

Bonnie Watts, Moderator, Middle Tennessee Presbytery, writes:

At our CT Meeting in July, it was suggested we start having Cluster Gatherings in the spring of 2010 instead of a Spring Gathering that includes PW from our entire Presbytery. We feel if this does not work we can always return to a large spring gathering the following year.

Our Fall Gatherings will not change. They include a Horizons Bible Study review that our women enjoy and will continue for the entire PW of Middle TN.

The Presbytery of Middle Tennessee PW have not done these types of gatherings before but felt now was a good time to try the change with gas being so high and our aging membership unwilling to drive long distances.

This initiative was mentioned to numerous women and at our Fall Gathering and the response has been very positive. We have quite a few small churches in outlying areas that do not participate in any PW activities, so we decided to go to them.

Cluster Leaders Mary Ellen Ausenbaugh, Diane Thurston and I met and came up with the attached Cluster Revitalization. The other information was collected from an e-ministry class I took, some of it we may be able to incorporate into what we would like to accomplish.

Three women have stepped up to be Cluster Leaders since July and two others have said they would help lead the Cluster Gatherings.

We have more meetings set with the CT and local moderators/contacts to define exactly what our PW want and how our CT will help accomplish the 2010 Spring Cluster Gatherings during our 2009 planning sessions.

## CLUSTER REVITALIZATION

PURPOSE: Revitalize PWP Clusters:

- \* Bring Presbyterian Women in the Congregations together regionally through local gatherings
- \* Reduce Travel
- \* Provide a means of connection for groups of churches in outlying areas
- \* Encourage the development of fellowship, friendships and area common interest
- \* Increase awareness of PW Presbytery and PW Churchwide
- \* Develop connections to PW Presbytery through the PWP Coordinating Team

ACTIVITIES:

- \* Cluster Leaders to meet with moderators of PW Congregations

- \* Ask for input on ideas for Cluster Gatherings programs – “What would you like to have?”
- \* Each Cluster would choose speakers and offering recipient
- \* Include 5 minutes at each Cluster Gathering for PW update – Presbytery, Churchwide – news and interest.
- \* Put PW Cluster gathering information on the PWP Website.
- \* PW Website – use newsletter to explain in detail how to get onto the PW / Presbytery website
- \* Ask churches to communicate mission projects / giving through Clusters.
- \* Consider doing a ‘Cluster Mission Project’
- \* View a local charity, day care center, clothes closet, shelter as a ‘meeting’ project.

OTHER INFORMATION:

- \* Gatherings – don’t make meals a competition
- \* Allow several churches to participate - one church hosts, another brings food, another provides copies / bulletins, etc.
- \* Large Nashville Cluster meeting could replace Presbytery Spring Meeting – open to all women in the Presbytery.
- \* Bonnie will send Cluster Leaders ideas on Revitalization.
- \* Cluster Leaders AND all CT members will need to support and attend Cluster Gatherings.
- \* Joyce – TIS materials and resources and Mary Alva – Devotional support

## **Phases of Long-Range Plan How To Attract Younger Presbyterian Women**

Establish a three-to-five phase plan for your local coordinating team:

### **Phase One**

- Identify, enlist and develop leadership
- Prayer and Bible Study

Note: Leadership development, prayer and Bible Study continue in Years Two to Five

### **Phase Two**

- Begin programming
- Approach Search Committee with goal of getting 30 % of the Coordinating Team as Young Women

### **Phase Three**

- Train Coordinating Team in all positions

#### **Phase Four**

- Define new jobs for older members so they are not left out

#### **Phase Five**

- Add an additional 30% in Younger Women to the Retreat Planning

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### **YOUNG WOMEN INVOLVEMENT IN PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OR IN THE CHURCH**

Responses to Nadine's inquiry: We would like to involve younger women in Presbyterian Women as well as the church. We see very few 20's, 30' and even early 40's. What can Presbyterian Women do to encourage you to get involved with PW or for that matter, the church?

1. Many people don't begin a spiritual awakening until their 30s which is probably why you don't see involvement until the 40s. They have to identify for themselves what their spirituality is in their 30s before they want to be involved. Until we reach our 30s, we are focused on education and personal development, spirituality seems to be the last area of personal development.
2. I think this is also the time that we realize we don't know as much as we though we did in our late teens and early 20s.
3. For moms - how to involve young children in prayer and begin teaching spiritual values and mores so they have solid foundation.
4. What daily, weekly rituals or practices can begin to teach prayer and love and also reinforce the Sunday.
5. How to engage in religious observance or hold to personal beliefs when many friends and co-workers may not be doing so.
6. How to engage in social justice for things I believe in. I don't feel my letter or my vote makes a difference; how can I be involved at a grassroots or other level to effect change in my community, country and world? What keeps people motivated to do this? Specific topics would include global warming, female abuse and mutilation, women's health rights (abortion, election for single parenting, etc.)

7. What about basics on Presbyterianism, what the church believes?
8. How does one personally reconcile the church beliefs when their own personal beliefs may be different (gay marriage, for example).
9. Can a person support issues that are contrary to the position of the PCUSA and still be Presbyterian? What if their personal beliefs are more restrictive? I don't recall a lot of teaching on what the church's position is on such matters through my high school years.
10. You want to capture these age groups of women as they may be returning to the church or considering a return to regular church attendance and involvement and addressing some of the thornier issues may do just that.
11. It seems like there are plenty of articles and workshops on balancing career, family, volunteer work, etc. But, I don't see a lot on releasing guilt or anxiety for doing one thing over another. There are many expectations on women that we don't fully realize until we are working and have children and we do not realize the expectations we have. Maybe a workshop to help young women identify their own expectations and values with respect to marriage, family, work, and recognizing that balancing it all means sacrifices.
12. Men are much more involved in family and home life than ever before and that is also influencing how women perceive their own roles.
13. A panel discussion with established PW who can share their experiences of being involved in PW and why that is meaningful to them may also serve as inspiration or produce good talking points.
14. I think there is also a much broader movement going on with New Age "stuff". What "new age" practices are embraced by Christian women of faith? I think many hide the "new age" practices they engage in for fear that it will be considered heretical. This is really old stuff that is being rediscovered or reintroduced. Crystal healing, angels, spirit guides, Gnosticism, using the many wonderful things God placed on this planet to supplement the practice of prayer. Sometimes people need crutches as they simply don't have pure faith. "New Age" can bridge that gap.
15. The Secret. This is quite popular these days. It is basically the power of positive thinking with a broad historical context. There is a movie and book website, all called "The Secret". [www.theseecret.com](http://www.theseecret.com)

**Talking Points/Class Notes**  
**How To Attract Young Presbyterian Women to Your PW**  
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Establish a three to five year plan for your local coordinating team

- Have an idea committee of three, who know the congregation, target one woman (age fifty – or middle of your range) to confide in for leadership. Work toward her service as Moderator of the Coordinating Team
- Sell 50 year old on a plan of getting younger women (28-48) involved. Fifty-year-old will be your mentor to next generation. Then move to 21-28 year olds as the process takes shape. Strong Bible Study is KEY.
- Consult Christian Educator regarding opportunities for University students and use of Horizon's for Bible Study for their age group.
- Begin praying together for success. Do a reality check of ages available through congregation. State goals. Be realistic about 54-75 year olds.
- Offer a well-planned and publicized Christmas program and involve the Younger Women with parts. Young Women are very capable on computer. Express a need for their help with printed program.
- Offer a retreat targeting the interest of Younger Women within the next month to six weeks following Christmas with well-planned advance publicity and accommodations. Get church to help underwrite costs.
- Six weeks later find a very short-term service project of a local mission that offers hands on experience to show PW interest in mission work. Observe the Younger Women leading. Make their time well spent.
- Work through a Search Committee with a goal of getting 30 % of the Coordinating Team as Young Women.
- Make every PW meeting worth Young Woman's time to attend.
- Track the interest of Younger Women by having small group meetings to evaluate. Consult minister. Dialogue with the women. Establish a prayer partner system. Make fun WITH A PURPOSE.
- Establish a Younger Women's Bible Study (by invitation) with the best leader you can find! This is VERY important. A really good teacher!
- Offer childcare. But remember college age needs freedom and focus.
- Experiment with Breakfast meetings, may be surprised by attendance!
- Announce a new Circle for the coming year at a totally new time and new format. Maybe NO food will be served and one-day projects only.

- Suggested plan:  
**Year one** – target leadership, prayer and Bible Study. **Year two** – Programming begins, approach Search Committee with 30% goal. **Year three** – Train Coordinating Team in all positions. **Year four** – define new jobs for older members so they are not left out. **Year five** - add an additional 30% in Younger Women to the Retreat Planning.



## The eMinistry Network

*Connecting the Church in Ministry*

### HOW TO ATTRACT YOUNGER WOMEN TO YOUR PW

Class Outline — September 16, 2008

Leader: Kathy Randall

#### Long-range Plan to Attract Younger Presbyterian Women

Realizing that each participant will have a different need, the class will explore the common ground shared by congregations that want to strengthen Presbyterian Women in the local church.

The discussion will cover the following path:

- a) REALITY - Assess status of “typical” existing group
  - Take a realistic look in the mirror
  - Understand that things will have to change
- b) METHOD - Select the conduit toward utopia
  - Name the ring-leader
  - Gain confidence
- c) ACTION - Set the plan into motion
  - Pray
  - Establish a workable timeline
- d) PROPORTION - Seek a percentage of the target group in intervals
  - Take Search Committee into the inner circle
  - At first, the younger women may be 54

- e) PROGRAMMING - Nurture established members into new roles
  - Know the importance of training for EVERYONE
  - Make room for the “newbie”
  
- f) ACHIEVEMENT - Recognize desired results
  - Eyes open and smile broadly
  - Celebrate success