

God's Word

Part three of a four-part discussion



BY JANICE CATRON

In the last issue of *Horizons*, we looked at God's Word through the lens of the first set of scriptures for the 2006 Churchwide Gathering, and we focused on the power of God's spoken word (*Genesis 1:1a, 3a*). Now we turn our attention to *John 1:1*.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Here, God's Word refers indisputably to the Christ, who was present with God at creation. This same Christ became the Word Incarnate in the person of Jesus, who was born in a humble stable in Bethlehem. As Christians, we hold that when we see the Word made flesh in Jesus, we are looking at the very essence of God. We believe that Jesus revealed God to us more clearly than any other means would accomplish.

So what does Jesus Christ, the Word of God, teach us about the nature of our Creator and our place in God's realm? In all that he said and did, Jesus taught that God is a God of great love and compassion who has done everything for us, and that we, in turn, are expected to demonstrate this same love and compassion to others. We are to follow in Jesus' own steps by living out, as best we can, the description he gave of his own ministry when he declared:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim
release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,

As Presbyterian Women prepares for the 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Louisville, Kentucky, July 7-11, 2006, members of PW and women planning to attend the Gathering are contemplating the theme—**"Creation! Celebration! God's Word—Light for the Journey."**

The articles in this series unpack the theological implications of the theme. Dive into this third part of a four-part series to see how PW finds God's Word.



The PW Purpose

Forgiven and freed by God in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves

- *to nurture our faith through prayer and Bible study*
- *to support the mission of the church worldwide*
- *to work for justice and peace*
- *to build an inclusive, caring community of women that strengthens the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and witnesses to the promise of God's kingdom.*

to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor' " (*Luke 4:18-19*, quoting *Isaiah 61:1-2*).

In these words, and elsewhere in Jesus' teaching and ministry, we see a passionate concern for justice and peace. Jesus noticed and respected people whom society scorned—people like the Samaritan woman (*John 4*). He welcomed children (*Mark 10*) and stopped the stoning of a woman caught in adultery (*John 8*). Jesus reached out to those in need, those who were hurting and those who were outcasts. He spoke up for those who were abused and oppressed, and he fought injustice wherever he found it. He modeled a faithful life as described in Hebrew scriptures, such as *Deuteronomy 10:18*, which calls for providing for widows, orphans and strangers. In so doing, he opened a window for us into the very heart of God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, we too strive for a more equitable world. So, in the third statement of the PW Purpose, we commit ourselves to work for justice and peace. At the Churchwide Gathering, we will celebrate some of the ways that God's efforts through us have been successful—and we will hear from some of the people whose lives have been bettered by our attempts to bring God's justice and peace to the world. Truly, this Gathering will be an occasion where we can say, "I by my works will show you my faith" (*James 2:18*).

Janice Catron is pastor of John Knox Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky.

Plenary Previews



BY LEA LAWRENCE

Creation! Celebration! God's Word—Light for the Journey

is the exciting theme for the 2006 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women in Louisville, Kentucky. Thousands of women will meet in Louisville to grow in love and faith, experiencing the Gathering theme and scripture in workshops, afternoon journeys, plenary sessions, exhibits and activities in Celebration Corners/Great Room and much more!

Plenary sessions will expand the Gathering theme and scripture from *Genesis* and *John* into memorable moments for every Gathering participant. The words and phrases in the theme provide rich imagery for music, staging and programming. Here are a few highlights of what you have to look forward to during morning and evening plenary sessions.

Experience **Creation** through

• **Music**

Elizabeth Peterson is pastor of Washington Presbyterian Church in Knoxville, Tennessee, and was the song leader for the Synod of Lakes and Prairies Presbyterian Women's Gathering in 2001 and 2004. Cathie Krueger has been an accompanist since she was 12 years old.

• **Story**

Lorraine Hartin-Gelardi is a popular storyteller for children and adults throughout New York and New England. She helps children in local schools tell and write their own stories through her residency program, Children's Voices.

Join in **Celebration** of the

• **50th anniversary of the Fellowship of the Least Coin**

Esther Byu has served as executive secretary for the International Committee for Fellowship of the Least Coin since 1998. She is a native of Myanmar (formerly Burma) and is now working in the Church of Christ in Thailand office in Bangkok.

• **50th anniversary of the ordination of women as ministers of Word and Sacrament**

Roula Alkhouri and Laura Mariko Cheifetz will dialogue about the future of women's leadership in the church. Roula is the first Syrian American woman ordained as a PC(USA) minister. Laura is a proud West Coast *hapa* (Asian Pacific Islander of mixed heritage) and a graduate of McCormick Theological Seminary seeking ordination.

Hear **God's Word** through

• **Bible study**

Dale Lindsay Morgan, author of the 2004–2005 *Horizons* Bible study, *What She Said: Quotable Women in Scripture*, has served as senior pastor and head of staff of St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Santa Barbara, California, since 1987.

• **Biblical reflections**

Ann Weems has authored seven books published by Westminster John Knox Press and wrote poetry to accompany the 2004–2005 *Horizons* Bible study, *What She Said*.

• **Prophetic voices**

Musimbi Kanyoro, a theologian from Kenya, is the general secretary of the World YWCA. She has made significant contributions to the fight against HIV/AIDS through the YWCA and as coordinator of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians.

Benedita da Silva is the first Afro Brazilian woman to be elected to Brazil's senate. Her activism on behalf of women, children, blacks and people who are poor has led to social reforms within Brazil and education about Brazil around the world.

• **Preaching**

Susan Andrews is pastor of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Maryland, and was the first woman pastor to be elected moderator of the General Assembly.

Find **Light for the Journey** with

• **News from Forbearance Presbyterian Church**

Charlotte Johnstone is a member of Immanuel Presbyterian Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and is the award-winning writer of "Dispatch from Forbearance Presbyterian Church."

- Global Exchange participants and Global Partners
- energizers, drama troupes, dancers and much, much more!

Lea Lawrence is the chair of the Plenary Committee of the 2006 Churchwide Gathering Connecting Committee.

