

# The Woman's Pulpit

October-  
December 2024

NEWS ABOUT ORDAINED AND LAY WOMEN IN MINISTRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD

## Roman Catholic Woman Bishop Patricia Fresen Remembered

The international movement of Roman Catholic Women Priests sadly noted the death of Bishop Patricia Fresen on September 3, 2024. Dr. Patricia Fresen was born on 7 December 1940, in East London, South Africa.

For several years she resided in Stuttgart, Germany but had in recent years moved back to Johannesburg, South Africa.

Not only was she recognized for her prophetic role on behalf of women's ordination in the Catholic Church, but also because as a young Dominican sister and school principal, she took a stand against apartheid, which led to her arrest and imprisonment in her native homeland of South Africa.

Dr. Fresen studied theology in Rome at the University of St. Thomas and the Gregorian, and following the completion of her Doctorate in Theology, taught at the St. John Vianney Seminary and the Catholic University of St. Augustine, both in South Africa. During those years, a *hunger* quietly grew in her to serve the Roman Catholic Church as an ordained priest. Believing that she would not witness the ordination of women in her lifetime, she determined to further women's rights in the church, including ordination.

In 2002 Patricia read about seven women who were ordained on the Danube River; and shortly thereafter, in 2003, she attended the European Women's Synod gathering in Barcelona, Spain, where she met Gisela Forster and Christine Mayr-Lumetzberger (two women of the original Danube 7 who had been

consecrated bishops) and they ordained Patricia a priest.

As a result of this ordination, Patricia was forced to leave her Dominican Order in South Africa, of which she had been a member for 45 years.

Patricia resettled in Germany, and was ordained a bishop on 2 January 2005 by the presiding male Bishop X (who remains confidential) for the express purpose of ordaining women in English speaking countries. As bishop she directed the international Roman Catholic Women Priest preparation program through which she trained many women seeking ordination to the priesthood, especially those from the USA. Trish, as she was fondly known to family and friends, was a major influence in the growth of RCWP and presided at many diaconate and

priestly ordinations as well as at the ordinations of seven women bishops.

In recent years, Patricia retired and returned to South Africa where she continued her ministry as a highly esteemed presenter, keynote speaker, and retreat facilitator. Rev. Dianne Willman, pastor of the Ru'ha community in Johannesburg of which Trish was a beloved member, presided at her funeral and in her homily shared a cherished quote by which Patricia lived her life: "Du bist Mein".... "You are Mine." These words which were engraved on the ring she wore for the 60 years since taking her vows as a Dominican sister, "reveal the profound intimacy that existed between God and her." Her legacy will be continued though the lives and ministries of all who were blessed to have known her.

*Written by Bishop Jean Marie Marchant, RCWP with input from Bishop Suzanne Thiel, and the homily of Rev. Dianne Willman.*



# The Woman's Pulpit

ISSN NO. 0433-  
4297

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

Vol 102 No. 4 October-December 2024

**Editor Emerita**  
LaVonne Althouse

**Editor**  
Marian P. Shearer  
305 Pomander Ave, Reading, PA 19606  
uccrev77@gmail.com

#### OFFICERS

PAST PRESIDENT: Margarethe Galbraith-Cordes  
megcordes@icloud.com  
PRESIDENT: Ella Sonawane,  
Elnisonawane@gmail.com  
VICE PRESIDENT: Kimberly Greway  
kgreway@stjohnsnorthversailles.com  
RECORDING SEC.: Cynthia Walton-Leavitt  
cynuff@aya.yale.edu  
TREASURER: Carol S. Brown  
csbrown550@hotmail.com  
ASSISTANT TREASURER: Ellie Johns-Kelley  
ellie.johns@gmail.com  
ARCHIVIST: Ann M. Rogers Brigham  
amrogersbrigham@gmail.com  
NOMINATIONS CHAIR: to be appointed

#### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Hyeon Jeong "Ruth" Kim  
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Class of 2026: Beverly Banyay One vacancy  
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STATUTORY AGENT FOR THE STATE OF  
OHIO: Janice Barker

#### REGIONAL CONTACTS

CANADA: J. Dorcas Gordon  
dorcascgordon1@gmail.com  
CUBA: Ofelia Ortega Suárez  
intre@enet.cu, ofeliatortega@gmail.com  
HUNGARY: Eszter Karsay  
ekarsay@freemail.hu  
PHILIPPINES: Elizabeth Tapia  
eliztapia5@gmail.com  
INTERNATIONAL: Romella Robinson  
romellasharaz909@gmail.com  
IOWA: Mary K. Green  
mrsfreddiekruger2@gmail.com  
WESTERN PA.: Kimberly Greway  
kgreway@stjohnsnorthversailles.com

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

Published quarterly.

# Prayer Calendar Updates

Please add these corrections and  
updates to your prayer calendar:

#### New Address

**Ann Rogers-Brigham**, 19 Church St.  
Apt 2, W. Brookfield, Mass. USA,  
01585

#### Looking for Emails: Can you help?

Aruna Alexander  
Sheril Davidson  
Ann Gonyea  
Rachel Hernandez  
Nosheen Khan  
Beatrice Njorge  
Dulce Pia-Rose  
Faith Nashika Ringo  
Julian Waithra  
Blesvilla Yap

#### Prayer Correspondents Wanted!

Would you like to connect with the  
women on our prayer list? Carol  
Brown is looking for writers to  
volunteer to take two to four weeks of  
the calendar, and write our greetings by  
email to those on the list. Colleagues  
who receive these messages often write  
back with gratitude at being  
remembered, and news of their lives  
and ministries. You can take part!  
Writers needed for December 2024, and  
May through December 2025.  
EmailCarol:

csbrown550@hotmail.com

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#### STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,

#### Management and Circulation

Dated 9/27/2024 for The  
Woman's Pulpit published  
quarterly at 1921 Palm St  
Reading, PA 19604. Editor/  
Managing Editor: Marian  
Shearer, 305 Pomander Ave  
Reading PA 19606. Tax status  
has not changed in preceding 12  
months. Average number of  
copies each issue during  
preceding 12 months (Net Press  
Run) 161. Paid circulation: Mail  
subscriptions: outside country:  
123. Paid subscriptions by other  
classes of mail through USPS 10.  
Total paid circulation: 13r3.  
Free distribution: 1.  
Total distribution: 134.  
Copies not distributed: 26.  
(99.24% paid.) Total number of  
copies of single issue printed  
nearest filing date (July-Sept  
2024): Net press run 150: Paid  
circulation 129.  
Free distribution: 1.  
Total distribution: 130. Copies  
not distributed: 20. (99.23%  
paid.) Electronic Copy  
Circulation: Average number of  
paid electronic copies each issue  
during preceding 12 months:  
104; total paid print and  
electronic: 237; Total print  
distribution and paid electronic  
copies: 238 (99.58% paid.)  
Number of paid electronic  
copies of single issue nearest  
filing date: 108. Total paid print  
and electronic: 237. Total print  
distribution and paid electronic  
copies: 238 (99.58% paid.)

# McCormick, Episcopal Divinity Schools Appoint

## Women Presidents

*From Episcopal & Presby. News Service*

**The Very Rev. Lydia Kelsey Bucklin** was appointed in August as the new President and Dean of The Episcopal Divinity School, New York City.

And, McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, Illinois USA, named the **Rev. Dr. Maisha I. Handy** as its 12th president in July. She is the first African American president and the second woman leader of the school.

**Handy** began her term on Sept. 3; her appointment follows her 24-year career at Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia USA, where she was most recently interim president and professor of religion. McCormick is regarded as a progressive leader among American seminaries.

A minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Handy earned her B.S. in criminal justice, and M.Div. from Candler School of Theology. Her Ph.D. from Emory University was the first given to an African American woman from the department. Since 2013 she has served as pastor for Ritz Community Church, in Atlanta, and in 1999 she spent a year as a teaching assistant to Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

**Bucklin**, a 2015 graduate of Episcopal Divinity School, brought a strong foundation in community and social justice advocacy to the position. While at EDS, she planted a church alongside a community of disenfranchised adults. Her work in the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan focused on collaborative ecclesiology and a commitment to indigenous peoples' reconciliation and social justice. "Lydia has consistently created new pathways for ministerial formation, especially for those with limited access to traditional theological education."

# Women Ministers Feature in United Nations Summit of the Future

**The Rev. Dr. Anne Burghart**, general secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, led a delegation to the United Nations in New York City in September to attend the Summit of the Future.

And, the **Rev. Dr. Angelique Keturah Walker-Smith** reflected on the recent UN summit for World Council of Churches News. Walker-Smith is North America president for the WCC.

Burghart said the summit "is a much-needed opportunity to strengthen multilateral cooperation and work towards effective solutions to the many crises facing our world today."

Churches bring hands-on experience and faith-based insights and solutions to responding to some of these crises, she said, "From global migration flows to the climate emergency, as well as our work for peace-building, development, human rights, youth and women's empowerment in countries around the globe."

Burghart and another Lutheran minister offered reflections at a dialogue on promoting peace; the delegation attended the summit to observe who world leaders move to adopt an action-oriented pact. It has goals for financing sustainable development, international peace and security, science, technology and digital cooperation, youth and future generations and reforming global governance.

Burghart also presided at a jazz vespers in midtown's Saint Peter's Church and offered a prayer during an ecumenical children's prayer service in the chapel of the Church Centre for the United Nations.

### Action Items for the Future

Walker-Smith was interviewed by the World Council News after the summit. She said her personal impressions were that it is "really a historical moment—a moment for the

world to pay close attention to. It's amazing to see the leaders of the nations of the world come together over the process of a few years to say we are naming the existential threats that are affecting all of us."

The pact embodies a commitment to tackle the most urgent challenges of our time—climate change, inequality, peace and justice.

### It's a Different World

She noted that when the United Nations and the World Council of Churches were formed, the world was much different. Most African, Caribbean and Pacific Island nations were still under colonial rules. That all changed beginning in the 1950s.

And women's roles have been changing since then too. "We must make more of a pathway for women and girls who were not the primary audience at the beginning of the United Nations," she said. "We must change our approach and find more equitable ways to be community."

## Christiane Tietz elected in EKHN

**Prof. Christiane Tietz** was elected in September as president of the Protestant Church in Hesse and Nassau, (EKHN), Germany. The professor of systematic theology at the University of Zurich will succeed Volker Jung, and be inaugurated Feb. 1.

"I am a theologian who lives in the church and is involved in it—and I am extremely happy to do this now in a public capacity," she said.

Tietz credited the youth and children's programs in her church for helping shape her faith. "I know how important well done youth work and children's church services and religious education are for one's development."

## Remembering: Grace Shirk

The Rev. Grace Thornton Lawrence Shirk, IAWM member who resided in Lancaster, PA, USA died in August 2022. The editor apologizes that the news has just reached us this summer.

Born in 1935 in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, Grace was educated at Westminster College, Baptist Institute, and Southern Seminary. She was the first woman employed by the Allegheny Valley YMCA to develop family, children and camping programs. She served as state officer for Church Women United, and served as chair of public advocacy for the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

She began a clown ministry in 1979, and served American Baptist Churches in Pennsylvania and Delaware from 1976-1985; after ordination in 1985 she served called and interim positions in Pennsylvania, including Westgate Baptist, where she held her membership in retirement.

Grace was named woman of the year, outstanding citizen of Lykens, PA, which later elected her mayor, and served on county and ecclesiastical boards of directors. She led and went on many mission trips at home and abroad, and was known as an advocate for women in ministry.

Her first husband, G. J. Lawrence, died in 2001. Second husband James "Bud" Shirk, whom she met in 2004 on a mission trip in Kodiak Alaska, died in 2017.

Grace was preceded in death by a daughter, a son and a son-in-law. She is survived by a son and daughter-in-law, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

## Regional IAWM gatherings: Is there one in your future?

*By Marian Shearer*

Over IAWM's 105-year history, there have been smaller gatherings of women ministers in their geographical areas, and partnerships of various kinds.

The regional chapter in St. Louis, Missouri USA hosted the 75th anniversary assembly. The chapter in Western Pennsylvania hosted our 100th in 2019, as well as the 80th and 90th anniversary assemblies.

You might say the Cuba chapter hosted our assemblies there in 2004 and 2017. There have at one time been clusters in England and Europe.

We now have several members in Korea, and since we made so many friends from Africa at the World Council of Churches assembly in Karlsruhe, we now claim and honor some gatherings of women in ministry there.

At our assembly in Puerto Rico in 2024, it was suggested that members could gather even one or two other IAWM sisters for lunch once or twice a year, and make some connections in their geography.

Currently, Western PA is the most active chapter, and they have monthly activities and an enthusiasm to be celebrated. Here are some:

-A virtual visit to the Puerto Rico assembly, with slides by members who were there;

-A visit with women seminarians at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary;

-A Pre-Advent Pamper Day, with massages and pedicures, and lunch available, before Advent begins (this sounds divine! -ed.)

-Walking the Advent Labyrinth at a local church

-And in the New Year, on-line and in person meetings about increasing accessibility, approaching retirement, pioneering women of today, annual overnight retreat, and an annual meeting.

For more details about the Western PA meetings, email Lola at [wpawomenministers@gmail.com](mailto:wpawomenministers@gmail.com).

### Smaller Meetings OK Too

In Eastern Pennsylvania, around Reading, where a few of us accumulated in our retirement or our calls, we have begun to gather for brown bag lunches at the church of a working pastor, so she doesn't have to leave the office to spend an hour with us.

There were only three of us the first time, but it was a start. Next time we will gather at a church where both pastors are IAWM members, and just keep up the connections.

Are there two or three other IAWM members within your geography? Or some old friends even in other places with whom you'd like to Zoom and connect?

Check out the Calendar of Prayer for addresses and emails, and invite a couple of women to lunch or tea or a beer. Or to Zoom. Or connect with someone far away that you met at an assembly.

Then be sure to report to the executive officers that you met, just so we can keep track and celebrate. No big organization is required, though if one develops, that's fine. Email President Ella at [elnisowanawane@gmail.com](mailto:elnisowanawane@gmail.com).

## Remembering: Cecelia W. Bryant

The Rev. Cecelia Williams Bryant, an African Methodist Episcopal Church minister, died Sept. 26, age 77.

She was the episcopal supervisor for the AME districts that her husband, now retired Bishop John R. Bryant, oversaw. She and her husband founded the AME church in India and Cote D'Ivoire. She was known for mentoring and encouraging young clergy. -RNS

## Remembering:

### Maureen Redenbach

**The Rev. Maureen Redenbach**, a retired minister in the Uniting Church of Australia, died July 12, 2024. She and her husband David started Redenbach's Foodstore in Peak Hill, New South Wales, in 1973, and ran it until she took her first ministry placement and her children took over the business. She attended United Theological College in North Parramatta, NSW. She was ordained by the Uniting Church of Australia in 1991 and served parishes in Coleambally/Darlington Point and Dungog/Myall River. She became a member of IAWM at the World Council of Churches assembly in Canberra. She retired in 2004 and returned home to Peak Hill. She is survived by two children, Ian and Mary.

### Lois Wilson

**The Rev. Dr. Lois Wilson**, United Church of Canada trailblazer, died at 97 on Sept. 13. She was the denomination's 28th moderator, and the first woman to fill the role, from 1980 to 1982. In addition she was the first Canadian to serve as president of the World Council of Churches, from 1983 to 1991. In 2000 she led Canada's first parliamentary delegation to North Korea to begin the process of establishing formal diplomatic relations. She served as a university chancellor, was appointed to the Senate of Canada in 1998, and was the author of ten books.

### Lynda Katsuno

**The Rev. Lynda Susan Katsuno** died August 28 at age 72, reported the World Council of Churches weekly newsletter. She was a pioneer of what is now the Ecumenical Disability Advocates Network. She had a permanent disability since 1973 and used a wheelchair, and was a third generation Japanese Canadian; from 1970 to 1983 she was an elementary school teacher in Toronto. She was a member of the Anglican Church of Canada, but also did much work with the United Church of Canada. Following the WCC 6th assembly in Vancouver, she joined the WCC staff and was remembered for "crisscrossing the corridors of the Ecumenical Center in her wheelchair, and for her precious contributions to the celebrations in the chapel." Katsuno was known for her lively liturgies and worship materials, and was a pioneer of the work on disability inclusion within the World Council of Churches.

## Online Meetings for Connection and Conversation Continue Quarterly: Nov. 1

Next Connection is:

**Friday, November 1 All Saints' Day**

**9-10:30 a.m. Eastern Daylight Time (US, Canada)**

**Theme: Rebuilding and Recovering After Disasters**

There were 20 women on our August 1 call, from Kenya, Barbados, India, Korea, Uganda, Pakistan, St. Vincent and the US.

IAWM president Ella Sonawane and Pulpit editor Marian Shearer are your hosts.

Email Marian for the Zoom link: [uccrev77@gmail.com](mailto:uccrev77@gmail.com).

## When's the Next IAWM International Assembly?

The members present at the business meeting in June in Puerto Rico voted to aim for:

**Summer 2026 in Jakarta, Indonesia**, at the ecumenical seminary: <https://stftjakarta.ac.id>

Planning committee is Dorcas Gordon (chair), who regularly visits the seminary; Kimberly Greway, whose spouse is Indonesian; and Margaret Ernst.

## World Council Offers Training in Social Media Monitoring for Violence Against Women

"Tech-Facilitated Gender Based Violence" is a new field of training and action for churches and groups participating in Thursdays In Black and other efforts against GBV, as it is called.

The WCC launched a tool kit called Taking Action Against Tech-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence, that offers practical ways to raise awareness and move towards overcoming tech-facilitated GBV. It offered a follow-up training to afford toolkit readers greater confidence in using the social media monitoring methodology introduced in the resource.

The toolkit can be downloaded at [www.waccglobal.org/resources/gender-justice/toolkit-against-tfgbv](http://www.waccglobal.org/resources/gender-justice/toolkit-against-tfgbv). Such topics as voyeurism, trolling, sextortion, hacking, doxing and deep-fakes are covered. For more about the WCC workshops look on [www.oikumene.org](http://www.oikumene.org).





**A few more memories from the 2024 assembly in Vieques! Can't you just see the Holy Spirit at work among the pairs in the lower picture?**

Photos from Margarethe Galbraith-Cordes



## **When's the Next IAWM International Assembly?**

The members present at the business meeting in June in Puerto Rico voted to aim for:

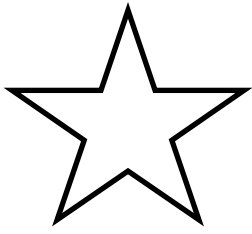
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Planning committee is Dorcas Gordon (chair), who regularly visits the seminary; Kimberly Greway, whose spouse is Indonesian; and Margaret Ernst. Email Dorcas if you would like to help: [dorcas-gordon1@gmail.com](mailto:dorcas-gordon1@gmail.com)

**Other IAWM nuggets:** Our new annual dues structure is as follows, for 2025: Based on income and in US dollars.

Under \$10,000	dues are \$10.00	Non North-America	\$10.00
\$10-20,000	Dues are \$20.00		
\$20-30,000	Dues are \$30.00	Life Membership	\$500.00
\$30-40,000	Dues are \$40.00		
\$40-50,000	Dues are \$50.00		
Over \$50,000	Dues are \$60.00		

Look for details in the prayer calendar and president's letter in December.



## From our Archivist, Ann Rogers Brigham A Song and an Invitation, And A New Address

Dear colleagues in ministry,

As your IAWM archivist, I am glad to share brief snippets of info that I have found interesting in my reading of the archives in past months. Last issue, I talked about IAWM assemblies in the 105 year history of IAWM and the changes that have occurred since that time, highlighting the Nov 10-12, 1924 assembly in Chicago, Illinois, at the Chicago Temple.

In this issue of our newsletter, let me encourage our appreciation of a lovely hymn written by Jean Henderson for the 75th anniversary of IAWM. Thank you, Jean! Here's the paragraph in the records that introduces the hymn:

"Now it's 1999—IAWM celebrates 80 years of hard work, suffering, fellowship, and faithful friendships—all to the glory of God and the service to Christ. Thanks be to God!"

*Song - "For Heritage and Hope" (tune: ST ANNE)*

*For heritage and hope, dear Lord, for justice and for love*

*For Spirit gifts on women poured, we praise you, God, above!*

*Creator God, of heav'n and earth, we sing our strong Amen!*

*For in your goodness you gave birth to IAWM.*

*Redeemer God in Christ you came to set your people free.*

*Let ordained women in your name, serve with equality.*

*Sustainer God, sweet dove of peace, our Comforter and Judge;*

*For women 'round the world, release your fruits of joy and love!*

*For heritage and hope, dear Lord, in gratitude we sing,*

*And pray renewal, with accord, the years ahead will bring!*

I expect that future archives may say that we continue our hard work, suffering, fellowship and faithful friendships in order to grow and become all God has called us to be in this time and place. Thank you for helping us remember your experiences in IAWM through the years. **Send me some "snippets" to share in our quarterly "archive" corner of the Woman's Pulpit.** Don't forget to send me IAWM pictures that may go in our new series currently being created at The Burke Library with those experiences you share!

Need to send me something? Please contact me at my permanent address in MA: **19 Church St Apt 2, W. Brookfield, MA 01585** or **send me your message by email:**

[amrogersbrigham@gmail.com](mailto:amrogersbrigham@gmail.com). My new interim ministry on Oct 1 takes me to First Church Congregational, UCC, Methuen, MA, USA. Although I can receive mail there, better to contact me at my permanent "base," the address above. If you are in my area, please come by to visit! Faithfully, Ann

Get on line Nov. 1!  
We're looking for  
you!

It's our next online  
fun conversation for  
and connection:

Friday November 1

9 a.m. Eastern DT

Email Marian for the Zoom  
code: uccrev77@gmail.com

## In the News

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion church elected new bishops at its quadrennial meeting in July. The historically Black denomination elected as bishop **Melanie Miller**, who will lead the Western District of several states in the American West. She was pastor of St. Paul AME Zion Church in Ewing, New Jersey, and is now the second and now only living woman bishop in the denomination. Bishop **Mildred Hines**, the first AME Zion female bishop, died at age 67 in 2022.

The new **Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice** opened in her childhood home of Durham, North Carolina, USA, in September. **Pauli Murray** was the first Black woman ordained an Episcopal priest, in 1977, and she was a civil rights activist who helped shape the legal argument for the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of the US Supreme Court, which desegregated American schools. In 2018 the Episcopal Church named her a saint.

Plans are underway at the World Council of Churches for an exhibition with the working title "**Women Inspiring Justice: Ecumenical Responses to the 12 Critical Areas of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action.**" The **Rev. Nicqui Ashwood of the WCC** reports that as the world prepares to mark the 30th anniversary of the declaration, she and her team in the Just Community of Women and Men programme got the idea of connecting an exhibit to the 12 areas. They have collected more than 40 names of women in the WCC, both living and dead, from all regions. "We want this exhibition to inspire member churches," Ashwood said, "to recognize the women in their contexts who have been instruments of change over the years."

St. Paul's University Joshua and Timothy School of Theology, in

Mombasa, Kenya, and their Lois and Eunice Fund celebrated their book launch in September. **Books Launch: Celebrating Women's Agency and Power** begins with "Liberation in Irrelevant Spaces" by **Belinda Nokuthula Crawford**, a workbook dedicated to those who have endured sexual assault. Crawford, of South Africa, turns her story of pain into a triumph for herself and others. Copies are available on Kindle.

**Rev. Karen Wiborn** was elected as the new church leader in the Uniting Church in Sweden. In congratulating her, the World Council of Churches wrote, "Your vision, passion and efforts have inspired many, and we are confident that under your guidance, the Uniting Church in Sweden will continue to thrive and flourish."

*(From Religion News Service, , denominational news letters, WCC weekly updates, social media and correspondence)*