Goodbye and Thank You to Heureuse Kaj and Rachel Beaver!

This Spring, WATER says goodbye to two beloved Staff Associates, Heureuse Kaj and Rachel Beaver.

Heureuse Kaj, Master of Divinity candidate at Wesley Theological Seminary, came to us through Wesley’s Practice in Mission and Ministry program. She brought a unique eye for liturgy and worship, helping to plan WATER’s monthly rituals. Her time at WATER culminated in a January 2018 ritual against human trafficking, an issue she became passionate about in her native Democratic Republic of Congo and through missionary work in Japan. Heureuse will continue in her second year of Practice in Mission and Ministry at Asbury United Methodist Church and focus on raising awareness of human trafficking.

Rachel Beaver, a recent graduate of Randolph College, joined us with a keen awareness of current social justice and theological issues. Her passion for feminist Biblical scholarship and early Christianity made her a welcome addition to our staff. Rachel assisted in projects related to WATERtools, wrote many a blog blurb for the Recommended Resources section of our website, helped organize WATER archives, and more. This fall, Rachel will be heading off to New York City to pursue a Master of Arts in Religious Studies at Union Theological Seminary.

A heartfelt thanks and congratulations to both Heureuse and Rachel. It is always hard to say goodbye to our staff, but we cannot wait to see what the two of you will do next! Come visit often.

Congratulations, Mary, for the Heart Award!

Mary E. Hunt received the 2018 Heart Award from the Metropolitan Community Church in New York on March 31 at their Annual Easter Awards Banquet.

During her Holy Saturday Sermon, “Wishing You a Wake-Easter,” she praised Rev. Pat Bumgardner for “thirty plus years of faithful, creative, maybe I say ‘weike’ ministry in this church. You are widely respected for your leadership in the Global Justice Network of the MCC.”

Mary closed her sermon with a challenge: “Take home tonight a reignited fire in our spirits. Go home with reset energies in our souls to do the work of justice, to live woke. Let the alleluias resound and the joyous struggles continue. We are indeed ‘threatened with resurrection!’”

The text of Mary’s sermon can be found on WATER’s website, www.waterwomensalliance.org/wishing-you-a-wake-easter/
Women-Church Convergence supports young leaders organizing against gun violence

Dear Anti-Gun Violence Leaders,

We, religious feminists rooted in the Catholic tradition, greet, applaud, and join you in your efforts to eradicate gun violence. Your courageous and insightful leadership is making a big difference.

We are deeply impressed by those of you who remind us of our justice-seeking children in your call for non-violence, an end to false notions of masculinity, and the embrace of all diverse and unique members of our communities. We write to convey our gratitude and pledge our support.

Thank you for stepping up and speaking out against the epidemic of gun-related killings that has marked your lives already. Colombians, False Night Club, Parkland, and Sandy Hook are constant and growing reminders that the whole country, that has almost as many guns as people, is in deep danger. You are right to be afraid, and you feel, the drills you endure, the decisions you make as you go to school and out to play. No children should have to experience any of that.

Your leadership is vital. We stand with you because the burden of social justice belongs to all of us.

Young people led the civil rights and anti-war movements. Many of us in our youth spearheaded women’s and LGBTQI efforts. You do the same. These commitments mature and ensue from a whole society, from oldest to youngest, to make change. That is why we link our hearts and voices with yours.

We concur that automatic weapons and bomb stocks have no place in a civilized country. We support an end to concealed weapons and a start to stricter licensing procedures.

We are willing to discuss changes to the Second Amendment hoping that a robust conversation might save lives. We join you in recognizing the particular vulnerability of communities of color to gun violence and in acknowledging and eradicating the underlying racism that causes it. We are all in for a safer country and willing to participate in the myriad ways necessary to achieve it.

To our allies and activists, thank you protesters and change agents. Whenever Emma González led us into silence at the March 24, 2018 rally in Washington, D.C., she demonstrated the impact of fusing spiritual with political power. We call on all of you to work for support every month.

Thank you for your words of encouragement and for being a voice to those who are silent. We will collaborate with you to make it so.