



Highlands Highlights

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of the Highlands of New Jersey

August, 2025

RECIPIENT - PLEASE POST THE FLYERS AT THE END OF THIS NEWSLETTER ON BULLETIN BOARDS AND/OR WEB SITES, and INCLUDE IN YOUR OWN NEWSLETTER.
Please also forward to women in your church.

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

Grace and Peace I bring to you in the name of our Lord, Christ Jesus!

With the heat of the Summer increasing in temperature year after year, I am reminded of a few things.

First and foremost, this world is not ours! It belongs to God. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis 1, it is said, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (NIV)

In last year's *Horizons* Magazine Bible study, entitled "Let Justice Roll Down, God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation", by Patricia K. Tull, we are reminded of God's creation and how we are to care for it.

The air we breathe – I recently viewed a commercial on television, the voice of a child reminding us of how 'we' created air fresheners. I won't name them since that would be promoting them. Yes, they smell good, but what are we doing to our lungs, so something can smell nice. Why do we need air fresheners? Chemicals.

In the book "An Air That Kills" by Andrew Schneider and David McCumber, they wrote about how the 9/11 (September 11, 2001) event created so much asbestos in the air that first responders and local residents are still discovering the ill effects of asbestos. How about the individuals who worked in the mines in Libby, Montana to extract the 'tremolite asbestos'. The miners inhaled the asbestos, wore their dirty clothes home for their families to breathe in the toxic air – and generations of their families still suffer the 'death sentence'. The population was only 2,775 at the 2020 census.

Water - we love the shore, to swim in the water, to fish from a boat or a pier. Fish are some of our sustenance, but we spew effluents into the water that kill the plankton, the fish. The nutrients we glean from sea animals, fish, crabs, shrimp, lobster, and yes, seaweed which encases sushi, all are declining in the oceans.

The land – are we overbuilding - we can continue to house our families in what was once called the 'extended unit', generations of families under one roof. Yes, we would need to learn to live with one another, to accept each other, no matter their opinion, their likes or dislikes. Isn't that what Jesus preached, love you neighbor as yourself. Who is your neighbor? The good news is that in New Jersey, 'The Highlands Act', was enacted in 2004 to establish environmental standards and procedures to protect over 800,000 acres that make up New Jersey's Highlands Region, designating approximately 398,000 acres of exceptional natural resource value as the Highlands Preservation Area. This helps our waters in the aquifers to remain healthy.

On the PC(USA) website at pcusa.org/climatechallenge there are resources to help us take both personal steps and outward steps to help us restore God's beautiful world. Copies at the November meeting.

The Presbyterian Hunger Program, during Winter of 2017, issued a flyer, about Climate & Disasters. "Did you know? And What Can we Do?" We'll have some available at the November meeting.

One way that we can care for God's creation is to give everything back. How? Recycle. This past Spring, Presbyterian Women of the Highlands of New Jersey joined with Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of the Coastlands of New Jersey for our Spring Gathering.

About fifty (50) women joined their hearts and minds to hear a presentation by the newly ordained Rev. Lissette Gonzalez Sosa, MDiv, MTE: Sanctuary + Seed at the Kingston Presbyterian Church. Rev. Lissette was ordained to a validated ministry for Sanctuary + Seed, housed in Martinsville, NJ. She delivered a powerful message about God's creation - how creating an indoor compost system gives us the opportunity to replenish our earth. (Google Bokashi Composting for instructions or a kit or e-mail hello@sanctuaryandseed.org) You are not only reducing the amount of waste piling up in the landfills, but also providing nutrients gained from the minerals and vitamins draining out of the bottom of the compost pile, to water your gardens, both floral and vegetable. Nature at its best!

Whether you serve on a Coordinating Team of PW, in your church, Presbytery, the Synod or Churchwide, remember, "Blest Be the Ties That Bind". PW offers ties that last a lifetime, no matter where you go.

Peace be with you, In Christ,

Donna Rahmann donnarahmann@comcast.net Moderator

BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR:

- ❖ The Fall Retreat – Flyer in this newsletter – page 11
- ❖ The Fall Gathering – A "Transformed Meeting" – Flyer in this newsletter – page 12

Both events are an opportunity for us to gather, learn something – come out and meet some new sisters.

JUSTICE AND PEACE

In the book Braving the Thin Places (Celtic Wisdom to Create a Space for Grace) by Julianne Stanz I found a wealth of insights into the spiritual life that brings **peace**. The questions asked in the last chapter are:

- What areas of your life are more cluttered than you like?
- How might you cultivate time for stillness each day?
- Have you ever gone on a retreat? Would you consider going on one?

With some of these themes in mind Presbyterian Woman in the Highlands have opened two opportunities for you to delve into your own spiritual life. First, there will be a one day **Retreat** at the beautiful Shrine of Saint Joseph in Sterling on October 18th. **Rev Linda Gaden** will lead us through being exhausted by all the chaos that has been going on around us. There is hope! You will be gifted a pendant to remind you of this journey toward hope.



There will be a “transformed” **Fall Gathering** (meeting) with just a few moments of business. You will be introduced to Mysticism and Julian of Norwich (mystic) by **Rev Carol Howard**. This will be held at Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center on November 1st, so plan to arrive early and/or stay late to enjoy nature, take a walk, sit by or row on the lake.



Please see and post the flyers, pages 10 & 11 and invite church members and friends to a time of spiritual enrichment and community fellowship.

+++++If you're new to Celtic Spiritually I strongly suggest the book Braving the Thin Places.

+++++If you're looking for a study for your PW to do together use this book.

+++++This year's PW Bible study Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ by Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter has us “finding resilience, joy and identity”. These themes are very close to those PWP will offer this fall. Additional information is on pages p8 & 9. *We hope to have time in the transformed business meeting to **show you** the introductory DVD.*

The Justice/Mission project we're holding up for you to participate in is Church World Services (CWS) “**Period Packs**”. ***“For many women and girls access to essential menstrual supplies is a daily challenge. These packs you can put together provide the basics to help them stay clean, safe and healthy.”*** You can hear more about this at the transformed meeting. No time? Your group can BUY a “Party Pack” and you'll be sent everything you need to assemble them (at a fee). *Shipping and processing fees apply, but if many of you put together packs they can (or I can) be dropped off at a local depot to avoid some of those costs.* Download instructions, and a presentation at <https://cwsglobal.org/?s=period+packs>.

Some quotes from Braving the Thin Places to whet your appetite:

Pg 10 “*When was the last time you felt truly happy and at peace”.*

“*Spirituality refers to how humans experience and nurture their relationship with their creator, God.*”

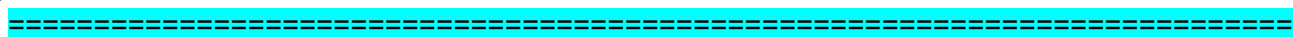
“*Spirituality is a path to wholeness or to put it another way to holiness. Religion is how we worship and express our relationship to God.*”

Pg 145 the author uses a metaphor of bread, “*The most important principle that ties all of these together is the ability to rest. Rest is not simply about the absence of noise or distractions. It is a soul state in which our body is in pause and our mind is at peace. Rest is part if your daily bread. You cannot rise unless you rest.*”

Pg 163-169 *The word aimsir means “weather” in Ireland but is also used in the sense of time and history. With the benefit of Giod’s grace and a bit of time, we heal and we grow. St Kevin of Glendalough suggests we seek out spaces for solitude, similar to the **mystics** and desert hermits, finding a place of solitude or **retreat** for a more intimate encounter with God.*

We don't always get to choose the things that take our breath away or holds us back. What's the THING that holds you back?

Lisa Gray - PWP Peace & Justice Coordinator Lisa_A_Gray@outlook.com



STAYING CONNECTED

If you know of any women who are not getting this e-mail, and would like to, send their name and e-mail to Jane MacDonald jkmac3536@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.

BOOK GROUP

The Book group is still meeting at 5:00pm at the Panera in Succasunna. If you would like to be notified of these gatherings, please e-mail Donna Rahmann at donnarahmann@comcast.net. Next meeting is August 22 – book is “Dark the Night, Wild the Sea”

TREASURER

As we reflect on God’s bounty to us, we know that every day is “gives day” here in the Presbytery of the Highlands of NJ. Every day we celebrate the loving relationships and the life-changing ministries Presbyterian Women enable.

Cultivating Presbyterian Women means putting our hands and hearts to work through our PW Purpose. Whether planting seeds through our ecumenical partnerships, building healthy communities through our Thank and Birthday Offerings, honoring faithful servants with Honorary Life Memberships, or taking time to be in beloved community through study, service and fun, we each choose to “live life in full bloom” by care-tending our bountiful and beautiful PW gardens.

Our gifts to the Mission Pledge especially are for:

- ❖ Award-winning PW/*Horizons* Bible studies and accompanying helps that nurture our faith and build community.
- ❖ Funds raised to support mission through our Thank and Birthday Offerings.
- ❖ Peace and justice issues that PW supports through prayer and advocacy.
- ❖ Building community, especially through PW Gatherings (whether synod or churchwide, in person or online) and our commitment to include all.

Of course everyone can go to the presbyterianwomen.org/give website to make a gift. If you do, there are choices for which ministry is supported, i.e. the Mission Pledge, the Birthday or Thank Offering or one of the Endowments. PW in the Presbytery prefers that gifts be made through us, so that the Presbytery is credited, and bank fees minimized. The remittance form is below, and write-ins are acceptable.

Also, new forms for scholarship applications, Honorary Life Memberships, etc. are available – just drop me an e-mail to treaspwhigh@gmail.com

Jane MacDonald, Treasurer

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN, PRESBYTERY OF THE HIGHLANDS OF NJ REMITTANCE FORM

Local Association Treasurers: Please use this form for making remittances. Your canceled check is your receipt. Please make checks payable to: PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN, HIGHLANDS PRESBYTERY. Thank you.

Name of Sender: _____ Telephone _____

Sender's E-Mail Address: _____

Church / Association: _____ Date _____

Payment of:	Amount
Mission Pledge - Churchwide	
Mission Pledge - Synod	
PW Presbytery Operating Support	
Birthday Offering	
Thank Offering	
Least Coin	
Other - Specify	
Total of Check	

All money is to be sent to the Treasurer:

Jane MacDonald
35 Hillside Ave
Newton, NJ 07860

Reminder: Quarterly payments for mission pledges are due by the 10th of March, June, September and December.

HORIZONS MAGAZINE

What is Horizons Magazine? It is a magazine published by Presbyterian Women, 4 times a year, as well as a special Bible Study once a year. Simply, it is a magazine for and about Presbyterian Women. But it is so much more – to quote a title from the January/February 2025 issue “Connected and Connectional”. The articles in each issue connect each of us with what is happening in the Presbyterian Church, our world and with each other. Editor Sharon Dunne Gillies says “the connections can grow into a strong relationship where we can share our commonalities and our differences”.

Each issue brings us insights as to how the Holy Spirit is working in the larger world and within ourselves. So, consider subscribing to Horizons and find out more about being a Presbyterian Woman, our connectiveness and how we are making a difference in our communities and beyond.

Doris Christians

HORIZONS BIBLE STUDY

For the 2025 *Horizons* Magazine Bible study, Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ, by Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter, a group gathered at Stony Point Center to be nourished by each other as we walked through the lessons. Joy – what is Joy? Resilience – how are you resilient?

For those of you who were unable to attend, here is the Saturday morning prayer:

Saturday Morning Prayer - Horizons Bible Study 2025
RESILIENCE

Relish the opening of your eyes, heart and mind this morning. Awaken refreshed.

Emerge and enjoy the everlasting love of your Savior.

Silently breathe in and out the newness of this day. Spend time with God.

Intentionally inhale the rich, fresh dew which glistens on the grass, like manna from heaven.

Listen to God speaking to you, look toward Him.

Inspire others with His word, His love.

Envelope others with His love emanating from you.

Never doubt the sacrifice on the cross.

Concern thyself not with what others think of you. You are loved just the way you are.

Express daily the wonderful works of creation and the Creator.

Amen.

By Donna Rahmann June 16, 2025

In the Workshop for Leaders, which you can find, for free, on PW's website, the question is asked, "What Can You Expect Participants to Learn?". Identify how resilience helps us bounce back in life and how several biblical characters exhibit resilience. Articulate the difference between Christian joy and feeling happy, and how joy can be a way of responding to and living one's life. (See the Workshop for Leaders for more.)

An interesting fact the retreat participants learned, was that sometimes what is transcribed, isn't actually the truth. Look at the video of research by Elizabeth Shrader, of 'Woman Erased.: Mary Magdalene in the Gospel of John. https://youtu.be/_b3Y3cJ0lc8?si=aCuJWiEt3xJ00dlm

Our former Moderator of PWP of the Highlands of New Jersey, Sherry, who relocated out of state, but joined the Bible Study Retreat at Stony Point said, "It was really wonderful to be with all of you at Stony Point. I came away with such a feeling of grace and gratitude, and a lot of useful information. Thank you to everyone who made it such a meaningful time."

HELP

Invitation, Inspiration

If your PW group is in need of a refresher course, or you are in need of information on inspiring women to participate in PW, know that the members of the Coordinating Team of PWP of the Highlands are available for invitations - to have a general discussion, or a presentation at your location. Contact Moderator, Donna Rahmann at donnarahmann@comcast.net to make arrangements. We would love to visit.

Medical Equipment Ministries

Did you know that there are local churches that house medical equipment? One is Union Hill Presbyterian Church in Denville, NJ. Their website is <https://unionhillchurch.org/medical-equipment-ministry>. I borrow this statement from their site: "Improving the lives of our clients and their families

through the redistribution of used medical equipment at no cost.” Donations are accepted. Go to their site and click on “Donate here or request an item”. You can also reach them via e-mail

office@unionhillchurch.org or call 973-361-9020

Others are: **First Presbyterian Church of Franklin** Website: [Home Health Equipment Ministry](#) or call 973-827-6444 and **Pluckemin Presbyterian Church** Website: [Medical Equipment Ministry](#) or call 908-396-6057.



Looking for a new path to serve the Lord and connect with other women?

We encourage you to consider joining Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of the Highlands. This is an opportunity to share your ideas or pick up new ones and

- to meet friends you haven't yet met
- to learn with and from each other
- to advance our work and mission of nurturing faith, supporting mission, and working for justice and peace.

It takes many talents and skills to make a team. See what a difference you can make in one year! What would you like contribute? Do you have a program idea you would like to bring to other women? A craft to share? A book, Bible or video study that has touched you. Do you play music? Enjoy knitting or crocheting? We could start a Knitting for Peace group. Do you enjoy keeping detailed records? Planning activities?

Need a preview of PW? There are four opportunities to “taste and see.” Flyers and information in this newsletter:

- The book group that meets once a month in Succasunna – next meeting Aug 22 at 5pm
- The study group that meets once a week via Zoom – picking up on September 11th with the last three chapters of Tending the Wild Garden, by Eugenia Gamble. After that it's Appreciate these Things by Jill J. Duffield. E-mail Lisa_A_Gray@outlook.com for the zoom login (It's underscores in Lisa's e-mail)
- The Fall Retreat on October 18th – at the Shrine of St. Joseph in Sterling
- The Fall Gathering on November 1st – at Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center

We would love to have you join us: come on out, or e-mail Doris Sabin at dorissabin@gmail.com or Donna Rahmann at donnarahmann@comcast.net for more information.

From Tending the Wild Garden

Tending the shoots of faithfulness – ripening the fruit of faithfulness means that we can leap with assurance into the arms of God, trusting that we will always be caught. We will be!

Tending the shoots of gentleness – ripening the fruit of gentleness gives us the capacity to mirror God's goodness, compassion and steadfast love.

Tending the shoots of self-control – think of Jesus, waiting for the right time to begin his ministry.

2025–2026 PW/Horizons Bible Study

Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ

By Rhashell D. Hunter

Suggestions for Leaders by Joyce MacKichan Walker

*I*n this Bible study, we will explore resilience. This is modeled for us by several biblical characters, gospel and epistle writers, as well as Jesus. So, what exactly is resilience?

Resilience is the ability to spring back into shape and to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or stress—such as from family, relationships, health, workplace, and financial stressors. People who survive and thrive well in change are resilient.

The Bible study is also about joy. How do we find joy in a chaotic world? Christian joy may be different from how a lot of people define joy.

Joy is sometimes confused with happiness. For Christians, joy can occur while we are in the midst of difficult circumstances. Joy is the second fruit of the spirit, preceded by love and followed by peace. [Gal. 5:22–23] Trusting in God when we are in trying times can fill us with glorious joy and peace. We have joy in our suffering, because ultimately our joy is found in Jesus Christ.

We will also seek to rediscover our identity.

Identity is more than who we are or who we show ourselves to be. At its core, it points to our humanity. Our core identity is not found in our titles, our positions, our spouses, our partners, or our possessions. For Christians, our identity is found in Jesus Christ.

[From the Introduction to *Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*]

Learn more about this
Bible study by visiting
presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/resilience





About the Authors of the Bible Study

The Rev. Dr. Rhashell D. Hunter served as the director of Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries for the Presbyterian Mission Agency for fourteen years. In 2022 she began teaching at Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Rhashell has written Celebrate the Gifts of Women resources for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and you may recognize her voice on some audio editions of PW/Horizons Bible studies.

Rev. Joyce MacKichen Walker served Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, New Jersey, as Director of Christian Education. Following her ordination to the ministry of Word and Sacrament in 2007, Joyce served Nassau as minister of education and mission until her retirement in July 2018. Joyce is a certified Christian educator.

We'll show an introduction to the Bible Study at the gathering on November 1st at Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center.

About our Retreat Leader Rev. Linda Gaden

Linda Gaden is a native of New Jersey. She graduated with an MDiv from the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in May 2019. She was ordained August 22, 2020 and began her ministry at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church on September 1, 2020.

Linda currently resides in Pittstown, NJ and in Morristown, NJ. She has been married to Frank for 39 years. Together they have enjoyed raising 2 sons, Erik and Steven. Linda loves spoiling her granddaughter who is a living miracle to the entire family. Linda enjoys soccer and, along with her family, is a New York Red Bulls fan. She also enjoys reading and travel; especially trips to the Outer Banks. Linda and her husband were members of the Morristown Presbyterian Church for 35 years. She has actively served her church and the Presbytery of Newton in a variety of ways.

Linda was a nurse for 25+ years. She worked in Oncology, Medical-Surgical, and infectious disease units and has cared for those suffering with HIV/AIDS. Early in her nursing career, she helped establish a support group for children of cancer patients. In June of 2008, Linda became a commissioned lay pastor through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. She was commissioned as sole (lay) pastor to the Mount Freedom Presbyterian Church (2008-2010). She worked as a chaplain at Broadway House for Continuing Care in Newark, NJ which provided care for those who are HIV positive (2010-2016). She was called to a second CLP position at Rockport Presbyterian Church (2013- 2017). Here she again served as solo pastor. Between August 2017 and April 2019, Linda served as a Covenant Student Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater.

About our "Transformed" Meeting Speaker

Rev. Carol Howard is the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Madison, NJ, and a frequent conference leader. She is the author of several books, including "Wounded Pastors" (Westminster John Knox), which she co-authored with James Fenimore, and "Healing Spiritual Wounds" (HarperOne). She was a columnist for the Christian Century. Her work has been featured in newspapers, magazines, and journals, including the *Washington Post*, the *New York Times*, and *Newsweek*. She has worked with the denomination, leading GA Task Forces on the Nature of the Church in the 21st Century and working with Survivors of Clergy Sexual Misconduct. Carol lives in Madison, where she enjoys oil painting, walking her dog, and visits from her daughter.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
FALL RETREAT
OCTOBER 18, 2025 9am-4pm
SHRINE OF ST JOSEPH
1050 Long Hill Road
Stirling, NJ

Manifold Witness: Hope for the Exhausted
Led by Rev. Linda Gaden

Are you kidding me?? One more thing? Many of us are feeling and asking these questions in recent times. This retreat is designed to offer hope for those of us who are exhausted. Scripture reveals an inexhaustible God, but that does not propel or compel us to run on empty. Come and join others we explore and share, pray and learn new practices to renew our spirits. Come for a framework that offers hope beyond burnout, compassion fatigue, and exhaustion.



Coffee, lunch provided

Please RSVP to Jane MacDonald @ jkmac3536@gmail.com or 973-383-4166 by
October 1

Cost: \$50 – Send a (non-refundable) check–payable PW in the Presbytery of the Highlands to:

Jane MacDonald

35 Hillside Ave, Newton NJ 07860

Scholarships are available upon request – send to jkmac3536@gmail.com for form

PEERING THROUGH THROUGH THE MYST



An Encounter with a Mystic, and Mysticism

Led by Rev. Carol Howard

Saturday, November 1st – 9am–3pm
Johnsonburg Camp and Retreat Center
822 County Road 519, Johnsonburg, NJ

The encounter is the centerpiece of the transformed Fall Gathering of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of the Highlands.

There will be a very short business meeting over lunch, an introduction to the Bible study, and more about the “period packs” that Church World Service is promoting.

A free-will offering will be taken to cover the cost of the lunch and the leader.

Please RSVP to Jane MacDonald @ jkmac3536@gmail.com or 973-383-4166 by **October 24** so we can let Johnsonburg know how many there will be for lunch.