

The Lighthouse



February 2025 Presbyterian Women in the Synod of the North Northeast

Moderator's Message



Happy New Year Sisters (and Brothers) in Christ,

Our January Mission "Caring and Sharing" was a great way to kick off the new year. We heard some of the awesome success stories from our PWSNE Socktober initiative. Our host leader Adina Yacoub opened the conversations for many great Mission success and ideas for to share with others.

We are all looking forward to the March 9th Justice and Peace "Caring and Sharing" with our host leader Hanna Cho. Then May 4 our host leader will be Diana Drake Behan leading the discussions about book studies and Bible Studies.

All our "Caring and Sharing" events are held via Zoom and last only one hour. Donna Rahmann has volunteered to be the Zoom host. All are welcome to attend. If you do not receive the Zoom invitation, please contact any of our Coordinating Team members or PWP Moderators.

Looking ahead, there is so many happenings within PWSNE. In March is the UN Commission on the Status of Women where several of our ladies will be attending. In June will be our annual introduction to the next year's Bible Study at Stony Point hosted by Highlands PWP.

On March 5, Hudson River is holding the Annual Ash Wednesday service and program at Holmes Conference Center. Some of our PWP are holding Spring Gatherings/Retreats. The Synod also hosts many learning opportunities, some in person and others on Zoom. Go to the Synod of the Northeast web page to view all the offerings. I especially want you to look at the "Connection to Transformation: Creating a Partnership Culture in Faith Communities" being held March 14-15 at Jamaica, NY. continued on page 2

Editor's Note:

I just realized we had decided to move the Spring edition to a March 1st deadline. Some articles needed to be published at this time so it was good I forgot the new deadline.

In a couple articles it noted to click on a link—but due a few glitches, I was unable to make them for you. Hence you will have to go to your browser and type in the links to get further information.

Mission articles and news from various PWCs or PWPs begin after page 15.

If anyone has difficulty deciphering this issue of the Lighthouse, please email me at august13sss@gmail.com.

I am willing to publish a mini Lighthouse for events or important news in the interim before September.

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.

Sounds like a great experience with wonderful leaders.

The Nominating Team will begin the search for our officers whose terms begin in September 2025. We ask you to prayerfully consider the invitation when you are asked. It would be so appreciated if all of you could make recommendation. This would be a big help.

Our RED (Racial Equity Dialogue) Team Leaders Donna Vize Wasik and Magdalene Lewis are ready to come to your Presbytery and/or church. They are looking for leaders in each of our PWP to continue with their message.

Just a reminder that Springtime is Birthday Offering Time. There should be articles throughout this issue of The Lighthouse with further details on many of the above mentioned activities.

“O sing to God a new song; sing to God, all the earth.” ~~ Psalm 96:1
I am closing with “Cold Water, Hot Coffee” by Ann Weems

Sometimes that cup of cold water, turns out to be a cup of hot coffee,

And what we're asked to do is to pour it... and to listen.

Sometimes we Christians in our enthusiasm think we were asked to save the world, when what we were asked to do is to go into it and tell God's story to people in need of some good news.

Anxious activists forget that just listening is an act of compassion.

Driven disciples forget that just listening is an act of faithfulness.

Guilt-givers forget that just listening is an act of stewardship.

Since we church people have a tendency to be driven and anxious and guilt-ridden, perhaps we should read the directions again and pour a cup of hot coffee and listen in His name.

In Christ's Service,

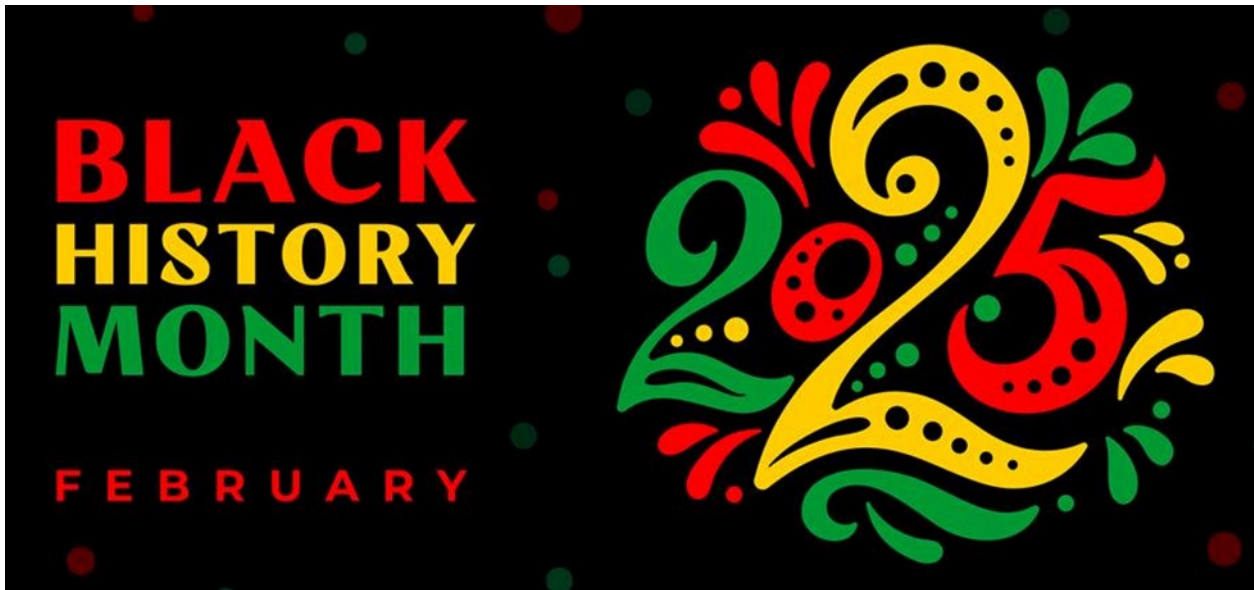
Virginia Champlin, PWSNE Moderator 2023-2026

A Moment of Inspiration

Rhonda Sanchez



When the end of day is empty
Because it is no longer shared
Dancing with you
The bed is less bumpy
Because your side is smooth
When cooking is a chore
I make too much for one
And every Sunday's hope
Leads to a Monday undone
Yes God is my refuge
Yet once you were my love
I now see many pigeons
Where once was a dove
Slowly I am pulled to grace
In my Lord's plan
Different music playing
I'm learning a new dance.



African American History Month (aka Black History Month) has been observed each February in the United States since 1976.

How will you or your group observe this celebration? If you need ideas, consider the following:

Learn about [African American History Month](#) through the documents, photos, audio and video files, and collections compiled by the Library of Congress, National Archives and Records Administration, National Endowment for the Humanities, National Gallery of Art, National Park Service, Smithsonian Institution and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The 2025 theme for African American History Month is *African Americans and Labor*. "African American artists have used art to preserve history and community memory as well as for empowerment. Artistic and cultural movements such as the New Negro, Black Arts, Black Renaissance, hip-hop, and Afrofuturism, have been led by people of African descent and set the standard for popular trends around the world." Learn more from the [Association for the Study of African American Life and History](#) (ASALH).

Do you like documentaries? PBS and your local PBS station offer [a list of films premiering this month, as well as programs available to stream in February](#).

If you'd like to make your observance Presbyterian-focused, [click to see images on the Presbyterian Historical Society blog that captured our attention and pulled at our heartstrings](#).

You can also visit the [Racial Equity](#) webpage on the Presbyterian Women website to download and take the [8-day racial equity education challenge](#), [read stories and reflections](#), and [download a list of book suggestions](#) on racial equity, and more!

RACIAL EQUITY DIALOGUE (RED) TEAM

The intent of the Racial Equity Dialogue (RED) Team is to fulfill the Presbyterian Women 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.

Many thanks to the Presbyterian Women in the Presbyteries for Southern New Jersey and Northeast New Jersey for including Donna as a speaker at their fall gatherings. As everyone plans their spring gatherings whether in person or via web-conferencing, please consider inviting Magdalene and Donna to join you. They are eager to share insights and resources while building a RED community that lifts our PW siblings. PW coordinating teams may also identify individuals who are potentially interested in joining the RED team and sending their contact information to Magdalene or Donna for follow up.

Magdalene & Donna will host the first meeting of the RED team on February 16, 2025, at 3 PM via the Zoom web-conferencing platform. If you are interested in participating in the meeting, please RSVP no later than February 14th by emailing Magdalene &/or Donna at

magdalenelewis08@gmail.com or dvwasik@gmail.com



As we celebrate Black History & Culture in February, we encourage everyone to participate in programs & events in your congregations and communities that acknowledge the contributions of racial ethnic peoples to our faith & society. The following resources may be useful:

Presbyterian Women Justice & Peace Resources

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/PW-Racial-Equity-Cultural-Humility-resources-05222024.pdf>

Blackhistorymonth.gov

A variety of resources including art, literature, & spoken word

Suggested Reading for Children Consider adding these to your church or family library. <https://www.pbs.org/parents/thrive/childrens-books-to-celebrate-black-history-month>



For generations, churches have served as the heart of community life, acting as catalysts for change and beacons of hope. This conference builds on that legacy, offering faith communities the empowering tools to harness their unique strengths and foster transformative partnerships.

Participants will be part of a collaborative effort, exploring strategies for engaging with local organizations, nonprofits, and community leaders to address pressing challenges and create lasting impact. Through dynamic workshops, inspiring speakers, and collaborative sessions, the event will equip church leaders, members, and organizers with actionable tools to strengthen relationships, expand their reach, and cultivate a thriving culture of partnership rooted in shared faith and a commitment to addressing common needs.

HOSTING ORGANIZATIONS:

This event is hosted by the Synod of the Northeast in collaboration with Reverend Patrick O'Connor (First Presbyterian Church, Jamaica, New York), the Tree of Life Nonprofit, and other civic and community leaders.

CONFERENCE THEMES AND GOALS

- Explore the pivotal role of faith in fostering partnerships and driving community transformation, woven throughout plenary presentations, workshops, and panel discussions.
- Learn practical strategies for engaging with community organizations and repurposing church spaces, supported by case studies of successful partnerships with nonprofits, health centers, housing initiatives, and educational institutions.
- Simplify the process of public grant writing with accessible guidance.

- Discover effective ways to engage with local governments, civic organizations, and interfaith partners.
- Address challenges and opportunities in mobilizing resources and building sustainable church-community partnerships, with open discussions and shared solutions.

Gain actionable strategies for mobilizing missional direct services and creating meaningful community change.

For more information please go to <https://www.synodne.org/calendar/2025/3/14/connection-to-transformation-creating-a-partnership-culture-in-faith-communities>

There are also opportunities for scholarships as well.

Looking for Leaders

Are you passionate about Presbyterian Women?

Do you have a drive to make a difference and contribute to a thriving community?

Then we need YOU! Positions that are needed are as follows:

Moderator-Elect

Treasurer:

Secretary/Historian: Keeps records of meetings and minutes, maintains historical documents

Justice and Peace: Leads initiatives related to justice and peace-making

Search Committee: Identifies and recruits potential leaders for future positions
If you are interested in learning more or would like to nominate someone, please contact

Jane Kim (love219@gmail.com).

We encourage you to step up and help shape the future of Presbyterian Women!



Just got my BIRTHDAY OFFERING flyer in the mail so here's my pitch for the Lighthouse..(and Highlands PWP)

"I don't know how many of you are on the PW mailing (snail I might add) list and received the 2025 Birthday Offering brochure. The scripture that is lifted up is Deuteronomy 16:15. And in italics is 'and you shall surely celebrate'. What's that's all about? The Birthday & Thank Offerings should be renamed to Missions, not offerings. It's not about donations and fundraising, it's about supporting Mission Projects! How will you ever engage younger women with just another way to give financially? What we must CELEBRATE is how a team from the PW Board chose the best candidates from the

applications they received for grants. And gave big gifts. 🎁

2025: HOUSING what is more relevant today?

1-Leland Presbyterian Church, Leland Mississippi

"Windward Volunteer Housing Facility" \$150,000

2-Red Cloud Renewable "Lakota Thiyuha Dome Home Project"

Pine Ridge, South Dakota \$150,000

Amazing, no? Women sent their monies ahead, trusting PW will find just the right Ministry. The monies you give in 2025 will go to the 2026 recipients. When it's thought PW is dwindling you see this vote of confidence in their purpose with \$300,000. Join the cause, celebrate.

Read more about these ministries in Horizons (PW magazine) or find it on the PW (Churchwide) website! Order the resources available to share with women in your church. Engage all of the congregation. Call 800-533-4371 or online Presbyterian women.org. Have a birthday party, USE THE DEDICATION SERVICE to close the celebration.

Back in the “day” women would donate a penny per year of their age to this. We’ve come a long way, so save up \$1 per year of your age and send it into the 2025 Birthday Offering.

Thanks, as the first part is the scripture said “For the Lord will bless you in all your produce and in all your undertakings”. Amen

Lisa Gray,
former PWSNE Moderator, Highlands Presbytery Peace & Justice Coordinator.

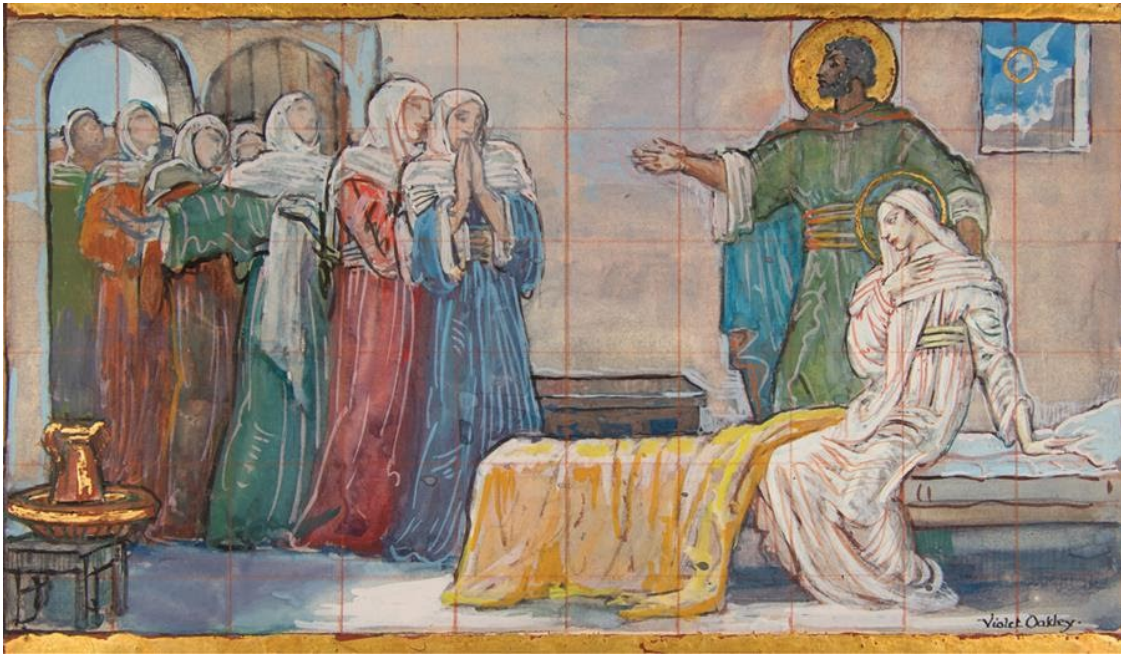
SAVE THE DATE!
Horizon’s Bible Study
June 19-21, 2025
Stony Point Center

All attendees will stay in the Gilmore Sloane House and PW in the Presbytery of the Highlands will be offsetting some of the cost. Mark your calendar.

(If you would like to be notified of the specifics of the gathering, e-mail jkmac3536@gmail.com to be put on the mailing list.)

Celebrate the Gifts of Women 2025

Saints and Widows



The Raising of Dorcas by Saint Peter, final sketch, Violet Oakley. La Salle University Art Museum, Philadelphia, PA

Each year Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday offers a time to reflect on and rejoice in the ways women enrich the life of the church. And each year, thanks to a partnership between Presbyterian Women and Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries, a liturgy and reflection supports this observation.

For 2025, Rev. Laurie Kraus focuses her meditation and liturgy on the range and talents and roles of women in the church, drawing on Acts 9 in "Saints and Widows: A Mildly Subversive Reading of Acts."

When Tabitha rises up, so does Peter. Together they go back to the saints and widows—who now, Peter says, had actually been disciples and saints all along. In 2025, Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday falls on March 9, but can be celebrated on any date that you choose.

The resource is available (in English) in the [November/December 2024 issue of Horizons](#) or as a [download](#) in English, Spanish or Korean.

Editor's Note: In my church in Mexico, NY we celebrate on Mother's Day and likewise do a Celebration of Men on Father's Day and a Celebration of Children at end of school year.



February—the month associated with love—is also PW’s “Do Everything in Love” (**DEIL**) *month*! (Yes, it’s true! The 2024 Churchwide Gathering theme happily continues to inspire!) During February’s sweet days of love and connection, Presbyterian women are encouraged to support “Do Everything in Love” with a gift of \$35 or more. Gifts will benefit PW’s Annual Mission Fund, which keeps PW connections and programs flourishing. Those who give may choose to send a symbolic rose to a friend, mentor, or future PW via downloadable card or insert. Why? Because supporting one another while supporting Presbyterian Women is a very big “**DEIL**”!

**D is for
denominational.**

Presbyterian women understand that our connectional church is feasible in large part because of the work and witness of a vibrant PW organization.

**E is for
ecumenical.**

Promoting unity and community expands our vision and deepens our reach to advocate and transform lives (including our own). PW is a full partner in World Day of Prayer, Fellowship of the Least Coin, and Bread for the World, and as an ecumenical body, PW is an NGO at the United Nations through the Commission on the Status of Women—talk about transforming lives of women and girls around the world!

I is for inclusive.

The PW Purpose guides us “to build an inclusive, caring community of women.” That’s why Presbyterian Women, Inc. has made a commitment to racial equity. It’s also why PW groups throughout the country actively seek to build God’s beloved community, where everyone’s gifts are valued, and difference is appreciated.

L is for love!

Unconditional love. Love in action. Love in connection. Love in faith. Supporting our organization and our siblings in Christ through Presbyterian Women is a fitting response to God’s love for each of us, and as articulated in our PW Purpose.

Visit presbyterianwomen.org/DEIL and select a downloadable card or insert to send to the individual you’re honoring. Single symbolic rose cards include red (for many, a symbol of love); white (hope); pink (appreciation and gratitude); yellow (friendship and fun); and for ease of printing and because coloring pages are fun, black-and-white!

Knitting4Peace

Our Vision: Everyone lives in hope, comfort, and peace

Our Mission: Create and deliver handcrafted items to adults and children worldwide.

The organization, a partnership of Presbyterian Women, collects knitted or crocheted items to go everywhere to bring peace & comfort.

Most-Needed Items:

Winter scarves (42" or longer, 6" or wider, or cowls). Use a warm, not lacy, stitch pattern.

Adult Hats (any size)

Blankets (Regular or baby) Most helpful if warm rather than lacy stitch pattern.

Where To Send: By mail to 2600 N. Leyden St., Denver, CO 80207.

It is really good to include a donation for the further mailing of items, as well as contact information.

There must be some knitters & crocheters out there! Youtube has lots of instruction videos. Get together - teach someone, teach a young woman. Don't let the art die!

Knitting for Peace also now has retail merchandise for sale – tote bags, t-shirts, note cards, etc – just go to their website <https://www.knitting4peace.org>



Photo by Nick Hunter

“Snow Covered Trail”

“It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter.” Psalm 74: 17

Winter World

February, the second month of the year, is said by some to be the last month of winter. Obviously those that say this don't live where we live—the area of an endless winter wonderland. The snow-covered forests and fields bring a brightness and glow to cloudy days and long dark nights. We know that under the snow new life is sleeping, just waiting to burst forth as winter, reluctantly yields to spring. Instead of grumbling about the cold, snow and ice enjoy, as best we can, the winter season. Like the sleeping earth we too need to slow down—even stop—and restore our energy. We need to take a moment to enjoy the beauty of our snow-covered landscape and cold crystal starlit nights. Or, best of all, take time to sit back with a piping hot coffee or tea, and give thanks to God for our beautiful, wonderful winter world.

~Maxine G. Hunter~

FEBRUARY

- Black History Month; blackhistorymonth.gov
- One Billion Rising for Justice, onebillionrising.org
- National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, teendvmonth.org
- 01 National Freedom Day, state.gov/national-freedom-day-deepening-our-resolve-to-ought-human-trafficking
- 1–7 World Interfaith Harmony Week, worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com
- 09 Souper Bowl of Caring, tacklehunger.org
- 12 International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers, redhandday.org

Do you recognize this? It's the February piece of the PW PEACE & JUSTICE CALENDAR.

I found it in NEWS-BYTES the PWC (CHURCH-WIDE) quarterly news update document.

The whole calendar is also on the PW website Presbyterianwomen.com. You could ask to have this newsletter emailed to you by going to the website and ask.

Why is this important? It will give you ideas about programs your PW might use to to educate your women (whole church). It's also ideas for mission projects such as the "Souper Bowl of Caring"...collecting soups for the hungry on Super Bowl Sunday.

A little late for this year? Put it on next years' to do list.

Pick one issue that speaks to you and get more information, by clicking on the link!

I thought it would perhaps be a draw for moms of teens or teens themselves to learn about "TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION". Perhaps younger women might make time to hear a presentation, see a video or be interested in a discussion forum on this!

Add some food and they may come!

Hope,

Lisa Gray;

former moderator PWC and Peace & Justice Coor

Hudson River Presbytery



Ash Wednesday Retreat

March 5

10:00am-1:00 pm

Presentation by Guideposts
Connecting Church Members

Holmes Camp and Conference Center
60 Denton Lake Road
Holmes, NY 12531

R.S.V.P. Diana Drake Behan
diana.pwhrp@gmail.com

SAVE THE DATE!
Horizon's Bible Study
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All attendees will stay in the Gilmor Sloane House and PW in the Presbytery of the Highlands will be offsetting some of the cost. Mark your calendar. (If you would like to be notified of the specifics of the gathering, e-mail jkmac3536@gmail.com to be put on the mailing list.)

Editor's Notes:

In the following pages you will find a variety of Mission Stories and Ideas for Mission.

Presbyterian Women are in force whether their church has an active PW group or not. Let's give it up for all Women in the Synod for the hard and creative works they do in helping others wherever we may be. We are strong, loving and gracious women.

The articles are in no particular order. Some things may be duplicate as Adina summed up what was said at our Caring and Sharing in January.

Please enjoy!!

From Morrisville Community Church PW



The Valentine Express Keeps on Rollin’

On a cold icy January 21, 2025, the Presbyterian Women’s Ministry Team once again held the Valentine Express Workshop. This ministry, now in its thirteenth year, is a happy Valentine’s Day outreach to the residents and staff of Crouse Community Center and now includes, Unity Acres, Orwell NY. This year—with a bit of work by some before the workshop—we were able to fill the Express with close to 200 Valentines. The 2025 Express crew pictured above: R to L: Ellen Davis, Karen Jacobs, Jo Purple, Maxine Hunter, Nancy McPherson, Marlene Miner, Sue Leamer, Ann Berlew, Sylvia McKinnan, and slightly hidden in the back, Norma Galbreath. Thanks to all who now and in the past have held keep this mission of colorful greetings rollin’ along. As St. Francis of Assisi said: “When we work with our heads, our hands and our hearts, artistry happens.” ~Maxine Hunter



Synod Rep News

Alpha Brown

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior

As we stand on the threshold of a new year, I am filled with gratitude for our shared journey!

Representing you on the National level of Presbyterian Women has been an honor. The Northeast PW SYNOD should be knowledgeable about all the wonderful Gatherings throughout the SYNOD. Let's share those gathering dates with other groups.

I am most proud of PW New York Presbytery. The Gathering that was held was a surprising success for the planning team. PWNKYC is back and Stronger than ever before. Most churches are preparing to Celebrate the Gifts of Women's History in March. The theme is "Saints and Widows", using the Scripture from Acts 9:36:43 by Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus.

Many changes in the churches and presbyteries will transform our thinking while we cannot always control how or when change happens, I am confident that Presbyterian Women will move into the 21st century with new and better ideas.

The Board visited the Café Ginkgo, one of the recipients of the 2024 Birthday offering. The Church gave a tour of the church grounds and explained how the birthday offering would be used for remodeling with the funds that they received. We had the opportunity to see an antique stove and learn how its role in the operation of Café Ginkgo. We were warmly welcomed by the church members with open arms and big hugs. Eight women were selected for the PW Delegation to the Commission on the Status of Women from this SYNOD in March. Please invite them to come to your gathering to share their experiences.

At the Board meeting in September, it was voted to have a gathering in 2027 in Louisville with a different format. The Board also agreed to re-evaluate the position of the SYNOD representative. This will be on the agenda in 2026 and will be voted on at the 2027 Gathering.

At our September board meeting, we had training sessions on parliamentary procedure and archiving. These are essential practices for effective leadership and maintaining our organizational history. It is important to have a clear vision for our future. I would like to conclude with a prayer by "Rev. Dr. Laurie Kraus"
Life is a precious thing to me, and a little thing. . . .

And the world is a little thingBut it is in God's ever-keeping; it is in God's ever-loving, it is in God's ever-making. How should anything be amiss? Yes, all shall be well And all will be well. And thou shalt see thyself that all manner of things shall be well"

STAY INFORMED - BE CONNECTED



PW First Presbyterian Church in Jamaica, NY, is actively taking decisive steps to strengthen its connections and ensure that the unhoused receive the nourishment they need. They are committed to making a significant difference in their community and will not rest until they fulfill this mission.

From Mexico, NY Presbyterian Church

One of several projects we have which is actually sponsored by our Board of Deacons but the women of the church participate is for the Veteran's Hospital in Syracuse. This is coordinated with the VFW auxiliary in Mexico.

Veterans or their families have to furnish many things for themselves. These vets must provide their own toiletry items and are given one cup of coffee a day. If they want additional cups of coffee they must pay for them as well as toiletry items and small throw blankets. We donate trial size shampoo, soap, toothpaste, shaving cream, and other items which would also help our women veterans along with small throw fleece/blankets.

Caring and Sharing Meeting 1/5/25

Adina Yacoub

As we all know and have experienced through the years PW is big on mission work or together in service as we called it.

Mission is not about preaching and praying only, it is about action and doing. It is about being the hands and feet of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. It is what Jesus did himself while living on earth. Feed the hungry and cloth the naked, give shelter to the unsheltered. The scripture says :

- **Isaiah 58:6-11:** "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house"
- **Isaiah 58:10-14:** "Feed the hungry, and help those in trouble"
- **Matthew 25:35,40:** "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink"
- Mission is doing the work of Jesus Christ in the power of the Spirit—proclaiming the gospel, making disciples, moving in the power and love of the Spirit, pursuing justice, serving others, embodying Christ through our presence, building communities of believers, caring for creation, suffering for righteousness.
- missions is bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who don't know him as Lord and Savior. There are no limits in territory, people, places, or methods used to reach those who are lost; and God's desire is that none should perish (2 Peter 3
- The end goal and ultimate purpose of missions is worship. This worship is, as John Calvin said, "to ascribe and render to [God] the glory of all that is good, to seek all things in Him alone, and in every want to have recourse to Him alone.

In 2024 we as a county experienced many hurricanes and natural disasters and we saw how PW and the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance agency showed up to those in the devastated areas of the Carolinas and Florida.

We had our in-person Fall Gathering as the Presbytery of the Northeast in Clifton on 11/23/24 and it was wonderful to see sisters and friends again and our offering for that gathering went to support an outreach to victims of Hurricane Helene at Camp Grier in North Carolina. This camp opened its doors to resident from Asheville and other devastated areas to be housed, fed, take showers and feel the warmth of people who care about their wellbeing.

Mission work of different churches from our synod:

Bethel Presbyterian church in East Orange in partnership with First Pres of Moonachie: in the summer of 2024 the women were involved in providing over 80 backpacks for students K-12 filled with age-appropriate school supplies. and gift cards for college students.

Mideast Evangelical Church of Jersey City:

In sept they provided school supplies for all children and in November they provided thanksgiving baskets for families that are in need. They also had some women cook and prepare meals for singles and those who are too ill to cook.

First Pres in Irvington held its food distribution and coat drive on 11/16/24

The connection newsletter that comes out twice a year from the Presbytery of NE published my mission project flyer under the title News from the Synod. One day late October our Moderator Virginia called me and said Adina have you ever hear of Stocktober, my response was no but I'm listening so she suggested as the mission person maybe I could do something with that. So, I did a little research, and my daughter helped me with the flyer that was distributed by Susan Silliman Smith and it was shared on the Synod Facebook page. Tonight, we heard from those who took the next step and did something with the flyer and the ideas for October, November and December. Two of them are prepared to share with us and after them.

Mission Project Flier

Charlotte Hasselbarth, Hamilton Union Presbyterian Church

The "Mission Project" flier that Adina Yacoub, our PWSNE Together in Service Coordinator sent out in the fall got me thinking about collecting items for established groups. The flier recommended collecting and donating needed items for specific local agencies.

Over the years my congregation has donated item to several agencies, but recently focused only on our local food pantry. Around the same time that the flier came out, I noticed that a local agency called the "The Caring Closet" was collecting hygiene items for students in the local school system. There were collection locations at our town library which is across the street from our church and at a local farm store that is owned by a family in our church.

The Mission and Social Wittiness Committee at my church decided to promote that project, but not actually collect at our church. This eliminated the need to establish a collection box at our church and finding someone to deliver the items. We have provided publicity through our church newsletter and weekly email blast, plus put fliers on our bulletin board. Projects that don't require a lot of manpower are very helpful. That "Mission Project" flier was successful in simulating new ideas.

Mission Summary From the Rev. Kathi Jones

(from the Valatie PW)

Just so you know - The PW in 2024:

- * collected empty prescription bottles (3 30 gallon garbage bags full in 2024) that are sent to Africa to be used,
- * collected magazines (400) and calendars (100) for a local nursing home and hospital waiting rooms,
- * did socktober at your suggestion at the last minute and collected 73 pairs from just the PW members for the Rescue Mission in Albany,
- * they have a mitten and hat tree at Christmas (not all counted yet as of today) that goes to the local schools as we have many Central American migrants in the area,
- * send money to the Albany PW, Synod and national PWs and collect for the Least Coin at every meeting.

They are a group of only 8 in a congregation of 65.

They have for over a decade led the whole worship service for Gifts of Women Sunday in March,
use the Horizons Bible study each year when they meet each month,
recycle those study books with another P in the presbytery who does the study a year behind,
has had someone on the CT of the synod often (Ardelle Stewart, Rosalie Hemingway, myself - though I am a former pastor who retired from there and still relates as they honored me with the title Pastor Emerita, though this is the group I relate to in spite of moderating another congregation's session).

I know pride is not something to have, but I am proud to be associated with this small group of women who take seriously the call to help others from local to globally.

Just so you have a sense of who they are and what they do. If any of this does not fit in with what you are looking for, just let me know.

Kathi

Valatie Presbyterian Women's Mission Projects

Martha Judson, a member of Presbyterian Women of the First Presbyterian Church of Valatie started a Warm Up America group in 1996. Members of the community were invited to join in knitting 7" X 9" rectangles that were then made into afghans to be given away. The project gradually expanded to include lap robes, knit hats, neck warmers, mittens and gloves. Each year representatives from local charities are invited to speak about their organization at a potluck supper in October where the items are distributed. In 2024 three hundred and fifteen items were divided among Catholic Charities, The Office for the Aging, The Salvation Army, The VMA Hospital, Re-Entry Columbia, and Ichabod Crane Central School's Weekend Teen Program. A few are kept in reserve for local people who are displaced by fire or other disasters.

The PW also sponsors a mitten tree which is put up in the sanctuary each December to receive donations of hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves. These are divided among the primary, middle, and high schools to be given to students when needed. They also collect calendars and magazines for the local nursing home, magazines for the Hudson hospital waiting room, and pill bottles for the Lion's Club which sends them to Africa to be used at clinics there.

PW news for Feb, 2025 Lighthouse
Rosalie Hemingway

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany's mission donations helping others

When Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany hold a Spring or Fall Gathering a free will offering is collected and the money is given to a charitable organization related to the speaker's topic. Money has gone to a wide variety of mission projects including Focus Churches of Albany, the Climate Reality Project, the Legal Project, MoonCatchers, Wizard's Wardrobe – a one-on-one tutoring program for primary school children, Westminster Presbyterian Church's African Missions, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for Ukraine and more recently PDA for Israel and Palestine. We've also collected dozens of children's books for the Wizard's Wardrobe and food items for the pantries in churches where our gatherings have been held.

At our Spring 2024 Gathering we collected gift cards for Lowe's, Target, and Walmart. Attendees at the June Presbytery meeting contributed \$200 toward cards for a total of \$505 in cards which were taken to the Churchwide Gathering by our moderator. Our Fall Gathering also collected money which went to the Circle of Sisters to buy Walmart gift cards to help newly immigrant women and their children purchase winter clothes and other necessities.

Over the years we have helped organizations working with immigrants, migrants, orphans, the homeless, and especially women and children. We have also donated to the PWSNE operating fund, the USA Mission Experience, and Global Exchange trips. This illustrates the range of our giving and doesn't include all the mission work done by women's groups in our presbytery.

Submitted by Rosalie Hemingway

Highlands of NJ PWP

Grace and peace I bring to you in the name of Jesus Christ!

If you recall, PWSNE had their Triennial Gathering at Stony Point, New York in July, 2023. At that time, the theme was IOU, based upon the scripture from Romans 8:28-30, that, **"GOD IS WORKING ON THE INSIDE, SO THAT WE CAN CONTINUE TO BUILD COMMUNITY ON THE OUTSIDE"**.

This theme continues daily. The IOU reflected on 'inward', 'outward' and 'upward'. How do we nurture ourselves inwardly- with Bible study. How do we build community on the outside-through missions. And upward reflects on how we worship God. It also brings to the fore the PW symbol.

Some may say that PW is not as alive as it used to be. BUT!!! Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey are alive and well. Most churches still don't have an active "PW" group, per se, but the women of these Churches do Bible Studies, they build community through missions and they definitely worship God! Some of the works are as follows:

The women begin their new year with new leadership! In Long Valley, they host Rumage Sales, cook meals for the homeless, raise funds to support PDA for the recent disasters; they support education of women from Africa or from the Dominican Republic.

Additionally, Presbyterian Women in Newton, aka Jubilee Women meet for Bible Study each month except July and August. The first part of 2024 the study was "Sacred Encounters, The Power and presence of Jesus Christ in Luke-Acts." Beginning in September, the study has been "Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation" by the Rev. Dr. Patricia K. Tull, Professor Emerita of Hebrew Bible at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary. Lessons cover Environmental Justice, Land Justice, Food Justice, Water Justice, Air Quality, etc. All women of the church are invited for study, prayer and fellow(sister)ship. (*Horizons Magazine at work!*)

This particular group of Presbyterian Women also support the PW in the Presbytery, Synod and Churchwide, and have also been contributing to child and maternal health in Africa through Direct Relief International, who train midwives. They also gave funds

to the World Central Kitchen who has been feeding the people of Gaza, and Unicef, who has been feeding children and refugees around the world.

Another group of faithful women, Bethlehem PW, held five Gatherings (January, March, June, September, and December) to conduct business and plan programs and mission. Their historical records, up through January 2021, were sent to the Presbyterian Historical Society. They hosted two Fellowship Hours, one honoring birthdays from January to June and the other honoring birthdays from July to December. We especially honored our nonagenarians: Joy Ashfield, Ted Frankenbach, Helen Hofgesang, Bebe Sellers, and Ginny Straub. (Any of those names familiar to you?) They hosted repasts for the Rev. Fred Black, Judy Morgan, and Bob Schulze, and a reception for the recital of Peter Toth. They continue to reach out to all members and friends with a birthday card. (This is a ministry that most Deacons do, which are upheld by women.)

Some fundraisers included a Souper Sale in February, a Pulled Pork Dinner in October, and a Holiday Cookie Sale in December; an ALL-Church Kitchen Supply Drive over the summer making ten tied fleece blankets for SAFE in Hunterdon; enjoying fellowship with friends at their homes, including a Christmas Luncheon at the Mountain View Chalet in December.

BPW participated in the Presbyterian Women's Offerings of Fellowship of the Least Coin at all meetings, the Birthday Offering in March, and the Thank Offering in September. These funds are used by Churchwide PW to provide grants in the USA and around the world to assist in establishing programs/projects for those in need.

Donations of \$200 each were given to Fisherman's Mark, Clinton Open Cupboard Food Pantry, Elizabethport Presbyterian Center, Family Promise, Highlands Presbyterian Women, Camp Johnsonburg Scholarship Program for Campers, Grow-A-Row, the South Branch Rescue Squad, and BPC Deacon's Grab-N-Go Sandwich Program. They continue to collect women's hygiene products for Women Helping Women and card fronts for the Developmental Center. BPW worked with the Session in obtaining an AED (Automated External Defibrillator) for the church. A donation of \$1,000 was given towards its purchase. A gift of \$545 to BPW, from the family of the Rev. Fred Black for his repast, was forwarded to the Clinton Open Cupboard Food Pantry in his memory. Pastor Linda took \$225 in donated gift cards for local mission to the Churchwide Gathering.

In Bound Brook, the Presbyterian Women have continued to function this year. They were able to fund the purchase of a sturdy outdoor bench which has been placed near the playground; some of those funds were from the sale of pecans which the congregation generously supported for several years. The After Hours circle met on the fourth Monday of each month in the evening for fellowship and continued their Bible study utilizing the PW Horizons Magazine Bible study. The 2023-2024 study "Sacred Encounters: The Power and Presence of Jesus Christ in Luke--Acts." was completed last spring. They are currently in the midst of the 2024-2025 study "Let Justice Roll Down." Information

They have been active participants in our PW in the Presbytery of the Highlands. Sev-

eral women attended the Spring Gathering in April to hear Marianne Montero, a participant in the 2023 U.S.A. Mission Experience, share what she saw, experienced, and learned about the region along our southern border and the issues surrounding immigration. In the fall, some women participated in the Fall Retreat, "Leaning Into Advent" facilitated by Rev. Karen Brostrom.

Everything we do as an organization and as a community is guided by our PW Purpose, and that includes ministry, resources and relationships.

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.

Thank you to all of our PW sisters in the Highlands of New Jersey. You continue to use your God given gifts to bring to life the PW Purpose.

In Christ with gratitude for all of you,

Donna Rahmann, Moderator

PWP of the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ

PWP of Southern NJ



St. Paul's PW of Laurel Springs, NJ

On Saturday, October 5th the PW of St. Paul's Church in Laurel Springs hosted more than 35 women from across the Presbytery for a time of learning, sisterhood and growing in our faith.

From our speaker Pamela Stalcup, we learned of the challenges of children in foster care and the value of presenting them with Pajamas and books. Many children have received pj's for the first time through this national top-rated charity. After the meeting, many churches continued to collect for this organization. [pajama program](#)

Ms. Stalcup also provided insight into Prevent Child Abuse NJ [prevent child abuse NJ](#). They are a multifaceted organization providing support to hospitals, parents and families across New Jersey. The organization received an honorarium to continue all of their good work. Many of us returned to our churches planning to recognize Child Abuse Prevention month in April. Check out their website for ideas and perhaps plant your own pinwheel garden.

Our host at St. Paul's were so very gracious in providing wonderful breakfast treats and dessert. Their pastor, Rev. Dasol Kang, helped to center us in our faith with the opening prayer and their music director, Steve Kwiatkowski, led us in an old-fashioned hymn sing with some of our favorite hymns.

We spent some time learning about the PW Gathering from attendees Donna Wasik and Jenny Stark. Donna also gave us an update on the RED (Racial Equity and Diversity) work that is happening through the PW Presbyteries nationwide.

And finally, with the help of Jenny Stark, we paid tribute to our dear sister, Neola Reese and remembered her amazing service to our Presbytery.

First Presbyterian Church Utica, NY

We walked a mile with the Utica Rescue Mission fundraiser, collected warm clothing a month for the Morrow Warming Center (homeless), collected for our church food pantry, collected toiletry items for the Refugee Center, gave gifts to a selected four families in a local school (coordinated with school officials), gave grants to flood victims who needed help through a Presbyterian Disaster Relief program, prepared a monthly meal for over 100, including Thanksgiving, for Hope House...local drop in center and filled plastic shoe boxes with games, puzzles, to entertain pediatric patients at Wynne Hospital (this will be on going as the patients take their special box home). This was done through our church mission committee (First Presbyterian, Utica)...We do not have a working Presbyterian Women's group, but we have working Presbyterian Women.
Barb Epley-Shuck

PW Purpose

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