

MODERATOR'S MOSAIC

DECEMBER 2015

Our Sister Mother Earth who sustains us...

“Sisters and Brothers in Creation; Praise be to you, my Lord, through our Sister, Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us...” ~Saint Francis of Assisi in *Canticle of the Creatures*

This title is taken from the introduction devotion in the *Horizons* magazine Nov/Dec 2015 issue and deepens our understanding of Eco-Justice: A Christian Vocation. Let me invite each of you to take some time to read and reflect on the articles on “Eco-Justice: Tending the Gift of Creation” and begin to host conversations within your circles and congregations.

Of the many insights and information within the articles, I appreciated the definition for Eco-Justice. Eco-Justice: the well-being of all humankind on a thriving earth; sustainable sufficiency for all. As you might guess, as an activists and public health official for years, I advocated for clean water; tree planting; solar energy; use of climate change science; and a deeper understanding of how we are affecting the climate as humans, etc. However, I have witnessed in Iowa a real resistance to Eco-Justice efforts; and in fact a resistance to even to hearing factual information related to our environment. It surprised me because as Iowans, we have a long history of moving into effective problems solving versus denial.

However, our church always gave me hope. As an activist, over the years I turned to and was always proud of the Presbyterian church standing

for the environment; and over the years promoted the churches information to support advocacy efforts. For decades a variety of denomination offices, through official ecumenical roundtables like the National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches have made statements, raised awareness, and taken action on earth care concerns. Some of these long standing bodies have been active in environmental witness for decades. For instance, attending the United Nations climate negotiations for 20 years running (The 21st United Nations Framework Convention of Climate Change’s Conference of the Parties (COP 21)). So we as Presbyterians, especially Presbyterian women, have a long history of caring for people who are poor, hungry, weak or vulnerable. Eco-Justice ministry is an outgrowth of this and extension of that. The biblical foundations of caring for the earth and all in it are plethora.

I especially wanted to highlight the opportunity in the *Horizons* magazine page 8 Resources... especially “PC(USA) Earth Care Congregations”, and ask the question would you like to see more information at the spring conference related to congregations who have made commitments to care for God’s creation. Check out www.pcusa.org/earthcarecongregations and let area coordinators know any questions you might have or how to your PW circles envision the mission of Eco-Justice in local congregations.

As I come to the end of the moderators note I want to remind everyone that the Des Moines PW coordinating team will be meeting on January 23, 2016. All are welcome to attend. Our agenda will include planning the spring conference. As a coordinating team we want to hear from you... what will support PW efforts in local congregations? Please take some time to reflect and call or email your area coordinator with your ideas or thoughts. We plan use your ideas in the planning process.

Let me end with: "O my God, in you I trust; do not let me be put to shame..." Psalms 25:2, and ask "What are we waiting for? Whom are you waiting for?"

*~Pam Deichmann, PW moderator
Presbytery of Des Moines
pam.deichmann@gmail.com*

Merry Christmas!

~ from your PW Coordinating Team members

CHURCHWIDE PC(USA) NEWS

Presbyterian Women Mission Pledge 2016

Just a reminder... have your local Presbyterian women filled out and sent in **your 2016 pledge?** The PW mission pledge may be best defined as "an expression of passionate stewardship" or perhaps "caring made tangible in joyful response to God's generous love for creation." The PW mission pledge, an annual pledge over and above tithes and other support to the church, funds the work of PW at all levels.

The PW mission pledge is also a joyful expression of PW's covenantal relationship to the PC(USA), as the largest share of mission pledge monies go to the General Assembly mission budget. Without the mission pledge, the church's ministry in the world would noticeably shrink. And at this time in our worlds **nothing is more important than caring** and making a joyful response to God's love of creation.

Disaster Preparedness Training Information

PW Disaster Preparedness Trainers (PWDP) needed. PWDP trainers will be training families, congregations, communities and presbyteries, men and women, about the need to prepare for disasters. Presbyterian Women in collaboration with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance are seeking Presbyterian women with time and interest in training congregations and presbyteries in disaster preparedness. This specialized ministry's focus is the need for every presbytery and congregation to have basic plans and preparations in the event of a church emergency or direct hit by a disaster,

natural, human-caused, or industrial-technical. Contact Beth Snyder for information on any trainings, beth.snyder@pcusa.org or www.pcusa.org/pda. Click on ACT, then volunteer.

Fellowship of the Least Coin

The Fellowship of the Least Coin is a worldwide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace, justice and reconciliation. Through this movement Christian women around the world seek fellowship with each other and are reminded to live a reconciled and forgiving life with others.

Fellowship of the Least Coin links prayer and "least coins" in a very significant way, as the least coin becomes the symbol of prayer for peace and reconciliation. Fellowship of the Least Coin, an ecumenical prayer movement, was begun in 1956 by Shanti Solomon of India, who believed that women anywhere could have a sense of being part of a worldwide family of faith as they prayed for peace and reconciliation and set aside the least coin of their country as a symbol of that prayer. As coins are gathered from around the world, they become a sign of our oneness in the common quest for peace, justice and reconciliation. **May Friendship Day is the traditional day for collecting the Least Coin Offering.**

Additional information and resources for the Least Coin Offering can be found at:

- www.churchwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/FLC_Brochure.pdf
- <http://flc.net.ph/>

Cloud Witnesses

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us...” (Hebrews 12:1).

Melissa Bane Sevier, the author of our 2017-2018 PW *Horizons* Bible Study is looking for your stories to include. (We’re not exactly sure in what way we’ll use the stories--perhaps in a supplement.) All of us have a ‘Cloud of Witnesses’ that has helped us along the way and who, even though no longer with us, still inspire.

Please, tell us your story of one of those witnesses; tell us the story of women, now deceased, who had a good influence on your life or on the life of someone you know. Include her name, her time and place and what made her influential.

Return your story to Melissa Bane Sevier, in care of Betsy Ensign-George, Presbyterian Women, 100 Witherspoon St., Louisville, KY 40202-1396, betsy.ensign-george@psusa.org.

The PC(USA) Office of Public Witness wants to help you stay informed!

Scan the code below or visit

www.capwiz.com/pcusa to sign up for: action alerts, legislative updates, event notices, *Advocacy as Discipleship*, and the *Washington Report*. To learn more, go to either:

- www.pcusa.org/washington
- ga_washington_office@pcusa.org
- officeofpublicwitness.blogspot.com
- Also, like or friend us on Facebook or Twitter at: @PCUSAwashington

A Worship to Inherit --

Celebrate the Gifts of Women is Sunday, March 6, 2016

On *Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday*, March 6, 2016, we honor women who contribute their gifts to the church and community, lifting up issues of women’s rights and focusing on the role of women in our communities and world. Though Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday is March 6, 2016, your congregation or women’s groups may



use this resource on any date that you choose to celebrate the gifts of women.

In 2016, Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday honors and remembers women whose faith leads us like a torch. There are women leaders who are paving the way and passing the torch and their worship inheritance remains in the hearts and minds of worshipers in their congregations and worshipping communities.

In Mark 14:3–9, we hear of a woman who boldly inherits the act of anointing, a sacred tradition reserved for men and religious authorities, and carries out this symbolic act of worship, risking condemnation from those who witnessed her action. But, Jesus vindicates her, praising her faithfulness, saying “wherever the good news is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her” (14:9). This story resonates with many women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), particularly those who practice and live out a bold paradigm of worship. This unnamed woman’s act is a model we are fortunate to inherit.

The Celebrate the Gifts of Women resource, with a reflection by Sera Chung and liturgy by Rhashell Hunter, includes a worship service with a call to worship, call to confession, prayer of confession, an assurance of pardon, suggested

hymns and scripture readings, an excerpt from The Confession of Belhar to read in unison and a “Women in Leadership in the Church and the Community” program suggestion.

The Celebrate the Gifts of Women resource is available in the Nov/Dec 2015 issue of *Horizons* magazine, as a free download from www.pcusa.org/women and free from Presbyterian Distribution Service (PDS)—800/524-2612 or www.pcusa.org/store, item 27501-16-001.

Order the Nov/Dec 2015 issue of *Horizons* from PDS, item HZN15250; \$4 plus shipping. A limited number of bulletin covers are available from PDS while supplies last; item 27501-16-002; \$5 for a pack of 25. The bulletin cover also may be downloaded free from www.pcusa.org/women.



Shopping Amazon? Shop AmazonSmile!

Shopping for Christmas on line this year? Ever try Amazon for your gifts? If you do, you can help PW. When you shop

through **AmazonSmile**, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to PW in the PC(USA).

Bookmark the link

<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/80-0473061> and

support us each time you shop.

Pal Craftaid gifts

Pal Craftaid started as a short-term venture, importing Palestinian sculpted olive wood and sending proceeds back to Palestine to help a few families survive and gain hope. Pal Craftaid now works with several groups of artisans in the West Bank and Gaza.

Their handcrafted purses are just \$20; proceeds support Pal Craftaid’s mission of bringing compassion, hope and healing for all Palestinians. Learn more at <http://palcraftaid.org>.



PW Working for Justice and Peace 2016 Calendar

November – Native American Heritage Month

- 20 Universal Children’s Day
- 25 International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women/Orange Day
- 25 Sixteen Days of Activism Against Gender-based Violence (ends Dec. 10)
- 26 Thanksgiving

December

- 1 #GivingTuesday
- 2 Int’l Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 5 International Volunteer Day
- 10 International Human Rights Day
- 18 International Migrants Day
- 25 Christmas and Orange Day

January – Human Trafficking Prevention Month

- 11 Human Trafficking Awareness Day
- 11–17 PW Together in Action Days
- 16 National Religious Freedom Day
- 17 Race Relations Sunday
- 18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 24 Criminal Justice Sunday
- 25 Orange Day
- 27 Int’l Holocaust Remembrance Day

February – Black History Month & Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month

- 1 National Freedom Day
- 7 Souper Bowl of Caring
- 14 One Billion Rising for Justice Day
- 17 National Random Acts of Kindness Day
- 25 Orange Day
- 28 Justice Advocacy Sunday

March – Women’s History Month

- 4 World Day of Prayer
- 6 Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday
- 8 International Women’s Day
- 14–24 UN Commission on Status of Women
- 25 Orange Day

SYNOD NEWS

2016 Synod Gathering is Set!

The Synod Gathering is held every three years and is held the year after the Churchwide Gathering. It is for women of all ages who would like to join in Christian fellowship and are looking for a spiritually enriching experience.

The theme for this gathering on June 15-18, 2016 at the Ramkota Hotel and Convention Center in Sioux Fall, South Dakota will be “Lord, Make Me an Instrument of your Peace.” Keynote presentation is “The Power of Presbyterian Women” by Susan Jackson Dowd, Executive Director of Presbyterian Women from Louisville.

There will be a selection of workshops including a new look at Presbyterian Women of Today and what they are doing. This is a wonderful opportunity for women from SLAP (Synod of Lakes and Prairies) to meet other women in fellowship, Bible Study, and worship.

Also, it is hoped that more Native American members can come since it is closer to them. We are also striving to bring in a younger population because of shopping in the town.

Registration for this Synod Gathering is now available online only. Watch for an email registration form to all moderators who can then send them out to members of their circles. The registrations will also be available at the Synod of Lakes and Prairies website and the Des Moines Presbytery website, under the category of *Presbyterian Women*.

Consider serving God through the Synod PW Office...

Are you aware that the **Churchwide Coordinating Team (CCT) Nominating Committee** is looking for a few good women? Do you know a woman who stands out as you have worked with her in your congregation, presbytery or synod? If so, would you please share their names with the PW Search Regional representative by November 1st? Positions which need filled are:

- Moderator
- Vice Moderator - Justice and Peace
- Vice Moderator - Mission Relations
- Board Secretary/Historian
- Finance Committee Chair

- Moderator of the Search Committee
- Regional Search Committee members (5 are needed)
- Racial Ethnic members at large (6 are needed to represent African American, Asian American, Hispanic/Latino American, Korea American, Middle East American or Native American)
- Young women at large (2 are needed; one should be racial ethnic)
- Finally, a New Immigrant Woman in the USA for 3 years or less is needed

Contact Nola Ross at: nross@gmail.com or 512-892-0802.

Resources & Tools for PW Leaders

- First, to learn about accessing these tools, go to: www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pw/
- On PW’s website: www.presbyterianwomen.org
- On Horizons’ website: www.pcusa.org/horizons (Blog access too!)
- On YouTube: www.youtube.com/pesbyterianwomen
- On Facebook: www.facebook.com, search for the “Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA)” like search for “*Horizons*” Be sure to ‘like’ us!
- On Twitter: www.twitter.com sign up, then search for PWPCUSA, and “follow”
- On Pinterest: www.pinterest.com sign up, then search for Presbyterian Women
- On Flickr: www.flickr.com/photos/presbyterianwomen
- From the PC(USA) online store: www.pcusa.org/store
- The Synod of Lakes and Prairies website: www.lakesandprairies.org
- On Facebook: search for “PW of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies”. We invite you to ‘like’ us!

More about the PW’s YouTube channel

At the Des Moines Presbytery’s 2015 Fall Connection, Moderator Pam Deichmann showed the PW’s historical videos. To view, go to www.youtube.com/presbyterianwomen, and click on the title’s *Presbyterian Women (Part 1)* and *Presbyterian Women (Part 2)*.

PRESBYTERY NEWS

Area Coordinator Reports

Area #4: Four members attended the Des Moines Presbytery's PW Fall Connection in Oskaloosa in October (3 from Platte Center Church and 1 from First Presbyterian Church in Creston). ~Judy Gale

PW Historian needs your year-end reports...

As your PW Historian, I am asking for your year-end reports from each church PW group. Can you scrunch into your life something relatively easy, extremely low cost (as in zero) and that is very important for statistics for our PW; as well as the Synod, and ultimately the Department of History in PC(USA); and Women and the CCT History committee?

Your reports can touch the heart of younger women, especially when they read of how the involvement in PW has helped your faith and future of your church! Please send **a paragraph or a page of your P.W. activities** this past year, **along with a financial year end report** within the next two weeks to:

Darlene Shephard
309 North D Street, Apt 306
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
Cell: 641-504-0155
Home: 641-673-5793

If you have questions or do not have a checklist of information needed, please call.

The Amazing Heritage of Presbyterian Women DVD

Have you checked out the History of Presbyterian Women DVD yet? Not only does it contain a video of women discussing our history but it contains information to build your own exhibit and PowerPoint presentation. This includes updates thru 2015 on our amazing heritage. For more information or to obtain the DVD, contact Darlene Shephard or on the PC(USA) website at: <http://store.pcusa.org/PWR15137>

Coordinating Team: Mark your Calendars!

PW Coordinating Team of the Des Moines Presbytery will have a Winter Soup and Salad Planning Meeting on Saturday, Jan. 23, 2016, from 9:30 a.m.–2 p.m., at the First Presbyterian Church in Winterset.



Plan now for PW's Together in Action Days, January 11–17

PW urges groups to plan events around Human Trafficking

Awareness Day, January 11.

Here are some ideas:

- Use the PC(USA)'s *Toolkit for Action: Modern Slavery*, prepared by the Human Trafficking Roundtable; www.pcusa.org/browse/resourcesresource/ministries/human-trafficking.
- Teach others to recognize signs of human trafficking and to report instances through local police and the **national hotline**, 888-373-7888. Learn more at www.polarisproject.org.
- Host a panel of speakers.
- Work with ECPAT-USA (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking) to encourage companies in the travel and tourism industry to prevent sexual exploitation of children. Learn more at www.thecode.org and www.ecpatusa.org.
- Estimate your slavery footprint at <http://slaveryfootprint.org>
- Join the Red Hands campaign to work for an end to conscription of child soldiers—www.redhandday.org.
- Join the #givehope social media campaign—www.unodc.org/endht.
- Start an S.O.A.P. campaign. See www.traffickfree.com.
- Support *On Eagle's Wings*, and other organizations working with girls either at risk or who have been trafficked: www.oewm.net, www.thelifeboatproject.org and more.
- Share information from the *Trafficking in Persons Report 2015*, www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2015.
- Visit www.endslaveryandtrafficking.org to act in support of the Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act.
- Host a film screening at www.polarisproject.org.
- Find out how many slaves work for you: <http://freedomcommons.ijm.org>.
- Hold a “run for justice” to raise funds for an anti-trafficking organization or outreach center.
- Support PC(USA)'s Human Trafficking Roundtable at www.presbyterianmission.org/donate, click “Change it here” and type in the ECO number—E052101.

DES MOINES PRESBYTERY PW COORDINATING TEAM

Executive Team

Moderator

Pam Deichmann (2017)
405 S 16th Ave
Winterset, IA 50273
641-462-3277
pam.deichmann@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary

Sheryl Puderbaugh (2017)
2746 Peru Rd
Peru, IA 50222
515-314-6334
Htnhnd2002@ol.com

Recording Secretary

Ann McGowan (2016)
6122 Goodman Dr
Urbandale, IA 50322
515-252-6195 (H)
515-480-9595 (M)
akmcgowan@msn.com

Treasurer

Angie Williams (2017)
2182 220th St
Hamlin, IA 50117
712-563-2213
rawilliams517@gmail.com



**PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN**

Coordinating Team

Mission Matters
Denise England (2015)
10531 Hickory Dr, #5
Urbandale, IA 50322
515-401-2769
deniseengland@mchsi.com

Historian

Darlene Shepherd (2015)
309 North D St, Apt 306
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
641-673-5793
eddy62osky@mahaska.org

Resources & HORIZONS

Susan Tinder (2017)
587 Erbe St
Pleasantville, IA 50225
515-848-5078
susan.tinder@yahoo.com

Justice & Peace

Betty Brown Elgin (2015)
2880 Grand Ave
Des Moines, IA 50312
515-288-2808
b.eLgin@q.com

Clergywoman Rep

Rev. Betty Sandy (2016)
3021 E Hart Ave
Des Moines, IA 50320
740-703-0691
betty@teamsandy.net

PWP Liaison to Leadership Council

Mary Lou Briles
1015 Luster Ln
Des Moines, IA 50315-6622
515-285-1074
marybriles@aol.com

Newsletter Editor

Kim Coulter
515-867-4299
coultermk@msn.com

Search Committee

Marilyn Finney (2017)
4717 Woodland Ave,
Unit 3
West Des Moines, IA
50266
515-267-1714
mLfinney1@mchsi.com

Sharon Falck (2015)
2009 Edmondson Dr
Oskaloosa, IA 52577
641-676-1561
sfalck@mahaska.org

Area Coordinators

Area #1 Coordinator

Judy Gale (2017)
802 N Division St
Creston, IA 50801
641-782-2998 (H)
641-202-4107 (M)
jgaleus@yahoo.com

Area #2 Coordinator

Vivian Thatcher (2017)
8031 Garrison Rd
Clive, IA 50325
515-276-7869
vivianthatcher@gmail.com

Area #3 Coordinator

Barbara Taylor (2016)
2709 1st Ave E
Newton, IA 50208
641-792-6990
barbjohn@pcpartner.net

Area #4 Coordinator

Rev. Linda O'Connell
(2017)
P.O Box 79
Lucas, IA 50151
641-766-9877 (H)
641-203-3660 (M)
revlinda@iowatelecom.net

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
OF THE PRESBYTERY OF DES MOINES
2400 86TH STREET, SUITE #20
URBAN DALE, IA 50322-4306

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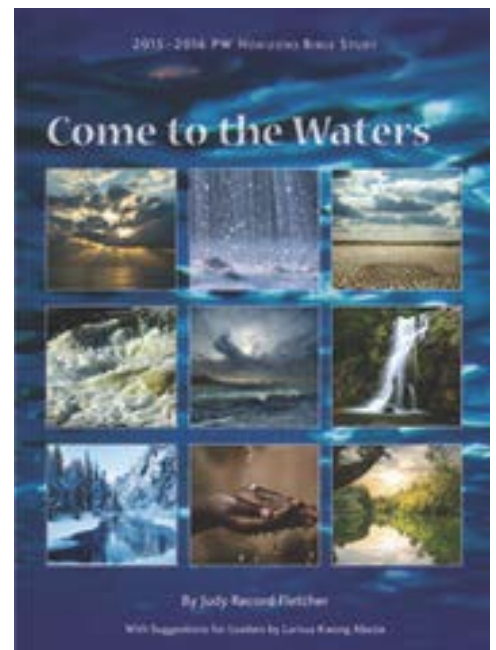
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COME TO THE WATERS...

Yes, there's more! Lots more!

One of the pillars of the Presbyterian Women's Purpose is "to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study." That's why Presbyterian women take seriously the Bible study process. From topic and author selection to a vigorous field-testing process, each *Horizons* Bible study is created and formed by Presbyterian women like you! And the development process doesn't end with the publication of the English Bible study. PW produces several other editions (large print, audio, ecumenical, and Spanish translation). Within the written study, readers will find Suggestions for Leaders at the conclusion of each lesson. Behind each study is lots of leader and reader support!

For example, this year's study is *Come to the Waters* by Judy Record Fletcher. [Order one of the many editions of *Come to the Waters*!](http://presbyterianwomeninthepecusainc.cmail19.com/t/t-l-idikkyt-dikdvhtk-r/) To order, go to: <http://presbyterianwomeninthepecusainc.cmail19.com/t/t-l-idikkyt-dikdvhtk-r/>.



PW taking Bible studies to Cuba

In October, PW in the Presbytery of South Louisiana (PSL) dedicated copies of the Spanish editions of the PW/*Horizons* Bible study *Come to the Waters*, which they will deliver to sisters and brothers in the Reformed Church of Cuba. The dedication took place at First Presbyterian Church New Orleans. The group raised \$1,100 and will be delivering more than 130 Bible studies.