



# *KEEPING IN TOUCH*

## *Presbyterian Women of The Peaks*

### *October 2025 Edition*



## **2025 ANNUAL GATHERING RECAP**

Northminster Presbyterian Church in Roanoke graciously hosted our 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering last month. We had a wonderful group with 42 attending, and 17 churches were represented. There was time to catch up with old friends, and time to make new ones. We hope to see everyone next year!

Our group of speakers told powerful stories about the plight and resilience of refugees from Afghanistan. Scott Bailey, Co-Founder/President of the Board of Directors of the Blacksburg Refugee Partnership, shared how refugees have a lot to learn as they start over here in the United States. They must learn to speak a new language, learn how our healthcare system works, and learn how to provide for their families as they become members of our communities. Jordan Kane, Supervisory Analyst with Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), told a personal story of the challenges of helping someone leave Afghanistan safely. Sarah Hyska, our own Racial Equity/Justice & Peace Representative, currently hosts six women from Afghanistan. She shared entertaining stories of everyday life as these young women attend university.

Our mission focus for this year's gathering put a spotlight on Eastern Appalachian Teen Challenge. Lisa Cox and two students shared information about the residential and private school in Roanoke and how it provides support for adolescent girls. An offering of \$628.01 was collected and donated to the program.

Other highlights included a warm welcome from Reverend Russ Merritt, Pastor at Northminster PC, and an uplifting devotion by Reverend Janet Chisom, Associate Pastor at Trinity Ecumenical Parish. Beautiful music was provided by Ruth Rieger, Pianist at Cloverdale Church of the Brethren, and a member at Northminster PC.

During the business portion of our meeting, the proposed bylaws amendments passed by a unanimous vote. The most significant change states that a leader will have the option of serving a second **and a third** term of two years. Several years back, the CT terms for leaders were two terms of three years each, or a total of six years. This revision returns the number of years a leader may serve to six instead of four years of service.

We had the honor of Pam Snyder installing new Coordinating Team leaders. Pam is the Moderator of PW, Inc., Board of Directors, our PCUSA churchwide leadership.

The 2025-2026 Coordinating Team:

Moderator	Shelda Wills
Vice Moderator	Janet Rakes
Secretary	Natasha Lowe
Treasurer	Theresa Underwood
Historian	Betty Oliver
Racial Equity/Justice & Peace Representative	Sarah Hyska
Missions Coordinator	Diane Patty
Moderator of Search Committee	Pam Claterbaugh
Search Committee Member	Gail McCullough
Search Committee Member	Janice Wells
Search Committee Member	Elese Wilson
Neighborhoods Coordinator	Laura Crumbley



Pam Snyder (left) recognizing the 2025-2026 Coordinating Team: Shelda Wills, Janet Rakes, Natasha Lowe, Sarah Hyska, Theresa Underwood, Pam Claterbaugh, Laura Crumbley, Diane Patty, Elese Wilson, Gail McCullough. Not pictured: Janice Wells and Betty Oliver.

Pam Snyder also recognized Cynthia Washburn (Second PC) for her many years of service with the Peaks Presbyterian Women Coordinating Team as she completed her last term as a Search Committee Member. Thank you, Cynthia, and we hope to see you at the next Gathering!

## **PW COOKBOOKS**

Some cookbooks are still available. They are \$25 each and include recipes from churches in The Peaks Presbytery. Email Theresa Underwood at [tundwood@aol.com](mailto:tundwood@aol.com) to reserve a copy.

## **PW FALL PACKET**

You will receive the PW Fall Packet soon! Moderators and contacts should complete forms and/or distribute forms to the appropriate leaders to complete. Please return all forms by the indicated dates. The forms assist the Coordinating Team with planning.