



Presbyterian Women in Grace Presbytery

Innovator

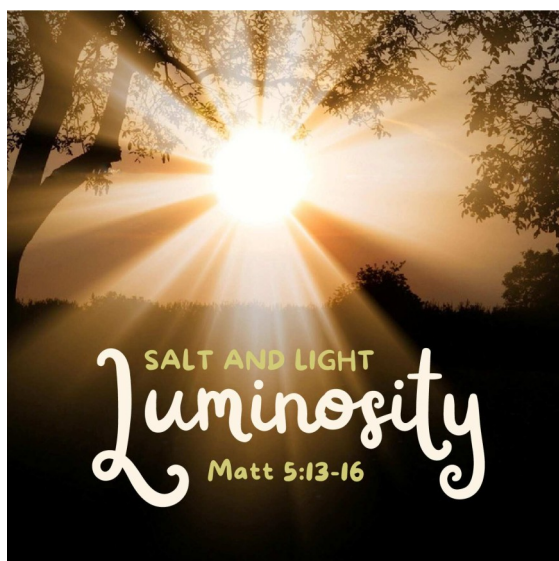
Semiannual Issue, September 2026

Jill Bray, Editor

jnbray51@sbcglobal.net

2026 Theme—A Year of Luminosity

Luminosity is defined as the state of being luminous and luminous is defined as emitting or reflecting light. Light is a central image of our scriptures and in Matthew 5:13-16, Jesus tells us we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth.



2026 Presbyterian Women's Fall Gathering

Saturday, October 17 9:30 a.m.—2:00 p.m.

Gilmont Camp & Conference Center

6075 State Highway 155 N, Gilmer, TX 75644

Keynote Speaker—Rev. Judy Fletcher

You are invited to the 2026 Presbyterian Women's Fall Gathering. Come spend the day with women from around the presbytery as we worship together, elect new officers, have a brief business meeting, hear from our Keynote Speaker, and shop mission tables.

If you would like to arrive on Friday evening and stay the night, Camp Gilmont has graciously offered cabins for lodging. See details and cost on **page 7**, under the registration form.

Issue Six

September 2026

Inside this issue:

Martha's Message	2
PWCT Officers' Contact Info	2
Honorary Life Membership	3
Thank Offering	3
Opportunities for Involvement	4
Women's History Month	4
PW Around the Presbytery	5
2007 Churchwide Gathering	5
Spring Workshop Highlights	6
Did You Know?	6
Fall Gathering Registration Form	7
Justice and Peace	8

Presbyterian Women, What We Do:

- + Nurture Faith
- + Support Mission
- + Work for Justice & Peace
- + Build Community
- + Develop Leaders

Martha's Message



**Martha Sheppard-Mahaffey,
PW Coordinating
Team Moderator**

Greetings to All:

The Texas Summer has arrived in full force. I hope that your days are as cool and comfortable as we can expect in our beloved state.

I want to remind us all that we are all Presbyterian Women. There are a mere two qualifications being female and being a member of your local congregation. There are no entrance exams; no special pledgeships; no background checks. All women members of a PC(USA) Church are part of this vibrant entity! You don't have to be a certain age, have a certain career or degree, or attend a certain Sunday School or Bible Study class. What is asked of you -us- then? To exhibit the "Fruits of the Spirit" is my answer.

Presbyterian Women show love, have joy and practice peace. PW are patient when needed, express goodness as best we can, and follow paths of kindness. The "women of the church" are faithful servants, exhibit gentleness to others and seek to monitor our self-control. We are ever vigilant in our service and gain our strength from working in community. How do you meet these requirements" for membership? How does being a PW show to others? How do you encourage other women in your congregation to be loving, joyful, peaceful, patient, good, kind, faithful, and gentle with self-control?

We've all heard that saying about Presbyterians forming a committee to get our work done decently and in order! It really is not a bad thing. We become our best when we share our tasks, our goals, our hopes and plans. We keep each other in check as we question and clarify our missions. We have been promised that we will not be given work beyond our means. PW is an organization that works together for others. That's the secret of our unique society. I pray that your work illumines yourself and brightens the way for all around you. And I hope to see you at the Gilmont Program Center on October 17th for our annual Grace Presbytery PW Fall Gathering.

Blessings on all,
Martha

Grace Presbytery PWCT Officer Contact Info

Martha Sheppard-Mahaffey, Moderator
marthashepphardmahaffey@gmail.com
Karen Dean, Secretary
karendean05@gmail.com
Dian Cooper, Cluster Coordinator
Dian.cooper@gmail.com
Jill Bray, Innovator Editor
jnbray51@sbcglobal.net

Rev. Elizabeth Boulware, Bible Study & Worship
elizabeth.e.boulware@gmail.com
Meg GarverHamilton, Programs
mgarverhamilton@gmail.com
Rev. Dr. Julie Adkins, Resource
drjadkins0226@gmail.com
Cheryl Arey, Historian
cwadiag@gmail.com

**The Coordinating
Team is here to
serve you!**

Honorary Life Memberships

The Honorary Life Membership (HLM) program was established in the Presbyterian Church to honor faithful service to the women's organization and to the church. With this recognition, your honoree will receive a certificate and either a 10K gold pin (\$250) or a silver pin (\$95).



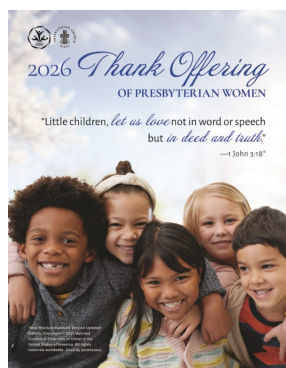
Funds derived from Honorary Life Memberships support the PW Leadership Development Grant Program. Grants from this program enable individuals to engage in leadership development opportunities such as the Churchwide Gathering, Ecumenical Advocacy Days, and the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

Each church in Grace Presbytery will receive a PW packet either at the Fall Gathering or in the mail. Included in the packet is an Honorary Life Membership Form with instructions on how to order.

Please allow at least six weeks to receive the pin and certificate.

2026 PW Thank Offering

Little children, let us love not in word or speech but in deed and truth." —1 John 3:18



Since 1888, women have helped save Presbyterian worldwide mission endeavors through the Thank Offering. Givers to the Offering have supported thousands of projects and raised tens of millions of dollars for ministries in the U.S. and across the world for people on the margins, particularly women and children.

In 2026 the Creative Ministries Offering Committee of Presbyterian Women evaluated sixty-six Thank Offering applications and selected nine projects for funding. In keeping with the Thank Offering bylaws, more than 40 percent of the selected projects are related to health ministries.

The projects chosen for this year are the following:

Lakeshore Habitat for Humanity Rural Home Repair for Allegan County, Holland, Michigan—\$40,000

Clearwater Forest Camp for ALL Deerwood, Minnesota—\$50,000

Women of Faith PW at First Presbyterian Church Baby Grace Ministries, Fulton, Missouri—\$7,600

The Greater Mount Airy Ministry of Hospitality Flat Rock Presbyterian Pantry Expansion Project, Mount Airy, North Carolina—\$40,000

Good News Home, Inc. Mommy & Me Domestic Violence Shelter, Tewksbury, New Jersey—\$23,080

Agency for New Americans: Self-Sufficiency for Refugees Literacy for Women Project, Boise, Idaho—\$45,796

Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA) Transforming Tomorrow's Youth, Mesa, Arizona—\$18,000

Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas Nourish and Thrive: Backpack Program for Children Experiencing Food Insecurity, Jonesboro, Arkansas—\$5,100

Nyanza Area African Inland Church Basic Needs, Simple Solutions, U.S. fiscal sponsor God's Green Resourceful Earth Ministry: Growing Gardens, Feeding Minds—\$40,000

To order the 2026 Thank Offering Booklet and other promotional materials, visit <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/product/2026-thank-offering-booklet>

Opportunities for Involvement



Grace Presbytery's Presbyterian Women's Coordinating Team (PWCT) meets 3 or 4 times a year at different locations to conduct business. The two main programs which the PWCT plans each year are the Spring Workshop and the Fall Gathering. But they do so much more—support mission efforts, offer resources to local PW, produce a newsletter twice a year, and participate in churchwide and synod level gatherings. In the process, they develop friendships and build lasting relationships. If that sounds like fun (which it is!), we are looking for women with fresh ideas and perspectives to serve on our Team.

Women are needed to fill the following positions:

- *Moderator Elect*—Currently vacant. Becomes Moderator when the current Moderator rotates off. Attends CT meetings and trains under Moderator.
- *Vice Moderator of Search*—Currently vacant. With the help of a committee, this person gathers names and contacts women who they recommend to the PWCT to fill vacancies on the team.
- *Vice Moderator of Cluster Leaders*—Current one rotates off and needs to be replaced. Trains and regularly communicates with Cluster Leaders. Keeps up-to-date lists of Cluster Leaders and the churches they serve.
- *Secretary*—Current one rotates off and needs to be replaced. Takes minutes of CT meetings and makes them available in a timely manner.
- *Treasurer*—Currently vacant. Handles all procedures regarding the receipts and disbursements of the operating funds.
- *Coordinator of Communications*—Currently vacant. Posts PW information and items of interest on social media.
- *Coordinator of Mission*—Currently vacant. Provides information on mission opportunities in Grace Presbytery and beyond. Arranges for mission display tables at the Spring Workshop and Fall Gathering. May plan mission programs and/or speakers.
- *Cluster Leaders for North 4 and East 1, 2, & 4*—Currently vacant. Provide support, program resources, and information to PW in the congregations of assigned region.

(North 4 Churches—Glendale PC, Dallas; Oak Cliff PC, Dallas; DeSoto PC, DeSoto; First PC, Duncanville; First PC, Lancaster / **East 1 Churches**—First PC, Clarksville; First PC, Hooks; First PC, Mt. Pleasant; First PC, Pittsburg; Northwood PC, Texarkana; Bethesda PC, Lindale / **East 2 Churches**—First PC, Commerce; First PC, Cumby; First PC, Deport; United PC, Greenville; Main Street PC, Honey Grove; Central PC, Paris; First PC, Paris; First PC, Sulphur Springs; First PC, Winnsboro; Crossroads PC, Blue Ridge / **East 4 Churches**—First PC, Henderson; First PC, Kilgore; Centre PC, Longview; St. Andrew PC, Longview; United PC, Longview; First PC, Tyler; Highland PC, Tyler)

Officers and leaders are to be elected and installed at our Fall Gathering in October and will begin serving their two-year term in January 2027. So, there is no time to waste! If you or someone you know would like to get involved and find fulfillment in helping the women of Grace Presbytery “nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study, support the mission of the church worldwide, work for justice and peace, and build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God’s kingdom”*, please contact anyone on the Coordinating Team (see contact info on page 2).

* From the *PW Purpose*

PW Around the Presbytery!

The Presbyterian Women of **FPC Tyler** Texas held the annual Birthday Offering on May 18. After a worship service, the Presbyterian Women enjoyed a luncheon. Nancy Westmoreland passed the gavel to Cindy Moore to be 2026-2027 Moderator. Ruth Ann VanDyke will be serving as Vice Moderator; Jo Anne Cochran, Secretary; Mary Hagan, Treasurer; Judy Schmoker, Scrapbook/Historian; Ginny Mattox, Leader of Community Missions; Sally Smith Garmon, Leader of World Missions; Debbie Jones, Nominating Committee Chair; Janet Burks, Life Member Chair; and Rita Poole, Publicity Officer.



Though not strictly a PW event, there were plenty of Presbyterian Women involved at **Grace First PC, Weatherford's** Back to School Event on Saturday, July 25th. We served about 450 pre-K through high school students as they got to pick out backpacks and school supplies. In addition, there were interpreters on hand, breakfast sandwiches, snow cones, face painting, haircuts (provided by the Weatherford College cosmetology department), and 2 books per student from the WISD bookmobile.



The free event required no registration/qualifications. Several churches in our community helped and local organizations had resource tables on display.



Putting our faith in action to help those in the community!



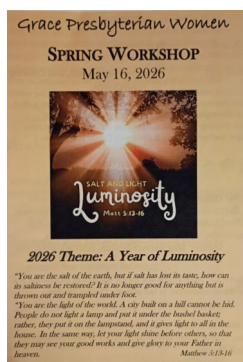
2027 Churchwide Gathering of PW

Save the Date—PW's next Churchwide Gathering will be **August 5–8, 2027, in Louisville, Kentucky**. The 2027 Churchwide Gathering theme is "A Threefold Cord Is Not Quickly Broken" Ecclesiastes 4:12b

Held once every three years, Presbyterian Women's Churchwide Gathering is an opportunity for Presbyterian women from across the country (and around the world!) to gather for worship, education, community-building, fun and renewal. Participants will enjoy workshops, forums, plenary sessions with inspiring speakers and worship. PW's triennial Business Meeting—where budget, leadership and programmatic emphases will be decided—takes place in conjunction with the Gathering.

For the latest information and to download a flyer, visit <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/gathering>

Spring Workshop Highlights, May 16, 2026

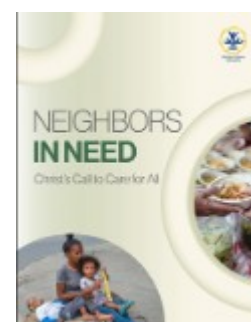


Thank you to the PW of First Presbyterian, Mesquite for hosting our Spring Workshop!

Did You Know?

There is a new PW resource available on supporting people experiencing homelessness. Throughout the United States and world, people struggle to find affordable, safe housing. Presbyterian Women's new electronic resource outlines ways to support unhoused people, welcoming them into worship and offering spaces and services that meet their immediate needs. Download the eight-page resource and share with your PW group or congregation as a way to discern how you can answer the call to care for all our neighbors.

Visit presbyterianwomen.org/neighbors for the free guide.



Fall Gathering Registration Form

Grace PW Fall Gathering Registration

Saturday, October 17, 2026 9:30 am-2:00 pm

Gilmont Camp & Conference Center, 6075 State Highway 155 N, Gilmer, TX 75644

Phone: 903-797-6400

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Home Church Name and City: _____

PW Office held, if any: _____

☐ Gluten-free meal is requested.

Registrar: Meg GarverHamilton, mgarverhamilton@gmail.com

To cover registration and lunch, mail your \$15 check (made out to Presbyterian Women in Grace Presbytery) along with this form to:

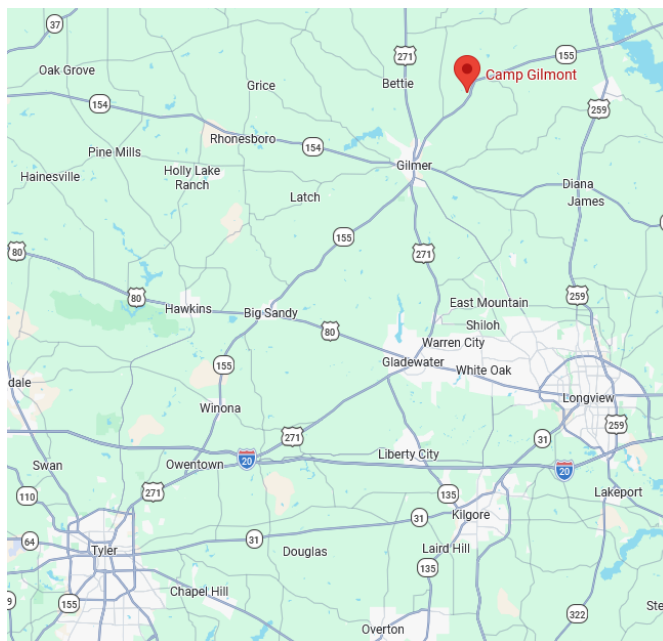
Meg GarverHamilton
222 Shady Oaks Circle
Terrell, TX 75160

Registration Deadline: October 2, 2026

If you would like to stay overnight at Camp Gilmont on Friday, October 16 prior to the PW Gathering, cabin reservations are available at \$60/person. This includes 1 night stay in a cabin side with 3-4 other ladies (no top bunks will be used). It includes a blanket, sheets, a towel and washcloth. Bring your own pillow from home! It also includes breakfast on Saturday morning (no Friday dinner, but restaurants in Gilmer would be an option).

Registration will be live for this on **August 3** at <https://gilmontadults.campbrainregistration.com/>. On the website, select **2026 Retreats**, and then look for **Grace Presbyterian Women Gathering** to make reservations.

Saturday's offering will be donated to Camp Gilmont and Conference Center. Checks and cash will be accepted for the offering and any mission table sales.



Presbyterian Women of Grace Presbytery
c/o Jill Bray, *Innovator* Editor

Grace First Presbyterian Church
606 Mockingbird Lane
Weatherford, TX 76086

Address correction requested

Find us on Facebook:

[Presbyterian Women of
Grace Presbytery](#)

Online newsletter: <http://www.gracepresbytery.org/ministries/presbyterian-women/>

Presbyterian Women Websites

PW of Grace Presbytery
www.gracepresbytery.org

Horizons Magazine, 866-802-3635
www.pcusa.org/horizons

PW in the (PCUSA), Inc.,
888-728-7228, ext. 8014
www.presbyterianwomen.org

PW in the Synod of the Sun
www.sospwconnect.com

Working for Justice and Peace 2026

We are called to share God's love with the world by being God's hands in the world. We answer God's call to "do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8).

You can find the Presbyterian Women's Justice and Peace Calendar at <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2026-JP-Calendar-NEW-FA.pdf>

Along with the calendar are resources and ideas for every month of the year.

Presbyterian Women Purpose:

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study,
- to support the mission of the church worldwide,
- to work for justice and peace, and
- to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.