

WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Southwestern



Minnesota Synod

The SW MN Synodical Women of the ELCA gathered for their 30th annual convention Saturday, May 6, 2017, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Redwood Falls, MN. Attendance was 225. Theme was "Gathered In Grace." Theme verse was "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast." Ephesians 2:8-9 NRSV.

Opening Devotions were given by Rev. Shannon Wachter of Gloria Dei. Guest Speaker was Lenae Bulthuis with "All Is Grace." Lisa Plorin from North Dakota brought greetings from churchwide. Workshops were: Living in a World of Color by Pastor Eunice Woodberry, Lakota Heritage, Spirituality, and ART by John Sterner, Incarceration and New Life by Barb Rehtzigel, and Living with Lyme by Rebekah Reynolds. Closing Worship with Communion was led by Pastor Becca Krogstad with Pastor Linda Pedersen presiding.

Convention Offerings totaled \$8606.50. 50% was given to churchwide ministries, 25% to Campus Ministries in SW MN, and 25% to Prison Ministries. Also received was \$500 to Lutheran Disaster Response, \$2498.60 for Lutheran World Relief shipping, and \$200 to Food Packing events. In-Kind Offerings: 597 Personal Care Kits, 934 Baby Care Kits, 744 School Kits, 23 Fabric Kits, 1,276 Quilts, 71 Fleece Blankets, 391 Bars of Soap, 17 Lap Blankets, and 63 boxes of Christian literature. Cans for Katie's Fund were on the tables and \$429.25 was collected.

Four first time visitors were awarded scholarships to attend the convention. Kathy Bergs and Karen Skarphol served as mentors. The visitors shared their experiences in articles in the Communicator after the convention.

Elected to serve on the board were Vice-President-Linda Magnuson; Secretary-Diane Fredin; Board Members at Large: Karla Conrad, Betty Anderson, Marcy Chapman, Jane Tongen, and Lindy Kaden. All were for 2 year terms, except Lindy Kaden- 1 year. Many thanks to Ruth Ann Anderson, Sara Larson, and Bonnie Jaeger, outgoing board members for their faithful service.

Over 200 women from SW MN attended the 10th Triennial *All Anew* in Minneapolis in July. Bishop Jon Anderson also attended. SW MN had the largest number of attendees at the gathering. Maria Lokensgard served as Triennial Promoter, one of only 15 for the entire church. Joan Iverson completed her term on the Churchwide Board. Sara Larson was elected to serve on the Churchwide Board for the next triennium. She is chairperson of the finance committee.

Our synodical board held 6 board meetings to plan and implement leadership events and the convention. E-mail is essential to get things done, as well. This year the board conducted a Zoom meeting using computers, phones, and smart phones. It went well and gives the board meeting options. The president is an advisory member of the Synod Council. I attend to know what is going on in the SW MN Synod, and to share what the Women of the ELCA are planning and accomplishing. I also look for ways to work together on projects, such as the Hunger Packing events. Our

organization will have a display at the 2018 Synod Assembly on June 8 & 9, 2018. We will also host a servant event-assembling and tying fleece blankets for Redwood County. In February I attended the Conference of Presidents in Chicago. There I learn from other presidents, get updates on projects, experience new worship ideas, and get answers to questions.

A Leadership Training event was held September 9, 2017, at Gloria Dei Lutheran in Redwood Falls, MN. Theme was "Reach Out and Welcome." Pastor Jon Nelson gave the program. Over 80 conference officers and synod board members participated. Individual officer training was held and the in-kind offering for the 2018 convention was announced-Personal Care Kits with all kits and quilts accepted. 2019 School Kits was also announced so that summer 2018 sales can be used. 629 women attended the ten Conference Fall Gatherings. 648 women attended 9 Conference Spring Gatherings. One conference was unable to reschedule their meeting following a blizzard.

Christina Nelson is the editor of *The Communicator*, which is sent to all units, board members, and anyone who wants a copy. It is sent electronically only and can be found on our website. This has been a good thing with less paper, less cost, and no worries about the length of the issue, plus there is no charge for this service. *The Communicator* is published quarterly-January, April, July, and October. Christina also puts together our Convention Booklets and the Convention Publicity Packet, which is also sent electronically. Our own website is a reality. It is www.swmnwelca.org. Make it a favorite, so you don't miss anything!

We are always looking for good speakers, Bible study leaders, musicians, and program presenters. Contact Christina at swmnwelca@gmail.com when you have a name to share. Please get permission from the individual before you give the name and contact information. The Speaker List is updated twice per year-after Spring Gatherings and Fall Gatherings.

Conference boards do a wonderful job of planning fall and spring events. Many women attend and enjoy these very much. It is a chance to get together with friends from other congregations. I have greatly enjoyed attending and tried to visit each conference once per year. This was not always possible. I cherish the many wonderful people I have met and the inspiring programs and Bible studies given. Women of the ELCA is a special organization. I have been honored to serve as president these last 5 years. I have worked with many outstanding women on this board. It has been a highlight of my life and has enriched my faith greatly. Thank you for supporting Women of the ELCA and all you do in service to our Lord.

Blessings to you always!

Kristy Henriksen, President
SW MN SWO Women of the ELCA