



Bacon Memorial Presbyterian Church



Sermon for Sunday September 21, 2008

by Patricia Bauer – Moderator Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Women's Message

As an organization we have these 9 basic principles:

1. Value of persons

- The individual member is a central concern
- Programming is provided to meet the needs of individuals according to interests, perspectives and gifts.
- Christian belief which promotes full growth and expression of each woman.

This environment renews, strengthens and empowers the individual to participate in the life and work of the church. The servant community of the church.

2. Spiritual Development and Growth.

- Reading of Scripture and study guides
- Prayer
- We believe that spiritual development and growth require us to reflect on our journey of faith. Keeping our heart's open to God's call to action and involvement.

3. Support the mission of the church

- As part of our long tradition, Presbyterian Women supports the mission of the church worldwide and the church at home.
- We work for justice and peace, for all God's people this is realized through giving and service.

4. Community Life

- We are committed to the building of an inclusive caring community.

- We call forth the gifts of one another.
 - We provide opportunities for women to grow in faith and understanding of individual and cultural differences.
5. Our Membership
 - Open to all women.
 - Members are those who choose to participate in or support Presbyterian Women in any way.
 - Seeks members inclusive of any age, race, ethnic group or geographical location
 6. Decision Making
 - Presbyterian Women determines its own leadership, programs and budget.
 - Decisions are made by voting or consensus at gatherings.
 7. Open Communication
 - We value the process of communication that provides opportunities for free exchange of ideas and perspectives.
 8. Flexibility
 - Encouraged to provide appropriate and workable programs for individual churches and communities in which we live.
 - We change freely to adapt to changing needs of ours and community.
 9. Giving
 - We challenge women to support the mission of the Presbyterian Church beyond their church pledge.

The Rich **History of Presbyterian Women and its publications** is found on this page at The Presbyterian Church USA:

<http://www.pcusa.org/pw/about/history.htm>

Presbyterian Women continuing our tradition today contribute to many missions of the church. Three primary opportunities for Presbyterian Women are:

1. Birthday Offering
2. Thank Offering
3. Fellowship of the least coin.

In 1922, 10 years after the Women's Auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church was formed, the women sought an appropriate way to celebrate what the auxiliary meant to them.

Hallie Paxson Winsbourough, Superintendent of women's work visited Miss Dowd's School for Girls in Japan. She observed crowded rooms, inadequate facilities and recognized a need for change. She knew this change could be met by Presbyterian Women in the USA. After returning home, Hallie challenged all women to give one penny for each year of their lives or \$1.00 if they did not want to tell their age as a "Birthday gift" to those girl's in Japan. This was the start of the annual "Women of the Church Birthday Offering".

This year's "Women of the Church Birthday Offering" has been given to:

Hope's Promise Orphan's Ministries in Namibia, Africa

And

Living Waters for the World in Franklin, Tennessee

Our Annual Thank Offering started in 1888 when Eliza Clokey of Ohio urged women to give over and above her usual contribution to the Women's General Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church N.A. as a "Thank offering to her Lord".

A day was set aside for a concert of prayer and praise and a gathering of "The Thank Offering". The women's giving is said, "To have saved the world wide missionary movement at that time.

The "Thank Offering" has continued to be an important part of women's giving today.

The expression of "Thanksgiving" is very important today as it used to support hospitals and other health ministries in the USA and around the world.

The "Thank Offering" is dedicated each November.

Last year's "Thank Offerings" were given to:

Grace Clinic: (1) Dental Expression Project Kennewick, Washington State.

(2) Presbyterian Children's Services, Mentoring of Children of incarcerated mothers and fathers, St. Louis, Missouri. And many more.

Fellowship of Least Coin links prayer and least coins of many countries in a very significant way, as the least coin becomes a symbol of prayer for peace and conciliation.

It was begun in 1956 by Shanti Solomon of India, who believed that women anywhere could have a sense of being a part of a worldwide family of faith as they prayed for peace and conciliation in the family, community and nation, by setting aside the least coin of their country as a token of that prayer. The least coin is a symbol, where the donor's identity is lost and oneness of women in their women fund is symbolized.

To date 24 project grants have been given worldwide.

The grants are sent to: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, The Middle East, Pacific Islands and North America.

The grants were used for the education of women and gender issues, programs for health, to promote justice and the environment.

The Presbyterian Women of Bacon Memorial Church have carried out the traditions of our fore-sisters and hope to continue for many more years to come.

In closing I am leaving you with a Litany to think about, pray and try to live as we venture forward in this relatively new century of technical advances and human foibles.

Social Creed for the 21st Century

- Envision a society that shares more and consumes less.
- Seeks compassion over suspicion.
- Equality over Domination.
- Security in joined hands rather than massed arms.
- Grace over Greed.

AMEN