

## THE HISTORY OF PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

The early 1900s were a time of upheaval and discontent; women gained power, women lost power, but through it all, women remained dedicated to the church. Then, in 1930, the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. (PCUSA) opened the office of elder to women, thereby expanding the power of women to serve on any board of the General Assembly. The offices of elder and minister were opened to women in the UPCUSA in 1958, when the PCUSA and the UPCNA merged to become the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and to women in the PCUS in 1964 when presbyteries approved the ordination of women. In the 1930s the definition of the word *missions* was expanded in the church. It began to mean much more than sending out missionaries, preachers and teachers to distant lands. It meant sending workers to work in inner cities. It meant working to bring people together. It meant working with former enemies after the two world wars. Peace became a continuing emphasis of Presbyterian women as they continued their faith journey through the 20th century and into the 21st century. They also worked to stamp out hunger, exploitation of women and children, and war. Presbyterian women were strong women who took tough positions on racism, reproductive choice and equal rights for women in society and in the church. After many years of talk about reunification, it became a reality in 1983 when the UPCUSA and the PCUS joined, becoming the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). There were many difficulties in blending two organizations of strong women. Finally in 1988, Presbyterian Women was born, incorporating the best in United Presbyterian Women (UPW) and Women of the Church (WOC). Two centuries after Presbyterian women first gathered to pray and give their money to the church, women have voice in the church and in the world. A legacy of devotion to the church and dedication to God are a strong foundation for continuing mission and taking Christ into every area of life in Presbyterian women's third century of organization. Presbyterian Women exists today because women are adaptable, determined, proactive, charitable, generous and dedicated to God. Presbyterian Women continue their life-changing work in the world, now with more recognition. PW incorporated in 2009, establishing itself as a publicly supported integrated auxiliary of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Then in 2016, the General Assembly added Presbyterian Women to the PC(USA) Organization for Mission as a related corporation.

This action formally acknowledges PW's unique role within the church: "The Organization for Mission is incomplete without referencing this important point of mission coordination for Presbyterians." The same assembly ruled that the national moderator of Presbyterian Women, Inc. is a corresponding member to the General Assembly. This gives the moderator a seat on the floor with voice, but no vote. When speaking to committee about this recommendation, Rhshell Hunter, Presbyterian Mission Agency director of Racial Ethnic and Women's Ministries said, "PW has supported the church for over 200 years—it's beyond time for this voice to be at the table."

### PW 101.7: We Celebrate Our History

In 2018, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of Presbyterian Women. Of course, women of the church have been active and faithful for generations. In fact, the first Presbyterian women's organization began in the early 19th century. Today's PW "came to be" when Women of the Church (WOC) (the women's organization of the PCUS, or "southern stream" of the church) and United Presbyterian Women (UPW) (the women's organization of the UPCNA, or "northern stream") united in 1988 after much discernment, prayer, and intentional engagement. Legacies from our predecessor organizations include the Birthday Offering (WOC) and Thank Offering (UPW); Bible study and magazine; hands-on mission work; and gains in women's leadership in the church. Presbyterian Women are mindful that we are never alone on our faith journey. Maintaining and preserving the history of PW at the congregation, presbytery, synod and national levels is a meaningful task for leadership at all levels of PW. PW historians in the congregations send annual reports to the John Bulow Campbell Library at Columbia Theological Seminary and a copy to the PW in the Presbytery (PWP) historian. PWP historians compile their reports based on PWC reports and send their reports to the Presbyterian Historical Society, with a copy to their PW in the Synod (PWS) historian. PWS historians compile their reports based on PWP reports and send them to the Presbyterian Historical Society, with a copy to the churchwide historian. The churchwide historian sends a report to PHS, as well. Download our historian brochure at [www.presbyterianwomen.org/history](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/history)

**Presbyterian Women**  
**Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church**  
**471 Mt. Vernon Hwy, NE Sandy Springs, GA 30328**  
**404-255-2211**



## PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

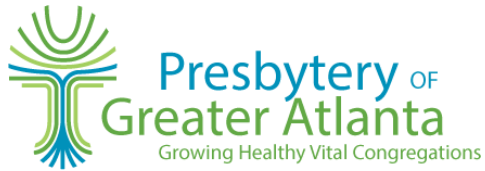
### POWERFUL KNOWLEDGE TO EMPOWER WOMEN

#### WINTER QUARTER 2018

#### *PW Christmas Dinner and Worship Service*

This year our annual Christmas dinner and worship service will be held on Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>. Reservations are required for dinner, but those who cannot make the dinner are still welcome to attend the worship service. The candlelight dinner is set for 6:30 p.m. followed by the worship service at 7:30. While this event is sponsored by Presbyterian Women, all members of the congregation and their guests are invited to attend.

The Presbyterian Women want this service to be our gift to the congregation during the Advent Season. Our vision is that it will be a respite from the busyness of the Season and an opportunity to worship and to prepare ourselves for Christmas. The theme of the worship service is "Advent Angels". The Christmas story is told through scripture, prayers, music, and works of art with the emphasis on the role that angels played in the story of our Savior's birth. The program is based on *Advent Angels*, which is a series of Advent devotions written by Ruth Tiller and published in *Presbyterian Survey* in 1992. Ruth is a former member of Mount Vernon Presbyterian Church.



<http://www.atlpcusa.org/pw.html>

Mount Vernon District Report  
Fall 2018: Sarah Chaplin, Moderator

- Have completed two of our Circle Presentations for this year. The first one was entitled “*Loving God Through Music*” and was presented by our Minister for Worship and Arts. It outlined a history of how music has become a part of our Christian worship service and was very informative and well attended. Our second one was presented by our Director of Youth Ministry. Our Youth Director gave an interesting and eye-opening presentation “*Loving God Through Service to the Homeless*” about the years of serving the homeless in Atlanta by our Mt. Vernon youth. For that ministry, we contributed hygiene items to be bagged by our youth for handing out to the homeless in North Atlanta. Under the direction of our Youth Director, the youth have undertaken this ministry for 15 years. Our November Circle presentations will be “*Loving God Through Caregiving for Family and Self*”. We have invited anyone from our congregation and their family members or friends to attend both presentations. The Sunday Circle is being led by two caregiving professionals and the Tuesday Circle is being led by two more experts in the caregiving field. This is an important topic that many of us must deal with: being a caregiver or requiring care for yourself or a loved one.
- Continue to develop a group for knitting. Presently knitting caps and scarves for the homeless at Christmas
- Participated in a Clothing Drive for **Mission Haven**
- Our Circle of Grace, which meets on Sunday evening once a month, has scheduled regular meetings for this year and continues to have good attendance for their Christian fellowship.

- At our Christmas program and dinner we will again collect gift cards to give to the **Community Assistance Center for Sandy Springs/Dunwoody (CAC)**, which is a very successful volunteer driven and charitable organization that helps our neighbors in our community in need.
- Mt. Vernon Presbyterian Women continue each year to set aside funds from our budget to help with financial support for **Family Promise of North Fulton/Dekalb**. This is an organization that works with families who have no place to live but are actively seeking employment to be able to live independently. Our church and other churches/synagogues in our area house these families on a rotating basis. We will again be housing some of these families for one week in December. PW, as well as many members or our congregation, will be volunteering to help with supplies and meals for the week. We could not do this without the partnership we share with B’nai Torah Synagogue
- Provide ‘thinking of you’ Winter remembrance bags for our members who are unable to attend church.



### MVPC PW 63 Years Strong!

#### Linda Bhame, Spiritual Growth

In the 1990s PW befriended several students at Thornwell—a Presbyterian orphanage in Clinton, SC. We sent them cards, well wishes, and collected birthday and Christmas gifts which were taken by several members to Thornwell. Later in the Spring, the big event was bringing several children and advisors to Atlanta, where they were hosted in members’ homes. They were escorted to the Botanical Gardens, Fernbank, Centennial Park, and backyard picnics. On Sunday, they were brought to church and introduced to the congregation. PW members loved this project.



### WITHOUT AN ANGEL

Without an angel, the stable is empty—  
no young virgin heard the faith-filled words;

“Hail, O favored one!”

Without an angel, the stable is empty  
for Joseph rejected his betrothed  
and hurled her into infamy.

Without an angel, the stable is empty.

No shepherds came to share  
the love that reached to common people.  
Without an angel, the manger lies barren.

The might of Herod triumphed  
and slew Bethlehem’s boy.

~ Ruth Tiller