

Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women
August 2 – 5, 2018 Louisville, KY

Glenda Watts PWHP Moderator

Business Meeting

Shannon Roe and I arrived on August 1 to attend the Business Meeting as voting representatives. We met from 7-9 pm on Aug 1 and from 9 am to noon on Aug 2. The 103 page Business Book includes reports of the elected leaders and staff, reports of the committees of the PW, Inc., Board of Directors and the recommendation for action: proposed amendments to the Bylaws, proposed Revised Bylaws, proposed Budget, 2018-2021, and the search committee report. The amount of work that your officers and staff do is phenomenal.

Rhashell Hunter, Director, Racial Equity & Women's Intercultural Ministries, Presbyterian Mission Agency, began the meeting with worship. We are called to be a better friend to others than they are to us, to celebrate the gifts of women, and to lead with love. Her text was Ephesians 4:3-6. She encouraged us to extend radical hospitality to all in the manner of Lydia to Paul and Silas, Mary and Martha, and the woman in Bethany with the alabaster jar.

Introductions included Tom Hay, Parliamentarian, Office of the General Assembly, 2015-2018 Board of Directors and Search Committee, Vilmarie Cintron-Oliveri, co-moderator of the 223rd General Assembly, and the staff.

August 2 began with prayer and remarks by Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency. We heard from ecumenical guests and the stated clerk, J Herbert Nelson.

The Bylaws and the Budget were adopted. After the report of the search committee, the 2018-2021 leaders were elected.

Plenaries

Steve Buttlemann, Official Bugler of Churchill Downs and the Kentucky Derby, played the Call to the Post to kick-off the Gathering. The music, hymns, and speakers were inspiring. There is no thrill like singing, praying, and worshipping with over 1500 women.

Each plenary used part of the theme "Arise, shine, your light has come! Isaiah 60.1. ARISE! Nurturing Our Faith, SHINE! Supporting Mission, Your LIGHT! Working for Justice and Peace, Your LIGHT has COME! Building Inclusive Community, COME! Celebrating the Beloved Community, and Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you! Witness to the Promise of God's Kingdom. Each included a "Glimpses in Time Video" of the past 30 years. All the liturgy came from previous churchwide gatherings.

The scripture for three plenaries were the next three Horizons Bible Study authors:

2018-2019 *God's Promise: I Am with You* by Amy Poling Sutherland

2019-2020 *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments* by Eugenia Gamble

2020-2021 *To You They Cried: Reclaiming Lament* by Lynn Miller

Book Groups

I attended all three book groups and recommend each of the books:

Change of Heart by Jeanne Bishop
Little Fires Everywhere by Celeste Ng
Strangers in Their Own Land by Arlie Russell Hochschild

Educational Opportunities

I always enjoy the workshops. My favorites were both by Lynn Miller. She led the Horizons Bible Study for 2020-2021 on lament. It was called Moved to Tears: Considering Tears in Scripture, Worship and the Christian Life. She showed slides of the different kinds of tears and how different they looked under a microscope – grief, onion, laughter, change. She has a great sense of humor. I also attended her workshop Creating a Journal of Epiphanies. We looked in detail at Isaiah 60:1-6 with all the images in it. Also we looked briefly at the other epiphany stories and looked at paintings from different eras. We began making journals of our life, looking back or to the future, thinking about the places where God is calling us. Also, times and places God has been or is being made manifest in our lives. These are works in process.

Thoughts to ponder:

Tears are a sign of hope. No hope – no tears.
We are called to shine God's glory.
Don't be afraid of darkness.
We are not in control – the Spirit is in control.
Don't wish for someone else's life.
Faith is not private.
We are God's beloved daughters.
Always hope for grace.

Meeting and talking with Presbyterian Women from all over the US and world is the most satisfying feature of the gathering. Start saving your money to attend the next triennial gathering. You will be glad you did!

Toni Spieth, CT rep. for Synod of Mid-America, reported: As of Friday night, of the Gathering, PW had received \$32,952 in gifts. Gift card contributions—for the D.I.A.P.E.R. Project, Kentucky Refugee Ministries and Lily's Place—totaled \$11,787. \$482 was given to Cents-Ability. Cents-Ability originated in 1976, as "Two Cents-A-Meal"—a project to involve individuals and families in a corporate response to world hunger. The final tallies will be in the Nov-Dec edition of *Horizon's 2018*.