

Presbyterian Women Presbytery of Western North Carolina October 25, 2016

The Presbyterian Women of the Presbytery of Western North Carolina had the Fall Gathering (East) at the First Presbyterian Church Gastonia on Saturday, September 24, 2016. There were 63 women in attendance representing 12 churches in the eastern part of our Presbytery. An overview of the 2016-2017 *Horizons Bible Study*, “*Who is Jesus? What a Difference a Lens Makes*,” was presented by Rev. Dr. Joan C. Martin, Chaplain, Covenant Village, Gastonia. The mission offering in the amount of \$641 was given to the *Bit of Hope Ranch* which has as their mission to “Reach, Rescue and Restore hurting, children, families and horses through offering equine therapy wellness and educational programs.”

The Fall Gathering (West) was held October 1, 2016, at Mills River Presbyterian Church. There were 61 women in attendance representing 15 churches in the western part of our Presbytery. The *Bible study* overview was presented by Rev. Dr. Edna Banes, Parish Associate for Kenilworth Presbyterian Church in Asheville. The mission offering in the amount of \$1,148 was given to *Safelight* which “provides support for victims of interpersonal violence, sexual assault and child abuse, making it possible for families who want to be free of violent relationships to succeed.”

Other workshops presented at both gatherings included: *Understanding Your Leadership Role: Tending to Your Own Soul*, led by Jane Lee Vondette of Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church, Asheville; *Through the Camera Lens: Where Jesus Walked*, led by Esta Jarrett, Pastor of Canton Presbyterian Church, Canton; and *Asking New Questions: An Experience in Journaling*, led by Susie Churchfield of Grace Covenant.

The Guatemala Microloan Project is in its third phase, and there are currently 68 women participating. Mother’s Day cards were designed with a picture of the women of Guatemala participating in the project on the cover. Presbyterian Women, their friends and family made donations to purchase cards to be sent on Mother’s Day to others, and the card indicated a donation to the project had been made in their honor. More than \$2,000 was raised which helped continue to provide the women of Guatemala the opportunity to grow in self-esteem, hope, and freedom, develop sources of income for their families, and make it possible for the Microloan Project to continue and expand.

The Microloan Task Force also submitted an application for a Thank Offering grant. If received, the plan is to add three more groups and a health component to the project. To learn more about the project and read stories about the women participating in the program, search for “Guatemala Microloan Project” on Facebook.

The 2017 Spring Gathering for the Presbytery of Western North Carolina is scheduled for April 8, 2017, at First Presbyterian Church, Newton. Our keynote speaker will be the 2017-2018 *Horizons Bible study* writer for *Hebrews*, Melissa Bane Sevier.

As shown by our actions, the Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery of Western North Carolina, “empowered by the Holy Spirit, we (continue to) commit ourselves:

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

Tina Joyner, PW Moderator
Presbytery of Western NC