



SPOTLIGHTING

Presbyterian Women of the James

Spring 2021



Spring GATHERING

Virtual Zoom Meeting

May 1, 2021

Virtual Coffee Hour 9:45AM to 10:00AM

Virtual Meeting 10:00 Am to 12:00 Noon

<http://bit.ly/pwpoj2021>

Registration

Join Presbyterian Women from across the Presbytery of The James for the annual Spring Gathering on Saturday, May 1, 2021 on Zoom. Check in will begin at 9:15 a.m., and the Gathering will convene at 9:30 a.m.

Although we cannot meet in person this year, your Presbytery's Coordinating Team is aiming to make the day's events as much as possible like an in person Spring Gathering. The Gathering will include mission speakers, the annual business meeting, the installation of the new PW-POJ leadership team, the "In Memoriam" necrology, and virtual communion. We even will have mission agency and resource representatives available to speak with you in breakout rooms!

Special Guests:

Ms. Elaine Alderman, PW Moderator, Synod of the Mid-Atlantic

Mrs. Susan Allen, President, Church Women United of Virginia

Ms. Chequila Fields, Board Chair, CARES of Petersburg (Mission Offering Recipient)

Dr. Fred Holbrook, Interim General Presbyter, Presbytery of The James

Dr. Susan Jackson Dowd, Executive Director of Presbyterian Women

Presbytery's Youth Council Members and Ms. Colleen Earp, Associate for Youth Ministry

You must register no later than April 28 to receive the Zoom link to attend Spring Gathering. Don't delay; register today!

Follow this link to register: <http://bit.ly/pwpoj2021>



From Your Moderator:

Soon after I started serving as Secretary on the PW-POJ Coordinating Team, I remember getting a purple button from Churchwide's Leadership Enhancement Team that said "PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN ADAPT." Have we ever proven this during the past twelve pandemic months!

In our personal lives and in our congregations we all have seen the need to evaluate what is essential and what is expendable to keep moving forward in these uncertain and constantly changing times. While we all have missed being together and long to return to having everything take place in person, Presbyterian Women have adapted our ways of doing ministry and have continued to fulfill the components of our purpose during the Covid19 pandemic.

Technology (like Zoom) has helped many PW groups stay connected and continue the portion of our purpose "to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study." This year's second Tuesday noontime Bible Study on Zoom has brought women together from all across the Presbytery of The James to learn more about reclaiming the Spiritual practice of lament. Thank you to Rev. Kelly Kaufman, assisted by Dr. Barbara Gary, Rev. Katherine Jackson, and Rev. Connie Weaver, for your leadership of this year's virtual HORIZONS Bible Study. Thanks also to Kelley Hope, Presbytery of the James' Associate for Communications, who has served as Zoom administrator for the Bible Study and for our Fall and Spring Gatherings of Presbyterian Women of The James. This virtual Bible Study ministry started because of the pandemic and may continue in future years to assist women who may not be able to participate in a Bible Study in her own congregation. Remember, recordings of each lesson are available on the presbyteryofthejames.com website for your access.

In the early months of the pandemic when we were mostly confined to home, Presbyterian Women had to rethink what we could do beyond prayer and financial support "to support the mission of the church worldwide." A congregation near my home has a sign stating "You are now entering the mission field" as you exit the parking lot. I am sure many of you concluded that your pandemic mission field was more local than global. Perhaps your mission has been to check on your confined neighbors to see what help they need such as safely getting groceries. Small actions can be so meaningful. Have you recently had your day brightened by a good old fashioned telephone call or handwritten note of encouragement? Our Area Leaders especially have enjoyed visiting by telephone with their moderators and contact persons this year when in person visits to congregations were not possible.

With the help of Zoom technology, we will learn of a ministry that we can help "to work for justice and peace." CARES, Crisis Assistance Response Emergency Shelter of Petersburg, is the only emergency shelter serving women and children in the Tri-Cities area. CARES is this year's Spring Gathering mission offering recipient. Their Board Chair, Chequila Fields, will be our Gathering mission speaker. Visit their website, www.cares-va.org, to learn more about their important work.

At Spring Gathering Youth Council members of our Presbytery will be speaking on creation care and climate change through a video they are producing. There also will be a live panel where questions will be taken. We are grateful to Colleen Earp, our Presbytery's Associate for Youth Ministry, for working with these young adults on this topic which has been our Presbytery's mission emphasis for the past year. Bringing the generations together in a forum like this is a wonderful way "to build an inclusive, caring community that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (USA).

It has been my honor and privilege to serve as you Moderator. The work you all are doing in your congregations and communities truly "witnesses to the promise of God's Kingdom." Thank you for your love and support which I know you also will give to incoming Moderator Kathy Peebles.

Blessings,

Jayne Sneed, Moderator

Presbyterian Women of The James

Peace and Justice News

The recipient of our offering for Spring Gathering 2021 is CARES. Crisis Assistance Response Emergency Shelter known as CARES. CARES operates the only emergency shelter for women and children in the Tri-Cities area. They serve the communities of Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Prince George. In addition, they operate a Food Pantry and Clothes Closet for low-income residents of Petersburg.

Their aim is to help families return to stability, dignity, and self-reliance by providing emergency shelter, workshops and training, networking, and job searches and more.

The Facts About Homelessness in the Tri-Cities:

27% of women entering the CARES shelter last year cited domestic violence as the reason for their homelessness.

8.7% was the unemployment rate which is 40% higher than the state average.

38% of families that are at a high risk of losing their housing in the event of an emergency.

40% child poverty rate which is 29% higher than the state average.

I welcome suggestions anytime for offering considerations. You may email me at twintoni@aol.com, write me: 14903 Lansgate Ct., Midlothian, VA 23112 or call me at 804.639-9511.

Antoinette Archer, Peace and Justice Coordinator

Spiritual Faith and Development

REVIVE US AGAIN

I.AM.TIRED. These three words begin an article on *resilience in trying times* by Anna Kendig in the January/ February issue of *Horizons* magazine. She laments the many ways in which her daily life and relationships have suffered and have been altered by the coronavirus pandemic. Like you, she can write an awfully long list of how those changes have added to her professional workload, increased family responsibilities, and demands on her time and temper. We are all anxious; we want to do more than get by, we want to feel better.

How are we doing in turning the corner on the coronavirus? We now have vaccines, but distribution has not been smooth: dosages not available, insufficient numbers of trained volunteers to administer the shots and keep the records. The racism and violence that surfaced in the most unlikely places in our country have camped on the doorsteps of the White House. Our national and global economies have not recovered; school systems are floundering trying to reopen in-person classes. Churches have invested in technology to continue conducting worship services, Bible classes, committee meetings, and other activities virtually. What technology has not been able to replace is congregational fellowship. We all miss those church suppers and Sunday morning coffee hours.

Very few people here and around the world have escaped some serious fallout(s) from these societal breakdowns related to the coronavirus pandemic. Is it the randomness of the deadly coronavirus, striking unpredictably everywhere, that is causing the depth of the anxiety we are experiencing?

Ms. Kendig concludes that what she needed is *resilience*. My dictionary defines resilience as the ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like. Those suffering the weariness associated with this pandemic are not *readily* recovering. Ms. Kendig believes resilience is a spiritual skill. She writes that “resilience is about how we maintain some sense of what “True North” feels like for our well-being when we are feeling stretched thin, tossed to and fro by life.” For her, the center of this resilience is faith that the Holy Spirit is guiding us, always. (This is an abbreviated summary of Ms. Kendig's article in *Horizons*.)

As we look back, we can recall how we relied on our faith, our church, friends, and frequently, government and social institutions, for life's necessities and relief during our hardships. We looked to Scriptures and pastors to give us answers, comfort, and hope. We examined our lifestyles, our commitments that may have overshadowed our loyalty to God and vowed to change our ways.

Why, in the current pandemic, do we think we need something else, something more? These resources are still available, relevant, and useful. Why is our anxiety deeper and more intense than the anxiety we have

experienced during natural disasters and other calamities?

Our current *Horizons* Bible study on lament is a lesson on the different ways in which people react to situations for which they lament, individually and often together for a common purpose. The first step when we encounter a situation that becomes lamentable is to pray. God's answers may not be what we pray for, nor come when we expect them. That requires the patience and discipline we have been working on in our Christian walk.

Barbara Gary, Spiritual and Faith Development Coordinator

The Inconvenient Truth of Climate Change

In the January/February issue of *Horizons*, David Attenborough, a founding member of the World Wildlife Fund and noted natural history filmmaker, is quoted as saying that a crime has been committed against our planet, that the world is in ecological peril and headed for disaster unless we take decisive action to address the impact of climate change.

Another prominent climate change activist and influencer is former vice-president Al Gore. He is the founder and current chair of the Climate Reality Project. His work in addressing the impact of climate change earned him (jointly with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

Change) the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize. The following is a quote from his widely acclaimed book *An Inconvenient Truth: The Planetary Emergency of Global Warming and What We Can Do About It*:

Global warming, along with the cutting and burning of forests and other critical habitats, is causing the loss of living species at a level comparable to the extinction event that wiped out the dinosaurs 65 million years ago. That event was believed to have been caused by a great asteroid. This time it is not an asteroid colliding with the Earth and wreaking havoc: it is us.

We are confronted with a wide range of critical climate change issues on a daily basis. These include global warming which leads to warming oceans and melting polar regions, coastal and river flooding, drought, wildfires, and extreme weather events.

The following are examples of wildlife negatively impacted by climate change:

Koalas

Koalas live in the bushland of Australia's east coast where their population has been threatened by rising temperatures, fire, and dehydration. In 2020 wildfires destroyed 25.5 million acres of bushland. It is estimated that more than 25,000 koalas, approximately half the koala population, died. In 2018 Australia experienced its worst droughts in 400 years. Plant life including eucalyptus trees, the koala's main source of food and water, dried up. As a result, a number of koalas died of dehydration.

The Monarch Butterfly

The monarch butterfly is found in North America, Hawaii, Portugal, Spain and New Zealand. Like most butterflies, they are highly sensitive to weather and climate. The monarch's amazing 3000-mile migration from Canada to their winter home in Mexico is increasingly threatened by storms and extreme temperatures. This has caused them to alter their established routes as they deal with freezes in their winter habitat as well as drought and heat waves along their migratory routes.

Higher global temperatures have caused the monarch to move its summer breeding farther north. One novel study measured a 4.9 percent increase in the monarch's wing size over the past century and a half due to its longer journey! Although not yet an endangered species, the monarch population is steadily declining. To put this in perspective, for every 100 butterflies of 20 years ago there are only 20 butterflies today.

- **Did you know** that green sea turtles cross entire oceans to reach their preferred nesting beaches? Their habitats are warm waters in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian oceans with nesting beaches in more than 80 countries. Strong winds can destroy their nests and rising sea levels threaten their breeding habitats.

The green turtle faces another unique challenge. The temperature of the nesting site determines the sex of their hatchlings. The hotter it is, the more babies are born female. A 2018 study of

Australia's Great Barrier Reef, home to one of the largest green sea turtle populations in the world, found "virtually no male turtles are now being produced" on the warmer northern beaches. Crocodiles, some lizards and other reptiles also have temperature-dependent sex determination so it is evident that global warming has a direct impact on their survival. (Source: Rolling Stone, April 2020. Climate Crisis On The Eve of Extinction by Andrea Marks and Hannah Murphy)

- **Did you know** that plastic bags kill approximately 100,000 animals annually? These include whales, dolphins, turtles and penguins that mistake the plastic bags for food.
- **Did you know** that sea turtles mistake floating plastic shopping bags for jellyfish? They are unable to digest the plastic bags they eat. Once there is too much plastic in their stomachs, they die. The plastic that remains is eaten by other animals and the cycle continues.

(Source: produce.planetinsiders.com)

Climate change presents challenges that often seem monumental and beyond our control, but there are measures we can take within our homes that make a difference. Lowering our water heater's temperature, washing our clothes in cold water, using our dishwasher's short cycle, eliminating paper towel usage by using renewable washable towels, purchasing energy efficient appliances, upgrading

lightbulbs, running our heating and cooling systems efficiently and recycling a variety of household items make a difference.

- **Did you know** that using a shorter cold water wash cycle can reduce energy by as much as 66%? (Source: en.m.wikipedia.org)

Individual choices lead to collective action and show the value of our grassroots efforts.

Linda Smiley, Missions

What the Presbyterian Women have meant to me during the Pandemic in their own words

My Circle, The Never Ending Circle, has been God-sent during these unconventional times. Trudy, our moderator, has made extraordinary efforts to ensure no one would be omitted from our group or forgotten in time of need. She aptly conducts our ZOOM meetings, offering tech help when the need arises. Other "angels" include: Nancy, Doreen, Maryann, Connie, Gail and the other members of The Never Ending Circle. Members of our Circle supplied meals, comfort and transportation to doctors, beauty salons and even airports among other errands. The Holy Spirit has certainly touched our lives to spur our Circle to action and care of people in unfortunate situations. I feel God may have used the pandemic to inspire us. We are called to serve our people. God says to "love your neighbor as thyself". Our Circle is making God's Everyone has stepped up to offer help to others, including people outside of

our Circle. words into action. Everyone has stepped up to offer help to others, including people outside of our Circle. Thank you, God, for all our members.

From Sharon Moser

I want to bring to the attention of the PW one of the church circles that has provided an amazing example of love, kindness, and generosity during this time of pandemic. I have belonged to the Neverending Circle of the Fredericksburg Presbyterian Church for many years. The members of the circle are career women who are now retiring to be with their families. The group leader is Trudy McNatt and group members share the responsibilities of leading the monthly lessons as they listen to the teachings and lessons and grow in their faith and knowledge of God. On December 22, 2020, I took a terrible fall that resulted in two surgeries and rehab over the past almost three months. I was not able to take care of myself completely and my family was unable to provide much support. My circle sisters in Christ took over and provided the care I needed to start healing and be safe in my home. They stayed several nights with me until my daughter was able to arrive and take over. I have been on a list to receive meals three days a week from my first day home from the hospital. My circle friends have gone shopping for me so that I have supplies to begin cooking again and becoming independent. They have shared their time, energy, love and caring to help me get back on my feet again. I would not have recovered to the point that I am right now without them. The pandemic did not

influence their commitment to support me and ensure I had whatever was needed to continue healing. They extended themselves beyond the boundaries of the Covid pandemic to assist me through the healing process. While I've been recovering, a second circle sister had a surgery that required extensive follow-up and medical attention. The Neverending Circle members provided the same level of love, care, and attention to this circle member. Finally, our church has other families requiring special support during these difficult times. My circle sisters have helped with other church families with special needs despite the restrictions of the pandemic. The women of this wonderful church circle are not only my sisters in Christ, but are also loving, caring individuals and friends who have proven to be amazing stewards of God. The pandemic has not stopped them from providing the care needed for multiple individuals and families. God has blessed me with their friendship, love, and caring in my life. They are true examples of the kind of Christians that make a difference in our world and our communities.

From Donna Hughes

First United Presbyterian Church

3401 North Ave



The Women at First United joined with the Men to surprise two Homes that they have adopted with Christmas dinners, the dinners were catered.

The women supplied socks, gloves, toiletries, and snacks. We usually help with the cookout in July but, of course we could not last year. We are doing Bible Study by teleconference. Covid 19 has encourage the ladies to pray, seeking God for peace and more love in this world. Like other congregations we pray for the day when we will be able to worship in the building.

Submitted by Evalyn Page

Dates to Remember:

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|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| May 1, 2021 | Virtual Spring Gathering |
| June 2021 | Summer Gathering cancelled |
| November 6, 2021 | Fall Gathering location TBA |

**Presbyterian Women
Presbytery of the James
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