

The Lighthouse



February 2021

Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the North Northeast

Moderators Message



Presbyterian Women in the Synod of
the Northeast
From the Desk of the Moderator
Adebisi A. Shofu

Greetings to my Presbyterian Women sisters in the Synod of the Northeast. This year is almost over. It has been a difficult year for us due to the pandemic, which has claimed over 300,000 lives and the lockdown, which has led to total isolation for so many. It is also, a year where we see so many families hungry and on the edge of losing their homes. A year of uncertainty, fear, doubt and suffering for so many; where people are living day to day not sure of what tomorrow will bring. There have been mass protests against the murders of so many African Americans both male and female as well as the inability to reconcile children with their parents after being separated from them at the border.

This is a year that calls for justice on all levels. I know it has been a terrible year with so many lives lost needlessly and many people suffering; the countless misery that have plagued many people. In this hardship, we have seen people come together to support each other. We have seen people of all races, sexual orientation, religions, classes, young and old and people of all stripes come together to join in the Black Lives Matter protests. People banding together to help the immigrants re-unite with their children. Conversations and strong support for Native Americans and other peoples of color. There have been so many acts of kindness in the most difficult time, but most all we have come together to help one another stay strong. We now realize we need each other regardless of color, creed, origin, sexual orientation and religion to survive. We are all created in the image of God; we see God when we look at each other.

We belong to God. God can't prevent suffering. The question then becomes how do we handle suffering? How do we

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Editor's note:

Comments appreciated on *Lighthouse*.

The next issue of the *Lighthouse* will be published in February. Deadline is May 1.

In addition it is hoped we will hear from PWPs. What are you doing? Ideas to share and photos, etc.

Susan Silliman Smith, editor
Email: august13sss@gmail.com

Moderator's message continued

rely on God when we suffer and somehow be at peace knowing that God is with us? Paul's message sums it up *"we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."* 2 Corinthians 4:8-10 When we face suffering, whether it will end soon or drag on longer than we expect, let us look to the scriptures for assurance because our God is the Good Shepherd searching high and low for that one lost sheep. Our God is the Father running down the road to meet the prodigal son. Our God is the Mother Hen gathering her brood under her wings. I pray for everyone in whatever circumstances you find yourselves that God's presence to be with you always. Let us continue to come together to lift each other.

As we end this year and move forward into the new year, I pray that 2021 will bring us the light of God so our lives can improve and go back to what normalcy will be going forward. 2021 is a new year filled with promises of better days and brighter tomorrows. I will end this message with the 1st stanza of a hymn (in Glory To God hymnal # 821) that has sustained me through this year and my surgery and recuperation. I encourage you to take a look and sing all the verses to encourage you.

"My Life flows on in endless song above earth's lamentation, I hear the clear though far off hymn that hails a new creation. No storm can shake my inmost calm while to the Rock I'm clinging. Since Christ is Lord of Heaven and Earth, how can I keep from singing".

Also, take a look at hymn #548 "May God Support You All Your Days".

My prayer is that the new year brings us peace, joy, good health, endurance, courage, happiness, hope, faith, love, wisdom, friendship, community and laughter.

[As you may have heard, New Jersey is consolidating its seven Presbyteries into four, which are: Central; Northeast; Northwest; Southern. The official start of the new Presbyteries is March 1, 2021. After that date our records will reflect the PW in those four Presbyteries.](#)

There are a lot of women sitting in the pews who don't understand what PW is about; they think we are just from a bygone era as an appendage of PCUSA, which has outlived its usefulness; therefore, no longer relevant. This year (2021) is an opportunity for PW to get our voices out there to let women in our churches know what Presbyterian Women are doing in various ways both nationally and internationally to show them we are about Justice and peace. I'm thinking about programming that has general appeal that shows mission and/or advocacy work that might interest or engage people.

If we engage them or provide interest in programming, we will surely attract some women in our churches. Also, keeping the work of PW in front of all of the churches. Perhaps presbytery moderators could help ensure information is getting to the churches in their presbyteries and to everyone within their sphere. I know sometimes the information does not make it past the church office; but if each moderator can brainstorm with her team and come up with ideas on how to by-pass the church offices to get the message in the hands of the women in the pews. Another option is to educate women in our churches about dynamic activities going on in PW by adding the news of what we are doing in your church bulletins, newsletters and poster boards. If we have an event coming up put a flyer on the board in your church; speak about the event at your Presbytery gatherings and announcement time in church, etc. Furthermore, educate the women in your churches and presbyteries that we are a separate entity from PCUSA so they

have a clear understanding of who we are.

The 2021 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women will be held August 5–8, 2021, in St. Louis, Missouri. This meeting is still on target to happen on the above date; if there are any changes or shift in direction, I will let you know. Please plan to attend, I believe by July 2021 we will all have been vaccinated. I pray that the COVID will have dissipated by then.

Blessings & Peace
AdebisiAShofu

**REFLECTIONS ON THE 2020 TRIENNI-
AL/FALL GATHERING OF PRESBY-
TERIAN WOMEN IN THE SYNOD OF
THE NORTHEAST BY
VICE MODERATOR
LORRAINE CUFFIE**

TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!! Despite the changes in venues (initially, the Desmond Hotel and Conference Center in Albany, followed by the Stony Point Center in New York) and the eventual switch to the virtual platform (due to the Coronavirus), the Design Team (Lorraine Cuffie (Chair), Adebisi Shofu, Alpha Brown, Beverly Hoover, The Reverend Denise Kennedy, Kristen York Gerling, Lisa Gray, Lydia Tembo, Nancy Lack, Rhonda Sanchez, Virginia Champlin) executed a meaningful and successful Gathering.

The theme of the Gathering was “Empowered to Serve”, based on 1 Peter 4:10 – “Each one should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace.” The event lasted from Friday, October 30 to Saturday, October 31, 2020. Prior to the beginning of the event, Moderator Adebisi Shofu presided over a Visioning Session which addressed challenging questions such as “Who are We? What is our Purpose? How do we come out of the shadows to be a

force to be reckoned with?” The Session was followed by a Coordinating Team Meeting and a Business Meeting.

The opening plenary, which began with the lighting of the Christ candle by Lisa Gray, Immediate Past Moderator, included the opening prayer by Lorraine Cuffie, Vice Moderator; the recognition of Presbytery Moderators and Delegates by Lisa Gray; the introduction of guests by Adebisi Shofu (who would later receive the Moderator’s stole honoring her as the newly elected Moderator); the Installation Service performed by the Reverend Jyungin Lee (Churchwide PW Moderator); the interpretation of the theme by the Reverend Jeniffer Rodriguez, First Presbyterian Church of Ossining, New York; the keynote address delivered by the Reverend Dr. Diane Moffett (Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)); and a prayer by the Reverend Denise Kennedy (Presbytery of Newark).

The closing plenary featured uplifting Words of Wisdom and Prayer by the Reverend M.J. Pattison (Presbytery of Albany), and three (3) relevant workshops, namely, **Voting Rights** by Moderator Adebisi Shofu, the Horizons **Bible Study** by Donna Rahmann, Vice Moderator-elect, and the **Commission on the Status of Women** by Sue Rheem, Missions Specialist at the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations. The grand finale was an awe-inspiring Worship/Communion Service officiated by the Reverend Jeniffer Rodriguez.

There were about 48 attendees who were diverse in age, ethnicity, and geographical locations. The presenters were well-informed and spoke eloquently. The workshops were illuminating, especially the one on Voting Rights, which gave us an insight into the resilience of women like Sojourner Truth, who were trailblazers and standard bearers for us to emulate today.

The music, which highlighted Korean and Spanish singers (including a soloist) and instrumentalists, was lively and mood-enhancing. It was a blessing to witness officers answering the call to serve in various capacities; to learn about the Matthew 25 initia-

tive and its goals to build vital congregations, dismantle structural racism and eradicate systemic poverty; to see videos of Presbyterian Women doing mission globally, as only they can; to experience the camaraderie and connection of Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Northeast (despite social distancing); to present our Outgoing Moderator, Lisa Gray, with the Honorary Lifetime Award; to watch our Sisters display their talents in technology (Moderator Adebisi Shofu, the Reverend Denise Kennedy, the Reverend Jyungin Lee) and in booklet design (Alpha Brown); to drench ourselves in the atmosphere of ease and linger in the presence of the Holy Spirit, as we worshipped together.

The entire Gathering was truly uplifting, and we are grateful to all its participants. It was, indeed, a privilege to serve our PW Sisters, and we thank God for empowering us with His grace.

Peace and Blessings,
Lorraine

Message from JoAnn Burrell Churchwide VP for Mission Relationships

Hebrews 12:15 describes bitterness as a root. Where do you find roots? They grow underground siphoning off nutrients from the ground all around them. The peaceful façade of the green grasses, flowers, or bushes can be deceiving. Underneath, the root might be bitter.

For four years prior to 01/20/21, we were subjected to a bitter root, siphoning off what we have developed as a republic, a nation of the people for the people. Unknown to us, the root that was planted was bad. Sitting beneath the surface, and only visible when we experienced the executive orders, and regulations based upon autocratic thinking, did we realize we got a bad

bitter root. We knew that bitter roots can only produce bitter actions, but we overlooked & allowed the bitterness to continue unabated. Tangled orders & tangled regulations are actions that a bitter root produces giving extreme pain to those who are forced to endure the touch of such actions.

Take heart! Our national Constitution provides us every four years with a fresh root. A new root is here! What we have experienced so far is, that this new root is not bitter. Let us help our new root succeed, so all residents can enjoy a more perfect union, experience equal Justice, feel tranquility, know the comfort of general welfare, and feel and see the blessings of liberty and prosperity. This new non-bitter root will provide nourishment, so that we, as God's workers, can do mission better.

Take joy in the concept of "mutuality" in mission. Pandemic, distancing, closures, and all the blockages placed in our way will not stop Presbyterian Women from our mission activities, because we are guided by God.

The Corona Virus has provided endless areas for mission. Talk to and listen to parents, youth, young adults, and everyone you meet to find out the needs of the community. Continue doing the mission activities you did before the year 2020. You will probably have to re-design or adjust how you do them, or you can be adventurous and implement a whole new mission project. Remember, you are never alone when you do God's work.

Write down in a little book what you want to do/accomplish in the year 2021. This will be your Dream Sheet. In January of the next year, check off the goals that you met. If you do not meet some of the goals on your Dream Sheet, just do them in following years.

A year full of sadness, fear, distancing, closures, and lack of contact with other humans places us in extreme stress, so you must take care of yourself. During these trying times, you might want to do the following things to

reduce stress:

1. Pray every day and meditate on pleasant thoughts.
2. Connect to loved ones and friends by telephone, text, email, and computer visual meetings.
3. Do some stretching exercises. You can even do them in bed or a chair.
4. Limit your caffeine intake. Too much caffeine can make you restless, anxious, and interfere with sleep.
5. Step outside or open a window, or just sit where you are inside, and take slow deep breaths off and on during the day. Inhale the beauty of the air around you.
6. Eat balanced meals. Try to get those fruits and veggies in.
7. Get as much sleep as you can. Take a mental escape during the day. Close your eyes; and think of something that makes you happy.
8. Pray over and over, and off and on all day long.

If you need ideas for mission make sure to subscribe to Horizon's Magazine, read everyone's newsletters, and focus your conversations about the needs of the world with people you know, and you will get ideas.

Remember to listen to each other, and always be kind and have courage to speak up and speak out. Choose the things in life that will make you proud. Mission to God's children will make you proud, and it will ultimately change minds, and help those in need.

The late Alex Trebek said, "Do what you can do to make this a kinder, gentler world." When you do mission, you are building that kinder, gentler world.

Jo Ann Burrell, Vice Moderator Mission Relationships, 2018-2021.

Living out the PW Purpose during the Pandemic

Hands on Mission Project - *Tea For the Soul to Go*

PW in Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church – Guilderland New York

Last May, our Interim Pastor, Rev. Janice West received a note from the Pastoral Care Dept. at a local hospital about its *Tea For the Soul to Go Project*. The department wanted to give hospital staff decorative bags of snacks that included a note of appreciation. Our PW group felt that this was a project that we could easily take on during the pandemic. We planned it for mid-May to the end of July and invited our congregation to participate. We asked that the decorated paper lunch bags and financial donations for the purchase of the snacks be left on the front porch of one of our PW members or they could be sent directly to the hospital. The bags kept coming in and we have now decided to make this an ongoing project.

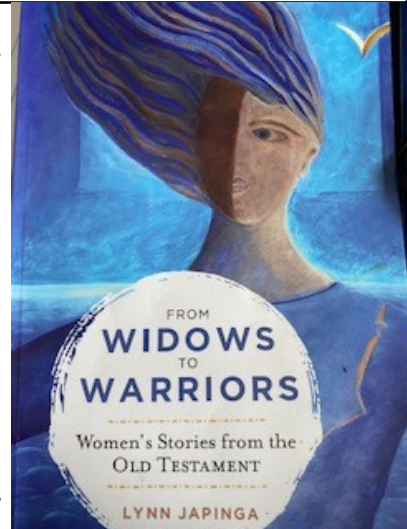
It was an easy project for us to do. Many of the bags were decorated by children. We have learned that the hospital's Pastoral Care Dept. has made care for the staff a top priority, so the need for decorated bags and financial donations will continue. The project was gratifying as the response was huge and anyone could participate, while maintaining social distance.

Bible Study on Deborah

submitted by Lisa Grey

My Thursday lunchtime Zoom women's bible study looked at the Book of Judges this week and two women: Deborah and Jael in chapters 4 & 5. Did you know "*DEBORAH carried out her role as judge (she was also a prophet) in an office under a tree in a high-traffic area, and people came to her for advice and guidance. She also served as a military adviser. She summoned Barak, the Israelite army commander, and gave him a word from the Lord.*"? And she went with him in battle.

With all the political stuff that's going on it's funny the name Barak came up and the author thought they were "*models for men and women who work together*". She goes on to say: "*Grace can come in the form of a leader who can identify the gifts of others, encourage their use, and stand alongside people in difficult situations*". We can hope for this in America.



So who are you? Are you a leader who needs to be an encouraging voice to someone who you see a spark of great things in? Are you the person who needs a spark lit? What gifts do you have that can be shared with our congregation, our neighborhood, and the world? What tree can Old Greenwich members sit under in a high-traffic area to speak God's word?

We wrestled with: "*The Old Testament frequently advocates violence as the way for the Israelites to take and protect their promised land...Did God command this?*". If you want to join these kinds of conversations email me for an invite Lisa_A_Gray@Outlook.com

Let us pray, (Kate Trigger Duffert-Racial Equity Committee - PW's churchwide board)

God of parted seas and turned tables,

You have revealed to us over the centuries just how broken we are.

We **hear** it in your words that deny the humanity of others.

We **feel** it in the grief of losing relationships to division.

We **see** it on flags that bear your name but carry out sin.

Give us justice.

Call us into the work of repairing our worlds by reckoning with who we have been and are becoming.

Give us peace.

Stir us into compassion, reminding us that we belong not only to you but are responsible for one another as siblings in your beloved family.

Give us imagination, to see what may be.

Give us strength, to admit what had been.

Give us love, to bind us together.

Amen

Bibles for Malawi

There is poverty, injustice, and barriers to peace in our world. We listen to the news... heartbroken at what we hear. But we are not helpless. We can make a difference. We can raise our voices to share the good news of Jesus Christ and the peace He brings. Presbyterian Women are women of faith who trust the words of Matthew 25:40 "...what you have done unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

Sisters, I invite you to lend support to an amazing mission. Churches from various denominations across our country have formed teams under the leadership of the Malawi Board of the Ministry of Hope to bring hope, to empower people, and to spread the gospel message. Liberty Corner Presbyterian Church in New Jersey is the home of Malawi Visions, one of the United States teams. Please take a moment to visit their website at **www.malawivisions.com** If you click on the "overview" you will see a wonderful narrative with photographs just published this January.

Can you imagine a country where only 8% of the population has electricity? Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa, with thousands of orphans. Look at the pictures of those beautiful faces of barefoot children. These children walk each day to the village centers to be fed one meal. They eagerly gather to study and learn.

As more people have come to know Jesus, the Ministry of Hope has joyfully shared that there are more people coming to church than bibles. So we are collecting English language, Protestant bibles. If the cover is damaged, it can be repaired as long as the contents are in good condition. Please collect any extra bibles you may have. Covid pandemic restrictions are preventing our PWSNE gatherings, where it would have been so easy for you to deliver your bibles. We will announce at a later date, how the collection will occur. As you will read on the website, Malawi Visions will wrap the bibles in plastic, put them into large crates, and ship them by boat across the Atlantic Ocean to Malawi.

One more, most unusual request: Malawi Visions is looking for treadle sewing machines. There is a program in Malawi to train young people to learn the trade of tailoring to help themselves and their community.

After you have taken a moment to explore the website, you will begin to feel a most extraordinary awareness. Each time you hit the switch to turn on a light or turn the faucet to get a drink of water, the feeling of enormous gratitude for the countless simple blessings in your life will fill your heart. Please pray that God will speak to your heart and guide your response to His children in need. Love and friendship,

Patti Williamson

PW in the Presbytery of Albany had a Very Successful Zoom Fall Gathering

Although other PWP's have had successful zoom gatherings, we were nervous about trying something we had no experience with. For our Fall 2020 Gathering, we were able to use our presbytery's Zoom account. Our stated clerk hosted. The speaker was Lisa Gray, the immediate past Moderator of Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the Northeast and participant in the 2019 USA Mission Experience trip to the Finger Lakes Region. In her presentation, *Standing on the Gifts of Empowered Historic Women*, Lisa shared her experiences and focused on the origins of women's empowerment in that region of New York State. She had an informative PowerPoint presentation with beautiful photos of the trip.

We always invite neighboring presbyteries to attend our Gatherings and occasionally, a few women come. One of the advantages of Zoom is that people don't have to travel. We had as many women from other presbyteries as from our own. There were women from six other presbyteries: Cayuga-Syracuse, Geneva, Hudson River, New Brunswick, Newton, and New York City. Because people could attend from home, one attendee who was once very active on PW, and is now 100 years old was able to be with us. We were very pleased that two women from a church in our presbytery that has not been represented in many years attended.

We're looking forward to learning how modern technology will enhance our ability to work together in carrying out the PW Purpose.

Charlotte

FLIGHT 2021, boarding now!

Welcome to Flight 2021.

We are prepared to take off into the New Year.

Please make sure your Positive Attitude and Gratitude are secured and locked in the upright position.

All self-destruct devices; pity, anger, selfishness and resentment should be turned off at this time. All negativity, hurt and discouragement should be put away.

Should you lose your positive Attitude under pressure during this flight, reach up and pull down a prayer.

Prayers will automatically be activated by Faith. Once your Faith is activated, you can assist other passengers who are of little faith.

There will BE NO BAGGAGE allowed on this flight.

Captain : "THE UNIVERSE" has cleared us for take-off.

Wishing you a New Year filled with LOVE, JOY & GRACE

From Sandy Arnold

Haiku poetry

Submitted by Donna Rajmann

Do you Haiku? Haiku is a type of short form poetry originally from Japan. Traditional Japanese haiku consist of three phrases that contain a kireji, or "cutting word", 17 on in a 5, 7, 5 pattern, and a kigo, or seasonal reference. Similar poems that do not adhere to these rules are generally classified as senryū.

format which is 5 syllables- 7 syllables- 5 syllables.

Pastor Scott Foster recently presented a sermon on the Baptism of Jesus, by John. How does he remember the John of the Bible who baptized with water, he remembers the song 'Rocketman' by Elton John. Is the music and song playing for you yet?

One member of the Fairmount Presbyterian Church, Califon, New Jersey, of the Newton Presbytery, Cheryl Slegers [with permission] wrote the two Haiku poems, based on the Rocketman sermon and the scripture.

Haiku Rocketman

Sermon:

Tension Spirit Fire
Caught up in all our own stuff
Follow Me says Christ

Jesus calls us out
Judgement isn't punishment
Choose to follow Him

Psalm 29:

Heavenly beings
God Universal Ruler
Lord give strength and peace

Genesis 1:1-5

Earth formless dark void
Separating light from dark
God made day and night

Mark 1:4-12

John baptized Jesus
Spirit of God descended
Sent His Son to wilds

Give it a try. It is pretty contemplative and a way to 'dig deeper' into the scripture, and also sermons. Peace and blessings to you, from Donna Rahmann, Moderator, PWP, Newton.

Editor's note: Continue to next page for another.


Haiku Fishin' Where the Fish Are
Psalm 62
In silence I wait
My soul waits for God alone
My rock salvation

Sermon
Jesus fished for men
Are we now fishing at all
Question of the day
Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Turn from evil ways
Jonah warns the Ninevites
They heed the message

No calamity
Ninevites fast wear sackcloth
God changes His mind
Mark 1:14-20
Drop nets Follow Me
Fishermen first disciples
Fish now for people

God's time is fulfilled
Kingdom of God near repent
Proclaim His good news

Enjoy,

Cheryl 



ECUMENICAL MISSION GROUP

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me.” Matthew 25:35-36

Dear Friends:

Fairmount Presbyterian Church has joined the Ecumenical Mission Group, which consists of Fairmount Methodist Church, Cokesbury United Methodist Church, The Round Valley Food Bank, via the Round Valley United Methodist Church, and Loaves of Love.

Fairmount Presbyterian Church is hosting our **third SOUP CAMPAIGN** on **Saturday, January 16, 2021**. Please drop off pots of **cooled** soup to the **Community House** between **11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.** Our volunteers will transfer the soups into pint sized containers for distribution. **You may pick up empty containers for the next campaign at the Community House.** (If you would like to be part of the team distributing soups to those in need, or if you know of someone who might benefit from the soups, contact Donna at the email below or 908/894-3176.)

Please label your donation, listing all ingredients. If you don't have labels, send your list of ingredients to donnarahmann@comcast.net by Wednesday, November 18th so that she can make the labels.

Some soups to donate: Chicken/Turkey noodle/rice; vegetable; lentil, and chili, Split pea.

We will be hosting the Soup Campaign again February 13, 2021 (weather permitting).



There are also members of our community still in need of financial assistance by means of gift cards. If you are able, please purchase Shop Rite or WalMart gift cards. You may purchase the gift cards privately and send to Pastor Lynn Mears, 230 Cokesbury Road, Lebanon, NJ 08833. Pastor Lynn will distribute the gift cards to those in need. Pastor Lynn can be reached at lcb-mears@yahoo.com or text to 908/625-5170. Dot Reed is able to purchase them through the Fairmount United Methodist Church and receives 5% back, which goes toward women's ministry. Dot can be reached at dotreed1218@gmail.com.

Thank you for your support of our friends who are in need and feeling isolated.

Peace to you and your families.

Donna Rahmann, Cheryl Slegers, Rosemary Hartten

showing a mission for
your inspiration

Hey Presbyterian Women —What New!

The new format for the three official funds (PW churchwide: Annual, Thank Offering, Birthday Offering) are no longer 8X12 booklets! They are still being mailed out to all on the list (by churchwide) AND every church. If you are looking for the same old flyer, look again! The one recently mailed, for the “Annual Fund” (Mission Pledge) is a shinny folder the size of a greeting card. Check out your church PW mailbox if you didn’t get one at home. Please share this with others!

That fund works by preparing the soil, planting the seeds, watering the seeds, tending the seedlings, nurturing the sprouts, and celebrating the yield. There would be no bible study written, Horizons Magazine, resources, Thank or Birthday Offerings given out, no triennial gathering, no webinars, zoom meetings OR HELP FIGURING OUT ZOOM. Please support the staff salaries and overhead by giving personally and in your group! Online: www.presbyterianwomen.org/annual-fund.

The “Leadership Newsletter” is NOW **PW News Bytes**. “NEWS YOU CAN USE”

The Winter Edition tells you things like:

Horizons is now five issues plus the Bible Study (*there’s a buy one get one free offer*)

You Can still contribute to the 2020 Thank Offering

The Racial Equity Committee has a leaflet ***Prayer & Beyond: Faithful Response in Times of Trouble*** (go to PW store) or download ***Prejudice vs. Racism: A Racial Equity Workshop*** for your prayer and study.

To receive e-blasts OR NewsBytes ask: patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org

Add PW to your Amazon Smile account, every penny donated adds up!

“Gifts of Women Sunday” is March 7th (or whenever you want it) with the resources of ***God Disrupts Us with Love*** - Matthew 25:35-36 as the theme of the written resources that is in Horizons (last issue of the year) or on the PW website for downloading (liturgy and ideas).

Our sisters in New Jersey are going from seven presbyteries to four. Newton (mine) will be “The Northwest” as of 3/1/21 (and until we choose a better name). With the Spirit moving through us we can expect great new things to happen as we reorganize the New Jersey PW groups into the new model. Did I hear *the more the merrier*?

Lisa Gray

Newton Presbytery Peace & Justice; PWSNE Representative to Churchwide (chair: Stewardship)

Tribute to Marcia Vair

The Presbyterian Women of Cayuga-Syracuse Presbytery wish to give thanks to **MARCIA VAIR** of Morrisville Community Church for her many years of faithful service. She has always been an active in PWP.

When Cayuga-Syracuse and Utica Presbyterian Women had their retreats at Vanderkamp, she served as the Registrar when it was Cayuga-Syracuse Women's turn to host. Not only did she serve in that capacity but *always* had wonderful baked goods to share with all. As time went by, even if she was unable to attend, she made *sure* we were treated with her 'goodies'!

She also participated in many activities of the Presbyterian Women of the Northeast. One year she and her daughter, Julie, created the artwork for the backdrop in the meeting room at a Triennial.

Marcia was PWP Co-Moderator with Sandra Arnold in 1998; then became Moderator in 2000. When her term was completed, she then took on the huge responsibility of being the Operating Treasurer, adding the Mission Treasurer responsibility along the way. She has remained as Treasurer until December 2020 when she requested to be relieved of her duties

We cannot thank Marcia enough for her many, many years of dedication!!

NEW TREASURER

As of December 2020, Gail Banks has taken on the responsibility of PWP Treasurer. Her address is 217 Everingham Road, Syracuse, NY 13205. Any contributions to PWP for Mission, Thank Offering, or other should be sent to Gail.

Valatie PW

Valatie Presbyterian Women have continued to meet in person, with masks and social distancing, to continue our Bible Study of *Into The Light, finding Hope Through Prayers of Lament*.

Our book club has stayed active as have those who knit, crochet, and sew together Afghans for Warm Up America. This year instead of a pot luck supper to give out the afghans and knit items, a drive by pick up was organized for the ten organizations in Columbia, Greene, and Albany Counties who received the one hundred and thirty-four afghans and thirty-six knit hats, mittens, and scarves. Our annual mitten tree where we collect small mittens and hats for a local day care and children in the primary school was also successful with the collection of sixty-three items to keep little hands and heads warm.

We were also able to collect over fifty 2021 calendars and one hundred and fifty magazines for the local nursing home and bags full of empty pill bottles for the Lions Club which sends them to doctors and clinics in Africa. So while we are spending more time at home, we are not forgetting our commitment to help others and to stay connected with each other for prayer and study.

Rosalie Hemingway

Valatie (NY) Presbyterian Women

Transitions, Changes and Blessings

Fairmount Presbyterian Church, located in the beautiful, once fully farming area of Califon, New Jersey, has been in transition since 2020, not only due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also due to the moving on of our Pastor, Katy Shevel Callum. Pastor Katy will be missed for her educational sermons and Bible studies.

However, during our time of transition, we reached out to the local clergy to see if they would be available to provide pastoral care, if needed, and they all responded with a resounding Yes! As part of reaching out to the local clergy, Fairmount was invited to participate in an Ecumenical Mission Group and we accepted the invitation.

One of the missions for the group were to collect \$10 and \$20 Shop Rite and Walmart gift cards to distribute to local residents who were severely financially affected by the pandemic. More than \$3,000.00 in gift cards was collected and distributed to over 20 families! Used magazines and note cards were collected – the magazines distributed to local nursing home residents – the note cards repurposed into newer cards, also distributed to the nursing home residents. They no longer feel isolated.

Fairmount began a soup campaign (see flyer). Members brought cooled, home-made soups and chili to our Community House; the women put the soups/chili into pint sized, ingredient labeled containers, and then into bags, which were labeled with the recipient's name, address, and phone number (we call in advance to advise that the soups are being

delivered). Any soups not delivered are then sent to Loaves of Love, a local food pantry. This soup campaign has expanded in the number of recipients, and now includes cookies. The first campaign included a flyer and a note card to wish the recipients well and blessed by the soups and the hands that provided it. Several notes and phone calls of thanks and joy have been received. (We need to begin a recipe exchange!)

Nancy Parks, Nancy Vaughn and Rosemary Hartten (see photo) are a few of the many hands making light work of this project.

The group has expanded its mission to include a puzzle exchange and are working on other ideas.

May our Lord and Savior continue to bless this ministry.

In Christ,
Donna Rahmann, Moderator
PWP Newton Presbytery



How about a different focus.? Do we watch God's world change?



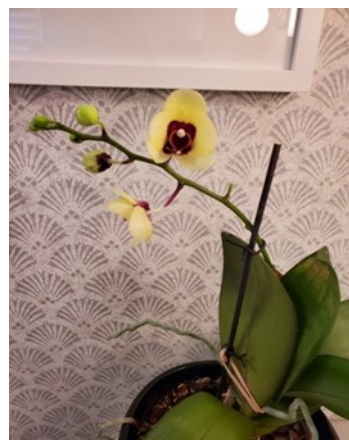
Week One



Week two

Week

Three



Bread For The World

'Bread for the World is a collective Christian voice using our nation's decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad...Bread for the World members have helped win bipartisan support for programs and policies that reduce hunger in the US and overseas.'

Members have just received in the mail Lenten Prayers for an End to Hunger. **Prayer** is one of the answers to the question "What can we (I) do?" along with **act** and **give**. *"This year our prayers are especially urgent. The coronavirus has created a crisis in hunger. Nearly one in four children worldwide is at risk of stunting because of chronic malnutrition. In the US, one in three families with children struggle with hunger."*

To receive "Lenten Prayers" visit **bread.org/lent** for an online version of these prayers- and to sign up to receive weekly reflections, prayers and stories and actions throughout lent.

There are also many resources for you that are free. If you teach Sunday School, there is curriculum for grades 4-6 and 7-9 to teach about hunger. There are flyers, prayers, and bulletin insets and fact sheets.

The 2021 Offering of Letters will cover four topics: food systems, climate change, economic justice and racial/gender equity. *"Working apart doesn't mean we can't work together. You can take action right now to persuade Congress to provide emergency assistance and approve nutrition for those most vulnerable due to pandemic. Background information, sample letters, and tips for personalized e-mail messages to Congress are all available at **bread.org/write**."*

Bread will have area webinars in 2021 and recordings of the November ones are posted **bread.org/blog/2021-regional-webinars-offering-of-letters-congress**. I listened to just the portion by Rev Eugene Cho (president) and it was very motivating!

Hope Presbyterian Women will be motivated also!

Lisa Gray

PWSNE Synod Representative to Churchwide; member of P&J Committee

Called to Serve

My name is MJ Pattison. I am a Presbyterian minister. Sometimes that is how I introduce myself when I meet new people. But I have also introduced myself as a social studies teacher and a Program Evaluator for the New York State Department of Health. I have introduced myself as Stewart's wife; as Ben and Elizabeth's mother, as Connor, Ava, Emma and River's "Nana". I am "called" to all of these roles!

I have always been grateful that ordination in the Presbyterian tradition is an ordination to "function". I am a teaching elder. I am not a priest. I am not "above" or "below" anyone else or between God and human beings in any way. This is a difficult thing to maintain in our world, where we want to place one another in various pecking orders. But hierarchy is not part of our theology or polity. It is also important not to equate "calling and vocation" with a profession or "our job". For ordained ministers, our calling or vocation is often our job or profession, but not always. For the 13 years, before I retired this summer, I was, after St. Paul, a "tentmaker" (Acts 18:1-3; 20:33-35); I worked full time at a secular job while serving in my ordained function as a parish associate and guest preacher. My "calling" did not go away when I changed jobs. My calling is much bigger than a job, role, or function in any of the seasons of my life.

I think the best definition of what it means to be called by God is one coined by Presbyterian minister and spiritual author Frederick Beuchner. He wrote **"The place God calls you is the place where your *deep gladness* and the world's deep hunger meet."** I especially like the idea that our calling is a deep gladness. It is this deep gladness that makes our calling more than a job, when it is our job. It is deep gladness that allow us to identify something as a calling that we might not otherwise recognize as service to the Lord. It is the deep gladness that allows us to do a secular job or have an identity, that provides the time and resources to follow our calling.

Where does your 'deep gladness' meet the worlds deep hunger? It is worthwhile to spend time thinking about how, and where we are called to God's service. It is also worthwhile to explore how our calling has changed over our lifetimes. If service is making you weary, or overwhelmed or depressed, it may be time to step back in prayer and contemplation or to seek the community of others who are called to similar work to share the load as we seek to follow Jesus. Over the years I believe Presbyterian women has been a model for how to be a community of service to others -providing mutual support and comfort as we reach out to address the world's great need. May we continue to share the load with deep gladness, as we reach out together to a deeply complicated and hungry world.

MJ Pattison

Bio: MJ Pattison is the women clergy representative of the coordinating team of the Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Northeast. She is a member of the Albany Presbytery (HR) While serving on the coordinating team she will be writing a reflection column for "The Lighthouse".

Racism: Guilt and Culpability from *The Peripatetic Preacher*

January 25, 2021 by John C Holbert

https://www.patheos.com/blogs/theperipateticpreacher/2021/01/racism-guilt-and-culpability-the-peripatetic-preacher/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Christians+For+a+Better+Christianity&utm_content=43

Many of those of us who are white citizens of US America have struggled with our involvement in and ongoing support for racism in our nation, especially a racism directed toward our Black sisters and brothers. We have engaged in protest rallies in support of Black Lives Matter. We have read any number of books and articles that have tried to place our systematic racism in larger contexts, historically, culturally, and socially. Those of us who are long-time members of the Christian church have discovered, or have been reminded of, our religious institution's long-time boosterism for racism, even while we claimed that we were speaking against all of its manifestations. In short, we have been awakened to our deep enmeshment with systems that have made true equality in our land well nigh impossible. The brutal and public assaults by recognized law enforcement officers against Black (and Brown) citizens—the names have become familiar among us—have lead to the demand that we look squarely in our mirrors to ask ourselves just how we have contributed to this horrific carnage, and in what ways we might move toward reducing and finally eliminating our support of this 400-year scourge in US America. We have at least learned that addressing, let alone solving this dilemma is work that will take generations of concerted and faithful efforts on the part of millions. Those of us who are white bear a special responsibility for this work. With regard to the ways we speak about our guilt or our culpability in the racism that I hope we now see much more clearly, I have been struck by the patterns of speech we white folk have used when confronted by the reality of our own racism. “I have black friends,” we say. “I would never demean any human being,” we add. “I just do not see color,” we whine. Each of these familiar sentences, among a host of others, merely reveals our white fragility, our unwillingness and inability to recognize the far deeper systematic structures that enshrined racism in our society and culture. In this brief essay, I want to explore a bit the relationship between guilt and culpability with regard to the intractable problem of racism in US America. I wish to address that issue using the rich analysis of this question offered by the German novelist, Thomas Mann, over 70 years ago, following the defeat of Nazi Germany by the allied forces in 1945.

Mann, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1929, author of such novels as **Buddenbrooks**, **The Magic Mountain**, **Doctor Faustus**, and **Joseph and His Brothers**, rich and complex portraits of German and European culture, both before and after the two great world wars, became an implacable opponent of Adolf Hitler, following the latter's rise to the chancellorship of Germany in 1933. Mann's angry rejections of nearly everything that Hitler espoused caused his German citizenship to be stripped away, and forced him into exile first into Switzerland, and finally into the US, where he became an American citizen in 1944. When Hitler killed himself in his Berlin bunker in 1945, and the war at last came to an end, Germany was forced to reckon with its involvement in the success of Hitler and his horrific policies, especially toward the Jews. The murder of the 6,000,000 Jews, if not many more, and the horrors of the extermination camps were a stain on all of humanity, but especially on Mann's fellow Germans.

In an article, "Germany and the Germans," Mann struggled with possible ways to express the pressing question of German guilt and culpability in the monstrous Nazi crimes. Against the loud voices of some at the time, including the British diplomat, Robert Vansittart, and the American secretary of the treasury, Henry Morgenthau, Mann rejected the notion of indiscriminate punishment of the German people, saying, "there are not two Germanys, a good one and a bad one, but only one, whose best turned into evil through devilish cunning. Wicked Germany is merely good Germany gone astray, good Germany in misfortune, in guilt, and ruin." Because that is so, he continued, "it is quite impossible for one born there simply to renounce the wicked guilty Germany and to declare, 'I am the good, the noble, the just Germany in the white robe; I leave it to you to exterminate the wicked one.'" All Germans bear a measure of guilt, because they are all heirs of a culture that gave birth to Hitler and all he represented.

Mann goes back to that enormously important German figure of Martin Luther to make the point. Luther's achievements were without doubt monumental; he was, says Mann, "a gigantic incarnation of the German spirit." He reconstituted the church in the Reformation, he "saved Christianity" from the depredations of a rotting Christendom, he created the German language, promoted freedom of research, of criticism, of philosophic speculation, advancing the cause of European democracy, even, Mann claims, "laying the foundations of modern psychology." In all this and more, Luther represents the very best of Germany. However, it cannot be denied that within all of these vast achievements lay the seeds of their own undoing, the very starting point for all that is most wicked about Germany. In the end, Mann says, "Luther was a liberating hero, who finally knew nothing of liberty." This can be readily seen in the monstrous way that Luther confronted the Great Peasant's Revolt of 1524, when he announced to the German princes that they would surely enter heaven by butchering those rebellious commoners who dared threaten the established social order. In addition, Luther railed against the Jews of his day, repeating the long-maintained theological notion that the Jews were the killers of Christ and were thus damned forever.

For Mann, then, Nazism cannot be seen as a kind of historical accident; its fundamental traits may be traced back at least 500 years to the Protestant Reformation. The appalling invective of Hitler and Goebbels and Julius Streicher are rooted directly in the verbal and intellectual brutality of Luther's reactions to the Peasant Revolt. By analogy, US American racism is not simply an aberration in our nation, not simply an outgrowth of southern slavery, something that ended with the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation. It has its foundations in the 400-year history of the demeaning actions against people of color that began at the same time that the nation was founded. Our founding documents, the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, among others, may be marked by soaring rhetoric about freedom and equality, but when black people were judged to be only 3/5 of a human and access to the freedoms that society claimed to offer to all were consistently denied to them, it is all too clear that our collective guilt as White US Americans is our inability to recognize and transcend the realities of our actions, while we trumpet the greatness of our promises, promises that have proven empty for too many of our fellow citizens.

When the monstrous concentration camps were revealed to the world, Mann knew well that only with the active support or at least the tacit assent of hundreds of thousands of Germans and their collaborators could these places of death have existed. He also

knew that there were Germans who had shown courage to do what is right, often experiencing torture and death as a result. Those persons were not individually culpable for Nazi crimes. Yet, he makes the important point that it is quite possible to feel guilty even for something for which one bears no personal culpability. In other words, one may claim that if I had been alive in those days, I would have resisted. But of course one can hardly know that, and if truth be told the number of true resisters were few in the face of those who went along. In fact, only the accidental circumstances of historical time spared Mann and others from making the choice to resist or not. Mann himself candidly admits that his analysis of German history, its richness and its horrors, “hardly came out of an alien, cool, objective knowledge; it is all within me.” That is to say, Mann freely admits that he, too, is German, and is thus heir to the complex situations of Luther’s greatness and his evil actions.

And I think the same is true for us US Americans. We are heirs to the greatness of our past as well as to the weaknesses and monstrosity of that same past. US America has thrived and prospered partly as a result of its racism against millions of its citizens, many of whom still in 2021 suffer as a result of that convoluted past. We may not be directly and personally culpable for individual racist actions, but we are still guilty of aiding and abetting the ongoing racism by which some of us prosper while others suffer. Like Thomas Mann we need an honest confrontation with our national past if we are ever to move forward into a better future. To borrow a late and little lamented campaign slogan, if we are ever to make US America great again, we first must acknowledge that whatever greatness we have had has not been gained without the denial and silencing of too many of our fellow citizens. Let us continue to move toward that acknowledgment so that we may move forward together at last.

Thoughts from your Editor

I am so thankful of the contributions to this edition of the LIGHTHOUSE. I am certain many of you have experienced many feelings and missing our in person gatherings. They will be here soon and I'm certain we will want to be able to gather our friends in gigantic hugs and say praise the Lord, I am thankful you are here. At the same time we grieve those who suffered and passed on during this time.

The year 202 certainly is something no one every hopes for again;

Your journey and persistence of wandering through the past year have been admirable. The ways to serve God's kingdom continues even though in a very strange and new way. We are resilient in change and learning.

We need to continue our themes and seek ways to connect and serve the Lord by what ever means.

Our small congregation continues to serve the hungry monthly. We also with the help of the community, schools and businesses managed to give to over 500 children within our school district gifts for Christmas—by drive thru that is. What an undertaking that was and how we had to set up our traffic routes for people to line up for it. I should have taken pictures.

Articles for this newsletter need not be submitted by only officers in Pw or CT how about the others who have read this.

This past year, we have encountered so many challenges. We have seen God in so many places and through so many avenues. Perhaps many would like to see this.

Like all of you I have missed our in=person gathers and miss all of you as fellowship is comforting. We have one of the most diverse synods in the USA and are thankful we can learn from all of us.

We have also been studying in many places what it is like not to be in what ever skin we are in. Are we comfortable in our own skin and can we also put our feelings in another person's skin==or do we need to be in homogeneous groups? I find it intreating to learn of others. One of my social work classes really opened eyes on diversity of this land.

Our next LIGHTHOUSE will be published in MAY. Jot down your thoughts now. * I keep a pad near my bed to jot down ideas that come to me at the weirdest moments. You can too. Try it. We agreed to publish three times per year.

Looking forward to your inspirations. Send anything by MAY 1. REMEMBER to add PW Lighthouse in subject line. Here's hoping I didn't forget anyone.

Susan Silliman Smith (august13sss@gmail.com)