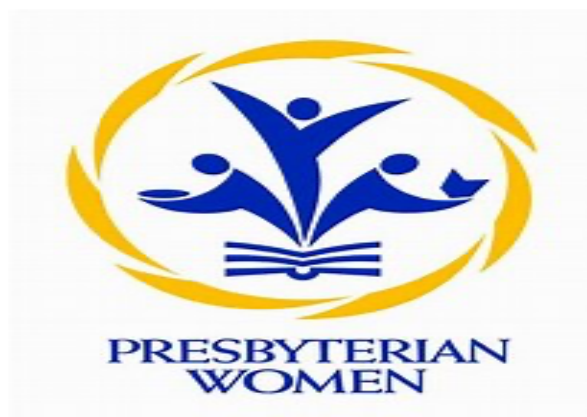


Albany Presbyterian Women's Newsletter

Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. Psalm 143:8

March 2025



Message from the Moderator

Andrea Ralph

As we journey together as Presbyterian Women, I am constantly reminded of the strength and beauty that arise from the unique paths each of us walks. Whether we are engaged in advocacy, fellowship, mission work, or deepening our spiritual lives, every step we take contributes something invaluable to our shared mission. It is through these diverse experiences that our community thrives, as each one of us brings a piece of the larger mosaic of God's purpose. Our individual journeys not only strengthen us personally but also build up the body of Christ as a whole, reminding us that no act of service or devotion is too small when it is offered with love and faith.

In this vibrant PW community, we recognize that the richness of our collective journey comes from our willingness to embrace and honor the varied gifts we each possess. Some of us may be called to advocate for justice, while others may find

their calling in offering fellowship and care. Still others might be moved to serve in mission or to devote time to prayer and spiritual growth. Every one of these callings is important and deeply connected to the others. Through the diversity of our paths, we see God at work in ways that we might not always expect, but are always meaningful.

As we continue to walk together in faith, let us remember that the strength of our community lies in our willingness to share our stories, our gifts, and our hearts. Together, we are not only supporting one another but are actively contributing to the larger Kingdom of God, expanding the reach of His love and grace through our collective actions as women of God to serve.

Presbyterian Women's Purpose

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.**

Presbyterian Women's Page on Presbytery Web site.

We're excited to share that we have a dedicated page on the Albany Presbytery website! For more information and updates,

See <https://albanypresbytery.org/presbyterian-women/>

Stay connected and explore all that's happening in our PW community!

Birthday Offering

The Presbyterian Women's Birthday offering has been a tradition for over one hundred years. In 1922 Hallie Paxson observed the inadequate facilities at Miss Dowd's School for Girls in Kochi, Japan and challenged the women of the church in the United States to give one penny for each year of their lives as a "Birthday Gift" to those girls. Since then, money has been collected annually for mission projects around the world. There are two recipients of the 2025 Birthday Offering that have received \$150,000 each.

The first grant went to the Leland Presbyterian Church in Leland Mississippi for the Windward Volunteer Housing Facility. The money will be used to help build a housing facility to provide temporary accommodations, when needed, for community members and a place to stay for volunteer groups doing disaster recovery.

The second grant went to the Lakota Thiyuha (translated "having a home, creating a new life") Dome Home Project of Red Cloud Renewable, which is a native led grass roots nonprofit organization on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. The money will be used to construct three energy efficient, economical, dome homes while providing training and workforce development to construction apprentices. This will increase the availability of affordable housing for Lakota families where there is a need for 4,000 to 5,000 homes on the reservation.

Rosalie Hemingway

World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women, inviting people of all faiths to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. The common observance of this special day occurs on the first Friday of March.

The theme for World Day of Prayer 2025, *"I Made You Wonderful"* (Psalm 139:14), was inspired by Christian women in the Cook Islands. This powerful theme reminds us that each of us is created with care and love by God. When we embrace this profound truth, it transforms us, allowing us to radiate God's light within.

As women and girls continue to face oppression and silencing, the theme from the Cook Islands is especially timely. The Cook Islands is a majority Christian nation where strong community bonds and cultural values are deeply rooted in faith. The World Day of Prayer 2025 program invites us to support women in expressing their faith and speaking their truths in prayer and worship, both individually and in community.

We look forward to seeing you on March 7!

"I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

**World Day Of Prayer 2025 Friday March 7, 2025
Roessleville Presbyterian church
1 North Elmhurst Ave Albany
2pm-3pm**

Plastics

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) passed an overture in 2024 called "On Becoming Free from Plastic Pollution". The overture encourages Presbyterians to reduce their use of plastics in their homes, churches, workplaces, communities, states, and nation.

As one of the advocates for the overture, I was tasked with speaking on the impact of plastics on human health. It was not my intent to scare anyone, but to educate and increase awareness.

It's what this overture is intended to promote. (See link at the end below to read the full overture)

So, what are these dangers? I am sure you have heard of the dangers that plastic is having on our oceans and sea life. Well, plastic pollution is also in our soil, the air we breathe, in our foods and now it has been found in OUR BODIES! After volunteering to present on human health, I had the opportunity to watch a documentary "We're All Plastic People Now," that just started streaming on PBS on June 21. I highly recommend it.

<https://roryfieldingfilms.com/weareplasticpeople/>

Plastic does not stay intact when thrown away. It breaks down. I was cleaning up around my house and found an old plastic milk container that had been left outside. It had been used to water plants. It literally cracked apart in my hands into small pieces. Plastic pieces break down even further, into microplastics, about the size of a grain of rice, and then to nanoplastics, the size of a virus, seen only through a powerful microscope.

Research points to two main entry routes into the human body: We swallow them and we breathe them in.

Did you know researchers found that, on average, a liter of bottled water included about 240,000 tiny pieces of plastic. About 90% of these plastic fragments were nanoplastics.

Did you know that microplastics are shed from the plastic that surrounds your meat or chicken? Or released by using a knife on a plastic cutting board? The chemical additives to plastics can leach into the very food we eat. Warm temperatures can change an inert chemical in plastic to a more toxic chemical. Think of that hot coffee in a plastic lined paper cup. And what about that water bottle that has been sitting out in the sun? And never, ever, heat up food in a plastic container, as that changes the chemical composition that can leach into your food.

Synthetic materials in your clothing are made of plastic and shed particles on your skin, your washing machine and dryer. They are even in cosmetics.

So where do these microplastics land in your body? They have been detected in the human brain, lung tissue, intestinal tissue, blood, breast milk, heart muscle, the placenta, inside fetuses and newborn babies. Most recently they have been found in the plaque of carotid arteries and in the testicles.

As nanoplastics, they act as endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs), which are linked to infertility, obesity, diabetes, prostate or breast cancer, thyroid problems and an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and stroke. The most vulnerable to these disruptors are the fetuses, infants and young children, as their endocrine systems are busy with development.

These findings of the effects of plastic on health are only beginning. More studies are continuing. But in the meantime? I like the analogy made in the movie I

mentioned earlier. When you see an 18-ton semi heading your way, you don't want to wait until you are under it before you do something about it.

We can't avoid plastics, but we can work on reducing single-use plastic production and our dependence on them. Nearly half of all plastics manufactured today are single use items and packaging. Legislation that calls to reduce the production of these items will go a long way toward relieving health risks. By endorsing education on the very real dangers of plastic, from its inception to its final destination, we will be able to address the issue of plastic pollution to our local, state and national governing bodies. In our state of NY, I have been a lobby advocate with

Beyond Plastics to get the **Plastic Reduction and Recycling infrastructure Act** and the **Bigger Better Bottle Bill** passed. Wow, you should have seen the influx of heavy hitting corporate lobbyists from the fossil fuel, petrochemical industries and companies that use plastic packaging that came flocking to our capitol in Albany to convince our representatives to vote against it, using some outright false narratives.

We, as the church, need to be a part of this process, speaking truth to power and acting to prevent the increased production of plastic that threatens not only our human health, but the health of our planet. I encourage you to 1) read the overture and incorporate the many ways your own church can make a difference and 2) what I believe is the most important thing each and every one of us can do, is call your legislators in NYS to support the two bills mentioned above. For more information on these bills, I recommend going to <https://www.beyondplastics.org/>

Our churches have the capability to be powerful voices for all life on earth. Let us use them. God has called us to be good stewards of this beautiful planet we call home. If it is God's call, of which I firmly believe, then God will be with us every step of the way and will give us the strength to persevere. I end this with the lament for creation, attributed to John Hollow Horn of the Oglala Lakota people:

***“Someday, the earth shall weep,
she will beg for her life,
she will cry with tears of blood.

You will make a choice, if you
will help her or let her die, and
when she dies, you too will die.”***

We all have choices to make. As the Knight Templar says in the Indiana Jones movie, “Choose wisely.”

<https://presbyearthcare.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/OVT-GA-226-On-Becoming-Free-fromPlastic-Pollution-draft-15Jan.pdf>

Elder Nancy Pienta, Chair, Albany Presbytery Peacemaking Task Force, and Moderator, Presbyterian Women, First Presbyterian Church of Valatie Presbyterian

Spring Gathering 2025

Saturday, April 26, 2025

11:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Valatie,
3212 Church Street, Valatie, NY 12184

Special Guest Speaker: Nancy Pienta

We're excited to welcome Elder Nancy Pienta, Chair of the Albany Presbytery Peacemaking Task Force and Moderator of Presbyterian Women at First Presbyterian Church of Valatie. Nancy is deeply passionate about educating others on the importance of reducing plastic use and inspiring Presbyterians to take action in their homes, churches, workplaces, communities, states, and beyond.

Nancy will provide an insightful overview of the plastic pollution crisis, exploring its impacts on climate, health, waste, and environmental justice. She will also share practical steps we can all take to make a meaningful difference. This is an event you won't want to miss—**mark your calendar now!**

To help us plan, please RSVP to Andrea Ralph at ARalph20@hotmail.com or call/text 516-849-3220 by April 19. Carpooling is encouraged!

Please bring a bag lunch—dessert and beverages will be provided.

We're looking forward to seeing you there!

Help Us Choose a New Name for the Newsletter!

The Albany Presbyterian Women's Newsletter is getting a fresh new name, and we'd love your input! If you have a creative or inspiring suggestion, please share it with us. The coordinating team will carefully review all ideas, and a new name will be selected.



Prayer Corner

Prayer is one of the most powerful ways we can connect with God, and it's often through prayer that we support and uplift those around us. When we pray for others, we engage in intercessory prayer, which is simply praying on behalf of someone else. This practice is rooted in love, compassion, and faith, and it allows us to bring the needs and concerns of others before God. When we pray for others, we follow the example set by Jesus Christ.

We Pray for One Another

In Compassion and Love: We are called to love one another, and one way to show this love is through prayer. When we see someone going through difficult times—whether it's illness, grief, or challenges in their personal life—praying for them is a way to care for them deeply. Our prayers may not always fix the situation, but they offer comfort and hope to the one we're praying for.

For Support and Encouragement: Prayer is a means of supporting those who are struggling. By praying for someone, we remind them that they are not alone in their hardships. It also encourages them, knowing that others are lifting them up in prayer.

For Strength and Healing: We can pray for others' physical, emotional, and spiritual healing. Through prayer, we ask God to bring comfort, guidance, and restoration. Prayer can strengthen people in ways words alone cannot, helping them feel peace and reassurance.

In Consistent Prayer: It's important to continue praying for others, especially when their struggles persist. A prayer for someone can be a one-time thing, but we can also keep them in our hearts, praying for them regularly.

Praying Together

Sometimes, it's not just about praying alone. There's great power in praying with others for someone in need. Whether it's a group prayer at church, a prayer chain, simply gathering with friends to pray for someone, or those connecting through this newsletter there is strength in communal prayer. Jesus said, "*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I with them.*" (Matthew 18:20). This reassures us that our prayers are even more powerful when joined with others.

Praying for others is one of the most beautiful ways we can show God's love and bring about change. Whether we pray for healing, guidance, or strength, we are aligning ourselves with God's heart for those in need. As we intercede on behalf of others, we participate in the kingdom work of loving and caring for those around us. It is an act of faith, hope, and compassion—one that brings peace to others and enriches our own hearts.

Let your eyes look straight ahead; fix your gaze directly before you. Give careful thought to the paths for your feet and be steadfast in all your ways.
Proverbs 4:25-26

Editor
Elder Andrea Ralph

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany invite you to
celebrate a

World Day of Prayer Service

“I Made You Wonderful” Psalm 139:14

The service is an adaptation of one written by Christian women in the Cook Islands.



**Friday, March 7
2:00 - 3 pm - Worship Service
Followed by Fellowship Time**

Roessleville Presbyterian Church
1 N Elmhurst Ave, Albany, NY 12205

*A freewill offering will be received for
the Presbyterian Women's Birthday Offering.*

*Make out checks to Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany
and earmark it Birthday Offering.*





SAVE THE DATE

***Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Albany
Spring Gathering***

**Saturday, April 26, 2025 - 11:30 am to 2:30 pm
at**

**First Presbyterian Church of Valatie
3212 Church Street,
Valatie, NY 12184**

***Nancy Pienta, Moderator of Presbyterian Women*
in**

**First Presbyterian Church of Valatie will speak on
Environmental issues.**

- Registration: rsvp to Andrea Ralph at ARalph20@hotmail.com or 516-849-3220 by April 19, if possible so the host church can make appropriate arrangements.
- Registration fee of \$10.00 will be collected at the door.
- Bring a bag lunch. Dessert and beverage are provided.
- A freewill offering will be received.

