

Grapevine



NEWSLETTER FOR THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH - PRESBYTERY OF DES MOINES - AUG. 2020



Moderator's Musings:

**Sharon Falck,
PW Moderator**

The year 2020 will be described in two ways-pandemic and pandemonium-both which appear in order in the dictionary. The definition for pandemic is: common to a characteristic of a whole people and affecting a very high proportion as a disease and for pandemonium is: a wild and lawless uproar.

In looking at the letters of the word pandemic individually it is possible to describe at first glance how we may feel, so I have taken the liberty to supply a word for each letter.

P-panic, A-anxiety, N-"new normal", D-depression, E-exclusion, M-money or lack of, I-isolation and C-confusion.

These all sound like pandemonium, a wild and lawless uproar, could exist in our minds and lives, however we can reverse this by looking at the letters of pandemic in reverse. Again I am taking liberty in the choices I have made for the individual letters.

C-Christ is first and will be with us always, so if we turn to His Word and offer prayers we can become less anxious; I-inspiration to look at our situation and find ways to do things differently and become more M-mindful of what we are doing, saying and

feeling. It will enable us to close outside distractions and give us E-energy which will enable us to not only help ourselves but others who may be in need. D-determination will help us stop procrastinating; step up to do what is right and necessary and give us of a different way of looking at situations and new ways to solve problems which will lead to greater happiness and fulfillment. This will be important as A-answers are found to combat the disease and ways are found to care for our health. If we can be positive then we will face whatever comes with P-peace of mind, peace in our family and community and the peace of God in our heart.

Pandemonium will cease to dominate our thoughts and lives as long as we lean on the loving arms of Jesus and feel his love for us.

GATHERINGS

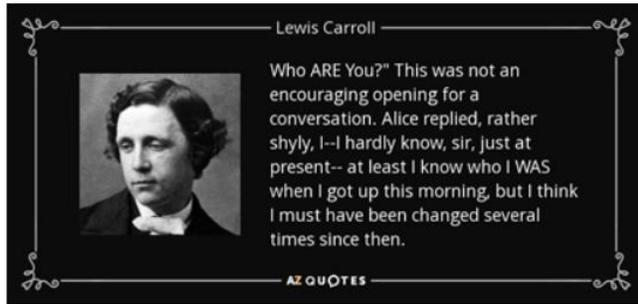
The Spring Gathering, which was to occur on April 26 was cancelled because COVID-19 had begun, we were hoping to have a Fall Gathering in October, but as time for planning drew near the Coordinating Team and I decided it would be too risky to hold it too. We are hoping to have a Spring Gathering in April of 2021, but again it will depend on what is going on with the virus.

Meanwhile keep in touch with each other, pray a vaccine will be developed and we can join together in worship and fellowship in the Spring.

Presbyterian Women held a special board meeting via Zoom on June 6, 2020, to consider several recommendations. Among other items, the Board approved the PW statement, "Say Their Names: Reaffirming Presbyterian Women's Stance on Racism." To read the statement, visit www.presbyterianwomen.org/2020/06/05/say-their-names-reaffirming-presbyterian-womens-stance-against-racism/

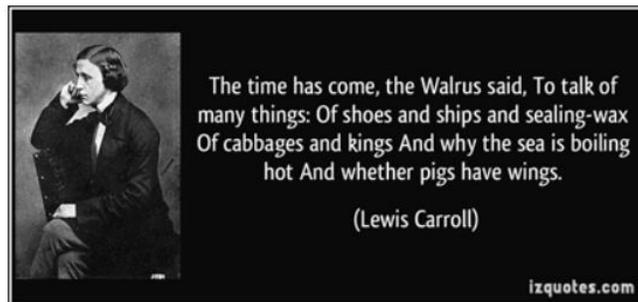
The Time Has Come

From Alice in Wonderland...



Consider...

How have we been changed by the pandemic?



What does this time allow us to talk about together?

Devotional Thought – The time has come...

Many people experiencing this time have come to believe that this is a Phoenix-out-of-the-ashes moment, when it becomes possible to move forward together into new life, into a more peaceful and gentle way of living. According to the teachings of Jesus, this “new” life is based on love...for God and for each other.

Perhaps now is the time to talk of such things, sharing love with one another and modelling love to and for the world.

Prayer

God of love, today is the day when we realize that we have been changed; the day we recognize that life—full, abundant, and eternal—is your gift, not just to Jesus, but to us as well. May we sense the Holy Spirit swirling within us preparing us to embody the final lesson that Jesus gave to His disciples

...that love is the strongest force on earth, able to overcome death, and able to transform life into the joyous pattern you intended.

Open our eyes to see Jesus present with us in this time of separation, highlighting how important we are to each other, and granting a peace beyond anything we could have imagined for ourselves. Amen.

And, finally...

Colossians 3:12-14, quoted from The Message

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even-tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the Master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It’s your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

Blessing

Be well. Care for yourself and care for others, showing God's love to all following the example of Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Barbara Todd



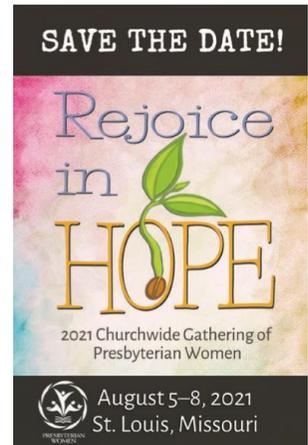
Former PW board member Magdalene Lewis, Synod of the Northeast, has been appointed PW’s ECOSOC and CSW Advocate at the United Nations. PW participates in the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) as an NGO recognized by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Magdalene will serve in this volunteer position through June 1, 2022.

GROWING OUR FAITH

The Churchwide Gathering is an opportunity to celebrate and strengthen our roots and connections. Check out the video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=12Vq1i48_Rk
It will make you want to put on your dancing shoes!

One of the many strengths of Presbyterian Women (the organization and those who are Presbyterian women) is our connectedness. Just attend a presbytery, synod or churchwide gathering and you will quickly and clearly see that our connectedness links us one to another in ministry and outlook. Our denomination relies on our rootedness and our connectedness. PW is a blessing to our church and the wider world.

SEE YOU IN ST. LOUIS!!!



DIGITAL MEDIA

The COVID-19 pandemic has truly impacted our world in ways no one could have imagined. The church is the place where we go for comfort, encouragement, reassurance, hope and even celebrations. While we are currently unable to comfortably gather in spaces and places that we thought would always be there for us, we are searching to find ways to connect with our members and communities.

If your church has some tech savvy members, you might try making short videos to put on

YouTube, on your church website, or other social media. Videos with content that is relevant and relatable can create and strengthen emotional connections with the viewers.

There are excellent ideas for creating meaningful videos at:

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/pcn/2020/07/15/the-benefits-of-digital-media-during-a-worldwide-pandemic/>

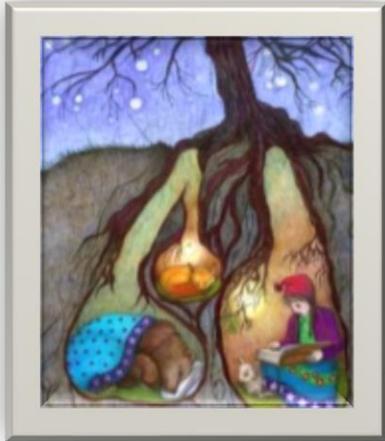
For the next few months the Grapevine will be published every other month instead of quarterly. Documenting your insights during this significant time in history will be valuable to future generations. This is how we know the personal experiences of people during times like the Spanish Flu epidemic, or the Bubonic plague. What are you thinking about? Have you written poems, or created paintings? Have your perceptions or priorities changed recently? Share your observations with others in our Presbytery.

Send to Grapevine Editor Juanita Ott: jott396116@aol.com

CHALLENGING OUR THOUGHTS

“And the people stayed home. . .”

Source: *The Sower*, PW newsletter for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies – Editor Kathleen Keefer:



And the people stayed home.

And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still.

And listened more deeply. Some meditated, some prayed, some danced. Some met their shadows.

And the people began to think differently. And the people healed.

And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.

And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.

Kitty O’Meara, a former teacher and chaplain in the US, penned this “prose poem” on the lockdowns caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Face Masks for Native American Communities

Source: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/stories>

Many caring Presbyterian Women have used their time at home during the pandemic to make face masks, distributing them wherever they determine there is a need—hospitals, nursing homes, frontline workers, underserved communities, firefighters, and more.

Holly Haile Davis, Native American member of the PC(USA)’s Racial Equity Advocacy Committee, says the need for masks for the Navajo Nation continues. Several weeks ago, the Navajo Nation put out a call for cloth and fabric masks, in addition to other items. [Visit the Navajo Nation’s Relief Fund page for a current list of needs.](#)

Bonnie Thompson, moderator of PW in the Synod of the Southwest, works alongside Native American communities in her synod. She is currently working with the Tohono O’odham Nation (near Tucson) and the Apache and Hopi

tribes in central Arizona to help them meet their needs for masks to protect against COVID-19. Bonnie believes there will be an ongoing need for masks, given the current rise of COVID-19 cases in Arizona and New Mexico. She has graciously agreed to be the point of contact for women who desire to make and send masks to those in need in the Synod of the Southwest. Those interested may contact [Bonnie](#).

PW recommends that synods and presbyteries wishing to partner with other Native American nations in their areas contact tribal offices to ask whether they need masks, then make and send masks directly to them as needed. The larger nations have health departments, which could be points of contact for those asking about the need for masks. Those in synods without Native American nations are encouraged to work with a synod that does.

Wrestling With My Complicity in Racism

Joy Durrant, March 20, 2019 - <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/stories>



"Dominance, even the threat of it, is a form of dehumanization. It's the ugliest kind of power." —Michelle Obama, "Becoming"

Joy stands in front of her family's first home

Early in my faith journey, I checked off the box for "You shall not kill" (Ex. 20:13). Naively, I thought I would never have to worry about that commandment! I erased the checkmark when I came to understand that my words and actions to undermine someone else, including gossip, were a form of killing another's spirit.

I have similar thoughts about racism, something I once thought I could never perpetrate. Yet, I have benefited from racism and continue to do so.

My ancestors came to the United States from Germany in the 1800s, attracted by land grants in Central Texas. "Land grant" is a phrase that legitimizes my ancestors' claims on land stolen from Native Americans—in this case, the Comanche. I don't live on those original homesteads, but I recently found an arrowhead less than a mile from my home of 27 years. The accidental discovery was my visual "hard reset." I, like my ancestors, live on land once home to the Comanche—rarely acknowledging how we came to live here. Today, the majority of the Comanche Nation live in difficult circumstances in Oklahoma.

I have childhood memories of undocumented men from Mexico working on my grandparents' farm. They lived with their families in simple dwellings near the cow pen, at the back of the farm—a difficult life. I wonder whether those workers were paid fairly. The city of San Antonio eventually grew to include my grandparents' land, increasing its value. Neither the Latinx

families nor the Comanche shared in the modest inheritance I received from my grandparents' farm.

My father was the first in his family to attend university, courtesy of the GI Bill. My parents purchased our first home through a VA loan. The benefits of the GI Bill and VA loans mostly were denied to people of color. I continue to benefit from these programs that grew the wealth of the white American middle class at the expense of people of color who were denied these benefits.

I once took it as a point of pride that my German ancestors refused to own slaves because they considered themselves to have been slaves in Germany. Racism, however, continues enslavement in other ways. I am complicit in this racism—an everyday white lens that upholds the white norm despite a multicultural world.

And so, I sit in my discomfort, wrestling with my deeply-rooted complicity in racism, lamenting and repenting this sin. I want to end racism; yet, I have perpetrated and benefited from it. Walt Kelly's phrase comes to mind: "We have met the enemy and [s]he is us." If you are complicit in racism, I encourage you to sit in your discomfort along with me, joining me in prayers for guidance as to how we can end the sin of racism, the ugliest form of power.

Joy Durrant is PW's national vice moderator for justice and peace and is co-chair of the Racial Equity Committee.

PRESBYTERY OF DES MOINES PW COORDINATING TEAM

Executive Team

Moderator

Sharon Falck (2021)
809 Turnberry Dr
Grinnell, IA 50112
641-260-8500
sfalck2009@gmail.com

Corresponding Secretary

VACANT

Recording Secretary

Ann McGowan (2021)
9549 Foxglove Ln
Johnston, IA 50131
515-252-6195 (H)
515-480-9595 (M)
akmcgowan@msn.com

Treasurer

Beverly Countryman (2021)
1529 19th Place
West Des Moines, IA 50265
515-225-1659
bcountryman1@yahoo.com



PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN

Coordinating Team

Mission Matters

Denise England (2021)
1013 Spruce Dr
Manning, IA 51455
515-802-1173
deniseengland24@gmail.com

Historian

VACANT

Resources & HORIZONS

Mary Lou Briles
1015 Luster Ln
Des Moines, IA 50315
515-285-1074
marybriles@aol.com

Justice & Peace

Margaret Blair (2021)
PO Box 17
St Charles, IA 50240
515-491-0356
mablair57@gmail.com

Clergywoman Rep

Rev. Barbara Tooker Todd (2021)
5210 Panorama Dr
Panora, IA 50216
712-355-0052
rogerbarbaratodd@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor

Juanita Ott
1214 W. Euclid
Indianola, IA 50125
515-778-7985
jott396116@aol.com

Search Committee

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Area Coordinators

Area #1 Coordinator

Linda O'Connell
PO Box 79
Lucas, IA 50151
641-203-3660
rev.linda@mediacombb.net

Area #2 Coordinator

VACANT

Area #3 Coordinator

Barbara Taylor (2021)
2709 1st Ave E
Newton, IA 50208
641-792-6990
barbjohnmim@gmail.com

Area #4 Coordinator

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Are you tired of sitting around, watching TV and eating? Try taking a virtual tour:

San Diego Zoo: <https://kids.sandiegozoo.org/index.php/videos>

Yellowstone National Park: <https://www.nps.gov/yell/learn/photosmultimedia/virtualtours.htm>

Mars: <https://accessmars.withgoogle.com/>

National Parks Virtual Tours:

https://www.nps.gov/search/?utf8=%25E2%259C%2593&affiliate=nps&sort_by=&query=virtual+tours

12 Live Animals Including badgers, penguins, polar bears and elephants...:

<https://www.countryliving.com/uk/wildlife/countryside/g31784857/live-animal-webcam-zoo/#:~:text=%20%20%201%201%20Folly%20Farm%2C%20Pembrokeshire.,splashing%20around%20in%20the%20water%20and...%20More%20>

The Grapevine is published by the Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Des Moines, 2400 86th Street, Suite #20, Urbandale, IA 50322-4306. Please share with the members of your PW and make copies for those in and outside your group. Urge them to share with others. Don't keep it a secret! If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please contact Betty Dyer, Presbytery of Des Moines office manager at bdyer@dmpresbytery.org or 515-276-4991.

News about Presbyterian Women:

Presbytery of Des Moines - <https://dmpresbytery.org/committees-task-forces-top/presbyterian-women>

Synod of Lakes and Prairies - <http://www.lakesandprairies.org>

Presbyterian Women - <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org>

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YouTube—<http://www.youtube.com/presbyterianwomen>

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Church Store—<http://www.pcusa.org/store>

Pinterest— www.pinterest.com/pwpcusa/