



PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN

THE LINKLETTER

PRESBYTERY GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY

September 2025

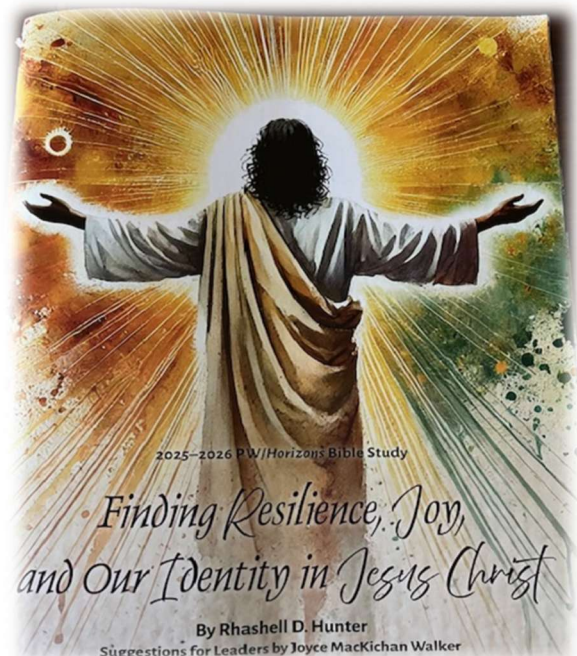
Connected by the Living Word

Reverend Janet Riley

Listening to Susan Jackson- Dowd, the PW Executive Director present an overview of the 2025-2026 Horizons Bible Study at the Synod of Mid-America Summer Gathering in August, I was struck by the power of the Holy Spirit to connect women nationally and internationally through Bible Study. The Horizons Bible Study is currently translated into Spanish, Korean, Mandarin Chinese and other languages and has a large print edition as well. The author of the study, *Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ*, the Reverend Dr. Rhashell Hunter has extensive experience in the national church where she served as director of the Racial Equity and Women's Intercultural Ministries. Rhashell has taught in various seminaries, most recently Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary and served as pastor of Community Presbyterian Church in Flint, Michigan and as associate pastor at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago. She brings this

vast church experience to bear in offering hope to us during recent days of stress and immense change.

This study is unique in that it is particularly directed towards women in the reformed tradition and exposes us to the latest in Biblical scholarship inviting us to see familiar passages with new eyes. Each study takes 4 years to create and must be field tested so women in the local church can give their input and feedback. **Cont. pg 4**





**PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN
OF GIDDINGS-LOVEJOY PRESBYTERY**



***PRESBYTERY-WIDE
PW FALL GATHERING
AT ST. MARK, BALLWIN***

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2025

Pass It On...The Fire of Our Foremothers



Reverend MP Panco
Keynote Speaker

St. Mark PW is happy to welcome Pastor MP back for a visit to St. Louis. After five years as Associate Pastor here, the native of Northeast Ohio has returned to the area with joy, grateful to be near family and to continue her call to ministry. She is Pastor of Burton UCC in Burton, Ohio.

Who passed the spark of PW to light the fire in you?

What is the legacy of PW in your church?

How do you share PW's heritage with your congregation?

Why does it matter what PW has done in the past?

Who really cares what the Birthday Offering funded in 2005?

How do we keep the flame burning in our heart?

We hope you will join Presbyterian Women from across the Presbytery as we celebrate the women and events that make us *keepers of history and sharers of the faith.*

Start the day with something new!

Chair Exercise at 8:00 a.m.

Continental Breakfast available at 9 a.m. in the Narthex

Share your story...PW in the Presbytery Displays

Program and Worship at 10:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Lunch at 12:30 p.m.

Registration form and directions to St. Mark on next page.

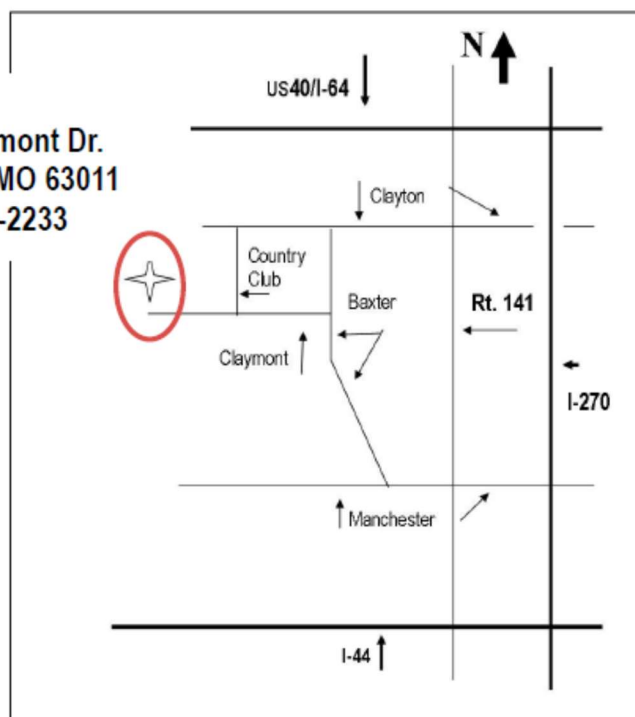
Pass It On...The Fire of Our Foremothers



Please return the reservation form by October 11, 2025.

For additional information contact:
Mary Beth Powell
mbpowell01@earthlink.net
636-227-4997

St. Mark
601 Claymont Dr.
Ballwin, MO 63011
6346-394-2233



Fall Gathering Registration Form Saturday, October 25, 2025 St. Mark

Name of Individual/Group _____

Name of Church _____

Contact Person for a group _____

E-mail _____ Phone _____

The event cost is \$15.00 per person and will be payable at the Gathering.

Please reserve places for: _____

Add additional names on the back of this form.

Mail form to St. Mark Presbyterian Women, 601 Claymont Dr., Ballwin MO 63011

Connected by the Living Word cont.

Another way the Holy Spirit seems to be at work through the Horizons Bible Study is that the themes of the study seem to show up just when we need them most. Susan Dowd reminded us that the study of Lamentations coincided with the COVID outbreak and gave us the chance to explore lamenting as an act of faith. This year's study, *Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ* is no different! It reminds us where the source of our ultimate strength lies! We are encouraged to draw upon the experience of biblical characters to renew our faith and reconnect to Christ

In the Workshop for Leaders, Rhashell defines each of the qualities highlighted in the study: "*Resilience* is the ability to spring back into shape and to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or stress- such as from family, relationships, health, workplace, and financial stressors. People who survive and thrive well in change are resilient." She says: "*Joy* is sometimes confused with happiness. For Christians, joy can occur while we are in the midst of difficult circumstances. Joy is the

second fruit of the spirit, preceded by love and followed by peace (Gal. 5: 22-23). Trust in God when we are in trying times can fill us with glorious joy and peace. We have joy in our suffering, because ultimately our joy is found in Jesus Christ." Finally, Rhashell calls us to rediscover that "identity is more than who we are or who we show ourselves to be. At its core, it points to our humanity. Our core identity is not found in our titles, our positions, our partners, or our possessions. For Christians, our identity is found in Jesus Christ."

Rhashell takes an in depth look at the various biblical characters named Mary and brings new scholarship to bear on her interpretation of Mary Magdalene whose nickname from the Aramaic *magdala*, means "Mary the Tower" or "Mary the Great" (Luke 8:2). We will be challenged to rethink some of the old passages which **cont. pg 5**

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Connected by the Living Word cont.

suddenly take on new meaning when the central role Mary played as a disciple of Jesus is acknowledged. We will be invited to re-imagine the story of the Prodigal Son as the story of the Prodigal Daughter. Be prepared to be surprised and challenged as you engage familiar scripture in new ways.

We hope that you will join with other women in this presbytery in utilizing the Horizons Bible Study. Consider on-line if there's no local opportunity available. Check out the Suggestions for Leaders

section of each study even if you aren't leading the lesson as you don't want to miss out on anything. Audio versions of the study read by the author are available. You can also find supplemental study material in the Horizons Magazine and Presbyterian Outlook. To access the author's blog, the Workshop for Leaders and other resources for study, visit the website:
www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/resilience

Meets on ZOOM every second Thursday of the month at 12:30p.m.

Widening Our Horizons: Connecting and Advocating with Women Worldwide at the United Nations

Reverend Janet Riley

As your representative from Giddings-Lovejoy PW at the Synod Gathering in Kansas City August 2nd, I was amazed to learn about difference in the lives of women that PW delegates are making through their participation in the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The presentation from Pam Synder, Churchwide Moderator of the Coordinating Team (2024-2027) traced women's involvement in the structure of the United Nations starting with the formation of Ecumenical Women in 2000 and moving to development of the opportunity for Presbyterian Women to serve as delegates on the Commission on the Status of Women in 2018. Ecumenical Women began as an international coalition of church denominations and ecumenical organizations which have status with the Economic & Social Council at the (ECOSOC) at the United Nations. EW seeks to give those traditionally excluded from political decision-making bodies opportunities to speak truth to power through partnerships with our communities and through bringing women from around

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Why I Discuss Politics at Church

Donna Cook

Jesus loves you! Love your neighbor! I think those were the first lessons I learned in Sunday School at Oak Hill Presbyterian Church. Love your neighbor, lessons taught in Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 22:39 and Mark 12:31. My mother liked to tell everyone that I would sit on the floor under the kitchen table and sing “Jesus Loves Me”. I was much younger of course and it was a lot easier in the late 1950’s for me to get up off the floor. But it is a lesson I continue to try to model in my daily life.

Our Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders, and pastors all ask the question, how do you show love for your neighbor or does this show love for your neighbor? Through the years my thoughts about this question have of course changed. Early on we learned to be kind to the other kids in class and on the playground, play with the child that was often left behind, share our toys, offer a pencil or paper to our neighbor who forgot. We participated in food drives and made donations to worthy causes.

Many of us use our gift of creativity to show our love for our families and neighbors. We make quilts, baby clothes, stuffed animals, prepare meals and baked goods and more. Recently I started reading “Just Making, A Guide for Compassionate Creatives” by Mitali Perkins. One of the passages that struck

me early in the book is “making beautiful things is a primary way of loving your neighbor. - when it comes to the investment of time, talent, and treasure.” I love to make art, all sorts, and I like thinking about it as showing love for my neighbor.

How else can we show love for our neighbor? We do it in our work life and as we’re out and about with our families in the neighborhood. So many of us spend hours volunteering to serve our neighbors by helping to alleviate hunger and homelessness. Others volunteer as tutors in schools and work at animal shelters.

What other ways are there to show love for our neighbors? Dare I say, talk about politics? In his book, “Christ and the Common Life, Political Theology and the Case for Democracy”

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Why I Discuss Politics at Church cont.

Luke Bretherton says “Politics is a crucial arena in which we work out what it means to love God and neighbors, and politics itself can be a form of neighbor love...In terms of neighbor love, democracy says each person matters. By building in the need to listen to each other through a democratic process, democracy says each person has dignity...Christians are called to love their neighbors, and democracy directly engages that call by saying that every person and every voice matters.”

I spent my work life as a Civics and American History teacher in the Northwest District in Jefferson County, Missouri. I worked everyday to show love for my student neighbors and to teach the students ways to love their neighbors. Vote in elections, show true patriotism by willingly serving on jury duty, and fully participating in the democratic process. We talked about appropriate ways to bring about change in our government to work to make the world a better place.

Recently, the reading from Luke 4:18-21 struck me as a call to action. Jesus is in the temple and reads from the prophet Isaiah, “the Spirit of the Lord is on me, because I have been anointed to proclaim the good news to the poor, proclaim freedom for the prisoners, recover sight to the blind, set the oppressed free and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”. Then Jesus said “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” This is Jesus’s “drop-mic” moment.

I needed to pay attention.

I have the honor to serve on the Presbytery’s Public Witness Team with Bernice Thompson. She asked me a few weeks back if I would write an article about why we should discuss politics at church. My answer is we should have those conversations because we love our neighbor and then take action to show that love for our neighbor.

We pray for our neighbors who suffer from violence, those who are oppressed and suffer from systems of discrimination. We pray for our neighbors who are victims of abuse and who are hungry and unhoused. We pray for those neighbors who are yearning for justice and longing for peace. While we pray, we need to have thoughtful conversations about how the church can bring about changes that address those issues. Conversations through our Sunday Schools, Book Clubs and yes, perhaps sermons. Conversations about how we as individuals and as a group can work for those changes. Conversations about how our churches are a part of the neighborhood and how we can be active participants in that neighborhood. We need to talk about working for changes to government policies that will end hunger, oppression and injustice. Jesus talked about it in Luke 4. We learned to love our neighbor in Leviticus, Matthew and Mark. It’s a long journey from singing “Jesus Loves Me” under the kitchen table. What can you do to show love for your neighbor? Everyone is your neighbor. It’s time to take action.

Widening our Horizons cont.

the world to the United Nations. Members of EW advocate not only for a few improvements but for a fundamental system change in church and state to invest in and empower women worldwide.

How did Presbyterian Women become involved in these efforts? At the 2012 Triennial Business Meeting at the Churchwide Gathering, a resolution was adopted to seek status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The process of gaining status took six years, but the result was worth the wait! On July 28, 2018, PW was granted Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council. The benefits of our participation are innumerable: allows greater visibility and access to the Commission on the Status of Women and the UN; broadens and enhances PW's global ministry; provides a global channel to justice and peace initiatives; and expands participation with women of all ages.

The PW delegation to the UN this past March of 2025 touted 32 delegates, the largest group ever including women from 9 synods and 19 different presbyteries with ages ranging from 33-96 years old. Perhaps God is calling you to expand your horizons and grow in awareness of how to address emerging issues facing women worldwide. The next PW Delegation coordinated by the Commission on the Status of Women is scheduled for March 9-20, 2026. PW Delegate Applications are available in October 2025 by contacting Vice-Moderator of the Coordinating Team, Kelsey Law at her email: Kelseylaw.pw@gmail.com. Participants are responsible for securing their own lodging for the event. Scholarship funds are available through the Synod and possibly the presbytery PW. Your local church may also be a great source of encouragement and support for this venture. The PW of Giddings-Lovejoy stands ready to partner in helping you obtain the financial resources needed. If you are interested in becoming a PW Delegate to the CSW at the UN from this presbytery, please contact Janet Riley (618-610-7946) janetlriley@yahoo.com. God will make a way.

Is God Calling You to Widen Your Horizons?

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