

The Woman's Pulpit

April-
June
2021

NEWS ABOUT ORDAINED & LAY WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

IAWM Applies to Relate to World Council of Churches

By President J. Dorcas Gordon

IAWM recently became aware of a possibility of establishing a working relationship with the World Council of Churches which, when approved, will open greater communication between our organization and the wider ecumenical world.

In November 2020 I wrote to the interim General Secretary of the WCC to make inquiries about IAWM's participation in the General Assembly to be held in Karlsruhe, Germany, in August 2022. In the context of the conversation I was asked why IAWM had never pursued the possibility of establishing a working relationship with the WCC by becoming what is called an International Ecumenical Organization (IEO).

The WCC Constitution defines an IEO as:

An organization international in nature (global, regional or sub-regional) (having) objectives consistent with the functions and purposes of the Council, and

“(which), knowing the basis upon which the World Council of Churches is founded, expresses its desire to relate to and cooperate with it.”

Each IEO shall be invited to send a delegated representative to the assembly and shall be provided with copies of general communications sent to all member churches of the WCC.

IAWM's Response

I presented the possibility to the IAWM officers who expressed excitement and agreed that we place a recommendation before the Executive Board requesting approval to proceed with our application. At its meeting on January 14, 2021 the Executive Board approved the proposal unanimously.

My subsequent letter to the WCC Interim General Secretary requested that IAWM be considered as an IEO. The

Continued on page 4)

international and ecumenical reach of our organization is clearly seen in the pages of the Prayer Calendar and the

the application is forwarded to the WCC Central Committee, which makes the final decision. The timing of this deci-

Traci Blackmon to Keynote IAWM Virtual Assembly on July 31

The Rev. Dr. Traci Blackmon, member of the national staff of the United Church of Christ and an organizer of the Black Lives Matter movement, will be the keynote speaker and preacher for the Assembly of the International Association of Women Ministers which will be offered as a webinar. Its theme is **Holy Solidarity: Embracing Racial Justice as Women in Ministry.**

Blackmon was a pastor in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014 when the police shooting of Michael Brown coalesced a movement to protest the longtime bias in many police departments against people of color. She has since been a vocal proponent of racism education and naming white privilege. She serves as Associate General Minister for Justice and Local Church Ministries for the United Church of Christ.

Blackmon joins a growing list of women scholars and ministers who will make presentations. The international assembly will be on line on Zoom webinar on Friday night, July 30 and Saturday, July 31 2021. Co-chairs Vima Couvertier-Cruz and Marian Shearer said they anticipate social gathering, worship and business meeting on Friday and on Saturday the keynote, speakers' presentations, discussion groups and breaks, and a closing panel including all the presenters. Breakout groups may be by continent, racial group or other categories so women in ministry may learn from each other and support each other as we address racism in our ministries. Specific times will be sent to participants later so all can plan to be present for the groups that interest them.

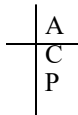
IAWM members and non-members are invited to register. There is no reg-

istration fee, although contributions are welcome. You may register by sending the form in this issue to Carol Brown, treasurer; or electronically through Ticketspice: <https://IAWM.ticketspice.com/IAWM-virtual-assembly>. The Ticketspice link should also be live through our website, www.womenministers.org.

Since the January-March issue of The Woman's Pulpit we have confirmed additional speakers besides Rev. Blackmon and are awaiting confirmation on more speakers from Brazil and India.

Linda E. Thomas, Ph.D., professor of theology and anthropology at the Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, is a Womanist theologian. She is particularly focused on the experience of African-American women and is passionate about uncovering and exploring historical and contemporary experiences that govern actions, policies and norms surrounding race, class and gender.

The Rev. Phyllis Byrd is a global mission partner for the United Church of Christ and Disciples of Christ joint global ministries. She has served and taught in Kenya for many years, and brings the unique perspective of an African-American woman serving in Africa. *(Continued on page 6)*



Official Publication of
 The International Association
 Of Women Ministers
 M. Madeline Southard, Founder
 1877-1967

Vol. 99	April-June 2021	No. 2
---------	-----------------	-------

Editor

LaVonne Althouse
 14 St. Mark Avenue, Lititz, PA 17543
 Revla32@dejazzd.com

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marian P. Shearer
 uccrev77@gmail.com

EXECUTIVE BOARD

PAST PRESIDENT: Marian P. Shearer
 PRESIDENT: J. Dorcas Gordon
 dorcasgordon1@gmail.com
 PAST VICE PRESIDENT: Ofelia Ortega Suarez
 VICE PRESIDENT: Margarethe Galbraith-
 Cordes
 RECORDING SEC.: Cynthia Walton-Leavitt
 cynuff@aya.yale.edu
 TREASURER: Carol S. Brown
 csbrown550@hotmail.com
 ARCHIVIST: To be announced
 VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY CO-CHAIRS:
 Vima Couvertier-Cruz
 Marian Shearer
 NOMINATIONS CHAIR: Jean Henderson,
 jhhh1942@aol.com

MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Vima Couvertier-Cruz Roswitha Golder
 Ella Sonawane Elizabeth Tapia

TRUSTEES

Ellie Johns-Kelley
 Janice Barker-McLaughlin Susan Black

STATUTORY AGENT FOR THE STATE OF
 OHIO: Catherine G. Borchert

REGIONAL CONTACTS

CANADA: J. Dorcas Gordon
 dorcasgordon1@gmail.com
 CUBA: Ofelia Ortega Suárez
 intre@enet.cu, ofeliaortega@gmail.com
 GREAT BRITAIN: To be announced
 HUNGARY: Eszter Karsay
 ekarsay@freemail.hu
 PHILIPPINES: Elizabeth Tapia
 eliztapia5@gmail.com
 SWITZERLAND: Roswitha Golder
 roswitha.golder@bluewin.ch
 IOWA: Mary K. Green
 revmary@iowatelecom.net
 WESTERN PA.: Kimberly Greway
 kimberly.greway@alleghenycounty.us

POSTMASTER: Send form 3579 to The Woman's Pulpit, 1921 Palm Street, Reading, PA 19604.

Published quarterly.

16 Days When Voices Rang Strongly Against Gender-based Violence

As "16 Days Against Gender-based Violence" drew to a close early in December, churches around the world expressed their prayerful determination to keep carrying the message past the annual observance into the new year and beyond. From webinars to prayer services, from formal statements to heartfelt utterances and Thursdays in Black photos on social media, the World Council of Churches family observed this annual campaign from November 25 to December 10, Human Rights Day.

Here are glimpses of what happened from among the many worldwide initiatives:

In Pakistan the Society for Peace and Sustainable Development held a solidarity prayer for victims of rape and violence on December 3 at St. Mary's Church in Pakistan (Multan Diocese), at Muzaffargarg. About 20 men, women and children took part and resolved that, every Thursday, women will gather to discuss, safety, violence and rape happening around them, and have some concrete actions in addition to praying together.

"The most difficult and challenging task was to share, think, discuss and elaborate the violence and rape issue beyond cultural and taboo boundaries," said Rev. Rufus Kamran, executive director of the Society.

The United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa issued a special statement on the 16 Days campaign. "We will challenge all our practices, laws, policies, liturgies—including prayers and the use of pulpits where gender inequity is perpetuated," reads the statement, which contains a list of commitments from that church. "We will promote a culture where all our congregations will be safe havens, places that are overflowing with love, where all are safe and welcomed."

The church both recognizes diversity and pledges not to promote division. "We will always promote cohesion. We are a reconciled community of believers."

An Anglican Communion five-part webinar series covered topics to help people identify signs of domestic abuse, address gender-based violence around the communion; engage men in ending such violence and ways theology engages us and motivates us to act.

Gavin Drake, widower of Jill Saward, who was a committed advocate for victims and survivors of gender-based violence for 30 years, was reminded of her

contribution to this effort. "Her campaign started after she was raped by a gang of burglars in her home, a west London vicarage, in 1966 when she was 21," said Drake. During the attack she prayed to God for strength to survive. Her campaign was her thank you to God for her survival."

When she died in January 2017 many laws in the UK had changed, but, said Drake, "there is much still to do. The Jill Saward Organization continues her campaign and is an advocate for victims and survivors."

World Council of Churches staff and friends prayed and reflected each day under the theme, "From our House to Yours." Bible studies and prayers focused on the impact of sexual and gender-based violence in the contexts of work and ministry.

Questions on which they reflected included "How can communities and churches be places where women find support in their leadership models?" One prayer of intercession read: "Where women and young children cry, 'no, no,' and are unhealed by their oppressors, Come, Holy Spirit, hear us and heal us."

(WCC News)

In This Issue

- IAWM Virtual Assembly 2021, p. 1
- IAWM applies to relate to WCC, p. 1
- England: Bishop for prisons installed, p. 5
- Guatemala: Rights advocate arrested, p. 6
- U.S.: WOC Marks 45th anniversary, p. 3
- Episcopal priest is Georgia senator, p. 3
- Prayer calendar changes, p. 4
- Reparations fund Cannon center, p. 4
- New welcoming Methodist church, p. 5
- U.S. Congress calls woman chaplain, p. 5
- Congregation forms at youth center, p. 7
- WCC: 16 days against gender violence p 2
- News: U.S., p. 7
- News: Europe, Kenya, Liberia, U.S., p. 8

WOC Celebrates 45 Years Of 'Prophetic Persistence'

In its three-day virtual gathering on November 27 to 29, the Roman Catholic Women's Ordination Conference in the United States celebrated 45 years of prophetic leadership working for women's ordination, acceptance of women's leadership in all aspects of the life of the church, and full acceptance of LGBTQ persons as equal partners in worship and leadership.

Founded in 1975, WOC has reached around the world to inspire sister WOCs. The first worldwide Women's Ordination Conference was held in Ireland in 2002.

U.S. WOC's 2020 theme was "Breaking Bread at the Table of Justice: A Celebration of Prophetic Persistence." Opening the first session on Saturday morning, Margaret Farley, who addressed the 1975 conference, restated her three reasons why ordination of women is essential for the church: their leadership, their visibility as representatives of God and their confirmation of women's capacity to stand in the presence of God are needed to demonstrate the full equality of women.

The Rev. Jenifer O'Malley, President of WOC, and her wife, Liz Carlin, welcomed participants to the virtual conference. They pointed to WOC's consultative status at the United Nations which gives it a global voice. WOC director Kate McElwee's welcome included an invitation to visit Saturday afternoon's silent auction. She thanked all who contributed items for sale and noted that proceeds from the auction would be combined with other donations toward the goal of \$45,000 for WOCs work in honor of this 45th anniversary.

In 2020 the National Coalition of American Nuns, the first U.S group to call for ordination of Roman Catholic women, gave WOC the Mary Ellen Trexler award, a giraffe for its courage to stick its neck out for what it believes is women's role in their church.

Speaking among the Prophetic Voices on Saturday morning, Fr. Roy Bourgeois, defrocked for strongly supporting the ordination of Catholic women, described a demonstration at the Vatican when he was inspired by the courage and dedication of four women arrested for that action and detained for four hours.

Miriam Duignan, one of the four women arrested, described her fearful feeling of the police presence and her arrest and, at the same time, her encouraging experience that "wherever we go

we are surrounded by support" for seeking ordination of women.

The strongest voice on Saturday afternoon for Keeping the Dream Alive was Father Luke Hansen, S.J., who analyzed the reasons why the statement by Pope John Paul II in 1994 that women cannot ever be ordained in the Roman Catholic Church cannot be considered infallible. Such a statement, he reminded, must be attested by Scripture, have been consistently taught, in the church, be agreed upon by bishops and be generally accepted by the laity. He pointed out the letter fails on every level: Scripture affirms the equality of men and women before God; there is no consistent affirmation in church history that women cannot lead in the church; the bishops disagree about women's ordination and laity around the world do not reject it—in fact, generally, they endorse it.

Therefore, he told the gathering, your voices need to be heard. This was also affirmed by Erin Seitz Hanna, a former WOC director, Nontando Hadebe and Sr. Martha Ann Kirk.

Among the voices of support who spoke from around the world, Sister Teresa Forcades, OSB, called attention to the fact that the first strong voice for ordination of women was St. Joan's Alliance, formed in England in 1911, which combined calls for ordination of women within that church and, in society, the right for women to vote in English elections. She commended the 45 years of WOC's advocating for women's ordination, affirming her belief that "it will eventually happen."

Lilian Medina Romero and Fr. Tony Flannery, CSSR, added their voices of encouragement and support and We Are Church Ireland thanked WOC for their excellent work over the years and affirmed that "women have a right to a

Episcopal Priest Elected Senator

On November 3 Rev. Kim Larson, a U.S. Episcopal priest in the Diocese of Atlanta, became the first LGBTQ person elected to the Georgia state senate. She won nearly 80 percent of the vote in the race to represent Atlanta's eastern suburbs where she lives with her wife.

It is the fulfillment of a lifelong dream for Jackson, who wanted to be both a pastor and an elected official since she was a girl. She continues to be vicar of the Church of Common Ground, a congregation of homeless and vulnerable people who worship in a park just blocks from Atlanta's Capitol.

She was blown away by the turnout. "About 90% of registered voters turned out in my district and that is unheard of," she said.

She is also the first Black openly LGBTQ priest in the Diocese of Atlanta. Members of her congregation were thrilled to learn news of her election. She was unsure of how the roles of senator and pastor would overlap but confident of her ability to navigate the interwoven roles.

One other Episcopal priest, former U. S. Senator John Danforth, a Missouri Republican, is an Episcopal priest, although he never served a parish.

(Episcopal News Service)

seat at the table."

Saturday ended with an opportunity for participants to visit the display of items members had contributed for auction. In mid-December McElwee announced that proceeds from this auction plus many large generous gifts to honor the 45th anniversary had exceeded the \$45,000 goal.

A moving celebration of Mass on Sunday morning was followed by a virtual conversation among WOC members who had attended the celebration. It was their opportunity to speak about their commitment to the ongoing efforts for women's ordination and their frustrations, hopes and dreams, and to enjoy each other's company. The virtual celebration had gathered thousands of women from across the world in a joyous and triumphant assembly.

—LaVonne Althouse

Cannon Womanist Center To Be Funded by Seminary's Reparations

In mid-December the board of directors of Union Presbyterian Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, approved the creation of a one million dollar endowment fund to recognize and repent the resourcing provided to the seminary through the labor of enslaved persons.

The fund will use proceeds from the development of seminary property known as the Westwood Tract to support the ministry of the seminary's Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership. The center convenes Black women around common issues for wisdom sharing, networking, problem solving and mobilization.

"America was built on the backs of the enslaved and disenfranchised, including Black women and indigenous peoples," said Rev. Melanie C. Jones, the center's director. "The sinful history of chattel slavery in this nation and the Church's complicity demand that the path to social transformation requires repentance, restoration and reparation. Union Presbyterian Seminary bears witness to this tragic past as a theological institution in the seat of the Confederacy and is morally bound to repair the breach."

With the information of the endowment to the center named in honor of the first ordained Black woman in the United Presbyterian Church, Rev. Dr. Katie Geneva Cannon, Jones said Union Presbyterian Seminary is demonstrating a commitment in word and deed to developing womanist leaders for the Church in the world.

"In taking this action the board acknowledged that the seminary has benefitted demonstrably in its resourcing from gifts of finance and land that were tied to the enslaved work of African American women and men," President Brian K. Blount said. "Philanthropist Lewis Ginter, who gave the acreage upon which the seminary

quadrangle sits, was also a Confederate soldier who fought to preserve an identity and economy built on slavery. His wealth derived from such an economic system. It allowed him to gift the seminary, thus bringing the seminary into relationship with not just his resources, but the manner in which he built those resources."

The initiative also recognizes the challenging history of the Westwood Tract, which was formerly owned by Hunter Holmes McGuire, doctor to Major Ginter and Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.

"It seems appropriate that resources gained from the sale of land once owned by Dr. McGuire and gifted to the seminary might resource a center dedicated to the proposition that Dr. McGuire fought against: that all men and women are created equal," Dr. Blount said. "Through its particular focus on African American women, and indeed, all women of color, the Center for Womanist Leadership represents a part of the seminary's dedication to a future that, while lamenting some of the darkest moments of the past, simultaneously aspires to a brighter future."

(Presbyterian Mission News)

Join WCC—

(Continued from page 1)

sion depends on the meeting schedule of the Central Committee. Presently a meeting is scheduled for June 2021. If approved, our working relationship with the WCC will be on a par with organizations such as the Council for World Mission, the World Student Christian Federation, World Federation of Diocesan Associations, Global Fellowship of Christian Youth, United Bible Societies and the World Day of Prayer.

Already the Rev. Nicole Ashwood Program Secretary for the Just Community of Women and Men, has been in contact with me. This area of WCC work recognizes that "just gender relationships are essential for the transforming renewal of church and society." Nicole has added IAWM to her contact list and regularly I receive emails that alert me to events and issues related to this section. My hope is that, once we are approved as an IEO, information on gender and justice will appear regularly on our website.

More information will be available in the October-December issue of *The Woman's Pulpit*.

I believe this step is fully in keeping with our mission, which begins with the words, "IAWM promotes, encourages and celebrates women in ministry." It continues, "Our mission is to:

- Support and develop relationships with our sisters in ministry around the world.
- Provide a forum in which women ministers from all races, nations and cultures can come together.
- Advocate for ordination of women.
- Encourage women who are preparing for Christian ministry.
- Preserve and honor the heritage of women in ministry.

Make These Changes on the Prayer Calendar

New Emails

Favour Ewere Ekpo judeekpo@gmail.com
Patricia Jacobson olga-jac@outlook.com
Shanea Leonard judahfellowshipchurch@gmail.com
Izet Samà Izett.sama@nauta.cu Izett7306@gmail.com

Changes of Address

Carol Miller 2937 S Atlantic Ave Apt 1805 Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32118
Marlis Stoner, 1003 Thompson St Sumner, WA 98390
Margaret Thomas 900 Old Lexington Ave. S #502 St. Paul, MN55116-4412

Additions June 10-16:

Carla Williamson 630 Henderson St Mt. Olive, NC 29365 cwilliamson@umo.edu
OFW BAPT

**Assembly XI of the WCC
Will meet in Karlsruhe, Germany
August 29-September 8, 2022.**

**IAWM will meet in Assembly
At Bethany Retreat House
Outside Karlsruhe
Preceding the WCC Assembly.**

**Watch for details
In future issues.**

Progressive Methodist Church Launched on Advent Sunday

On Advent Sunday, November 29, a group of progressive U. S. United Methodists and other Christians launched a new denomination named The Liberation Methodist Connexion or LMX. It aims to center on the voices of people of color as well as queer and transgender persons those organizers see as marginalized in the United Methodist Church.

Launched with an online worship service, presentation and after-party the gathering had more than 400 registrants. Technical difficulties prevented some registrants from logging on.

The new Connexion is getting off the ground after decades of intensifying debate within the United Methodist Church about how inclusive to be of LGBTQ Christians. At the General Conference planned for May 2020 United Methodists expected to take up a proposal to resolve the dispute over same-sex marriage and gay ordination through a formal denominational separation. However, coronavirus-related shutdowns postponed the law-making assembly, which is now scheduled for August 29-September 7, 2021.

The new denomination's organizers, a number of whom are LGBTQ, said they felt called to act now. The Rev. Althea Spencer-Miller, a New Testa-

ment professor at Drew Theological School, said, "The timeline of the Holy Spirit is driving our decision to launch the LMX at this moment and we are following the call."

She and others declined to say how many congregations or people are part of the new denomination. Among the collaborators are both UM pastors and lay people, including at least three church leaders elected to be General Conference delegates or reserve delegates.

The Wesleyan Covenant, being a group on the traditionalist end of the theological spectrum, also has plans to start a new denomination, separate from the United Methodist Church. Its leadership includes General Conference delegates and already has drafted its own Book of Doctrines and Disciplines. (United Methodist News)

First Woman Chaplain Called to Serve U. S. House of Representatives

On December 30 Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi announced that a long-time military officer had been named the new chaplain of the House. Rear Admiral Margaret Grun Kibben is the first woman to serve as chaplain for either chamber of the U.S. Congress, according to Pelosi.

Kibben, an ordained Presbyterian Church (USA) minister, had previously served as the U.S. Navy's chief chaplain and chaplain of the Marine Corps. "The integrity, experience and patriotism will serve the Congress and the country well, as she ministers to the needs of members," said Pelosi.

In a 2018 address to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (USA) Kibben said that military chaplains can serve as a moral compass for senior military leaders. Chaplains, she said, also serve young people who have left their home churches to serve their country, as well as people who have no religious ties. "Many men and women we deal with have never darkened the

door of a church, a mosque or a synagogue," Kibben said.

In the 2018 address, she also encouraged clergy to serve as chaplains. "If there is any dissonance there, forgive me, but I think about it very deeply," she said. "Christ calls us to serve with the people who need it most."

Kibben, who holds graduate degrees from Princeton Theological Seminary and the Navy War College, joined the Navy in 1986 through the Navy's Theological Student Program.

Her service as a chaplain for both the Navy and Marine Corps, included a stint as senior chaplain in Afghanistan. (Presbyterian Mission News)

Install Bishop for Prisons, Deputy Chaplain General

The Anglican Bishop of Gloucester, Rachel Tweweek, was commissioned as Bishop for Prisons, and Rev. Helen Dearnley was licensed Deputy Chaplain General of Prisons on December 18. The commissioning took place during a service of evening prayer conducted from Lambeth Palace crypt chapel.

With participants from both the Church of England and the Church of Wales tuning in via Zoom to welcome the installation, the service included prayers of Bishop Rachel and Rev. Helen read by the Archbishops of Canterbury, York and Wales.

Rev. Helen, who is Anglican Chaplaincy Adviser for Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, said, "My role is to equip and support all Anglican Prison Chaplains, to pray for all those who work and live in prison, to support the Through the Gate provision for those released from custody and to be a link between the Church of England, Church of Wales and Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service."

"It is a real privilege and joy to have the Anglican Churches' endorsement of the ministry I share with all Anglican Prison Chaplains across England and Wales."

Bishop Rachel has campaigned on criminal justice issues, including domestic violence, sentencing reform and the treatment of women in the justice system. In recent years she has worked with her predecessor, Bishop James Langstaff, as bishop to the women's prison estate.

Bishop Rachel said, "I would like to pay tribute to Bishop James, not only for his advocacy and detailed knowledge of criminal justice, but for his steadfast support and care for chaplains and charities working in the Service."

"Our prisons and chaplains encounter people at the most critical moment of their lives. Their work can transform lives, not just for individuals but for whole communities. It is an honor to be appointed as Bishop of Prisons"

(Episcopal News Service)

Human Rights Advocate Freed in Guatemala

In December two young women sought refuge at the home of the Rev. Delia Adelina Leal Mollinedo, a Guatemala human rights advocate. Their living situation was so precarious they felt unsafe. They had stayed with her before when things were uncertain.

Days later, the Guatemalan National Civil Police, in the municipality of Coban, using a warrant that didn't even include her name, arrested Leal and charged her with

kidnapping, child trafficking and obstruction of an investigation. Although Article 9 in Guatemala's constitution says a hearing must be held within 24 hours of an arrest once she gave a statement, Leal was in custody with no further court appearance.

On January 11 she appeared in court for a hearing postponed from December 30. Members of CEDEPCA, and other supporters demonstrated peacefully outside the courthouse. In the end the initial very serious charges were reduced to minor charges. In custody for almost two weeks, she was released to house arrest. A new hearing is scheduled for May.

"Delia demonstrated grace under pressure and a stronger commitment than ever to work for God's love, peace and justice, especially on behalf of and for the empowerment of women and children," said World Mission regional associate Leslie Vogel, referring to a media interview with Delia and her attorney on January 12.

Since 2007 Leal has served as regional coordinator for global partner CEDEPCA (the Protestant Center for Pastoral Studies in Central America). A Nazarene and Baptist pastor in Coban, she has committed her life to promoting sexual and reproductive health for women from indigenous communities of the Q'eqchi Poqomchi' region of Guatemala.

"Women in Central America and Mexico live in a patriarchal, violent and oppressive system at all socioeconomic levels," said Judith Castahada, CEDEPCA director. "Central America is fragile and Guatemala is one of the most vulnerable countries."

In 2000 90,565 Guatemalan women and girls 19 and under became pregnant, many as a result of rape. CEDEPCA works to empower girls in new ways. Alta Verapaz (Coban is the

capital city) has one of the highest levels of pregnancies in teens and girls, 11,103. That compares to the department where half the country's population lives, Guatemala City which had 8,507 pregnant teens and girls in 2020.

One CEDEPCA course on healthy relationships called "It's Marvelous to Be a Woman" teaches girls and young women that they, like boys, are created in the image and likeness of God. That, unfortunately, is a new concept for women and girls. They are taught that men were created in God's image and women from a man's rib.

In the days following her arrest, Leal became the victim of smear campaigns and public stigmatization in local, national and social media. News of the case has been filled with inaccurate information which has only contributed to an atmosphere of stigmatization around the case.

Front Line Defenders, founded in Dublin, which provides rapid and practical support for at-risk human rights defenders, said Leal's detention and fabricated charges appear to be directly targeted at her work defending human rights, especially children's and women's rights and asked that every measure be taken to guarantee her safety and integrity.

The Vasquez-Leal-Mollinedo family issued a statement saying that their confidence since the beginning of the process is placed in God.

"Delia, our Linita, strong woman, valiant and full of the courage needed to confront the situation without losing her essence," the family said. "We are very aware that justice has its procedures, which we respect, hoping in and waiting for a favorable resolution, as we know is appropriate."

(Presbyterian Mission News)

Virtual Assembly--

(Continued from page 1)

The Rev. Dr. Monica Tyotsna Melanchthon is associate professor of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament at Pilgrim Theological College, University of Divinity, in Victoria, Australia. She is an ordained pastor in the Andhra Evangelical Lutheran Church of India, a Hebrew scholar and a post-colonial thinker, with a theological commitment to examine gender and caste.

These three join our previously confirmed panelists, **Dr. Nora Arsenian Carmi**, who brings her Armenian perspective and her lifetime of work with the YWCA of Palestine, Sabeel and Kairos Palestine; **the Rev. Dora Arce-Valentin** of Cuba, a Presbyterian pastor and officer of the World Communion of Reformed Churches, and **Dr. Lori Ransom** of the First Nations of Canada, an ordained Presbyterian elder and scholar specializing in indigenous and northern affairs in Canada.

IAWM members are invited not only to register, but invite others to do so. Look in your email for a flyer you can forward to friends or use this newsletter.

"This is a new endeavor for us," said planners Couvertier-Cruz and Shearer. "We will be spreading the word on social media and the IAWM website, and we hope to livestream the conference on Facebook or another platform and record at least portions of it."

'Homeless Jesus' Depicts Gospel

In Wildwood, New Jersey this summer a seven-foot bronze sculpture depicting a homeless man sleeping on a park bench will greet beachgoers, one of about a hundred greeting people around the world, including at the Vatican in Rome. The New Jersey one was commissioned the Rev. Kate Aaronson who serves North Wildwood United Methodist Church. Having seen another while visiting in Spain, she led the congregation to commission Canadian sculptor Timothy Schmalz to create this replica.

The face and body are concealed under a blanket. The identifying marks on the feet reveal who he is. A Homeless Jesus Fund created to accompany the statue receives gifts to feed the hungry.

Registration Form

Virtual IAWM Assembly, July 30- 31, 2021

Last Name _____ First _____ Middle _____

and Street _____ City _____

State/Prov. _____ Zip/PC _____ Country _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Registration donation _____ I will attend sessions on July 30 ____ July 31 ____

Send check or money order for registration donation, made payable to IAWM, with this form to: Carol Brown, 1921 Palm St. Reading, PA 19604. Registration deadline is July 15. Any questions, contact Carol at 484-926-2429 or email csbrown550@hotmail.com. To register at Ticketspice: <https://IAWM.ticketspice.com/iawm-virtual-assembly>.

'Voices of Jubilee' Inspires, Encourages Youth, Grows into Worshipping Community

In the fall of 2018, reports Kathy Hope to Presbyterian Mission News, youth at Bon Air Juvenile Correction Center in Chesterfield County, Virginia, U.S.A. asked to start a gospel choir. The request reached the Rev. Lauren Ramsuer and the Rev. Ashley Diaz Mejas who, along with friends, collaborated to support the initiative. Ramsuer and Mejas soon discovered that they were "doing church" - gathering twice a month at the correctional center for a community of worship. The group

itself the Voices of Jubilee.

Volunteers of the Voices of Jubilee provide pastoral care to members of the youth choir through letter writing, community conversations and visits. They seek mentors for returning citizens who share their stories and inspire hope among the incarcerated youth.

Incarceration is a national crisis, said Ramsuer. "We support our folks who are being impacted by a system of racialized violence."

At the 2020 meeting of the Presbytery of the James the voices of the Jubilee Choir became a worshipping community. Bon Air Presbyterian Church, where Ramsuer is a pastor for children, youth and families, is the congregational partner of the Voices of Jubilee. Presbytery of the James also ap-

proved Mejas as the worshipping community's co-pastor with Ramsuer ordaining Mejas in October and dedicating financial resources for the voices of Jubilee through 2024.

Support during Covid-19

In March Ramsuer and Mejas learned that a youth resident and two employees had been diagnosed with Covid-19. Facilities administrators requested help in providing masks for staff and youth. Voices of Jubilee put out a call to volunteers friends and congregations. Within five days they had delivered 550 masks.

Soon after they heard a similar need at other facilities in Richmond. Through

Through a fundraiser they collected \$1,700 in one day. Voices of Jubilee purchased 1,300 masks for the Richmond City Jail and the Richmond Juvenile Detention Center.

During the pandemic Bon Air youth have been confined to their units. Classes and activities (including the Voices of Jubilee gatherings) were canceled. With these young men and women in their hearts, Voices of Jubilee volunteers created 170 Care packages for the youth, each including a journal, a puzzle book, a pair socks and a letter of encouragement.

In Other News

The Rt. Rev. Diana D. Akiyama was installed and consecrated the eleventh bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon on January 30 at Trinity Cathedral in Portland. She was the first Japanese -American woman ordained to the Episcopal priesthood and is the first Asian-American woman consecrated a bishop in the Episcopal Church.

IAWM member **Rev. Bonnie Thurston** of Wheeling, West Virginia's latest book is *Shaped by the End You Live for: Thomas Merton's Monastic Spirituality*, from Liturgical Press.

In the News

Europe

During a virtual meeting last year in November the Norway Conference of the United Methodist Church made plans to issue a public apology to LGBTQ people as part of an ongoing process leading to full inclusion. It would be the first church in Norway to issue such an apology.

The executive committee of the United Methodist Church in Germany agreed to be more open on matters related to human sexuality while creating a "Community Covenant" aimed at accommodating those members and congregations from a more traditional, conservative perspective. Meeting November 20-21, they accepted by an "overwhelming majority" a proposal which suspends negative and restrictive passages of the German version of the Book of Discipline related to homosexuality, including the ban on same-sex weddings, while insuring the pastors and churches from the conservative wing of the German church are "not required to act against their own conscience."

Kenya

The second woman to be ordained a

priest in the Anglican Church of Kenya, **Canon Emily Awino Onyango**, has been appointed to serve as assistant bishop in the Diocese of Bondo. In so doing, she becomes the first female Anglican bishop in east and central Africa.

Liberia

In partnership with the Asbury United Methodist church in Smyrna, Delaware, USA, the United Methodist Church in Liberia has launched a computer training program. "Depending on how best we will use this facility, our partners have committed themselves to funding more development in training initiatives," Bishop Samuel J. Quire Jr. told United Methodists who gathered at the dedication.

He said the center would serve all Liberians whether they are Christians or not and urged all Liberians, especially young people, to take advantage of the opportunity to enhance their computer knowledge.

United States

IAWM member and past president **Rev. Dr. Jean Henderson** will celebrate her 50th anniversary of ordination

in April. She has also served multiple years in the offices of recording secretary and nominating committee chair.

Episcopal **Rev. Paula E. Clark** was elected the 13th Bishop of Chicago, the first woman of color to hold that office, on December 12.

The Rev. Sujin Pak, formerly vice dean at Duke University Divinity School, has been named dean of the School of Theology, the oldest United Methodist seminary in the U.S. She succeeds the Rev. Mary Elizabeth Moore, its first woman dean, who served there for 12 years.

Ruth Ann Boykin has been appointed associate director of the Metro Urban Institute at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. She began work December 1.

Dr. Sandra Monts is the new Dean of Chapel at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. She has served as interim dean since August 2020.

(Sources: United Methodist News, Anglican Communion News Service, Episcopal News Service, Presbyterian Mission News, and correspondence.)