

## A Word From Susie Stanley

Executive Director, WHWC, Intl.

As some of you already know, the Rev. Dr. Janet Peifer died in her sleep November 13, 2004. Cause of death was a rare heart problem that could not have been diagnosed prior to her death. We decided to include my tribute at Janet's funeral in this newsletter as a testimony to her ministry in WHWC. The family requested that women who have been influenced by Janet's ministry sit together at the funeral. Approximately forty women provided a visual witness to the fruits of Janet's labors. A representative of the Brethren in Christ listed many of the activities she had undertaken within the denomination that promoted women in ministry. Janet's passion came through loud and clear.

Others are continuing Janet's work within the Brethren in Christ. Over sixty contributions have been made to the memorial fund dedicated to The Brethren in Christ Council on Women in Ministry and Leadership which she founded. In a broader capacity, Janet's web site [www.equalworth.net/ministry](http://www.equalworth.net/ministry) is still available.

### Mission Statement

**"The mission of Wesleyan/ Holiness Women Clergy is to equip and encourage divinely-called women in vocational ministry and professional leadership positions."**

Janet's picture is ready to join our "Cloud of Witnesses." Even though she is no longer with us in body, memories of her passion for women in ministry and her seemingly endless hours of work to promote the recognition of women gifted for ministry will still surround and inspire us as we worship in San Diego.



This issue is dedicated to Janet's memory. May others pick up the mantle and continue her work on behalf of women in ministry. †

## Book Review

Smythe Shannon, and Rob Wall. *Women With a Passion for Ministry: Catechism*. Seattle: WA: Seattle Pacific University, 2004.

This 34-page booklet addresses theological and biblical foundations in support of the ministry of gifted and called women in church leadership. Adopting a catechetical format, the authors provide information followed by biblical readings, discussion questions and questions for reflection. Paragraphs about prominent women throughout church history are sprinkled throughout the booklet.

A student authored the section entitled "One Woman's Testimony." She spoke of attending the 2002 "Come to the Water" conference where a sermon by the Rev. Linda Adams on jars of clay encouraged her in her calling to pastoral ministry. We will never know the extent of God's work during these conferences!

To receive a booklet for review, contact Dr. Rob Wall at [rwall@spu.edu](mailto:rwall@spu.edu). †

## CONFERENCE BROCHURE AND PROMOTION

Conference brochures will be available in May. Newsletter recipients will receive a brochure in the mail directly from the WHWC office.

If you would like to receive promotional post cards to distribute, please e-mail [whwc@messiah.edu](mailto:whwc@messiah.edu) providing the number you would like and the address where they should be mailed.



# Funeral Tribute for Janet Peifer

by Susie C. Stanley

Come to the Water. This has been the name for the conferences sponsored by WHWC. It was this organization that first brought Janet and me together. She helped facilitate Brethren in Christ denominational support for the conferences. Then, she served on the Planning Board. She was every board chair's dream. If she said she would do something, she did it. Janet was 100% dependable, 100% supportive. She shared the commitment of the group to encourage women in ministry and educate our churches in their role in placing them in pulpits.

Janet and I soon learned that we shared a deep passion for the utilization of women's gifts for ministry. We spoke the same language. There was no need for explanations. She became one of my best friends. After her board term was up, I asked her to remain on the board, creating a new position of assistant convener. In this capacity, Janet played an increasing role in WHWC. She was my right hand woman. She became my confidant. I didn't always feel like coming to the water. There have been times of discouragement and downright disgust at some of the actions of people who would thwart women's calling to ministry. We shared each other's pain, prayed and continued the journey, knowing that God had called us to this task. Janet's commitment even in the face of setbacks was unwavering.

Janet helped handle some of the hard responsibilities for the conference. For example, she had served as trouble shooter for the registration process. You can imagine that with 559 registrations at the 2004 conference, there would be some room for confusion or misunderstanding. I had full confidence in her ability to deal with any issues that arose and she didn't disappoint me. She also helped me deal with hirings and firings, never an easy task. I relied on her wisdom as we make some hard decisions.

It was Janet who I called when our registrations stood at 170 just 1 1/2 months before one conference. We agonized over the discrepancy between this number and our goal of 500. We were both extremely careful with our money. We cut back on the budget, being realistic about our situation while at the same time, we still decided to print 550 programs just in case everyone came. They did.

It was just 1 week ago [Nov. 4-7, 2004] that the planning board met to organize the next conference. Janet offered to supervise the making of a quilt at the Messiah Village which would represent the theme of the conference. She offered to lead a workshop on ministering to older adults. Her name is sprinkled throughout the minutes. Janet had edited the newsletter for several years. She countersigned checks, dealing with our \$300,000 budget. Who's going to fill her shoes?

Janet's influence spread throughout the country because of her significant involvement in WHWC. Once the word of her death started spreading, I began receiving e-mails from around the country. Janet was well known and her gifts were appreciated. Here are excerpts from a few.

- a Free Methodist leader who just met Janet – "words can't express the emotion I feel... she was a very good leader"

- "We all will miss Janet very much. For years to come, we will celebrate her contribution to WHWC." – the leader of Nazarene World Missions.

Messages have come from a Quaker in Oregon, a Salvation Army officer in Alexandria, VA, and I'm sure that's just the beginning.

Janet had so many dreams yet to be realized. I often talk with my students about the fact that sometimes there are no easy answers to the huge question—Why? We just have to know that God is with us in our questions. Last summer, Janet and I sat in her back yard with Lake Meade lapping at the deck. She shared her hopes for the next several years. There is a Women in Ministry room at Messiah College. In anticipating the future growth of the Brethren in Christ Council on Women in Ministry and Leadership, the room was designated as its office. Speaking of this room, I'm reminded of one of the most fun times we had together. Her schedule, as usual, was extremely busy but she carved out 1 1/2 hours to shop for furniture for this room. We had more fun picking out chairs and a table. But even with the excitement of having funding for this furniture, Janet decided to make lined drapes for the room to add to its specialness. As is often the case with projects, she ran into difficulties and the night before the open house, she and Elvin were still working on getting them hung correctly.

Now, she isn't here to fulfill those dreams. I can't even imagine going forward without her. But that doesn't mean that her dreams are dead. I firmly believe that God right now is calling up others to transform those dreams into reality. My prayer is that several of you will capture Janet's dreams and do the work necessary to make them a reality. Women, or men, you can honor her ministry by answering God's calling to continue her work. We don't know why Janet was taken now, at the very time when her work was bearing so much fruit. But, we can respond to the call to bring in the harvest.

Since the beginning, our conferences have visibly recognized the cloud of witnesses who have gone before us in ministry. Pictures of women in ministry are attached to the walls surrounding our worship space. Janet has joined our Cloud of Witnesses to remind "us to run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

Jesus promised the Samaritan woman: "those who drink the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Janet is drinking that water today. We celebrate her time on earth and her vision for women in ministry. I thank God for the privilege I had to be a co-worker with this marvelous woman. †



## Pamela Thompson Assumes Newsletter Editorship

Rev. Pamela Thompson has agreed to serve as the Come to the Water newsletter editor. She has extensive experience with editorial work in the Church of the Nazarene. We really appreciate her willingness to take over this responsibility that had formerly been under the direction of Janet Peifer. If you have announcements, news, articles, book reviews, or any other information you'd like to be included in the summer newsletter, please contact Pam at [pam@marysvillenazarene.org](mailto:pam@marysvillenazarene.org).

## 2006

## Come to the Water Conference

April 20-23, 2006

Town and Country Resort, San Diego, CA

Add this event to your calendar and thanks for your prayers for the board as they plan the conference!

## Take a Look at the WHWC Website!

[www.messiah.edu/WHWC](http://www.messiah.edu/WHWC)

It's filled with resources you will find helpful!

## Wesleyan/Holiness Women Clergy International Membership 2004-2006

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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\$25.00 Membership  \$15.00 Student/Senior (over 55)  Contribution

I request scholarship assistance to pay for my membership dues. (Please pay what you can.)

Your membership card will be sent to the above address, unless otherwise specified. Mail this form and your check (made out to WHWC) to: Major Donna Hurula, The Salvation Army National Headquarters, 615 Slaters Lane. P.O. Box 269, Alexandria, VA 22313.

Please encourage others to join by sending a copy of this form. Thank you.



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