



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN SPRING GATHERING
PRESBYTERY OF YELLOWSTONE
APRIL 2ND, 2016
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - BILLINGS

THEME: TO BE OF USE

Eighteen Presbyterian Women from across our presbytery experienced wonderful fellowship recently at our Spring Gathering hosted by the women of First Presbyterian Church – Billings. We were happy to welcome women from Terry, Forsyth, Bozeman, Ennis and of course, Billings led by Marlene. Butte, (Anna Circle), Madison Valley and Bozeman submitted written reports.

The Christ Candle was lit. PWP Moderators Merry Lee Hooks (Madison Valley) and Suzanne Bratsky, Vice Moderator opened proceedings with devotions: “God: Goodness, Love Energy, The Divine (from 15 things I know by Anne Lamott). Suzanne Bratsky (Bozeman) spoke from a Joyce Rupp devotional about all the little extras in life that help us pay attention to daily living so we can hear the Savior call our names.

Merry Lee, Suzanne and Susan Gibb (Bozeman), three of seven presbytery women who attended the 2015 Churchwide Gathering, reported on their wonderful experiences in Minneapolis. Merry Lee reported on the business meeting and alluded briefly to the role Marilynn Collins played in requesting an overture about membership in PC USA. Our concerns were heard and answered later in a letter from the Churchwide Coordinating Team. At this year's Synod Meeting the women gathered sent a message to all women of the church that they may find among their small numbers the desire to continue in relationship and to be of use.

Our special guest, PW Synod Moderator Marilynn Collins (Ogden, UT), gave a motivational presentation about the historical strength of Presbyterian Women and how we can maintain visibility of our programs and contributions both locally and regionally. In a later report Marilynn encouraged everyone to attend the upcoming Synod Triennial Gathering for Presbyterian Women in the Rocky Mountains. Held June 9-12, 2016 at Laramie County Community Collage in Cheyenne, the \$200 registration fee includes double-occupancy ensuite rooms, meals and materials. The Gathering theme is “How May I Serve You?” ***Please contact Merry Lee Hooks (406-925-1536, hooksmerrylee@gmail.com) or Suzanne Bratsky (406-539-0211, suzbratsky@gmail.com) if you wish to attend and to arrange carpools.*** Consider making this event a great start to your summer!

Becoming certified as a PW Disaster Preparedness Trainer is an additional opportunity available on the first day of this Gathering. A portion of your registration fee will be covered if you participate in this training. Certification requires a three-year commitment to actively seek, set-up and conduct at least three disaster preparation trainings per year in congregations, cluster and/or presbytery/presbyteries. Contact Suzanne or Merry Lee immediately for application materials if you are interested. Think about it! The deadline for PDA registration is May 1, 2016.

We heard a very interesting presentation by Bonnie Blakely, Bozeman Team Leader for Days for Girls. Days for Girls International is a grassroots non-profit creating a more dignified, humane and sustainable world for girls through advocacy, reproductive health awareness, education and sustainable feminine hygiene products. For example, one in every 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during their period or "drops out" because of it. All of us understand the impact of girls not attending school and the many related advantages of

those that do. Local PW individuals or groups can participate by making or donating materials for reusable personal hygiene kits. If you're interested in helping with this wonderful program, please contact Bonnie at e-mail bozemanmontana@daysforgirls.org.

The next PW Global Exchange is to Indonesia September 12-29, 2017. Every three years a group of Presbyterian women travels to another part of the world to hear the joys and pain that our sisters there experience and to share faith stories and ministries with one another. The following year a group of women from the same country is invited to itinerate in synods and participate in our Churchwide Gathering. To learn more about the Global Exchange, visit www.pcusa.org/pw/missionmatters or call 502-569-5402. Your application is due to the PWS Synod Moderator, Marilyn Collins, by August 15, 2016. It would be great to have a Presbyterian woman from Montana as our Synod representative. Please consider this.

The next Churchwide Gathering will be held in Louisville KY August 2-5, 2018, celebrating the 30th anniversary of our modern Presbyterian Women. Save this date and plan to attend.

During the business meeting we reviewed the bylaws and the purpose, to encourage and support the women in the congregation to answer their call to faith. We no longer have enough women in office for a search committee and officers. We will work on an alternative structure, possibly committees, to organize annual meetings and attract new leadership.

PWP Treasurer Linda Best (Bozeman) gave the Treasurer's report and discussed PW Together We Serve ministries. Linda makes our disbursement for the mission of the church worldwide as well as our support of PW in the Presbytery and the Synod assuring that we comply with the financial responsibilities of Presbyterian Women. A copy of the budget is attached. We passed the budget unanimously.

The Rev. Cathy McLean, Forsyth, celebrated an uplifting communion service, teaching of the "broadness" of the communion table and the inclusion of all.

The benediction was made and the Christ Candle was extinguished to close the gathering.

Merry Lee Hooks, Moderator 2016

Susan Gibb, West Cluster Moderator 2016 and impromptu recording secretary

Suzanne Bratsky, Vice- Moderator 2016

Linda Best, Treasurer, 2016