

WOMEN'S MISSIONARY SOCIETY

RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no recommendations.

REPORT

To the Venerable, the 142nd General Assembly:

The Council Executive of the Women's Missionary Society respectfully submits the following report.

COUNCIL

The biennial Council meeting took place at Crieff Hills Retreat and Conference Centre from May 1–3, 2015. There were approximately 50 delegates, staff and guests in attendance.

The theme was "Seize the Hope" based on Hebrews 6:13–20. This theme was carried out throughout the conference, starting with the Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll, professor at Knox College, who gave a talk on "Hope" on the first day. Music was led by the McLennans (that is, Susan and Mark) with Joy Randall on the piano.

The business was carried out as usual, with the approval of the budget estimates for 2016 and 2017. As well, the Auditor's reports for 2013 and 2014 were approved.

There were many guest speakers, as follows:

1. The Rev. Dr. Richard Fee spoke, his last time as General Secretary before retirement in September 2015.
2. From PWS&D, Guy Smagghe and Jennifer Ramkissoon spoke about the Mayan people of Guatemala. PWS&D has an ongoing partnership with the AMMID (Maya Mam Association for Research and Development).
3. President Betty Siverns, along with Janet Brewer and Joan Smith, gave a presentation on their trip to Afghanistan in 2013.
4. The Bible study was led by the Rev. Kristine O'Brien, minister of Trafalgar Church. The scripture passage studied was Hebrews 6:13–20, reflecting on the theme on hope.
5. June Campbell spoke on Human Trafficking.
6. The Rev. Deb Rapport, Director of ARISE Ministry, spoke on sex trafficking in the Toronto area.

With the closing of the Book Room, Susan Clarke was invited to Council for a time of recognition. Susan was shown much appreciation for developing the Book Room for 15 years as its Manager. Through Susan, the Book Room served the whole of The Presbyterian Church in Canada as well as the WMS with a wide selection of books and resources.

Interspersed with the Bible study and presentations, business was also carried out. The following were some decisions made by Council:

1. It was decided that the WMS will continue as the umbrella organization and that the PCW (Presbyterian Church Women) would fall under the WMS. The PCW will be the outreach ministry of the WMS.
2. The Women's Gathering will be an ongoing ministry of the WMS to be held every three years.
3. The Together We Can! projects for 2015–2017 will be the Mayan people of Guatemala and ARISE Ministry of East Toronto Presbytery.
4. The number of delegates to Council was reduced to reflect the declining membership as well as for cost-saving reasons. The number of representatives on Council Executive was also reduced.

Saturday ended with a fun-filled time around a campfire, singing songs and playing games. Sunday worship and communion was led by the Rev. Mark McLennan. After the election of officers, Mark also installed the new executive. The newly installed President, Susan McLennan, closed the Council meeting with prayer.

The next Council meeting will be May 18, 2017, the day before the Women's Gathering at the Sheraton Parkway Hotel in Richmond Hill, Ontario.

COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

The Council Executive met in full session on November 11 and 12, 2015, at 50 Wynford Drive.

There were two presentations from mission exposure trips which took place in 2015: Susan McLennan and Shirley Miller presented the Guatemala Trip; Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer presented the Tumekutana Conference near Accra, Ghana.

The Finance Committee presented the budget for 2016 which was approved. Also, various grant decisions were made, some of which are listed below.

The PCW Working Group presented several recommendations for consideration. Council Executive decided the following coming from the recommendations:

1. That the new name for the outreach arm of the WMS will be called “Women To Women” (WTW).
2. That the website name for WTW will be called *The Hub*.
3. That a WTW Committee will be formed, composed of the current PCW Working Group members plus two more women.

MISSION RESOURCES

Resources for Mission Awareness Sunday were distributed to all WMS and affiliated groups in February 2016. This year the resource was written by the Rev. Lara Scholey. Resources for Mission Awareness Sunday are available online at wmspcc.ca, or through the WMS office.

The WMS popular report ‘On the Move in Mission’ marked its 15th year publication this past year. This resource continues to serve as an excellent promotional tool for the Society and for mission.

Glad Tidings continues to be published six times a year, and is available by subscription (\$15 plus tax for one year). It is interesting to note that our subscribers are not all WMS members, and even a few men subscribe to the magazine. Topics are varied and of interest to many across The Presbyterian Church in Canada. In 2015, we had articles on food security, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, camping ministry, housing and many more. In addition, there are worship services, devotionals and reports from missionaries and WMS groups.

Glad Tidings also prints a study. This year we are undertaking a two-year (eight-session) study on women that began in the July/August 2015 edition. It will include topics such as domestic violence, care-giving, and some focus on women in our partner churches and organizations around the world.

WOMEN TO WOMEN (WTW)

Last year, we reported that the PCW would become an outreach ministry of the WMS, and we have moved forward with this ministry throughout the past year. At the Council Executive Meeting in November 2015, it was decided that this new outreach arm would be called Women To Women (WTW). A committee was created to brainstorm and give structure to this new mission of the WMS as follows:

Mission Statement	Presbyterian women serving, sharing, and spiritual living.
Goals	Resourcing, mentoring, and networking.
Purpose	To reach out to Presbyterian women across Canada and globally, to network women to women, with common women’s experiences and concerns.

To meet the needs of women, much of the work will be relationship focused. We will connect women through topics like work, marriage, parenting, caring for caregivers, social justice themes and leadership development.

To help accomplish our mission, we will also engage women in service, at all levels of the church, both clergy and laity. We will also share educational resources and calls to action for community impact and prayer support, for both Canadian and international partners. Women will have the opportunity to share their experiences with other women across Canada, and even around the world.

We also know that many women are stretched and often forget about their own personal discipleship and spiritual development, so we will also provide resources that nurture spiritual living. Through various means such as our new blog and the National Presbyterian Women’s Gathering in 2017, we will provide an opportunity for self-reflection and authentic faith growth.

Much of the initial work done by this committee has been the development of *The Hub*, which was launched in January 2016.

The Hub (womenshub.ca) is an online space for women to share their Reformed faith and how it relates to their daily lives. It is a place to create relationships with women who identify themselves as Presbyterian. Through regular blog posts, we hope that women will feel a part of this community, that they will hear their stories in the words of another. We pray that relationships will develop among our readers and that their relationship with God will also be deepened. We hope the blog posts will also encourage women to continue to serve God in their daily life. We hope it will be a lively site that welcomes and encourages discussion among its readers. Many of the posts will include ways in which women reach out into their community (locally and globally), and how they work towards justice for the marginalized, the neglected, or the forgotten. *The Hub* is also supported by the *Women To Women* Facebook page.

NATIONAL PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S GATHERING 2017

The third National Presbyterian Women's Gathering is well underway with planning and preparation. A Planning Team of 20 members from across the country have been working since May 2015. The information/registration booklets were mailed out early March 2016. The following are some highlights; detailed information can be found in the booklets or on the Women's Gathering website (womensgathering.ca) or through *The Hub* (womenshub.ca).

- Date: May 19–22, 2017 (Victoria Day Long Weekend)
- Venue: Sheraton Parkway Hotel and Conference Centre, Richmond Hill, Ontario
- Registration Fee: early registration \$365; regular \$465; family discounts \$50/person; student discount \$50
- Early deadline: November 30, 2016
- Final deadline: March 31, 2017
- Theme: Rooted In Love (Ephesians 3:14–21)

Many things are being planned, including: many workshop topics, four forums with special speakers, uplifting worships each day, Spirituality Centre, Saturday evening program with dinner and show presenting Aboriginal culture. There will be worship and praise each day; the praise leader will be the Rev. Hugh Donnelly, minister of Guildwood Church. Four women clergy will be preaching each day: the Rev. Dr. Patricia Dutcher-Walls, the Rev. Mona Scrivens, the Rev. Linda Ashfield, and the Rev. Karen Horst.

Keynote Speakers:

- Mary Jo Leddy: Founder of Romero House, a home for refugees in Toronto; professor at Regis College, Toronto School of Theology; writer of *Radical Gratitude*, *The Other Face of God*; *When the stranger calls us Home*; recipient of the Order of Canada
- Jean Chamberlain: Gynaecologist, works at McMaster University and in Uganda as a teaching doctor; Founder of "Save The Mothers, Canada"
- Cindy Blackstock: Lawyer and advocate for Aboriginal children in Canada; Executive Director of First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada (FNCFCSS); Associate Professor at the University of Alberta

Saturday Evening Program

Aboriginal Night with cultural presentation by Tribal Vision Performers and keynote speech by Dr. Cindy Blackstock.

Spirituality Centre

A special guest, the Rev. Theresa Cho, minister of Presbyterian Church (USA), will set up and lead the Spirituality Centre with assistance from our three chaplains, the Rev. Jean Morris (Calgary), the Rev. Theresa Han (Toronto), and the Rev. Cynthia Chenard (Halifax).

Forums

1. Theme passage: the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset
2. Spiritual Disciplines: the Rev. Theresa Cho
3. Inclusiveness: Sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age, etc.: the Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls
4. *Half the Sky* – the Rev. Sarah Kim will lead this video presentation

Workshops

1. ARISE: In Hope and Love – the Rev. Deb Rapport
2. Blanket Exercise – Katharine Masterton
3. Connecting a Garden to the Globe – the Rev. Theresa McDonald-Lee

4. Dance to Praise Him – Anointed Joy and Sharon Geigl
5. Every life needs...to make a difference – Raw Carrot, the Rev. Joel and Ms. Rebecca Sherbino
6. *Half the Sky* video presentation – the Rev. Sarah Kim
7. Pray All Ways: Expanding Your Prayer Toolbox – Laura Alary
8. Reconciliation in the Watershed – KAIROS
9. Suffering, Prayer and God – the Rev. Dr. Pam McCarroll
10. With Hands and Hearts: Creating Outreach in a Changing Canada – Karen Stiller and Patricia Paddey
11. Global music/songs through the church year – the Rev. Hugh Donnelly
12. Spirituality (English and Korean) – the Rev. In Kee Kim
13. Theme workshop – the Rev. Dr. Emily Bisset
14. Passing on the Faith/Family ministry – the Rev. Jacqui Foxall

The second *Presbyterian Woman of Faith Award* will be presented at the Sunday Banquet dinner. Congregations and groups across the country are encouraged to nominate a Presbyterian woman for this award. Contact Liz Brewer at church offices for more information.

STAFF CHANGES

The Presbyterian Church in Canada Finance Department approached the WMS with the suggestion to take over the WMS Financial Officer's work. The Council Executive considered this and approved the decision. Subsequently, after almost two years of working as Financial Officer in the WMS, Elza Furzer finished as of November 2015. As well, arrangements were made to have Sheilah Alyea do some administrative work for the WMS, starting in December 2015.

PARTNERSHIP WITH WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS

The WMS is active in a number of women's organizations within Canada and around the world.

Sarah Kim and Susan McLennan attended the Presbyterian Church USA Women's Gathering in Minneapolis that was held from June 18–21, 2015. More than 1,700 women (from around the United States and the world!) went to Minneapolis. It was a very interesting experience to be part of the international delegation. The theme of the Gathering was "One Body, One Spirit". Through many wonderful plenary speakers and workshop leaders we heard that, if we "welcome one another through God's spirit, we will unite as one body empowered to embody Christ's love in the world."

A WMS group, including Susan McLennan, WMS President, travelled to Guatemala from September 30–October 9, 2015. The projects supported by the WMS in Guatemala include food security, women's empowerment and the education of children. Women receive training on agro-ecology, livestock production, veterinary care, gender equality and Mam cultural identity and land rights. The groups that were visited by the delegation were very encouraged by our visit and wanted most of all for their stories to be shared with others. By strengthening their abilities and increasing their knowledge, these women are improving the future for their children and families. When women are strong, communities are strong. The work we are supporting is important and useful.

In September 2015, Sarah Kim and Janet Brewer attended the Tumekutana African Women's Conference held near Accra, Ghana. There were women from 22 African countries, 5 Presbyterian Church (USA), 2 Church of Scotland, and 2 The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Tumekutana is a Swahili word meaning "We have come together". It was started by a former Presbyterian Church (USA) missionary, Ms. Caryl Weinberg, who had the vision to bring together Presbyterian/Reformed Church women from African countries for a time of sharing their common concerns. This was the third conference. The first conference was held in Nairobi in 2007; the second one was in Rwanda in 2011; the third was to take place in 2014 but was delayed until 2015 because of the Ebola outbreak. This was an excellent opportunity to meet women in African churches and hear the grass-roots stories and concerns; relationships were also built and strengthened.

The WMS has had a long partnership with the Women's Inter-church Council of Canada (WICC). As well as making financial contributions, the WMS sends a representative to sit on their committee. WICC is a member organization on the World Council of Churches. It is the organization that produces the World Day of Prayer resource as well as participating in the Fellowship of the Least Coin.

The WMS is also a voting member on the National Council of Women of Canada. Although this is a non-church organization based in Ottawa, we give voice to Presbyterian women through our membership and vote.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AGENCIES OF THE CHURCH

The Together We Can! projects, which were decided at Council 2015, continue to raise funds for the following projects: Mayan Women (Guatemala) that raised \$7,858.11 in 2015; and ARISE Ministry (Canada) that raised \$8,083.53 in 2015.

A contribution of \$100,000 was given to the General Fund of The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 2015. This grant will continue in 2016. In 2017, the grant will be \$50,000.

The WMS continues to give annual student bursaries of \$1,000 each to Knox College, Presbyterian College and the Vancouver School of Theology.

In addition to the above, the WMS gave grants from its various endowment funds for individuals as well as for projects. The following are some of the recent grants:

1. A grant of \$2000 was given for the construction of a bore-well for the Mendha Community in India.
2. From the Pauline Brown Fund, \$10,000 (CAD) was given for 18 students at the Isabel McConnell School of Nursing (Jobat, India) for two years study \$600 for each student.
3. From the Giollo Kelly Memorial Leadership Development Fund, \$3600 was given for 12 students to participate in the Knox College mission education trip to Cuba.
4. From Undesignated Legacies, \$5000 (US) was given for the Tumekutana Conference to assist the African women's travel to attend the conference.
5. From the Ewart E. Henderson Fund, a grant of \$5000 was given for Minister's Wives' Theological Education of the Blantyre Synod, Malawi (through the Women's Desk of the Synod).

The Council Executive gave a grant of up to \$10,000 (CAD) from the Nettie Gemmell Fund to the Tumekutana African Women's Conference every three years.

The WMS is very grateful to all our members who give generously through second mile givings. We are also grateful to all Presbyterians for their support of the Together We Can! projects.

Susan McLennan
President

Sarah Kim
Executive Director