

2009 JPD Women & Religion Annual Report

April 2009 – March 2010

The Women and Religion Facilitator's Circle (Randa Todd, Laura Myers-Paligo, Nuala Carpenter, Chris Higgins, Anne Slater, Alix Berenzy, Heather Gehron-Rice, Anne Mason, Sherri Philpott, and Margaret Bakker) worked this year to promote our mission as women in community, which is to explore our authentic selves and work to promote gender equity in our lives, our congregations, and in society. Our Facilitator's Circle meets two or three times per year to plan and implement our goals.

Our meeting in May 2009 allowed us to finalize plans for the retreat to be held in October and to begin developing ideas concerning location and theme for the next retreat in 2010.

Our Annual JPD Women & Religion Retreat was held in October 2009. We had a very successful weekend serving 30 UU women. "Discover Your Voice" was held at the Bishop Claggett Retreat Center in Buckeystown, Maryland. Anne Mason and Sonny Ditzler used vocal and rhythm techniques to help us reclaim the power of our bodies and voices. This offered women from all over the district the opportunity to meet and connect with each other over a longer period of time. Once again, we offered "Help A Sister Scholarships" which enabled women to attend who otherwise could not have afforded it. During the retreat we held a silent auction to help support UUW&R and their mission.

At our January 2010 meeting we gathered ideas for additional projects that JPD W&R could become involved in to further our mission, especially in the area of gender equity. We also discussed the topic and presenters for the retreat to be held in October 2010.

The 5th Annual Drumming Circle for women ages 10 and up was held on March 13, 2010 at the Main Line Unitarian Church in Devon, Pennsylvania. Jaqui MacMillan of Westminster, Maryland, facilitated our learning. This event serves as another way to reach women in our district, promotes communication, and provides a sense of belonging to a community of women. We provided a great day of communion and learning for 30 women and two girls.

We have a Woman-Link in most of the churches and fellowships of the JPD. We strive to have one in each congregation. These women serve as the primary link between Women & Religion and the women of the JPD.

We have a library for JPD W&R and we make available to all women in the district a variety of materials including books, videos, DVDs, curricula, and sermon topics.

Our web site, www.jpdw.org, has been updated and a new library program is to be installed in the near future. Our web site increases public awareness of our mission and activities both JPD-sponsored, and congregation-sponsored. Anne Slater and Laura Myers-Paligo received training on working with the web site. A section called "Sister to Sister" is being added that will allow women to share their thoughts about favorite books and movies and the affect these have on us as women.

Submitted by Laura M. Myers-Paligo, Co-convenor of JPD Women & Religion