

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN IN THE SYNOD OF THE COVENANT

Nurture faith, support mission, work for justice & peace, & build community



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...Message from our Moderator, Patsy Gaines

Have you heard the latest news???

Dear PW Sisters,

Summer is almost over and it is time to be thinking about Fall Gatherings and a new year of activities and up-dated material for Presbyterian Women.

I wish to share some information with you and hope that you present it to your PWP and local PWs.

The Presbyterian Women Palm Project

This is a new mission program to develop palm plantations in Congo. Once the world's largest producer of palm oil, the destruction of agricultural capabilities in Congo has forced the country to import the cooking oil from Malaysia for its domestic use. This change in the market has opened up an opportunity for our Presbyterian partners to develop income-generating projects that do not require huge financial investments, but can have great returns.

With funding from this project, women's groups and hospitals of the Presbyterian Community of Congo will be able to plant new varieties of palms. These new plants grow low to the ground, allowing women to participate in the planting, maintenance and harvest of the crop. PW have made a 3 year commitment to this project.

There is a Palm Project brochure available for more details and promotional ideas. Questions: Contact Cheri Harper at charper@ctr.pcusa.org or 888-728-7228 ext. 5402.

Churchwide Gathering of PW in 2009

July 11-15, 2009 Louisville, KY

The Business Meeting will be held during the Gathering, not prior to it as it was in 2006.

The National Association of Presbyterian Clergywomen (NAPC) will participate in the Gathering, holding a separate business meeting, but joining PW for plenary sessions, workshops and programming.

Materials Available

Thank Offering

Materials for 2007 are available for order by calling PDS at 800-524-2612 or by using the order form available from Moderators.

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Moderator's message continued from page 1...

Revised PW Budget Brochure

The newly revised PW Budget brochure (free: PWR-07-100) provides a succinct overview of Celebration Giving and where this money goes. A brief resource list is included.)

Revised PW Manual

The newly 2007 edition of the revised PW Manual (\$6.00, PWR-07-101) includes the fundamentals; structure and relationships, sample bylaws, sample budgets and more....as well as a new guide for treasurers and tips for leaders.

Above and Beyond – Horizon Bible Study Resources

Large-PRINT version with Suggestions for Leaders HZN-07-150, \$10.00
Audio CD HZN-07-172 \$15.00/set

RACIAL ETHNIC YOUNG WOMEN TOGETHER (REYWTO RETREAT)

“Loving Ourselves: Discovering our Identity and Exploring Our Places”

October 4-7, 2007, Shaker Village, Lexington, Kentucky

This retreat will allow you to spend time and space in personal and spiritual reflection, discernment of your gifts and much more.

Check website for more information. www.pcusa.org/reywt

REYWT LOOKING FOR CORE TEAM MEMBERS

REYWT has two openings for the Core Team designated for young women between the ages of 18 and 35. One opening is for a Middle Eastern sister and one is for a Native American sister.

The Core Team is REYWT's 12-members decision-making body. Core members are selected in the spring and serve a 3 year term. The group meets each spring and fall in order to plan and guide the direction of the mission and ministry of REYWT.

The group must include two Asian American women, two African American women, two Hispanic/Latina women, two Native American women and two Middle Eastern American women. One member must also come from another denomination.

Apply at www.pcusa.org/reywt or email reywt@pcusa.org or call Bridgett A. Green at 888-728-7228, ext. 5476.

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Moderator's message continued from page 2...

Story Stole or Parament for PW

Looking for a creative way to engage the stories of Jonah and Ruth? Invest in a story stole or parament for PW in your congregation, presbytery or synod. InStitches: Center for Liturgical Art has created two new story stoles and a banner, based on the 2007-2008 Horizons Bible Study, Above and Beyond: Hearing God's Call in Jonah and Ruth. These colorful, multi-textured pieces of fabric art are handcrafted, with appliquéd and embroidered images to prompt the imagination.

Jonah Stole: Call and Response, \$185

Ruth Stole: Above and Beyond, \$165

Jonah and Ruth Banner, \$196

Order from InStitches: Center for Liturgical Art
17092 Sunset Dr.
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023
205-727-0092 (fax)
www.institchescenter.com

Does your PW in the Presbytery have a Celebration Giving Representative?

Basic Function

Interpret the giving opportunities of PW.

Responsibilities

- Identify Celebration Giving Representative/contact person at the congregational level
- Provide programming and workshops at the congregation and presbytery level
- Work with PWP moderator to distribute mission pledge and offering materials
- Provide resources and follow up with PWC about receiving materials and actions taken
- Provide feedback to the Funds Development group on CCT through the Synod Coordinator who will make an annual report.

Skills

Leadership, Communication, Organizational, Familiar with PW and PW funding streams

Relationships

Synod Coordinator of PWP Celebration Giving Representatives
PW National Treasurer

For more information visit www.pcusa.org/pwsgiving or contact Ann Ferguson 888-728-7228 ext 5365 or aferguson@ctr.pcusa.org

I know this is a lot of information but please read it and discern what pieces are needed in your PWP or congregation.

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Moderator's message continued from page 3...

PW Mission Pledge - Blessings Without Boundaries

In August, PW moderators in the synods, presbyteries and congregations and Celebration Giving representatives will receive a mailing that will help them inform women in their congregations about the PW Mission Pledge. The materials will help explain the ways in which the PW Mission Pledge financially supports both PW and the mission of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Pledge cards and pledge forms will also be included for women to make their individual pledges.

For 2008, the giving goal is \$2.7 million, which will help fund programming at all levels of PW as well as the mission work of the PC(USA).

PW in the Synod of the Covenant Coordinating Team Meeting

A CT meeting is set for October 19-20 at the Synod Office in Maumee, Ohio. Cheri Harper will be our guest and will be leading us through material used at Albuquerque, New Mexico in January 2007. This is a very IMPORTANT PROCESS so please make every effort to attend. Definite details will be sent to you after the Planning Committee holds an evaluation meeting in mid-September. This October 19-20 date was chosen last year and should be on our calendars.

May you all have a wonderful summer full of fond memories and fun times with loved ones.

And may you be refreshed with the Spirit of Love for God and one another as we look forward to an exciting year for Presbyterian Women.

Peace and love, Patsy Gaines

Articles for the next
PW/SOC Newsletter
are due
November 1, 2007
They may be emailed to
info@pwsoc.org

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How one PW manages its money

Presbyterian Women at Covenant Presbyterian Church (CPW) in the Presbytery of Scioto Valley prepared its bylaws in accord with the structure suggested when Presbyterian Women was created by the Women of the Church and United Presbyterian Women in 1988. The bylaws set forth the guidelines for the pledging and budget for their organization.

CPW has always taken Second Mile Giving and supporting the mission of the church very seriously. Annually the Coordinating Team fills out and sends in the pledge form received from the Presbytery PW. They commit themselves to an amount, then work hard all year long to make sure they exceed this. How do they do this?

Women in five circles make annual pledges. There is also a Prayer Shawl circle, but many of these women are members of one of the other five circles. All women in the congregation receive a letter inviting their participation in circles and five annual gatherings and their financial support, too. One circle makes a quilt annually. Since there is a prohibition against selling raffle tickets, each "opportunity" on the quilt means the purchase of a pot holder, a "scrubbie", or another useful item for the home. While they are busy making the quilt, these circle members are also creating the other items they sell.

Women from the church and all the circles participate each fall in sessions to prepare "The World's Best Peanut Brittle" – at least the dozens of people who purchase it think it's the best. Members of one circle prepare Buckeyes – those impossible-to-resist peanut butter and chocolate concoctions - to sell during the same season.

For a week in the fall, the PW and other members of the congregation set up and conduct a huge garage sale. Near Thanksgiving, an all-church Thanksgiving Dinner is held, at which the Thank Offering is received. During the winter, the women prepare the annual spaghetti dinner, and many members of the congregation participate in a variety show for which they have been practicing since the fall. All the money raised from PW's projects is divided, as the bylaws require, in the following manner:

Fifty percent of all money raised goes to meet (and it always exceeds) the pledge to Churchwide Presbyterian Women.

The other fifty percent covers, first, the expenses of all the projects. Second, of the remaining funds, one fourth is designated for local mission and one fourth provides for projects and needs in the church - tables, office equipment, a redecorated bathroom, etc. There are several local mission projects which benefit, and the recipients vary from time to time. Since the church has a food pantry which delivers food to people, some money is given to buy fresh products for the families Covenant serves as needs arise.

The very best part of this support for the mission of the church is that it gets women together to work and at the same time builds strong community, and not just the community of women. The community of the church grows because many who do not call themselves PW or who, in fact, are men, enjoy the work we do together. Thanks be to God!

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...from Vice Moderator for Studies & Spiritual Development, Christel Hilgarth

“God’s Kind of Love”

Romans 12: 20

“... if your enemies are hungry, feed them; if they are thirsty, give them something to drink ...”

Hearing or reading of war evokes memories within me of things that I experienced after World War II.

The war had ended four years earlier when my family and I became refugees fleeing from Russian occupied Germany. We were resettled in northern Germany. Food was scarce and a generous farmer allowed my father and I to glean his potato field after the harvest. It became an exercise that repeated itself for a couple of years. Scrounging and foraging for food was the way of life. But God was good, and I was too young to understand or worry much about the daily struggle to find food. One day my father came home with a big package. We all stood around him and eagerly waited for him to open it. In big letters, stamped on box was United States of America.

There was a big can of butter, a big can of cheese, a bag of rice, and a box of powdered milk. I still see my mother cooking the rice for the first time and watching her panic as the rice grew in the pot to overflowing. Soon she needed two pots and needless to say, the neighbors ate rice too, because there was so much cooked rice to share. I wondered what America was and my father explained to me that it was a country and America was far away and a big ocean was separating us. I internalized the information from my father and the experience of all the food. To me, America was a place that sends food to people like me and my family and other families in far away places.

I was only 6 years old when the first package arrived and many more followed. I believe the food saved my life, because I was severely malnourished and the doctor told my mother that the fat in the butter and cheese and the milk and rice was keeping me alive. The Red Cross received loads and loads of clothes and shoes from America that Church Women had packaged we were told, and had send it to Germany, a country that only six years before had been at war

with America. I have never forgotten the generosity of the American people. I do know that the food was Army surplus, but that did not make it less of a gift.

I am a Presbyterian woman now and serve PW as PWS VM. In this position I have the opportunity to speak to PW groups and each time when I do speak and see the senior PW women (80 and over) my heart goes out to them in gratefulness for all the years of ministry service and mission they have given in the name of Jesus Christ to people they never met. I cannot stop wondering if it was their generation of PW who sent out so many packages as ministry and mission to all of Europe who had experienced war. I look in their faces and see wisdom. What a resource of wisdom those women are who are still active in PW and have so much to share by serving as mentors to others. There is war and unrest around the world and there are starving women and children who are the victims of violence still in countries far away. Presbyterian women have been known for their ministry and mission, for the work for peace and justice not only in this country but also around the world. I pray that the heart of Christ in each Presbyterian Women and others will continue to be large and wide with generousities to help fill the needs of many who experienced famine through war in far away places.

Paul is upholding God’s kind of love and tells us to live peaceably with one another. Feeding one’s enemy and showing God’s love to one’s enemy will melt the heart that has hardened. Paul is asking us to show love to our enemies with God’s love.

I am very grateful to God who works on our behalf. In good times and not-so-good times, we are never alone.

Shalom, Christel Hilgarth

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Greetings from Lake Michigan Presbyterian Women!!

At our Spring Gathering, Lake Michigan Presbyterian Women revised and voted on new By-laws. We now use Liaison instead of the title PW Enabler. Each CT member has a Cluster of churches for which she is the Liaison. We now have Co-Moderators with the new person serving for 2 years.

The mission project for the winter for LMPW had been to make baby gowns and/or assemble health and school kits and bring them to our Spring Gathering on April 21st at Battle Creek Westlake Presbyterian Church. We had a **GREAT** response. Over 500 baby gowns, 185 Health Kits, 92 School Kits, 43 Kids Kits and \$1075 for processing fees. LMPW had planned to ship these to Church World Service, but we were very happy that David Bower, CWS Lansing Rep, was able to join us and share personal information about CWS. He took all of the kits and gowns back with him.

Holland First Presbyterian's PW invited LMPW to their annual Picnic on June 20th in the Fellowship Hall. The program was Carol Bechtel, author of Horizons Bible Study for 2007-2008. We had 55 attendees with 7 churches represented. Good food and fellowship!

We are always looking for new ideas that can be shared with our Presbyterian Women. If you have some, please send/e-mail them to me.

I would like to introduce you to my Co-Moderator, Kathryn Wylie.

Dear PW Sisters,

I am finding the positive changes we are currently making in LMPW CT are exactly what we have been called to do as we widen the circle of God's love and embrace our PW purpose of building an inclusive, caring community by developing new ideas and programs. We are finding that having the courage and open-mindedness to develop and implement service projects we are touching many lives. Through these activities we are beginning to network with our PW sisters in a way in which was not present before as well as make a difference in many local and regional communities. These are exciting times!

Sisters in Christ,

Mary Bennett

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Kathryn Wylie

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Visit the website anytime...

The PW/SOC web site (www.pwsoc.org) is being updated! Under Studies Christel Hilgarth has added articles on "Planning a Retreat" and Bible Study Resources for the new PW Bible Study. Under Leadership Development Martha Pool has added articles on "What is a Leader?", "Leaders and Followers: Both Are Needed" and "The Art of Convening." Look for more new articles in the months to follow. If you have suggestions on new items to be posted, contact the website through info@pwsoc.org.

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Are you looking for a worthwhile Christmas project?

Dear Sisters,

No, I am not early or late for a Christmas letter but I am thinking ahead towards Christmas shopping. I have recently agreed to be a regional representative of PAL CRAFTAID, which is a ministry of compassion, hope and healing for peace and justice in Palestine. Since 1993, PAL CRAFTAID has imported Palestinian olive wood sculptures and counted cross-stitch needlework made by Palestinian artisans who offer fair wages to their workers.

I write to each of you to encourage you to order some of our inventory for your alternative Christmas market, Presbyterian Women's gathering, or any other event. You can actually order on consignment at any time of the year but the fall is definitely the time when most such activities take place.

Ben and I were in Israel/Palestine in April of this year. During that time, we, of course, saw many holy sites for Christians but, more importantly, we visited with many of the Palestinian artisans who produce our inventory and heard their stories of Israeli checkpoints, isolation created by the Separation Barrier, and terrible hardships caused by an almost nonexistent Palestinian economy. We visited many of the projects which receive the profits from sales of the PAL CRAFTAID inventory and saw the importance of that support to the lives of Palestinian villages, schools, families and individuals. We are convinced that our support of PAL CRAFTAID can make a difference in the lives of Palestinians.

For those of you who are Presbyterian, our General Assemblies have repeatedly called for a just peace in the Middle East conflict between Israel and Palestine. In 2004, the Assembly took action calling for the Mission Responsibility Through Investment Committee (MRTI), of which I am the chair, to begin a process of phased selective divestment from multi-national corporations operating in

Israel/Palestine that in some way support the creation, expansion and maintenance of Israeli settlements on Palestinian land; are involved in the construction of the Separation Barrier or the destruction of Palestinian homes and olive groves; support the continuing occupation of Palestinian land by Israel; and other forms of harassment and humiliation. Following a huge uproar over this action, the 2006 General Assembly slightly modified the earlier action by affirming the work of MRTI through progressive engagement and encouraging "positive and peaceful" investment in the region. Many other denominational governing bodies have taken similar action and have joined us in the progressive engagement process.

With my longstanding interest in the Middle East and my leadership of the MRTI Committee, I have decided to express my own personal commitment to positive and peaceful investments in the region through my involvement with PAL CRAFTAID. I hope you will be able to support me through your orders of the PAL CRAFTAID inventory for upcoming events. [Editor's note: For a brochure of items available, download the brochure in pdf form from the newsletter page of our website www.pwsoc.org or contact Carol].

I hope to hear from you soon with your dates and your orders. Please share this letter and brochure within your own networks as you see appropriate. Thanks for your support and your help.

Your Sister in Christ,
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