

Meet WATER Interns!

Through WATER Internships, we educate budding feminist theologians, ministers, and activists. To date, we have mentored more than 100 interns who are now going about WATER-related work in education, ministry, and action worldwide.

We have two interns for 2023. Pamella Miller, born in Jamaica now a student at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, DC, is doing her practicum, Partnership in Mission and Ministry, at WATER. Patrice Rupp from Germany is spending a year with us from Eirene and the Brethren Volunteer Service.



Pamella (standing in her office at WATER) with (left) Techika Rhodes and (right) Clarafrancie Cromer Sowers. They both did internships at WATER when they were M.Div. students at Wesley. Techika is now doing her D.Min. at Howard University School of Divinity. Clarafrancie is doing the D.Min. at Wesley. She also serves as a mentor and clergy learning partner to Wesley PMM students at WATER, currently with Pamella.

Pamella Miller is from Jamaica where she worked in the corporate world in accounting and auditing. When she moved to the United States, she pursued a Masters in International Management at University of Maryland Global Campus (formerly UMUC). She felt a call to ministry and is now working on a Masters in Divinity at Wesley. She intends to seek ordained ministry as an Elder in the United Methodist Church and prepare for a career in chaplaincy serving in local communities.

She came to WATER from Wesley as part of her community engagement courses. Her previous Resident Chaplain internship opened her eyes to some social issues that WATER can address with social justice partners. She is intrigued to learn that two of her seminarian classmates were also interns at WATER!

Patrice Rupp from the Brethren Voluntary Service is delighted to spend a year at WATER as a Staff Associate. She came to the U.S. through a German organization called Eirene which partners with the Church of the Brethren.

Before her voluntary service, Patrice was a student at Heidelberg University in Baden-Württemberg, Germany. Her hobbies include local politics, church service, and voluntary firefighting. After her service year she will continue studying sociology and psychology in Heidelberg. She is curious to experience the impact of feminist theology and the ways it creates space for people all over the world to connect and discuss. Patrice says: "I'm looking forward to an enriching year at WATER!"



Patrice working at her desk on Mary's archives.



Happy New Year from WATER!

May 2023 be full of equality and peace, ecology and joy.
Our common efforts will help make it so.
Thank you for ALL you do!

Who We Are

WATER is a global interreligious network, a non-profit educational center and public charity, a spiritual space, a center for dialogue on feminism, faith, and justice. We connect activists, religious leaders, students, scholars, and allies who are using feminist values to create social and religious change. Founded in 1983 by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu, we have been empowering people to address structural violence for forty years—making WATER one of the oldest feminist religious non-profit organizations in the world.

Join the WATER community as we work toward inclusive theologies and rituals, push for social and religious change, and collaborate from inclusive perspectives. To learn more about what we do, visit us at www.waterwomensalliance.org.

Mary E. Hunt, Diann L. Neu: Co-directors | Pamella Miller, Patrice Rupp: Staff Associates | Emily Neufeld, Anali North Martin: Communications | Joe Scinto, Cheryl Nichols, and Charlotte Cook: Volunteers

WATER is a 501(c)3 organization. All donations are tax deductible. We thank you for your support.
©2023 Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual.



Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual • NEWSLETTER

Volume 30 • Issue 3 • 2022-3

Beautiful Miracles and More *By Mary E. Hunt*

Argentina's World Cup victory came at just the right time. The country was reeling from inflation, governmental crises, and enough political intrigue to leave the nation second guessing itself. The national soccer team snatched victory from the equally skilled French team in a global thriller of a game that returned the Copa to the soccer-besotted country for the first time since 1986. Someone in Buenos Aires put a sign near their flag: "We deserve beautiful miracles and they will happen." Indeed they did, and they do.

This story parallels so much of contemporary life. Just when one thinks the game is over, something emerges to turn the tide. American democracy was on its last legs on January 6, 2021, but now the then-president faces the real possibility of criminal and/or civil charges. Roman Catholic anti-abortion leaders have acted with reckless impunity for decades and recently one of them was defrocked by the Vatican. The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, came, saw, and conquered a bipartisan U.S. Congress simply by the transparency of his request for help. Whether he gets arms, and indeed whether more war will help anything are highly debatable. But the miracle of his presence against the odds—security alone would dictate that he stay home—was a thing of beauty.

Climate change has the world by the tail. At a recent meeting in Toronto, 190 countries agreed to a UN initiative that will protect nearly a third of the world's land and water. Okay, neither the U.S. nor the Vatican were part of

the consensus, but the miracle is that there is plenty that can be done while these two players sit on the margins and suck their thumbs.

Death row inmates who have been exonerated and released from prison are beautiful miracles all. Life is short for even the most heinous criminals, so a little mercy goes a long way.

We at WATER are quite familiar with beautiful miracles. Interns who train here and then come back wanting recommendations or to mentor other interns are wonderful examples of a cycle of life that yields many amazing results. Donors who step up just when the time is ripe for a new program or project are the stuff of miracles. A high functioning team effort and other professional collaborations are what melt the hard issues of homogeneity, inequality, and exclusion into puddles of promise.

Illness survived, a suspicious mammogram proved negative, a child with problems newly solved are all beautiful miracles as well. The whole phenomenon is a reminder in the coldest, darkest days that most things are possible for those who act together in good faith. No telling how long it will take to get results. But the act of trying "to make all things new" is a miracle all its own. ■

© 2023 Mary E. Hunt is Co-founder and Co-director of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), mhunt@hers.com

Practice Gratitude for 2023 *By Diann L. Neu*

The New Year invites us to pause and reset. It is a good time to make a resolution to practice more gratitude in 2023. Simple gratitude practices include thinking of three things you are thankful for each day, starting a gratitude journal, meditating on gratitude, and showing appreciation.

Try writing down your daily blessings to boost your mood. Be grateful for a healthy meal with friends, a caring touch from a loved one, an email from an old friend, a compliment from a colleague, a new book, time to take a walk, and so much more.

Each day, counting three blessings of gratitude can contribute to your well-being. Go ahead and try it. Write down these blessings each night for a week. Be sure and add the date. You can review your blessings, and reflect on them at any time.

My Three Blessings Today (Date)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ways to Show Appreciation (Start by thanking yourself!)

- . Write an appreciation note.
- . Take a friend out for tea or coffee.
- . Say thank you!
- . Give a colleague a compliment.
- . Offer a listening presence.
- . Gaze gratefully at the stars.

© 2023 Diann L. Neu is Co-founder and Co-director of Women's Alliance for Theology, Ethics, and Ritual (WATER), dneu@hers.com



WATER Returns Archives to Sister Organizations

Throughout our 40-year herstory, we have used and archived newsletters and other periodicals from women's organizations in religion both national and international. This is a unique trove of important documents telling the history of our movements.

We decided it was time to return these treasures to the various organizations so they could archive them properly with their materials. Directors and staff were thrilled as many of them had never seen, much less saved some of their organization's early work. While many materials were already archived, there was a resounding, grateful response to getting another copy or filling in a missing issue. We are delighted that women's herstory is being preserved!

Here are a few examples of the hundreds of feminist files we collected, and returned.

. Kate McElwee of *Women's Ordination Conference* had never touched WOC's early newsletters because they were long archived when she became Executive Director. Kate came to the WATER office to receive copies of WOC's prophetic newsletter, *New Women, New Church*, from Vol. 3 No. 1 January 1980 to Vol. 46 No. 1 Winter 2022.

. Arlene Goetze, editor of *NETWORK for Catholic Women's Spirituality* newspaper, was delighted that Santa Clara University wanted WATER's collection from Nov/Dec 1997 to Dec 2004 for their archives.

. Lē Weaver of *Christian Feminism Today* received copies of their newsletter and of *Daughters of Sarah* from 1984 until publication ceased.

. Regina Bannon was happy to now have her own copies of SEPA-WOC's earlier and current newsletters, *Equal wRites*, so she does not have to search for them in archives.

. Kwok Pui-lan accepted *In God's Image*, from 1982 to 2015, a quarterly journal which provides Asian women a platform for sharing their experiences of struggle, achievement, reflections, dreams, and aspirations.

. *Women's Theological Center* materials went back to Nancy Richardson for the archives of that group.

There is no way to overestimate the value of our historical documents. Save, share, and archive!



Kate McElwee of Women's Ordination Conference.

"Thank You" from WATER Staff and Former Interns!

With WATER's 40th Anniversary near, we look back at our herstory and ahead at the challenges awaiting in 2023. As we plan, it is important for us to know that we will be meeting those challenges with your renewed support. Thank you.

WATER's accomplishments are directly attributed to the unfailing loyalty and generosity of involved people like you.

With your support, we have been able to reach colleagues in more than twenty countries through our monthly Zoom programs and collaboration. See Program Highlights page 3. We will continue these programs and more in 2023.

Of particular note, the **Elaine Donaldson Legacy Fund** continues to provide bedrock support for the work and programs of WATER, including those focused on feminist psychology and religion. We are grateful to Donna Katherine Goehle for this exceptional life-giving gift.

We are committed to sharing the resources of feminist studies in religion with a broad audience. With your help, we can do so. Many thanks.



(l to r) Cindy Lapp, Pamela Miller, Techika Rhodes, Mary E. Hunt, Diann Neu, Clarafrancie Cromer Sowers, Joe Scinto, Patrice Rupp in a festive mood.

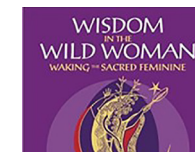
Program Highlights for Fall 2022

Thank you to all who led and participated in these Zoom programs. We had people from more than 20 countries join us! You can find video, audio, and notes at www.waterwomensalliance.org under Programs.

WATERmeditations



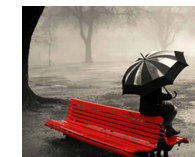
In September, **Mary E. Hunt** invited us to meditate on "Our Spirits, Ourselves" in a riff on the famous woman's medical self-help book "*Our Bodies, Ourselves*." We explored what spiritual self-help looks like. The many forms of feminist spirituality that are available globally comprise a resource as worthy as the groundbreaking publication on health.



In October, **Lillian Lewis**, priest and writer, activated our shaman ancestral energy. We leaned into the Day of Dead with reflection on "Looking for My Antlers, Leaping the Worlds."



In November, **Pamella Miller**, Wesley Theological Seminary student, invited us to "Rest to Achieve Potential." She emphasized how important it is to rest for renewal in a hectic world.



In December, **Brad Lutz**, retired pastor, presented the poem "Life will bloom when it is ready" by Vic Lejon. He guided us through "Waiting" together as a source of strength and peace.

WATERrituals with Diann L. Neu

In September, we gathered to "**Return Thanks with Hildegard of Bingen**." She is one of the most gifted spiritual teachers of all time, one of only four women to be named a Doctor of the Church.



In October, we came together to "**Walk in Providence with Mother Théodore Guérin**," the eighth American saint and the foundress of the Sisters of Providence at St. Mary-of-the-Woods, IN. We shared the words and works of Mother Théodore to capture her spirit and imagine what we need to become saints.



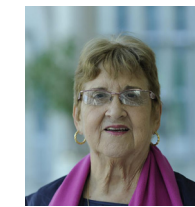
In November, we were "**Grateful in Hard Times**." We greeted the Season of Thanksgiving with things we are grateful for, even though illness, wars, unjust economics, climate disasters, and so much more create hardships and injustice.



In December, we explored "**Bringing the Light of Wisdom for Winter Solstice**." On the day before the Winter Solstice, we had the opportunity to draw on our natural resources and strengths.



WATERtalks



In September, we celebrated with **Ofelia Ortega** of Matanzas, Cuba, the publication of her groundbreaking book, *Cuban Feminist Theology: Visions and Praxis*. Shannon Clarkson, Cherie White, and Mary E. Hunt discussed with Ofelia her extensive work in Cuba, Geneva, and around the world.



Toba Spitzer joined us in October to talk about her compelling book, *God Is Here: Reimagining the Divine*. Integrating Jewish spiritual and ethical teachings into daily life, she guided us to experience new ways of thinking about the sacred.



In November, **Kwok Pui-lan** spoke about her important new book, *Postcolonial Politics and Theology: Unraveling Empire for a Global World*. This was a welcome conversation on the day after the midterm elections as she raised the importance of political theology globally and the complexities of messy democracy.

WATERteas

In December, **Rosemary Ganley**, Canadian writer and activist, asked a very hard question: Is responsible travel still possible? She led us up to the conversation by sharing the saga of her trip to the Galapagos which Ecuador guards against rampant tourism. Still, is the potential damage to persons and places outweighed by the great goods of solidarity and sharing that are all part of travel?



WATER and Women of Dignity Collaboration

We gathered in October with Jewish colleagues **Linda Holtzman and Deborah Brin** for "*LGBTQ Jewish Rabbis Share Insights*." They explored their storied careers both in and out of the pulpit. Women across faith traditions compared notes on our respective ministry experiences. The successes and failures of our efforts at gender equality made for provocative discussion.

Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network

Mary E. Hunt gathered the **Feminist Liberation Theologians' Network** in November at the American Academy of Religion meeting in Denver, Colorado. They honored the rich legacy of Rosemary Radford Ruether, shared stories of her impact on them, and worked together on a first draft of her legacy for feminist liberation theology by mapping its many dimensions.