



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

PRESBYTERY OF MISSISSIPPI

February 2008

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Moderator's Moment – Myra Hester

The weekend of January 25-26, over 50 Presbyterian women from Mississippi gathered at St. Mary of the Pines in Chatawa for our Annual Winter Retreat. Dee Koza, a Certified Christian Educator, from Dothan, Alabama led us in “Finding God...Finding Home.” We explored faith journey words including love, humility, joy, patience, courage, determination, faith, gratitude, hope, kindness, and forgiveness. Dee also led us in exploring our “Pathway to Peace”, considering those who accompany us, those who inspire us, those who challenge us, and those whom we meet along the way. In considering the 23rd Psalm as a pathway, she asked, where are we? Where do we stall?

Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Mississippi are continuing the “Casserole Caravan” to the coast. Schedules are changing some to better coordinate with the new way volunteers are coming to the coast. Sarah Amos, Contact for Justice and Peace, will begin to coordinate these schedules with Inez Dunlap, Special Projects and Concerns Coordinator. Inez will fill the unexpired term of Josephine Austin as Cluster C Leader.

At the Annual Gathering on April 5 at First-Trinity in Laurel, we will propose a bylaw change to reflect more closely the structure of PW in the Synod. The Contact for Justice and Peace will become the Vice Moderator for Justice and Peace and the job description will include those concerns previously under the Special Projects and Concerns position. As we heard from Gloria Moorman in September, Justice and Peace is about mission, looking around us and finding what needs to be done, and then doing it - exactly what we have been doing with the Casserole Caravan and other projects.

Our experiment with e-newsletters seems to be a success. Those I have heard from seem to like being able to have their own copy and enjoy knowing what is happening throughout our Presbytery. Also by having the email capability, our entire newsletter is now on the Mississippi Presbytery website and the PW Synod website. Being able to include registration forms to download has also been helpful. Keep giving us suggestions – this is a learning experience for us all.

I hope to see all of you at the PW Annual Gathering at First-Trinity in Laurel on Saturday, April 5, when our new leaders will be installed for the coming year. The offering recipient this year will be Clean Water U, the training facility at Camp Hopewell in north Mississippi, where teams are trained for Living Waters for the World installations.

Cluster A – Annie Ruth Thigpen

We held our Fall Cluster Gathering on Saturday, October 6, 2007, at the beautiful and historic Handsboro Presbyterian Church in Gulfport. A total of 36 persons attended our meeting. The offering of \$406.00 was given to the Harrison County Children's Shelter. The Cluster meeting for 2008 will be at Gautier Presbyterian Church on Saturday, October 4, 2008.

I have been in contact with most of the moderators or contact persons from each church in the past few days. They report continued recovery from the storm. Some still have volunteers staying in their churches. They participated in various activities and programs in their churches during the Advent and Christmas seasons.

Cluster B – Linda Soons

I would like to thank the ladies from Jones Memorial, Prospect, Trinity-Meridian, First Trinity in Laurel, Westminster, and Pineview for their continued support for the Casseroles for the Coast mission project. In July we were able to take 110 casseroles and in November a total of 118 casseroles. We took 107 casseroles to the coast on February 1, 2008. Keep up the good work..

We had a very successful Cluster B Fall Gathering at Jones Memorial on September 13, 2007. We had a total of 53 in attendance and \$536.00 was collected for Habitat for Humanity. The ladies enjoyed the update of what is happening in our Presbytery by our Executive Presbyter, William A. de Prater and the overview of the bible study given by Norma Loposser. Next year, we look forward to having our Cluster B Fall Gathering at Pineview Presbyterian Church in Hattiesburg on September 20, 2008. Hope to see you there!

Many of the ladies from Cluster B enjoyed the winter retreat at Chatawa and especially the presentation by Dee Koza.

Trinity-Meridian and Jones Memorial are saving stamps for the Stamp Ministry project that was on our Synod's website. I encourage more of our churches to also participate in this project.

Cluster C – Inez Dunlap

Surprise Cluster C. You have a new cluster leader. When Josephine Austin felt she had to resign, Myra asked yours truly, Inez Dunlap, to fill the position. Please be patient with the "new girl on the block". I will try to learn fast.

The first order of business is something I am familiar with--casseroles. Betty and Glenn Gentry delivered 40 casseroles from the Fondren freezer to the coast the middle of January. They have gotten rave reviews from the Amish people presently working with us on the coast. But, between 490 and 590 workers are expected in March! And guess

whose month that is-CLUSTER C! Fondren is planning a "cook" day in February and Briarwood is too. The offer to bring your casseroles to the Fondren freezer is still good. You cook'em and I'll get them to the coast.

Cluster D – Renee Benolt

It is a joy to join with you in God's work. The ladies of Cluster D are enjoying the wonderful Bible study on Ruth. We are tending to the members in our local congregations and community. We also delivered 25 casseroles, rolls and cornbread dishes to the Presbytery Relief Office on 30th Avenue in Gulfport. This food is for an Amish building crew (from Pennsylvania) that is building homes from the ground up on the Mississippi coast. Many thanks to the cooks from Magnolia, J.J. White, Westminster and First Presbyterian Church in Natchez.

Ladies, I would like you all to know what an honor it has been to serve as your cluster leader for the past three years. I praise God for each and every one of you. Many Blessings! Renee

Special Projects and Concerns – Inez Dunlap

Hello, casserole cooks and deliverers. Workers have been few the last month or so. BUT, the Amish are coming, the Amish are coming! In fact some are already here and working diligently on the prefabricated houses they brought with them. Let's show them what good Southern cooking is all about. Here is a new special request: Before you take casseroles to the coast please:

CALL JENNY at 1-228-871-7114

She will tell you where they would like them delivered. There is no freezer at the new office so that is not a convenient place for deliveries. You will still be asked to deliver to only one location, however. The address of the new office is: 1223 30th Ave. Suite B, Gulfport, MS. Cluster B is delivering Jan. 31 for February. So March will be Cluster C and April Cluster D.

Peace and Justice Workshops – Sara Amos

The Peace and Justice Workshop help during the months of August, September, and October had a high attendance rate in the majority of the meeting areas. Church representatives who were in attendance of the meeting were already implementing the different subject areas that were discussed and committed to continued procedures and fundamentals of the workshop. In addition, handouts were given to help increase the knowledge of each subject matter covered during the meeting.

During the Open Forum, Inez Dunlap voiced the suggestion to start a video presentation of dynamic speakers who have gone through some hardships. The video presentation would be composed of different speakers followed by positive outcomes and comforting words. It was also suggested that these video presentations be at the

disposal of abuse shelters and other facilities that target under privileged individuals. It is our goal to get the project up and running in a timely manner.

If any groups, organizations, or participating Churches want to send in anything or make some positive suggestions, please feel free to do so. I can be contacted to address any ideas, concerns, or comments by email, asara51@yahoo.com or by phone, (601) 545-3949. If I cannot address an issue, I will proudly place you in touch with someone who can provide you with some assistance.

By-Laws Change

A motion will be presented at the Annual Gathering to merge the leadership positions of Contact for Justice and Peace with Special Projects and Concerns to Vice-Moderator for Justice and Peace. The rationale for this change is to more clearly reflect the organization of the Churchwide and Synod PWCTs. The Vice-Moderator does not move up to be Moderator. The Moderator-Elect does that. The motion will come from the PWCT and will not require a second.

Annual Gathering Invitation

The women of First-Trinity Presbyterian in Laurel would be honored by your presence at the 20th Annual Gathering of the Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Mississippi on Saturday, April 5. Registration will begin at 9:30 and the meeting at 10 am with lunch following at a cost of \$8.00. For reservations, please call Margaret Rice at 601-580-2702 or 601-729-5735 or email her at margaretrice@c-gate.net. You may also call the church office at 601-428-8491 to your reservations.

Winter Retreat at Chatawa





PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN - SYNOD OF LIVING WATERS MODERATOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Living Waters is a healthy organization engaged in prayer, Bible study, mission, and service. We strive to be “an inclusive, caring community of women” in the PC (USA). We thank the Synod for supporting us—financially, emotionally, and personally in all of our programs.

Women from each of the twelve Presbyteries attended Leadership Training on June 6-8, 2007, at First Presbyterian Church in Franklin, Tennessee. Beautifully led by Mary Hammett, the event provided training for Presbytery leaders who will in turn train women from their churches. Leadership Training Workshops were led by a team who attended a churchwide training event in Albuquerque, NM in March: Martha Knichel (St. Andrews), Carolyn Jordan (Sheppards & Lapsley), Mary Hammett (Sheppards & Lapsley), Bonnie Blair (Mid-South), Mary Ellen Ausenbaugh (Middle Tennessee), Gloria Moorman (Mid-Kentucky), Loretta Bradley (East Tennessee), and Mary Weber (Transylvania).

Martha Knichel, Moderator of Synod PW, presided at our 5th Triennial Gathering, in Franklin, Tennessee, June 8-10, 2007. We had stimulating workshops, met out Churchwide Moderator Dr. Catreli Steele Hunter, studied and worshipped together. During a beautiful installation service, Martha presented me with a Living Waters of the World stole (which she designed). The stole will be passed on to each moderator for her three-year term.

Our Mission Focus for the two combined meetings was Living Waters for the World. Thanks to Dr. Charles Bryson, who painted and donated an original depiction of the Women at the Well, our auction went well. Together with our offering we were able to give a generous amount to Living Waters for the World. We were treated to the Premier Showing of the new LW/W DVD, “Clean Water for all of God’s Children.”

Presbytery level PW normally get together twice a year, in the spring and fall, for Gatherings or Cluster Meetings. The theme of most of this fall’s meetings has been training, as recommended by our churchwide coordinating team. I have been blessed to be able to take part in a number of these meetings and find them to be a key to living our faith and keeping us connected.

Our churchwide coordinating team is also encouraging us to identify churches that do not have active PW and to work to help them start PW, noting that we need to be flexible and creative in order to meet the needs of all age women.

Thanks to our wonderful secretary, Polly Banks, we have been able to start a website! We use it to inform members of upcoming events, tell our Mission stories, share devotions, learn about each other, and build enthusiasm. Electronic communication is wonderful, but we realize that not everyone is comfortable in that medium, so we appreciate the coverage that PW has received in The Voice. We share our Presbytery PW newsletters, talk on the phone, and make every effort to stay connected, even when we cannot travel to be together face-to-face.

Our future looks good. Three women from our Synod have been selected to attend PW Mission trips in 2008—one to eastern Europe and two to Juarez, Mexico. All three will be

available to speak to groups upon their return. Another upcoming event will be a Racial-Ethnic Conference. All sorts of PW conferences and meetings are planned. Local churches are responding to the challenge to do Mission in their local areas as well as supporting PW projects around the world. We are already looking ahead to our next Triennial Synod Meeting, and our Coordinating team will meet in June, 2008, in Huntsville, Alabama.

We continue to support Columbia Theological Seminary, and our support of Louisville Theological Seminary may grow, as one of our mission trip delegates is a student there. We are always looking for ways to include young women in our community.

In the year 2008 the organization of Presbyterian Women will be twenty years old! Like any adolescent, we have had some growing pains, but we are committed to continuing our work to witness to the promise of God's kingdom

Mary Weber, Moderator
Presbyterian Women in the Synod of Living Waters



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