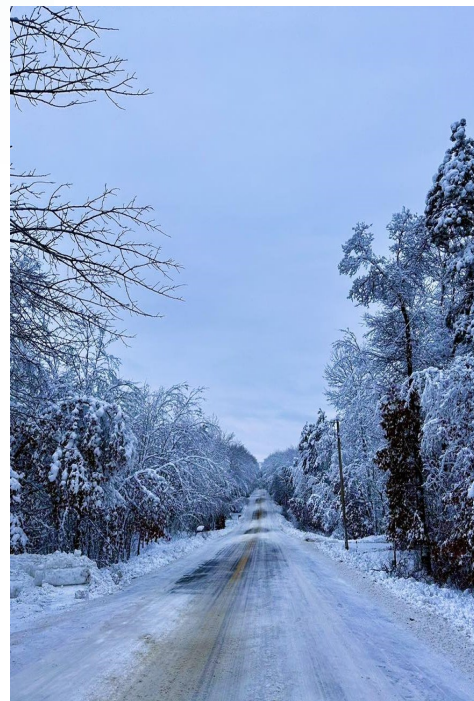




Women ^{of the} **ELCA**

The Communicator



2023 SWO Convention
Date: Friday, May 5, 2023
@ Shetek Lutheran Ministries,
14 Keeley Island Drive, Slayton, MN
Theme: Renew, Redo, Rejoice
Theme Verse: Zephaniah 3:17b

“he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love; he will
exult over you with loud singing as
on a day of festival.”

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“A Word from Your Synodical President”

As I write this article, winter has come, snow has fallen and it has been very cold. I seem to dread the Minnesota winters more and more. Yet, I know I would really miss family and friends, and of course the snow, if I moved somewhere else, where it did not snow.

We just finished Christmas and I surely thought as I got older, I would not have to hustle and bustle so much at Christmas time, but yet again I felt hurried. Go shopping for gifts, bake cookies, clean the house and make a meal. Go, go and go some more. A person hardly has time to breath. I always do devotions in the morning, but I found myself doing them later and later in the day, when and if I had time to slow down. Thank you, Lord, for the calmness I felt with You in the Word and prayer.

IT'S ME AGAIN, GOD REMEMBER ME, GOD?

I come every day
Just to talk with You, Lord,
And to learn how to pray...
You make me feel welcome,
You reach out Your hand,
I need never to explain
For YOU understand...
I come to YOU frightened
And burdened with care
So lonely and lost
And so filled with despair,
And suddenly, Lord,
I'm no longer afraid,
My burden is lighter
And the dark shadows fade...
Oh, God, what a comfort
To know when I seek You
YOU WILL ALWAYS BE THERE!
By Helen Steiner Rice

It was at the Christmas Eve service, that I finally felt the newness of the babe Jesus in Bethlehem, coming to save me from my sins, I sat in “aha”, of what the Lord has done for me. Thank you, God, for giving us your Son. Every year, Christ's birth, seems anew. Let each of us feel the blessing, that the Lord bestows on us. Let us love each other, the way He loves us.

As you read this, the Christmas season is in the rear-view mirror and the new year has begun.... (Or so the saying goes)

The Synod women's board will be meeting January 8th, 2023, to finish planning the 2023 Convention. There is a lot of planning to do yet. Please remember the 2023 Convention will be May 5, 2023, at Shetek Ministries. We as the board, challenge you to bring a friend with you, that day. Remember to say, “Come with me”. The theme is “Renew, Redo, Rejoice”, Bible verse is from Zephaniah 3:17. The day will be packed with fellowship, business meeting, speaker, voting for new board members, music, and also and very important, meeting friends there.

Soon a letter will be sent out to all Conference Presidents and/or Conference Secretaries, regarding scholarships for Triennial Gathering and the SW MN Synod Convention. Please see that this information is sent on to the units in your conference. Thank you!

As I close this article, I want to send New Year Blessings to all of you. May the Lord bless and keep you. May you stay warm, healthy and safe.



FAITH INSTEAD OF FEAR

For God did not give us a spirit of timidity or cowardice or fear, but (He has given us a spirit) of power and of love and of sound judgment and personal discipline (abilities that result in a calm, well-balanced mind and self-control).

2 Timothy 1:7

Fear, simply put, is the opposite of faith. God wants us to walk by faith, but Satan tries to make us live in fear. When we learn to live by faith and not let fear rule our lives, we can live a fulfilling, satisfying, peaceful, and joyful life in Christ.

Fear begins with a thought. Proverbs 23:7 tell us that "as (a man) thinks in his heart, so is he". I like to say it this way: Where the mind goes, the man follows.

This is why the Bible talks about meditating on the Word of God and having your mind renewed (see Romans 12:2). To meditate on God's Word means you ponder the Scripture over and over in your mind until it becomes part of you. When you do this, it takes information and turns it into revelation. The more you study God's Word and think about His promises, the better your life will be!

By Joyce Meyer

Respectfully yours in Christ,

Ilene Penk, SW MN Synod President

EDITORS CORNER:

For all of you I wish you a Blessed 2023, Whether this past year brought you success, fulfillment, and joy or you faced grief, setbacks, and struggle, you can look ahead to the new year with hope.

Jeremiah 29:11 tells us "for I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

The arrival of a new year brings a great opportunity to renew our faith and love for God and Jesus. It's also a wonderful time to renew the joy of salvation in our hearts as a new creation in Christ.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

I want to ask for Units and Conferences to send me special items that may be of interest to others in our Synod. I do not guarantee to be always able to make room in the Communicator or on the Website but I will try to put out there what I can. As you plan your Spring and Fall Gatherings please remember to get the details of the event to your Liaisons or send direct to swmnwelca@gmail.com

Jane Tongen

A Message from Pastor Heather

As we enter the month of January, as Lutheran Christians, we celebrate the feast of the Epiphany. Epiphany has long been celebrated as a way to remember and rejoice in the journey of the Wise Men or Magi. We tell and retell the Biblical story of how the Wise Men or Magi traveled from far away, following the light of a star, to discover and worship the infant Jesus. The season of the church year focuses on that sense of journeying and discovery as well as on a sense of brightness and light. For many cultures around the world, Epiphany continues to be a time of celebration and festivities with parades and house blessings and even gift giving.

This January, as we begin a new calendar year, Epiphany is a good time for us to reflect on our own journeys. Women of the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, where have we seen God's light in our lives? Where have our journeys taken us? What discoveries have we made in faith? How have those discoveries surprised us?

In closing, I'd like to share a prayer with you from WELCA's Daily Grace resource in 2018,

"May we each day open the window of our worlds, inviting the fresh Light of Epiphany to flood us with hope, to bring us fresh insight and to fill us with grateful joy. May we see the world around us with new creation eyes, filled with potential and brimming with promise. May our lives be a continuous unfolding into God's grace, revealing new vistas that expand our faith horizons. In Jesus' name we pray, and by his name we are saved. Amen."

**~Submitted by Pastor Heather Culuris
SW MN Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders
& SWMN WELCA Liason**



Mission Community/Justice

Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, New International Version:
There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: A time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

As I write this article, November 1st is All Saints Day when we remember the loved ones who have died this past year. The above verse from Ecclesiastes reminds us of a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to weep and a time to laugh, which seems so appropriate right now for our family. Three days ago my sister lost her husband of 41 years to a dreaded disease, multiple myeloma. He fought the disease for nearly 3 years through a stem cell transplant and other treatments. He was a hero in that he willingly participated in research programs at the U of M when he knew the outcome for him was dim, but always said maybe it would help others to follow. We mourn his loss and rejoice in the promises of our Savior.

This day also we remember our mother who passed away last May 14, 2022 at the great age of 103. We rejoice that she was a wonderful mother and gave us so many cherished memories.

As a community of Christians, we gather round people in need in many ways. Our gestures may range from a hug for a hurting friend to contributions for survivors of Hurricane Ian. Wherever we are led to help, we can answer the call with God's blessing.

Changing the focus of this article now to a lighter note and a time to celebrate. My church, Peace Lutheran at Cosmos, MN will celebrate 100 years of ministry in 2023. The planning committee is meeting and discussing ways to make this year memorable and meaningful. Some ideas they're working on are publicity, a theme verse, a picture directory, a catered meal on the date they chose (August 13, 2023), invitations to past pastors and much more. This past year, 2022, saw the original church building torn down. Our current building

was built in 1957-58. The original building was serving a purpose even after being replaced but now had outlived its usefulness. A time to tear down and a time to build.

Our small community has been so blessed through these years with all the good that our church members accomplish through combined efforts. A short list here: Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, Bible Camp, Luther League for youth, women's bible studies, LWR projects, a cookbook project, serving at funerals and special events, sponsorship of a missionary, church council leadership and guidance to name just a few of the ways our church has impacted our community and the world. We pray for God's guidance as we deal with the needs that we see around us.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen

Connie Dallmann



Consider a family service project as a way to show love for the community this Valentine's Day.

CONFERENCE LIAISONS 2022-2023

CROW RIVER (CR):	Connie Dallmann
GLACIAL RIDGE (GLR):	Gwen Degner
GREAT RIVER (GRV):	Noreen Berarek
LAC QUI PARLE (LQP):	Dianne Doscher
LAKELAND (LL):	Carmen Maus
MINNESOTA VALLEY (MV):	Brenda Danielson
PRAIRIE (PR):	Carolyn Enstad
SCENIC VALLEY (SV):	Janet Hagen
SHETEK (SK):	Marcella Chapman
WATONWAN RIVER (WR):	Maria Lokensgard

Mission Growth/Discipleship

“I Resolve to...”

It's that time of year again. The holiday season is behind us and the New Year has come. Many of us take a reflective look at our lives and think about changes (resolutions) for next year. I have made several attempts at these over the years: I will lose weight this year. I will exercise every day. I will spend more time in Bible reading and study. I will read more. I will clean up those messes in the sewing room.

I imagine that you may have had some of the same thoughts. My first inclination was to write about Bible reading and prayer life, as I think that is so important; but instead, I would like to help you know more about an initiative of the Women of the ELCA. If you are familiar with the health initiative, **“Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls”**, I encourage you to revisit it and add something to your yearly agenda to promote this initiative. If you don't know about it, please read on.

Many of our New Year's resolutions center around improving our physical health. This initiative centers on physical, mental, and spiritual health of women and girls in our congregations. By committing to care for ourselves, we can then better serve God, and others. Healthy women can produce healthy families, churches, communities, and societies. If you look back at the purpose statement of the Women of the ELCA, you can see that we pledge to promote healing and health in our church, society, and the world. Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls encourages us to look at total health: mentally, physically, spiritually, to develop healthy and balanced women. As you are planning your year for your organization, perhaps you can include a speaker who focuses on health. This initiative has several resources which you can use from the WELCA website.

One resource is a planning guide to holding an event for women and their daughters. There is much concern that girls from age 10-14 need closer relationships with the women in their lives to help them navigate life to come. We should also extend that to include grandmothers and granddaughters. One event was a retreat for these women.

There is a well-developed planning guide in the resource section that can help get these ideas accomplished.

Women of the ELCA hold this initiative in such high regard that they have attached a grant application so that you could get funding for an event or speaker to help you accomplish your goal. I think that you can set up an exercise group and get water bottles for everyone through this grant. You could perhaps get some help printing brochures to help promote wellness and health. Applications for the 2022/2023 grants need to be postmarked or e-mailed by April 5, 2023. For more information, go to WELCA website and look under Ministry and Action.

Thinking about my local unit, we have more gray heads than mothers of 10 year old girls, but there are still plenty of health topics and lifestyle encouragements to be shared. In the resource section of the WELCA website, I found several journey to wellness resources centering on eating well, getting enough sleep, planning for health improvement. Another one that looked useful was called “The Faces of Grief”. In your planning for next year, perhaps one of these resources would be helpful.

Thoughtfully wishing you a healthy, happy New Year, Brenda Danielson

Application materials for the 2022-2023 Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls seed grants must be postmarked or emailed by April 5, 2023. All applications must be submitted by active units of Women of the ELCA who are familiar with the Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative and the criteria of this program.

[Download and send completed application](#) to women.elca@elca.org

or mail it to Women of the ELCA RUHWG Seed Grants Program, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631.

Looking for ideas on health projects?

[Download our resource.](#)



Mission Action/Stewardship

Happy New Year! Year 2023 is here with arms open wide.

May we all embrace 2023 with thankful hearts. In everything that we do, we should pray,, praise, and give thanks.

In *Jesus Calling*, a devotion book, for November 25th we find “Moreover a grateful attitude makes it easier for you to communicate with Me.” “When your mind is occupied with thanking Me, you have no time for worrying or complaining. If you practice thankfulness consistently, negative thought patterns will gradually grow weaker and weaker.”

In Mission Action, we have hit the ground and are up and running. Many projects will be started and maybe new things will be learned. Join in the fun.

With all that is happening in the world, there is need for quilts and kits to be done and collected. Both Lutheran World Relief and Global Health Missions are ready for our donations. Check the websites for news on this: Lutheran World Relief <https://lwr.org/quilts-and-kits> and Global Health Ministries www.ghm.org.

Thrivent Action Team grants are a great way to boost your quilt and kit project funding.

Get your congregation and community involved. Tell others what you are doing and who the quilts and kits are helping. Put out donation boxes to give people the opportunity to participate. All are invited to join the fun!!

Noreen Beranek



For the upcoming convention the In-Kind Offering will be School kits.

Just click here for your

[School Kit](#) instructions:



Just a Few prayers to start your days.

Father, I give you all that I am today. Please take away my weariness, so that I may be inspired all I do throughout the day. Help me to find new ways to reveal your love to all I meet. Keep my mind clear and focused on all I need to achieve, and give me the wisdom to overcome difficulties and find solutions

Another Beautiful Sunshine

Dear Lord, thank you so much for another day of life on Earth. Thank you for another beautiful sunrise to enjoy. Thank you for the wonderful sounds of nature, from the cool breeze brushing through the trees to the birds singing melodies. You are a wonderful God, full of grace and mercy. I praise you for allowing me another day to spend with my family. I love you Father! Amen.

—Unknown

Prayer for Tiresome Days

Father, clear my sleepy head and fill my mind with expectation. Awake my slow body and energize my heart with love in action. Ignite my spirit and set this day on fire with promise. Make the ordinary extraordinary. Engage me, show me your kingdom alive. Help me to see that every waking moment is full of promise because of you. Amen.

—Unknown

Prayer Before Work

Lord, I give you all that I am this day. Please brush away my weariness, so that I may be inspired in my work. Help me to discover new ways to reveal your love to all I meet. Keep my mind clear and focused on all I need to achieve, and give me the wisdom to overcome difficulties and find solutions. I look to you and trust you are with me this day. Amen.

—Unknown

Highlights & Special Items



ROLLED BANDAGES

This article may be coming to you a bit late but it tells so much of what this organization is about. The bond that we all have when it comes to helping each other.

Submitted by Linda Dettman
St Paul's Lutheran Church of Stewart MN

"A Productive and Amazing Day"

30 white bed sheets plus 32 busy hands equal, 595 rolls of bandages made and packed for Global Health Ministries. On Wednesday, September 21st 2022 the women of St. Paul's Stewart (MN Valley Conference) invited women from St Boniface Catholic Church and friends from the Stewart community to join them for the day to roll bandages.

Rolled bandages are made from used clean white cotton or cotton blended bed sheets. The sheets are cut or torn into strips then rolled into bandages with a roller as seen in the picture. We chose to cut the strips as it rolls easier and makes a better roll. Then the rolls were packed in boxes which will be taken to Global Health Ministries in Minneapolis.

GHM partners with low-income countries in Asia, Africa and South America to serve them with a commitment to improve community health. Basic supplies are needed at mission hospitals and clinics. Rolled bandages is one way to provide clean bandages, an item needed daily to care for their patients.

We had great fellowship, lots of visiting and busy hands to compliment all the bandages that were made. A delicious lunch added to our fellowship for the day with requests to do this again. So, it is back to collecting white bed sheets so we can roll bandages again. Thanks to all who made the day successful. We are truly blessed.



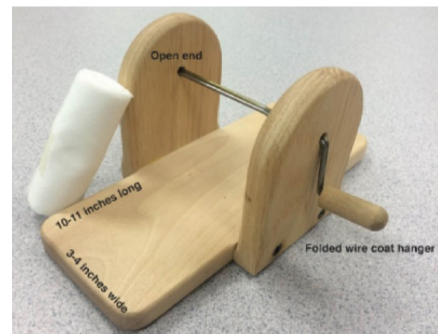
Global
Health
Ministries

Just a reminder



OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

"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."



A simple bandage rolling "machine" can be created from scrap wood and a wire coat hanger:

Pre-wash used white sheets. Cut or rip into long strips 2 to 4 inches wide and ideally about 6 feet long (the length of a sheet). • Place end of bandage strip into the double wire. Roll tightly and evenly. • Pull the wire from the center of the bandage. • Note: A couple of backwards turns on the "crank" makes it easy to pull the wire out and avoid an uneven center in the bandage roll. • Pull or cut off loose threads and secure each bandage with masking tape to keep it from unrolling

DATES & SPECIAL ITEMS TO REMEMBER

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

“Faithful Friends” is an easy way for you to support Women of the ELCA – automatically! You can start giving online right now.

“[Faithful Friends](#)” supports the Women of the ELCA general fund, which makes it possible for your church-wide organization to act quickly and flexibly in response to any need that may arise.



The next business meeting of the SW MN SWO board will be **Saturday, February 25, 2023, at 10 a.m.**

WOMEN OF THE ELCA CHOCOLATE SEMINAR

January 28 @ 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm

Learn about the chocolate bars that you love—in time for **Valentine's Day**.

Women of the ELCA and Equal Exchange will host a special chocolate webinar and tasting for WELCA participants and friends across the country.

Register at <https://shop.equalexchange.coop/products/chocolate-lovers-seminar>



<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/category/daily-grace>



Leadership Training Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Redwood Falls, MN



The Twelfth Triennial Convention

September 19-21, 2023,
Phoenix, AZ.

Women of the ELCA
Gathering

Theme “Just Love”

2023 Spring Conference Gatherings

Conference	Date/Time	Location	Program
Crow River	Saturday, April 22nd	Gethsemane Lutheran, Dassel , MN	To be Announced
Glacial Ridge	Tuesday, April 18 Registration 4:00 pm	Fron Lutheran Church Starbuck MN	To be Announced
Great River	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Lac Qui Parle	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Lakeland	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Minnesota Valley	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Prairie	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Scenic Valley	April 20	Hawk Creek Lutheran Church , Sacred Heart, MN	To be Announced
Shetek	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Watonwan River	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced

SYNODICAL BOARD 2022-2023

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Ilene Penk (*appointed 2022)

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Carmen Maus

MISSION COMMUNITY (Justice) Marcella Chapman, Connie Dallmann

MISSION GROWTH (Discipleship) Dianne Doscher, Brenda Danielson

SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE LIAISON: Marcella Chapman

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE Ilene Penk, Janet Hagen, Gwen Degner,
Maria Lokensgard