



Highlights from the 2024 PW Churchwide Gathering

It's the event and the community you've been waiting for—a Gathering of Presbyterian Women from across the country!

Attendees have come from every synod, traveling by plane, train, bus and car. Hundreds of Presbyterian women and PW supporters have come together to worship, find inspiration, get resources, make connections and enjoy the diverse community that is Presbyterian Women. The pages that follow include just a sampling of the Gathering. From moments of levity in the Exhibit Hall to inspirational speakers in plenary, from the work of the Business Meeting to the joy of reconnecting with friends, the Gathering has been an embodiment of the 1 Corinthians 16–18 urging to “Do Everything in Love.”



Candle holders created by Charles Wiley

Presbyterian women meet, plan and pray about the best way to live into the PW Purpose. And, of course, the Gathering is a fantastic way to equip oneself and a group to live out commitments to justice, mission, community and growing in faith. But only at PW's Churchwide Gathering is it possible to live into the PW Logo! The “Living Logo” is a light-hearted tradition of Churchwide Gatherings. If you have a Living Logo photo you'd be willing to share, post it on Facebook and tag “Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA)” or email to Laura Lee, laura.lee@pcusa.org.



Thank you, Exhibitors!

The Exhibit Hall included vendors, agencies and networks that support the ministries and interests of Presbyterian Women. Fair trade gifts, ideas for your PW group's mission or justice efforts, information about seminars or connections to PC(USA) programs—the Exhibit Hall had it all! If you didn't have a chance to shop and connect while at the Gathering, there's still a way to shop the beauty products whose ingredients are sourced directly from Ghanaian producers (Hanahanabeauty.com), jewelry crafted by survivors of human trafficking (madeforfreedom.org). Learn more about the denomination's Presbyterian Mission Agency (pcusa.org) and Office of the General Assembly (oga.pcusa.org), or Living Waters for the World (livingwatersfortheworld.org).

Check the exhibitor listing in the Gathering program book, pages 28–33, for brief descriptions and websites so you can stay connected after the Gathering!

Discerning, Worshiping and Voting in Community

By Sharon Dunne Gillies



Left: Voting representatives took care of business on August 7 and 8—finishing in time to fully participate in Churchwide Gathering. *Middle:* Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett led worship to begin day two of the Business Meeting. *Right:* Kathleen Keefer (far left) and Kathy Reeves (far right) handed the PW Churchwide Moderatorial Team stoles to PW’s newly elected Kelsey Law (middle left) and Pam Snyder (middle right).

On August 7, Presbyterian Women, Inc.’s 161 voting representatives settled in for the organization’s triennial Business Meeting. After introductions, a land acknowledgement, and a brief orientation to their work, Business Meeting attendees received correspondence that provided updates from a number of Thank and Birthday Offering recipients.

Kathy Reeves, 2021–2024 PW churchwide moderator, and Kathleen Keefer, PW vice moderator alternated in leading the meeting. They described a few national programs and a visioning process the PW, Inc. Board engaged. This visioning process focused on outlining the ways that Presbyterian Women can continue to serve and connect, while recognizing the ways the church had world have dramatically changed over the last decade. Committee chairs reviewed the recommendations to be considered on August 8.

The next morning, Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, greeting the voting representatives and provided a devotion. Her message invited participants to consider how to live according to 1 Corinthians 16:13–14, which is the Gathering theme scripture. She said, “How we treat one another matters to God and marks our witness. . . . Doing all things in love means that wherever you go and whatever you do, people sense the love of God on you. Love can move mountains. Love creates community. Love unites us all in the fabric of our humanity.”

The newly elected PC(USA) Stated Clerk Jihyun Oh joined by video, offering greetings and reflections on the life-changing impact of sharing Jesus Christ’s love with the world, and the way that community grows from our shared

faith. She said, “I think we have good news to tell and good news to be. In a world of deep loneliness, we are a covenant community who continues to commit to and engage with one another across important differences, as well as commonalities.”

Jihyun also shared a few brief stories about congregations and the General Assembly encountering moments of difference and how they responded to these opportunities. And then, in words that were ideal for a group considering the path and priorities of Presbyterian Women for the future, she said, “Some of you may have seen in recent days a TedX talk by David LaMotte where he concludes that it is not heroes that transform the world; it is committees that transform the world. People often joke that it is Presbyterian to love committees. We don’t love committees, because we love meetings . . . or at least most of us don’t. We love committees, because they are the way we engage in communal discernment.”

Prayerful and communal discernment began shortly thereafter with the voting representatives considering a few recommendations regarding the structure of the PW, Inc. Board. A few proposals offered ways to streamline the size of the PW, Inc. Board, which is the largest of the PC(USA)’s agencies and entities’ boards. The most significant discussion focused on the recommendation to decrease the number of synod representative positions on the Board—an idea that arose in the PW Board’s visioning process. The current structure includes 16 synod reps (one for each synod) and the recommendation was to reduce that number to 5 regional representatives. Voting representatives did not pass the original recommendation, and instead passed a substitute motion. The revised

recommendation arranges a rotational system for in-person attendance at board meetings where one class of synod reps attends in person, while the other two classes participate online. As long as the Board meets yearly in person, each class would attend one in-person meeting.

Voting representatives approved the recommendation to add the Search Committee moderator and a young women's representative to the Administrative Committee, which acts for the whole Board between Board meetings. After careful discussion, they also voted to eliminate the position of Finance Chair on the Board beginning with the 2027–2029 triennium. The role will be filled by a member of the Board, which aligns with how chairs for other Board committees are filled. Voting representatives also approved the recommendation to allow Board committees to make decisions via unanimous written/email consent. Prior to this recommendation, committees needed to meet and ensure quorum before any action could be taken.

The voting representatives also approved the 2025–2027 budget and elected the nominees for PW, Inc.'s 2024–2027

Board and Search Committee. Pam Snyder (Synod of the Mid-Atlantic) was elected moderator. In her remarks, she said "It is an honor and privilege to be called to serve this organization, Presbyterian Women, which has been such a huge portion of my fiber and foundation for so many years. I am so grateful for the foremothers who persisted and forged the path for all of us. I am especially grateful for those who took me by the hand, encouraged me, nurtured me, and prepared and prayed me into this time and this leadership opportunity."

Kelsey Law (Synod of Southern California and Hawaii) was elected vice moderator, and also reflected on the ways she had been boldly loved into the vibrant community of PW. She said "We are a collective mirror of precisely what makes Presbyterian Women forgiven, freed, and empowered. We are members of diverse communities, we are leaders and activists, she-roses and mentors. Above all, we are a community of siblings who care deeply about our organization and are the embodiment of our Purpose in all ways.



PW Churchwide's 2021–2024 moderator Kathy Reeves reflected on her term during the second day of the Business Meeting. Kathy said, "Thank you for your confidence in me to serve as your Moderator. When I retired as Mission Associate for Presbyterian Women in 2018, I never imagined that I would be invited to return as Moderator of the Board! This triennium included some unique challenges and opportunities as the world opened up after Covid." She thanked PW Churchwide vice-moderator, Kathleen Keefer and all the members of the PW Board for their faithful service, and thanked "the presbytery and synod PW moderators who took the time to meet online to share information, make connections and build relationships; for all of the faithful PWs in our congregations for their faithfulness and all the contributions they make to strengthen the ministry of PW."

Part of the quiet yet vital work of PW Churchwide during the 2021–2024 triennium was searching for and interviewing candidates for PW, Inc.'s Board. The 2021–2024 Search Committee moderator Bonnie Thompson said that the installation of leaders (pictured above) didn't feel like the culmination of the committee's work, but rather an exciting jumping off point. Thank you, Search Committee for your work, new Board members for accepting the call, and all who are nurturing PW's future leaders or discerning your calls to leadership!



Following the installation of the 2024–2027 PW, Inc. Board of Directors, 2021–2024 PW Churchwide Moderator Kathy Reeves (right) passed the gavel to newly elected 2024–2027 Churchwide Moderator Pam Snyder.

PLENARY DAY 1 ❖ THURSDAY PM

What's love got to do with it?



1 Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett, president and executive director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, offered greetings on behalf of the PC(USA). She celebrated Presbyterian Women's long history of mission and determination to share God's love with the world. She said, "For your willingness to keep pressing and leaning into new ways to support the signs of life emerging in new worshipping communities, older, revitalized churches and groups who yet rise, amidst death in this ever forming, reforming, denomination . . . For the audacity to believe that God is doing a new thing, and you still have a role to play in it . . . For being disciples who "re-present" Christ, who are love with skin on it, who are doing all things in love . . . "For Presbyterian women of the past, present and future, I say, Thanks be to God! And blessings on this 2024 Presbyterian Women's Gathering!"

2 Jo Ann Burrell (left) and JyungIn Lee served as PW Churchwide's 2018–2021 Vice Moderator for Mission Relationships and Moderator, respectively. Lighting candles during the Litany of Preparation, they said "We honor the journey that we have been on since the last time we shared sacred space together—the journey that we have traversed over the past six years. Journeys through pandemics, grief, moments of joy, life changes, lives begun, lives completed. . . . We celebrate that as we gather, we are minded of the holiness of being together and how in the incarnation, our savior Jesus Christ reminded us of the sacred nature of meals shared together, stories told among friends old and new, prayers offered with beloved ones."



3 Thursday night's opening plenary was themed "What's Love Got To Do With It?" In her keynote, Cindy Kohlmann linked the lyric Tina Turner made famous—"Who needs a heart when a heart can be broken?"—with Isaiah 54:7–8. She acknowledged the reality that sometimes God's people break God's heart: "And so we need to acknowledge that a good portion of what breaks God's heart is the very fact that we claim that love for ourselves and then deny it for others. We receive God's love, we sing praises for the forgiveness of sins, we remind ourselves of the goodness of God's grace, and then we hold on to those precious gifts as if we have the right to decide who is inside and who is outside God's boundless mercy. Who needs a heart? God's heart is chugging along just fine. It is our hearts that are in need of intervention, our hearts that need a check-up, our hearts that keep clinging to second-hand emotions."

4 Shari Stump (Synod of Southern California and Hawaii) served as emcee during plenary sessions. In addition to introducing speakers, she led the Gathering attendees in energizers, like "pillow fluffing" and the wave. (Be sure to check Presbyterian Women's Facebook page for a video of the wave, perfected over the course of a few sessions!) Shari also used her magic mirror to send greetings to online Gathering participants, whom she called her "Zoomy friends."

PLENARY DAY 2 ❖ FRIDAY AM

Loving our world



1 “I wish you could see what I see from up here,” exclaimed Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett during the first plenary session. Indeed, a sea of attentive Presbyterian women attended each plenary session, listening thoughtfully to the prophetic and inspiring messages from speakers. On Friday, the sea included many individuals wearing red as part of the day’s awareness building around Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

2 Newly elected as a co-moderator of the 226th General Assembly (2024), Rev. CeCe Armstrong brought greetings to Friday morning’s plenary session. She remarked how glad she was to participate in the PW Churchwide Gathering so soon after being elected, saying, “What a wonderful start to this journey with you by receiving the mandate to do everything in love. Smile in love. Cry in love. Laugh in love. Fight for justice in love. Do everything in love and the love of Jesus Christ will pour from your presence into a world that needs love now more than ever.”

3 Rev. Patricia K. Tull, author of the 2024–2025 PW/*Horizons* Bible study, *Let Justice Roll Down: God’s Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation*, offered an overview of the study. She spoke of care for the earth as not just protecting part of God’s creation, but also a way of ensuring health and wholeness for all people: “The more we take seriously what it means to be intelligent beings living in God’s creation, depending upon it, contributing to its health, living at peace with it and with one another, the richer and happier our lives will be. This is not about giving something up. It’s about becoming fuller versions of who we were made to be.”

4 In a keynote titled “Did You Eat Yet?” Rev. Yung Me Morris reflected on food insecurity and famine, and how the biblical traditions around hospitality can guide us toward health and wholeness for all. She began by noting that the Korean greeting literally translated is, “Did you eat rice?” She said this greeting “carries the meaning of ‘Are you taking care of yourself? Your health is important. You are important. Have you taken care of your most basic fundamental needs today?’” She noted that the ability to take care of one’s basic needs requires both holding accountable those who allow injustices and the immediate response and hospitality of a community.



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PLENARY DAY 2 ❖ FRIDAY AM

Loving our world



1 Participants of the 2023 USA Mission Experience to the Arizona–Mexico border offered the prayers of the community. Addressing many of the concerns they witnessed on the trip to the border, they said, “We pray that we may learn to live more peaceably with each other and with this land and with our communities. . . . We pray also for the peace that comes only when the needs of each person are fulfilled. In your creation, abundance overflows, but scarcity overflows too. The abundance is holy, the scarcity is systemic sin at work. May peace prevail until everyone has enough to thrive.”

2 When four members of the Wednesday Whine Club gathered to commiserate over what they've been assigned to do for their PW groups—from leading the monthly Bible study to creating liturgy to celebrate women's leadership—it seems like there's no hope. Then Horizons Woman appears and assures them that Horizons magazine has everything they need for only \$24.95 a year!

OTHER GATHERING SCENES



1 Gathering attendees started their event experience picking up registration materials. Gathering registrar Carol Winkler (seated), PW staff Mindi Stivers (top left) and Gathering Chair Jeanette Huie huddled up to ensure the smoothest check-in possible.

2 PW Board member Letty Heredia staffed the Justice and Peace table in the PW Exhibit Space. The table included a display of PW's newest resource—Etchings in Diversity: Book 2. If you didn't pick up a copy at the Gathering, the item is available as a print resource (PWR24209) or download (PWR24210); \$7 plus tax from presbyterianwomen.org/shop.

3 Two Gathering attendees browse the beautiful tote bags created by Stitching Change, a Kansas City organization that employs women refugees to create beautiful sewn goods.

BEFORE THE GATHERING EVEN STARTED . . .

Embracing a Vision—and Plan—for Inclusive Community

PW Racial Equity Dialog Training By Louise Van Poll



Left: Natarsha Sanders, associate for intercultural leadership development and recruitment for the PC(USA), spoke during the RED training. Natarsha described denominational efforts to have conversations about race, gender, equity and inclusion, and how her office works to actively affirm the gifts and witness of all people, particularly those who historically have been discriminated against. Right: RED trainees will begin the work of establishing, reinvigorating or continuing Racial Equity Dialogs in their synods. Reach out to your PW in the Synod moderator to connect with the trainee(s) in your area!

Before the Gathering began, a group of 25 women met for Racial Equity Dialog (RED) training. Each PW in the Synod had been invited to send one or two representatives to be trained in organizing a RED team within their synod. Twenty-five women attended. The training was led by Catreli Steele Hunter and Nina Khouri, who both serve on the RED team in the Synod of the Mid-Atlantic. That synod's RED team has been active since 2005, so these women were extremely qualified to lead this workshop.

Racial Equity Dialog seeks to fulfill the PW Purpose by "building an inclusive, caring community" using dialog as a tool for building relationships among and between women of different racial and ethnic groups. The Mid-Atlantic team has sponsored a variety of workshops at synod gatherings, read and discussed several books about race and equity, and attended leadership development events.

Catreli and Nina instructed and

led the attendees in community circles, which build relationships and trust among the members. The leaders also presented a detailed review of the RED team's work year-by-year. RED trainees received folders full of information about best practices for creating agendas, organizing meetings and recruiting team members.

Stephanie Patterson, PW staff, has set up a shared site for RED trainees that includes all these resources plus many more. Catreli Hunter emphasized using the resources available: "Use our book lists. Join established book discussions, such as the Justice and Peace group. You don't have to reinvent the wheel."

After lunch, participants met in their synods to discuss and formulate a plan for implementing a RED team. Again, the workshop leaders provided a model of what a RED team might look like; an excellent checklist from now through December 2026 with detailed to-do lists; and a blank plan

with questions and spaces for filling in who would be responsible and deadlines for completion.

Nina and Catreli affirmed that RED teams can take many forms and create or follow any model that works for the group.

Nina said, "Don't feel you have to do everything we have done. Make this your team to fill your needs. It can be as simple or elaborate as you want." The sub-groups reported back to the larger group with many great ideas. One woman said they would start with the PW/*Horizons* Bible study as it deals with environmental justice.

Every woman left the room with a renewed call to action. Energized and enabled to further the PW purpose to "build an inclusive, caring community."

Louise Van Poll is the PW Synod Moderator for the Synod of Lakes & Prairies and a member of the PW Presbytery of South Dakota Coordinating Team.