

# Women<sup>of the</sup> ELCA

## The Communicator



## Eleventh Triennial Convention Highlights



On August 3-5, WELCA made history with the first ever virtual Triennial Convention. Southwestern Minnesota had 9 voting members in attendance.

To read about highlights and actions from the convention, please check out the national WELCA website at:

[www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleventh-triennial-convention)



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- [Thank You for Your Service to Southwestern Minnesota \(and Welcome!\)](#)

## A Word from Your President

Hello to ALL Women of the ELCA here in Southwestern Minnesota! Hope your Fall is going well. In some ways it seems like this year has just passed by so quickly, which is probably a sign that my life has stayed very busy so far this year!! Amidst all the issues of our world right now, may you each find something to be thankful for in your daily lives!

Your 9 voting members of SW MN joined the 260 voting members in the first ever virtual Triennial Convention back on August 3, 4, 5. It was a new experience for most of us, but the three days were basically full of business items for the Women of the ELCA. A few constitutional changes were approved. Here's the highlights of constitutional updates:

- Participating in a congregational unit is encouraged but no longer required for leadership in either the synodical or churchwide expressions of Women of the ELCA; however, voting membership in an ELCA congregation is required.
- Reducing the number of churchwide executive board members from 21 to 15, including the four officers.
- Creating more flexibility for synodical women's organization boards: The board may number "3 or more" without requiring approval from the churchwide executive board to change the number of SWO board members.
- Allowing two members of the same congregational unit to serve as leaders of an SWO; one as an officer and the other as a board member.
- Offering more flexibility in SWO leaders' titles: leaders may be called president and vice-presidents, chairs or co-chairs, conveners or co-conveners, or coordinators.

The constitution had not originally provided for digital conventions. Voting members from the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017) were called into action and, in a mail-in ballot in July, approved a constitutional amendment to hold conventions remotely or virtually, provided participants are sufficient to constitute a quorum, thus paving the way for the historic first digital convention of Women of the ELCA!

Voting members adopted several memorials that included:

- Continuing to fight human trafficking
- Continuing to support solar energy in Liberia
- Supporting and participating in Thursdays in Black
- Encouraging the practice of using reusable bags
- Encouraging immigration reform
- Engaging in education against school violence and mass shootings
- Focusing on unjust treatment of women and girls by providing education and prayers for those who have been victimized and giving voice and support to those who willingly acknowledge such treatment by saying #METOO

We are pleased to share that the new churchwide president, Joy Michalicek, is from Region 3E, Northeastern Minnesota! Besides elections the voting members approved a 2022 budget of \$1,636,250.

The convention offering will be divided equally between Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest and the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization, as designated by the churchwide board.

You can find all the information coming out of the Triennial Convention by going to [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

**CONFERENCE BOARDS:** Even though we are not holding a Fall Leadership Event this year, the synod board asks that your conference secretary please turn in your current listing of Conference Officers and Boards. Please get the information to the synod president and to the synod secretary. You can find our e-mail addresses at the end of this issue.

**UNITS:** We also ask you to keep the synod president and synod secretary up to date on your UNIT OFFICERS, so please send in your current officer and board listings. It is also important that the synod board is kept up to date on the status of each UNIT in our synod. If you know of a UNIT that has disbanded, PLEASE get that information to the synod president. An assessment of active units is to be fulfilled by the synod president. Churchwide uses the number of active units for many purposes, so it's important to know what units are active and what units have disbanded. The most important reason for knowing the number of active units in our synod is that churchwide uses the number of active units per synod to determine how many triennial voting members we are allowed to elect every 3 years. *According to the synod constitution, Article XI, Section 5, Item 2: "Each synodical women's organization shall elect one voting member for every 25 congregational, intercongregational, or special-units (or a fraction thereof) within the synodical women's organization, and each synodical women's organization shall have at least two elected voting members in addition to the president of the synodical women's organization....." SOOOOO.....if your unit has disbanded, you need to let the synod president know! Thank you!*

Addressing what constitutes an ACTIVE UNIT, here is what the Unit Constitution states: Article II, Section 2: *"To accomplish the purpose of Women of the ELCA, women in this unit shall commit themselves to a: come together for study, support, and action; b: participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation; c: support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA; and d: designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women's organization."*

Three conferences had plans to meet in person for their 2021 Fall Gatherings in September and October and hopefully many of you were able to participate.

The synod board has hopes to meet in person for a board meeting sometime this fall yet. A decision needs to be made on plans for a 2022 SWO Convention and make decisions on how the new constitution changes will affect our board. The 2022 convention will be a busy election year. Election of board members and officers as well as election of the 2023 Triennial voting members. So, if you receive a nomination

## A Word from Your President—Cont'd

letter from the synod nominating committee, please give that opportunity your heartfelt prayers to want to step up and serve!

Stay safe and enjoy what's left of 2021! I'd like to end with our Statement of Purpose.

***As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.***



## Mission Community/Justice

### **Fight Injustice with Love, Kindness, Respect and Faith, Most of all FAITH**

*"He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"* Micah 6:8

*"Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands wait for his law."* Isaiah 42:1-4

*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."* Matthew 5:9



My 10 ways to seek justice and peace:

1. Love our neighbor as we would love ourselves.
2. Forgive as we have been forgiven by God
3. Love all of humanity, respecting everyone, and see differences as a gift from God
4. Give whatever you can whenever you can. Wherever you can.

5. Humble yourself to others, each of us is not better than the next
6. Seek out injustice and help others to see it and make it Just.
7. Face your own prejudices. Work to change
8. Practice your Faith, it is a good way to fight injustice
9. Pray for peace among nations and peoples. Prayer always helps.
10. Same as #1 Love our neighbor as we would love ourselves

Dear Father,

Help us act in ways that are just and right.  
Help us to not treat people based on wealth, skin color, and other factors.  
Help us remember, You made every person in Your image and love each of us deeply.  
Help us use your Words to set us on the right path.  
Lord, Please grant your justice and peace in our communities, homes, and hearts. Amen.

"Along with all citizens, Christians and others have the responsibility to defend human rights and to work for freedom, justice, peace, environmental well being and good order." (ELCA Social Statement, The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective, 1991, pg. 5).

Jane Tongen, Louise Ferry, Kim Christianson

### What Sparks A Memory?

Each of us has an awesome brain that the Lord gave us. He even gave us a memory portion that helps us to remember the good things, some bad things, and some other things too.

What sparks memories? Is it a date, a Bible verse, a smell, a season, a flower, or even a joke?

What are Biblical days we remember? I remember Christmas and the month leading up to Christmas as the Birthday of Jesus and yes, also our Christmas Sunday School Programs. We often celebrated with singing happy birthday and even having a cake to celebrate with Jesus. We never worried about how old he happened to be that year. Easter season is another season we celebrate in churches and also in our homes. What would I do without being able to eat Chocolate Easter eggs?

Each culture of religion celebrates special holidays of their faith. What are other religious holidays we celebrate? Lutherans often celebrate reformation when there was a separation from the Catholic Church began by Martin Luther at the end of October. We often celebrate Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation dates. Do you have a picture to remember those dates and events in your life? I have several pictures of those events to remind me of how young I was then and what the hair and clothing styles were. It also helped me know who my sponsors were when I was baptized.

Birthdays and Death days are celebrated and remembered. It is fun to celebrate getting one year more of memory as I get older. I am thankful not having to go thru some of my younger years more than once. There are dates of death of loved ones we remember. Yes it will soon be 2 years since my husband died and I will be remembering the date and talking about the good times. There are dates of important persons that we celebrate like presidents of our USA, even other persons like Prince, Princess Diana, Elvis, and others and many times connect that event with where I heard the news of their death. For instance, I was Caring for my brother who was in hospice at the time I heard about Princess Diana dying. Where was I when 9-11 happened? I was in the Middle school Library, the TV was the News Channel. Students needed to have news events for their social studies classes. The pictures were live of the New York twin towers going down. I told the students you will remember this date forever.

What are other important events and or dates we remember? What about the first events in your life? How about your first job, your first day of school each year, your first pay check or cash? My first time serving on the Women of the ELCA board, my first church memory like Sunday school or vacation bible school or my first car? Or even when I passed my driver's license test?

What other life events do you remember? Thankfully there are many memories that you have that when another event happens in your life, it brings up those old goodies.

Why do you think we remember things from our past? Why did God give a memory? Thankfully, we are to learn from our past and try not to make the bad things happen again. The good things are times to celebrate again and again. Thankfully we have the Bible of historical record. We do learn that God's people back then also had times they did not always follow His teaching, and yes were given punishment when they needed the lesson to go back and follow Christ.

Yes, we have the Bible to rely on when we are in a quandary and even need some reassurance and or guidance. There are a great number of bible passages and can help us with memory and even to create new memories.

Thanks be to GOD!

Betty Brandt, Dianne Doscher, Janet Hagen





## Mission Action/Stewardship

### There's a lot going on

Recently, I retired from a 39 year career at a financial services company. One of my long-time managers used to preface almost every staff meeting with the observation, "There's a lot going on," and then describe at length all of our urgent projects and tasks. It became a catchphrase in our department, and we would often chuckle among ourselves or keep a tally of how often he said it.

Upon hearing that a Mission Action update and article was due for the Fall Communicator, my first thought was, what can we possibly say? The spring convention and fall leadership workshop were cancelled, many local groups are not meeting or are taking summer breaks.

We've got nothing to report. There's nothing going on.

But then I thought, maybe there is just a little I could mention. The VBS day camp kids at my church packed 41 School Kits for LWR last month. My daughter and I assembled 8 Baby Care Kits this summer from items scavenged at rummage sales and thrift stores, combined with t-shirt diapers and blankets from leftover fabric I had put together. Just yesterday, one of our quilters was saying she had just made 3 quilt tops from fabric her daughter in law had cleaned from her mother's closet. And a WELCA member from a nearby community and her husband recently took a load of quilts and kits to the LWR warehouse in St. Paul. That's a little something.

Almost every day at least one person posts on the Quilters and Kit Makers Facebook page about what their church, or they individually, have accomplished. They continue to post photos of quilts and kits, and of worship spaces filled with quilts or packed boxes. That's quite a few more "somethings."

On a global scale, Lutheran Disaster Response continues to act as the hands and feet of God in the midst of earthquakes, hurricanes, fires, and other disasters. That's definitely a lot of "somethings."

Thank you to all of you, who continue to work and serve God by helping others. So, as I reconsider, there really is a lot going on.

Karla Conrad, Noreen Beranek, Katherine Claussen

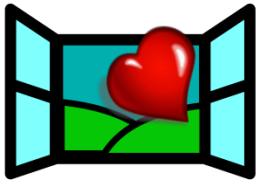


**Lutheran World Relief**  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. LASTING PROMISE.

#### Information and Suggestions

- Visit [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org) for information. It may be possible to match monetary gifts by donating during a specific time period. Also, check out quick links along the top of the page. You will find the latest LWR news and response to COVID-19.
- Check out the ideas and photos in the LWR Quilters & Kit Makers Community on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/groups/lwrquilters](https://www.facebook.com/groups/lwrquilters)
- Continue to find creative ways to complete quilts, whether it is a solo effort or in small groups, at home, or at church.
- Remember Thrivent Action Teams: If you are a member of Thrivent Financial, you are eligible to apply twice each year for a \$250 grant for mission projects or aid to those in need. Associate members are eligible to apply for one project a year. Applying for the funds is easy online ([www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com), click on the "What we Offer" tab and then on the "Generosity" tab, scroll down to "Thrivent Action Teams" and follow the apply tabs.
- If possible, transport your quilts and kits to the warehouse in St. Paul. The warehouses accept items year-round. **If you are dropping items off, please call ahead for driving directions and hours of operation.** Lutheran World Relief, 398 East Richmond Street, South St. Paul, MN 55075. Telephone number: 651-457-9009.

## Looking Out My Window by Joan



Today, I sit here staring at my computer screen thinking about what to write! It's a beautiful, sunny day outside and looking out my window, I see the corn field getting more and more ripe as each day passes! The crops have been stressed this growing season with the shortage of moisture earlier on and then our area got hit with storms at the end of August. Wind and hail didn't help the already stressed crops, but we are definitely reminded that we are not in control! As farmers, we've been through these situations before. Looking back, we did survive, and I honestly believe we will survive again!

I also sit here looking at the piles of papers on my desk. One pile of papers is really stacking up with lots of history on our church that turned 150 years in 2020. Our church had to postpone the 150th event in 2020 due to COVID-19, and in two weeks we will once again try to hold a special worship service and gather together as a congregation of thankfulness of the great heritage that the pioneers of this area have left for us to carry forward!

Our anniversary theme is based on Hebrews 13:8, "TO GOD BE THE GLORY – Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow." The thought of all the trials that the pioneers faced when coming to this country back in the 1860's couldn't have made life very enjoyable at the time, but to read and know that searching for fellow church goers to meet for worship and prayer in the dugouts and log cabins was of great importance to them. That strong heritage they brought from their home countries should really just melt our hearts in gratitude that they wanted to share their faith with others and build up churches in the new country they had come to!

To know that through all these years our God has not changed and is still in control and we are on the same path of living out our faith just as the pioneers did. No matter the times, God is ever present for us to lean on and direct us in the direction we need to be headed. Thank God, the Almighty offers Himself as a changeless God in a changing world! God is our refuge, just as He was for the pioneers 150 years ago, He is still our refuge today!

It is with overflowing hearts that we celebrate the Sesquicentennial of not only the oldest Lutheran congregation in our county, but celebrating the pioneers that faithfully shared their heritage with us! I quote the words preached by a former pastor of our congregation, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be given all praise, glory and honor, for Thy mercy and Thy Truth's sake!"

So, in remembrance of the pioneers and the trials they faced, we too are facing trials of our own today, but to know that there is an unchangeable God in our presence, lifts our hearts in praise and glory no matter how dire the times might seem!

*"For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations."* Psalm 100:5

## Thank You for Your Service to Southwestern Minnesota! (and Welcome!)



Photo credit: SWMN Synod ([www.swmnelca.org](http://www.swmnelca.org))

A special thank you goes out to Bishop Jon Anderson as he ended his service as our SW MN Bishop after faithfully serving the past 18 years. Our prayers do follow you as you embark on a new adventure serving as Luther Seminary's Director of Rural Ministry!

A special thank you goes out to Pr. Kathryn Skoglund as she moves into retirement from her duties as synod minister the past 6 years. May the good Lord bless you and guide you through an enjoyment of retirement and may new doors be opened for you!



Photo credit: SWMN Synod ([www.swmnelca.org](http://www.swmnelca.org))

ALSO.....a welcome to our newly elected Bishop, Dee Pederson who began her duties on September 1st. Prayers for guidance and discernment as you face the new duties of serving as our Bishop!

## 2021 Fall Conference Gatherings

Thank you for your patience as fall conference plans continue to change based on current information on virus spread and community safety. Please reach out to your conference president to stay up to date on the current gathering plans.

Conference	Date/Time	Location	Program
Crow River	Sept 25, 2021 8:30 am	Ostmark Lutheran Church Rural Watkins, MN	Marie Henriksen “Walking Through the Bible with 12 Remarkable Women”
Glacial Ridge	EVENT CANCELLED DUE TO COVID 19 TRANSMISSION RATES		
Great River		Have not decided	
Lac Qui Parle	EVENT POSTPONED. NEW DATE WILL BE ANNOUNCED AT A LATER TIME.		Jeri Popma “Walk With Jesus”
Lakeland		Have not decided	
Minnesota Valley		Have not decided	
Prairie	October 2, 2021 8:30am	Ruthon Community Center Ruthon, MN (Hosted by Peace Lutheran)	Rev. Diana Hunstad “God’s Wink”
Scenic Valley		NO FALL GATHERING SCHEDULED	
Shetek	Sept 18, 2021	Shetek Lutheran Ministries Shetek, MN	
Watsonwan River		NO FALL GATHERING SCHEDULED	

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