



Flame and Fire

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An Occasional Newsletter for "A Flame in our Hearts, A Fire in our Bones" Celebration
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TIME TO CELEBRATE WOMEN'S ORDINATION and LEADERSHIP 2005 – 2006

By Eunice Blanchard Poethig

Many congregations are already planning events to celebrate the beginning of the ordination of women as deacons, elders, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament. The Chicago-based Planning Team related to the General Assembly is hard at work developing resources for such congregational and presbytery celebrations as well as planning one of the four national celebration events.

This coming November 5-7, 2005 women and men will be coming from north and south, from east and west to Chicago to celebrate the actions that first authorized ordination for women— 100 years as deacons (1906), 75 years as elders (1930), and 75 years as Ministers of Word and Sacrament (1956). Our celebration, called "A Flame in our Hearts, a Fire in our Bones," is one of four national events called for by the 215th General Assembly and carried out through Women's Ministries of the General Assembly Council. The others events are in Princeton, Atlanta, and San Francisco. The national theme is, "Tending the Flame: Women Called to Lead." Many resources are available on www.pcusa.org/women/ordination.

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Our focus in "A Flame in our Hearts, a Fire in our Bones" is on celebrating the women who were pioneers and "Firsts" in the movement toward ordination, recognize women "Flame Tenders" today, and inspire a new generation of "Flame Bearers."

We will do this through a High Tea on Saturday, November 5, at McCormick Seminary, followed by "Julian of Norwich" enacted by the Rev. Linda Loving.

On Sunday afternoon at Fourth Presbyterian Church we will have a Celebration Expo with exhibits, book signings by women authors, dramas by and about women, women's poetry, music, and art. To record the history of the ordination movement and of women leaders we will chart "Your Journey Toward Ordination" and introduce the Women's Biography Project of the Presbyterian Historical Society. Our Offering will be for victims of domestic violence.

The Rev. Dr. Dale Morgan Lindsay, author of the Horizon's Bible Study, "And She Said" and Pastor of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara, CA, will lead our Celebration Plenary by bringing the voices of biblical women to us and connecting them to our lives today. During Vespers at Fourth Church we will hear

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from the Rev. Dr. Margaret Towner, the first women ordained as a clergywomen in the PCUSA and from the Rev. Dr. Rhashell Hunter, a Pastor and adjunct professor at McCormick.

At the Celebration Banquet at the Westin Hotel Sunday evening our Recognition Service will honor our “Firsts” and women chosen by their presbyteries for recognition. Nominations will come from the network of presbytery and synod Planning Teams . So far we have contacts in 35 of the presbyteries and synods.

Monday we look seriously at our responsibility for Creating the Future for women in the church and in society at home and globally. Mary Elva Smith of Women’s Ministries, will lead our planning session.

The Midwest celebration, A Flame in Our Hearts and a Fire in Our Bones, is sponsored by Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.), Strengthen Leaders, Cultivate Community, and Nurture Community Mission Priority Leadership Teams. Partners with the leadership teams in the covenant are Presbyterian Church, (U.S.A.), McCormick Theological Seminary, Naperville, Knox Presbyterian Church, and Committee on Women in the Church, (C.O.W.I.C.).

For further information contact Betty McGinnis, staff, at betty@chicagopresbytery.org or Eunice Poethig, Chair of the Chicago-based Planning Committee, at ebpoethig@earthlink.net.



Invitation to write articles or be editor of our Flame and Fire Newsletter

You are invited to send articles and notes as well as descriptions and photos of events or people to be included in our newsletter. Please mark information for the newsletter very clearly and send articles and photos by email to Betty McGinnis, betty@chicagopresbytery.org.

Our newsletter schedule will be “occasional.” When we have received several articles, we will put them together as a newsletter and email them to the planning teams. We hope to have at least one article from every presbytery in our region. Please use pencil to put the names of people in photos on the back of the photos.

You are invited to be editor of one or two issues of Flame and Fire. We want to pass the responsibility and the privilege to several people who like to edit newsletters. These volunteer editors will be expected to select material and to shorten articles that are too long.

Suggested topics: Events being planned, celebrations held, interesting stories of early deacons, elders, and Minister of Word and Sacrament, information about societal violence against women, projects you have developed to support agencies serving women suffering violence, stories of congregations who elected women as leaders early on, stories of the women they elected.

Presbytery and Synod planning teams have permission to reproduce the articles or the newsletter.

PLANS UNDERWAY

Presbyterian Women of Lake Huron Presbytery, Synod of the Covenant

On October 15th our PW of Lake Huron Presbytery will be having a two part Celebration of the Ordination of Women as Elders.

At the Memorial Presbyterian Church of Midland Mich we will start the day at 9:30 with a short business meeting to elect officers.

The celebration begins with the recognition of the women the 54 churches would have (hopefully) sent to Presbytery at the June meeting for Presbytery to vote for the one whose name will be sent to you.

Then we will honor women elders of different times and Marydeana Duckworth will match hats to the period the women were ordained. The churches are to send in stories of the women from their church . We have received 31 lists of elders, deacons and Ministers of Word and Sacrament from the 54 churches.

We are planning a longer lunch period so the women can browse the Mission, History, peace and justice for women, Serrv, and book tables.

In the afternoon at 1:45pm we are holding a Worship and Communion, and installation of the newly elected officers. The Associate General Presbyter the Reverend Dr. Valerie Fargo is planning this service. During the Communion the Rev. Karen Blatt will read the names of the women elders who have passed away. This service is for any member and all pastors who wish to join PW in the afternoon.

As soon as the Presbytery votes on a woman to honor we will send the name to the Midwest Planning Team in Chicago.

Also we will bring with us a copy of all the names of women Ordained or served in Lake Huron Presbytery.

Yours in Christ
Sally Abbotts
Member of Lake Huron 3 person team

NEWS FROM THE PEWS

AT A MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY, A REQUEST WAS MADE TO SEND IN THE NAMES OF THE FIRST THREE WOMEN TO SERVE AS ELDERS AND DEACONS IN EACH CONGREGATION. THREE DAYS LATER A (MALE) CLERK OF SESSION PHONED IN THE LIST AND EXCLAIMED, "THERE ARE SO MANY WOMEN ON SESSION NOW, THAT I DON'T DARE REPORT THE REQUEST FOR NAMES, UNLESS I CAN ALSO REPORT THAT I'VE ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF IT!"

Doing Your Research

By Cossy Ksander

PROCESS FOR FINDING THE FIRST THREE WOMEN ELDERS AND DEACONS IN YOUR CONGREGATION



1. Ask the Clerk of Session or the Pastor or the Church Secretary to look in the “church register” for the information. The book might also be called the “rolls of the church” or the “membership rolls and registers” or the “church records” or some similar name. (The Session of the congregation has the responsibility of keeping a complete register of marriages, baptisms, elders, deacons, and pastoral relationships, according to the Book of Order, G-10.0302c.)
2. The Register for Elders and Deacons may include the name of the church in which each was ordained, the date of ordination, terms of active service, and the record of removals. You want to gather as much information as is available.
3. If people have stories concerning these people, collect the stories also.
4. Type what you have gleaned, add your name and contact information, and send it all to person in your presbytery who is editing the information for use in the celebrations of women’s ordinations in 2005 and 2006.

A PROCESS FOR FINDING THE FIRST WOMEN CLERGY TO SERVE IN YOUR PRESBYTERY



1. Talk to some old-timers, those who have been in the presbytery since the 1970s. They may remember who the first women were and be able to give some context for your search.
2. Find a source for the General Assembly Statistics from 1956 forward. Your presbytery may have them or check at a Presbyterian-related school. The Jesuit-Krauss-McCormick Library at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago has a complete set through 1991.
3. Study the statistics for your presbytery for each year, seeking women’s names.
 - a. If the name is ambiguous, ask someone who might have served with this person. (A “Carmen” and a “Kim” turned out to be men.)
 - b. In the 1950s and 1960s “Licentiates” may be listed after the specialized clergy and “Commissioned Church Workers” may be listed separately by presbytery. Both lists probably include women. Neither category counts as clergy, though some of the persons may have been ordained later.
4. It may take several years worth of statistics, before you find a sufficient number of women to suit your needs. For instance, it took from 1960 to 1975 for ten women to have served in Chicago Presbytery. By 1977, there had been 20 women. By 1980, there had been thirty women and by 1982, forty women.