

***Vision for the New Year***  
**By**  
**Rev. Mary Newbern-Williams, Executive Presbyter**

Blessings and sincere prayers for each of you, your families, and your ministries for this New Year. My prayers include the hope that each of you enjoyed a Blessed Christmas with all of the smiles, gifts, good food, laughter, and fond remembrances of family and friends in fellowship. As this New Year begins, please be assured that I pray for each one of you and your congregations in my morning meditation and evening prayers. May God continue to bless and keep all of us this coming year.

2019 brings new ministries, new foci, and opportunities for each of us to work together in creative and exciting ways. As you know, through partnership and work with the Omaha Presbyterian Seminary Foundation, PMRV is one of three presbyteries funded by the Lilly Foundation for a three-year period. This grant will allow us to engage in a creative programming for the benefit of pastors and congregations. The two other presbyteries are Missouri Union (Executive Presbyter, Rev. Deborah Boucher-Payne) and Central Nebraska (Executive Presbyter and Stated Clerk, Rev. Polly Deppen-Williams). We are excited about this project, welcome the new Project Manager, Rev. Becky Balestri, and together will move forward to lead God's people in progressive and meaningful ways. We are grateful to Rev. Dr. Gary S. Eller for his faithful leadership and for spearheading this work the led to the Lilly Grant approval.

Another concentration this year for PMRV will be Racial and Social Justice. To the heartbreak of so many, our nation continues to suffer from expressions of racial hatred, injustice, and what seems to be an inability to move beyond the past. As such, instances of such evils continue, often resulting in death and deeper divisions between people. Injustice and racism are not God's intent. The Leadership Team of PMRV has been engaged in discussions, a book study, and will continue to address social ills. In addition, Rev. Dwight Williams and I have participated with pastors around the Omaha Area in presenting a united pastoral presence to address racism. Pastor Dwight Williams has been faithful and tenacious in the leadership with this ecumenical group of committed pastors.

In addition, three leaders of our PMRV participated in leadership and professional development led by the Christian Leadership Formation through Duke University. The three leader participants were Ruling Elder and Stated Clerk Pat Shipley, Ruling Elder and Clerk of Session for New Life PC, Dr. Carolyn Grice, as well as Pastor and Counselor/Coach Rev. A. David Paul. This event even further equipped these professionals for outstanding service.

In addition to the talent and strong leadership in PMRV, we have elders and pastors who participate in the broader ministry of the PCUSA. There are leaders who serve on Synod and GA committees and projects. Be proud of these committed servant/leaders and pray about whether God may be calling you to such service. I will pray with you and for you and your own work in PMRV.

One of the first major events of 2019 will be a presentation/seminar sponsored by the Presbyterian Foundation. Rev. Dr. Skip Herbert and Rev. Minner Serovy of the Presbyterian Foundation will be with us at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Council Bluffs, Iowa on Monday, January 7, 2019 from noon until 2:00 p.m. This seminar will be the last in a series of four entitled, "Project Regeneration" for congregations that are discerning where God is calling you. Contact the Presbytery Office to inform us if you will be in attendance. Lunch will be provided for you at no cost. Be present.

The next will be our first Presbytery Gathering/Meeting of 2019. Our first meeting will take place on February 16, 2019 at Peace Presbyterian Church. As usual, this February event commemorates Black History Month in worship and presentation. The guest presenter and preacher will be the Rev. Jimmie Hawkins, Executive Director of the Office of Public Witness for the PCUSA. This Office, located in Washington, D.C., addresses essence of social justice, politics, and faith/religion. Please access the website of the Office of Public Witness of the PCUSA online. The website is well done and shows the heart of the work to which it is committed. The schedule for the work and presence of Rev. Jimmie Hawkins will be as follows: Friday, February 15, 2019 there will be a workshop led by Rev. Hawkins at First Presbyterian Church of Omaha from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. with a gathering time for coffee at 9:30 a.m. The Presbytery Meeting will take place on Saturday, February 16, 2019, as stated at Peace Presbyterian Church. Rev. Hawkins will be the guest preacher at Presbyterian Church of the Master on Sunday, February 17, 2019. Be on hand to participate in the activities and work of your presbytery.

There will be many more events of 2019, such as the outstanding work of our committees, namely FELD and its committed ministry in Christian Education and Leadership Development; SJP and its international focus on Peace and Social Justice; Mission and Evangelism and its commitment to spreading the love of God in Christ Jesus. This committee partnered with our Personnel/Administrative arm of PMRV for ministry with Rev. Emad Tawadrous, who is the Presbytery Evangelist and Pastor of the Arab Christian Fellowship. Pastor Tawadrous and his wife, Deacon Shireen, are prepared to present, preach, and provide leadership for your congregations in Evangelism and ecumenical/interfaith ministry. All of our committees of PMRV are strong, committed, and available to share with you. In addition, the Nominations Committee may be contacting you to serve and share your gifts with others.

There is so much to share with you, and each copy of the "New Monday Morning" will provide content that will keep you abreast of our work and our lives. Look for special announcements, special events, information about upcoming presbytery meetings, and opportunities for your own service. Welcome our new Editor and Publisher of "Monday Morning", Ruling Elder Kathleen Keefer. Let us give great thanks for the Rev. Jody Filipi, who provided this ministry for many years. ***"THANK YOU, JODY."***

One special announcement is this: In addition to the ministry of Monday Morning, Ruling Elder Kathleen Keefer, PMRV Moderator of the Presbyterian Women and one of our strong Synod Leaders, will be participating in a leadership event with the United Nations. She is one of many leaders who will be in attendance and will return to share and to help our Presbytery to develop new and enhanced approaches in the wider work that must continue. Another special announcement: From April 5-7, 2019 the Office of Public Witness of the PCUSA will host "Advocacy Days", an annual event that trains leaders for the essential work of social justice. I have participated in the past with this event. There will be special training for the work of social justice and small groups will visit senators and congress people in their offices in Washington. Perhaps God is calling you to be part of this crucial work. Kathleen Keefer and I are already making plans.

You will be reading my "Year-End Report" for 2018 soon to be more deeply aware of all we accomplished in 2018. We continue the ministry of God in Christ. May God bless you as this New Year begins. Please contact me at the PMRV Office if I can be helpful to you in any way. I look forward to visiting with you and sharing a meal, coffee, or just good prayer and conversation.

*Blessings Now and Always,*

*Rev. Mary Newbern-Williams  
Executive Presbyter*

