



# SUNRISE



Presbyterian Women

Presbyterian Woman Shenandoah  
Elaine Quick, Moderator

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

November 2017  
Pat Armstrong, Editor

## THE BIG EVENT

The Big Event was held Saturday, September 16 at Massanutta Springs. The Event opened with a Worship Service. Tracie Martin, from Opequon Church delivered a message based in part on Hebrews.

She talked about the importance of Community which fit in well with our PW Bible Study workshop which followed. Anne Ross and Ann Held conducted the workshop on Cloud of Witnesses: The Community of Christ in Hebrews. They gave wonderful examples of how Hebrews is very Community oriented.

Five Workshops were offered in the morning and seven in the afternoon. I attended Doing a New Thing led by a member of the new Church Development Committee, the Rev. Rachel Crumley. This is a new concept of inviting persons for worship in places other than the church sanctuary - in gyms, coffee shops, wherever would be a comfortable place to gather.

Rev. Crumley's 12 year old daughter Rachel provided special music on the cello.

An offering was taken for the Presbyterian Disaster Assistance for flood relief. Clean Up and Health Kits were collected.

SHARED BY RUTH WILLIAMS

## INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES

“Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works.”

~ Martin Luther,

“Don't pray when you feel like it. Have an appointment with the Lord and keep it. A man is powerful on his knees.”

~ Corrieten Boom

## MASSANUTTEN CELEBRATES 150TH ANNIVERSARY

On Sunday, October 1, Massanutten Presbyterian Church celebrated its 150th anniversary with visual displays of the church's history, special music, including instrumentals and volunteers in the choir, and guest pastor David Witt. Following the worship service about 250 members, past and present, and guests enjoyed a celebratory luncheon, prepared and served by church members. Favorite recipes were contributed to compile the 150th Celebration Cookbook, available for \$10.00.

SHARED BY JEAN GEARING, MODERATOR

## MT HOREB PW SHARE

Once again we prepare to enter another year in the life of the church. Looking back on 2016-2017, we can't help but wonder where it went, but we are eager to get on with the challenges 2017-2018 may bring our way.

Here at Mt. Horeb, the church year ended on a very positive note as we hosted the Shenandoah Presbytery meeting on Saturday, August 26th. Approximately 190 people were present for this event, with 122 enjoying a delicious lunch provided and prepared by the Presbyterian

Women. A day filled with sunshine was also a day we will remember for a long time. We hope everyone who came to share this day with us will, too.

As we look forward to new events and possibilities in the coming year, we do not have to look far to see what is next. A tentative date of October 21st has been set for our annual apple butter boiling. This, as many of you may already know, is the highlight of the Fall season here at Mt. Horeb, and one which involves the participation of the entire congregation. All of us have a chance to share in the preparation of, what has been described as, the "best apple butter in the Valley".

This is only the beginning! There will be lots going on throughout the year, and we will be happy to share all of it with you as it happens. In the meantime, we wish everyone a glorious year in the service of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God bless.

Shared by: Johanna Bailey, Recording Secretary, Mt. Horeb Coordinating Team

## News from Olivet

Our church has been busy this month preparing for fall festivities and celebrations of life and love. We held a formal dedication of our newly renovated nursery on September 24<sup>th</sup> and were blessed with several of Wilma's children present at the dedication. Our new Moderator, Stephanie Armstrong, officiated at the dedication and shared her own memories of Wilma and having her own child grow up in the nursery. Circle meetings have started and each has its own Bible Study curriculum. Circle 4, of which I am a member, is studying the Book of Ephesians. The Women hosted a Thank You luncheon for our Pastor and his family on Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>. We have a church cookbook coming out soon and members who submitted recipes were asked to prepare a dish from their submissions to share. It was a wonderful afternoon with delicious food. We are looking forward to the cook-

book in December. If anyone is interested, the cost is \$15 per book with checks made out to Olivet Women, and mailed to the following address: Karen Stevens, 251 Rosser Avenue, Waynesboro, VA 22980.

Since fellowship is best served with a hot meal (that's our motto anyway), the Women will be hosting a Potato/Chili Bar on Sunday, October 22 at 12 noon. All you can eat baked potato, homemade chili, salad, dessert, and drink for \$6.50. All are welcome so come hungry! We are also working on our Thanksgiving Baskets for needy families, and beginning to think about needs around the community and around the world over the Christmas season. We are planning a Shoebox Packing Party the last Sunday in October and hope to gather at least 50 shoeboxes to send out. It's a wonderful time of the year and we are so blessed, each and every one of us, to be a part of God's wonderful plan for us. Please remember those less fortunate and take care of one another!

Blessings to All,

Karen Stevens  
Olivet Presbyterian Church Staunton

## STORY CLUB AT MOSSY CREEK

This year at Mossy Creek's Story Club, 18 volunteers ministered to 35 area children from 4 different local elementary schools. Our day began with worship and a Bible lesson, taught by our pastor, Reverend Coleman. The children then split into groups and cycled through various stations. Some of our youth helped at various stations. Groups of children participated in art projects inspired by various famous artists. A local student volunteered to teach music as part of a Sociology project. The bulk of our volunteers worked with small groups of students for 20 minutes at a time on their reading. The children rounded out their time with snacks and outdoor play.

We continue to see a need for this program. Many of the children we reached this year do not attend church. Our area continues to lag behind

## SUNRISE EDITOR REPORT NOV. 4, 2017 CT

the rest of the state in per capita income and reading scores. 43 percent of the students at our nearest elementary school receive free or reduced lunches. At the very least, we were able to provide some enrichment and an opportunity for rural school children to socialize with friends in a safe, friendly environment.

The highlight of our summer was our closing picnic. The children and their families shared a meal with us on the last day of Story Club. It was such a joy to see the church filled with families, and the children proudly displaying art projects they made over the summer. A sweet time of fellowship was had by all!

Kim Shank – Director of Story Club

### Massanutten Presbyterian Women

Our opening picnic was held on August 21st. A large group of women attended, and Ann Pettit led us in an insightful overview of the Horizons Bible Study for the coming year, Cloud of Witnesses: The Community of Christ in Hebrews.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, the church celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. David Witt of Opequon Presbyterian Church was guest preacher. Special music included an anthem with all choirs participating, and a brass quintet. Following the service, lunch was served in the Fellowship Hall. Presbyterian Women are looking forward to the Fall Fellowship on October 25<sup>th</sup> at Sunnyside. This is an annual opportunity to visit with church staff members and Sunnyside residents.

In the Spring, PW hosted a churchwide drive to raise enough funds to supply 10 goats for Heifer International. Response to this was wonderful, and we even had a visit from several local baby goats. In the end, enough was raised to contribute 22+ goats.

SHARED BY CAROL LOWN SECRETARY

I am still finding it a challenge to get reports on activities of PW at churches. Only several churches shared for this SUNRISE edition. I know the PW are involved in many ways of serving--any thoughts on how to folks to share would be appreciated.

Would like to encourage making all aware of activities, events, etc. taking place at your churches to which invitations are extended. This would be a great way of getting to know others PW and to have good fellowship.

Suggestions for ways of sharing in SUNRISE: Activities in your churches, communities, etc.; Bios of PW and what PW has meant in their lives; Thoughts on what's happening in Presbyterian Church, USA; Invitation to your church activities, events, etc.; Mission Projects; Humorous events, etc., etc. There are so many ways to share.

Please send anything for Sunrise to [armstrong.richpat@gmail.com](mailto:armstrong.richpat@gmail.com)

Blessings to all,  
Pat Armstrong (Sunrise Editor)

### CHURCH HUMOR

WHOEVER STOLE OUR AC UNITS, PLEASE KEEP THEM. IT'S HOT WHERE YOU ARE GOING!



# The Whispering Word

BY PATRICIA K. TULL

For use with Lesson Three of the 2017–2018 PW/  
*Horizons*

Bible study, *Cloud of Witnesses: The Community of Christ in Hebrews* by Melissa Bane Sevier

Scripture: Hebrews 1:1–3a; Genesis 1:1–5; Ezekiel 37:1–14; John 1:1–5, 14; Hebrews 4:12–13

In the 1984 movie *Amadeus*, that musical connoisseur Emperor Joseph II of Austria commented that Mozart’s music was “an excellent effort” but contained “too many notes.” It’s a comment that often runs through my own mind during Presbyterian worship. Except in a Presbyterian worship service it’s “too many words,” too much to think about, too much to digest in an hour. That’s why I love the music there—Mozart’s or any other, the organ prelude on which my meditations float, the anthem overflowing with harmony, the hymns. Presbyterian hymns are packed with deep thought. So, although they are very familiar, it’s possible to hear an old line in a new way every time.

I also think about the phrase “too many words” when I write sermons. Mozart responded to the emperor with young arrogant genius, saying, “I don’t understand. There are just as many notes, Majesty, as are required. Neither more nor less.” Perhaps that was so for Mozart, but I find I can do without all the words I am tempted to pack into every sermon, overloading hearers’ brains and patience. As the emperor said, “There are in fact only so many notes the ear can hear in the course of an evening.” And only so many words ears can hear in the course of a morning.

Mozart sarcastically asked his king to choose the notes that should be omitted. But as a preacher I don’t have that luxury. I have to decide before Sunday which words to leave out. Sometimes whole paragraphs can go.

Mindful of Jesus’ advice—“When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words” (Matt. 6:7)—I’m drawn to simplify the liturgy as well. The Great Prayer of Thanksgiving doesn’t have to rehearse all of salvation history every single time. The petitions of the congregation can indeed be expressed without heaping helpings of thee and thou. Spaces can remain between words, moments to breathe and be, in blessed silence.

Power is not in many words, but in the right words. According to Genesis 1:3, God set the universe in motion with two of them: *yehi* ‘or, “Let there be light.” That was all the prompting the world needed. John the Baptist set Jesus’ ministry in motion, according to Matthew 3:2–3, with a two-sentence sermon, half of which was a quote from Isaiah. The question is not where to find more words, but how to choose a few words well.

What is the one sentence that will set healing in motion today? What is the word or two that will comfort or encourage? Which words can and should be omitted?

During college I took long shuttle bus rides to campus and often used the time to memorize scripture from flash cards, both to get to know the Bible better and to exercise my mind. More than half a life-time ago, it came easier. Today, remembering where I put my phone is exercise enough. But I do remember some of those verses, often whispering just the word I need to hear. “I am with you.” “Rejoice in the Lord always.” “Consider the lilies.”

As an environmental theologian, I visit congregations interested in jumpstarting their environmental ministries. Church members ask what they can do when the ecological challenges seem insurmountable, when many large forces—governmental, economic, ideological—seem arrayed against

sustainable solutions, when other members seem indifferent, when they wish their green teams were twice as large. I tell them what scripture whispers to me. Things like the parable of the sower, how one seed falling in the right soil—and we never know which soil that might be—grows thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold, but only if we’re sowing. I describe to them the tiny mustard seed from which a huge bush grows. Perhaps it’s whispering in the dark to say these things. But it is short sentences like these, scripture’s vivid words, not long windy sermons, that whisper to us and keep us going day by day.

The word of God is like that. It’s not imperious or longwinded or vague. It’s just the right phrase at just the right moment in just the right ear. Living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, the author of Hebrews said. The word of God judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and sustains them as well.

## Questions

1. Recall a time when a single word or phrase made things right for you and redirected, comforted, or revealed something important to you. Where did it come from? What made it stick?
2. How often does something you read from the Bible pop up in your mind at just the right moment? How can you encourage that to happen more often?
3. Images in scripture, like the image of the valley of dry bones coming to life in Ezekiel 37, can also be powerful. What are some scriptural images that communicate God and life in God to you?

## Entertaining Angels

BY PATRICIA K. TULL

For use with Lesson Four of the 2017–2018 PW/Horizons

Bible study, *Cloud of Witnesses: The Community of Christ in Hebrews* by Melissa Bane Sevier

Scripture: Genesis 28:10–22; Daniel 3:8–30; Matthew 1:18–25; Luke 1:5–17, 1:26–38, 2:8–14; Hebrews 1:3–14; 13:1–2

“Some have entertained angels unawares,” say the King James and Revised Standard Version Bibles—the wording of Hebrews 13:2 that many of us know by heart. The phrase is piquant in its brevity, but risks misunderstanding, since the adjective “unawares” could be applied, grammatically speaking, to the “angels” instead of to the “some,” and what are unaware angels? Most contemporary translations clarify the meaning of the phrase with the more prosaic “entertained angels without knowing it.”

Which raises the question, which guest is not an angel?

In terms of grace and gratitude, of course, there are some unangelic guests. If, by angel, we mean someone who is well-behaved, well yes, we do entertain angels and devils and a lot of in-betweens. There was the overnight guest who never mentioned that he couldn’t seem to get a hot shower downstairs. That was too good—we could have fixed that. But then there was the guest of one of our children who nearly burned the house down by not quite stubbing out a cigarette during a teenage get-together in the attic. I don’t believe he was welcomed by anyone after that.

But, in ancient cosmological imaginings, angels were not understood as extra nice people who picked up their towels and never complained

about accommodations. They weren't even, in the first instance, the emergency intervention forces that many people regard angels to be today, halting oncoming trucks and falling objects. Nor are they fairies, though you can't tell that from what some websites profiting from the angel craze might say.

Rather, in the Bible's ancient world, they were understood fundamentally as bringers of divine messages. They were messengers from God, intermediaries to mortals—sometimes to those who weren't getting the point, sometimes to those too distressed to hear, sometimes to those in danger of acting rashly, sometimes to those whose lives were about to be redirected.

Lesson Four points out the correspondence in Hebrew between the words angel and messenger. The Hebrew word *mal'akh* can mean either or both. The messenger can be human—a prophet (Haggai 1:13) or a priest (Malachi 2:7) or even a courier conveying information from one person to another (Genesis 32:3; 2 Samuel 11:19). The Greek word *angelos* can be similarly ambiguous, though its references to a human messenger are more rare.

People sometimes express frustration with perceived discontinuity between the world as it appeared in Bible stories and as it appears today. Why did they get miracles and angels and we don't? Wouldn't life be easier with such direct signs of God's presence and will?

A couple of things are worth bearing in mind. First, events or perceptions take shape as they are reduced to words. Even when something happens to us ourselves, it is an act of interpretation and clarification to retell it, and thus to transform it from incident to meaningful sequence. The stories told in Scripture underwent shaping that participants, in the moments themselves, or in moments that inspired the stories, might not have seen as as well-defined as hearers see them now.

Second, the laws of science are built into creation and do not change. But human storytelling conventions and worldviews do change. Today, if

modern images are to be believed, we have fairly fixed notions of what angels must look like: white clothes, halos, big feathery wings. But descriptions of angels in scripture are sparse and fluid. In scripture, angels often merge with God's presence or are mistaken for humans. For us, angels and miracles defy science. In ancient times, angels and miracles had nothing to do with defying science—since, as an organized discipline, science didn't yet exist. Angels and miracles were signs of divine action and presence, signs that must be interpreted to be perceived. The wonder was not in the event's scientific impossibility but in its signal of God's grace.

I am probably not the only person who feels chronically short of time, but I am certainly an expert at guarding it. My office is in our home, and with six children, four children-in-law, three grandchildren, a few "adoptees," and tenants, neighbors, and church members, not to mention phone and email messages pouring in, I am grateful for days when I can think in a straight line for half an hour. It doesn't happen without some self-protection. So hospitality is almost never the first impulse, and efficiency in dispatching the interruption is often uppermost.

My spouse is similarly in a hurry most of the time. And yet he is a good pastor. Watching him welcome intrusions has helped me relax and open myself to what God can show me through angels arriving unannounced. A daughter comes in, purportedly to check her mail, but then sighs and sits down, and I know it's time to close my laptop. An out-of-town friend needs a place to stay on a very busy weekend. A church member won't exactly say what is lurking behind her eyes, but needs a hug. It's a matter of reading cues, slowing down, doing triage, letting the unexpected happen, realizing that in those moments I can benefit less by plowing on with my to-do list than by receiving the person in front of me. And almost inevitably what comes when I entertain "angels unawares" is a new insight about the daughter, the friend, the world or myself—new information, new understanding, new encouragement, a gift from above.

Maybe, as the angel people claim, life is indeed a

series of near misses from which angels are protecting us, cartoon montages of pianos and anvils not quite falling on our heads. But much more frequently, life is a series of nearly missed messages brought by angels all around, messages that will indeed be missed when we fail in hospitality, if we refuse to open our lives to strangers and friends alike.

## Questions

1. Have you ever thought—or heard others say—that life is a lot murkier now than in biblical times, when it seemed as if angels showed up at all the right moments to explain things? What do you make of that?
  
2. Recall a time when an unexpected encounter resulted in a message you needed to hear just when you needed to hear it. What allowed you to be open to it? How can you develop a habit of being open to others?

## **NEXT PW SUNRISE JANUARY 2018**