

The Sower

Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Lakes and Prairies

June 2008

Sue Nedderman, editor

MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

Yesterday, I started training on a new job. There were 17 of us in the class and one of the icebreakers was to choose a neighbor and find out some things about them and then report to the whole class. Some of the questions were those of an ethical nature: "If I had a million dollars, I would..."; "If I found a thousand dollars in a vacant lot..."; "If I had a magic wand, I would..."; "If I knew I only had 24 hours to live..." I was amazed at the answers. The first couple of answers on everyone's list were silly - shop forever, go to Las Vegas, eat all the foods forbidden on my diet. Then the answers got more serious. Several people talked about ending poverty and homelessness, helping children in shelters, helping their communities through various ways. It was wonderful to hear the thoughtfulness and care for others. Yet no one mentioned their faith as a reason for their concerns and answers.

I laughed hard at Marge Adey's sigh at the coordinating team that she served on the Evangelism Committee. We Presbyterians don't do evangelism very well. We had a program back in the 1970's called RISK Evangelism, that took congregations through three years of program ideas, starting with an inward look as serving our own and culminating with real evangelism to the world (or at least our neighborhoods). My church still has a program or two operating after 35 years. But like most churches, we didn't do so well on the outward bound third year. In fact, many of the members of the RISK committee sighed that they wished to stay in the first year setting.

I did not "risk" commenting on the peace and justice ideas that came out of the ice breakers, since we were in a job setting. But I will seek out those with the thoughtful answers to strike up a conversation and I probably will seek out those who might need a nudge. It could be interesting!

Peace, Elizabeth

U.S. MISSION EXPERIENCE

I want to sincerely thank everyone who contributed to the funds for the first U.S. Mission Experience, "Beyond Borders 2008." This trip took twenty-one of us to El Paso, Texas, and Juarez, Mexico. We were to view first hand some of the problems associated with immigration and see how various organizations are responding. It was an amazing experience that I am eager to share with all of you. To schedule a visit from me, you may call [507-365-8430](tel:507-365-8430) or email me at: wfay55920@aol.com. I have pictures on a CD and would need equipment available to show them. However, if there is none available, I do have some printed pictures that can be displayed. To learn more about immigration, I suggest you go to the following websites:

pcusa.org/immigration and then on the right side bar, click get acquainted

julia.thorne@pcusa.org

LaDonna Fay

WHAT IS A RETREAT?

It is a time set apart to explore, deepen, unclutter, and set straight one's spiritual path. It can be an opportunity to develop and strengthen relationships with others. It can be a place of beginning or a place of renewal. It is a process that gives rhythm to the life cycle of the journey of a Christian.

What are the qualities of a Christian community?

Acts 2:42-47 lists several. Christians were devoted to:

- § the apostles' teaching
- § fellowship
- § the breaking of bread
- § prayers

That is, they learned the faith, they shared their lives together, they participated in Lord's Supper and they prayed together. In addition, they established community ownership of property and they provided for the material needs of those in want. Finally, they participated in the worship of the community

- § in the temple (at prescribed hours for prayer)
- § "broke bread at home" (another reference to Lord's Supper)
- § praised God with glad and generous hearts.

What does this suggest for community today?

We need to remember, first, that "community" is a word that is much stronger than the way it is often used. "Community" means the company of faith, founded on the teaching of the apostles, living on the traditions that have molded us. To be a community is to have an identity and a vocation. We are God's people, called to do God's work in the world.

Community is at the heart of the retreat. In the retreat, we experience trust, Eucharist, prayer, music, laughter, suffering, joy, meals, work, study, silence, listening, fear, solitude, meditation, Scripture and one another. Members of the community of faith share the responsibility to accompany and guide each other on the spiritual journey. Being a Christian requires community.

Emily Seeger

The Shape and Color of PW

What is the shape and color of your PW? Does it matter that your shape and color are not the same as other PWs in your presbytery? Not at all! Your PW can take on any shape and color you choose. Whether your PW has three or thirty dedicated women that meet regularly, only you can determine your shape and color.

The old mantra of needing a moderator, vice moderator, secretary, treasurer, etc, etc. no longer works for many of our PWs. The shape of your PW should reflect your situation. Perhaps two or three year terms could be changed to one year, or, how about a Moderator of the Month.

Size and shape aren't everything. Two people can create a circle. Three faithful women make very nice triangle. PWs fortunate enough to have twenty or thirty women that come for a business meeting and program will take a decidedly different shape and can make a large circle or rectangle. If you meet for Bible Study and decide to pledge \$25 to mission, you are a viable PW.

Just for fun, let's talk color. Is your PW blue – cool, logical, serious; or yellow – happy and bright? Are you vibrant and dynamic orange or on-fire red or perhaps angry red? Are you royal, loyal purple, or green – growing, fresh, new and maybe inexperienced? Just as there are many colors in God's rainbow, there are many colors for PW.

Be daring and creative and don't be afraid to change the shape and color as needs of your group change.

Submitted by Beverley Raske

NEWLY ELECTED AND INSTALLED MEMBERS OF THE PWS COORDINATING TEAM

Churchwide Co-Ordinating Team	LaDonna Fay
Vice Moderator	Joan Berglund
Search Committee Chair	Sue Gose
Search Committee member	Marge Adey
Together in Service	Marilyn Stone

We welcome them to their new service. These women will assume their duties at the November meeting of the Coordinating Team.

Next PWS-CT meeting: Presbyterian Church of the Master, Omaha, November 13-15

52nd Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women February 25 – March 1, 2008 Report by Margaret Welsh

Being the first time that I attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women, I was overwhelmed at the number of countries represented and the parallel events. It was important to me that I attend the ones that would be beneficial to me and to the women I represent. Through our activism, advocacy and direct action at various stages of conflict we can offer integrated strategies that help end violence. My report will focus on the events I attended.

Each morning we attended an Ecumenical Worship Service at Tillman Chapel, which was at the Church Center for the United Nations, located across the street from the UN building. This was held from 8:00 – 8:45 a.m.

The Joan B. Kroc Institute for Justice and Peace presented a panel of women from nine countries who told what they were doing in their countries to help bring an end to violence. All these women face daily challenges. Oftentimes they and those they work with struggle for survival. Hopefully their stories will summon us to action on behalf of their conflict. They have all taken stands for the human rights of others.

Another panel that intrigued me was eight men who are working to combat violence against women. These men feel women should have every opportunity to enjoy the human rights to which every citizen is entitled. They place great emphasis on the prevention of violence. Children and young people are an important target group. They feel it is important to take early action in schools and organizations where children are found. We also need higher standards and greater efficiency in the judicial system. Better measures are needed to target violent offenders. While women are still exposed to violence and it remains a major social problem, it's good to know men are beginning to recognize the seriousness of the problem and are taking steps to eradicate it.

The new Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon, addressed all the delegates attending the 52nd Commission on the Status of Women with an inspiring message by proclaiming a five-year effort to eliminate violence against women.

HAVE YOU READ ANY OF THESE BOOKS?

The Spirituality of Nature by Jim Kalnin

This beautifully illustrated four-color book is a reminder of the omnipresence of nature. A wondrous new creation story is told, one that is based on what science has discovered about our cosmic history up until now. 978-1-896836-87-4 Northstone Pub.

The Spirituality of Grandparenting by Ralph Milton

More than a celebration of grandchildren, this book celebrates grandparenting and the very real reward it offers to both grandchild and grandparent. 978-1-896836-86-7 Northstone Publishing.

Thumpin' It: The Use and Abuse of the Bible in Today's Presidential Politics by Jacques Berlinerblau

In one of the most insightful, provocative, and witty books yet to explore the relationship between Bible and American politics, Berlinerblau looks at how the left, right, and everyone in between have used and misused the Bible to advance their political causes and careers. 978-0-664-23173-6 John Knox Press

A New Climate of Theology: God, the World, and Global Warming:
by Sallie McFague

The author not only traces the distorted notion of unlimited desire that fuels our market system, she also paints an alternative idea of what being human means and what a just and sustainable economy might mean. 978-0-8006-6271-4 Fortress Press

At Sea With God: A Spiritual Guidebook to the Heart and Soul
by Margret Silf

This book develops the image of life as a sea voyage using seven aspects of sailing to shed new light on the spiritual journey.
978-1-933495-11-8 Sorin books

Making a Home of Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Your Children
by Elizabeth Caldwell

How can families articulate and pass on their faith. Sections include blended families, multi-faith families, and multi-cultural families and the challenges they face.
978-08298-1769-0 The Pilgrim Press

LAP AND NAP UPDATE

In my last report I told you I had 4/5 blankets on hand. I had told most of the places where we had delivered lap and naps to call if they had further need. None did. Today I called the safe-house program which is fairly new in Storm Lake. Sarah, the director, said she could really use them. When I took them down to her she showed me the empty cupboard. When she tells children or parents they can keep the blanket it always brings smiles at a difficult time. I was pleased to leave all of the ones I had right there. Another call today brought this story from Jean at the Department of Human Services. When we first provided them, she took so many of the children's size blankets, about 3-4 dozen. She had set up 2 all day sessions for pre-school parents to help with developing and practicing parenting skills. She gave each child a lap/nap to take home. So now I have zero on hand. Jean said this was so successful that she 'found' some grant money to buy more fleece. Called someone at Buena Vista for students or groups to help cut and tie. She had a group of ALL BOYS and everyone was happy with the results. When thoughts of your summer gathering seem almost forgotten, the success of all those busy hands goes on and on!

Most sincerely,
Jane Spooner

PRESBYTERY REPORTS

Presbyterian Women have been busy – at mission projects, at worship, at fellowship. The following events were reported in the semi-annual presbytery reports given at the June meeting of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Coordinating Team:

- § Spring Gatherings were held in 11 of our presbyteries. Highlights of these gatherings were mission speakers, singing, mission projects, skits promoting PW events, worship with communion, shopping, offerings given to a variety of projects, dedication of the Hunger, Least Coin and Birthday Offerings and installation of new officers.
- § Other presbyteries had spring cluster events, with workshops for leadership training and mission projects.
- § Planning is well under way in most presbyteries for late summer or fall gatherings, retreats or cluster events. Many of these will have mission speakers and workshops for leadership training.
- § Mission projects that are on-going in many presbyteries are the Moringa tree project, the Palm Oil project, sewing, prayer shawls, NetWorkers, clean water projects, sheets for African hospitals, lap and nap robes.

Report from Synod Leadership Development Coordinator Lois Hansen

On January 1, 2008, a check for \$300.00 was mailed to the Moderator of each of our 16 presbyteries. They were asked to deposit the check and use the funds to train leaders. The funds came from the PW Churchwide team to encourage training of all their leaders. The training is to be completed by July of 2009 and they were told to make use of their time together at Cluster Gatherings and Spring/Fall Gatherings. All were encouraged to purchase the new PW Manual.

A postcard was enclosed asking if they received the check and what specific or long range plans they had to use the funds. Also, they were asked how any member of the Synod CT could help develop their leaders.

As of May 15, 2008, 14 Moderators responded saying they had received and deposited the check with varied uses reported.

- § Cluster leader training
- § Money deposited in Money Market to use in 2009 for scholarship to the Churchwide Gathering
- § Purchased manuals for every moderator and the PWPCT
- § Used for mileage to send PWPCT leaders out to congregations
- § Study and implement information in the PW manual
- § Leadership retreat
- § Entire audience workshop at each Spring Gathering
- § A guided tour through the new manual
- § Please continue with Leadership Training at Synod Gathering
- § Marilyn Stone presented a power point workshop at Fall Retreat in one presbytery

No postcard came back to me from Dakota or Twin Cities. I do not know if those checks were cashed.

PW in Synod of Lakes and Prairies	Coordinating Team	June 13, 2008
Moderator	Elizabeth Swee 1714 S. 5 th St. Moorhead, MN 56560-3428	218-236-9346 218-446-7479 bswee@aol.com
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	LaVonne Looking Elk 3729 W. Chicago Rapid City, SD 57702	605-716-0888(h) 605-355-2377 (w) slooking@rap.midco.net
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	Sharon Falck 2009 Edmundson Dr. Oskaloosa, IA 52577	641-676-1561 sfalck@mahaska.org
Peace and Justice	Ann Rock 811 Everett Dr. Stillwater, MN 55082	651-439-0192 acrock1@juno.com

Minnesota Valley Retreat

Responding to God's Call

"We renew ourselves"

Fall Spiritual Retreat for
Presbyterian Women

Sept. 15-16, 2008

Green Lake Bible Camp

9916 Lake Ave. So.

Spicer, MN.



Spiritual leadership by Rev. Candace Adams, Hope Church of Spicer

Prayer Partner Exchange Gift:
Recycle Bags

Please bring your Bible, notebook, pen, towel, washcloth, sheets and pillowcase,
and comfortable clothing. Camp linens may be rented for an additional. For \$5.00
The day of the event from camp personnel.

2 days Meals and lodging: \$60.00

Meals only \$15.00/per day

Complete attached form by Sept. 4th, 2008 and mail to

PWP Treasurer Shirley Hauck

2224 Spruce Dr., Brainerd, MN 56401

Phone Registrations to 218-829-9127

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City & Zip _____

Any Special needs _____ Roommate _____

The Sower

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First Presbyterian Church
621 North Lincoln Ave
Hastings, NE 68901

Moderators,

Please make copies of this *Sower* and give each of your officers a copy. Urge them to share it with others. Don't keep this info a secret!!

If you are no longer the moderator or don't wish to receive this newsletter, please let Sue Nedderman know at sue@fpchastings.org or call 402-462-5147.

We would like to send it by e-mail to as many as possible. Let Sue know if you can receive it by e-mail.