

Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women August 8-11, 2024 - St. Louis, Missouri – by Judy McCray

The 2024 PW Churchwide Gathering was a flurry of activities. I arrived 2 days early for the Business portion as the Voting Representative for the Miami Valley. Over 200 women, moderators, vice moderator, financial staff, secretary, board members, voting representatives gathered to hear questions and discussions prior to voting.

Kathy Reeves, 2021-2024 PW Moderator and Kathleen Keefer, PW Vice Moderator alternated in leading the meetings. They focused on outlining the ways the PW can continue to serve and connect while recognizing the ways the church world had dramatically changed over the last decade.



Left to right: Marvella Lambright, PW, Inc. Search Committee for Synods of the Covenant, Lincoln Trails and the Trinity; Judy McCray, Voting Representative, Presbytery of Miami Valley; Pam Synder, Moderator, PW, Inc. and Kelsey Law, Vice-Moderator, PW, Inc.

The Voting reps. considered a few recommendations regarding the structure of the PW's, Inc. Board. A few proposals offered ways to streamline the size of the PW's Inc. Board, which is the largest of the PC(USA) agencies. They focused on the recommendation to decrease the number of synod representative positions on the Board. The current structure includes 16 synod reps. It was recommended to reduce that number to 5 regional representatives.

Voting representatives did not pass the original recommendation; 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. After careful discussion, the vote would eliminate the position of Finance Chair on the Board beginning with the


2027-2029 triennium. The role is to be filled by a member of the Board. Voting reps also approved to allow Board committee to make decisions via unanimous written/email consent. Prior to this, approval committees had to meet with a quorum before action could be taken.

Dr. Diane Moffett, President and Executive Director of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, greeted the voting reps, 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 from scripture. "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 in you. Love can move mountains. Love creates community. Love unites us all in the fabric of our humanity.

At the business meeting, the Board Members were introduced by Moderator Kathy Reeves. Elected and installed during PW's Business Meeting were Pam Snyder, new moderator, and Kelsey Law, new vice moderator. Pam and Kelsey spoke at the Saturday evening banquet, sharing their histories with Presbyterian Women, their enthusiasm for what PW's helps make possible, and their vision for 2024–2027 Triennium.

Thursday, a multitude of more Gathering Presbyterian Women from across the country started arriving from every synod, traveling by plane, train, bus, and car. I understand there were 800 registrants' including zoom participation. It was a joyful sight to witness so many Presbyterian Women swarming the streets around downtown St. Louis, wearing their registration badges, exploring St. Louis' atmosphere, searching for a restaurant, or heading toward the Marriott Hotel, with suitcases/bags in hand, forming lines to check in for an exciting gathering to take place for the next three days.

Days following the business meeting included three additional days of Worship, Bible Study, and Workshops. To name a few: "Red Dress" addressing violence against women, "Missing and Indigenous Women"; "Menstrual Health" – menstrual supply needs; "Wear Orange – End of Domestic Violence", "Justice and Peace Presentations"- Honor those who died crossing our southern border". "Local Mission Display highlights local mission initiatives; "Newborns in Need", "Children's Home & Services", "Pre-school Camp". The Exhibit Hall was showcased. Also, 20 Booths displayed items such as crafts from the Holy Land, Living Water for the World, and the Gathering Theme "Doing Everything in Love". The registration packet included a booklet outlining all day events, times, and location. Maps provided directions to assist in finding every event location within the hotel.

Following the business meeting, I prepared to head home without participating in the three days of events. The few days there was a wonderful experience gathering in love, sharing and getting to meet other Presbyterian women from around the world with different experiences, dreams of loving our neighbors, loving ourselves, loving our community and loving out loud. This event is held every three years, so if you have a desire to participate in a worthwhile gathering to meet other Presbyterian Women from around the world, now is the time to start planning. 

PW, Inc. is as close as your Circle, PW Groups, your Women's Retreats or your contributions to Thank or Birthday Offerings. Look for more info about Presbytery and Synod Gatherings. Text Marvella at 937-838-3780. PW misses YOU!