

## **"Heritage" - Synod of the Sun - Triennial PW Gathering**

Gene Scott, Sue Ellen Hall, and Gail Abrahamson attended the Synod of the Sun's Triennial PW Gathering at First Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City, July 15-18, 2010. The theme of the gathering, "Heritage," focused on the church's involvement with Native Americans, particularly during the settling of Oklahoma up to the present.

Keynote speaker Rev. Martha Sadongei is pastor at Central Presbyterian Church in Phoenix, AZ, the only organized urban Indian congregation in the PC(USA). She spoke of her family's history, education off the reservation, and compared "real life" Indian culture to the Hollywood version. The beat of Indian drums will never sound the same after her talks.

Missions in the Synod were highlighted by an on-site prototype model of solar panels from Solar Under the Sun connected to its own storage batteries as well as the water purification generator created by Living Waters of the World. Chris McRae from the Solar School used a PowerPoint presentation to show us the destruction of Frances Landers' schools in Haiti and the rebuilding process, which includes new solar-powered water purification systems.

Workshops included something for everyone. Gene made a dream catcher and became inspired to plan a local observance of Native American Day on September 22. Gene and Sue Ellen made beautiful music with the gathering choir while Gail tried her hand at making whacky music with boomwhackers. There were classes on Indian culture, PW peace and justice, prayer, PW missions, and the new *Horizons* Bible study. We had access to a prayer labyrinth, spiritual center, and the church's chapel.

Worship services were in the sanctuary, which is breathtaking. The ministers who provided our sermons and served communion gave us real food for the soul. Saturday evening we heard hymns sung in different languages, watched an amazing hoop dance, and joined in the Friendship Dance.

On Sunday morning after our final service, new Synod leaders were installed. Judia Foreman of Midland spoke of PW moving in new directions in the coming years. She concluded with a quote we should all remember, "God doesn't steer a parked car."