to connect with one another are forced into isolation that results in major consequences. But there is hope. In this workshop, mental health counselor Ashley Dittman looks forward into delving into this topic with you all!

**Ashley** (She/Her) is a Washington state licensed and nationally board-certified mental health counselor. She received her Masters of Science in Counseling from Southern Methodist University specializing in substance use disorders as well as children and adolescent counseling. Within her 10 years in the ever-evolving mental health system, she has gained invaluable experience in a wide spectrum of the mental health field and in a variety of facets: clinical supervisor for a team of community crisis outreach and stabilization clinicians, technician and recreational therapist for inpatient psychiatric facility, and case manager and clinical intake specialist for outpatient services to maintain stability. Regardless of her position, Ashley maintains the basic principles of approaching all folks with the same compassion, humility, empathy, and attention. In her free time, Ashley enjoys gallivanting around Seattle finding delicious coffee (spoiler alert: it’s not hard to find), perusing used book and record stores, tending to her copious amount of plant babies, and spending quality time with her wife, Carmen, and doggo, Jax.



## **Child Abuse and the Pandemic -What Can YOU Do?**

Presenter: Miriam Ybarra-Rodriguez, M.A.

The worldwide pandemic affected every system in our society, including the rates of child abuse, suicides, and domestic violence. Join us in this session to learn a little about what child abuse looks like in Texas; how the pandemic affected rates of abuse/neglect and how Texas responded to the crisis during the pandemic. Most importantly, we will explore how you as a Christian can help via different resources and volunteer opportunities like CASA, Child Advocacy Centers, fostering/adopting a child and Blue Sunday.

**Miriam** is a native of Brownsville, Texas but now lives in Helotes (a suburb of San Antonio) with her husband Vidal Rodriguez and their 7 year-old daughter, Selena Anissa. Miriam graduated from her beloved UT Austin with a Bachelor's in Psychology in 1989 and is an avid Longhorn fan. She received her Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from UT Pan American in 2001. Miriam's professional career of 31 years has been with the Department of Protective Services in Child Protective Investigations. Her career began in Brownsville where the highest position she held was as the Program Director for Cameron and Willacy counties. She is currently the Lead Child Safety Specialist in the San Antonio region and is a State Office employee. During her tenure with CPS, Miriam has served on numerous statewide committees affecting casework practice and policies across Texas. She has led numerous committees and trained staff statewide on initiatives to ensure for child safety and well being.

Miriam enjoys spending time with her husband and beautiful daughter, chauffeuring her from activity to activity. She is currently Selena's Girl Scout Troop Leader which keeps her busy, especially during cookie season. Reading, binging on Netflix, walking on the beach and swimming in her pool are all stress relievers. Miriam is currently an Elder at Northminster Presbyterian Church in San Antonio but her heart lies with her childhood church in Brownsville, Primera Iglesia Presbiteriana Mexicana.



## **The Healing Power of Harp Music**

Presenter: Nancy Robohn

This workshop will focus on how music is used to reduce physical and emotional pain and increase quality of life. Nancy will demonstrate skills that are used in music therapy sessions which will help you on your creative journey that can be applied every day. Nancy was a feature workshop leader at our Fall Gathering and we are excited to have her back with us.

**Nancy** earned her Bachelor of Music Education from The Presbyterian College of Emporia and a Masters Equivalent in Music Therapy from University of Kansas. She has worked as a Registered Music Therapist at the San Antonio State Hospital and has developed a Geriatric Music Therapy Program in Independent, Assisted Living and Skilled Nursing

homes in San Antonio. Nancy was a Fulbright Fellowship recipient doing research in Children's Music in Costa Rica; and was a Kansas Master Teacher.





## American Sign Language & The Lord's Prayer: Signing Liturgy for Online Worship

Presenter: Kristie Lee

American Sign Language (ASL) is the language used by the deaf and hard of hearing in the USA and in English-speaking Canada. Even though it is not a universal language, it is quite popular. In this workshop, we will learn to sign the Lord's Prayer along with some of the history behind the signs. Join us as we learn to sign the words that Jesus taught us to pray.

**Kristie** is an educator who spent the first half of her teaching career at the McAllen Regional Day School Program for the Deaf teaching a variety of subjects to deaf and hard-of-hearing students in middle school and high school using American Sign Language. Currently, she is a junior high math teacher at Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic School where she has also taught American Sign Language as an elective. Kristie has interpreted numerous retreats and church services for the deaf members of her church community. She has a special love for American Sign Language and enjoys sharing the gift of signing with others. Kristie and her husband have been married for almost 30 years and have four children who range in age from 7 to 27, with the youngest being their only daughter and the princess of the family.



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