



SUNRISE



Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Woman Shenandoah
Pat Armstrong, Moderator

<http://shenpres.org/presbyterian-women/>

March 2016
Pat Armstrong, Editor

MODERATOR'S LETTER

Laura Atkins from MPC

AS I WRITE THIS, WE ARE HAVING A LOVELY SPRINGLIKE DAY--EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE COMING TO LIFE (AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING!). HOW THE LORD BLESSES US WITH THE BEAUTY OF HIS WORLD. MAY WE COME ALIVE WITH A RENEWED LOVE OF HIM AND ALL HIS CREATION AS WE PREPARE FOR RESURECTION SUNDAY.

THE SHENANDOAH WOMEN LED BY MARY ANN COX AND HER COMMITTEE HAVE PLANNED AN EXCITING SPRING GATHERING FOR APRIL 9. SEE DETAILS AND REGISTRATION FORM IN THIS NEWSLETTER. THIS IS A GATHERING YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS.

THE BIRTHDAY OFFERING IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO REACH OUT TO THOSE IN NEED. THERE IS SUCH AN INFORMATIVE ARTICLE IN THE CURRENT HORIZON'S TELLING ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THIS OFFERING AND EXPLAINING HOW THE OFFERING WILL BE USED FOR 2016. YOU CAN ALSO GO TO ONLINE PW SITE TO READ ABOUT THIS.

AS MY TIME AS MODERATOR FINISHES IN APRIL, I AGAIN WANT TO THANK YOU FOR THE PRIVILEGE OF SERVING AS YOU MODERATOR. I LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE WITH PW AND TO SUPPORT OUR NEW MODERATOR, ELAINE QUICK.

JOYFULL WITH LOVE,
PAT

“Hola, amigos.” This month’s featured woman is a long way from her birthplace of Illinois, and her growing up years in the Philippines, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Panama! Laura Atkins and her older sister moved frequently due to their father’s job with the State Department’s Agency of International Development. There was always an American contingency where she went to school, but relationships were hampered by the knowledge that they would probably never see each other again as families moved to other countries. School was taught in English, although they also took Spanish classes. Church options were limited to a single non-denominational church because English speaking residents were so few in number, so Laura felt no strong connection to a particular denomination, although her mother is Methodist. When Laura was fourteen, Mr. Barth was transferred to D.C. and Laura went to high school in Vienna, VA. She then went to James Madison University and met her future husband, Randy Atkins, who was raised in Cross Keys. Laura worked in information systems at R.R. Donnelley for twenty years, and in 2005 became a full-time computer information systems instructor in the College of Business at JMU.

Before daughter Rachel was born (1993), followed by son Matt (1997), the Atkins searched for a church home. They felt comfortable at Massanutten Presbyterian, and soon got involved. Laura was the VBS co-director for two years and also taught a variety of Sunday school classes at different times. She has served on the Board of Deacons, Stephen Ministry, and is currently on the Session. She effuses that it has been a joy to be involved with the Liturgical Art group, and has found it fascinating to complete a couple of art

projects with the youth. She has also participated in mission trips with the youth, focused on hunger and poverty issues, including one to East Liberty in Pittsburgh and another to Asheville, NC. But the truly life-changing mission trip began with her daughter's summer youth trip to Baja, Mexico. Laura says that Rachel "came back so fired up about the work that they did, and the people they served, that she was simply transformed." And it was not just a temporary high—it stayed with her, sparking incessant conversations. So in 2011, Laura and Randy talked about it, and made the decision to make the next Baja mission trip an Atkins family event!

It may be helpful to interject a little logistics information at this point. Our Shenandoah Presbytery contingency flies to San Diego where they meet up with a YWAM trip leader, and begin the six hour drive down the Baja peninsula. Once in Baja, the group stays in bunkhouses and has breakfast and dinner at the mission base. The mission procures the building materials, paid for by fundraising activities by the Virginia congregations, and preselects a family for the build. Our church members have also sent monetary donations, health and hygiene kits, and linen and kitchen items. Days are spent building the home, but more importantly building a relationship with the family. Laura marvels that everyone does their own thing and yet somehow it always gets done! In four days, it will have gone from a concrete slab to a furnished home with a fully stocked kitchen. The neighborhood kids all show up to see the flurry of activity and sometimes help with some of the tasks. And of course everyone in the neighborhood wants to help paint! Some grateful homeowners from recent years' projects often come by to lend a hand. In particular, Ricardo, from the 2014 build, would work in the fields all day and then come work on the house. Although he and Randy couldn't speak each other's language, they bonded, working side by side. Ricardo and Bertha and three children really tugged on the Atkins' family heartstrings! And Maricela and Primitivo, of the 2012 build, even named their newborn daughter "Virginia" in honor of the build team.

Each morning begins with a worship service and evenings are spent in outreach—distributing

health kits, going to a local Mexican church and visiting families from previous years. The group spends the week completely removed from distractions like phone and internet, and the final evening is spent in a meaningful service of communion and reflection, held on the beach. But Laura says "it is not just the thing they do in July. It is a part of our lives now and we think about what we can do throughout the year."

Rachel is now studying in Malta; Matt attends VT and will be going on a mission trip to Honduras—things they might not have felt comfortable doing prior to the Baja trips. The whole family's eyes have been opened, and they plan to support this mission for as long as they are able!

It seems so providential that Laura would end up on this spiritual mission voyage. I asked her to bring her early years full circle with her mid-life years. Laura mused that her perspective is vastly different now from when she was growing up. "We saw this level of poverty growing up, but we didn't address it. I was just a kid. Now I see this and I can **do** something. I can speak their language and I am very comfortable in their culture." And we are so grateful that she is! "Adios amigos hasta la proxima."

Submitted by Marta Armstrong

The Basis of Our Security (A MEDITATION)

What is the basis of our security? When we start thinking about that question, we may give many answers: success, money, friends, property, popularity, family, connections, insurance, and so on. We may not always *think* that any of these forms the basis of our security, but our *actions* or *feelings* may tell us otherwise. When we start losing our money, our friends, or our popularity, our anxiety often reveals how deeply our sense of security is rooted in these things.

A spiritual life is a life in which our security is based not in any created things, good as they may be, but in God, who is everlasting love. We

probably will never be completely free from our attachment to the temporal world, but if we want to live in that world in a truly free way, we'd better not belong to it. "You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Luke 16:13).

For further reflection...

[The one] who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God in whom I trust." - Psalm 91:1-2 (NIV)

Bunker Hill Presbyterian

Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church has been busy this winter month with plans for the ladies to make peanut butter chocolate covered eggs to sell for delivery at Easter. Proceeds will benefit the working fund that is used for funeral dinners, community missions and many other things in the church and neighborhood. It will be the first time to do it for our group and we will gather together at the church to work on these and make. We will have the guidance of experience in that the recipe has been given and is foolproof! Each egg will be slightly decorated, be 4 oz. of sweet goodness and placed in a bag tied with colorful ribbon and include a scripture verse. Pray for us! :-)

The PW bible study group had the honor of being chosen to test and comment on the Horizons bible study that will be coming up in 2017. Each lesson ended with an evaluation sheet filled out and turned in by the leader and then all participants filled out a master evaluation on lessons completed by December. It was a wonderful experience to get to do that.

The church hosted a Red Cross Blood Drive on Feb. 13th and stressed to everyone in the community and church that supplies were down due to weather cancelling many drives all over the

region. The bitter cold day didn't keep people from coming out and 30 pints were collected with the double red machine going the duration of the drive! Ladies help with registration and canteen area and the local Domino's in Inwood always gives pizza for donors after giving. They are such a wonderful part of the drives we have been hosting for almost 20 years.

Hospice of the Panhandle gives cookies around Valentine's Day to thank all those partnering with them to provide care and comfort to patients and their families. Over 850 clients were served last year alone and Hospice provides such a wonderful service to our community working with doctor offices, funeral homes, transportation specialists, pharmacies and drug stores. It is the pleasure of Bunker Hill to be able to help in their thank you gifts of cookies to everyone and this year 57 dozen were baked and given by various congregant members.

The youth group is hosting a themed basket bingo on March 12th and proceeds are going to the scholarship fund. Members make up terrific themed baskets for prizes and admission is by donation and food concessions are available and everyone always has a wonderful time!

We are looking forward to Easter celebrations and breakfast hosted this year by our BHPC men Easter morning. We go together with the Methodist Church across the street to do a combined sunrise service and take turns hosting the breakfast every other year. Morning service always draws a crowd and the breakfast is a community tradition too.

The church and members and community are very blessed to be together and work together putting faith into action!

Easter Blessings
submitted by Vickana Norton
Bunker Hill Presbyterian Church

**SAVE
THE
DATE**

**PW SPRING
GATHERING**

**MASSANETTA
SPRINGS**

APRIL 9, 2016



"SO IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST, THERE IS A NEW CREATION; EVERYTHING OLD HAS PASSED AWAY; SEE, EVERYTHING HAS BECOME NEW."
2 COR. 5: 17

"AND THE ONE WHO WAS SEATED ON THE THRONE SAID, "SEE, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW."
REV. 21:5

REGISTRATION:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Home _____

Church: _____

Arrangement for Special Assistance:

Golf cart shuttle will be available

Special needs (dietary, mobility)

Medical issues:

Emergency contact & phone: _____

Been to Spring Gathering before? Yes No

The Annual Spring Gathering is open to ALL women (teen to adult). You do not have to be a member of a PW

ALL THINGS NEW

8:30 a.m.
Registration, Exhibits and Refreshments

9:45 a.m.
Meeting, worship, installation of officers, communion and music luncheon

Childcare available



SHENANDOAH PRESBYTERY
PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
2016 SPRING GATHERING
Massanetta Springs
Harrisonburg, VA

**SHENANDOAH
PRESBYTERY
PRESBYTERIAN
WOMEN
2016 SPRING
GATHERING**

Saturday, April 9th
Massanetta Springs



SPECIAL MUSIC:

The Daugherty Sisters have sung together since they were children. Connie Daugherty Wood serves as PW Leadership Coordinator for the Mountain Valley Mission Community. We are very happy to welcome this "sister act" to enrich our worship.

EXHIBITORS:

- First Step
- Green Hummingbird Fair Trade Clothing for Women (*will have items available for purchase*)
- Massanetta Springs Camp & Conference Center
- Together in Service
- Horizons
- Justice and Peace
- iCare
- Bread for the World
- Sunnyside Retirement Communities
- LDA: Custom products tell your story
- HumanKind
- Equal Exchange (available for purchase) and More!

➤ Offering collected for the day will go to **FIRST STEP in Harrisonburg, VA**, a response to domestic violence.

<http://firststepva.com/>

➤ Please bring travel size personal items (shampoo, toothpaste, soap) to share with women's shelters & children's homes



KEYNOTE SPEAKER: The **Rev. Dr. Roy A. Martin**, has a heart for Massanetta Springs, having spent years at Camp Massanetta as a camper, counselor, and then director. After serving pastorates in Florida, Delaware, and again in Florida, Roy came to Shenandoah Presbytery in October, 2013, to serve as transitional presbyter. He has enjoyed preaching and visiting in most of the congregations in our presbytery and looks forward to visiting the rest.



INSTALLATION & COMMUNION: Nearly ten years ago, **Rev. Rachel Crumley** was ordained as a Minister of Word and Sacrament (Teaching Elder), and came to Shenandoah Presbytery to live out this calling. After seven years serving the wonderful people of Front Royal Presbyterian Church as the Associate Pastor, Rachel accepted a new call in Martinsburg, WV, where she has had the joy and honor of serving as the pastor of Tuscarora Church for the past three years.

Rachel has a wonderful husband of 17 years and two amazing kids (ages 9 and 10)! In her "spare time," Rachel enjoys photography (weddings and portraits), spending time outdoors, and sharing life with others.



All Things New

Fees:

Registration

of Adults _____ x \$5.00 _____

Lunch

Adult & youth 13+ _____ x \$12.00 _____

Youth ages 3 to 13 _____ x \$7.50 _____

Under age 3 free _____ x \$0.00 _____

Childcare: (List # of Children and Ages) _____

Number: _____ Ages: _____

TOTAL: _____

Send form and money no later than April 4th:

Shenandoah Presbytery PW

Treasurer

Gladys Wonderley

5027 Rockfish Road

Grottoes, VA 24441

Questions: Call Mary Lou Cox
540-499-2585 or cwmcox@htcnet.org

<http://shenpres.org/presbyterian-women>

Come enjoy a day of fellowship and worship, feel God making all things new!



CHECK US OUT ON

Horizons Bible Study Lesson 7

Wrestling with Forgiveness

BY IRENE PAK

For use with Lesson Seven
of the 2015-2016 *PW* /
Horizons Bible study,
Come to the Waters by Judy Record Fletche

**Scripture: Isaiah 35:1-2, 5-7; Psalm 51:1-12;
Matthew 6:12**

I've been staring at an empty screen for a long time. Writing an article to help people further study the topic of forgiveness has me paralyzed. The lesson's title, "Streams of Mercy," sounds beautiful and healing. But the practice of forgive-ness—really thinking about what it means to for-give and be forgiven—is a concept that I struggle with. Maybe you do, too.

There was a conference held in September 2015 in Minneapolis called "Why Christian?" A diverse panel of women from different denominations came together and wrestled with the question, "Why am I a Christian?" The "About" section of the conference website asked, "Why, in the wake of centuries of corruption, hypocrisy, crusades, tele-vangelists, and puppet ministries do we continue to follow Jesus?" Although I was not able to attend, I was able to follow the postings on Twitter (#WX2015). In the midst of a range of conversation, the topic of forgiveness came up again and again. Apparently, the lack of forgiveness (or grace) is a reason many people cite for leaving the church. And forgiveness is a key reason people come back to the church, as well.

Even though forgiveness is not easy to write about, think about, or practice—whether it's extending forgiveness or receiving it—it is something we all must wrestle with. That's what I want to acknowledge. The idea of forgiveness triggers a number of (perhaps conflicting) feelings for many people, myself included. Judy Fletcher, the Bible study author, writes, "We can confess our sinful-ness more

freely when we know the grace that is there for us like water in the desert" (p. 58). But let's be honest: we do not always fully trust that there is grace. Trusting that grace is there is sometimes the hardest part, especially if you are like me, and stubborn as all get-out. There is a deep, inner struggle I have when it comes to for-giveness, especially if someone has wronged me or wronged someone I love. I sometimes feel that if I forgive someone, I am somehow accepting the pain they have caused. How about you? Do you struggle in this way?

Still staring at a blank page awaiting my insights on forgiveness, I looked at a number of websites to see how others have approached it. I found a sermon by Lutheran pastor and writer Nadia Bolz-Weber, who was one of the speakers at the afore-mentioned conference. She preached a sermon in 2011 on the topic of forgiveness, and it opened my heart to the topic in a new way.

She wrote, "Forgiveness is God's way of combat-ing evil...." She continued, "When we forgive someone, it's not an act of niceness, it's not being a doormat, it's an act of fidelity to God's evil-com-bating campaign. Forgiveness is an act of fidelity to the kingdom of God and a defiant stance against the forces of evil—even the evil in our own hearts. And in turn when we are forgiven by someone else we are set free because they are saying they will no longer be bound to the harm we did them."

It was as if she had read my mind and given me a new lens on forgiveness. Thinking about forgiveness as a radical act against the powers and principalities in this world that are evil and binding was liberating.

Psalm 51:10 says, "Create in me a clean heart, O God." Maybe that's really the starting point for those of us who struggle to forgive.

How might you allow space to look within your heart and extend and receive the forgiveness you need?

The truth is, I think that's why I struggle with this topic, because there is some healing that needs to still happen within myself on this topic.

What healing needs to happen within you to facilitate forgiveness?

Reflect for a moment on the statement "Forgiven people forgive." What do you feel you need to be forgiven for? Who and what do you need to forgive?

There are no easy answers or simple strategies, but I invite you to practice with me today, keeping in mind that forgiving is not being a doormat, but is an act of fidelity to the kingdom of God and a stance against evil.

Irene Pak is associate pastor at Stone Church of Willow Glen in San Jose, California.

Notes

Why Christian? www.whychristian.net/about; accessed December 15, 2015.

Nadia Bolz-Weber, "Sermon on Forgiveness," blog post first published September 11, 2011, reprinted on Goodreads.com; www.goodreads.com/author_blog_posts/1542722-sermon-on-forgiveness-on-9-11-2