

# PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S MINISTRIES

*Newsletter of Presbyterian Women's Ministries, First Presbyterian Church, Portland, Oregon*

## Winter 2007

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## Over 150 Years of Service and Achievement

Women have played a vital role in the establishment and continuance of First Presbyterian Church since its beginning.

The first meeting of our church was held October 3, 1853 in a building on the corner of Front and Washington Streets.

During the next several years, membership dwindled until the church was reconstituted, or revived, with just seventeen members, thirteen of which were women.

For the next several years, the small congregation met in a store on the corner of Third and Morrison Streets. Later, a more permanent structure at Third and Washington Streets was built on land purchased by the Ladies Sewing Circle of First Presbyterian, a group organized in 1862 for that purpose. The women also provided the cushions and carpets for the interior of the sanctuary. Mrs. H. W. Corbett generously

donated the bell, which was later moved to the spire of our present sanctuary on Twelfth and Alder Streets, where it still rings daily.



First Presbyterian Church at Third and Washington Streets

## Early FPC Women Lead in Mission Work and Study

The early women of First Church were a "moving force" not only in the development of the church but in its outreach to the community and beyond.

Julia West Lindsley, wife of FPC pastor Aaron L. Lindsley, organized the first Woman's Missionary Society on the West Coast on March 21, 1871 and the first Children's Missionary Band on the West Coast. The goal of both endeavors was to raise money for the support of girls schools in India.

In 1887, the Woman's North Pacific Board of Foreign Missions was organized to strengthen the work of the Women's Foreign Mission Society and broaden its scope to include Home Missions. From its beginning until 1921, every president of the board of this society was a member of First Presbyterian Church. The Board supported the work of the Sitka Training School (now Sheldon Jackson College) in Alaska and the work of Sue and Kate McBeth among the Nez Perce

Nation.

In 1912, the FPC Ladies Aid Society was organized to assist with mission work, and later became the Women's Association of First Presbyterian Church.

For the next several decades, the FPC Women's Association sent mission workers to Persia, Korea, Mexico, Laos, Japan, China, and locally to Utah, New Mexico, and North Carolina. First Church's women were also recognized as leading all other churches in the nation in mission study.



In all thy ways  
acknowledge Him,  
and He shall direct  
thy paths.  
Prov. 3:6



## A Century of Progress Towards Equality

By 1900, women within the denomination had become known for their tireless service as organizers and fund-raisers.

In 1906, as Presbyterian women across the United States prepared their 50th anniversary celebration of the independent women's boards of missions, the United Presbyterian Church in North America approved the ordination of women deacons to perform the same work in their own communities.

In 1922, the denomination's General Assembly

voted to merge the women's mission boards into the denomination's Boards of National Missions and Foreign Missions.

In 1930, the presbyteries approved the ordination of women as elders, a major turning point in the church toward equality and respect for women's contributions to the church.

Finally in 1956, women began to be ordained as Presbyterian Ministers of Word and Sacrament to serve the rapidly expanding denomination. Marga-

ret E. Towner was the first woman ordained.

Today, about 30% of active (non-retired) clergy in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) are women. Of these, half serve in congregations and half in specialized ministries.

From 2005 to 2006, Presbyterians rededicated themselves to recognizing the gifts of women to the church by organizing the Celebration of the Ordination of Women in the Presbyterian Church ("Tending the Flame: Women Called to Lead").



*"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to his purpose."  
Romans 8:28*

## 2007 Celebrate the Gifts of Women Set for March 4

By action of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Celebrate the Gifts of Women appears each year in our planning calendar to celebrate and honor individual women who contribute their gifts to their congregation and community and to lift up issues of women's rights.

Resources and materials for this day in 2007 were commissioned by the General Assembly's Office of Young Women's Ministries, and were written by the National Network of Presbyterian College Women and Ra-

cial Ethnic Young Women.

On March 4th, our denomination will be celebrating the diversity of spiritual and cultural gifts of young women who are active in their congregations, recognizing that young women are, and have potential to be, present and future leaders of the church.

The program lists the following suggestions for individual congregations:

- Ask young women from your family, community, and workplace to attend worship service

with you, and then encourage them to return.

- Invite women of all generations to church activities.
- Encourage young women to share in the leadership of worship.

We women are still growing and developing in our role as facilitators and leaders in all areas of the church's ministries. The input of women from all generations is critical in continuing to help and mentor other women in our denomination.

## Fall Tea and Annual Business Meeting Features Triennium Gathering 2006 Report

Our October Fall Tea and Annual Business Meeting featured a report from the Presbyterian Women's Triennium Gathering 2006 held last summer in Louisville, Kentucky. Mary Weaver, Jenni Bergemann, Sharon Brown, Jane Van Boskirk, and Lois Shamberger joined over 5000 Presbyterian women from around the world for this event. Each day, the group gathered to worship, laugh, hear speakers from the General Assembly and around the world, and attend seminars on topics such as coping with loss, reaching membership electronically, bringing God into the family, and building groups within our larger national affiliate, Presbyterian Women. Any member is welcome to attend the next Triennium Gathering in 2009.



Jeanne Bradley with 2006 PWM President Ann Walsh.

These photos were taken at our October 2006 Fall Tea and Business Meeting in Geneva Hall.



Sharon Brown, Lois Shamberger, Julie Emry Dougherty, and Jane Van Boskirk share a table at the Tea.



Fran Merz-Phinney chats with Rev. Anne Stewart Miller.



Our compliments to the chef!



All agreed that our selection of caterers and menu was excellent.



*Therefore, my beloved, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, because you know that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.  
I Corinthians 15:58*



**Newsletter of  
Presbyterian Women's  
Ministries**



**PRESBYTERIAN  
WOMEN**

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**Something for Everyone**

No matter what your schedule and interests, Presbyterian Women's Ministries has a fellowship group for you. The following groups meet throughout each month:

- Open Circle
- Tuesday Evening Group
- Mystery Book Club
- Quilters Group
- Prayer Partners
- Women of Cheer
- Mom's Angels
- Linen Ladies and Silver Stewards

The Fall 2006 PWM Newsletter, posted on the church web site at [www.fpcpdx.org](http://www.fpcpdx.org), describes these groups in detail.

Consider giving us your email address so we can email you this newsletter.

**2007 PWM Board Members and Staff**

The following board members were elected at the 2006 October Annual Meeting:

**Jenni Bergemann**  
Moderator

**Sheryl Freedlund**  
Member at Large

**Ann Walsh**  
Vice Moderator

**Betty Jo Lee**  
Member at Large

**Sharon Brown**  
Treasurer

**STAFF**  
Rev. Anne Stewart Miller

**Suellen Bergdorf**  
Recording Secretary

**Ann Witchel**  
Corresponding Secretary



Thy word is a lamp  
unto my feet  
and a light  
unto my path.  
Psalm 119:105