



The Sower

*Newsletter for the Presbyterian Women in the
Synod of Lakes & Prairies*



February, 2025

Kathleen Keefer, Editor

Greetings and Happy New Year!

I am so excited to inform you that in this issue of the Sower you will find a flyer about the Synod Gathering along with a registration form.

After you register, you will receive the workshop schedule to make your selections. We have a nice variety lined up to accommodate everyone's interests. The workshops fall under five categories: Justice & Peace; Mission; Spiritual; Creative; and PW concerns.

The deadline to register for the Gathering and to reserve your hotel room is May 12. Rooms are limited so get yours quick.

Along with the workshops, the Hands-on Mission room will be open all day and there will be a Marketplace with a Christian bookstore and Native American artists selling jewelry and artwork. There will be displays from Horizon's and PW as well as displays from the Synod Coordinating Team committees letting you know what they do.

The commons area will also have room for displays from your Presbytery and/or local PW group. Let's share with each other what we are doing. Ads are on sale for the program book. What a great way to recognize a special woman or to greet others.

And don't forget the pre-gathering mini-mission trip! More information about that is in this issue, too. And the Gathering Choir and the Book Clubs! I'll send those titles out in the next Sower. If you would like to facilitate one of the book discussions, please drop me a line.

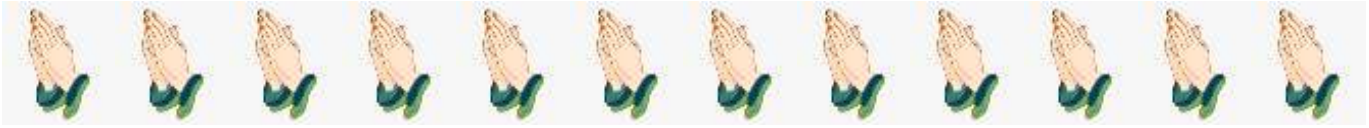
Share the flyer and spread the word. This is going to be an exciting, rewarding weekend. I can hardly wait to gather with all my PW sisters again.

Yours in Christ,

Louise

Louise Van Poll, PW Synod Moderator
lcvanpoll@gmail.com

Prayers & Devotions



We are always "fresh from the word,"
 You call the worlds into being,
 You call us into your church,
 You call nations and kingdoms to do your will,
 You call swords to plowshares, and
 spears to pruning hooks.
 Your calling word is carried, concretely, bodily,
 by your speakers who dare break the world
 by utterance.
 And so we give you thanks,
 for preachers and poets,
 for prophets and writers and editors,
 voices of truth,
 voices of pain,
 voice of alarm and of comfort...
 the ones who call the world back
 to your truthful presence.
 We live in a land of silence, denial, and self-sufficiency
 where the word is scarce, and
 ears are grown thick with protective wax
 and heavy skin.
 And then your word!
 uttered to us,
 perhaps eventually uttered by us
 in courage and in candor,
 your word given vulnerable and lean,
 your word embodied in Jesus,
 your word incarnated here and there among us,
 at risk.
 And we, in our anxiety
 at best pray for fresh ears to hear,
 for quivering lips to speak as you will us to do.
 Amen.



Prayer written by Walter Bruggemann, from his book, Acting in the Wake, Prayers for Justice, published in 2023 by Westminster John Knox. P.74-75

"Creator & creating God, as you are the true light of the world, I pray to be a reflection of your radiance in my life. Guide my words and actions to bring hope and comfort to those around me, let my life be a beacon of your love in the darkness, and use me as an instrument to spread your light wherever I go. Amen."

A Memory from Kitch: I was a Camp Fire Girl when I was young. Each level of progression in that program had what was called a "desire" that we memorized and aspired to live into. The Torch Bearer desire was as follows:

"That light, which has been given to me, I desire to pass, undimmed, to others."

Walk in the Light

Jesus is the light of the world
Come on choir
Walk in the light (walk in the light)
Beautiful light (well it's a beautiful light)
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright (Oh Lord)
Shine all around us by day and by night
Oh oh oh oh, Jesus is the light of the world
I wonder, do you know that this evening
Yeah yeah yeah
Walk in the light (we're walk in the light)
Beautiful light (well it's a beautiful light)
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright
Oh Lord, shine all around us by day and by night
Oh Lord, Jesus is the light of the world
Oh oh oh, oh oh oh oh, yeah
Walk in the light (we're going the distance, yeah)
Beautiful light (we're going the distance where the light)
Come where the dewdrops of mercy shine bright (of mercy shine bright)
Shine all around us by day and by night
(Oh Lord) Jesus is the light of the world (the Lord is the light of the world)
He's shining (Yes, he's shining)
He's shining (oh yes he is, he's shining)
He's shining in my soul (oh yes he is, oh yeah)

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Traditional

Walk In the Light lyrics © Public Domain

From South Dakota Presbytery

We would like to extend a warm South Dakota welcome to those planning to attend the Synod Triennial Gathering June 12-15, 2025. It will be held in Watertown, SD. The theme is Let Your Light Shine. It will also offer a mini-mission day on June 11 (See details in this issue). There will be a worship leader, a music director, an art director, workshops, vendors and PW resources. There will be worshipping and singing and creating and learning. Women will come from North and South Dakota, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska. Watertown is the home of the Terry Redlin Center.

Opportunities will be available to tour the Center and view the many paintings of Terry Redlin. Take advantage of networking with Presbyterian Women from across the Midwest. See registration details in this paper.

You are the light of the world-like a city on a mountain, glowing in the night for all to see. Don't hide your light under a basket! Instead, put it on a stand and let it shine for all to see. In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father. Matthew 5: 14-16 Judy Rops, Moderator of South Dakota



Synod Gathering

All About the 2025 Synod Gathering
♦ June 12-15 ♦ Watertown, SD



Plan to Register Early!

Registration is now open for PW's 2025 Synod Gathering, which will be held June 12-15 in Watertown, SD. Join Presbyterian women from around our Synod in learning about, rejoicing in and embodying what it means to "Let your Light Shine," as guided by Matt. 5:14-16.

Leadership Team

Elona Street Stewart will be our Worship Leader. She serves as our Synod Executive and has been part of PW for more than 30 years. She was honored as a PW Woman of Faith in 2010 and was co-moderator of the 224th General Assembly in 2020.



Rev. Kristi Holler will be our Music Director. She is currently the pastor at Emanuel Presbyterian Church in Marion, SD.

Fern Cloud will be our Artistic Director. She is a Native American artist and member of the Sisseton Wahpeton Dakota Tribe who lives in Granite Falls, Minn.



Full Registration, \$150

It's the event you've been waiting three years to attend. It begins with dinner reception on Thursday and ends with morning worship on Sunday. A full registration is your ticket to community, learning and worship with PW sisters from across the region. It includes all meals, even snack breaks; up to eight workshops from inspiring leaders; group presentations; shopping; a program book; book groups; mission opportunities; guest speakers; a Gathering choir; and so much more!

Single-day Registration, \$75

Enjoy the day's plenary sessions, provided meals of the day, and select from the day's programming options, up to four workshops.

Pre-Gathering Event, \$10 with full registration, \$35 for all others includes Thursday evening reception

A pre-gathering Mini Mission event will occur Thursday when we meet in the lobby at 8 a.m. to carpool to the Lake Traverse Reservation. A full day of tours, speakers, and special events are planned, including a lunch hosted by our Dakota Presbytery PW sisters.

Program Book Ads, starting at just \$50

Now is the time to purchase your group/individual ad for the program book. A full-page ad is just \$150. {Think of it as \$50 per year to tell someone how much you appreciate them every triennium.} A half-page ad is half the price at \$75. And a quarter-page ad is only \$50.

Send your request and payment to Synod Treasurer Terri Sherman at 12244 N 84th St.: Lincoln, NE 68517. Ad copy may be emailed to her at terrisherman99@gmail.com.

Gathering committee staff will happily build your ad for you at no additional cost. Just submit the information you want included and a photo, if desired, and we'll do the rest!

Register NOW to reserve your spot!

2025 Synod Triennial Gathering



**Synod of
Lakes & Prairies**

Watertown, S.D.

June 12-15

Registration



Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone and email: _____

- \$150.00 Full registration includes five meals and snack breaks.
- \$75.00 One day registration includes two meals. Please circle one: Friday or Saturday.
- \$10.00 Mini-Mission Experience with full registration. Includes lunch and transportation.
- \$35.00 Mini-Mission Experience without full registration. Includes lunch, transportation and evening reception.
- I can drive for the mini-mission trip and take _____ passengers. [Gas money provided.]

Food allergies: _____

Emergency contact name and phone: _____

Book your room reservation with Ramkota Hotel direct using this number: 605-886-8011. Ask for the PW Gathering rate. If you book online or use a different reservation telephone number, you will not be given the discount rate. Rooms must be reserved by May 12 to receive the discount.

Roommate[s]: _____

There are a variety of rooms: Single and double kings and queens to accommodate up to four per room.

Some rooms are on the second floor and there is no elevator. If you are capable of accessing an upstairs room, please book accordingly and save the ground floor rooms for the elderly and infirm. Thank you.

Please return this form to Maggie Horak at 5601 Barrington Park Dr.; Lincoln, NE 68516 by May 12, 2025.

The hotel offers a complimentary breakfast with both hot and cold items. There is a pool and fitness center.

Workshop schedules will be sent upon receipt of your registration.

June 12-15, 2025 PWS Gathering Workshop Titles & Descriptions:

<p><i>The Importance of Awe</i></p>	<p>Awe experiences are self-transcendent. They shift our attention away from ourselves, making us feel like we are part of something greater than ourselves and making us more generous towards others. But what is awe? What are the effects of awe?" <i>(from the Science of Awe)</i>. When we focus on feeling awe in our everyday lives, we become the light for others, we show them the awe of life.</p>
<p><i>Make a Joyful Noise</i></p>	<p>Please join me in making a noise to the Lord! We will sing our favorite songs and hymns, making music together from the heart. No musical background or experience necessary! Where two or three or more are gathered, Christ is present! We will sing and shout, laugh and cry, and most of all---make a lot of joyful noise together!</p>
<p><i>Forgive!</i></p>	<p>We are called to embrace forgiveness. As a community we strive to forgive and support each other. But can we genuinely forgive someone and move forward? What does it mean to truly forgive? What are the transformative effects of forgiveness? Forgiving someone is a complex journey, but the experience of it can be freeing.</p>
<p><i>Shining our Light in Dark Places</i></p> <p><i>Gen 28:15 I am with you and will keep you wherever you go</i></p>	<p>Listen to stories and recollections from the 3 delegates from our Synod who were able to participate in the 2023 USAME</p> <p>Listen & learn</p> <p>Build relationships</p> <p>Faithfully Serve</p>
<p><i>Armchair Advocacy</i></p>	<p>We're called to champion the environment, uplift the vulnerable, support service institutions, and cherish our families. But how does one step into the role of an advocate? What tools do we need? Are our busy lives a barrier to effective advocacy? Are we too old to wave signs and stand on icy street corners? Must we? With today's technology, advocacy is more accessible than ever. The challenge is, with countless pressing issues, how do we decide where to focus our efforts? How do we find reliable information? Where do we start?</p>
<p><i>Introduction to 2025-26 Horizons Bible Study: Finding Resilience, Joy and Identity in Jesus Christ</i></p>	<p>Introduction to content of the Bible Study and suggest resources and teach ideas to Bible Study Leaders.</p>
<p><i>Lap Robes for Seniors to Brighten Their Days</i></p>	<p>Help create 10 or more lap robes for seniors residing at a local nursing facility. These robes can bring warmth on a chilly day and a little brightness to their lives. No experience necessary.</p>
<p><i>Celebrate Newborns with the Warmth of Baby Hats</i></p>	<p>Make pompoms and sew them on knitted baby hats made with loving hands by a longtime member of P. W. Did you know that hospitals put hats on newborn babies to ensure they stay warm. Newborns have very little body fat so it is important to protect them from becoming chilled and getting sick.</p>

<p><i>Help Children in Disaster Areas go Back to School</i></p>	<p>We will be putting together School Bags to send to national disaster areas. There is a huge need for these after the hurricanes, floods and fires have devastated communities.</p>
<p><i>Just for Fun Rock Painting</i></p>	<p>Join us anytime during the day on Friday & Saturday to explore your creativity through rock painting. This is a fun and easy way to relax and just have fun. All you need will be provided. Let your light shine through creativity.</p>
<p><i>Soul Collage: Transformation Through Images and Reflection</i></p>	<p>Spiritual growth can take many forms and images along with creative activity is one of the best ways. Through guided meditation, creation of a soul collage of images and reflection, participants will gain insight into their own faith, spirituality, and the state of their soul.</p>
<p><i>Shining Light on the Native American Boarding Schools</i></p>	<p>Native boarding schools were founded to eliminate traditional Native ways of life and replace them with mainstream American culture. The first boarding schools were started in the mid-nineteenth century either by the government or Christian missionaries. This workshop will explore the life-long trauma caused by these boarding schools, the generational impact and the role of the PC(USA).</p>
<p><i>Processing Enlightenments from the PWS Mini Trip to Lake Traverse Reservation</i></p>	<p>Many sites were visited during the PWS Pre-Gathering Mini Trip to the Lake Traverse Reservation and many speakers were heard. This workshop provides an opportunity to further discuss the experience and the topics address, including Mission & Murdered Indigenous Women, support services for prevention of domestic violence/abuse, college scholarships for Native students, boarding school experiences at the Tekakwitha Boarding School and more. You do not need to have participated in the mini trip to join this discussion.</p>
<p><i>Letting your light shine by stepping out of your comfort zone</i></p>	<p>Churchwide Board of Directors. Challenges, opportunities, expanding new horizons. Hoping to encourage others to take the opportunity to serve.</p>
<p><i>Place it on a Lampstand: Best Practices for Saving and Sharing PW History</i></p>	<p>This workshop focuses on best practices for preserving PW history at the congregational level. I will focus on “Saving” and “Sharing”—what you can do to ensure the records and history you want to preserve survive and are accessible well into the future, and what make preserving records and histories worthwhile. Participants will leave with tools for accessing their archival material, ideas for preserving it onsite, and suggestions for leveraging it for storytelling and fundraising.</p>
<p><i>Provide a Credible Witness for Justice</i></p>	<p>Restorative Actions is an economic equity initiative born from the intersection of theology, justice, and economics. It allows U.S. Americans who benefit from institutional racism, to provide a credible witness for justice, by acknowledging the unjust advantages produced by racism, and then surrendering the gains of those advantages toward the establishment of just relationships with Afro-American and Indigenous communities.</p>
<p><i>PW: RED</i></p>	<p>Anyone interested in the Racial Equity Dialog program through the Churchwide PW is invited to this informational meeting. Our goal is to form a RED team in our Synod to help presbyteries and congregations to begin or continue the dialog on racial equity. We will set program goals and a tentative Zoom schedule for quarterly meetings, as well as practice a conversation technique to build trust in our relationships.</p>
<p><i>Welcome the Child</i></p>	<p>This program was a PW Thank Offering recipient. Director Lisa Schrader will tell us about the program and the impact it has on families and children on the Pine Ridge Reservation.</p>

Dome Homes	Chief Red Cloud started Red Cloud Renewables on the Pine Ridge Reservation, and it was the recipient of the PW Birthday Offering. The goal is to build affordable, efficient, dome homes while training workers in construction skills. Chief Red Cloud will share insights into this exciting project.
Gaza	Find out what is happening in Gaza from PW sisters who have been there. Learn what the stance is of the PCUSA and how we can help promote peace and equity.
Yoga	Yoga? At my age? Yes! Yoga is for anyone. Grab a mat or grab a chair. You can do yoga without getting on the floor. Yoga is a great way to stay limber, keep flexible and help retain your balance.
Book discussion	Attendees will have the option of reading a book and joining an informal discussion group. A different book will be discussed each day. Read one or read them both. Book titles will be announced in the registration materials.

TOGETHER IN SERVICE
By Pat McKisson, Committee Chair

‘Answering the call to be the hands and feet of Christ in the World.’
“Each one should use whatever gift one has received to serve others,
faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” (1 Peter 4:10)

When the P.W. coordinating team of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies started discussing the plans for the upcoming Synod Gathering in June of this year, our committee was tasked with coming up with the hands-on project for the event. Over the months since then, our course has been plotted.

As P.W., our focus for Together in Service is three-fold.

One, we support the work the women of our churches do at the local level in our communities. Second, we support the work you do at the national level, those projects that affect our neighbors in the U.S. Third, we support the work you do at the international level, giving to those beyond our borders where there are so many needs.

At the upcoming Synod Gathering you will have a chance to participate in 2 different projects; each will be as a session. One will benefit the community of Watertown, SD, and one will go to the Native American Concerns committee. For our national needs we are asking each presbytery to bring Kid’s Kit bags (previously known as School Kit bags) to the gathering to support the Gifts of the Heart mission of the PC(USA). The bags will be sent to the Ferncliff location where they will fill them with the school supplies needed.

Your Together in Service team has also planned a Just for You time to come and paint rocks. Stay tuned for more information on the Gathering.



Pre-Gathering Mini-Mission Trip...

To Lake Traverse Reservation June 12



Our pre-gathering event will take place on Thursday, June 12. We will tour the Lake Traverse Reservation, visit many sites and hear from guest speakers. Plus enjoy a delicious lunch provided by our PW sisters of Dakota Presbytery.

We will gather in the lobby and carpool to the reservation, which is just a hop, skip and a jump north of Watertown.

We will visit the three Presbyterian churches on the reservation and hear their histories.

Next, we will tour Sisseton Wahpeton College and hear from the dean. We might even be able to visit with some of our scholarship recipients. Our lunch break will be in the District Center in Old Agency.



We will then visit Tekakwitha Memorial Park, the site of the Indian Boarding School and Orphanage. We will hear from Elder Alvina Hayes and others who attended the school. A grove of trees is being planted in memory of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and their relatives.

Our last stop will be at the Wac'ang'a, or Sweetgrass, domestic violence center and hear from the director, Crystal Owen. Attendees are asked to bring a gift to the shelter of personal care items, feminine hygiene products, and baby necessities.



This tour is available to all. Cost is \$10 with your Gathering registration; \$35 for all others and includes the evening reception. Drivers will receive gas money.

Here is a thought for the new year. It's 2025.

Today, when I awoke, I suddenly realized that this is the best day of my life, ever. There were times when I wondered if I would make it to today but I did! And because I did, I'm going to celebrate!

Today I'm going to celebrate what an unbelievable life I have had so far; the accomplishments, the many blessings, and, yes, even the hardships because they have served to make me stronger. I will go through this day with my head held high, and a happy heart. I will marvel at God's seemingly simple gifts: *the sunrise, the frost on trees, the new fallen snow, the cold nip in the air*. Today, none of these miraculous creations will escape my notice.

Today, I will share my excitement for life with other people. I'll make someone smile. I'll go out of my way to perform an unexpected act of kindness for someone I do not even know. Today, I'll give a sincere compliment to someone who seems down. I'll tell a child how special he or she is, and I'll tell someone I love just how deeply I care for him or her and how much he or she means to me.

Today is the day I quit worrying about what I don't have and start being grateful for all the wonderful things God has already given me. I'll remember that to worry is just a waste of time because my faith in God and His Divine Plan ensures everything will be fine. And tonight, before I go to bed, I'll go outside and raise my eyes to the heavens above. I will stand in awe at the beauty of the stars and the moon, and I will praise God for these magnificent treasures.

As the day ends and I lay my head down on the pillow, I will thank Almighty God for the best day of my life. And I will sleep the sleep of a contented child, excited with expectation because I know tomorrow is going to be the best day of my life, ever! (Pinterest, Gregory M Louignont, 1993)

Have a Blessed New Year!

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Podcasts, you say?

I am not a podcast person, but... for those of you who are, I have a few recommendations from PC(USA):

<https://amatteroffaith.buzzsprout.com/1648090>

A Presbyterian Podcast where we respond to your questions & comments on issues of Faith, social justice & church life

[https://newchurchnewway.org/season 2-1](https://newchurchnewway.org/season-2-1)

1001 New Worshiping Communities Initiative of PC(USA) to spark a movement of innovation & risk, courage & faithfulness in the Church of Jesus Christ & bearing witness to the Reign of God in the world

<https://between2pulpits.buzzsprout.com/2228330>

This podcast aims to connect congregations with work done by PC(USA) Worldwide improve support to those participating in Special Offerings & Presbyterian Giving Catalog

<https://feeds.buzzsprout.com/2049438rss>

A Year with Matthew 25 connects reading from the Scripture with Presbyterian Church(USA) Matthew 25 vision of building congregational vitality, dismantling structural racism & eradicating systemic poverty

<https://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/mid-council-ministries/podcast-along-the-road/>

Weekly new episodes podcast on faith & leadership for ministry leaders of the PC(USA)

Hope Dougherty, ICC Chair



NOTE: UPDATED lists for 2025!

Packing and Sending “Gift of the Heart” Kits

- Complete kits should be packed in boxes with only one type of kit in each box. However, if you are shipping a small number of different kinds of kits, they can be combined in one box.
- Clearly mark the outside of the box with the contents.
- Complete the mailing form and place it inside the top of your box before sealing it. This will provide the name and address of your group sending the kits for the CWS receiving site, and it gives information about how to share your story with PDA.
- Secure the boxes with packing tape.

Deliver all kits to:

Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church (CWS Depot)
8300 East Pointe Rd
Lincoln, NE 68516
402-484-8844

If you wish to help with shipping costs: Make check payable and SEND to
CHURCH WORLD SERVICE, P.O. Box 968 Elkhart, IN 46515
OR

Ship all kits prepaid to:

Ferncliff Disaster Assistance Center
1720 Ferncliff Road
Little Rock, AR 72223
501-821-3063 or 866-732-6121

Period Packs (Menstrual Hygiene Kit)

In many parts of the world, people who menstruate live in period poverty — lacking access to necessary period care supplies. During the menstrual cycle, these hygiene materials are especially important to healthy practices. Not having supplies like sanitary napkins, tampons, soap, and disposable plastic bags can create challenges that lead to unsafe and unsanitary conditions.

Now you can help people who menstruate living in period poverty. The Period Pack provides the essentials they need to feel clean, be healthy, and live with dignity during the menstrual cycle.

- One 1-gallon size resealable bag
- Two 2 oz. bottles hand sanitizer
- Three 4-gallon bathroom trash bags
- 5 regular tampons
- 5 super absorbency tampons
- 12 pads (Unscented. Long super ultra-thin.)
- Bath-size soap (3 oz. bar or larger. No Ivory or Jergen’s soap. Do not remove from packaging.)
- One pack of flushable wipes (Unscented. 42 count.)
- Six fragrance-free laundry sheets (placed in small, Ziploc bags. [Example](#))

Assembly Tips

- Place all items in the plastic bag, remove air, and seal.
 - All items must be new.
 - Do not enclose personal notes, money, or extra items in the kits.
-

Emergency Cleanup Bucket

- One 5-gallon bucket with resealable lid (If reused, please scrub clean. Do not use a bucket that has held chemicals of any kind. No screw lid. Brand labels on the outside acceptable.)
- Five scouring pads (No stainless steel or pads with soap in them. Remove from packaging.)
- Seven sponges, including one large
- One scrub brush (With or without handle.)
- 18 reusable, lightweight multipurpose cleaning towels (Not paper towels. Remove from packaging.)
- One 16-34 oz. bottle of liquid dish soap (antibacterial preferred)
- One 12-40 oz. bottle of liquid concentrate household cleaner that can be mixed with water (No spray bottles.)
- One 50-100 ft. clothesline (Cotton or plastic line.)
- Five dust masks (N95 particulate respirator dust masks preferred; No surgical masks.)
- Two pairs of heavy-duty, waterproof dishwashing gloves (Latex-free preferred. Durable for multiple-use. Remove from packaging.)
- One pair of heavy-duty, reusable work gloves (Such as Nitrile, cotton with leather palm, or all leather)
- 20-28 heavy duty or contractor type 30-45 gallon trash bags on a roll (Remove from packaging.)

Value: \$75

Processing Fee: \$3 per bucket

All cleaning items must be new and all liquid items must be capped and securely tightened. Place all items into the bucket, making sure they are packed securely to avoid damage during shipment. Snap the lid on tight and seal with packing tape. Please do not enclose cash or checks inside of the kits or the boxes.

Kids Kit

What was once the beloved School Kit has now become the Kids Kit—an updated, thoughtfully refreshed package to be used at home or in the classroom.

- One box of 12 colored pencils
- One 2-pocket folder
- One glue stick
- One pair of blunt scissors removed from the package (rounded tip, only)
- One 70-page spiral bound notebook (no loose-leaf or filler paper)
- One 30-centimeter/12" ruler
- One hand-held pencil sharpener removed from the package
- One large eraser (no pencil cap erasers)
- Six new, unsharpened pencils with erasers (removed from packaging and use a rubber band to hold the pencils together)
- One box of 24 crayons (only 24)
- One 12"x14" to 14"x17" finished size cotton or lightweight canvas bag with handles (solid color or kid-friendly fabric, no logos, reusable shopping bags or backpacks)

- Optional item: One handmade [Make Your Own Pencil Pouch - Sew Much Moore](#) or store-bought pencil pouch

All items must be packed inside of the bag.

Optional: Loose school kit items may be placed in a large Ziploc type bag to keep them together. Remove the air, seal the bag and place inside of the cotton/canvas bag.

Value: \$15

Processing fee: \$2 per kit

Hygiene Kit

- 1-gallon resealable plastic bag
- One washcloth
- Toothbrush (in original packaging)
- Fingernail or toenail clipper (packaging removed)
- Bath-size bar of soap (in original packaging)
- Travel-size stick deodorant (3.4 oz. or less, non-aerosol)
- Travel-size lotion (3.4 oz. or less, fragrance-free, NEW only)
- Travel-size shampoo (3.4 oz. or less, NEW only)
- Travel-size toothpaste (3.4 oz. or less, expiration date of at least 1 year)
- Sturdy wide-tooth comb (remove from package; 6" minimum teeth; pocket combs or picks not accepted; rattail combs and combs without handles are acceptable. [Example](#))

All items need to fit inside a 1-gallon Ziploc type bag. Remove the excess air from the bag and seal before boxing.

Value: \$15

Processing fee: \$2 per kit

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) established Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday in 1996. It is a day to honor women and the positive change they bring to the church. The day recognizes the qualities of women and the transformation they bring to the church through their work.

Congregations and women's groups celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday with worship services. The services often include a sermon that explores scripture and celebrates the women in the congregation and biblical history.

The day honors the qualities of women and the positive change they bring to the church. It also honors women who have made significant contributions to the church and it honors the many admirable qualities of women, and the positive change they bring about by working together.

What can your church do to celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday?

Plan the worship service for March 9, 2025 or a substitute Sunday in March. Helps available in *Horizons* magazine, November/December 2024. Plan for women in the congregation to greet, usher, take offering, read scripture, sing in a women's choir or give the children's sermon.

It is also a good Sunday to display the many activities of Presbyterian Women. Pictures are always good. Include things like PW sponsored dinners, filling backpacks, sewing blankets and assembling baby layettes. Show where your monies are spent—on mission projects and supporting the local church with various projects. Presbyterian Women are tireless workers to make coffee, serve at funerals and "lead" in the church. Printed materials like Bible studies from the *Horizons magazine* is always good to display. Invite women in the congregation who are not members of Presbyterian Women to join a Bible study Circle or attend a PW gathering.

Be imaginative and creative.

Celebrate the Gifts of Women Sunday by celebrating women.

Rev. Benjamin Cremer writes: Obviously, the condemnation of women in ministry has become a talking point given recent events. So, I just wanted to submit this reminder: Christianity isn't a monolithic religion. It has never been. In various segments of Christianity in the first three centuries of the early church, women served as pastors, priests, and bishops, not in spite of scripture or Jesus' teaching but because of them.

Fast forward to today and there are more than 200 different sects of Christianity within our own country alone, all with their own unique approach to the Bible and how they believe it should be applied.

So, it takes a great deal of arrogance to live in the U.S. with over 200 different sects of Christianity, all with their own unique beliefs, yet insist that only your sect has the right to speak, not only for all Christians, but for all who call this country home.

Some sects believe the Bible teaches equality between men and women in leadership roles while others believe it teaches complementarianism. After my years of studying the Bible and church history, the ordination of women and supporting them in leadership roles has become central to my faith.

I am a Christian in the Wesleyan tradition, which has been faithfully ordaining women since the beginning, long before women even had the right to vote in our country.

Since we are a movement that spans the globe, we have been elevating women to leadership around the world for a very, very long time. We do this not in spite of scripture or the early church but precisely because of our faithfulness to them.

It is my conviction that God is the one who calls leaders and pastors, no matter their gender and no matter what others may say about it or not. God calls women to preach and lead. The church simply affirms that call. I believe that when we claim that humanity is created in God's image, both male and female, yet conveniently minimize, silence, and subjugate the "female" part of that image in our churches and in our culture, we are simply telling the world that we aren't interested in the image of God being fully expressed. This does irreparable harm to our witness.

So, to my sisters in ministry who may again be hearing your call diminished on a national level: thank you for your faithfulness to God's calling on your life, even when other Christians have not been faithful to you.

Remember all four gospels end with women being the first to carry the good news of the resurrection.

As the great theologian Jürgen Moltmann once said, "Without women preachers, we would have no knowledge of the resurrection."

Thank you for remaining steadfast to the good news.

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons AND daughters will prophesy." -Acts 2:17; Joel 2:28

Written by Benjamin Cremer and reprinted with his permission. To learn more about Rev. Benjamin Cremer head out here: <https://www.monergism.com/rev-benjamin-r-cremer>

Here are some needed resources on this topic: Ordained Women of the Patristic

Era: <https://www.cbeinternational.org/resource/ordained-women-patristic-era/> Women church leaders in the New Testament: <https://margmowczko.com/new-testament-women-church-leaders/> The Neglected History of Women in the Early Church: <https://christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine/article/women-in-the-early-church> Artifacts show that early church women served as clergy: <https://www.ncronline.org/spirituality/researcher-artifacts-show-early-church-women-served-clergy> Who Was Phoebe? <https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/who-was-phoebe/> 5 Myths of Male Headship: <https://juniaproject.com/5-myths-of-male-headship/> 5 Reasons to Stop Using 1 Timothy 2:12 Against Women: <https://juniaproject.com/5-reasons-stop-using-1-timothy-2-12-against-women/> Yes, Paul Really Taught Mutual Submission: <https://www.christianitytoday.com/2024/05/paul-taught-mutual-submission-ephesians-wayne-grudem/> The Making of Biblical Womanhood: How the Subjugation of Women Became Gospel Truth, by Beth Allison Barr: <https://a.co/d/aV16FmI>

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Looking after yourself and caring for someone with a mental illness

Being a carer for someone with a mental illness can be emotionally and physically demanding. Sometimes the burden can become too much. To make sure you do not burn out, set aside time to spend with friends and family who are not involved, and do things

that you enjoy, like gardening, going to the movies or exercising. If you are in good spirits and feel refreshed, you can provide better support for the person you are caring for.

If you are going through a difficult time with the person you are caring for, talk to your friends and family about it. Often, just by talking things through, they become clearer and less overwhelming. If you are concerned about the person's privacy, talk to a healthcare professional instead. They will be able to advise you on useful strategies and further mental health support services. It is important that you know your limits. Be clear about what you can take on and how available you can be. It is better to be a consistent and stable support rather than someone who is available all the time but very stressed.

Be aware of your own safety and trust your instincts when caring for someone with a severe mental illness. If you ever feel threatened or unsafe, it is important that you remove yourself (and any children) from danger straight away. You can always call emergency services from somewhere else if you need to get help.

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/servicesandsupport/caring-for-someone-with-mental-illness>

2025 Birthday Offering Recipients

**Leland Presbyterian Church \$150,000
Windward Volunteer Housing Facility
Leland, Mississippi**

This Birthday Offering grant will help build a housing facility at Leland Presbyterian Church. Windward Volunteer Housing will offer safe and comfortable accommodations, including showers, laundry equipment and a kitchen. Members of the community who need a temporary place to stay and volunteer groups who come for disaster recovery will find a warm welcome in Leland.

**Red Cloud Renewable \$150,000
Lakota Thiyuha Dome Home Project
Pine Ridge, South Dakota**

This Birthday Offering grant will construct three dome homes, providing housing as well as creating publicity for this affordable option. Construction apprentices will gain experience in this building technique that can rapidly and affordably increase housing availability for Lakota families in need.

NOTE TO ALL PRESBYTERY MODERATORS/REPS: March 1st is the deadline for your annual report, either in narrative or standard form, to be sent to PWSCT Secretary Kitch Shatzer for distribution.

The PW Synod Coordinating Team is looking to fill the position of Zoom Coordinator. The Zoom Coordinator sets up two hybrid meetings a year and maintains the PW Synod's Zoom schedule. If curiously interested, contact Interim Zoom Coordinator, Lana Schultz at lanaj0@casselton.net or 701-238-4538.

The next Sit 'N Sip is Feb. 22 at 11 a.m. by Zoom. The conversation will focus on the January 21, 2025 sermon by Right Rev. Mariann Edgar Budde, Bishop, Episcopal Diocese of Washington, D.C. If you would like to be part of the conversation, contact Kathleen Keefer, facilitator, kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com.

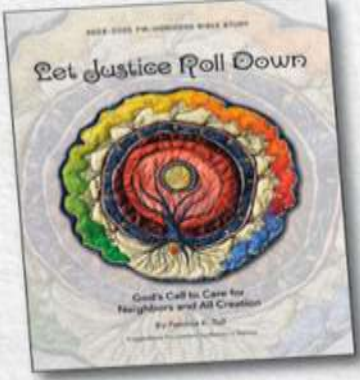
The next PWS *Horizons* Bible Studies by Zoom are set for February 10 and March 10 at 6:30 p.m. on Lessons 5 and 6, respectively. Invite others and make it a watch party. Contact Kathleen Keefer, facilitator, kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com.

WELCOME Linda Anthony of Lexington, Nebraska to the PW Synod Coordinating Team! Linda joins Hope Dougherty and Teresa Bartlett on the Search Committee. If your home Presbytery is Milwaukee, Northern Waters, Twin Cities Area, Winnebago or John Knox, there is an open spot on the Search Committee for you. Contact Hope (hdougherty2018@gmail.com) or Teresa (tbartlett98@gmail.com) for more info.

Let Justice Roll Down

God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation

By Patricia K. Tull
With Suggestions for Leaders by Rebecca Barnes



Patricia K. Tull, author of the 2024–2025 PW/*Horizons* Bible study *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*, describes her call for creation justice in this way: "When I first learned of the climate crisis, I wondered how a biblical scholar with few practical skills could help and found my purpose in learning about ecology and teaching people of faith what I could. Such is not everyone's skillset or desire, but each of us has something to do with all our hearts."

We invite you to join Presbyterian Women as we explore, with all our hearts, God's call to care for our neighbors and for creation. Readers will learn about ecological systems, the challenges we face in this time of accelerated climate change, and the possibilities available to address or counter the impact of human-made stress on our environment. Further, readers will explore theological questions that point us to act and engage, in small and large ways.

Many of us no longer have an active PW within our congregation and would still like to participate in the Horizons Bible Study. If you are one of these women, Kathleen Keefer is offering an online Bible Study is being offered by Synod of the Lakes and Prairies Presbyterian Women for anyone (no matter the gender) who would like to join in. The group will meet on the following Monday evenings: 2/10; 3/10; 4/21; 5/12; 6/23 at 6:30 pm Central. Please email: kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com to receive the zoom link.



SPRING GATHERINGS: If your PW Presbytery is making plans for a Fall Gathering and is looking for a speaker, contact a USAME participant to lead a presentation on the USA Mission Experience to the Arizona-Mexico border:

Julie Miller: jam1150@hotmail.com

Louella Voigt: louvoigt@hotmail.com

Kathleen Keefer: kathleenkeefe20@gmail.com

Presbyterians have been giving a Land Acknowledgement for some time now to give honor to the Indigenous peoples who lived on this land before us. PW Synod meetings/events now begin with a land acknowledgement. Your PWP/PWC meetings/gatherings can begin with one too. An example can be found at www.presbyterianwomen.org/downloads/land-and-history-acknowledgement

The Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Lakes and Prairies created a new Facebook page to keep you informed on all the exciting things happening with PWSLAP! The page can be found by clicking on this link: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61552522904776> or by searching for Synod of Lakes and Prairies Presbyterian Women on Facebook. Once you find the page, please "Like" it and updates will appear in your Facebook feed.

If you have any items you would like to add to the PWSLAP Facebook page, please send them to Christy Abraham, PWSLAP Facebook Coordinator at christylou71@gmail.com

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ARE BOLD – AROUND THE WORLD

CELEBRATING A BOLD PW

“PW are uniquely BOLD” is a short yet powerful two-minute video that highlights the unique and important witness that PW brings to the church and world. Available at youtube.com/presbyterianwomen/videos (PW’s YouTube channel), the video debuted at the 225th General Assembly (2022) and is an excellent tool for showing why Presbyterian Women matters. Share a link for the video in your next personal email, church newsletter or minute for mission. Use it as a tool to raise awareness about and invite others to participate in our life-changing organization.

READY FOR DOWNLOADING

“PW Essentials” (formerly PW Manual) is available at <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/PWR23120-PW-Essentials.pdf> for downloading. In the future, any changes or new editions will be available in a downloadable format only.

Living in a world without violence against women and children. Pause for a moment of silence on Thursdays at noon your local time to remember and honor those who have died at the hand of sexualized or gender-based violence. Go online at <https://www.ecumenicalwomenun.org/thursdays-in-black> and commit to the pledge below:

I commit to: **Thursdays in Black.**

In solidarity. In protest. In mourning. For awareness and In hope.

By supporting to wear black on Thursdays, I stand

- In solidarity with 1 in 3 women worldwide who face violence in their lives
- In protest against systems and societies that encourage violence in any form
- In mourning for men, women and children who are harmed and killed in sexual violence
- For awareness and knowledge about the challenges of sexual and gender-based violence.
- In the hope that a different reality is possible.

MAKE THE PLEDGE. #THURSDAYS IN BLACK. STAND AGAINST VIOLENCE.



**PRESBYTERIAN
DISASTER ASSISTANCE**
OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

Ferncliff Camp & Conference Center in Little Rock is ready to host church mission trips to help replenish the stock of disaster kits

To watch the video, copy and paste the link below into your browser.

<https://youtu.be/tBQV9PdoaKY>



The new Justice & Peace Calendar is not out yet. I hope to find it on the PW website soon! Keep watching!!

Presbyterian Women's *Build a Bouquet* FUNdraiser

PW's *Build a Bouquet* campaign invites us to celebrate all the individuals and programs that help Presbyterian Women bloom in so many spectacular ways and places. Funds received through this campaign will build PW's Annual Fund, which supports all PW ministries and programs, at all levels of the organization.

Bouquets

Beginning in May
Churchwide
2024, gifts to



2023 through the
Gathering in August
Presbyterian

Women's *Build a Bouquet* campaign will be recognized with a virtual bouquet. Bouquets will be digitally displayed at the Churchwide Gathering and via other PW communications.

Seven bouquet options + one community garden are available!

	<p>Flower</p> <p>Carnations Lillies (memorial) Tulips Daisies Sunflowers Mixed bouquet Roses Community garden</p>	<p>Amount</p> <p>\$10.00 \$10.00 \$25.00 \$35.00 \$45.00 \$55.00 \$100.00 \$500.00</p>
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For each gift to the PW *Build a Bouquet* campaign, a card (in honor or in memory of) will be available to print and mail, download and email, or email directly with a personalized message.

Build your bouquet (or learn more) at presbyterianwomen.org/bouquet.

Or, send a check with additional information (the bouquet option you choose, your name and address, email address and telephone number) to: Presbyterian Women, Inc., Remittance Processing—Giving, PO Box 643652, Pittsburgh PA 15264-3652.

Presbyterian Women's Annual Fund (the Mission Pledge) makes possible every mission, program and resource of PW, including the Churchwide Gathering. Give now to support Presbyterian Women's witness in the world.

GIVE TO PW'S ANNUAL FUND

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