



# SUNRISE

Presbyterian Women



Presbyterian Women Shenandoah  
Dorothy Bowers, Moderator

January-February 2012  
Pat Armstrong, Editor

## Dear Shenandoah Presbyterian Women,

Winter is here! Our first snow & sleet storm of 2012 in January. We did have a snow on October 29, 2011; but we had not had any until this the latter part of January. I stay inside when there is snow and ice on the roads. Afraid of falling, aren't we all afraid of that: young and old.

Our next Shenandoah Presbytery Presbyterian Women's Coordinating Team meeting is February 4, 2012. We will be making our final plans for the **Spring Gathering to be held at Massanetta Springs, April 14, 2012**. Registration forms will be out soon; if you don't receive one, please contact your leadership coordinator or call me. Plan to attend! Now is the time to think about carpooling. You'll find it rewarding the time spent with friends; it can also be a time to make new acquaintances.

At the Annual Spring Gathering we will hold our annual business meeting and the election of officers. We still have some vacancies to fill on the C.T. Moderators, you know your ladies: we need names of those that would like to serve as a member of C.T. Should you say "yes" to serving, you won't regret your decision.

Churches should now have applications for the Churchwide Gathering in Orlando, FL, July 18 – 22, 2012. If your church does not have one, let me know and I'll see that you get one.

I will be attending the Synod Coordinating Team meeting on March 16 – 17, 2012. Applications should be available for the Synod Summer Gathering, June 8 – 10, 2012 at Massanetta Springs. After hearing their report at the Synod CT meeting in October, they are ahead with their planning of the Summer Gathering.

Presbyterian Churches have a chain of support called the Links of Love, a partnership between Sunnyside Communities and Presbyterian Women. February is the month for collecting contributions. Although it is sponsored by Presbyterian Women, envelopes can be placed in the pews for the congregation at large to participate in this worthy cause. Links of Love gifts bring reassurance to residents at Summit Square, Kings' Grant and Sunnyside. It is a ministry of compassion in action that reassures the most needy residents that they are loved and will be provided for...regardless of their financial status.

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## **News from MASSANUTTEN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

Many of the ladies in our Circles provided items to be used in the Salvation Army Santa Bags. What a blessing to have the opportunity to bring smiles to faces of other during the Holy Christmas Season. Our ladies participated in the Zacchaeus Kitchen project where warm clothing and gently worn coats were collected for those needing these items. A good way to spend cold winter days and nights is to knit toboggan hats for Church World Service and some of our PW are doing just this. In January, one of our activities will be Blankets Plus when blankets will be collected. This is open to all members of the church and coordinated by PW. Ladies from our Circles provided cookies for the reception when the Massanutten Brass Band provided us with a delightful Christmas Concert. Our Moderator, Nancy Davis, had hip replacement surgery in early Dec. and has made wonderful progress. Our wishes are for all to have a 2012 full of God's blessings.

Shared by Pat Armstrong

**The Ivanhoe Presbyterian Women** took part in our annual Parish Cantata held at Second Opequon and Wardensville Presbyterian churches this past Saturday and Sunday nights. They will have their first Blue Christmas Program for those who have experienced recent grief and loss on Sunday night, December 18th, at 6:00 PM, at Ivanhoe Church. They will also have a play entitled "Sleepover at the Stable" on Tuesday, December 20th, at 7:00PM.

### **Bunker Hill Presbyterian PW**

104 items were collected and delivered to Martinsburg Salvation Army of hats, gloves and scarves at beginning of December. They supported a local Community Networks program that is an umbrella agency for a women's shelter, housing assistance, HIV/AIDS Center, career counseling by continuing membership in their \$300 club. Four families were provided Thanksgiving dinner, 4 families were provided Christmas dinner, and 4 families were provided with gifts for Christmas.

Four college students will be awarded \$500 scholarships in January from fund guided by

PW. Forty-five cards were signed and sent at the last PW meeting for December as part of our monthly card ministry. These cards go each month to members that are shut-in, or moved away, operations, sickness, or need some cheering up.

### **Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church**

Our circle at Shepherdstown Presbyterian Church had a productive fall. Our major mission fund-raiser for this year was held several weekends in November. We raised over \$3,200.00 selling items made by a women's sewing group in Thailand and fair-trade items from SERRV. Perhaps some of you remember or know of Rev. Sirirat, the director of a Thailand orphanage. The sewing group, organized by her and her sister, makes beautiful items quilted and cross-stitched in native patterns. The money we raised will help women and children whose lives are affected by AIDS and other diseases, abandonment, slavery, and sex trafficking.

In December we honored Barbara Kaplin our moderator for the past 12 years as well as a member of Presbyterian Women for 46 years!!!! For years at our church, when our circle numbers were down, she was the "glue" which kept our circle going. What a joy to have an average attendance now of 16-18 monthly! We are grateful to her for her faithfulness to each of us and to PW.

Lucy Gay, Moderator

### **MAIN POINTS BIBLE STUDY LESSON 6 Lesson Six—Greatly Honored Are the Pure in Heart!**

**Key Idea:** Jesus upholds those who, with genuine hearts, wrestle with God, are changed, and live in a way that strengthens the whole people of God.

**Heart Conditions** (page 47; 71 in the large-print)

In teaching the sixth beatitude, Jesus reveals that the heart is the seat of emotion, passion, thought, and important decisions. Speaking to the disciples on the mountain in *Matthew 5:8*, Jesus says, "Greatly honored are the *katharos*, the pure in heart."

This Greek word would have evoked something clean, unmixed, unpolluted, or genuine. Yet, this description does not tell us much—hearts are described as pure very

rarely in scripture, and there is almost no instruction attached to any of the descriptions.

We do have descriptions of those who are impure, or unclean in their hearts, and we can derive from the description of their heart conditions what a pure heart might be like. According to *Matthew 15:19*, the unclean heart is full of “evil intentions, murder, adultery, prostitution of others, theft, the bearing of false witness, and slander”—all qualities that are manifested outwardly. Evil intentions lead to evil actions.

Thus, the impure heart is dangerous not simply because of the thoughts it carries, but because of the actions those thoughts produce. Further, anyone might have an unclean heart, even one who appears to be upright.

Those who are pure in heart are the opposite of those with unclean hearts—they have good or noble intentions that manifest themselves in good or noble actions. They preserve lives and families, rather than destroying them for personal gain and pleasure.

They protect and defend others, rather than attacking and destroying them. They do not slander or speak false witness—they speak the truth. “Pure in heart” not only describes what one *does*; it describes who someone *is*. One does not *do* clean; one *is* clean. These are people who live with integrity. One who is pure in heart is not perfect, but is genuine. She both claims to love God and neighbor *and* thinks and acts in ways that demonstrate her belief. Jesus honors the pure in heart.

**19 Seeing God: Promise, Peril, and Prophetic Witness** (page 49; 74 in the large-print) There are at least two ways to understand the promise made to the pure in heart—that they shall “see God.” It is an eschatological promise that will happen when this age ends and God’s just reign begins, when Jesus Christ comes to renew the world. It is a promise steeped in the history of God’s revelation to God’s people. In considering this second way, it is helpful to think of Jacob’s encounter with God in *Genesis 32:22–32*. Here, Jacob, one without much integrity, meets a stranger who engages him in a wrestling match until dawn. From this place of wrestling, Jacob emerges

with a new name: Israel, which means “the one who contends with God.”

From Jacob, we learn that when one sees God, one enters a place of struggle and of renaming, a place of discovering one’s own strengths and weaknesses. Those who see God, Jacob warns us, are changed forever. They are weaker, but truer. They are purified by the struggle.

We find other examples in scripture. One such example is the call of Isaiah (*Isaiah 6*). After seeing God, Isaiah becomes a prophet, revealing that the pure in heart bear witness to God’s justice and mercy in the community. Mary of Magdala also saw God in the resurrected Christ, and she testified to the truth of God’s justice that is able to overcome even the injustice of crucifixion. There are consequences to living with integrity and bearing witness to the presence and power of the Triune God, particularly when one’s witness is a prophetic challenge to “how things are done.”

Still, those who respond to the call to be a genuine witness for the Lord, to relate the good news of God, will bring wholeness and healing to their communities and to the world. At the heart of the matter, then, is a spiral: those who are genuine, who live out their faith with integrity, will be drawn toward the face of God where they will wrestle, be renamed, and be purified.

Then they will be sent out to bear witness and face community shaming, by what they say and how they live. And, in living out their lives with integrity, they will be drawn in to see God’s face once again.

***Processus Confessionis: Recognizing, Learning, and Confessing What Is True*** (page 50; 77 in the large-print) After the first five beatitudes, which speak to the injustices of the world and the need for mercy, it is tempting to become self-righteous. We might think, “How could *they* mistreat the poor and powerless?” The sixth beatitude holds up to each of us, and to our communities of faith, a mirror.

The sixth beatitude calls us to consider whether our confession of the sovereignty of Jesus Christ is borne out in how we live our lives. Many of us in the global north are more a part of the global system of consumption and greed than we care to admit. The truth is there are no easy answers to the challenge

of living in such a way that we do not further impoverish the destitute of the world. Yet we are called, like Jacob, to wrestle with our complicity in these systems and discern how to make lifestyle changes that reflect our solidarity with those who are hurt by our global systems. The God of heaven and earth is a God who values integrity. God honors those who live with integrity—with a heart condition that leads to life and wholeness, rather than death and destruction. Jesus promises that those who are pure in heart

will see God; and scripture teaches us that seeing God is a process of further purification and of commissioning—a cycle that continues throughout the life of discipleship. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, we, the church, are called to live into that integrity before God and on behalf of our neighbors. And even when we fall short of this call to purity, the radical gift of redemption through Jesus Christ calls us back into the heart cycle of God, where we are purified and sent out once more.

### **Dates to Remember**

<b>February 4, 2012</b>	Coordinating Team – Presbytery Office – 10:00 a.m.
<b>April 14, 2012</b>	Spring Gathering – Massanetta
<b>May 5, 2012</b>	Coordinating Team – Presbytery Office – 10:00 a.m.
<b>June 8-10, 2012</b>	Mid-Atlantic Synod Summer Gathering - Massanetta
<b>July 18 – 22, 2012</b>	Churchwide Gathering @ Orlando, Florida