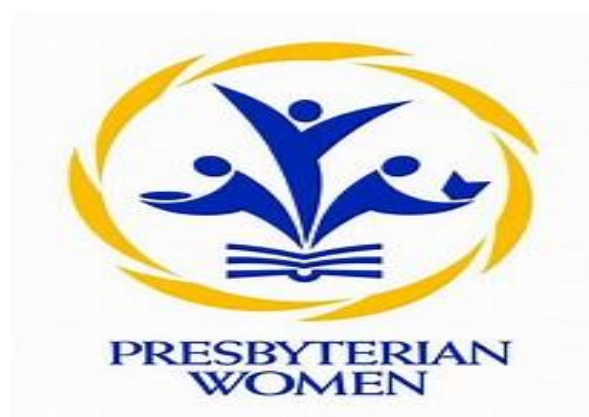


Albany Presbyterian Women's Newsletter

"Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually!" 1 Chronicles 16: 11

Fall 2022



Message from the Moderator

by Charlotte Hasselbarth

One of the purposes of Presbyterian Women in the Albany Presbytery Coordinating Team is to be a resource for PW groups and other women's groups that wish to have some involvement in PW activities or form a PW group. Any of us would be happy to visit your church to answer questions, offer advice or help in anyway. Please call on us.

Charlotte Hasselbarth	Moderator and Presbytery Representative	chasselbarth@hotmail.com
Rosalie Hemingway	Treasurer	silver3213@gmail.com
Teresa Barendsfeld	Member at Large	tbarendsfeld@gmail.com
Rev. Kathi Jones	Member at Large	revkathiljones@yahoo.com
Andrea Ralph	Newsletter Editor	aralph20@hotmail.com
Ardelle Stewart	Member at Large	ardellestewart@hotmail.com

Thank God for Presbyterian Women
by Rob Trawick, General Presbyter, Albany Presbytery

The church where I was raised and nurtured was the Southern Presbyterian Church (PCUS) in the 1970s. The PCUS was late to the ordination of women, not approving ordination until 1964, almost 35 years after the northern branch of the church. Even this official action proved slow in its implementation and not without controversy. Indeed, it was over the question of the ordination of women, that a number of churches split from the denomination to form the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) in 1973. And in my home church, while women could be ordained, by and large, they weren't.

This had an impact on my own spiritual formation. As a child, when I looked around to find the "leadership" in my own congregation, it was exclusively male. Implicit, though never actually stated, was the theological conviction that this was as it should be, that whatever gifts women might bring to the church, the gifts of leadership were not among them. I would later learn that such views were both Biblically unsound and that they severely constricted the possibilities of ministry in the church, but as a very young person, my church was teaching me by example, and the example was a limited theological vision, and in error.

Except...

Although I lived this reality and limited though my understanding of the church certainly was, even I could intuit that things weren't quite as they seemed. Official leadership (Session, Diaconate, Pastorate) aside, when the real discipleship of the church was being done, even in those dark ages, it was obvious that women were right in the middle of it, and often, leading it. My Christian education and my early involvement in mission would not have happened were it not for the nurture and guidance of that powerful and faithful group of disciples in the Women of the Church (later Presbyterian Women). While my father's work on the Session was important (in, for a child, some distant and difficult to understand fashion) my mother's work with the Women of the Church was what really impacted me.

So, I am deeply grateful to Presbyterian Women and its precursors. I now know that these groups, throughout their history, have often marched a few steps ahead of the rest of the denomination, prodding and pushing the Presbyterian Church forward on such issues as women's rights, racial justice, eradication of hunger, peacemaking, and many others. Without Presbyterian Women, I am certain that Presbyterian Church would be much farther from its ultimate mission to realize, as best as possible the kin-dom of God here on earth.

As Albany Presbytery's General Presbyter, I look forward to being in partnership with Presbyterian Women in the capital region. There is already a fruitful relationship to build upon, and I am excited about the possibilities. I know that the Presbytery has much to learn from Presbyterian women about building community, growing discipleship, and fostering real and permanent social change. I am thankful for the guidance, leadership, and nurturing of Presbyterian Women in my own spiritual journey and am excited about our collective ministry moving forward.

General Assembly Report

by Susan Wright, the Ruling Elder Commissioner 225 the General Assembly in 2022

Susan Wright is a ruling elder from First United Presbyterian in Troy and serves on COMAC. She is a clinical social worker. For four years with her husband, Ted, she was a mission co-worker serving as regional liaisons in south-central Africa. Susan spoke about her experiences in Africa at our Fall Gathering in 2007.

The 225th General Assembly of the PC(USA) was held from July 5 – 9 remotely due to Covid. Committees met in Louisville on a staggered schedule in order to maintain Covid protocols. I served on the Financial Resources Committee which heard the report of a three-year study concerning the merger of the Office of General Assembly and the Presbyterian Mission Agency. The Revs. Ruth Santana-Grace and Shavon Starling-Louis were elected co-moderators and they ably conducted the business of the assembly with prayer and humor guided by a parliamentarian who kept everything decently and in order.

Some highlights of the work of the Assembly included:

- **Recognition that Israel's Laws, Policies and Practices Constitute Apartheid Against the Palestinian People**

This overture “recognizes that the laws, policies, and practices of the government of Israel regarding the Palestinian people fulfill the international legal definition of apartheid.”

- **Fossil Fuel Divestment**

This overture reflected compliance with a previous General Assembly's environmental policy. It called for divestment from five oil and gas companies: Chevron, ExxonMobil, Marathon Petroleum, Phillips 66 and Valero Energy. This affects four agencies which invest funds: the Presbyterian Investment and Loan Program, Inc., the Board of Pensions of the Presbyterian Church (USA), the Presbyterian Church (USA) Foundation, and the New Covenant Trust Foundation.

- **Immigration**

The Immigration Committee sent this overture to the whole assembly in order to affirm that the PC(USA) is a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church.” “The decision “sends a message that the church is committed to working for justice in U.S. immigration policy.”

- **Ukraine**

According to a summary of the actions of the General Assembly, “By a vote of 340-25, the General Assembly approved [IMM-06](#), allowing the church to declare itself a “Sanctuary and Accompaniment Church.” The assembly's Immigration Committee says the decision sends a message that the church is committed to working for justice in U.S. immigration policy.”

- **Racial Justice**

From the Race and Gender Justice Committee, an overture that offered “an apology to African-Americans for the sin of slavery and its legacy.” It an emotional reading a litany of repentance by the assembly. A special committee was also approved to “expose white supremacy within the denomination.”

Information for this article was from:

https://pcusa.org/news/2022/7/12/summary-general-assembly-actions/?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=PC%28USA%29+Daily+News&utm_campaign=Daily+eNews+%7C+July+13%2C+2022

New Coordinating Team Members Needed

At our Spring Gathering our New Coordinating Team was Installed. Those women volunteered to serve a 1-year term. We're currently hoping to fill the following positions with new people: Treasurer, Secretary, Newsletter Editor, Member at Large and Search Coordinator. We meet about 5 times a year on Zoom at a mutually convenient time for about 1 ½ hours and communicate by email in between meetings. Most of our work involves planning our Gatherings. These are not labor-intensive positions. New ideas are really what we're looking for. We're working on our bylaws, which will include the term. At this point volunteering for a year or 2 would be a huge help. Contact Charlotte Hasselbarth at chasselbarth@hotmail.com or 518-356-0637 if you are interested or could suggest someone we ask.

Wizard's Wardrobe – a Thank Offering Recipient **By Debbie Fagans, Wizard's Wardrobe Program Director**

At the Wizard's Wardrobe "Reading is Magic." We are a free, one-on-one literacy tutoring program where young students thrive. Here elementary age students from Albany's South End are matched with trained, caring tutors whom they see twice a week for an hour and a half each time. Like many young children we are now experiencing a 'growth spurt' and need more tutors, who are willing to work once or twice a week for about two hours each time.

This June marks our fifth full year of tutoring. A new semester will begin in September-October. Our focus is on shared reading, literacy activities, and problem-solving through STEM challenges. Our program has an imaginative theme through which we foster a love for learning. Along with our goal of enabling students to read proficiently by the end of third grade, we seek to inspire confidence, competence and creativity in every child by exposing them to the Magic of Reading.

This year four fifth graders are leaving us and moving on to middle school. We celebrated their achievements and the success of all our other students on June 10th with a short program and chicken bar-b-cue. If you would like to learn more about the Wizard's Wardrobe and/or sign-up please visit our website (<https://wizardwardrobe.org>). For additional information or questions contact our Program Director, Debbie Fagans, at (518) 776-0664.

One Congregation, Many Missions

by Mickey Nieman, member of PW at Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church

This article below was submitted to "Horizon's Magazine" for its "Supporting Mission" column. A somewhat trimmed down version of it appeared in the March/ April edition on page 39.

Mission is at the heart of many programs at Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church. Our PW group frequently partners with our Social Witness and Mission Ministry Team on projects.

PW at HUPC is very busy! We have an ongoing collection of flip-flops, men's socks, and laundry detergent for a local shelter. We assemble delectable, gorgeously decorated Easter baskets for three local groups. We contribute financially to Capital City Rescue Mission's "Backpack Giveaway Program." Every Advent season we have a "Mitten Tree" to collect winter accessories. Each year we purchase and wrap Christmas gifts for a family in a transitional housing program. In April and May each year, PW holds a drive to support the Church World Service (CWS) blanket program.

Presbyterian Women established a fundraiser several years back through a local garden center, Gade Farms, owned by generations of one of our church families. Offering a coupon in the church newsletter and identifying two weekends to shop, Gade Farms donates a portion of the sales—more than \$600 this year—for PW's local, national, and global mission.

For many years we have hosted Mission-Minded Meals by going to a restaurant and collecting a freewill offering to support our mission budget. In response to Covid-19 precautions, we held them outdoors and brought our own individual meals. The Guilderland Food Pantry (GFP) began at HUPC back in the 70s. We invited John McDonnell, the director of GFP, to speak at our first outdoor meeting. In early November 2021, we honored church member Cindy Schultz, who has volunteered at the GFP ever since she retired a dozen years ago, by visiting at the pantry and presenting her with a check for food in her name.

We are now supporting an additional pantry: the Purple Pantry at the University of Albany, State University of New York (UAlbany—colors purple and gold). The Purple Pantry is open year-round since many UAlbany employees and students stay on campus in the summer. While the pantry is generally well stocked with food, they often lack personal care items such as toothpaste, facial tissues, feminine care products, deodorant, shampoo, soap, contact solution, cotton swabs and razors. We sponsor a continuous collection of these items.

In October we assembled 23 chock-full bags of personal care items for the Purple Pantry, adding snacks and cards to the bags decorated by children, youth, and adults. Sally D'Alessandro, Assistant Dean of Students for Student Care Services spoke at our church.

We support the Cornerstone Campus Ministry at UAlbany in that our PW financially supports one student going on its annual mission/service trip.

In the Fall of 2021, PW and Social Witness and Mission collaborated in a fundraising and educational program for Heifer International. We raised the \$5000 to purchase an entire Ark from Heifer International and had \$2,000 left over to donate to Heifer's education and empowerment of young women.

Whether donating personal care items or giving to initiatives, our PW at HUPC is very responsive and, above all, mission-minded in recognizing ways to help relieve the needs of our community and world. We have eight women who regularly attend and support our work and several other women who help with special programs. God continues to richly bless us!

Commission on the Status of Women - United Nation **by Magdalene Lewis**

**UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on the Status of Women Advocate
Presbyterian Women, Presbyterian Church (USA) Inc.**

As the UN Economic and Social Council, Commission on the Status of Women Advocate for Presbyterian Women (PW), Magdalene Lewis functions as the liaison between Churchwide PW and the UN Commission on the Status of Women. She is a member of the first Presbyterian Church in Jamaica Queens. She has been held leadership positions at all levels of PW: Congregation, Presbytery, Synod and Churchwide. She spoke at the 2015 Spring Gathering of Presbyterian Women in the Albany Presbytery where she shared her experiences as the PW in the Synod of the Northeast representative on the Global Exchange Trip to the Caribbean Islands.

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a global body dedicated to promoting gender equality and women's rights. The CSW mandate is to prepare recommendations on promoting women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social, and educational fields. Presbyterian Women, and the Presbyterian Church (USA) Inc., partner with Presbyterian Ministry and Ecumenical Women at each session of the UN's Commission on the Status of Women.

During the annual CSW session, member states, civil society organizations (CSO) and UN entities gather at the UN in NY to discuss programs and gaps in implementation of the Beijing Declaration (1995) and Platform Action, which is the key global policy document on gender equality. One of its main purposes is to review emerging issues that affect gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Non-government organizations (NGO) and CSW/NY organize the civil society side of the UN CSW. These forums run parallel to the official session taking place at the UN headquarters. This gives the Civil Society Organization (CSO) the opportunity to engage in the process of CSW session without a UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) accreditation or a UN grounds pass. However, to attend CSW Side Events organized by UN women they must be ECOSOC Accreditation. In 2018 Presbyterian women, the Presbytery Church (USA) Inc. received Non-Governmental Organization accreditation status from the UN.

When work is to begin, a Consultation Day event is hosted by NGO CSW/NY the Sunday before the CSW begins to prepare the community for the CSW event through an educational panel discussion concerning the priority theme. The group works on both the priority theme and the review theme. The priority theme for CSW 66 2022 was "achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, in the context of climate change, environment and disaster

risk reduction policies and programs.” The review theme was women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work (agreed conclusion of CSW61 2017 agreed conclusion. Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, CSW was held virtually. CSW 66’s 2022 agreed conclusion is the first time CSW recognized the connection between climate change and gender equality.

How Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany uses your donations

The Coordinating Team for Presbyterian Women (PW) in the Presbytery of Albany receives their operating funds from the registration fee at the Spring and Fall Gatherings and from donations from individuals and women’s groups in local church congregations. These donations are used for expenses related to the gatherings such as honorariums or travel expenses of the speakers.

We also make an annual contribution to PW in the Synod of the Northeast (PWSNE) and financially support the Global Exchange and USA Mission Experience trips.

When the PWSNE and Churchwide Gatherings are held in person, the moderator or her representative goes to the business meeting to give our area a voice and vote on all business being presented and to bring back information for our groups. There is money set aside in the operating budget to cover some of the expenses of the moderator/voting representative.

All money given as a free will offering at the Spring and Fall Gatherings goes to a mission project of the speaker’s choice. Occasionally money is taken from the general budget to support a mission that the Coordinating Team feels is appropriate.

Maintaining connections with the larger Presbyterian Women’s organizations and providing support to the women’s groups in Albany Presbytery requires continuous funding and we encourage you as individuals or groups to consider making a contribution to our operating fund. Please send your gifts to Rosalie Hemingway, 32313 Church Street, Valatie, NY 12184



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Contributions to Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany

Date _____ Church _____

Treasurer or Donor _____

Phone Number and/or email address _____

Address _____

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany operating fund \$ _____

Other \$ _____ Check Number _____ Total \$ _____

Make checks payable to Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany or just PWA

Send to: Rosalie Hemingway, 3213 Church Street, Valatie, NY 12184

PW Birthday Offering at 100 years

Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering is celebrating one hundred years of generous giving.

In 1922 the women's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States decided to celebrate its tenth birthday by raising funds for domestic and overseas missions. To encourage giving they suggested each woman give a penny for each year of her age and if she didn't want to reveal her age, she could give a dollar. By the end of the campaign more than \$28,000 had been raised. This started an annual tradition of giving which has provided more than thirty-seven million dollars to support mission projects around the world. Over the century the gifts have supported theological studies on five continents, given funds to hospitals and shelters, and aided in providing food and clean water to many. Particular attention has been paid to grants that specifically benefit girls or women such as the establishment of a nursing school at a historically black college in Alabama. In 2022 \$80,000 went to McCleary House in Maine to renovate their house where three to four families or six to eight individuals can live for a few months while getting psycho-social and educational help to transition to independence. The other 2022 grant of \$105,000 went to Iglesia Presbiteriana de Lares, Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand in Lares, Puerto Rico to upgrade their kitchen with new appliances, wiring, and plumbing. Solar panels and a

generator will be installed so the church can continue to provide food, purified water, and personal items to the local population which is still suffering from the effects of Hurricane Maria in 2017 and earthquakes in 2020. More information on the projects aided by the Birthday Offerings over the years can be found in the January/February and March/April 2022 Horizons Magazines.

MoonCatcher Project

Dear Presbyterian Women in Albany Presbytery,

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- *to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,*
- *to support the mission of the church worldwide,*
- *to work for justice and peace, and*
- *to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.*

Our Presbyterian Women's Statement of Purpose is used by so many of our groups to remind us of who we are and why we exist.

So often, we hear of needs in the world that require us to act. These days, there seem to be so many that we can become dizzy with all of them and instead of doing *something* we freeze and do nothing.

As your Albany Presbytery Presbyterian Women's Coordinating Team, we have become aware of a situation that we *can* address to help young girls who cannot attend school without the help that we can offer. Many of you may know of the MoonCatcher Project. It was founded by Ellie von Wellsheim of Schenectady, right here in our Presbytery. It makes reusable menstrual hygiene products for girls and women in undeveloped countries, and also sets up guilds in these areas to provide local employment to empower women there.

In September, the MoonCatcher Project's sewing guild in Chituka, Malawi, was broken into and two sewing machines were stolen along with three boxes of completed menstrual kits plus various sewing notions and fabric yardage. According to Ellie, the partners in Malawi indicate that each machine costs \$144 (mk 147,800 in Malawi currency) and transport is \$30 each. The 300 kits lost were each worth \$5.07 which equals \$1,521. The value of the supplies lost is unknown.

One of our PW members in the Presbytery heard of the need and felt strongly enough about addressing it that she has challenged us to raise the funds to replace the items stolen by offering to match donations from our groups and individuals up to \$2,000. Should we raise more, we will give it to them to purchase more supplies.

The Albany Presbytery PW Coordinating Team felt that this was an important way to support young girls who might otherwise not be able to go to school and the sewing co-op which uses this project to help women financially support their families.

So, we are sharing this information with the prayer that your PW groups and, perhaps, individuals, would want to help in this tangible way. We are asking that you share this story with your women and collect donations for it. We would like to encourage you to do so and send your contributions

to our treasurer, Rosalie Hemingway with checks made out to: Presbyterian Women of Albany Presbytery (or PWA), earmarked MCP, to 3213 Church Street, Valatie, NY 12184 by December 20 so that we can send the donations to MoonCatcher Project before the end of the year.

Thank you for your continued work in your congregations and with our programs and projects that are bigger than any one group could address. Together, we can make a difference.

In Christ's Service with you,

Your PWA Coordinating Team

Information on the MoonCatcher Project can be found at <http://www.mooncatcher.org/>

"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

Elder Andrea Ralph
editor