

PW Synod of the Covenant Newsletter Winter 2012

Nurture Faith, Support Mission, Work for Justice and Peace and Build Community

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From the Moderator, Judy Oeder

While going through some old papers (it is something I do in January), I came across a sheet from an alternative worship service that I attended almost a year ago. On this sheet of paper was the question, "How do you think 'non-church' people view the church?"

At a time when church membership is declining, this is a very good question to keep asking ourselves; not just about non-church people also about church people. In a recent sermon, the Pastor made the comment that even though we live in a society that values individuality, the Bible doesn't. The Bible talks mainly about living in community (a community of faith).

I have been trying to put these two thoughts together. And as usual, I come up with more questions. The big question for me is, "How do people (both men and women) view PW?" Are we projecting a positive, faithful, Christian image? I have had men tell me that as soon as I mention PW, they tune me out. PW is a women's organization and is not relevant to them. I must say that I disagree!

The programs that PW presents are for everyone. Yes, we are primarily a women's organization, so how do we become important to those (both men and women) who are tuning us out?

As Christians, we are bonded together in a community of faith. We are supposed to be helping each other to learn and grow in that faith. We are supposed to be supporting each other. How do we reach out to those who do not understand who we are and what we are about?

Well, yes, I have thrown all those questions that keep popping up in my head out there. I am the first to

admit that I do not have all (or even any good answers). I do know, however that PW is a wonderful community of women that relies on faith to guide us in the directions that we go.

I have known and learned from many wonderful Presbyterian Women in my life and they have all been wonderful, caring, faithful women. I am not discouraged because if we keep doing what the Holy Spirit leads us to do, we will be who we are supposed to be. How do others view us? Hopefully, they will see the work we do, the love we share and the Christ that is in each of us.

Peace,
Judy

From the Vice Moderator for Studies and Spiritual Development, Sarah Juntune

"Law vs. Attitude": The Global Exchange to Northern India, as presented in the January/February issue of *Horizons*

Our sisters who participated in the 2011 Global Exchange to Northern India have returned and begun their 2-year period of sharing their stories with all of us. The newest issue of *Horizons* is a goldmine of articles and pictures about this amazing experience. Each of us who stayed home and prayed for the group can benefit so much from everything in these pages.

Synod of the Covenant's representative, Charlotte Fisher, has an article about the John Rogers Theological Seminary, where women may attend but may not be ordained to any role. Synod of the Covenant can also claim Chris Wolf, PW vice-moderator for justice and peace, as one of our own. Her reflection on

Continued on page 2

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Connecting can be found in an extended version at www.presbyterianwomen.org. Also, Amy Starr Redwine, who led an inspiring study on the Beatitudes at last summer's gathering, has a wonderful article (including specific tips) on "Cultivating a Hunger for Justice" in our children, a hunger that each participant of every Global Exchange comes to know well.

Each of the other PC(USA) synods had a GX representative also, and their articles cover topics such as: "The Complexities of Christianity in India" (and its presence alongside Hinduism and Islam), "Presbyterian Mission in India," "Status of Women and Girls in India" (and the forces that marginalize women), "Church Outreach to Women and Children of India" (faith-based efforts to educate and support women), "Christian Women's Groups Working in India," "A Christian Response to Impoverished Women's Empowerment" (the caste system's impact, and how ordinary people are helping others overcome oppression), "The Trafficking of Women and Children" (a very serious problem involving millions of women and children), and finally "Environmental Justice for India's Women and Girls" (the acute impact of environmental issues on women and girls).



As I was reading my copy, the following quote really jumped out at me (emphasis added): "India's constitution includes many laws aimed at eliminating discrimination and abuse of women. . . . Yet, traditionally poor attitudes toward women seem stronger than the legislation." (p. 5) This is indeed the

heart-breaking part, yet progress is being made, and more and more people are working to break down the obstacles, so there is Hope, even a River of Hope.

So come to the Churchwide Gathering this summer and meet some of the Indian women our PW sisters met. Then we can all travel side-by-side along that "River of Hope," even as we face other situations where laws and attitudes conflict or even work against justice for all. See you in Orlando! Sarah

Justice and Peace News

Join Presbyterian Women
at Ecumenical Advocacy Days
Washington, D.C. March 23-26, 2012
Presbyterian Women Scholarships
Available!

Interested in learning more about advocacy for domestic and international issues in federal and local government? Looking for hands-on training in advocacy skills? Want to work for a just and Godly economy? Ecumenical Advocacy Days (EAD) may be the experience for you!

At the 10th annual EAD, March 23-26, 2012, in Washington, DC, we will explore economy, livelihood and our national priorities through the lens of Isaiah 58. Join other Christians in seeking a global economy and a national budget that break the yokes of injustice, poverty, hunger and unemployment throughout the world — heeding Isaiah's call to become "repairers of the breach and restorers of streets to live in."

We will worship, dialogue and be inspired and equipped to speak boldly as people of faith. Rousing preachers, stimulating theologians and

Continued on page 3

internationally known policy experts will offer a faith-based vision for a just economy and a healthy livelihood, along with training on key policy issues and grassroots advocacy —culminating with lobby visits on Capitol Hill. In addition, area specific workshops will be offered on Africa, Asia-Pacific, Latin America, Middle East, Domestic U.S., Eco-Justice, Global Economic Justice and Peace & Global Security.

You can learn more about EAD and register online at www.advocacydays.org.

This year, Presbyterian Women is sponsoring 8 scholarships of \$180 each (the cost of earlybird registration). For a scholarship application, please email Lois Bingham at ljbingham@gmail.com. Scholarship applications must be received via email by **January 30, 2012** to be considered. Preference will be given to first-time attenders and with hopes to build age, racial/ethnic, geographic, and experiential diversity.

If you are already planning to attend EAD this year, please let us know. Send a note telling Lois you'll be there. We're working on finding a time for Presbyterian Women to connect over the weekend. Also plan to attend the Compassion Peace and Justice training day with the Office of Public Witness on Friday, March 23. Check <http://www.pcusa.org/events/18750/compassion-peace-and-justice-training-day/> for registration information!

Hope to advocate with you in DC this spring — and if you aren't able to attend in person, stay tuned for updates on actions you can take in your part of the country!

For more information, contact Meagan Manas, Justice and Peace program specialist, Presbyterian Women, meagan.manas@pcusa.org, 212/870-2738



IMPORTANT!!

Looking for Synod CT minutes from before June of 2009

Have you been meaning to clean out that pile of papers from past Synod CT meetings? Why not do so now. Your Synod CT secretary is trying to preserve Synod CT minutes. The files do not have any minutes before June of 2009. It is helpful to have past minutes to understand past actions and the history of the organization. If you have any of these minutes, please send them to me, Florence Morrison, 14068 Bayview Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49686. I will place them in the secretary's notebook so we have a record of actions taken by the Synod CT. Thank you for your help. *Florence*

FlorenceMorrison@aol.com

PW SYNOD OF THE COVENANT LUNCHEON AT THE CHURCH WIDE GATHERING

Saturday July 21, 2012

11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Place: To be Announced – see booklet when at Churchwide

Menu: contact Moderator Judy Oeder

Cost: \$15 per person
(actual cost is \$28 – PWSOC is paying \$13 per person)

To reserve your place at the Luncheon send :

- 1-Your name and e-mail address
(if e-mail is not available your mailing address)
- 2-your check for \$15 payable to PWSOC (Presbyterian Women of the Synod of the Covenant) to:

Sara Gresh, PWSOC Treasurer
31729 Commodore Court
Avon Lake OH 44012

A confirmation e-mail (or card if no e-mail) will be sent to you upon receipt of payment as your confirmation.

Reservations must be received by May 16, 2012 so we can provide the facility the luncheon count so that there will be enough lunches and table settings.

From the Synod Representative to the Churchwide Coordinating Team of Presbyterian Women, Carol Winkler

Two opportunities for Presbyterian Women have immediate deadlines so act quickly!

First, at this time of year, the offices at 100 Witherspoon are quiet as Presbyterians across the country prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior. However, some work must go on. One of the tasks to be completed before 2011 draws to a close is finalizing and distributing the nomination form for 2012's Women of Faith Awards.

Alex Sherman from Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries/PW writes, "I am happy to announce that the nomination form for the Women of Faith awards is available for download on the web <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/2012-women-faith-nomination-form>. The form will also be available shortly on the AllWomen website www.pcusa.org/women. "

Make a nomination for the 2012 Women of Faith Award! The Women of Faith Awards honors women who have courageously transformed and strengthened the church in its witness and ministry in a time of great transition. The 2012 Women of Faith Awards theme is, "Courageous Women Transforming Communities of Faith, Hope, Love & Witness." **Deadline to submit nominations is January 23, 2012.** Download nomination forms at <http://www.pcusa.org/resource/2012-women-faith-nomination-form/>

Second, the World Council of Churches sends the following invitation: Words Matter rests on the conviction that the words we choose to use really do matter. An initiative of the Justice for Women Working Group of the National Council of Churches, USA, Words Matter is not just about inclusive gender language or women's issues, but stretches to address all boundaries where "us" meets "them." Words Matter values relationship and storytelling, expansive rather than restricted language, cultural attentiveness, and an understanding of how words are tied to systems of power.

This Lent, Words Matter is exploring the words we use when we pray. We are accepting submissions of prayers using expansive language to be posted on our website (www.WordsMatter.org) during Lent 2012. Would you consider writing one?

Guidelines for submissions:

- Write using any style or format you wish—or none. Prayers from any and all traditions are welcome, including those where prayers are not usually written down. We hope that through exposing ourselves to a wide variety of expansive language prayers, we will learn new language, images, and forms in deep ways that we can draw on in any context.
- Prayers do not have to use words—submissions of artwork and photography are also welcome with the acknowledgement that there are many ways in which we communicate.
- Use expansive language. We are looking for more than "inclusive language" here—which in many cases serves only to neutralize and obscure. Instead, we are looking for more, new, forgotten, and different specific images, words, and metaphors for God and people.
- Expansive prayers also address expansive topics. What topics do you not see addressed in the prayers you hear in church? Is there something you want to pray for but can't find the words?
- Prayers may or may not be based on the Lectionary readings for Lent. Please note if your prayer is linked to one of these texts.
- Prayers can be submitted anonymously, with your name, with a short bio (100 words or less!).
- Prayers must be accompanied with a brief statement about the writing —what about this prayer is expansive, transformative or liberative to you?
- Your submission indicates that you consent to the standard National Council of Churches media release: *I grant NCC and its affiliates the nonexclusive, perpetual, worldwide right to reproduce, publish, and otherwise use the written and visual submissions in any and all media and formats, including but not limited to books, newsletters, and other publications. They may be archived for broadcast at any time, for an unlimited number of broadcasts. No compensation will be due me for any use of the Images and/or Remarks. I waive any interest and rights, including copyright, that I may have in my Remarks or in any Images, and I release NCC from liability from any infringement of any personal or property right that I may have in the Images and/or Remarks.*
- **Prayers must be submitted by email to mmanas@nccusa.org no later than February 10, 2012.**

News from Presbyterian Women in the Presbyteries

Cincinnati Presbytery, Laura Hovland, Moderator

Our winter Gathering was held on Tuesday, December 6, 2011, at the Kennedy Heights Church in Cincinnati. It was a day meeting with luncheon following. Our program was presented by Rev. Rhoda Brumfeld, pastor of the Richwood, KY, church. Rhoda dramatized the Christmas story as she recited the various scripture sources from memory. It was a moving experience for all of us. The Rev. Christine White of Christ church in Milford, OH, presided at our Communion service. Communion was served in the pews by past PWP moderators: VJ Schuster, Ann Wood, Janice Wieland, and Jan Dixon. The Together in Service project for the day was a collection of gift cards for GLAD House, a local agency that provides services to children whose parents are in drug rehab programs. The cards are used as gifts to the young people for Christmas and also as rewards for achieving various milestones. 61 persons were in attendance, representing 17 churches.

Our next Gathering will be Saturday, April 21, 2012, at the Carmel church in Cincinnati. We are looking forward to our program and speaker, Charlotte Fischer, the Synod of the Covenant Representative to the PW Global Exchange to India last October. Our Together in Service project will be paper products and personal care items for the local women's shelter. We are also promoting the new PW Churchwide Together in Service project: Little Dresses for Africa. These simple sun dresses are absolutely darling, and very easy and fun to make. There is a web site: www.littledressesforafrica.org where you can learn about the program and get sewing directions. The new Together in Service manual (available summer 2012) will also have directions.

Detroit Presbytery, Janet Morton, Moderator

(This is Janet's third quarter report) This is my first year as Moderator of PWP. I was installed at the May Gathering of 2011. We had a leaders retreat in May with the outgoing and incoming officers and committee members. That is where we set the theme and programs for the year 2011-2012. Our year consists of 6 gatherings, a retreat, and cluster meetings.

September, 2011 was our cluster meeting month. We have 5 clusters that are supported by PW Partners. The Partners planned cluster gatherings for their area. One of the clusters had a program on domestic violence, a couple of clusters joined together for a program "Women of the Bible" where a group of women from a Methodist Church in Roscommon came and performed. The other two clusters had a program on "Eat, Pray, and Attend Church."

October is our month of mission program. We had our first PWP gathering for the season with a missionary from Lithuania who spoke on her work as a teacher on "Introduction to Bible" at an International University in Lithuania.

October is also the month that we do the Mission Ingathering. This is where the PW groups in the churches gather, make and/or purchase items to bring to the Ingathering which is a three day event. We had about 57 volunteers from 21 different churches help sort, pack and deliver to thirty three local agencies and worldwide mission opportunities. The estimated value of goods collected was \$46,000.00. PWP is the only presbytery that does the Mission Ingathering.

At the November 2nd gathering we will have speakers on Foster Care and also on a Maternal Infant health program. We will gather again on December 7th for "A Special Christmas Program."

The Justice and Peace committee continues to work on regulating the sale of ammunition by licensed dealers and on domestic violence.

Detroit PW, continued

The Study and Spiritual Development Vice Moderator has once again offered the "Reader's Challenge", where we are to read at least one faith based book before June 2012 and prepare a review to be read at the dinner hosted by one of the readers.

Second Mile Center continues the after school program with 94 children registered with an average daily attendance of 43 children. They also provide a Monday night community meal that is open and free to everyone, with an average of 64 people eating at each meal. The summer free lunch program had 114 children registered, with an average attendance of 50 children. Lunches were provided, Monday-Friday, for the nine weeks with over 2,084 meals served. Activities included: Sports challenge, water games, vacation bible school, health fair, scrap booking, 3D card and envelope, canvas painting, wood burning and crafting, jewelry classes, stepping, drama, and prayer beads. The state inspectors came in during this time, not once but twice during the nine weeks. The inspectors gave Second Mile an A+ on both inspections. The inspectors told Second Mile that their mission center is a model for the other mission centers in Detroit because they have planned activities along with the lunch program. SMC is preparing for the Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets they give out to the families by asking our women for assistance once again.

The Women in the Presbytery of Detroit keep busy with mission and are preparing for the Advent season. We welcome all women to come to our gatherings. Good things happen when Presbyterian Women gather!

Detroit Presbytery, Motoko Huthwaite, Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace

In trying to expand our committee, we issued an invitation in our last PW newsletter, the Prism, to any PW with a passion for peace with justice, for diplomacy not war, for nonviolence confronting injustice and wrong without fear or hate, to come and join us.

In the meantime, our committee continues to work for the regulation of ammunition sales so that they are available only at licensed dealers and not at gunshows or superstores. An email was sent to Representative Gabrielle Giffords regarding our proposed bill in the hopes that with a sponsor who was shot with a bullet bought at a Walmart Superstore, the response would be favorable and immediate. Our emphasis is to see that ammunition sales are restricted. We are not infringing on the right of Americans to keep and bear arms according to the Bill of Rights.

One hundred survey forms were distributed at the December gathering to determine what socio-economic issues our PWP should focus on this coming year. Topics range from Domestic Violence to Racism, Nuclear Proliferation to Wars, Hunger and Homelessness to Universal Health Care. The collected forms will be tabulated and the results announced at the February gathering.

In the October 23rd edition of the Detroit Free Press, there was an article by a Harvard psychologist, Dr. Steven Pinker, who stated that statistics showed a significant reduction in family violence, rape, deaths from war, with the heartening conclusion that we were now "smarter" and thus able to turn "swords into plowshares." So may it be.

Eastminster Presbytery, Carmen Ferris, Moderator

Our Coordinating Team plans to meet January 31st at the Presbytery office. We plan to work on plans for the Spring Gathering and encourage everyone to work on getting to Florida next summer for the Churchwide Gathering.

Muskingum Valley Presbytery, Barb Amon, Moderator

The Coordinating Team is planning an April 18th gathering and details will be forthcoming.

Continued on page 7

Scioto Valley Presbytery, Judy Oeder, Moderator

We are really excited about our upcoming Gathering on February 25, 2012 at Broad Street Presbyterian Church in Columbus, Ohio. The topic of the day will be "Immigration" and the keynote speaker will be Julia Thorne, Manager for Immigration Issues and Immigration Council in the Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA). This is a much debated topic and this Gathering will give us information about the issue and about what our denomination is doing about it.

Registration for the day starts at 9:30 AM with the program starting at 10 AM. The Gathering will conclude at 2:30 PM. There is a registration fee of \$9 including lunch. Women from other presbyteries are welcome and if you would like to make a reservation, please contact the Registrar, Charlene Aeh at cba2300@hotmail.com

We are also excited to have Bethany Presbyterian Women hosting Margaret Aymer on March 17th. Dr. Aymer is the author of the Horizons Beatitudes Bible study. For more information on this wonderful opportunity please contact Bethany Presbyterian Church at bethanypresby206@att.net.

Sign up for *Justice and Peace Links* – Great way to stay informed about justice and peace issues. Includes Bible study and action ideas. Contact Meagan Manas, meagan.manas@pcusa.org to join the list!

PW has a quarterly mailing full of information for PW in your presbytery and congregation. The Quarterly Mailing Schedule: 10/20 1/15 4/14 7/15 Contact: Patricia.longfellow@pcusa.org to get in the database to receive this **VALUABLE** online update.

Churchwide Gathering Scholarships Available!

Churchwide Coordinating Team Treasurer, Joyce Smith, let us know that while the early deadline for scholarships to the CWG has passed, the next deadline is March 30, 2012. Gathering scholarships are available to cover the \$440 cost of early registration. First-time attendees are encouraged to apply! Forms are available online, http://www.pcusa.org/media/uploads/pwgathering/pdf/2012cwg_scholarship.pdf

Church Women United News, Ann Wood, Ohio CWU Representative to the Synod PW Coordinating Team



Although I was unable to attend the National 70th Anniversary Celebration Meeting held in Atlantic City December 1-3, I have heard from friends that it was an inspiring, memorable event. Atlantic City is where Church Women United was founded at the beginning of WWII. Among those early founders was Mrs. Norman Vincent Peale. Our president, Marguerite Carter, presided over the general meetings last December, and there were many workshops dealing with a variety of topics that affect women and children.

Upcoming meetings of interest include the following:

- World Day of Prayer, Friday, March 2 at locations throughout the state. Church Women United still sponsors many WDP services, including those in Cincinnati. The focus this year will be on the people of Malaysia. Check your local newspapers for the times and locations.
- State Assembly-Leaders' Council, Friday and Saturday, April 27-28 in Columbus
- May Fellowship Day, Friday, May 4 at various locations throughout Ohio

Church Women United members support many local and global mission projects. They collect Least Coin offerings on May Friendship Day. They include Protestant, Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and other Christian groups.

For the location of the CWU unit nearest you, contact Edith Woodard, President Ohio CWU, 705 Westerly Dr., Lima OH 45805 419-991-0601

For a subscription to the Ohio Lamplighter (\$4.00 per year Jan.-Jan. for 4 issues) send a check to Edna Vaughn, P.O. Box 9632, Columbus, OH 43209, PH: 614-237-8321

Ann

A Word about Horizons: The Magazine for Presbyterian Women, Susan Imel

(Reprinted from Scioto Valley PW Newsletter)

It's a good mail day when the latest issue of Horizons magazine arrives in my mailbox. I am always eager to peruse the issue, admiring the art work, scanning the articles, and then digging into some of my favorite sections. It never ceases to amaze me how the theme of each issue is carried out in ways that I would never have anticipated. "The Grace of Aging" is the theme of the November/December 2011 issue and the articles varied from personal experiences with aging to discussions of global actions on aging. Many of the articles included recommendations for further reading.

I also find that I stockpile issues for later reference. For example, the theme of the September/October 2008 issue was immigration and when I dug out my copy, I found an article by Julia Thorne, who will be the keynote speaker at the PW/PSV Gathering on February 25, 2012. (See lead article for details). I plan to review this issue before the Gathering so I will have more background on some of the issues related to immigration and how as a Presbyterian Woman I can get involved.

If you don't already receive Horizons, consider subscribing. Try it out for a year and receive six issues plus a copy of the annual Bible study. Subscription information is available at <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/pw/subscribe-horizons/> Subscriptions must be received by April 1 to receive the Bible study, which is mailed in April. *Susan*

From Charlotte Fischer, PWSoc representative to the Global Exchange

To all women who supported the PW Global Exchange program financially, with prayer, and by crocheting necklaces, and to any who are interested in PW Mission endeavors:

I think the picture (left) expresses the delight those necklaces brought to women in India. We gave them away wherever we visited - schools, meetings, vocational training centers, hospitals, evening programs and performances. We gave them to the girls, and walking out of the event, we saw them adorning the boys too, so we began giving them to the boys too ... (right)



I've put together a slide show and talk - that took about 45 minutes at a potluck dinner for my congregation. They were my guinea pigs! I must have taken a thousand pictures, and have managed to choose 125 of them that tell a story of Christianity in India and a visit by 27 women from around the USA, sponsored by an organization that has been integral to Christian mission around the world for almost 200 years - that's PW! Please let everyone know that I am available to talk about this amazing experience, and about what Christ is doing in India. My contact info is: Charlotte Fischer, 1291 Suffield Ave., Birmingham, MI 48009, [248-646-8078](tel:248-646-8078), charlotte.fischer@wowway.com (or cfischer50@gmail.com)

Thanks so much for your prayers and support! Hope, Love, Joy, and Peace, *Charlotte*