

The Lighthouse



September 2024 Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the North Northeast

Moderator's Message



Dear PWSNE Sisters (and Brothers) in Christ,

"Do everything in love" I Corinthians 16:14 was an awesome theme for this summer's Churchwide Gathering. So many love themes were woven into all the Plenary and Keynote Speakers and music during the 4 days together.

For me, the highlight of any churchwide gathering was our PWSNE Synod luncheon. Lisa Gray was our great speaker on the value of using and eliminating plastic disposable water bottles and using your own refillable ones. She also talked with us about how important it is to VOTE, especially this November. We need to all work together to get everyone registered and to the polling sites. I sure appreciate all the helpful hands in setting up and cleaning up. Our guests from Alaska-Northwest and Friday evening keynote speaker the Rev. Evelyn Torres-Rameriz from Puerto Rico were all pleased to be included.

Located on page 38 of the CWG booklet was in memorandum for Lois Carter and Anne Reynolds.

Take note of the several Fall Gathering or Retreats coming to your neighborhood. You can find some of the flyers attached to this issue of "The Lighthouse." Anyone and everyone are welcome to attend any or all of these.

I am looking forward to seeing/hearing from everyone during our upcoming Annual Meeting via Zoom, on Saturday, September 28th. The next "Caring and Sharing" will be Sunday, November 17, 8 PM via Zoom featuring our Diversity Coordinator, Magdalene Lewis. She will include information on the Churchwide RED training.

continued on page 2

From your Editor:

Read this before reading The rest of the Lighthouse.

There is much in this issue so I am forgoing the Table Of Contents this time.

I need to explain some items.

You will see many instances where there are references to links or websites. Due to the fact that I copied and pasted many articles I had issues where I could not make it possible for you to just click the link as I have in the past. Please forgive me for that.

Simply highlight links and copy them and paste into your browser to see what is what.

I hope you will be able to do so as there is lots of information on those links.

Hopefully in future issues that will not be an issue.

email articles with **PW Lighthouse** in subject line to august13sss@gmail.com
Susan Silliman Smith, Editor

Please Note: New Lighthouse Deadlines:

March 1 and September 1
This will help to better promote Spring and Fall news better.

It was my honor & privilege to attend the Service of Ordination for our Seminarian Rebeka Fergusson-Lutz on June 9th in Rochester. We send her to the Geneva Church near Detroit, Michigan with our love.

I am going to include in this issue of The Lighthouse the report that I submitted to Synod for the September Mission and Ministry Commission.
Remember, "Do everything in love."

Virginia Champlin, PWSNE Moderator 2023-2026

Vice Moderator's Message

Do Everything in Love

This was the theme of the Presbyterian Women 2024 Churchwide Gathering, held this past August in St. Louis, Mo.

It was somewhat difficult to remember the 'Great Commandment' when you arrive from the airport and your luggage is missing for a few days; or you waited in a long line for a buffet style meal scheduled for 800 women for an interminable amount of time; or you asked for a vegetarian meal, only to receive a bowl of lettuce; or your flight home was changed to a later time! (The positives are that I had to purchase two new shirts, lost some weight due to less food ingested, and had a better plane on the way home.

In the New Testament, specifically Luke 10:27, it is written. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." This is the Great Commandment. Doesn't it truly exemplify, or bring to life, the theme of the Churchwide Gathering? I think when we look at other scripture, we have to have patience (waiting in line), we have to learn to hold our tongues (the tongue is mightier than the sword) and we should accept people where they are – we haven't walked in their shoes (loving our neighbor as ourselves).

Some attendees, myself included, arrived a day early to attend the Business meeting as Voting Representatives. Issues voted upon included revisions to the Bylaws for language changes, to include two positions to the Administrative Committee, to remove the position of Finance Committee Chair, and to reduce the number of synod representatives to a regional model of five representatives (down from 12 representatives).

Of importance is that the Synod of the Northeast Voting Representatives, along with other voting representatives, strongly felt that the reduction in number of synod representatives from 12 to five, and utilizing a regional model that has been utilized in the Search Committee to create these 'regions', would create numerous problems, including a lack of communication, fellowship, and increased cost to the Synods. This mo-

tion failed. It was discussed that the rationale behind the motion was that first, volunteers were minimal and contributions to Churchwide have declined. It was brought to my attention from our own Sueliu, that of the 16 Synods, three of the Synods did not submit nominations for their representatives, and of those submitted, six individuals declined the nomination.

A subsidiary motion was submitted, seconded and passed. This motion created a rotation scheduled where 1/3 of the Synod Representatives would attend the Churchwide business meeting the first year, the next 1/3 of the Synod Representatives would attend the Churchwide business meeting the second year, and the last 1/3 of the Synod Representatives would attend the Churchwide business meeting the third year of their service. With this model, the number of Synod Representatives remains intact.

The Gathering was a wonderful event from the Plenary sessions, the music and the fellowship. I was able to sit and close my eyes and listen to the hymns sung by a chorus of 800 women. Wow! What a moving experience.

The messages of love were spoken from women of different status, different walks of life and different forms of service, all spoken in love. Cindy Kohlmann, the Connectional Presbyterian of New Castle Presbytery and Co-Moderator of the 223rd General Assembly (2018) spoke on "Who Needs a Heart?". Yung Me Morris, Spiritual Care and Bereavement Care Coordinator at Heartland Home Care & Hospice spoke on the topic, "Did You Eat Yet? The Ancient Tradition of the Agape Love Feast and the Mutuality of Korean Hospitality." Evelyn Torres, Pastora, La Iglesia Presbiteriana en Lares, Puerto Rico delivered a heartfelt message of life in Puerto Rico. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention the wonderful CeCe Armstrong, Associate Pastor of St. James on James Island in Charleston, S. Carolina and Co-Moderator of the 226th General Assembly (2024), who preached on "Love Always..." (and in all ways???)

Contributions of sanitary products were stacked feet high. Over \$20,000.00 was collected in gift cards to be distributed to two needy organizations. Over \$92,000 was collected last year for Fellowship of the Least Coin. What a wonderful way to 'Do Everything in Love'.

Workshops attended were on the Commission on the Status of Women, led by our own Magdelene Lewis. Another workshop was MMIWR - Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives. What a travesty to learn of the numerous Indigenous Women, and now their relatives, who go missing each year – and remain missing due to the lack of investigative resources or interest! Another workshop was based upon the book entitled, *"Walking Through the Valley"*, which discussed 'womanist explorations'. (You can google these organizations or books for more information.)

Speaking of books::: Since I registered early, I was gifted with a book by the Churchwide committee entitled, *"Legacy"*, by Helen Harano Christ. I did purchase *"Walking Through the Valley"* at the Presbyterian Bookstore at the Gathering, and our Synod Moderator, Virginia Champlin gifted the book, *"Annie, the Kitchen Queen"*, to the attendees at the Synod Luncheon.

Speaking of the Synod Luncheon, Synod Moderator, Virginia Champlin exemplified “Love”, by inviting the women from the Synod of Alaska-Northwest to the luncheon. As I close, I would like to extend a heartfelt, Thank You, to our Moderator, Virginia Champlain, for exemplifying love in her first year of service as our Moderator of the Synod of the Northeast. It has been an honor to serve as your Vice-Moderator.

In Christ's love,
Donna Rahmann,
Vice Moderator

Thank You-Thank You-Thank You

There are PWSNE folks that helped make our Churchwide Gathering extra special...

... Joanne Schnaudt for helping to collect and report about our Voting Representatives

...Lisa Gray for being our Synod Luncheon speaker

...Donna Rahman for helping with the details

...Linda Werts for setting up the Wednesday night dinner and hosting the USAME reunion

...JoAnn Burrell for working on our USAME reunion

...Bisi Shofu for our meal graces

...all the folks that helped with the set and a cleaning up for our Synod Luncheon

...Donna Viise Wasik and Magdalene Lewis for representing PWSNE at the RED training

...all of our Voting Representatives for all your input and attendance

...Rhonda Sanchez for not being afraid to speak up



...everyone that attended the Synod Luncheon

...Susan Silliman Smith for taking many of our photos

Presbyterian Women's Report to Synod of the Northeast Mission & Ministry Commission August 2024

"Do everything in love" – 1 Corinthians 16:14 was a great theme for the 2024 Church-wide Gathering of Presbyterian Women Churchwide, August 8-11 in St. Louis.

Nearly 75 from PWSNE attended the gathering

The Business Meeting - 15 PWSNE attendees were Presbytery & Synod Voting Representatives, plus three more sitting on the Board of Directors voted on
 The next triennial budget
 The next triennial Board of Directors
 By-Laws changes

2 attended Racial Equity Diversity training: Donna Vize Wasik & Magdalene Lewis

50 attended our Synod luncheon "East Meets West"
 Welcomed women from Alaska-Northwest and Puerto Rico
 Program – Lisa Gray
 eliminating and recycling plastic water bottles
 Women's Rights

Gathering Offerings:

Frontera deCristo

Period Products and Menstrual Justice products were collected; LifeWise StL. Will share the items for people in need in the St. Louis area

Gift Cards for local ministries:

Bethel Hills, a residential community that provides supportive housing, social & educational opportunities for adults with & without developmental disabilities

Presbyterian Children's Homes and Services, whose programs throughout Missouri help vulnerable children, strengthen families & guild communities

Plenary Speakers

Diane Moffett, Welcoming Address and greetings from PCUSA

Cindy Kohlmann, "What's Love Got to Do wit It?"

CeCe Armstrong, led closing communion worship

Yung Me Morris

Evelyn Torres-Ramirez (Puerto Rico)

Laura Cheifetz, "Love Is Courage"

continued on page 6

Horizons Bible Study authors featured

Patricia K. Tull (2024-2025) "Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation"

Rhashell Hunter (2025-2026) "Amazing Grace"

Veda Pendleton (2026-2027) "Love Is Courage"

To view many of the speakers and stories go to <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/2024cwq>

Some of the upcoming Presbytery Fall Gatherings (all welcome to attend and or all)

Coastland – Saturday, October 12

Highlands – Saturday, October 5

Geneva – Friday, October 4, Canandaigua

Albany – Tuesday, October 29, West Charlton

Northern New Jersey "Retreat" – October 25-27

Synod Assembly & Pre-Conference – October 24-27, Albany

Synod PW Annual Meeting – Saturday, September 28, 9 am via Zoom

"Caring & Sharing" – Sunday, November 17, 8-9 PM via Zoom

Diversity Coordinator Magdalene Lewis leading

Our Seminarian Rebeka Fergusson-Lutz, graduated in May from Colgate Rochester Crozer Divinity School in Rochester, NY and her Service of Ordination was held on June 9 at Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester. She has taken a call to the Geneva Church near Detroit, Michigan, Synod of Covenant. We send the Rev. Fergusson-Lutz with our Love.

Just a reminder that the fall is the time for collecting the "Thank Offering"

"Do everything in Love."

Respectfully Submitted,

Virginia Champlin, PWSNE Moderator 2023-2026

Note From Nancy Lack

Thank you to all the women of the Synod of the Northeast for entrusting the finances of the PWSNE to me for the past six years.

We are all indebted to Jane MacDonald for stepping in to handle the finances for this year. With her experience and knowledge the records and process of the Treasurer will be in exceptional condition to pass on to the next steward next year.

Thank you Jane for all you have done for the Women in the Synod of the Northeast.
Thank you from Nancy Lack

THE CHURCHWIDE GATHERING – A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Joanne W. Schnaudt

Eleven gatherings in person, one Zoom of the Business Meeting in 2021, and now one online gathering.

Participating in the gathering online is quite different than being there in person, as anyone who has participated in a worship service online can tell you. You feel like the proverbial fly on the wall watching, observing, absorbing, participating somewhat, but you're not able to share the experience afterwards.

Fifty-eight women/women's groups participated in the Churchwide Gathering online. Many of us kept the camera on, so we could see each other, but too many did not and showed only a black block of space for themselves. We were muted, but we connected in our own way by waving to each other when we came on and signed off each day. I recognized only three of us from the Northeast: Doris Christians, Kris Gerling, and myself.

We participated in the four plenary sessions and in the Sunday morning worship service. I know I appreciated being recognized by Emcee Shari Stump, who called us the Zoomys

We had a view of the stage only, but could see the backs of the heads of the women in the first few rows. It was like we were sitting in the third row with all of you. The words to the hymns were put on our screens so we could sing along with the rest of the women in attendance. Churchwide Staff Stephanie Patterson set this up and emailed a copy of the program book ahead of time so we could participate in any responsive readings. The still photos on Facebook allowed us to see some of the women and activities. I recognized Rhonda, Alpha, Jo Ann, and Virginia in a few of those photos.

You could tell what part of the country some women were from. Those eating breakfast online were from the west coast where the program began for them at 6:30 AM PDT. Those of us on the east coast started later (and we could sleep an hour later) at 9:30 AM – so we enjoyed coffee or tea while watching the program. And, no, Shari, no one was wrapped in a towel from just stepping out of the shower. (Unless those were the women in the black boxes!) I don't know about pajamas, though.

Thank you to Steph and her staff for giving us the opportunity to hear those dynamic speakers, learn about PW's involvement in missions around the world, and get to meet our new leaders.

I do hope that Churchwide, and also our Synod PW, will consider having an online presentation at all future gatherings so ALL women can have the opportunity to participate.

RACIAL EQUITY DIALOGUE (RED) TRAINING WORKSHOP

Donna Wasik

Wednesday, August 7th, 2024 marked a new beginning in the life of Presbyterian Women, USA. After nearly 10 years of planning, discussions, research, and prayer, the first Racial Equity Dialogue (RED) training workshop was held in St. Louis, Missouri. Twenty-five women representing 15 Synods and diverse backgrounds eagerly anticipated this opportunity to learn more about promoting racial-ethnic equity in their communities.

PW staff person Stephanie Paterson and Catrelia Steele Hunter and Nina Khouri from the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic facilitated the day long workshop which included presentations by PW leadership, small group discussions, education on inclusive language, and LOTS of planning.

The purpose of the Racial Equity Dialogue (RED) Group is to fulfill the PW purpose by “building an inclusive, caring community” that works for justice & peace using dialogue as a tool for building relationships among & between women from different racial-ethnic groups and backgrounds. Each RED representative is charged with developing a RED Team in their Synod. Ideally, RED teams will consist of at least two women from each presbytery with an overall goal to have representation from racial ethnic groups found in their community.

The RED representatives for the Synod of the Northeast are Magdalene Lewis from the Presbytery for New York City and Donna Vize Wasik from the Presbytery for Southern New Jersey. Magdalene and Donna are excited and humbled to have the opportunity to gather with our PW siblings in building a RED community. They will be reaching out to PW Presbytery Moderators to identify potential RED team participants and begin team building.

If you would like more information, please feel free to reach out to Magdalene at magadalenelewis08@gmail.com or Donna at dvwasik@gmail.com.



**Magdalene Lewis
and Donna Vize
Wasik receiving
their Synod RED
Representative Cer-
tificates from Nina
Kouri on August
7, 2024, St. Louis,
Missouri.**

Annual Meeting Saturday, September 28, 2024 9AM via Zoom

Yes, it is our time of the year for PWSNE Annual Meeting. It will be held on Saturday morning, September 28 via Zoom. Donna Rahmann has volunteered to be our Zoom host. You will see that she has opened it up at 8:30 for us to chat before the meeting begins at 9.

All of our Coordinating Team Members and our Presbytery Moderators are asked to answer five questions as their report. These are to be submitted to both the Moderator and Secretary Joanne Schnaudt jwschnaudt@comcast.net by September 8. These will be compiled and emailed to our CT and PWP Moderators. I ask that you read these over before the meeting. Then during the meeting questions may be addressed.

What have you done in this position this year

What has happened in your position/ committee area this year

If you are leaving your position, what helpful hints do you have for your successor

If you are returning, what are your goals for the next year

Could anyone help you to accomplish your goals and how

Topic: Donna Rahmann's Zoom Meeting
Time: Sep 28, 2024 08:30 Eastern Time
(US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82875255312?pwd=xbjxkUubj5i03jO4RlkhDY0r4Flean.1>

Meeting ID: 828 7525 5312
Passcode: 424850

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,82875255312#,,,,*424850
US (Washington DC)

+13052241968,,82875255312#,,,,*424850
US

Dial by your location

• +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)

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• +1 309 205 3325 US

• +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

• +1 646 558 8656 US (New York)

• +1 646 931 3860 US

• +1 689 278 1000 US

• +1 719 359 4580 US

• +1 720 707 2699 US (Denver)

• +1 253 205 0468 US

• +1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

• +1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

• +1 360 209 5623 US

• +1 386 347 5053 US

• +1 507 473 4847 US

• +1 564 217 2000 US

• +1 669 444 9171 US

Meeting ID: 828 7525 5312

Passcode: 424850

Find your local number: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82875255312?pwd=xbjxkUubj5i03jO4RlkhDY0r4Flean.1>

Letter From Rebeka Fergusson-Lutz

Friends and family near and far:

I have mailed my New York State license plates back to Albany and put new Michigan plates on my car. The other day I asked someone to describe the location of their summer cottage to me by pointing to my hand, so I guess I'm truly a Michigander now. Please update your address books accordingly: **42573 Amherst Court, Canton, MI 48187**.

I'm slowly acclimating to life without Wegmans, but the good news is that in most regards Detroit is an awful lot like Rochester but with better Arab food. The roads are terrible but I can get amazing hummus and [Dot's pretzels](#) at the corner store, so I suppose it balances out in the end.

I have unpacked fully and settled into my new apartment and new office, both of which are great. I'm about five weeks into the job and there have been no major blow-outs or blow-ups at Geneva Presbyterian Church, so I'm hopeful that we can extend our streak! I have a great staff, genuinely, and the members of this church work quite well together. My biggest complaint is that I'm slow and inefficient. Just as at the beginning of my teaching career, I'm creating everything from scratch and (true to form) overthinking it. I find that every email I send, every memo and sermon I write, every decision I make, takes about twice as long as it should. It's like I can't get my cognitive engine out of second gear. That might be a grief response, honestly, or just performance anxiety. (My pastor friends said that I should anticipate feelings of imposter syndrome for the first year, at least.) Either way, though, it's my problem with which to contend, and everything and everyone else is ticking along really nicely.

For those of you who were not able to attend my ordination service in person, the link to the recording lives in perpetuity on the YouTube channel for Third Presbyterian Church. You can view it [here](#), if you'd like.

The date for my installation service has been set: **Sunday, October 13 at 3 p.m.** If you are interested in making the trip to Michigan in the fall, let me know!
All the best,

Love,
~Becka/Becky/Rebeka

Editor's note: See Next Page for Photo from Rebeka with Virginia Chaplin at her Ordination

Hi, Virginia,

I just wanted to share this photo from Sunday afternoon's ordination service. THANK YOU again for making the drive out to attend, and for all the support that you've shown me! I'm grateful! =)

All the best,

~Becka



Editor's Note: Becka's Ordination was on June 9, 2024 in Rochester, NY

Puerto Rico

Juana (Joanne) Tunison

“Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people” (Ephesians 6:7)

A soft, balmy breeze gently blows across the azure waters, softly rustling the fronds of nearby palm trees. The waves wash across the sand, depositing sparkling gems, waiting for the would-be collector hoping to discover a priceless treasure. The white sand is warm and smooth, inviting a body to simply sit and meditate on the mesmerizing motion of the tide. Adding to this breathtaking experience is the fragrance of coconut oil from nearby sunbathers and the inviting aroma of fresh pineapple and mango sold by locals on the beach. Indeed, this must be the definition of “paradise”. And the Caribbean Island of Puerto Rico is aptly described as such by the would-be tourists and global economists and real estate moguls looking for cheap properties with generous tax breaks.

Over the course of its history, despite its being dubbed la “Isla del Encanto”, the “Island of Enchantment”, this nation has been a place of challenge and hardship, a place where only tourists enjoy the above-mentioned pleasures that Puerto Rico has to offer. Many locals find themselves working diligently and relentlessly for insulting wages, to be able to provide these luxuries for tourists. It is this tourism that was supposed to be the promised panacea to rebuilding the anemic economy and unstable government.

Unfortunately, from the time of its discovery by Europeans until the present, history and circumstances would have an impact on these islanders that would catapult them into a 21st Century “bottoming out”.

They call themselves “los perdidos y los olvidados”, “the lost and the forgotten”. In September 2017, an historic natural disaster made landfall in Puerto Rico. Between September 19–21, 2017, Hurricane María devastated the entire island of Puerto Rico and caused a major humanitarian crisis. Originally as a powerful Category 5 hurricane, Maria was the strongest storm to impact the island in 90 years. The island was all but completely devastated, resulting in months of the absence of running water, total black-outs, extremely limited healthcare, inaccessible roads, landslides, loss of life, and the list continues. Although the actual duration of the storm was four days, the continued rain throughout the month of September and into early October wreaked havoc on the already fragile infrastructure of the island. With little US governmental assistance, the residents were in complete survival mode, and in a sense, remain as such today.

The Matthew 25 initiative charges us as Christians to minister to the “least of these”. Specifically, one of the maxims of the initiative is to “eradicate systemic poverty”, Wherein as this might not be realized in our lifetimes, we must at least work toward that challenge. And that, my brothers and sisters is exactly what First Presbyterian Church of Elmira NY did when it partnered with Iglesia Presbiteriana en Lares, PR.

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This partnership has lasted for over 6 years and remains strong. There is mutual understanding and love, shared challenges and successes, transparency and trust. The critical factor is not about rebuilding homes, schools, and churches, indeed, all particularly important. What this partnership demonstrates is “building relationships”. Over the years, there have been six teams from the Elmira and nearby churches, and at least fifteen separate fact-finding trips to Lares made by Kathy Menges (FPC Elmira) and Juana (Joanne) Tunison (FPC Horseheads). Each time we are welcomed with grace and love, fed with fellowship and food. We share abundant laughter and at time, tears.

One recent trip made by Kathy and Juana took us to Utuado and San Sebastián, two rural mountain communities like Lares, where a partnership might develop. Kathy and Juana are in the process of facilitating another trip to the island in mid-winter of 2025, to visit Lares and meet with the pastors and elders of Utuado and San Sebastián. to ascertain need and interest. If you are interested, please contact Juana (Joanne) Tunison at lalocat@aol.com.

Juana (Joanne) Tunison, Ed.S., NBCT, Chair, Mission & Witness, Presbytery of Geneva, NY

THE HANDS AND FEET OF JESUS

“Christ has no body on Earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ’s compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now”

Sta. Teresa of Avila



see pictures fro the island on page 12



PUERTO RICO

ISLA DE LOS PERDIDOS Y OLVIDADOS



All pictures from Juana Tunison



Autumn Joy

The play filled and busy summer is ending. Don't despair. We are entering the season when God's creation transitions into autumn. It is the season when the bright greens of summer are showing hints of yellow, orange and red. The cool morning breeze is refreshing. There are days when white puffy clouds decorate the crystal blue sky. Leaves fluttering down make the air dance in a swirl of color. It is the season of soft golden light in the morning and early evening. It is indeed a world of amber and orange. But nothing says lovely autumn like the iconic monarch butterflies flitting around our meadows from purple asters to golden rods to our flower gardens where the vivid pink flower—the Autumn Joy—flourishes. Enjoy!

Prayer: We thank you God for the passing of summer into the season of beautiful and joyful autumn. Amen

~Maxine Hunter

~Photos by Nick Hunter

It was just May!

If we wait long enough ...it will come...the weather feels like May!...Again!!

May, the first time we gathered face to face since the Covid lockdown.

May, then we came together to celebrate to doing “All Things in Love”.

May, since we celebrated 2 of our members who turned 100 (one who attended her first PW meeting at age 5 with her grandmother).

May, since we thanked those who make PWNENJ happen and bid farewell to one of our rocks.

But after a summer that was too hot and too short, we are at a point of finding places to gather and to share the wonderful memories of St Louis as we continue our work to reorganize PW in our new Presbytery.

2025 is an election year for us so we will be looking for members who will bring new energy to replace those who can no longer serve. This will not be an easy task, your prayers will be appreciated.

On a positive note – individual PW’s in our churches are meeting, studying the Bible, showing support for the work of PW through their work in their communities and their support for the Birthday and Thanks programs,

Enjoy the cooler weather – will share our fall escapades in the next issue!

Liz Hemminger

Moderator, NE New Jersey

From River of Hope to Lessons of Love

I last attended Churchwide in 2012 when I endeavored to travel to the River of Hope never realizing I would return 12 years later not only to a river that brought hope to thousands, the Mississippi River but also millions for the years of boating, shipping and industry that occurred in and around this great river. Persons that didn't look much different than me but had a lot of hope as the "freedoms" that are not self-evident become real and defined.



It has been a labor of love these 12 years as more change has hit my life, all our lives, on this side of COVID. Imagine my surprise this when the theme, "Do Everything in Love" would enable me to reflect on the nurturing and love of my mentor, the former Vice Moderator of PWSNE, JoAnn Burrell - would enable me to cast a net in a different direction, letting go of my love for numbers and finance and learn a love for people and administration.

As incoming Vice Moderator of PWSNE, I am thankful. Thankful for the JoAnn, Joanne and JoAnn's in my life.

Women as we come to labor and do everything in love for the next three years, please vision with us, please allow God to help you transform your role and say yes to new opportunities.

"And they will know we are Christians by our love, by our love. Yes! They will know that we are Christians by our love."

Submitted by,

Rhonda Sanchez



with special guest
**Rev. Dr. Marielis
 Barreto-Hernández**



This World Communion Sunday join us as
 Rev. Dr. Marielis Barreto-Hernández,
 PCUSA's International Peacemaker from
 Puerto Rico, leads us in worship.

First Presbyterian Church of Elmira
Sunday, October 6 - 10:30 a.m.

Light luncheon to follow. Reservations
 required by October 1. Please RSVP to
office@firstpreselmira.org or 607-734-1614.



First Presbyterian Church
 Elmira

1054 West Clinton Street, Elmira NY 14905
 607-734-1614 - firstpreselmira.org



From Western NY PWP

Editor's Note: This article was submitted in April 2024

Sacred Encounters in Worship was attended by 38 women from 9 churches in the Western New York Presbytery. Our new Moderator (Mary Anne Leslie) was installed during the business meeting by outgoing, Marilyn Koszarek. Marilyn shared a wonderful and quite relevant essay on "CHANGE" by Charles Olsen. Our Board is certainly in a season of change and transitioning from what was and has worked for decades to what might be and needs to work to keep PW viable, relative, and centered on Christ through Bible study and prayer. Our first step is moving from being a traditional "board" to a *team*!

2024-2025 TEAM

Moderator: Mary Anne Leslie

Advisor: Becky Ventre

Treasurer: Janie Smith

Secretary: Marilyn Koszarek

Action Coordinator: Mary Anne Leslie

Action Events: Olga Rico-Armesto

Marketing: Melissa Chwojdak

Member-at-Large: Joyce Bailey

Member-at-Large: Diane Buzy

The Gathering started with a lively and chatty group of friends from all over Western New York. Following the Business meeting we moved to the sanctuary and the Call to Worship. Becky Ventre led us with the opening song "Come"...it was magical! Next was a guided contemplative prayer exercise led by Kathy White. We transitioned from quiet and calm to the soft and beautiful music of the Liturgical dancers, performing to "Come to The Table" as they eloquently danced down the isle from behind and to the altar. (Dancers: Marilyn Koszarek, Gail Janiga, Jane Hewett, Kathy Huntz, Elaine LaClair, Darcie Maccubbin). No PW gathering is complete until we celebrate with Praise music and Communion, led by Rev. Holly Clark-Porter. Our program ended with our 2024-2025 Social Justice Star, "Stitch Buffalo" a non profit founded in 2014 as a textile art center committed to empowering refugee and immigrant women from all over the globe. Buffalo is blessed by the skill, artistic creativity, and giving hearts of these ladies and this organization. Only thing left to do...was lunch and shopping the Stitch Buffalo table of treasures (info@stitchbuffalo.org)

A special thank you to Bruce Decker (Wayside's music director), the musicians, vocalists and ladies of Wayside for hosting us all!



Earth Care

Exciting news for Presbyterian women and all who are called to care for God's creation ...

Presbyterians for Earth Care will host a virtual Bible study based on the nine-lessons of the PW/Horizons Bible study, *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*, by Patricia K. Tull!

Every fourth Sunday evening, beginning September 22, Revs. COURTENAY WILLCOX and LUCY YOUNGBLOOD, of Presbyterians for Earth Care, will lead a 75-minute discussion on PW's nine-lesson study (<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/>).

To learn about the leaders, details about the study and its author, how to sign up or acquire a copy of *Let Justice Roll Down*, please visit <https://presbyearthcare.org/bible-study-pw-2024-2025/>.



From our Webmaster

Sue Lui states you may go to the link below for other gathering pictures, etc.

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/2024-churchwide-gathering-take-home-the-gathering/>

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany Fall Gathering

Tuesday, October 29, 2024 – 11:30 am – 2:30 pm

**West Charlton United Presbyterian Church
1331 Sacandaga Road
West Charlton NY 12010**

Thank Offering

The Presbyterian Women's Thank Offering is mostly taken during November.

The following was taken from the Presbyterian Women's Website (see below)

About the Thank Offering Each year Presbyterian Women heeds the call of Paul to "supply the needs of the saints" through the PW Thank Offering. This grant making program originated in 1888 with one generous woman, Eliza Clokey of Springfield, Ohio, when she urged everyone to give one dollar over and above their usual contribution to mission. Since then, organizations in the United States and around the world have benefitted from the overflowing of thanksgiving to God shown by Presbyterian women through their offerings. Eliza called upon women to give a "thank offering to her Lord" and today we continue to answer that call through support of the PW Thank Offering. When we come together to pool our money as Presbyterian Women, we can make a much greater impact than we can on our own. For more information on the 2024 Thank Offering recipients, read the Summer issue of Horizons magazine or go to presbyterianwomen.org/thank.

Below is one of the grants issued:

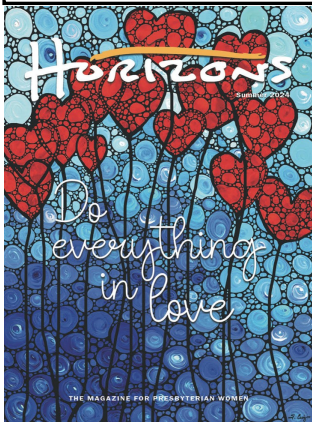
CENTRAL FLORIDA PRESBYTERY Forward Paths Foundation, Inc. Homes to Independence —Housing for Homeless Youth \$50,000 forwardpaths.org Forward Paths Foundation works to positively influence at-risk youth in Lake County, Florida, with the support needed to complete high school, attain a consistent work history and learn financial management skills. The Thank Offering grant will help expand their services to homeless, unaccompanied youth and those who have reached the age of 18 and are no longer eligible for foster care. By providing housing and a personalized plan for each youth, this program makes possible a future for them to have meaningful work and

continued on page 22

relationships, and to live independently by the time they are age 25. Forward Paths's student, Sylvana, is embarking on an inspiring journey in healthcare and is in school to become a licensed practical nurse. Her passion for nursing runs deep, and she is drawn to the intensity and significance of working in critical.

Promote the offering. Hint: small churches may even want to ask the entire congregation. Your editor does so each November.

Subscribe to *Horizons* for just \$9.95



Horizons is the magazine and Bible study for Presbyterian women. Every issue of *Horizons* magazine provides ideas, inspiration, and information by addressing issues facing the church and the world.

With this discounted *Horizons* subscription, you'll receive:

- Five print issues of this award-winning magazine, delivered to your home or office

- Devotions, mission stories, ideas for justice and peace work, and information about Presbyterian Women and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

- FREE access to digital issues of *Horizons* magazine, including many encore issues, which you can read on your computer, tablet or mobile phone

Subscribe today!

Sincerely,

Your friends at *Horizons*

The magazine and Bible study for Presbyterian women

In Memoriam Pages

Editor's Note: You will find memorials on the next couple pages

In appreciation of Ardelle Stewart 's Life

On Aug 11, Ardelle Stewart passed away after having had a stroke a week prior. Most of us don't remember a time when Ardelle wasn't active at the congregation, Presbytery and Synod levels of PW. She provided music at many events and saw to it that the PW Purpose was the cornerstone of our programs.

She was a member of PW in The First Presbyterian Church of Valatie. Her group provided a "Gifts of Women Sunday" program every year. Ardelle insisted that the PW Purpose be read each year at that event. In 1987, Ardelle was one of a small group of women at the church who advocated for starting a PW group. A PW "Enabler" came to speak to them about how to start a group. Besides her PW activities, Ardelle was the organist at her church and played in the morning of the day she had the stroke.

She was a long-time leader of the PW in the Presbytery of Albany Coordinating Team and was Moderator from 2004-2007. We had a PWA Coordinating Team meeting on the Friday before her stroke. She was full of ideas, as always.

Ardelle held several positions on the PWSNE Coordinating Team. She was present at most PWSNE events and many Churchwide Gatherings.

Ardelle's family included her late husband Bruce, late daughter Caren, daughter Patricia Porter and granddaughter Nicole, whose accomplishments she was very proud of plus her late Poodle, Coco who she was devoted to.

Her interests were cooking, music plus travel to historical sights and cruises with her daughter Caren. She ushered at the MacHady Theatre in Chatham. Ardelle enjoyed musical productions in person and on TV and the "The Big Bang Theory" TV series

Ardelle was a good and caring friend to many and only missed her 65th college reunion because she was sick the weekend it was held.

Notes for Ardelle's family can be sent to c/o First Presbyterian Church of Valatie, PO Box 267, Valatie, NY 12184.



In deep sorrow,
The Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of
Albany Coordinating Team

In June, our beloved and devoted sister, Neola Reese, peacefully passed and returned to our Lord.

I got to know Neola in 2018 when we were roommates at the PW Gathering in Louisville, KY. At that point she had attended every PW Gathering—that would be 11 events from 1988 – 2018. Walking with Neola at this event was like walking with a celebrity. (I have attached a photo of Neola dressed for a theme night)

Neola was an active member of PW in the Presbytery For Southern New Jersey (a.k.a. West Jersey) and served in many roles including Moderator, Mission Coordinator, and Gathering Voting Rep. At Trinity Presbyterian Church in Cherry Hill, NJ she was actively involved in PW: serving as PW Moderator in 1998, Priscilla Circle Moderator for many-many years, and honored with the PW Honorary Life Membership Award in 2001.

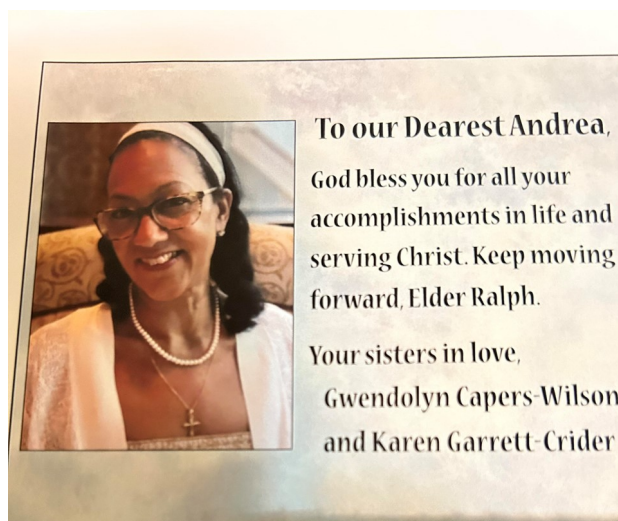
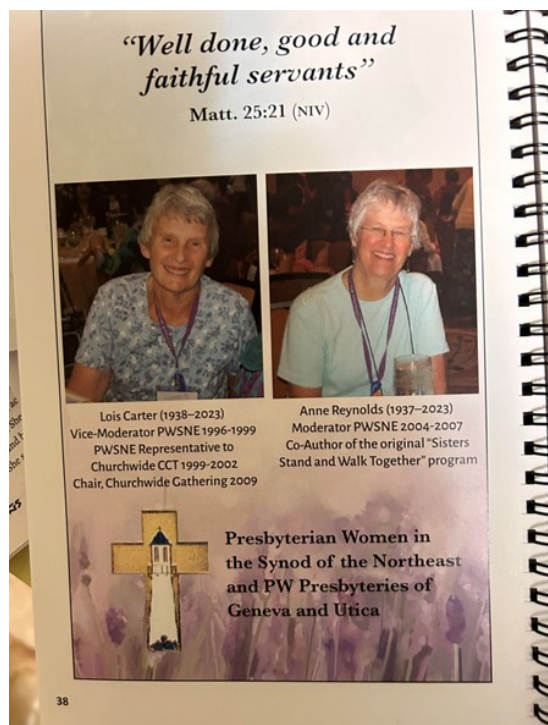
Well into her 90s Neola continued to encourage women to get involved in mission and Bible study. Details of Neola's life can be found here:

<https://www.courant.com/obituaries/neola-reese/>



Submitted by Jenny Stark PWP Southern New Jersey

Seen in Churchwide Gathering Book From PWSNE



Pictures from Churchwide Gathering

Your editor has attempted to enter as many photos as I could that were sent to me. Not all photos have all people identified but I have attempted to identify to person who sent them to me.



Maggie Lewis
center ??
Alpha Brown



sent by Roslyn
Thompson
A group from
Maryland and
New York

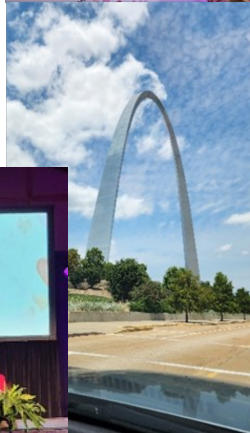
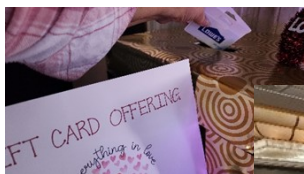


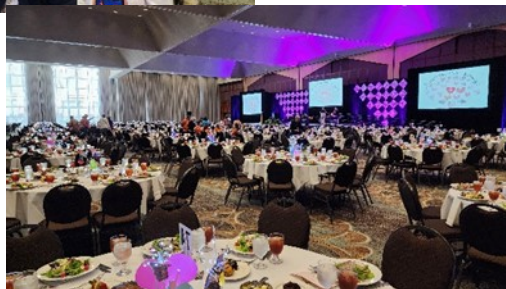
exhibit Hall



Top right of this group: welcome
flag: Gift card Offering, St. Louis
arch. Left photo: a workshop;
bottom right: Saturday Night Ban-
quet
All sent by Nancy Lack



Highland NJ PWP
with Virginia
Champlin





Pictures sent by Nana-Yea Gysai from
NE New Jersey PWP



left: Virginia
Champlin at
PWSNE luncheon

Right: USAME par-
ticipants at Church-
wide Logo



These above three photos by Linda
Werts



Before the
Business Meeting
PWSNE Reps
Gathered at
Robie's Restau-
rant for dinner

right photo at
PWSNE Lunch
photo by Susan
Silliman Smith



Other Miscellaneous photo from Susan Silliman Smith



Women—Getting out the Vote



Below the women Vote pictures
Top two on left—Plenary
speakers—You will recognize
JoAnn Burrell and Jenny Lee at
a Plenary.
Shari Stump our energizer

Our Musicians



Alpha Brown
with one of the
tech people



out for lunch nearby

Below—pictures from Rhonda Sanchez



VOTE – VOTE – VOTE

It's been a little over 100 years that our country's foremothers fought for women's right to vote.

Living only 20 miles from Seneca Falls, New York the National Women's Park and the home of where these very brave and outspoken women met to fight for the right to vote. I am very passionate about women voting. As a leader in the Presbyterian Church USA, I am encouraged not to tell folks who to vote for or lobby for candidates. But what I can do is to encourage everyone to search the issues and then vote for the candidates that match those same values and goals. You can share with others about your thoughts.

We need to help make sure that everyone becomes a registered voter. Then, help ensure that they do make it to the polls to vote. If they are unable to go to the polls, help them obtain an absentee ballot, vote and mail those ballots in.

There are a lot of issues on the ballots and your vote can make the difference. In one of our local elections, it ended in a tie, even after the mail in were counted.

So, the bottom line – VOTE, VOTE, and help others VOTE.

Submitted by Virginia Champlin