



FALL 2024



Spirit

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN OF THE SAN FRANCISCO PRESBYTERY

Fall Gathering

Reports from the PW Churchwide Gathering

“Do Everything in Love”

Saturday • October 5, 2024 • 9:30am-12:30pm

First Presbyterian Church Livermore

2020 Fifth Street, Livermore, CA

All Presbyterian Women and friends are invited

The Churchwide Gathering took place on August 8-11, 2024 in St. Louis, MO and attracted over 800 women from across the country. The women who attended from San Francisco Presbytery will share highlights from this experience.

- 9:30-10 am** Fellowship Time and Refreshments
- 10:00** Welcome - Rev. Nancy Holve, Co-Moderator
Lighting of the Christ Candle / Devotions
- 10:15** Program - Panel highlights from several of the Churchwide Gathering attendees sharing their reflections of the plenary sessions and many of the workshops.
- 10:45-11:15** Q&A, Discussion, Findings
- 11:15-11:30** PWP Business meeting
- 11:30-12:30** Lunch - Salad buffet

Taking BART?

We can shuttle you to and from the church.

Contact Karen Vied,
kvied@comcast.net

to make
arrangements.

Please RSVP by 10/3 to:
Phyllis Brewer, pj719brewer@pacbell.net

Questions? Contact Susan Bond, susbond@gmail.com or Rev. Nancy Holve, nancy.holve@yahoo.com

The Presbyterian Women 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.



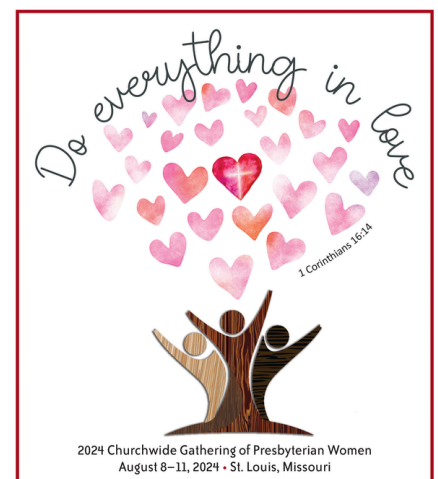
Reflections from a First-Time Attendee of the Gathering

From the first announcement of the 2024 Churchwide Gathering “Do Everything in Love” friends encouraged me to attend, listen and bring back my findings to Livermore. After a six-year hiatus, Presbyterian Women met together on August 8-11 in St. Louis, Missouri. The selection of Saint Louis was a little off putting as I remember the downtown as old, dirty and tired with hordes of tourists. Today there is a revitalized city with a lovely park, flower boxes, hanging gardens, restored grand buildings with an absence of tent cities, litter and crime. I took pleasure in walking the streets of this “dressed-up dame” and participating in my first Churchwide Gathering. It was a thrill to see and hear the representatives from America and Africa sing together and hear new perspectives on today’s problems.

Each day’s program consisted of morning and evening plenary with all 800 participants and renowned, empowered speakers that were experts in their fields. The theme “Do Everything in Love” was explored in the daily topics of “What’s Love Got to Do With It,” “Loving Our World,” “Loving Our Neighbors,” “Loving Ourselves.” All 70 workshops were related to Love: Love of God, Love of Self, Love of Neighbors, Love of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Action to end Gun Violence, Equity in the Body of Christ, Building Congregational Green Teams. The choices were dazzling and provided solid insight and information. We learned about the actions and options of love and responsibility for children suggested by PCUSA’s 226th General Assembly so that children may live free from Gun Violence. Social justice is intertwined with environmental justice and environmental protection. The earth can function very well without man, and it is man that has polluted the air, earth, and water. We learned that we need hearts that can be broken, and when one’s heart is broken it can overflow. Justice, mercy, and love are better than just thoughts and prayers. Compassion is hard with the evil in society and feels simply like watering a desert with an eye dropper. God chooses to love us and entrusts us to do his work. God suffers from seeing evil and apathy, but he does not turn away.

Two workshops that were impactful to me were “Congregational Green Teams” and “Did You Eat Yet” a presentation on famine in the world. Many speakers discussed the need for women to love themselves and to find their identity in Jesus. Another relevant workshop dealt with the difference between equality and equity when dealing with multiracial groups. I surely benefited from the multiple exposures to ideas about love and God’s requirements. I hope that the women of our Presbytery will consider taking advantage of the opportunities for spiritual enrichment at the next Churchwide Gathering.

Susan Bond
Co-Moderator PWP of San Francisco
First Presbyterian Church, Livermore





top: Women from Kenya at the Gathering

middle left: learning how to fold an origami crane.

middle right: handmade Gathering totebags

bottom: Silent Auction included quilts, baskets and jewelry

Business Meeting and Racial Equity Dialog

Dear PW Sisters .

I pray that you all are well and were able to enjoy time with friends and family this summer.

At the Presbyterian Women, Inc.'s triennial Business Meeting, voting representatives focused on outlining ways that Presbyterian Women can continue to serve and connect, while recognizing that the church and the world have changed dramatically during recent years.

- The most significant discussion focused on a recommendation to decrease the number of synod representative positions on the Board from 16 to 5. This motion didn't pass. A substitute motion that passed kept the 16 representatives but identified a rotational system for in-person attendance at board meetings. One class of synod reps would attend in person, while the other two classes would participate online; thus, during their term on the Board, each class would attend one in-person meeting.
- Voting representatives also approved a recommendation to allow Board committees to make decisions via unanimous written/email consent. In the past, committees needed to meet and have a quorum before any action could be taken.

Before the Gathering began, a group of 25 women met for Racial Equity Dialog (RED) training. Each Synod sent one or two representatives to be trained. Phyllis Givens and Rochelle Shaw were the Synod of Pacific's representatives. They will help develop teams within the Synod to seek strategies to:

- Honor the gifts, perspectives, and heritage of all God's people and celebrate our oneness in the living Christ;
- Work together toward developing a sanctuary where women of different racial-ethnic backgrounds can speak the truth to each other and be heard;
- Intentionally find ways to increase mutual understanding and work together as partners in ministry.

What a joy it was to see and interact with the women in our synod at the Synod Luncheon. Participants were able to provide information regarding synod accomplishments, wishes, and suggestions. A print-out of these comments and a report on business conducted at the synod luncheon will be in the upcoming synod newsletter.

Peace and blessings to each of you.

Betty Delaney, Moderator

PW in the Synod of the Pacific



Plenary Hall where we met in the morning and evening



Synod of the Pacific
PW Coordinating Team



Women from the
Presbyterian Church in
Chinatown wearing the
PWP-SF t-shirt.

A Transformative Experience

Now that the 2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women has taken place with positive outcomes, I can relax again! I was asked to be Chair of the Gathering back in November 2021 and my first task was to form a team of five work groups (16 women), which took nearly six months, but it was well worth the time to build this strong foundation.

The next step was to work with the PW Board of Directors on selecting a theme. I'm amazed at how much work can be accomplished via zoom. We narrowed it down to about a dozen suggestions, but we kept gravitating back to "Do Everything In Love" from I Corinthians and so the decision was made.

Initially I felt that it was an honor to serve as Chair but now I feel that it was a gift. The PW staff and the work group members became a part of my life for over two years. As to why I took on this job, I was curious about the process of planning for this event and wanted to be part of the decision-making. But the relationships and connections made with everyone along the way was more sustaining for me. I thought I had a busy schedule... I was humbled by the women on the planning team when I learned about all that they accomplish between work, church and family.

My first PW Churchwide Gathering was over 30 years ago at Purdue University in Indiana. At that time, I was just learning about the PW organization. I recall feeling overwhelmed at that Gathering, being in the midst of 5,000+ women and overloaded with too much information. However, I also recall feeling a sense of community and sisterhood that extended beyond race and age. Over time, I became more active with PW in my church, and then with PW in the Presbytery, Synod and National.

Changes in our churches throughout the country also affects Presbyterian Women. Attendance at the Churchwide Gatherings dwindled each time (every three years) and in 2024, our attendance was just 900 women.

The morning plenary sessions started early at 8:30 in the morning but the beautiful singing and powerful speakers kept me awake! On Friday morning, The Rev. Yung Me Morris, in her dramatic plenary address titled "Did You Eat Yet?", explained that this typical Korean greeting is shorthand for asking "Are you taking care of yourself? Did you meet your most basic need today because you are important, your life is important, and it's worth preserving."

When I think of hospitality, I immediately think that involves welcoming a friend or neighbor into my home and offering them something to eat or drink. Yung Me offered a broader perspective - "Hospitality is how we love the world, but it is not easy because hospitality puts people over profits. Hospitality challenges unjust policies that might cut food stamps or deny children lunch at school. It will also confront unjust laws that make it illegal to feed the unhoused. There are cities with that law on the books." She challenged us to show more hospitality in a world gripped by famine, war and polarization; and for those going without food because of traumatic experiences such as war, homelessness and greed. "Remember, hospitality doesn't ask, 'Are you a Republican or a Democrat?' Hospitality doesn't ask, 'Who's right and who's wrong?' Hospitality doesn't ask, 'Is it in the budget?' Hospitality saves lives, and it's a moral imperative even today."

Jeanette Huie, PWP Treasurer

This Hit Me Hard

(Devotion read at the PW Synod Gathering Lunch, St. Louis)

Have you ever noticed how in the scriptures men are always going up into the mountains to commune with the Lord?

Yet in the scriptures we hardly ever hear of women going to the mountains. But we know why – right?

Because the women were too busy keeping life going. They couldn't abandon babies, meals, homes, fires, gardens, and a thousand responsibilities to make the climb into the mountains!

I was talking to a friend the other day, saying that as a modern woman, I feel like I'm never "free" enough from my responsibilities, never in a quiet enough space I want with God.

Her response floored me. "That is why God comes to women. Men have to climb the mountain to meet God, but God comes to women wherever they are."

I have been pondering on her words for weeks and have searched my scriptures to see that what she said is true. God does indeed come to women where they are, when they are doing their ordinary, everyday work.

God meets them at the wells where they draw water for their families, in their home, in their kitchens, in their gardens.

God comes to them as they sit beside sickbeds, as they give birth, care for the elderly, and perform necessary mourning and burial rites.

Even at the empty tomb, Mary was the first to witness Christ's resurrection. She was there because she was doing the womanly chore of properly preparing Christ's body for burial.

In these seemingly mundane and ordinary tasks, these women of the scriptures found themselves face to face with divinity.

So, if – like me – you ever start to bemoan the fact that you don't have as much time to spend in the mountains with God as you would like, remember, God comes to women. He knows where we are and the burdens we carry. He sees us, and if we open our eyes and our hearts, we will see Him, even in the most ordinary places and in the most ordinary things.

He lives. And he's using a time such as this to speak to women around the world.