



25 Years of Presbyterian Women

A Litany of Thanksgiving and Hope

BY MEAGAN MANAS

In 1988, Presbyterian Women was created, bringing together the women's organizations from the two denominations that had merged to become the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Practices, programs and faithful women from both United Presbyterian Women (of the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.) and Women of the Church (of the Presbyterian Church in the United States) were joined to form Presbyterian Women.

For 25 years now, our beloved organization has been witnessing to the promise of God's kingdom and transforming lives around the world. And, of course, this young group is carrying on the more-than-200-year tradition of Presbyterian women meeting, praying and acting together in shared love of God!

Sometime in 2013, take a moment to celebrate all that Presbyterian Women has achieved and meant for people around the world, and all that we will continue to accomplish. Your continued support of the organization—through prayer, financial support and participation—will mean transformation for many more lives and hearts.

You are welcome to reproduce this liturgy, which both celebrates and holds in prayer Presbyterian Women, for your PW group's or church's celebration of Presbyterian Women's 25th anniversary.

One: Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we give thanks for 25 years of Presbyterian Women!

All: As we mark this anniversary, we also give thanks for the Presbyterian women's organizations that came before and those that lie ahead!

One: We have committed to nurturing faith through prayer and Bible study. From church circles to synod coordinating teams, from Purdue to Orlando, we have gathered! We have visioned, we have worshiped, we have studied. Through the Honorary Life Membership program, we have shared opportunities to learn and grow through Leadership Development Grants.

All: We lift up the Honorary Life Members of Presbyterian Women from the past 25 years! We give thanks for the blessing of nurture and the challenge of study! May we be strong and flexible as we continue to find ways of gathering together.

One: *Horizons*, the magazine and Bible study for Presbyterian Women, has nurtured our faith, become a resource for the denomination and beyond, and even won awards for its quality!

All: We give thanks for the witness of *Horizons* magazine and Bible study. We pray that these publications adapt well to changing times and remain strong in the future.

One: Over the past 25 years, we have joined in mission in a variety of ways. Through Mission Opportunities and in partnership with the International Health Ministries of the PC(USA), we have donated funds to supply bicycles, mattresses and first-aid essentials in Africa.



All: Through Together in Service we have knitted baby caps, receiving blankets and layettes, assembled hygiene kits, supported the Roma Development Project and contributed to the Congo Palm Project.

One: The Global Exchange has taken us to Australia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Ghana and Kenya, Brazil, Central and Eastern Europe, and India.

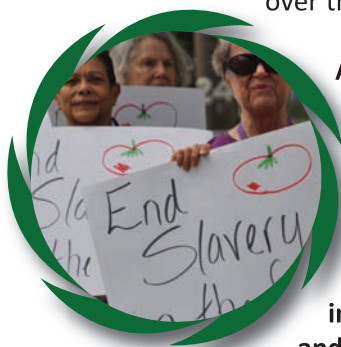
All: The USA Mission Experience—through trips to the Mexico/U.S. border area, South Dakota and Appalachia—taught us that God’s work is waiting to be done in our own country. We have been a strong voice in disaster response, rebuilding homes in New Orleans with Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, Habitat for Humanity, St. Charles Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Presbytery of South Louisiana.



One: We remember the people we met, the ways of life we have encountered, the concerns and joys shared with us, the service we have done in partnership with those sisters and brothers in Christ.

All: For each of those things, we give thanks. We continue to pray for the women we have met throughout the world and those we will meet in the years to come.

One: Our work for justice and peace has flourished over the past 25 years.



All: Presbyterian Women are taking action to end human trafficking! We have committed ourselves to antiracism training. We have grown aware of the ways injustice harms the image of God in our brothers and sisters around the world. And we are still learning!

One: We have come to advocate at the United Nations, with the size of our delegation increasing tenfold! We have traveled to the seat of power in our own country to train at Ecumenical Advocacy Days, speaking truth to power!

All: We seek an end to injustice everywhere in our world! Give us courage to continue to work as advocates for justice and peace!

One: We have been intentional about building an inclusive, caring community over the past 25 years.

All: Since 1988, Presbyterian Women has seen its first African American moderator, its first Asian American moderator, and its first Latina moderator! We have seen the first national gathering for Native American Presbyterian Women and the ordination of the first Middle Eastern American woman!

One: For all who have led Presbyterian Women over these 25 years, we give thanks! For moderators and vice moderators, for coordinating teams at the presbytery, synod and churchwide levels, for staff, we give thanks! Let us name the leaders in our own community for whom we give thanks:

All: (*name women who have been leaders*)

One: In these two and a half decades we have strengthened the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnessed to the promise of God’s kingdom. Our special contributions through the Thank Offering and Birthday Offering have supported the Menaul School, RECONCILE in Sudan, Solar Under the Sun, Living Waters for the World, programs to fight human trafficking and spurred the formation of the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network—bringing us closer to God’s vision of abundant life for all.

All: Through the Thank and Birthday Offerings we have provided funds to build schools, hospitals, domestic violence shelters, homeless shelters and transitional living shelters. We have provided money for prison ministries, education, hunger, disabilities, community organizing, family, health, evangelism and so much more!



One: We have worked with the whole church on a variety of initiatives, and now have voice and vote at the churchwide level, helping shape the denomination's witness through the Presbyterian Mission Agency Board.

All: We give thanks for the testimony of these accomplishments! We commit ourselves again to this church and to God's work.



All: This memory gives us hope for the future, as we have learned that we are stronger together and can cope with shifts and changes.

One: Holy One, God of our mothers and grandmothers, we give you thanks and praise for what you have done through us thus far!



One: As we celebrate this anniversary, we remember the struggles and pain that accompanied the formation of Presbyterian Women out of two distinct groups, brought together through the formation of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

All: Holy One, God of our daughters and granddaughters, open us to see your work anew, fill us with your imagination and breathe into us the breath of life, until the celebration of our next 25 years . . . and beyond. Amen. 🍷

Meagan Manas is a teaching elder ordained to validated ministry as justice and peace specialist for Presbyterian Women.



Here's What (Else!) You Can Do

In addition to a service commemorating PW's 25th anniversary, consider these ways to celebrate 25 years and counting!

- ✓ Order anniversary materials through Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612
 - 25th anniversary participation pin—item PWR13405; \$4 each, plus shipping, or PWR13407 (pack of 5) for \$15, plus shipping.
 - 25th anniversary magnetic bookmark with an abbreviated 25-year PW timeline—item PWR13411; 50 cents each, plus shipping.
 - 25th anniversary poster featuring the work of Presbyterian Women and a 25-year PW timeline; item PWR13410
 - Updated *Amazing Heritage of Presbyterian Women* history exhibit kit (includes the *200 Years of Presbyterian Women* video on DVD); item PWR13137; \$20 plus shipping
- ✓ Make a gift of \$25 (or more!) to the Mission Pledge to mark 25 years of world-changing work; give at www.presbyterianwomen.org/missionpledge.
- ✓ Tell us how you're celebrating 25 years of Presbyterian Women; call or email Yvonne Hileman



with your ideas, 888/728-7228, ext. 5897, or yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org.

- ✓ Share your significant, memorable or historic photos (with captions, please!) from the last 25 years on Presbyterian Women's social media sites. Post photos on PW's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/presbyterianwomenpcusa, or email your photos to yvonne.hileman@pcusa.org for sharing on PW's 25th anniversary Pinterest board, www.pinterest.com/pwpcusa/witnessing-for-25-years.
- ✓ Download additional resources at www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/pw/about-25years
 - 25 *more* ideas for celebrating 25 years
 - The "PW . . . Witnessing to the promise for 25 years" logo (featured above) for your fliers, bulletin boards and other anniversary resources
 - an expanded timeline featured on the bookmark