



The Communicator



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Special points of interest

- [Thank You Women of the ELCA](#)

Many thanks to all that attended the 2022 SWMN SWO Convention. It was a blessing to gather together once again.

Congratulations to our newly elected Synod Board members! Thank you to our newly appointed Board Members as well. May God guide you in your leadership.

Photos from the Convention, offering information and more are further in this edition of the Communicator.

A Word from Your President

Greetings to all the bold women of Southwestern Minnesota Synod! May your summer be a happy and healthy one!

The 35th annual convention of the Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was held on May 13th at Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church in Benson and was a very enjoyable and delightful day for those 101 ladies that attended! The facility worked out perfectly for our one-day convention. THANKS to Our Redeemer's staff and women's group for making our convention such a joyful day!! Our total attendance was down some due to storm damage the night before that affected a few ladies. Bishop Dee Pederson was welcomed by all with her message on the important part that women serve and Synod Minister, Pr. Heather Culuris, brought a great message on women through her wonderful Bible study on Miriam! I could just see the excitement of the women present being together once again after a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19. It was so great to see the women mingling and visiting and catching up on their lives between each other! It was so good to hear the harmonizing in the hymns shared!

The women came through again with their LWR Quilts and Kits. Around 660 quilts were brought, and 2,400 Kits were brought! Way to go you BOLD WOMEN! The quilts and kits were delivered to the St. Paul MN LWR Warehouse the week after convention and those items will be of great value to so many people around the world who are facing imperfect lives! Thank you, ladies!!! Several items for Project Turnabout and Eagle's Healing Nest were also brought to benefit the needs of local people. The offerings totaled \$6205.00 with 50% of that (\$3102.50) going to Churchwide Women of the ELCA and the other half was equally divided with \$1551.25 each going to Heartland Girls' Ranch and Swift County Food Shelf. We collected \$227.50 from the loose change you all tossed in Katie's Cans on the dining room tables! Way to go you BOLD WOMEN!!

It was good to have our churchwide representative, Diane Henning, join us from St. Paul, MN this year. Diane was just elected to the Churchwide Executive Board the summer of 2021 and we were happy she could join us and bring us greetings from the churchwide board and staff, offer prayer before each ballot and install the new synod board members.

After reading the convention evaluations, it seemed a few of you didn't care for all the parliamentary procedure followed. Ladies, it's all part of the business that our organization follows in order to bring the business to you in a timely fashion. I was just following Robert's Rules of Order and also the proposed script and election process that churchwide provides for the synodical presidents to follow. It's a good thing – and helps to make sure that all the elections and

business are properly presented.

The election process went fairly smoothly this year due to the fact that we had to elect a full board and triennial voting members. The synod nominating committee worked hard to gather up the number of nominees that they did produce. We all know that times are changing constantly for our units and the number of eligible women to serve has dwindled over the past few years. Thank you to the synod nominating committee for the work they did. You are all appreciated very much for your time and talents spent on the nomination process. 2022 was a different year for the election process. Normally a president, treasurer, and 5 board members are elected in even years and a vice-president, secretary and 4 board members are elected in odd years. Please bear with the synod board as they work at getting this election back on track, but it may take a couple years to do so. When COVID-19 hit there were some board members that resigned and new ones appointed for parts of a term and then several officers and board stayed on the board to keep it complete those 2 years, so our years of service got all jumbled up and now the new board will work at getting the election process back to normal.

For the first time ever, the synod board was not filled completely. Elected to the board were the following: Vice President, Janet Hagen from Marshall (for a 1 year term); Treasurer, Maria Lokensgard from St. Peter (for a 1 year term). Maria will finish out her 7th year as treasurer this coming year and we thank her for all her service to this position! Board Members at Large to serve for a 2 year term elected were: Noreen Beranek of Gibbon (incumbent); Carolyn Enstad of Walnut Grove; Brenda Danielson of Arlington; and Carmen Maus of Murdock. The one-year term Board Members at Large elected were: Dianne Doscher of Benson (incumbent); and Connie Dallmann of Cosmos. Following convention three ladies volunteered their service. Ilene Penk of Brownston volunteered to be the President for one year and Gwen Degner from Benson volunteered to be the Secretary for one year and Marcella Chapman of Westbrook volunteered to be a one-year Board Member at Large. These three ladies will be appointed by the new synod board to serve for one year. We Thank God for these BOLD WOMEN!! According to the synod constitution, when a synod board needs to appoint a board officer or board member, this lady appointed shall fill the same until the next regular convention and then any elections by the convention shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term.

SW MN Synod Women's Organization has a total of 168 active units (as of April 1st, 2022). This number is used to determine how many triennial voting members we are allowed to elect. We are allowed one voting member for every 25 active units within our synod. Do the math with me: 168 divided by 25 = 6.72. Round that number to 7 and

A Word from Your President—Cont'd

that is the number of triennial voting members we are allowed to elect for the 2023 Triennial in Phoenix AZ the week of September 18, 2023. Of that number 7 – 1 of them shall be a Woman of Color or speak another language than English. We lost that spot as we did not have any nominees to fill that spot. This spot will be filled by churchwide appointing a voting member at large. So that left us with 6 voting members to elect. 10% (or 2) need to be a first-time voting member. So of the six voting members allowed, here is how our election turned out. We elected two first-time attendee voting members: Dawn Planting of Marshall and Betty Brandt of Hutchinson. Elected to serve the other 4 regular voting members: Maria Lokensgard of St. Peter; Karen Skarphol of Windom; Nancy Roessler of St. Peter and Ardis C. Nelson of Annandale. The 6th voting member elected was our Alternate: Jane Marie Tongen of Brownton. Jane will only attend as a voting member if one of the other voting members elected cannot attend, but Jane is a regular voting member, so she has to match up with a regular voting member. If a first-time voting member backs out, then only a first-time voting alternate can replace her. The synod president attends as a voting member by virtue of office.

Speaking of Triennial – all we really know at this point is the theme from last time “Just Love” will be revamped and used again and the event will happen the week of September 18, 2023 in Phoenix, AZ. A sign up sheet was placed out at convention for anyone planning to attend the Gathering that would like to be kept informed as the synod board hears more information. A few signed up, so you can always let the new President, Ilene Penk, know if you want to be added to that list.

We were blessed with three Scholarship Participants at convention with Algene Larson as their mentor for the day. They showed us a great way of what they thought of the experience in their ending presentation at the convention. It is always my prayer that women who come as first-time attendees of our synod convention are inspired by what they see and learn and want to stay involved in Women of the ELCA and become potential conference officers and/or synod board members! Those participants this year were Emilie Brustuen of Morris; Ardis C. Nelson of Annandale and Lorna Johnson of Madison. Remember for next year that any first-time attendees of convention (can't be voting members) – those that have never attended a synod women's convention before – you can be nominated by your unit to apply!

Some more thoughts on some of the evaluations given after convention. Some wonder if the synod convention should be held on a Saturday to make it easier for the working women. The dates chosen by the synod board when to hold the convention depends a lot on the availability of the facility

they are securing and other events happening that time of the year. I know we can't please everyone by the decisions the synod board makes, so bear with the board and please know that when the dates of the convention are publicized early enough, this gives the working women that really want to attend the opportunity to make plans ahead of time! The new synod board will take into consideration the evaluations as they plan the 2023 convention.

Conference Officers – please keep August 27th open and plan to attend the Leadership Event to be held that day at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Redwood Falls. This again will be a great time for the conference officers to meet in-person after two years off. The new board is busy right now planning the one-day event for you, so Conference Presidents, watch your mailboxes for that invite and be sure to share the information with your fellow conference officers and board as well as the conference and synod nominating committees. For each conference that has a Synod Nominating person – this is a critical meeting for the synod nominating committee as this will be their first meeting as a committee to begin the search for nominees for the 2023 convention elections. It's always a great day to come together and learn more about Women of the ELCA and what's new for you as conference leaders.

The 2023 Convention – which will be the 36th annual SW MN SWO Convention – will be held on Friday, May 5, 2023 at Shetek Lutheran Ministries. It will be a one-day event, so mark your calendars and plan to attend. Plans for the event will be made now in the next few months by the synod board. Keep watch on any website news or Facebook page news on this convention as the board makes those plans.

Will you please join me in keeping LaVaun Danielson from Franklin in your prayers? Her husband, Erling Danielson, passed away on May 14, 2022, with his service held at Swedlanda Lutheran Church on May 21st. Also join me in praying for the family of Leona Miller. Leona passed away in January of this year and a memorial service was held for her at Trinity Lutheran Church in St. Peter on May 21st.

This ends my service as your synod president. I've enjoyed the time leading, but it was just time to move onto other things. I will forever be grateful to all the BOLD WOMEN of this synod that do great things for the organization. Please welcome your new synod board in the months ahead and support them with the same enthusiasm you have served the past boards.

Mission Community/Justice

The Greatest Commandment!

"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."

John 13:34 NRSV

John shares the story of the "Last Supper." He passes onto us that Jesus presented to the disciples the greatest commandment of all, "LOVE ONE ANOTHER." These days we talk about the differences in people's color, race, sexual differences, faith, wealth, job status and anything else that makes us different. What about all the things that make us the same? Does that even matter? What would happen if we just treated everyone with respect, kindness, loyalty, friendship, affection, and especially LOVE?

We are all sinners and God gave his only Son to a human death, to take that sin from us. Does that mean we give up our own soul to get what we want by whatever means we can? There are right and wrong choices and it should not be at the cost of others. It is so sad that every day we hear of many people choosing the wrong and hear less of people choosing right. Everything we say and do matters! If we choose to "LOVE ONE ANOTHER," we will choose to do the right thing. We may choose the wrong path at times. We then need to ask for forgiveness to the only One that can give us the full and true forgiveness. Just think... What if ALL people could see the truth of true forgiveness? Imagine the PEACE that would be in everyone's heart and the PEACE that would be in this world. We cannot let the negative and selfish influences override the world.

We need to always remember to "LOVE ONE ANOTHER."

As we look at our world today, I hope and I pray for PEACE. PEACE that stops all war. PEACE that calms those that feel the only way out of their situation is to hurt others or themselves. PEACE that softens the hearts of people all around us; next door, a town away or a country away. PEACE to pull together and stop all the injustice everywhere.

This all starts by showing LOVE to all. This may be hard at times, but it means we have to get out there and spread the LOVE that God/Jesus gives to us.

I believe the song "Walk on Faith" by Mike Reid says it all:

"Walk on faith, Trust in LOVE,
Just keep on putting one foot down in front the other,
When the valley's so wide, we stumble in stride,
Everything inside wants to give up,
Walk on faith and trust in LOVE."

Video Link to Song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZWcaxYNKIM>

Let us walk in our faith and trust that God's LOVE will help us never give-up. We can stumble and fall but we will keep going. Even with the hatred and chaos we have seen in recent times, one day we will see LOVE and PEACE in this world.

Let us Pray, Dear God:

May men and women around the world
everywhere, everyday LOVE each other!
May You give us the wisdom to see past color and religion.
May we remember that we are one & that our differences make us stronger.
May we look at each other and see our beauty, our truth and our diversity.
May we welcome our brothers and sisters with an open heart and a loving spirit.
May our hearts be filled with LOVE and PEACE and make us instruments of both.
Where there is hatred, let us sow LOVE.
Where there is insult to me, let me pardon.
Where there is discord, bring harmony.
Where there is despair, spread hope.
Where there is darkness, let us see light.
May we all "LOVE One Another" just as You have LOVED us.

In closing, go out and spread LOVE! "LOVE ONE ANOTHER" so we will someday see PEACE in the World!

Jane Tongen, Louise Ferry, Kim Christianson



Mission Growth/Discipleship

"Life is amazing. And then it's awful. And then it's amazing again. And in between the amazing and awful it's ordinary and mundane and routine. Breathe in the amazing, hold on through the awful, and relax and exhale during the ordinary. That's just living a heartbreaking, soul-healing, amazing, awful, ordinary life. And it's breathtakingly beautiful." -L.R. Knost

I think I experienced the awful part for at least 3+ days. I had family help to change my pay ahead cell phone plan to a family plan. The idea is to save some money. Well that included getting an iPhone, which I never had before and going with a main cell phone company. My plan was to keep my same phone number, my pay ahead company did not want to give up my phone number for 48 hours which turned out to be at least 64 hours and a number of hours sitting in the phone company store. Thank the Good Lord and family for giving me patience. I at least am able to receive and send calls and some texts. Not all is yet the "Amazing" part of having an iPhone, trusting it will get better....soon. Yes, I did have to calm down and breathe. I have forgotten how it is to be without a phone in the car or when I want to google some information or take a picture with upgraded lenses. I am thankful to be back and learning to use a cell phone again.

Our country is in need of everyone having Respect. This past month there have been some mass shootings of innocent children and adults. We as a nation, as a village need to help instill and/or teach everyone respect, of self, of others and trust in the Lord. Trust in the Lord is in many places in the Bible both old and new testament.

The willingness to accept responsibility for one's own life is the source from which self-respect springs.

Thank You Women of the ELCA

Project Turnabout would like to extend a most sincere Thank You to all of the Women of the ELCA for your Very Generous Donations!

Each and every donation to the individuals in our care is appreciated far more than we can express.

Thank You very much to the Women of the ELCA for your tireless efforts, and Best Wishes to you all!

**Items for Project Turnabout were collected at this year's Synodical Convention. For information on how to make a financial donation, please visit:*
www.projectturnabout.org/take-action

Joan Didion

In her 1961 essay "On Self-Respect," writer and cultural icon Joan Didion laid out one of the most essential [truths about self-love](#). When we are accountable for our words and actions — and act with integrity even in the face of adversity — we are far more likely to find pride, confidence, and respect for ourselves. Taking responsibility is not always easy, but it's a worthy pursuit. As Didion wrote, "people with self-respect exhibit a certain toughness, a kind of moral nerve; they display what was once called character."

Some Bible verses:

- *Love each other with genuine affection and take delight in honoring each other.* Romans 12:10
- *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.* John 15:12
- *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.* Ephesians 4:32
- *Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.* Ephesians 4:29

Those are just a few Bible verses that I found with respect to others. In light of such devastating news of the tragedy that has rocked our nation and families and children, we all need to turn to Christ and our faith to make a change in this world.

Our prayers are for our Country, Our Villages and cities and towns those living in outlying areas and for all who are needing the lessons of Respect and Self-respect. Amen

Betty Brandt, Dianne Doscher, Janet Hagen



Mission Action/Stewardship

CELEBRATE (celebrating the 35th anniversary of the forming of Women of the ELCA)

Theme Verse: Psalm 149: Praise the LORD! Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise in the assembly of the faithful (NIV)

May 13th was the day for our 35th annual SW MN Women of the ELCA Convention at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Benson, MN. We came together with joy and thanksgiving to meet old friends and make new friends. The morning started early as In-Kind Offerings were brought to be loaded into a larger truck to be taken to Lutheran World Relief on Monday morning. We thank Al Simmonds from DeGraff for taking these gifts to the Twin Cities.

We collected 660 quilts, 732 School kits, 1,225 Personal Care Kits, 371 Baby Care Kits, and 74 Fabric Kits. We also collected items for Eagle's Nest, Project Turnabout, and Global Health Missions. Thank you to all the women in all the congregations that gave so generously of their time, talent, and money to make the beautiful quilts and put together so many kits - all are much needed and appreciated. We would like to thank the gentlemen

from Our Redeemer for helping unload the boxes and getting them ready to be loaded for Monday morning.

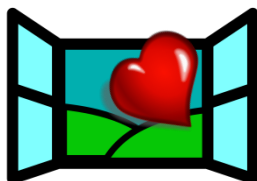
Rev. Dee Pederson, our ELCA Bishop, led our worship service. Rev. Heather Culuris, Synod Minister, was the main speaker as well as assisting Bishop Dee at opening service and serving as Convention Chaplin. Rev. Heather led us in a Bible Study on Miriam – A Woman of Praise. Diane J. Henning, Executive Board Member on Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, was introduced to us. She is serving on the budget and finance committee. It was a pleasure to meet and get to know these Synod representatives.

Our 36th Annual SW MN Women's Organization of ELCA Synod Convention will be at Shetek Bible Camp, rural Slayton, MN on May 5, 2023. Mark your next year's calendar – we hope to see you there.

Come, meet new friends and old friends. Share in our Celebration.

Noreen Beranek, Karla Conrad, Katherine Claussen

Looking Out My Window by Joan



I keep this little saying taped to the wall above my office desk and read it often to be reminded of how our daily lives reflect on "Our Garden of Life" and how we are to live our daily lives. May it give you all some gentle reminders of living our daily lives.

PLANTING YOUR SPRING GARDEN

For the Garden of Your Daily Living

PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE

1. Lettuce Be Faithful
2. Lettuce Be Kind
3. Lettuce Be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

NO GARDEN IS COMPLETE WITHOUT TURNIPS

1. Turnip For Meetings
2. Turnip For Service
3. Turnip To Help One Another

TO CONCLUDE OUR GARDEN WE MUST HAVE THYME

1. Thyme For Each Other
2. Thyme For Family
3. Thyme For Friends

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love.

There is much fruit in your garden because you reap what you sow. Pass it on!!!

"Dear Friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love." ¹ John 4:7-8

Convention 2022 Photo Highlights!



Want to see more? Visit the link below to view the entire photo album of the 2022 Synod Convention!

[2022 Convention Photo Album](#)

2022 Fall Conference Gatherings

Thank you for your patience as several conferences are still discerning whether to gather in the fall. We will send more information as it becomes available. Please reach out to your conference president for more information in the meantime.

Conference	Date/Time	Location	Program
Crow River	Saturday September 24 8:30-11:30am	Stockholm Lutheran Church Rural Cokato, MN	Katie Koplin “Created, Sustained, Placed”
Glacial Ridge			
Great River			
Lac Qui Parle	Tuesday October 18 9:30am		Vicar Sarah Larson “Border Encuentro” <i>Vicar Larson’s story of mission work at the Texas Border</i>
Lakeland			
Minnesota Valley	Saturday September 10 11:30am	Trinity Lutheran Church St. Peter, MN	Noon luncheon with Gathering to follow Speaker: Kris Langworthy
Prairie			
Scenic Valley			
Shetek	Saturday September 17 8:30am-noon	Shetek Lutheran Ministries Slayton, MN	
Watonwan River			

SYNODICAL BOARD 2022-2023

President:

Ilene Penk (*appointed 2022)

11168 Hwy 15, Brownton, MN 55312
320-510-1261
ilene@wildbluecoop.com
Congregation: Grace Lutheran, Brownton
Conference: Minnesota Valley (1yr expires 2023)

Vice-President:

Janet Hagen

1212 Parkside Dr, Marshall, MN 56258
507-829-9916
hagen_janet@yahoo.com
Congregation: Rock Valle Lutheran, Echo
Conference: Scenic Valley (1yr expires 2023)

Secretary:

Gwen Degner (*appointed 2022)

408 8th St N, Benson, MN 56215
701-261-8920
gwen.degner@gmail.com
Congregation: Trinity Lutheran, Benson
Conference: Glacial Ridge (1yr expires 2023)

Treasurer:

Maria Lokensgard

37980 State Highway 22, St Peter, MN 56082
507-246-5828 507-317-0365 (Cell)
mandem.loke@gmail.com
Congregation: Scandian Grove, St Peter
Conference: MN Valley (3rd term expires 2023)

Board Members At Large:

Noreen Beranek

PO Box 83, Gibbon, MN 55335
507-834-6817
naberanek@gmail.com
Congregation: Augustana Lutheran, Gibbon
Conference: MN Valley (2nd term expires 2024)

Marcella Chapman (*appointed 2022)

867 280th Ave, Westbrook, MN 56183
507-828-8829
chapmanbm@gmail.com
Congregation: Grace Lutheran, Westbrook
Conference: Shetek (1yr expires 2023)

Connie Dallmann

15366 545th Ave, Cosmos, MN 56228
320-583-2311
cjdallmann@gmail.com
Congregation: Peace Lutheran, Cosmos
Conference: Crow River (1yr expires 2023)

Brenda Danielson

304 Polar Circle, Arlington, MN 55307
507-964-1021 952-956-2954 (Cell)
danielson.brenda6@gmail.com
Congregation: Zion Lutheran, Arlington
Conference: Minnesota Valley (1st term expires 2024)

Dianne Doscher

208 11th St So, Benson, MN 56215
320-368-0479(Cell)
e.ddoscher@charter.net
Congregation: Our Redeemer's, Benson
Conference: Glacial Ridge (1yr expires 2023)

Carolyn Enstad

25463 Co Rd 7, Walnut Grove, MN 56180
507-822-0506
dcenstad@mvtvwireless.com
Congregation: Old Westbrook Lutheran, Westbrook
Conference: Shetek (1st term expires 2024)

Carmen Maus

1408 40th St SE, Murdock, MN 56271
320-424-0272
carmen.m.maus@gmail.com
Congregation: Kerkhoven Lutheran, Kerkhoven
Conference: Lakeland (1st term expires 2024)

SWMN Synod Staff Liaison:

Rev. Heather Culuris

PO Box 499, Redwood Falls, MN 56283
507-627-9047 218-851-8865(Cell)
heather.culuris@swmnelca.org

Communicator Editor:

Christina Nelson

302 Sheppard Dr, Williamsburg, VA 23185
320-412-0510 (Cell)
swmnwelca@gmail.com