

PW Historian Workshop

What Is This?

A basic outline that can be adapted for a workshop at a PW presbytery or synod gathering, at a cluster training day for PW in the congregations or for an event with neighboring presbyteries.

Who Is the Workshop for?

Presbyterian Women historians in the congregations, presbyteries and synods (The historian's responsibilities may be combined with the secretary's position.)

What Will Participants Learn?

Participants will

- learn why it is important to have a PW historian and the position's basic responsibilities
- identify some of the issues of concern for PW
- learn about PW resources available for historians
- explore the two models for PW presbytery leaders to work with PW congregations

Checklist for Workshop Leaders

Several days or weeks before the scheduled workshop

- Prepare a written plan or outline, with built-in alternatives.
- Plan activities that have a change of pace.
- Secure resources needed.
- Preview any video or audio materials to be presented.
- Plan a community building activity.
- Prepare necessary handouts.
- Prepare nametags, if needed.

The day of the workshop, prepare the location of the workshop including the following:

- Post signs outside the door.
- Ensure the room has an adequate number of tables and chairs.
- Ensure comfortable temperature and proper lighting.
- Have resources and equipment ready.
- See that equipment functions properly.
- Have visual aids prepared.

Conduct the workshop

- Set a welcoming atmosphere.
- Greet the participants in a friendly manner as they enter.
- Provide nametags, if needed.
- Introduce your self, co-leaders and purpose of the workshop.
- Open with prayer.
- Provide a means by which each person can be introduced to the group.

- Direct the learning activities.
- Share your expectations for the workshop.
- Invite the participants to share their expectations.
- Show enthusiasm for the learning experience ahead.
- Offer an opportunity to share.
- Be flexible to the needs of the group.
- Provide handouts.
- Bring the workshop to a close.
- Summarize the points covered.
- Provide an opportunity for evaluation both by the participants and leader.
- Close with prayer.

The Workshop

Open the session with the suggested prayer or one of your own.

Creator God, God of all history, we are here together to learn how to maintain the historical records of Presbyterian Women. We ask that even now you fill our hearts with creativity and make us aware of the importance of this position. We will give you the glory. This we pray in Jesus' name.

Why is it important to have a PW historian?

To introduce the participants to each other and begin exploring what it means to be a historian, invite each participant to tell one fact about the history of her church or PW group and why that fact is important to remember. It may be the year the church was organized, an important PW celebration or a special relationship with another group.

Thank the participants for sharing. Ask them to think about the stories they have heard. Why are the stories significant? What do they tell us today about the church or group?

Distribute Handout H-1 with the quotes about history and historians. Divide the participants into groups of five to six people. Ask each group to discuss the questions on the handout, focusing on how the quotations relate to the importance of keeping the history of Presbyterian Women and the role of the historian. Allow no more than ten minutes for discussion.

Call the groups back together. Ask someone to report the discussion. Record responses to questions one and two on newsprint. Identify commonalities and differences.

What are the responsibilities of a PW historian?

Suggested job descriptions for historians in the congregation, presbytery and synod are in the *PW Manual*. Remind the group that this may be a separate position or combined with the duties of secretary. Point out that the Churchwide Coordinating Team (CCT) historian has a History Committee to help her accomplish her job. Ask participants to find the job descriptions for each level.

Distribute Handout H-2 and Handout H-3. Every historian carries similar basic responsibilities. Ask participants to review the chart of responsibilities. Choose from the following questions to help guide the discussion.

- What general responsibilities are common to each position?
 - creates and maintains files
 - maintains a working file for her successor
 - develops and maintains relationships with history committees and PW historians
 - attends and/or provides ongoing training and resources
- What questions must be answered as the filing system is established? Will files be kept chronologically or thematically?
- Why is it important to relate to other historians and history committees?
- Why is training important?
- Each historian is responsible for writing an annual or triennial history. What are the connections between the histories in the congregation, presbytery, synod and churchwide?
 - What should be included in a PW history?
 - What guidelines should be followed in writing histories?
 - Compare the due dates and repositories for congregation, presbytery, synod and churchwide histories outlined on Handout H-3.

How does the PW historian in the presbytery work with the congregations?

Distribute Handout H-4. Review the differences in the two options. Ask for ideas about how the position might work in each. Ask for specific examples for staying in touch with congregations.

What resources are available for PW historians?

If possible, have samples from the resource list on hand for the participants to browse. Distribute the resource list. What additional resources are the participants familiar with?

How can the workshop be used to support PW historians?

After comparing the position responsibilities, allow time for participants to reflect on what they would add to workshop if they were leading it. Ask what they would add to the workshop if they were the workshop leaders. Record the ideas on newsprint. Ask participants which idea they might try. Ask what additional information might help justice and peace coordinators in the presbyteries and congregations understand their responsibilities?

Allow time for additional questions and discussion. Summarize the workshop and close with the suggested prayer, or one of your own.

Close with the suggested prayer, or one of your own.

Redeemer God, we give you all the praise and all the glory for the good that has happened during this time together. We ask your forgiveness for any human frailties that have sneaked in to make our conversation or our actions a distraction. As we close, we do so with thanksgiving for this community of believers serving as your leaders and for You, our living, dynamic, communicating God. It is in the precious name of your son, Jesus, we pray.

The Importance of History

“If the General Assembly should enjoin upon each of their members to furnish, as particularly as may be, the history of his own church, it is probable that materials (for a complete history of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) may be collected without much difficulty. The sooner it is done the better, as time, accident, and the death of ancient people will daily destroy some sources of information.” (*Minutes of the General Assembly, 1791*)

“The purpose for keeping a PW History is to maintain and preserve historical records of Presbyterian Women in the Congregation.” (*PW Manual*)

“Presbyterian Women historians preserve the record and write the story of how its members and organizations serve God, the church, and the world. In doing so, the PW historian brings praise and thanksgiving to God and builds up the church by making it more appreciative of the trials and triumphs of its women.” (*Historian brochure from the PW Leadership Packet*)

Questions for discussion

1. What does each quotation tell us about the reason for keeping a historical record of Presbyterian Women?
2. What do the quotations tell us about the role of the historian?
3. Which quotation speaks to you? Answer individually and as a group.

What are the Responsibilities of a PW Historian?

| Congregation | Presbytery | Synod | CCT Historian |
|--|--|---|---|
| Creates and maintains files about PW in the Congregation (PWC) | Creates and maintains files about PW in the Presbytery (PWP) | Creates and maintains files about PW in the Synod (PWS) | Maintains files about PW in the PC(USA) |
| Maintains a working file for her successor | Maintains a working file for her successor | Maintains a working file for her successor | Maintains a working file for her successor |
| Develops and maintains relationships with congregation historian and/or history committee and PWP historian | Develops and maintains relationships with PWC historians, PWS historian, and presbytery historian and/or history committee | Develops and maintains relationships with PWP historians, the PW churchwide historian, and synod historian and/or history committee | Develops and maintains relationships with PWC, PWP, and PWS historians and Presbyterian Historical Society |
| Attends trainings to stay informed of new resources and methods | Provides ongoing training and resources for historians in the congregations | Provides ongoing training and resources for historians in the presbyteries | Provides ongoing training and resources for historians in the synods |
| | | | Prepares a display or presentation highlighting PW history for the Churchwide Gathering |
| Writes the annual PWC historical and/or statistical report for the calendar year. | Requests copies of annual PWC historical reports and/or statistical reports to be received by January 31. | | |
| Sends a copy of the report to the historian of Presbyterian Women in the Presbytery by January 31. Sends original report to Columbia Seminary. | Writes the annual PWP historical report for the calendar year. History may also include a summary of PWC reports. | Requests copies of annual PWP historical reports to be received by March 31. | Receives the annual historical reports from PW in the synods and forwards to the PC(USA) Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. |
| . | Submits an annual written report to the PWS historian by March 31. Sends original summary of the annual PWC report to Presbyterian Historical Society. | Writes the annual PWS historical report for the calendar year. History may include a summary of the PWP reports | Requests annual historical reports from the PW in the Synod historian to be received by April 30. |
| | | Submits an annual written report to the historian of the CCT, no later than April 30. | Writes the history of PW in the PC(USA) for the period of her term of office. |
| | | Receives the annual historical reports from PWPs and forwards them to the Presbyterian Historical Society. | Submits the history to the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia at the conclusion of her term. |

When and Where Do I Send My History?

Note: Histories can be prepared electronically, but must be submitted as hard copy. Presbyterian Historical Society and other archival bodies do not accept archives in electronic format because of the impermanence of both the hardware and the storage media.

PW in the Congregation Histories

No than January 31 each year send original to

Send copy to

Columbia Theology Seminary
historian
Linda Davis, Special Collections Librarian
John Bulow Campbell Library
Columbia Theological Seminary
PO Box 520
Decatur, GA 30031
404/687-4615
DavisL@CTSnet.edu

PW in the Presbytery

Keep a copy with the Presbyterian Women records for the church.

PW in the Presbytery Histories

Receive PW in the Congregations histories by January 31.

No later than March 31 send each send original PW in the Presbyterian history to PW in the Synod historian. Keep a copy with the Presbyterian Women records for the presbytery.

PW in the Synod Histories

Receive original PW in the Presbytery histories by March 31 each year and forward to Presbyterian Historical Society.

Nancy Taylor
Records Archivist
Presbyterian Historical Society
425 Lombard Street
Philadelphia, PA 19147
215/928-3891
215/627-0509 (FAX)
ntaylot@history.pcusa.org
www.history.pcusa.org

No later than April 30 each year send original historical report to the PW in the PC(USA) historian. The history may include a summary of the PWP reports, including information studies, local mission projects, trends, or special projects. Keep a copy with the PW records for the synod.

PW in The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

Receive PW in the Synod histories by April 30 and forward to Presbyterian Historical Society at the above address.

Send triennial history of PW in the PC(USA) to Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia at the conclusion of her term. Keep a copy with the PW churchwide.

How Does the PW Historian in the Presbytery Work with the Congregations?

| When PWP Historian Is Primary Contact | When PWP Cluster Leader is Primary Contact |
|---|---|
| The historian is a member of the PWP coordinating team and works with the other members to plan and carry out the work of PW in the Presbytery. | The historian is a member of the PWP coordinating team and works with the other members to plan and carry out the work of PW in the Presbytery. |
| The historian provides training and resources for the historians in the congregations. | The cluster leaders help the historian provide training and resources for the historians in the congregations. |
| The historian has direct contact with the historians in the congregations to send and receive information. | The historian sends and receives information to sends to the historian in the congregations through the cluster leaders. |

Suggested Resources

- *PW Manual*; item PWR-07-101*
- *PW Scrapbook Kit*, item PWR-06-130
- *PW How to Write Church History*, item PWR-02-105
- sample historical report**
- The Bible, NRSV translation
- *Horizons*, the magazine and Bible study for Presbyterian Women; subscribe online, www.pcusa.org/horizons, or call 800/524-2612; subscription includes six issues of the magazine and the annual Bible study
- *Presbyterian Planning Calendar*; published annually*
- *Presbyterian Women in America* (second edition) by Lois A. Boyd and R. Douglas Brackenridge (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1996)**
- *Mission Yearbook for Prayer & Study*; published annually*

*Order through Presbyterian Distribution Service, 800/524-2612 or www.pcusa.org/marketplace.

** Available through Presbyterian Historical Society, www.history.pcusa.org or The Presbyterian Historical Society, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia PA 19147.

Helpful Hints for Historians

1. Keeping materials

- Ask the secretary for a copy of the minutes from meetings and make a file. This will give you information for the history you will write. These can be organized in different ways: notebooks or file folders.
- Keep a copy of any programs, brochures, study materials, publicity, photographic records (prints, slides, video, motion pictures, etc.) and all oral recordings.
- Obtain, if possible, copies of any histories regarding any Presbyterian women's organizations that preceded your Presbyterian Women's group.
- Acquire and preserve copies of artifacts: any buttons, fabrics, porcelain, glass, etc., objects created with the name or to illustrate programs of your group.

2. Guidelines for writing histories

- Writing the report
 - Use acid-free paper for all written minutes and annual historical reports. Such paper is available from library supply firms and many office supply stores.
 - Type minutes and historical reports single-spaced one side of page; double space between paragraphs. If handwritten, use a black pen.
 - Place name of PW group (congregation), location (city, state) and period of time covered in minutes and historical report at the top center of the first page and in the upper-left corner on the following pages. Date and sign your name on last page.
 - During the year keep a file for entering information as significant events take place to have the information you will need for your annual historical report.
 - Decide how to organize the report: chronologically, thematically or a combination of the two (each method has advantages and disadvantages). Avoid doing the report month by month. Chronological is an easy, calendar approach, but can be repetitious. Topic/subject avoids repetition and is more interesting, but needs good organization.
 - Prepare an outline. Start writing. Use direct quotes where appropriate and anecdotes to make the story interesting. Vary sentence length and sentence beginnings.
 - Record dates and names accurately.
 - Identify the source of any quotes.
 - When reporting a controversial event, be fair to all sides, compassionate and use good judgment.
- Information to include in report
 - Names of Coordinating Team members
 - Reports of gatherings, special programs, activities
 - Names of women who attend conferences and training events

- Recognition of women who have been honored during the year (Honorary Life Membership recipients, members in leadership positions in PW or in the governing bodies of the denomination)
 - Year-end financial statement, including operating expenses, benevolences and special gifts
 - Brief biography of deceased members
 - Photographs to illustrate the historical report; balance the number of photographs and the written commentary within the report
- Photographs
 - Collect photographs of leaders, groups and events. As much as possible, acquire black and white photographs, as they last longer than color prints.
 - Handle prints or negatives along their edges. The emulsion side (duller sheen) of a negative is easily damaged.
 - Do not write or type directly on a picture front or back.
 - Write or type identifying information (date, place, event, names) on a piece of acid-free paper and lightly glue to the back of the photograph with acid-free glue. Write this same information on an acid-free or polyethylene cover into which the negatives can be placed.
 - Store photos and negatives together flat in acid-free boxes or file folders.
 - Publications
 - For any printed materials produced on poor quality paper, such as newspaper clippings, if at all possible, make a photocopy on acid-free paper for your files. The originals can be destroyed.