

HerStory 2008 Workshops: Women Who Testify: Proclaiming the Gospel in Our Own Voice

CAN I SAY THAT? SERMON PREPARATION FOR JUST PLAIN FOLKS –

You've been asked to speak during worship and your stomach flip-flops. Do not fear, says Reverend Jean Rodenbough. She will give you tips on how to prepare a presentation/sermon that witnesses both to your faith and to the scriptures. Jean is a retired Presbyterian pastor with experience in pastoral care and small church ministry. She lives with her husband in Greensboro, NC and writes poems, fiction and non-fiction reflections, enjoys chip-carving and playing recorders.

WOMEN: SPIRITUALITY AND AGING -

"Crone" is a term which women are re-claiming to denote the wisdom they have gathered through their living. Kay Goodman, child of Godde, mother, grandmother, "my sister's keeper," seeker of justice, founding mother of the HerStory conference, and crone, will explore the difference between spirituality and faith and how the wisdom of our years enhances our lives.

BACK FROM BAGHDAD AND BEYOND: ONE WOMAN'S PEACEMAKING JOURNEY IN IRAQ –

Reverend Beth Pyles spent two months as a Reservist with Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) on their Iraq team. She will discuss the work of peacemaking in the specific context of Iraq and the work of CPT in general, followed by questions/answers/reflections/brainstorming about what 'ordinary Christians' can do towards peacemaking in a global context. Beth is a 2005 graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, an ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (USA), and is currently serving the part-time charge of McDowell Presbyterian Church and Headwaters Chapel in Highland County, VA. Prior to attending seminary, Beth practiced law in West Virginia for twenty-two years.

MAKING A PRAYER SHAWL –

Which of us would not benefit from being bonded through prayer to a sister who knits a shawl for us? Hartford Seminary's Women's Leadership Institute in 1998 gave birth to the prayer shawl ministry. Through formal publicity and informal passion, this ministry has spread around the world. The creation of a shawl is accompanied by prayers for the recipient, knitting two souls together. Carol Griffin will lead this hands-on workshop and will bring supplies to sell.

BOOK DISCUSSION – *LEAVING CHURCH: A MEMOIR OF FAITH* by BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR -

Beth Roberts, Vera A. Milner Professor of Education at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA, considers the HerStory conference a personal highlight of every year. She will lead a discussion of this critically-acclaimed book of the author's spiritual journey from "called, set-apart, ordained clergy" to "fully-engaged, flawed being of light," reflecting upon what it means to be human and church and Christian.

DIVERSITY, BY GOD (INCLUSIVITY IS UP TO US) –

'Meeting at the intersection of spiritual majorities and sexual minorities: weaving GLBTQ folks into the fabric of Christian communities' will be the theme explored in this workshop. In 1997 Virginia native, Rev. Emma Chattin, discovered and joined the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, a denomination founded in 1968 with a primary outreach to Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning Individuals. Soon after, she completed seminary and was ordained at MCC, Richmond, VA with her father and uncle, both Methodist ministers, participating in the service. Emma currently resides in Fairfax, VA with Heather, her life-partner of 10 years. She has been working to plant an MCC church in the Harrisonburg, VA area. Her joy in theological diversity can be summed up in the words of her bumper sticker: *God is too big to fit into one religion.*

EXPLORING THE FEMININE FACE OF GOD –

Using such classics as *The Divine Feminine: The Biblical Imagery of God as Female* by Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Reimagining God* by Johanna W.H. vanWijk-Bos, and *A God Who Looks Like Me* by Patricia Lyn Reilly, we will return to the exploration of Scripture which presents God as female. While the exploration of this topic goes back more than 30 years and is assumed by some, it is still new to many and returns to HerStory by request of past participants. Facilitator, the Rev. Sally Robinson, serves as a professional Interim Pastor in Shenandoah Presbytery, now in her 8th interim in 13 years. She spent the early part of her ministry as a campus minister. She lives in Fairfield, VA with her two Irish Setters, Rosie and Bridie, loves Ireland and Celtic Spirituality, and is a member of the Presbyterian Peacemaking Committee for Northern Ireland. She has been a member of the HerStory planning team since 1994.

BodyPrayer: RECOVERING A SPIRITUALITY OF THE BODY THROUGH MOVEMENT AND DANCE

From our hunger for deeper rootedness in biblical texts and the living out of our faith arises the quest for a sacramental awareness of our body. Indeed, a spirituality of the body is needed to help us recover the physicality and deep embodiment of our worship and living. Come experience the “fleshing out” of your faith through movement and dance as prayer. We will also prepare a simple movement piece for worship that builds upon the conference theme. No dance experience necessary. All bodies encouraged! Kathryn Sparks, of Washington, DC, is a dancer and choreographer who has long been interested in the integration of body and spirit as related to faith practices. She is adjunct faculty in dance at Wesley Seminary. There and in various other contexts she enables people of all ages to access the inherent creativity in their body through movement.

WORSHIPPING BAREFOOT: BEING YOUNG AND RESTLESS IN THE CHURCH:

Forget the hat, forget the gloves, forget the shoes. Join the frank and constructive conversation about what it is to be one of the “missing generation” – as young adults are known – who can actually be found in church. The workshop will be led by Columbia Theological Seminary graduates Amy Summers-Minette, Associate Pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Staunton, VA. and Teri Peterson, Associate Pastor at Ridgefield-Crystal Lake Presbyterian Church in Crystal Lake, IL.

Worship Leader – Anna Carter Florence

Women of all ages are crying out for a deeper rootedness in the biblical text, a deeper embodiment which is to say, a living out, in full view, of the theological questions. As we become more enlightened, we ask, “Can I really say that?” Learn that we can, as Anna uses biblical and historical models of girls and women. She will revisit some familiar texts including Exodus 2 (Miriam in the reeds, watching her baby brother and standing in for her mother), Luke 1 (Mary and the annunciation), the story of Mary and Martha, Acts 12 (the story of Rhoda), and parts of the Song of Songs. The testimonies of these girls and women give us hope and permission to stand behind what we say and what we truly believe.

Anna Carter Florence is an Associate Professor of Preaching and Worship at Columbia Theological Seminary. Anna is interested in historical, theological, aesthetic, and performative dimensions of preaching and the ways preaching engages other fields and different traditions. Her research focuses on testimony, feminist theology, the role of experience in preaching, and the history of preaching women.