

The Woman's Pulpit

July-September
2023

NEWS ABOUT ORDAINED AND LAY WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

US Southern Baptist Convention Dismisses Churches, Adds Language Restricting Women Ministers

Several churches with women pastors had already been "disfellowshipped."

This journal reported in our last issue that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, had removed five churches from its fellowship because they have women serving as pastors.

Two of those churches appealed the ruling, and thus the whole convention voted on their expulsion at the SBC assembly in June in New Orleans.

Saddleback Church in California, and Fern Creek Church in Kentucky, were formally voted out, despite that women had been pastors in each for up to 30 years.

"After overwhelmingly voting to finalize the expulsion. . . ." reported the New York Times, "Southern Baptists voted to further expand restrictions on women in church leadership, potentially opening up hundreds of new churches to investigation and expulsion."

Delegates approved an amendment to their constitution that says churches must have "only men as any kind of pastor or elder as qualified by scripture." The amendment must be passed again next year to go into effect.

The Rev. Linda Barnes Popham, pastor of the Fern Creek

Baptist Church, said the volume of opposition was hard to take in. The votes were around 90 per cent against both churches.

"This signals a decline for Southern Baptists," she said. "I believe they are going to discourage so many women from ministry that women and their families will find other places to serve. There are such talented women out there, who obviously God has called."

From The NY Times report by Ruth Graham and Elizabeth Diaz, June 14, 2023

**Save the dates!
IAWM International
Assembly
June 4-8, 2024
Puerto Rico**

**Holy Solidarity:
Embracing Hope**

**Location and Speakers to
be announced next issue.**

**See page 3 to get on the
"I'm Interested" list!**

***"A group of women pastors sharing the sacrament in an Orthodox space, surrounded by icons."
Western Pennsylvania IAWM chapter met in retreat in April, and with Jewish women in June; see page 3.***





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Updates for Prayer Calendar

Can you help find new emails for
these members?

Seforosa Carroll
Donna Giver Johnston
Mercy Kalajja
Norma Prina Murphy
Tega Swann

Deceased Members

Jane Duffield
Valerie Parsons

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Ann Rogers-Brigham
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Bonnie Thurston blbthurston@gmail.com

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From your IAWM Officers: Travel Funds Needed

Your executive committee has set up
a task force to plan for the assembly to
be held June 4-8, 2024, in Puerto Rico.
To ensure a meaningful and hope-filled
assembly, we are asking each of you, as
you are able, to consider contributing
either to IAWM's **Scholarship Fund** or
to **general Assembly costs**.

Through such donations IAWM will
be able to expand the number of
scholarships available for our
international members, and possibly
reduce the overall costs for everyone, so
more women with limited means can
attend in person. Email Carol Brown at
csbrown550@hotmail.com for PayPal
access.

Would you like to become a Prayer Calendar Communicator?

We are looking for a few folks to
write to our IAWM members
(mostly email) during the week they
are on the prayer calendar. Carol
Brown has instructions and
assignments; connect with her at
csbrown550@hotmail.com.

Prayer Calendar additions: July 8-15

Nyomera Sausia Mukono 0412
Uganda nyomerasausihyagmail.com

September 17-23

Margaret Wheeler 701 Martin Luther
King Drive Franklinton, LA USA
70438 wdm.jesus@gmail.com
NON-DENOM

October 1-7

Mary Amunga Pamela
50200-1904 Bungoma, Kenya
amungamary@yahoo.com PENT

December 24-31

Esther DeWitt 1678 Boulder Creek
Oceanside, Ca 92056 USA
bookofesther@gmail.com

Mary Michael Leahy
8 Leonard Ave #2
Cambridge, MA 02139 USA
newseeds28@gmail.com RCWP

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Remembering: Jane Duffield

Second-career minister and former news bureau manager, the Rev. Jane Duffield of Pittsburgh, PA, USA, died March 21 at the age of 71.

“For thirty years,” her newspaper obituary reported, “she was the director of the News Bureau for the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) serving as the organization’s chief spokesperson and crisis communications manager.” She retired from UPMC in 2006 at age 55 to enroll in Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

While at Union she taught a course on media relations and was the seminary’s media relations consultant. She did field education at the Vatican in Rome, the National Council of Churches in New York City, and West End Presbyterian Church in NYC.

She was ordained by the National Capital Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. in 2011. She served as interim minister in several churches in Chevy Chase and Pittsburgh. Jane traveled extensively and enjoyed spending summers at Chautauqua Institution in upstate New York.

Jane had earned the B.A. from Denison University in 1973 and Master of Social Work from West Virginia U. in 1975.

She was predeceased by her parents; she is survived by her sister, Nancy Vernon, and brother-in law, Rick Vernon, and nieces and nephews.

IAWM’s Renewed Website Is Live!
www.womenministers.org

Check out photos, history, back issues of the Pulpit, and more.

Western PA Chapter Celebrates Spiritual Practices and Jewish Colleagues

Twenty women, about half long-time members and half new, gathered in April to explore spiritual practices that “help ground us as leaders in the midst of this post-pandemic ‘new normal.’”

“We had a lovely retreat April 20-21 at Antiochan Village in Bolivar, Pennsylvania,” reported chapter member Liddy Barlow.

They were led by United Church of Christ pastor and spiritual director Rev. Meredith Hutchison, who is affiliated with the West Virginia Institute for Spirituality.

“We closed with communion together in the chapel,” Barlow said. “A group of women pastors sharing the sacrament in an Orthodox space, surrounded by icons.”

Then on June 1 they co-hosted “A Celebration of Women’s Ordination,” gathering with Jewish colleagues to mark the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women in Reform Judaism.

“It was so exciting to gather with the ordained Jewish women, both rabbis and cantors, from our area; this was the first time we have ever met together,” said Barlow. The Jewish women led in an opening prayer service; then there was a time of short presentations on women in our scriptures, the history of women’s ordination in our traditions, and hearing personal stories, with conversation around our tables. Before lunch, we had a time of storytelling about the wildest stories of being ordained women, and the trophy for the best story was awarded to the Rev. Dr. Jean Henderson.

They also collected professional clothing for women entering the workforce and donated it to Dress for Success, which provides clothing to women entering the workforce from challenging circumstances.

They are excited to gather again, Barlow reported. And there was an article about the meeting in the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle.



The Rev. Jean Henderson with her trophy for the “wildest” story of being an ordained woman.

**Interested in the next
IAWM International
Assembly in
Puerto Rico, June 4-8,
2024?**

If you think you might attend, get on the pre-registration list so we can estimate how much housing may be needed.

Email Carol Brown at csbrown550@hotmail.com
(Some of the meeting will also be on line.)

Remembering: Valerie Parsons

The Rev. Valerie Lynn Parsons, of Wheeling, West Virginia USA, died in May 2022 at WVU Medicine Wheeling Hospital. She was 59. The news of her death did not come to IAWM until April 2023.

She was born in Washington, PA, and was a former teacher with the Switzerland of Ohio School District and a minister at the Island Christian Church, Disciples of Christ.

She served on the WV Disciples Women's Cabinet, was a member of the Tuesday Morning Pastors Study Group, and a founding member of the Wheeling St. Baldrick's Day event. She was described as a pastor, author, teacher, workshop leader, singer, actress, model and spokesmodel.

She is survived by her husband of 32 years, David Parsons; daughters Elissabeth and Amber; brothers and sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews.

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Unitarian Universalists in the US Elect First Woman of Color as President

"A womanist theologian, ethicist and minister was installed as the 10th president of the (USA) Unitarian Universalist Association," reported the Religion News Service June 25.

The Rev. Dr. Sofia Betancourt has been a national leader in the UUA for more than two decades. She is both the first openly queer person and the first woman of color to lead the faith tradition, and will serve a six-year term. She earned her doctorate in religious ethics and African-American studies at Yale University. (From Religion News Service, June 25, 2023)

Remembering: Agnes Abuom

Dr. Agnes Abuom completed her time as moderator of the World Council of Churches when it met in international assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 2022.

She then moved on to become a lay canon in the Episcopal Church of her native Kenya. "There were seven of us (whom the archbishop called)," she said. "I was the only lay woman, and I see this as a new chapter in my journey."

But that new chapter was cut short when Abuom died of heart failure May 31, at age 73.

Abuom was elected to the post of moderator in 2013 at the international assembly in Busan, Korea. She was the first African and the first woman to hold the position. She had been part of the ecumenical movement for nearly 50 years, and was president of the World Council board before she became moderator of the central committee.

At her memorial service June 13 at Anglican All Saints' Cathedral in Nairobi, Kenya, her daughter Tabitha Chepkwony said, "One thing that will forever stand out for me. . . is, even on your death bed, you still praised God and thanked Him for his goodness in your life. Your life is a testimony, Mama."

WCC general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr. Jerry Pillay told the

mourners, "Dr. Agnes sought to live her ecumenical commitment through a lifetime of dedicated service. We. . . have so benefitted at every level from her decades of ecumenical engagement."

Abuom, Pillay said, was a peace pilgrim first to last, a true African and a citizen of the world. "Agnes showed us how Christian engagement, marked by love, can yield global transformational change."

Leaders in the ecumenical community remembered her compassion, her spirit and her deep faith that informed everything she did. Leaders of faith communities in Romania, Antioch, Germany, Sweden, Italy, Africa and more gave testimonies to her hard work and peacemaking ability.

She is survived by her daughters Tabitha and Neema.

From World Council of Churches weekly update, June 15, 2023

Remembering: Janet Somerville

The World Council of Churches noted the death April 16 of **Janet Somerville**, former general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches (1997-2002).

Somerville was the first woman and the first Roman Catholic general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches. The WCC reported that she was known for her attentive listening, her elegant way with words, her personal journalistic storytelling, and her genuine passion for justice.

She was the first producer of CBC Radio's "Ideas" and associate editor of the independent faith and justice-oriented newspaper Catholic New Times.

A funeral mass was held April 22 at Our Lady of Lourdes in Toronto, Canada.

From WCC weekly update, April 20, 2023

IAWM Members from Around the World Are Published in 2023

In Cuba, in Korea, in Africa and beyond, IAWM members have seen their work in publication this year.

Cuba: Rev. Dr. Ofelia Ortega and Moraima Gonzales Ortiz

Jeremias: Profetiza La Esperanza En Tiempos de Crisis, a monograph under the auspices of the Institute of Gender Studies at the Evangelical Seminary in Matanzas, Cuba, comes from past IAWM president Dra. Ofelia Miriam Ortega and colleague Lic. Moraima Gonzalez Ortiz. Ofelia wrote:

Dear colleagues, greetings and affection. We send you the material written by the advisory team of the Instituto Cristiano de Estudios sobre Genero, ICEG, on the work and life of the prophet Jeremiah and comments on his inspiring words of hope. (Jer. 29:11, NRSV, “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.”)

IAWM congratulates Ofelia and Moraima, director and editor respectively, on this fine accomplishment; and we congratulate **Moraima Gonzalez on her retirement** from the seminary administration, after many years of managing the school and welcoming international guests.

Korea: Dr. Eunha Kim, IAWM member from the Presbyterian Church of Korea, published her dissertation called The Formation of the World Council of Churches and the Contribution of Ecumenical Women Pioneers to it.

Throughout history, Kim said, women have been pioneering creative ministry, forming women’s communities and contributing to the formation, development and growth of the church. However, once the church was stabilized, the women’s community was absorbed by the male dominated church, re-alienating women when the women’s separate boards were integrated into the whole community.

“This dissertation argues that women’s participation in the church has not been active because the women’s community repeated the cycle” of pioneering ministries particular to women, then changing into a whole committee and reducing the particularity of women’s ministries. Nevertheless, she said, women were pioneers in the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century, and she names several: the women who were the majority of missionaries at the 1910 World Missionary conference in Edinburgh; Madeline Barot during World War II, paving the way for the church’s social ministry; Kathleen Bliss who developed a theology of the laity in the Evanston General Assembly of the World Council in 1955; and more.

Geneva: Rev. Dr. Nyambura Njoroge, former World Council of Churches staff member, has written In Remembrance of HER, a new book on the dignity, freedom, selfhood and opportunities to grow in faith against the many odds faced by women. Proceeds will be in aid of Lois and Eunice Theological Scholarship Fund for Women at St. Paul’s University, Limuru, Kenya. Available in e-book or hardcopy from Amazon.de/Remembrance/HER/English-Nyambura-Njoroge-ebooks/dp/BOBYSR8882.

(From Correspondence and WCC on line updates)

Roman Catholic Women’s Ordinations

4 June 2023: **Eileen Mary Mathy**, at First Presbyterian Church of Urbana, Illinois USA.

Deacons **Suzanne Knapp and Adina Meyer**; Incardinated priest **Amina Wolf**; Northern California USA.

24 June 2023: **Carmella (Cookie) Cicirelli**, at Celebration Lutheran Church, Westland, Michigan USA

From June 2023 RCWP Calendar and News Notes, via IAWM member Mary Michael Leahy

Remembering:

Ruth M. Fitzpatrick

The woman who fought to ordain female Roman Catholic priests died June 15, age 90, in Virginia. She was longtime coordinator of the Women’s Ordination Conference, initially run from her dining room table. “We will not accept men telling women they can’t be priests because that’s the way God wants it,” she once said. “She does not!” Ms. Fitzpatrick traveled the world on behalf of the Women’s Ordination Conference; in 1992 she led a trip to the Czech Republic in search of Ludmila Janorova, a woman ordained in the underground Catholic church. Her long career of activism included an all-night vigil outside the hotel where Pope John Paul II was staying in Washington.

She was predeceased by her husband in 2017; she is survived by three children and six grandchildren. *(From the Washington Post obituary by Michael S. Rosenwald)*

IAWM Archivist Asks for Material

**The Rev. Dr. Ann M.
Rogers Brigham is new
archivist**

Dear Women in Ministry,

We are glad to collect your items for our IAWM archives when you have a treasured picture, article, program or the like that you feel should be preserved.

Our IAWM leadership team will be learning more about what is appropriate for submission to our IAWM collection at **The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary**, New York City.

For many years our archivist **Jean Henderson** of Pittsburgh kept the records. The Burke Library has complete issues of *The Woman's Pulpit* for many years, and other records.

I will be working with **Cynthia Walton-Leavitt** on assessing what we have and what we need to add to the archives.

Please address questions or send material to us at:

amrogersbrigham@gmail.com

Rev. Dr. Rogers Brigham, interim pastor, Old Steeple Community Church, United Church of Christ, 656 Main Street, P.O. Box 154, Aquebogue, NY USA 11931.

Cynthia Walton-Leavitt, IAWM Secretary: cynuff@stny.rr.com

Can Ecumenism Survive Some Orthodox Churches' Resistance to Ordained Women?

*Excerpts from an editorial by
Anna Piela in Religion News
Service, on line, April 13, 2023*

In January, at an ecumenical prayer service in Warsaw for International Holocaust Remembrance Day, a recently ordained Lutheran priest, the Rev. Wiktor Matloch, was asked to leave the event because priests of the Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church refused to pray with her, saying the rules of their church forbade female ordination.

Afterward, Bishop Jerzy Samiec, head of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland, criticized Matloch's exclusion, as did some other media outlets.

The Shalom Foundation, which organized the event, wrote on its website: "Collaborative ecumenical prayer, in which Catholic priests and representatives of other denominations participated that day, was a very important part that highlighted the spiritual aspect of this event."

There is a difference between enforcing denominational policies and regulating public interactions among clergy of various backgrounds. *If Christian ecumenism is to thrive globally, as nearly every major church body insists it should, women priests must be tolerated, if not welcomed, part of the modern religious landscape.* (Emphasis mine—Ed.)

Other Women Ministers in the News

Bishops Sandra Steiner-Ball and Cynthia Moore-Koikoi are bishops in the United Methodist Church and co-bishops of the Susquehanna Conference in central Pennsylvania, USA. Both women were featured in an opinion column by Joyce M. Davis in Penn Live Patriot News, an online news outlet, under the headline "Some women of faith have cracked the stained glass ceiling, but not all."

Moore-Koikoi, an IAWM member, has been a bishop in western Pennsylvania since 2016. Her background includes school psychology. She is known for her spiritual role during another time of tensions, after the death of Freddie Gray in police custody in 2015. She persuaded churches to open their doors to children and families whose schools were closed during the racial unrest. She also led volunteers in red T-shirts through neighborhoods to reach out to families in need. The women are helping to lead their church during a critical time, when some are leaving the United Methodist Church over fears it is becoming more open to LGBTQ+ and diverse peoples.

The article also featured Rabbi Ariana Captauber of Harrisburg, Bishop Audrey Scanlan of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, and the Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak of the Pittsburgh Episcopal Diocese.

The editor salutes Ms. Davis for profiling the ordained women in her territory!

Poetry Page

(The editor would like to publish poetry and liturgy from our readers. Please send your submissions to Marian at uccrev77@gmail.com. They must be works not already published in other copyright materials, or include permission.)

A Call to Worship for A Pastor's Installation

Alpha, you are our beginning.
Omega, you are without ending.

You companion us through the turning of every season.

We gather at your invitation in worship and praise
To celebrate this new season of mutual ministry.

Strengthen us to serve your people with love and justice.
Open our hearts in trust as we listen for your word and will.
And bless the covenants we make this day with you and one another.
Amen.

By The Rev. Sonja Ingebritsen, as she was installed as pastor and teacher of Glenside United Church of Christ, Philadelphia, PA, USA, April 30.

God of the Women

A Hymn by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette, 1998 Slane 10.10.9.10 ("Be Thou My Vision")

God of the women who answered your call,
Trusting your promises, giving their all,
Women like Sarah and Hannah and Ruth—
Give us their courage to live in your truth.

God of the women who walked Jesus' Way
Giving their resources, learning to pray,
Mary, Joanna, Susanna and more—
May we give freely as they did before.

God of the women long put to the test,
Left out of stories, forgotten, oppressed,
Quietly asking, "Who smiled at my birth?"—
In Jesus' dying you show us your worth.

God of the women who ran from the tomb,
Prayed with the others in that upper room,
Then felt your Spirit on Pentecost day—
May we so gladly proclaim you today.

O God of Phoebe and ministers all,
May we be joyful in answering your call.
Give us the strength of your Spirit so near
That we may share in your ministry here.

Text: Copyright c 1998 by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette. All Rights Reserved. **Used by Permission.**
From *Gifts of Love: New Hymns for Today's Worship* by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette (Geneva Press, 2000)
To use in worship, email carolynshymns@gmail.com New Hymns: www.carolynshymns.com

The International Association of Women Ministers
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Periodicals Rate

In the News

Rev. Dr. Cathleen Narowitz was given the 2022 Distinguished Alumni/ae Award by Colgate Rochester Crozer Theological Seminary, Rochester, New York USA. She graduated from Crozer in 1957, when it was still a separate school, as the only woman in her class and the only woman in the entire seminary. Narowitz went on to serve 26 interim ministry positions in American Baptist churches. She turns 90 in September..

The Rev. Cheryl Barnes has been named Africa Area Coordinator in the Presbyterian Mission Agency's World Mission ministry. She has been a mission co-worker serving in Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, and an educator with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian general assembly. She began her new role in June.

Propstin (Provost) Astrid Kleist has been appointed General Secretary of the German National Committee of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). She will begin in

2024. Kleist has been senior pastor since 2013 at the church of St. Jacobi in Hamburg, and Propstin in the East Hamburg district of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Northern Germany. She is currently a vice president of the LWF. (*from the LWF weekly news, June 16*)

The Rev. Ann S. Coburn has been named the recipient of the Cotton Fite Award from the Episcopal Peace Fellowship Palestine Israel Network. Coburn was ordained in 1977, among the first Episcopal women priests, and has been a leader in focusing on the struggle of Palestinians for freedom and human dignity, leading at least a dozen teams on Holy Land journeys. (*Episcopal News Service*)

The Rev. Romella Robinson represented the Presbyterian Church of Pakistan, in which she is the first ordained woman, at the Asian

Church Ecumenical Leaders Conference May 1 and 2 in Jakarta, and attended the Bossey Institute's online course in ecumenism in June. The course was "Together Towards Unity: Being Church in a Fragmented World."

Dr. Ani Ghazaryan Drissi, programme executive for the World Council of Church's Faith and Order department, delivered a reflection on Red Sunday, April 24, commemorating Genocide Remembrance Day. She noted that 1.5 million were victims of the Armenian genocide in 1915. "Let us hold those who would commit genocide to account," she said, "even if it takes a lifetime."

The Rev. Dr. Jean Hawxhurst of the United Methodist Church will serve as president of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC), USA, for the next three years.

(*From denominational newsletters and correspondence*)