

Greetings from ABWIM's National Director



This past year—and especially this past month— has been a time in which the goodness of God's people and the greatness of God have become eminently clear. I know for a fact that I am where I am today not because of my own doing but only because of the grace of God and the prayers of God's people. With that in mind, I start this new position full of gratitude and absolutely overwhelmed by the grace and generosity of so many friends, family and colleagues in ministry. Thank you!

As I begin my ministry, the words of Frederick Buechner come to mind, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

The world needs women in ministry. The world hungers for the gifts of women clergy. I acutely feel this need and my heart longs to respond. Equally acutely my heart jumps with joy—or, in Buechner's words, "deep gladness"—for women in ministry, and I have a deep desire to address this need in a way which supports women in the living out of their call and the utilizing of their gifts.

Early in my ministry I was part of a wonderful group of women ministers who strengthened and supported my ministry. When we gathered, I would often bring my kids, which at that time were my two daughters. (Two sons have since been added to the mix!) One time the church I was pastoring happened to be hosting a community service at which a male pastor was going to be preaching. When he arrived, decked out in ministerial garb, my then 5 year old, Danica, exclaimed to me, "You mean, men can be ministers too?!" I hadn't realized the impact this group of women ministers had in shaping her perspective! When the gifts of all God's people are fully shared, our perspective changes; our world is transformed.

To that end, I want to be part of working towards the full participation and full partnership of women and men in ministry. When we live as partners in mutual ministry we more fully live out God's image in our lives and God's design for our ministry. How can we do that?

This past Mother's day this same daughter and I ran the first ever Kalamazoo marathon. Yes, 26.2 miles. I am still feeling every one of those miles and especially that last .2 of a mile even as I now write! She ran because of me; I finished because of her. Together we did what neither one of us could do alone.

As women in ministry we can partner with each other to do together what none of us can do alone. As we begin this journey together I hope ABWIM can be a place and a paradigm of partnership that we may live into and live out the dynamic and transformative partnership of God's new creation.

I began by saying "thanks!" and that is where I end. I am thankful to be here! I am here quite literally because of you. Yes, YOU! And I am here for you. More exactly, we are here for each other. Let's connect!

In closing, I want to especially thank Rev. Holly Bean and the ABWIM search committee, all of whom have been patient with the process, persistent in their prayers and passionate about the work to be done. Indeed, there is much to do; together we can do it! I invite your participation and your prayers as we begin this journey together. 26.2 miles is suddenly sounding short! Would you run this race with me—not just a marathon but this multi-faceted, many colored, mosaic of ministry?!

God is doing a new thing. Won't you join me...

Your partner in ministry,

Pat

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