

Linda Gaden, Minister of the Word and Sacrament

Bethlehem Presbyterian Church, Pittstown

Local Church Involvement:

I am currently the installed solo pastor at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in Pittstown, NJ. I serve in that church as pastor as well as Christian educator-preparing adult bible studies and children's C.E. materials for Sunday mornings. In my community I have helped organize the No. Hunterdon Ecumenical Fellowship. We are 3 small churches (Presbyterian, Lutheran, RCA) which collaborate in a variety of services throughout the year, including a monthly service in local parks during the summer.

Presbytery Involvement:

Currently I am serving on CPM and PJC. I have also served on COM.

Have you attended General Assembly as a Commissioner before? If so, when?

Yes - 2010, 2014

Have you attended General Assembly on your own before? If so, when?

NO

Tell us about yourself:

I became a member of the Morristown Presbyterian on March 6, 1988. I was ordained as an elder Feb. 21, 1993, serving on the Christian Education, Worship and Music, and Outreach Committees. Additionally, I served as a church school teacher and helped organize and teach VBS. On several occasions, I planned and implemented the children's portion of an all family church retreat. This included lessons, activities and worship for an entire weekend. My commitment to Presbyterian Women led me to serve as moderator for Newton Presbytery and the Morristown Church. Serving as Studies Chairperson for PW, I facilitated several Lenten Bible studies, presenting shortened studies to individual Circles. I have served as Spiritual coordinator for Presbyterian Women of Newton Presbytery. I have participated in the Newton-Nairobi Partnership for 15 years. I traveled to Kenya 7 times. I have shared my faith and commitment to Jesus Christ through various missions (Kenya, Dominican Republic,

Hurricane Katrina relief, Hurricane Sandy Relief); engaging myself in bible study with our mission partners during some of these trips. I have served Presbyterian Women on a Synod level helping organize several annual retreats. I also have served as retreat leader and co leader at both Presbytery and Synod levels; including a mini retreat within a larger retreat for children of women in attendance. Both adult and children themes coincided. Recently (10/2025) I led a Presbytery PW retreat. In June of 2008, I became a commissioned lay pastor through the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary. I was commissioned as sole (lay) pastor to the Mount Freedom Presbyterian Church (2008-2010). I worked as a Spiritual Support at Broadway House for Continuing Care in Newark, NJ which provided care for residents who are HIV positive (2010-2016). I was called to a second CLP position at Rockport Presbyterian Church (2013- 2017), again serving as solo pastor. Between August 2017 and April 2019, Linda served as a Covenant Student Pastor at First Presbyterian Church of Stillwater. In September of 2016 I entered seminary. I graduated from University of Dubuque Theological Seminary in 2019 with my MDiv. I was ordained in August 2020, and installed at Bethlehem Presbyterian Church in September 2020.

What excites you or concerns you about G.A.?

I am excited about attending G.A. because it always gives hope for the future of the church and affirms that Presbyterian Church is alive and heading in the right direction regarding faithful discipleship.

What excites you or concerns you about the church today?

What concerns me is that some have forgotten that we are all created in God's image. As such, we should treat one another with love and respect. I find that there is a division in understanding Jesus' mission with and for us and the acknowledgement that we are ALL children of God; not a select number.

