



# SPOTLIGHTING

**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN (POJ)**

**FALL 2021**



## **FALL GATHERING**

### **Virtual Zoom Meeting**

**November 6, 2021**

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

**Meeting 10:00 Am to 12:00 Noon**

**Key Note Speaker: Rev. Rosalind Banbury**

**Fall Gathering Registration Link:**  
[www.presbyteryofthejames.com/fall-gathering/](http://www.presbyteryofthejames.com/fall-gathering/)

## **From Your Moderator**

Well, Ladies we have made it this far with the grace of God. It has not been easy. Lots of improvising to share information and Bible study but we did it. I am looking forward to being your new PW of the James Moderator.

As Jayne would agree, we are creating a new way of “Doing it”. That IT would be Bible Study, Gatherings, continuing our mission in Christ while living the Presbyterian Women’s Purpose.

**Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves**

- **to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,**
- **to support the mission of the church worldwide,**
- **to work for justice and peace, and**
- **to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom.**

In this day and time, we must all remember to “Be Kind”. I have seen these signs all over my community. It makes me contemplate what my grandmother taught me by example, my mother shared with her dedication to family and community. One of my favorite verses from 1 Corinthians 13:4-6. To paraphrase. Love is patient, love is kind...It does not dishonor others, it is not easily angered...it rejoices with the truth. That is what my grandmother, mother and mother-in-law taught me.

And we have the opportunity on November 6 to hear more about this year’s Bible Study, “What My Grandmother taught me” as Our keynote speaker will be Reverend Rosalind Banbury. You all may know her from the Insights she does in the Outlook Horizon Bible Studies. Nancy Long the moderator for Presbyterian Women Synod of the Mid-Atlantic will be joining us bringing the invitation for the in-person Summer Gathering at Massenetta this summer.

We are virtual again for this Fall meeting but praying for in-person in May. Oh, for this dream to come to fruition. Looking forward to hearing about ways you all have “made it thru” in your histories and reports. The Handbook is completed

Please share with your fellow PW ladies to come and join us on November 6<sup>th</sup>, get comfy, have a cup of tea. Love seeing all your smiling faces.

Yours in Faith,

Kathy Peebles, Moderator

## Peace and Justice Coordinator Report

---

Spring Gathering 2021 offering recipient was Crisis Assistance Response Emergency Shelter (CARES) a mission project within the Presbytery of the James. The total offering was \$1,507.00. If you did not send a donation and would like to, please mail to the treasurer, and indicate CARES.

Our Spring Gathering 2022 will benefit a global mission project. In solidarity with our Mission's theme, the Coordinating Team is recommending the following for vote at Fall Gathering on November 6, 2021. As your Peace and Justice Coordinator, I am providing information about the recommended programs. You are welcome to contact me should you need additional information.

1. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - California Wildfires
2. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - Hurricanes

### **PDA – California Wildfires**

We see the impact of climate change in wildfires. While wildfires are a natural part of California's landscape, the fire season started earlier. Climate change is considered a key driver of the fires. This year, they have had 7,883 total fires that damaged 2,487,887 acres.

With 7,883 wildfires blazing, PDA is in communication with all affected presbyteries. National Response Team members are assisting the presbyteries as they assess the situations in their communities and determine how PDA can best assist. Grants have been disbursed to address immediate needs such as feeding programs and emergency housing for displaced residents.

### **PDA – Hurricanes**

As natural disasters grow; Presbyterians respond as out of chaos there is hope. The PDA works with Presbyterian leadership as they assess needs. PDA enables congregations and mission partners of the Presbyterian Church to witness to the healing love of Christ through caring for communities adversely affected by crises and catastrophic events.

Voting will follow Fall Gathering to determine the offering recipient. Voting instructions will come later. Each Church of the Presbytery of the James will have one vote.

Antoinette Archer

Peace and Justice Coordinator

## Ballot for Mission

At each Spring Gathering of Presbyterian Women of The James (PW-POJ) an offering is received for a mission agency which benefits women and children. In odd numbered years the recipient is a local mission agency within the bounds of the Presbytery of The James. In even numbered years a global mission agency is the recipient. Any Presbyterian Woman within The Presbytery of The James may nominate a mission agency to be the mission offering recipient. The Peace and Justice Coordinator and PW-POJ Coordinating Team members select finalists from the nominations. The finalists are presented for a vote to select the recipient at the Fall Gathering of Presbyterian Women.

Because this year's Fall Gathering cannot be held in person due to Covid19, the voting for the 2021 Spring Gathering Offering recipient will take place electronically or by mailing a ballot. The voting representative from each congregation (your PW Moderator or Contact Person) will make your church's selection using this ballot. Information about each mission agency was included here in the Fall, 2021 edition of SPOTLIGHTING.

Please select ONE agency from the candidates below. Return this ballot electronically or by U.S. Mail no later than Monday, November 22, 2021.

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - California Wildfires
- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - Hurricanes

NOTE: if you are unable to vote electronically, please return your ballot by U.S. mail to:  
Antoinette Archer  
Peace and Justice Coordinator, PW-POJ  
14903 Lansgate Court  
Midlothian, Virginia 23112



## IN SPITE OF....

We have been contending with the COVID-19 pandemic for almost two years. The pandemic is being blamed daily for incidents of bad and even violent behavior among all socioeconomic and racial classes of people. For example:

A parent in northern California barged into his daughter's elementary school and punched a teacher in the face over mask rules. Anger from parents reached a peak when for the first time a teacher was attacked. A father became irate when he saw his daughter come out of the school wearing a mask, but teachers in a lounge were not masked. Flight attendants have been receiving much of 2021 chaos. Flyers attack attendants over masks, over who is entitled to use which arm rests in the seats, and plane cabins have experienced brawls by passengers fighting over separate issues. The airlines and many school districts have sought federal intervention and state national guards to assist maintaining order on planes and in schools. We read reports of stabbings and shootings resulting in major injuries and deaths in supermarkets, parking lots, and other businesses over wearing masks, showing vaccination IDs, slow service, and certain items not being in stock. What has happened to civility? Kindness and courtesy to others?

While I was being inundated with incidents of violence and extreme rudeness, I was nudged to take stock of my own behavior. Is my patience slipping? Is my self-control still under control? How about the *lity* of my expressions of kindness, gentleness, and the other fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? The fruit of the Holy Spirit is the result of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. Everyone receives the Holy Spirit the moment he or she believes in Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 12:13). One of the purposes of the Holy Spirit coming into a believer's life is to *change that life*. It is the Holy Spirit's job to conform us to the image of Christ, making us more like him. Believers battle the temptations of their former sinful selves and the new nature given by Christ (2 Cor. 5:17). Love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control are the attributes we develop with the help of the Holy Spirit to express and reflect the life of Christ in us. These attributes mature as we grow in the Christian way of life. They motivate our performance of the Spiritual Gifts given to us by Christ: serving, teaching, giving, leadership, mercy, and so on (Romans 12).

Now might be a good time to review these Scriptures to assess our own behaviors and the strengths of our Spiritual fruit. These times are exceptionally challenging and stressful. We have no experience in coping with pandemics, lockdowns, quarantines, and, most of all, limits on our access to other believers for worship, service, and support. We miss in-person contacts, group studies, working on committees and service projects. We may become less vigilant monitoring the condition of our Spiritual attributes (our goodness, gentleness, patience).

When I read or see reports of uncalled-for rudeness, insults, name-calling on trivial matters that lead to violence, and even worse, I ask: “What has gotten into these people!” That’s when I was compelled to read again the Scriptures that speak to our responses to everyday challenges and our behaviors in tough situations. Now is the time, too, to rely on our sisters in Christ for a listening ear, advice, and support. That is why we have prayer partners! Take a moment to read the hymn, “Make Me a Blessing,” below, one I haven’t heard in decades. See you at our Zoom Fall Gathering November 6.

Barbara Gary, Faith and Spiritual Development Coordinator, POJ PW

### *MAKE ME A BLESSING*



## Message from Mission:

### Eco Facts and Climate Change's Impact

*What we are doing*

*to the forests of the world*

*is but a mirror reflection*

*of what we are doing*

*to ourselves and one another.*

**Attributed to Mahatma Ghandi**

We can apply this warning to all aspects of our environment as we deal with deforestation, pollution, flooding, drought, wildfires, rising sea temperatures, and more severe wild weather occurrences.

What are some of the negative impacts on our oceans, marine life, and wetlands?

#### **Eco Fact: Sharks**

It isn't sharks we should fear, but an ocean without them! Sharks are perhaps the most misunderstood fish in the ocean. While we've been taught to fear them, sharks play a pivotal role in protecting the oceans' biodiversity. They feed on the sick and weak, control prey populations, and help to maintain the strength and diversity of other species.

In just the last few decades, some shark populations have declined by as much as 80% due to plastic pollution,

illegal poaching, finning, overfishing, and habitat loss.

#### **Eco Fact: Finning**

Finning occurs when the fins of the shark are cut off and the shark is thrown back into the ocean. This inquisitive sentient creature sinks to the ocean floor and dies a slow, agonizing death by bleeding out, being eaten by other fish or slowly suffocating ([www.sharkallies.com](http://www.sharkallies.com)).

Shark fins are tempting targets for fishermen due to their high monetary and cultural value. The fins are used in traditional Chinese medicine and are the key ingredient in shark fin soup, a symbol of status in Chinese culture.

Due to finning, large shark populations are declining globally and many species are threatened with extinction. It is estimated that tens of millions more sharks and rays are killed each year through illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing ([sharkstewards.org](http://sharkstewards.org)).

#### **Eco Fact: Dolphins**

Dolphins are iconic marine mammals which have evolved over 50 million years. They have large, complex brains, are self-aware, and develop close relationships within their immediate family and with other

members of their pod. No wonder we feel such an affinity with the dolphin!

Yet, dolphin populations are dwindling due to plastic pollution, climate change, habitat loss, noise pollution, and the billion dollar captivity industry. Currently, one out of every four species of dolphin is threatened by extinction ([4oceans.com](http://4oceans.com)).

### **Eco Facts: Wetlands**

Wetlands are areas of waterlogged soil which trap polluting substances and release nitrogen. Most of the wetlands in the lower 48 states (95%) are freshwater.

Types of wetlands:

- Marshes are a type of wetland ecosystem where water covers the ground for extended periods of time. Unlike swamps, which are dominated by trees, marshes are usually treeless and dominated by grasses and other herbaceous plants.
- Bogs are spongy, freshwater wetlands that accumulate peat, decayed plant matter, mosses, and, in most cases, sphagnum moss. Bogs are located in colder climates where cranberries are grown.

- Swamps are areas permanently saturated or filled with water and dominated by trees. They are often named for the type of trees that grow in them, such as cypress or hardwood.

Today there are about 110 million acres of wetlands in the lower 48 states. That's about half the area of wetlands that existed in the 1600's. Some of the land loss is attributable to farming, construction, pollution, and the construction of dams and dikes. Drought and erosion are natural causes impacted by climate change which have contributed to the loss of wetlands ([www.nationalgeographic.org](http://www.nationalgeographic.org), wetlands – Issue 3, 2021 Mini Page, The Free Lance Star).

### **Eco Fact: The Oceans**

The oceans impact our lives in countless ways and provide food and jobs for millions worldwide. It is our responsibility, as individuals and nations, to develop strategies to counter the indiscriminate dumping of plastic waste, millions of protective face masks, and other damaging pollutants into our oceans, streams, and waterways (the [revelator.org](http://revelator.org), [www.usgs.gov-science](http://www.usgs.gov-science)).



According to the United Nations, at least 800 species worldwide are affected by marine debris. 80 percent of that litter is plastic. Fish, seabirds, sea turtles and marine mammals can become entangled in or ingest plastic debris which can lead to suffocation, starvation, and drowning. Humans are also directly impacted when certain plastics break down into tiny particles that end up in the seafood we eat.

Plastic waste kills up to a million seabirds each year. Many seabirds die of starvation due to the plastic they have ingested. Dead seabirds are often found with their stomachs filled with absorbed plastic waste. Scientists estimate that 60 percent of all seabird species have ingested plastic. They predict that this will rise to 99 percent by 2050 ([pewtrusts.org](http://pewtrusts.org), Plastic Pollution Affects Sea Life throughout the Ocean by Simon Reddy).

Since our son and family have recently moved to Amsterdam, I'd like to close with an unrelated Eco Fact on Dutch trains.

### **Eco Fact: Dutch Trains**

Dutch trains run entirely on wind energy. One windmill running, for an hour can power a train for 120 miles and around 5,500 trips are facilitated every day. The system allows 600,000 passengers to commute daily without

any emissions ([unbelievable-facts.com](http://unbelievable-facts.com))!

Wishing you health and happiness in the months ahead.

Linda Smiley /Missions Coordinator

