

JOYFUL NOISE

NEWS FOR PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA



From the Moderator



As we approach the beginning of our Church year with Advent, we reflect with awe and praise on the foundational line of our PW Purpose: *Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ*. Living with this assurance of Grace may you find a balance between the inner and outer journeys we take daily.

May the joy of being in God's presence through prayer and bible study become the joy of interacting with and serving our sisters and brothers, God's children all around us. Listen for God's Spirit within and allow the Spirit to direct and inform your day.

It continues to be a joy for me to share your programs and learn of the creative ways you are carrying out the PW Purpose in you church and community. Both fall gatherings were well attended and well received. The hospitality was exceptional, workshops stimulating and informative, and worship enriching and energizing. Over 200 women from 42 churches participated. Although it sometimes seems a long way to go to join with other PW for a morning, those who came felt well rewarded for their journey.

Read the many ideas here and let us know what is helpful, what else you would like to know, how the Presbytery Coordinating Team could be of more help to you.

Have a blessed and joy filled Advent and Christmas.

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- ***Please pass this issue of Joyful Noise to the person responsible for distributing information to the Presbyterian Women in your church.***

Happy Holidays!!

Daily Devotional Study

Expecting the Word, a daily devotional study for **Advent** is available to download free at www.WordsMatter.org/advent-devotional.

Megan Manas, national PW Justice and Peace program specialist has edited this collection of meditations by an ecumenical group of church leaders, both women and men, for the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Including art and questions for reflection, *Expecting the Word* examines how we make choices about the stories we tell and the words we use to tell them. As we await the birth of One who would be our Savior, how will we make these choices?

2011 Global Exchange to India

Twenty-seven Presbyterian women are visiting India to build relationships with and learn more about the most pressing issues for our Indian sisters and brothers. As participants visit Delhi, Shillong, Kolkata, Agra and Durgapur, they will learn about the impact of environmental issues and human trafficking on women and children throughout Asia.

They will visit with church partners and learn about the projects and relationships that are helping women and men create brighter futures, and the initiatives providing education and health to help children grow strong. Learn more about the [2011 Exchange](#) on [Facebook](#) or by following [Presbyterian Women's blog](#).

Mission Malwi

Dr. Barbara Nagy has requested a new supply of baby caps for Nkhoma Hospital. The Presbytery is sending a delegation in May. So let us have a good number of these knitted or crocheted caps that protect the life of new borns for them to take with them. Please do NOT use red yarn as that has political implications the hospital would like to avoid. Send your completed caps to the Presbytery office or bring them to the PW Spring Gathering, April 21. We shall send several patterns by e-mail to all churches for whom we have e-mail addresses. Others can contact Betty Yoder, Mission Facilitator to receive patterns by mail (828-693-4016).

Consider being part of the Presbytery Delegation to Malawi May 21-June 6, 2012 and see for yourself the life giving work of both the hospital and Ebenezer school for this whole district of Malawi. Application forms are on the Presbytery website and due by January 30, 2012.

PW On Facebook

Visit (or better yet, "like"!) Presbyterian Women on Facebook. You'll hear the latest about Presbyterian Women's mission, justice and peace, publishing and leadership development work. And you can tell Presbyterian Women all the wonderful things you're doing!

The Presbytery Resource Center is relocating to Montreat Conference Center. You will be able to access material from your homes via computer. You can pick it up personally or have it mailed to you. The collection includes Women's studies and PW material. If you want to contribute to make this Center at Montreat happen, write a check to PWNC –Resource Center and mail to Presbytery Office, 114 Silver Creek Rd., Morganton, NC 28655.

Justice and Peace

A Glimpse into One Great Hour of Sharing

by Margarete Kennerly

Because I am on the National Hunger Advisory Board of the Presbyterian Hunger Program, I have had the unique opportunity to see the wonderful connectional nature of our church at work. Churches take the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering each Easter season. This offering is sent to Louisville and divided among the Self-Development of People group, the Presbyterian Disaster Relief group and the Presbyterian Hunger Program. Our task is to read grants and decide how the gifts of the people are used.

We do not take this task lightly! Each committee member reads about 20 national grants and 3 to 5 international ones. These are grants that have already been read by staff and had the follow-up of checks with local Presbyteries or International partners to make sure they are effective. This year we funded 120 national grants totaling \$468,000. We declined 47 because they did not meet our criteria or

there were not enough funds. Special consideration was given to programs which dealt with ways to alleviate hunger that were more far-reaching than a local soup kitchen, although we gave 27 congregational grants of \$1,000. Because of the far reaching effects of hunger, we favored programs that deal with systemic change - with trying to get at the root causes of hunger.

Internationally, we granted 24 projects totaling \$622,747. These included a program in Cameroon that helped women set up a grain bank to save seed that they can use to trade or sell and to plant in the appropriate season. They can also use this to get loans as they have something of great value - seeds that flourish in their environments.

Although time consuming, this experience of seeing your gifts at work is a wonderful glimpse into how we work together to help feed God's children and work for justice in the food systems of the world. I give thanks for all of you and your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

5 Cents A Meal

Your gifts to our Presbytery of Western North Carolina 5 Cents a Meal Offering also make a great difference. The PW Fall Gatherings provided \$53.08 to this combined effort. These funds are also allocated as committee members read and visit sites making requests for funds. - some of them for programs within the Presbytery and some for International programs (we don't get to visit those!)

This is a program started by Presbyterian Women years ago as 2 Cents a Meal. We can give thanks for the many lives it has touched as we follow the command of Jesus, "You give them something to eat."

Social Justice Publication

For the Church

Unbound: An Inter-active Journal of Christian Social Justice is an online journal and community that examines, expresses, and provokes social justice as inspired by the prophetic gospel of Jesus Christ. As both a journal and a forum for conversation, action and community building, *Unbound* is at once the inheritor of the print journal *Church & Society* (98 years running) and the innovator of an interactive approach to support social ministry.

Horizon's as a Gift

Until January 30, 2012 you can give two gift subscriptions to *Horizons* for the price of one.

Consider your minister, church resource center, daughters, or have two women go together to order so that all of your circle leaders and C-Team have a subscription. This will include the Bible Study in March as well as the six bi-monthly issues on timely topics. **866-802-3635** or <http://horizons.pcusa>

Mission: Guatemala

1. Thank you!

For the fifty Spanish *Horizon* Bible study books the women of this presbytery have provided yearly for the Presbyterian Women in Guatemala. This year's study books on the Beatitudes were delivered to Guatemala by Juana, who visited our Fall Gathering in Valdese.

For the \$240 given yearly by our presbytery PW to the *Obrera* Program. These funds enable the *obreras* (literally helpers) to travel around the country to local women's groups and provide education and support. See an update on this program below provided by Amanda Craft.

2. A new opportunity!

Four women from our partner presbyteries in Guatemala will be invited to visit with us in April 2012. they will attend our Spring Gathering and visit churches, PW groups, and ministries across our presbytery. One of the goals of the partnership is to develop closer relationships among the women of our presbyteries, and we hope to further that goal while our visitors are here. There is much potential benefit in what we can learn from each other and in the ways we can work together. You can help as we prepare for their visit:

We are looking for volunteers to serve on a planning team to schedule their time here. Please contact Mimi Michael, mimimichael@charter.net or 828-465-0335 if you are available to help.

We are looking for meaningful visits and experiences for our Guatemalan guests. If you would like them to visit your church or PW group or a ministry in your area, please contact Mimi.

Funding will be needed to cover their expenses. **We are asking each circle in our presbytery to consider giving \$1 for each woman in their circle.** This is not only a practical way to raise the support needed, but is also symbolic of how each of us can have a role in strengthening the ties with our Guatemalan sisters. Please discuss this in your Presbyterian Women groups and send a check to our treasurer clearly marked for "Guatemalan Women Spring 2012 Visit."

Mimi Michael

The Legacy of Presbyterian Women Continues

Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study.....The mission Yearbook, this “annual report” from the communion of saints, started as a ministry of Presbyterian Women! It dates back to 1892, when the Women’s Executive Committee for Home Mission, the organization of Presbyterian Women, prepared a simple Calendar of Prayer to help women’s societies pray for missionaries on designated days. Three years later the first mission yearbook appeared, called the Year Book for Prayer for Foreign Missions. That publication was joined with the prayer calendar in a 1919 edition, the Year Book of Prayer for Missions, when both international and domestic personnel were included. In 1971 the name changed to what we know today as the Mission Yearbook for Prayer and Study. Having been in continuous annual publication since 1892, it has the longest history of any denominational mission and prayer book in the United States.

Churchwide Gathering

What is the Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women?

The Gathering, held once every three years, is an opportunity for Presbyterian women from across the country (and around the world!) to gather for worship, education, community-building, fun and renewal. Participants will enjoy workshops, tours, forums, plenary sessions with inspiring speakers and worship. PW’s triennial Business Meeting also takes place during the Gathering, where budget, leadership and programmatic emphases will be decided.

In 2012, the Gathering will be held July 18–22 in Orlando, Florida, (all under one roof) at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center. Themed “River of Hope,” the 2012 Gathering will renew our hope and explore Psalm 46:4–5:

*There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the
holy habitation of the Most High.
God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved;
God will help it when the morning dawns.*

Your moderator and all *Horizons* subscribers have received the program book listing the many opportunities or you can check out the program, registration and housing details on the web at <http://gamc.pcusa.org/ministries/pwgathering/about-gathering/>. If you plan to go please let Suzanne Barrett know so we can connect people, get you WNC name tags, and communicate before, at the Gathering and after. It only happens once every three years so seriously consider participating.

Creative Ministries

We are moving quickly into the season of thanksgiving for our veterans as well as for our personal and family blessings and of course the joyous anticipation of the birthday celebration of our Savior, Jesus Christ. This is also season for the PW Thank Offering, a time to recognize and share our blessings, however meager, with the millions of women who are so much less fortunate than we.

Many of us in the United States have not felt particularly fortunate and maybe not even blessed since our country has been in financial difficulties for several years. The stories of failing businesses, foreclosures and high unemployment have certainly been disheartening. Any yet, we are blessed not only by our faith in our Lord, but as we look around, by all the different ways there is support for Americans who need help.

There is a quote from a book called “The World We Have: A Buddhist Approach to Peace and Ecology” by Thich Nhat Hanh that perhaps can help bring things into focus: “My bowl, empty now, will soon be filled with precious food. Beings all over the Earth are struggling to live. How fortunate I am to have enough to eat. When many people on this earth look at an empty bowl, they know their bowl will continue to be empty for a long time. So the empty bowl is important to honor as the full bowl.”

If we expand this idea, we can say the empty bowl represents not just the huge issue of world hunger, but the other struggles faced by people all over the world, including shelter, medical care, domestic violence against women, and days filled with uncertainty for hope for the future.

As faithful Christians, we have an obligation to lift our voices in prayer and open our hearts in support of these desperate people. And as we can, to share our blessings. I love the Fellowship of the Least Coin: Each time a woman prays, she sets aside the least coin of her local economy as a symbol of the prayer. These “least coins” are shared all around to world in support of women. Imagine, every time you pray, you put a penny aside – how many pennies would you have in a week, a month, a year??

I wish you all a wonderful holiday season. And pray that each one of us can find blessings in every day, regardless of our circumstances, as Sisters in Christ.

Mimi Michael

Dates and Deadlines

January 31, 2012	History Report Due	
February 15, 2012	Scholarship Form Due	
February 25, 2012	WNC Presbytery Retreat	Morganton, NC
April 21, 2012	Spring Gathering	First Pres, Hickory
June 7-10, 2012	PW Synod Summer Gathering	Massenetta, VA
July 18-22, 2012	Churchwide Gathering	Orlando, FL



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