

# Standing on the Shoulders of Empowered Women

## PW USA Mission Experience 2019



# Finger Lakes Region New York July 12-22, 2019



“For freedom Christ has  
set us free. Stand firm.”

—Galatians 5:1a



Camp Whitman, Geneva Presbytery  
Seneca Lake, New York



# Why we went

PW's USA Mission Experience gives Presbyterian women the opportunity to learn about the history, culture and ministries of local churches in a particular region of the country.

The 2019 USAME visited a land steeped in the legacy of human rights, civil rights and women's rights—a land that embraces difference and diversity, a land that represents the inclusion of all people!

The trip was a mix of education, fun, hands-on mission and tourism. Many sites were included on the itinerary—historical sites, sites of religious significance, sites important to the economic development of the region, Native American sites and many Presbyterian sites.

Participants visited sites in the presbyteries of Cayuga-Syracuse, Geneva and Genesee Valley. As on all PW trips, those who went forged a bond that strengthens them and PW.

Following the trip, participants share their experiences and present new opportunities for mission.



# Churches visited

- ▶ Presbyterian Church in Geneva
- ▶ Hannibal Community Center
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Elmira
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Cohocton
- ▶ Hector Presbyterian Church
- ▶ Watkins Glen Presbyterian Church
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Auburn
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Skaneateles
- ▶ ROC SALT and Third Presbyterian, Rochester
- ▶ Phelps United (PC(USA) and UMC)
- ▶ Canandaigua United (PC(USA)/American Baptist)
- ▶ Seneca Falls Presbyterian Church
- ▶ West Fayette Presbyterian Church
- ▶ North Presbyterian Church, Elmira
- ▶ Trumansburg Presbyterian Church
- ▶ Park (Newark) Presbyterian Church
- ▶ Pulteney Presbyterian Church
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Bath
- ▶ Fulton United Church
- ▶ New Hope Presbyterian Church
- ▶ Willard Chapel
- ▶ Ovid Federated Church (PC(USA) and UMC)
- ▶ First Presbyterian Church, Waterloo

The hospitality we received was heart-warming! Picnic at one church, high tea at another, barbecue at another, salad lunch at yet another, home-cooked Indian meal at one, and so on . . . ! We were warmly welcomed at each place we visited.



# Friday, July 12

**Galatians 5:1:** "For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

Welcome to the Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA) USA Mission Experience. We are excited to share our experience with you. It is our hope that sharing the many stories encountered during this experience will help all of us better understand our country, its history and people, and strengthen us to do God's work on earth.

We found inspiration and strength in learning about the native peoples and those who came later and became tireless advocates for freedom and civil rights for women and the enslaved.

**Prayer:** Gathering God, we trust that you brought us together from all walks of life and from all corners of the United States so that we might follow your way as one. We thank you for all the people who made it possible for us to travel to such a storied area. We rejoice in your gift of love, freedom, strength, friendship and solidarity, all of which we celebrated during this mission experience. Help us to remember the shoulders on which we stand.

—Reflection by Jo Ann Burrell



# Friday, July 12

- ▶ Welcome dinner at the Presbyterian Church in Geneva
- ▶ Welcome and orientation, Jo Ann Burrell, vice moderator of mission relationships, PW in the PC(USA)
- ▶ Visit from Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell (portrayed by Eleanor Stearns), the first woman to receive a medical degree in the United States. She was active in the abolitionist movement and established what is now New York–Presbyterian Lower Manhattan Hospital.
- ▶ Candlelight vigil held in conjunction with “Lights for Liberty,” a worldwide protest of U.S. immigration policies that hold thousands of asylum seekers in poor conditions.



# Saturday, July 13

**Psalm 24:1–2:** “The earth is the LORD’s and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers.”

Today we experience[d] history in Syracuse and Oswego, New York. Our first stop [was] the Erie Canal Museum. The Erie Canal changed the lives of people in the U.S. and Canada. Thousands of British, German and Irish immigrants provided the muscle that built this monument to humanity, using shovels and horsepower, earning less than a dollar a day.

We visited the home of Matilda Joslyn Gage, freethinker, author, suffragette and abolitionist. Her home was a stop on the Underground Railroad and she worked with Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in the women’s rights movement. We remember her advice: “Think for yourself.”

Finally, we visited Safe Haven Museum in Oswego, which commemorates the stories of survival of 982 Holocaust refugees who were guests of the U.S. government for 18 months in New York.

Holy God, as we think about immigrant builders, refugees and the women who helped us be where we are today, we are humbled to be part of your story. May the memory of care and love from the people of Oswego and Syracuse be a blessing.

—Reflection by Jo Ann Burrell



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Saturday,  
July 13

Our first  
lunch  
together

Olive  
Garden,  
Syracuse



# Sunday, July 14

**Luke 6:27–36:** “But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. . . . Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. . . . But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. . . . for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.”

John Jones was a slave to the Ellzey family in Leesburg, Virginia. In 1844 he fled north, fearing he would be sold to another plantation. He settled in Elmira, New York, and became an active agent in the Underground Railroad. He worked as a sexton in the local Baptist church. During the Civil War, he buried 2,963 Confederate soldiers who died in the Elmira Prison Camp, with grace, dignity and honor. He marked each grave with a wooden cross and recorded the names of each decedent. He showed God's mercy.

—Reflection by Lois Carter



# Sunday, July 14

- ▶ Worship, FPC Elmira
- ▶ Lunch, North Presbyterian, Elmira
- ▶ Visit to Civil War prison camp—During the Civil War, Elmira, NY, was a stop on the Underground Railroad, the site of numerous Union training camps and the location of a controversial Confederate prison camp.
- ▶ John W. Jones Museum, Elmira—Because of John W. Jones, an estimated 800 fugitives of slavery reached freedom via the Elmira stop on the Underground Railroad. Nearly 3,000 Confederate prisoners of war were buried with respect and documentation in Elmira's Woodlawn Cemetery (see photo at right).
- ▶ Mark Twain Study, Elmira College
- ▶ Dinner at Hector PC (shown far right)

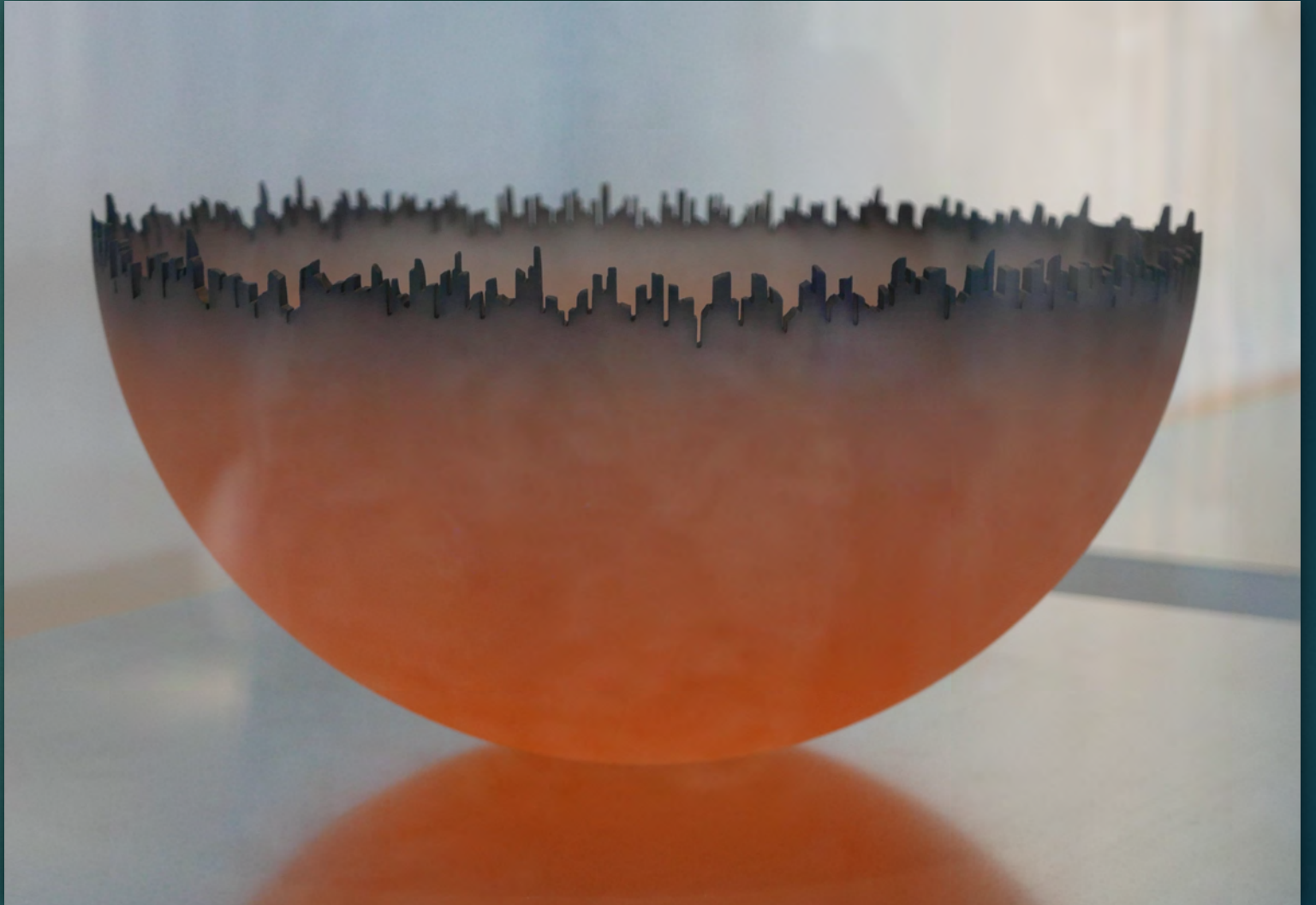


# Monday, July 15

**Jeremiah 18:1–6:** “The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ‘Come, go down to the potter’s house, and there I will let you hear my words.’ So I went down to the potter’s house, and there he was working at the wheel. The vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter’s hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as seemed good to him. Then the word of the LORD came to me: ‘Can I not do with you, O house of Israel, just as this potter has done? Just like the clay in the potter’s hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.’”

Molten glass is to the gaffer as pliable clay is to the potter. Are we willing to have our lives shaped according to God’s will, just as the gaffer or potter shapes glass or clay into beautiful and useful objects?

—Reflection by Lois Carter



# Monday, July 15

- ▶ Visit to the Corning Glass Museum, Corning, New York
- ▶ Lunch, Watkins Glen PC
- ▶ Tour of Lakewood Vineyards, one of dozens of vineyards in the region and family-owned and operated.
- ▶ Visit to Camp Whitman, a summer camp operated by Genesee Presbytery and Geneva Presbytery—This camp is inclusive of all, including those with developmental disabilities.
- ▶ Dinner with a Mennonite family—a glimpse inside the life of a family with an intentionally simple lifestyle—close to the land, with the traditional division of labor that historically has been part of farm life



In photos from left to right:  
Rev. Cara Milne, Watkins Glen  
PC; Jeri Joy, participant from  
Synod of the Rocky Mountains;  
Tiffany window, Corning  
Museum, Corning, New York



# Monday, July 15—Stronger together





Erma Jones, right, with Pauline Johnson, great-great-niece of Harriet Tubman

# Tuesday, July 16

**Exodus 6:6–8:** “Say therefore to the Israelites, ‘I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my people and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to gave to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.’”

Harriet Tubman rejected the teachings of the New Testament that urged slaves to be obedient; she found guidance in the Old Testament message of deliverance and hope.

“Mighty God of the exodus, . . . Hear the cries of those who are troubled. Calm the thoughts of those who are afraid. Lead all those who grieve into new life. Mighty God of the exodus, as the waters of cruelty part and the path of compassion becomes solid, we remember your love; we rejoice in your grace; and we recognize the power that makes the world tremble.”\*

\* Excerpt from *Together We Pray: A Prayer Book for Families* by J. Bradley Wigger (Chalice Press: St. Louis, MO, 2005)

—Reflection by Rita Hooper

# Tuesday, July 16

- ▶ Equal Rights Heritage Center, Auburn
- ▶ Seward House Museum, Auburn
- ▶ High tea lunch at Case Mansion, First Presbyterian Church, Auburn
- ▶ Willard Chapel
- ▶ Dinner, First Presbyterian Church, Skaneateles, New York

**Note:** Transportation between points was by bus. Participants became close to the woman who was our bus driver, following closely the imminent and premature birth of her granddaughter.

USAME participants outside  
Equal Rights Heritage Center,  
Auburn, New York



# Tuesday, July 16



Clockwise, left to right: Image of Jesus in the Seward House; the aqua brigade outside the Equal Rights Heritage Center; Rev. Banu Moore welcoming guests (including former Churchwide moderator Kris Gerling) to a tea luncheon at Auburn First PC's Case Mansion; Beth Kocheiser, Cheryl Mayo, Julie Launey, Martha Manning and Chris Evans.



# Wednesday, July 17

**Psalm 1:1–3:** “Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night. They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”

Historians describe Susan B. Anthony as a reformer. When we, Presbyterians, speak of reformers, we think of Martin Luther, who posted his 95 theses on church doors in Germany in 1517. We also think of John Calvin and John Knox. But we often overlook other leaders who shaped our church and world. Susan B. Anthony was raised in a Christian home and certainly found in scripture the basis to call for reforms that were urgent to her day and to ours—women’s suffrage, women’s rights and abolition of slavery.

As Presbyterian Women, we are called to be reformers who seek justice and righteousness, who find in scripture liberty and peace. We are called to be the tree planted by the streams that yields fruit far beyond its season, as Susan B. Anthony did.

—Reflection by Danilie Hilerio-Villanueva

At right, Susan B. Anthony and Frederick Douglass having tea in Rochester.



# Wednesday, July 17

- ▶ Susan B. Anthony Museum and House, Rochester, NY
- ▶ ROC SALT—Service and Learning Center in Genesee Valley Presbytery
- ▶ Lunch with Coffee Connection, a women's empowerment project of ROC SALT
- ▶ Mount Hope Cemetery to visit Susan B. Anthony's and Frederick Douglass' graves
- ▶ Dinner, Phelps United Church (PC(USA) and UMC)



# Wednesday, July 17



# Thursday, July 18

You crown the year with your bounty;  
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.  
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,  
the hills gird themselves with joy,  
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,  
the valleys deck themselves with grain,  
they shout and sing together for joy.

—Psalm 65:11–13

The Native American tale of “The Three Sisters” (corn, beans and squash) tells of the abundance available to humankind thanks to a generous Creator. From ancient days, corn, beans and squash were welcomed and understood as precious gifts of the Great Spirit, for they truly are foods of life. The sisters thrive together, but grieve when they are apart. They are interdependent, and it is at their peril that they forget God’s intent: corn grows tall and gives beans structure to grow upward; beans, in turn, provide nitrogen that nourishes sister corn, and provide a steady base for windier days. Prickly squash vines keep weeds at bay. Let us remember that our interdependence is of God. We are blessed to serve one another and creation. We are blessed to see with our own eyes the glory of God’s good world.

—Reflection by Carissa Herold



# Thursday, July 18

**Note:** “You are in the aboriginal territory of the Onondaga Nation, the center of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy, where women have had political voice for 1,000 years. The Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga and Seneca nations came together in 909 and formed a political alliance on the shores of nearby Onondaga Lake. Joined later by the Tuscarora, this confederacy, based on peace, absolute equality and thankful acknowledgment of the connection of all life, is arguably the oldest continuing democracy in the world. The Haudenosaunee provided a model of democracy for the Founding Fathers, as [Matilda Joslyn] Gage knew.”

—matildajoslyngage.org

Guide at Ganondagan State Historic Site



# Thursday, July 18

- ▶ Ganondagan State Historic Site/Seneca Cultural Arts Center
- ▶ Box lunches at Ganondagan provided by Canandaigua United Church (PC(USA) and American Baptist)
- ▶ Joseph Smith Family Farm
- ▶ Rotary Club barbecue
- ▶ Hill Comorah Pageant



# Friday, July 19

**Leviticus 19:33–34:** “When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”

We visited two programs that seek to reach the underserved, the “alien among us.” Liturgia Rural Worker Education Center in Lyons, NY, offers programs for rural and migrant workers. It is hosted by the Rural Migrant Ministry organization.

Newark/Wayne Hospital's Mothers and Baby Tobacco-free Program works in a rural community where there is a need for prenatal care, where infant mortality rates are high and birth weights are low, on average. The program helps expectant mothers stop smoking. Program participants get training courses to aid them in breaking their addiction and vouchers to help with diapers.

Gracious God, you call us in many ways to live out the hope of the resurrection. Through our mission experience, may we gain new insights and greater appreciation for the empowered women who have laid a firm foundation for us and who continue to work for the good of all people today. Amen.

—Reflection by Linda Werts



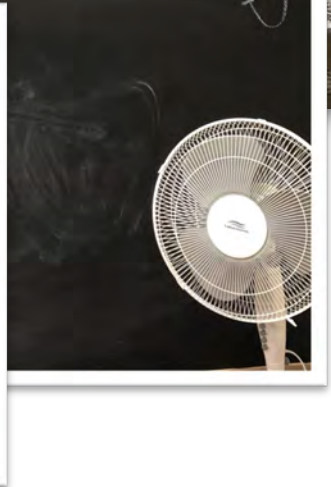
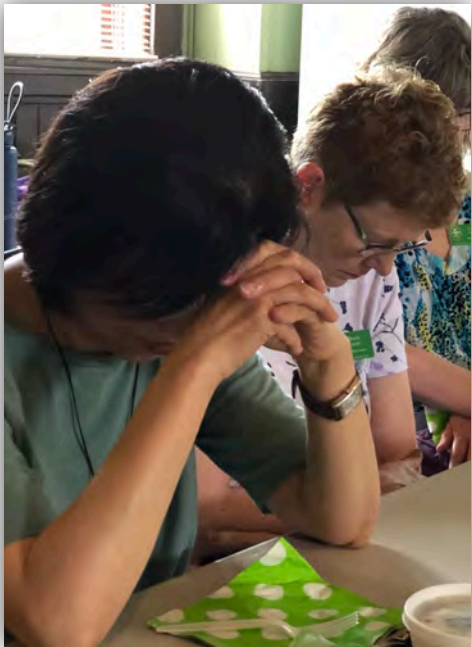
# Friday, July 19

- ▶ Newark-Wayne Community Hospital: Mothers and Babies Tobacco-Free Program
- ▶ Liturgia Rural Worker Education Center, a branch of the Rural Migrant Ministries Lyons, NY
- ▶ Lunch with Liturgia; we learned that Liturgia helps immigrants with navigating paperwork, finding assistance, and most importantly, knowing their rights as workers and human beings.
- ▶ Prepare dinner for Family Promise family

USAME participants Gayle Timilione, Gail Heimbuck, Lisa Gray, Erma Jones, Martha Manning, Chris Evans, Avys Massey, Jo Ann Burrell and Linda Werts (local planner), with Liturgia interns (second and third from left) and Rural Migrant Ministry interim coordinator for Western New York, Gabriella Quintanilla, center.



# Friday, July 19



# Saturday, July 20

**Exodus 1:15–16:** “The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, one of whom was named Shiprah and the other Puah, ‘When you act as midwives to the Hebrew women, and see them on the birthstool, if it is a boy, kill him. If it is a girl, she shall live.’ But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live.”

**Exodus 2:1–6a:** “Now a man from the house of Levi was married to a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son’ and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she placed the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river . . . She saw the basket among the reeds . . . When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him . . .”

**Reflection:** The midwives act out of goodness and fear of God; Moses’ mother and sister, and the Pharaoh’s daughter, act out of hope in their own places in life. Their individual actions and deeds work together to bring life to Moses. No one is more important or less important than the others. . . . Like these women, we don’t work alone. Together, we continue on the journey that our foremothers began

—By JyungIn Lee

*The First Wave*, by Lloyd Lillie, depicts early leaders of equal rights movements in New York.



# Saturday, July 20

- ▶ Women's Rights National Historical Park
- ▶ Convention Days activities, Seneca Falls
- ▶ Lunch, First Presbyterian Church, Seneca Falls
- ▶ National Women's Hall of Fame
- ▶ Dinner, West Fayette Presbyterian Church

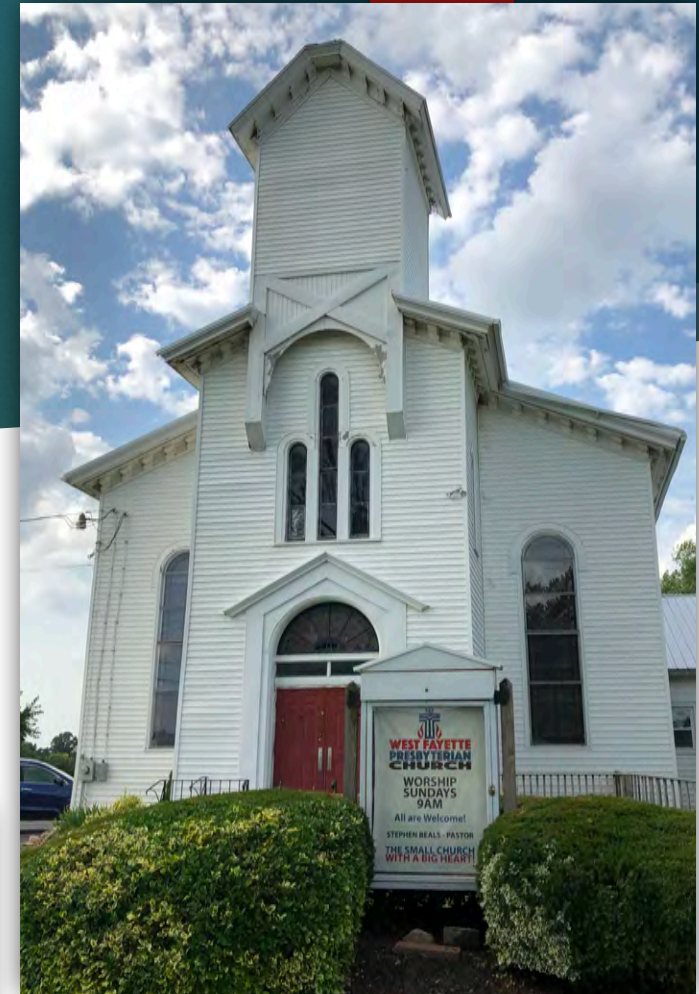
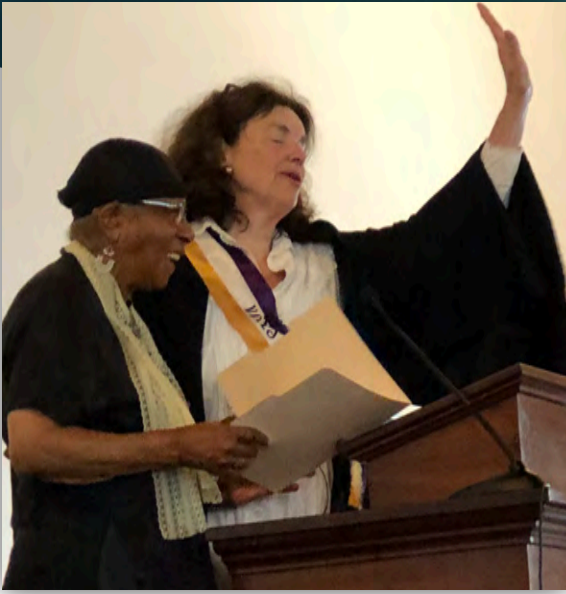


Actors portray Mary Ann M'Clintock, Lucretia Mott, Jane Hunt and Elizabeth Cady Stanton planning the first Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York.

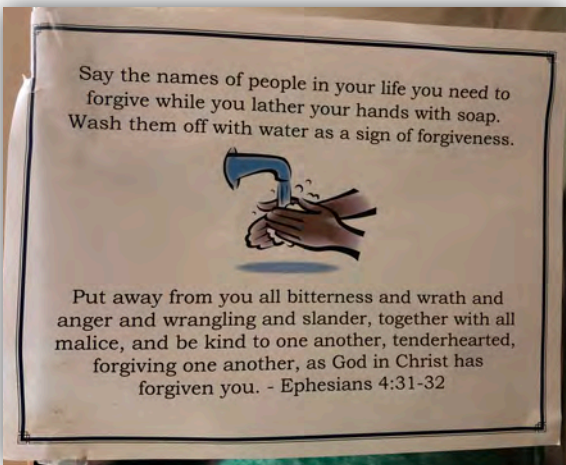


Wesleyan Chapel, site of the first Women's Rights Convention, held in 1848 in Seneca Falls, New York.

# Saturday, July 20



Photos clockwise from top left: Pauline Johnson (Harriet Tubman's great-great-niece) with Coline Jenkins (Elizabeth Cady Stanton's great-great-granddaughter); FPC Seneca Falls; lunch at FPC Seneca Falls; West Fayette PC; our hosts at West Fayette; a sign at FPC Seneca Falls that urges congregation members to forgive others.



# Sunday, July 21

**Micah 6:8:** "He has told you, O mortal, what is good: and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

**Reflection:** We learned during the trip of many injustices and unkindnesses that people have been exposed to and suffered. We also learned of the fortitude, determination and persistence they exhibited to overcome these obstacles. Women and men suffered discrimination, loss of freedoms, slavery, religious persecution, and more. Some were strangers in a new land, facing many challenges. Their strength and faith in overcoming these challenges are examples for us.

How do we respond to challenges and how do we respond to God's call to do what is required of us: to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God? We are called to advocate for those who suffer from homelessness, hunger, racial inequity, discrimination, human rights violations, violence and more. May we be mindful of our call to walk with others hand in hand as we fight injustice together.

—By Gail Heimbuck



Native American painting depicting the diversity of life.

# Sunday, July 21

- ▶ Worship and lunch in various churches in area
- ▶ Visit to Prentiss House
- ▶ Final dinner and debrief at Belhurst Castle, Geneva, New York



Four USAME participants attended First Presbyterian Church, Bath, New York. This church features Tiffany windows, wall murals, light fixtures, pulpit and more. Rev. Stanley Bhasker says of his congregation, "I should not be the face of the church. The members should be the face of the church." Above, one of the of the young families that are members at Bath FPC.



# Sunday, July 20



Photos to right: bed and painting from Narcissa Prentiss home; Narcissa was an early Presbyterian missionary to Native Americans; USAME participants at Belhurst Castle; Seneca Lake at Belhurst Castle.

## 2019 USAME Participants

**Laurie Peil**

Synod of Alaska-Northwest

**Beth Kochheiser**

Synod of the Covenant

**Joanne Schuetz**

Synod of Living Waters

**Jan Albert**

Synod of Living Waters

**Rhoda Frasier**

Synod of Mid-America

**Cheryl Mayo**

Synod of Mid-America

**Avys Massey**

Synod of Mid-Atlantic

**Lisa Gray**

Synod of the Northeast

**Corinne Quinn**

Synod of the Pacific

**Gail Heimbuck**

Synod of the Rocky Mountains

**Jeri Joy**

Synod of the Rocky Mountains

**Erma Jones**

Synod of South Atlantic

**Gayle Timillione**

Synod of Southern California/Hawaii

**Chris Evans**

Synod of the Sun

**Julie Launey**

Synod of the Sun

**Carol Main**

Synod of the Southwest

**Martha Manning**

Synod of the Trinity

**Jo Ann Burrell**

Vice Moderator, Mission Relationships,  
Presbyterian Women in the PC(USA)

**Lois Carter**

Local Planning Committee

**Virginia Champlin**

Local Planning Committee Coordinator

**Carissa Herold**

Staff, PW in the PC(USA)

**Yvonne Hileman**

Staff, PW in the PC(USA)

**Rita Hooper**

Local Planning Committee

**JyungIn Lee**

Moderator, Presbyterian Women  
in the PC(USA)

**Margaret Mitsuyasu**

Staff, Synod of the Northeast

**Linda Werts**

Local Planning Committee



Learn more about the 2019 USA Mission Experience  
in the November/December 2019 issue of *Horizons* magazine.



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