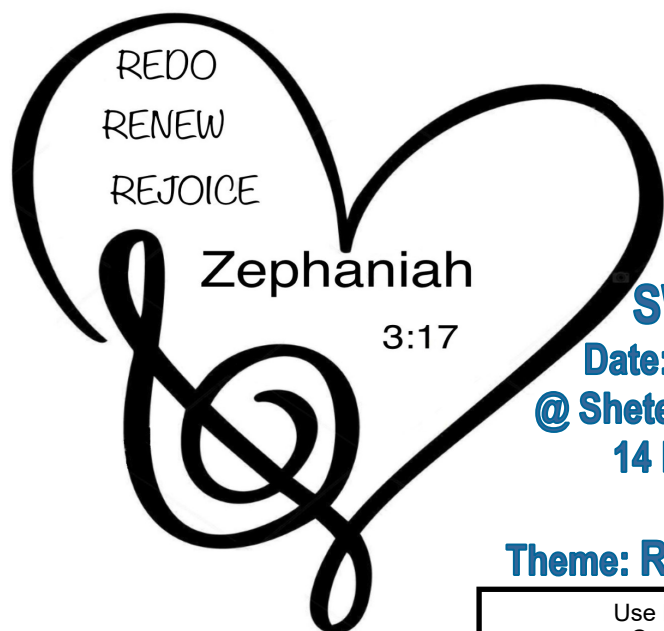




The Communicator



**2023 SW MN
SWO Convention**
Date: Friday May 5, 2023
@ Shetek Lutheran Ministries,
14 Keeley Island Drive
Slayton, MN
Theme: Renew, Redo, Rejoice

Use Link Below Tap on HOME
Open the Registration Packet
<http://www.swmnwelca.org/>



**The Twelfth
Triennial
Convention**
September 19-21,
2023,
Phoenix, AZ.
**Women of the
ELCA
Gathering**
Theme **"Just Love"**
September 21-24,



[For More Info on the TWELFTH TRIENNIAL
GATHERING Click Here](#)

[For More Info on the TWELFTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION Click Here](#)

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SNOWY WINTER IN SW MN SYNOD

S — **S**now and more snow. As I drive through the country, going to meetings, I can't help but wonder in “AH” of God's handy work. He puts the snow on the land to help the earth rest. We may complain about the weather, but someone reminded me, the hot, humid summer is coming, and we can't forget the mosquitos. The snow does not look so bad now.

N — **N**otice the beautiful days the Lord gives us to enjoy. The day break sun rises, the beautiful sun sets, and the glorious days in between. I do a lot of meditating as I drive to meetings, and if I can, I will take a different route, so I can see something new.

O — **O**h, Lord how wonderful art Thou! You have given each of us such wonderful gifts. Your love, our families, friends, our health, and for those of us who are not feeling so healthy, we thank you for the healing we have received. Thank you, Lord.

W — **W**e thank you God for giving us your son to die for our sins. We ask for your forgiveness, because we all are sinners. Please come into our hearts to help us remember your precious gift of Jesus.

Y — **Y**ou are the light of our world. Let your light shine within each of us, so others may see it from far away. It will be then that we will be able to tell them about Jesus.



*The next business meeting of
the SW MN SWO board will be
Thursday, May 4, 2023, at 7 p.m.*

W — **W**hy me? That is the question we receive when we ask for others to serve on committees, and boards. Instead, we should be saying, “Here I Am Lord, Send Me.” It is not easy to serve, but with God's help, we learn how precious our time working together is. So, when you are asked to serve, please pray about it, and then say YES!

I — I am sitting here at my desk, trying to find something to say about each letter in, Snowy Winter, and I feel so much love for all the women of the ELCA. We are **BOLD**, **FAITHFUL**, and **LOVING**. We care about each other and we pray for each other. We are indeed sisters in Christ.

N — **N**ow we have exciting news for all of you. The conferences are busy planning the Spring Gatherings and they are sounding very exciting and interesting. So be sure to check out the gathering in your conference. The synod board is busy working on the Convention on May 5, 2023. It will be held at Shetek Ministries, Slayton. The publicity packets are being sent out by email and mail. So, look for the information to arrive soon. We are excited to see many of our sisters there.

T — **T**oday is the first day of your life!! Yesterday is gone and so today is the first day. What are you going to do with your first day? What does your first day look like? I want you to think about it. Pray about it. Tell others about it. “This is the Lord's Day, rejoice and be glad in it.”

E — **E**aster is almost here. Are we ready? Where did the time go? Every year we study about Jesus' death on the cross, but do we really realize how much God gives us, in His son, Jesus? He brings us teachings about the Old Testament, and about why God sent him here on earth. He knows he will die, and for us sinners. My sins!! What a glorious day, Easter Sunday, when Jesus rises up from the grave. Halleluiah!

R — RAY OF LIGHT

Imagine a large circle and the center of it rays of light spread out to the circumference. The light in the center is God; each of us is the ray. The closer the rays are to the center, the closer the rays are to one another. The closer we live to God, the closer we are bound to each other.

Your Synodical President,
Ilene Penk



A Message from
Pastor Heather

“Sometimes when you're in a dark place you think you've been buried, but you've actually been planted.”

—Christine Caine

Women of the ELCA here in Southwestern MN, as I write this reflection, we are in the midst of the Lenten Season and are soon to celebrate Easter. During this time, I have been reflecting on the awesome, powerful mystery and miracle of Easter that forever changed our world and our lives. We believe in a God who brings new life from death, joy from sadness, new beginnings from endings. We believe in a God who can bring light and joy bursting forth from the darkness of an empty tomb. This is our faith. This is the miracle of Easter. This is the promise God has for you and for me each and every day.

Indeed, as we consider the Easter promise, we know that many of us have lived through and faced moments where the sense of loss or darkness or grief has seemed overwhelming. We may have felt like we were at a dead end. We may have felt like we had been buried. But the promise of Easter is a promise that growth and life and joy and hope can happen, with God's power and help. Even when we think we have been buried, perhaps we have actually been planted, so that growth can come in our lives.

This Easter season, I encourage you to immerse yourselves in the celebration of Easter. Read the Easter accounts in the Gospels. Sing Easter hymns with enthusiasm and gusto. Then look at your life to see what new life God is bringing to you. Where are the tiny shoots of new life emerging? Where is growth happening in you and your congregation? Then thank God for the wondrous, amazing work that he has done to bring new life to us all through Easter!

Pastor Heather Culurís

SW MN Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders

Email: Heather.culuris@swmnelca.org

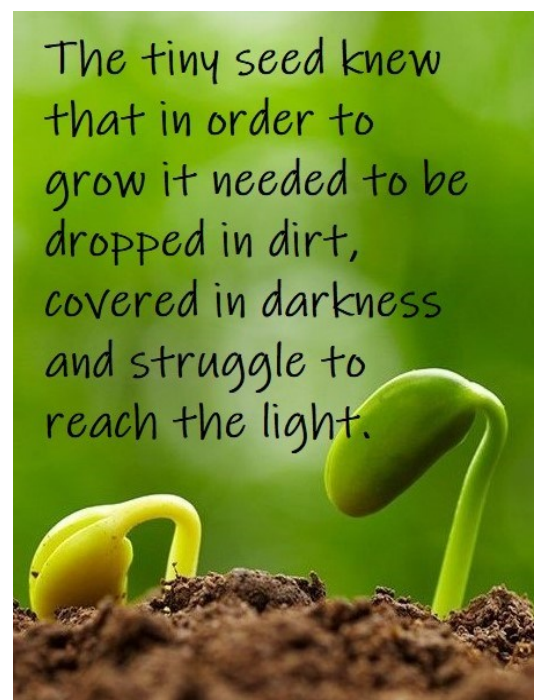
EDITORS CORNER:

It's Spring Again-I Think!

So I Thought I would give you a bit of a Spring To-Do-List.

Wake up with a smile on your face
Pick some Beautiful flowers
Walk in the rain with a loved one.
Plant a seed and watch it grow.
Take a Walk and Explore a new place.
Make a wish on a dandelion.
Go outside and play in the rain.
Search for a four-leaf clover.
Go shopping at a local farmer's market.
Do some spring cleaning.
Plant a seed and watch it grow.
Take a walk through a forest or park.
Make and hang a bird feeder in your backyard.
Head to a pond or lake and feed the ducks.
Go to a local farm to see the baby animals.
Skip stones across a pond.
Blow bubbles.
Listen to the birds singing outside your house.
Take time as they say “to stop & smell the roses”.
*And remember,
With Gods help, You can always start again,
just as spring starts anew each year.*

Note for Units and Conferences: Please send me special Items that may be of interest to others in our Synod. I don't guarantee to have room in the Communicator or on the Website for everything but, I will try to put out there what I can.



The tiny seed knew
that in order to
grow it needed to be
dropped in dirt,
covered in darkness
and struggle to
reach the light.

Mission Action/Stewardship

The calendar is telling me that SPRING will be here on March 20th, I sure hope they are right. There is a lot of snow and ice to go away.

Our Lenten Journey to the cross with Jesus has begun.

Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face, --and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace.

May we learn to put Christ first and foremost in our lives.

How are your mission projects doing? Are you still keeping busy?

Lutheran World Relief is in desperate need of Personal Care Kits for relief in the earthquake areas and Ukraine. Thrivent Action Team funds are a great way to buy the materials needed to put together these kits.

Materials needed to make a Personal Care Kit:

ONE light-weight bath-size towel

(between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27" dark color recommended)

Two or three bath-size bars of soap

equaling 8 to 9 oz., any brand in original wrapping

One adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging.

(Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business-size envelope; no plastic bags or wrap)

One sturdy comb, remove packaging

One metal nail clippers-remove packaging

Wrap all the items in the towel and secure with ribbon, yarn or rubber bands.

Do not enclose the kit or any of its contents in plastic bags.

Be sure to visit lwr.org/quilts and lwr.org/kits for resources to make your quilting or kit-making project a success.

Lutheran World Relief is accepting quilts and all the kits.

Donations can be delivered to: Lutheran World relief
398 E. Richmond Street
South St. Paul, MN 55075
Call before you go: 651-457-9009

There will be NO collection of In-Kind Offerings at our 2023 Convention, but you are asked to bring your In-Kind Offering Form to the convention or send it to Noreen Beranek in advance. Address: P O Box 83, Gibbon MN 55335.

Remember to include all donations on your report, not just those made to Lutheran World Relief.
Noreen Beranek



ROLLED BANDAGES

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

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

Just click here for your

[School Kit](#) instructions:

Mission Community/Justice

Since 2020 when we saw the effects of the Covid our churches have been suffering and changed.

We have two churches worshiping together on our Sunday Mornings and we do not even have one hundred people there together. Churches are empty. People may be taking advantage of watching the service when it is broadcasted. I myself have done this, however I have not been staying home just to watch the service. I realize that it is much simpler to stay home and watch as you do not have to get dressed up and drive into town. But I enjoy the service when I attend as this is Community.

Maybe it is the fact that we do not have a Pastor that people are not attending. We have had some very interesting supply pastors.

Our women's group no longer has meetings and our local board are all over 80, but still willing to do the job. We still do all the things we did before, serve funerals, take care of the flowers, chancel committee, but WE do not do the extra.

I realize that most of the younger people have jobs outside the home so they feel like they just don't have time. However, if you don't have time for God in your everyday life how can you expect Him to be there when you really need Him, in times of distress, pain, grief, or an emergency.

Our World seems to be forgetting about God and everything he does for us. We used to have God and our country in our schools, but not anymore. Instead we have people going into our schools and causing harm. God is not doing this, the Devil is.

So what are the answers to these problems. I truly do not know the answer to these questions. My solution is to pray about these things daily. We need to pray that we get God back where he has been tossed out.

Mission Community/Justice Marcella Chapman



JUSTICE

In 2021, the women's organization recommitted itself to viewing all its work through a racial justice lens.

For 35 years, Women of the ELCA has been a leading force in anti-racism work within the Lutheran community, with trainings, networks, resources, articles, and advocacy. And yet, we've only scratched the surface. We need only look at recent happenings within our church and society to know so much more needs to be done.

Our organization, through the churchwide executive board, has committed itself to undergird our mission and ministry with three anti-racism foci: awareness-raising, accompaniment, and advocacy. The work is all ours to share, in congregational units, in synodical organizations, and in the churchwide women's organization.

With awareness-raising, we are called to educate ourselves and others about racism in the church, the society, and the world. We are to enable ourselves and others to see everything through an antiracist lens. Women of the ELCA has curated a list of books, podcasts, and other resources to use in educating ourselves.

With accompaniment, European descent women (the majority within our organization) are asked to walk in solidarity with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) women in the struggle for racial equity. The bottom line is developing authentic relationships with BIPOC women.

With advocacy, we are called to live out our Lutheran belief that governments can help advance the common good, focusing specifically on anti-racism issues. You'll want to sign up to join the ELCA e-advocacy network today so you can remain informed and be a ready advocate.

To help you work towards all three objectives, join Women of the ELCA's Racial Justice Advocacy Network, a network of bold women working towards systemic change through racial justice education and advocacy. Take time now to learn more about the network.

This Article above was taken from the Justice page on the W of the ELCA Website

An Editor's Note: Community/Justice is one of the Most complicated Mission Committees to understand. And for this reason, I write this note. All the Mission Committees have the same importance — 1/3 of a total Mission program. But with that being said the issues that face Community/Justice have changed in the last few years. Due to this we sometimes have to keep an open mind when we hear or read things that are of a sensitive nature, no matter if we personally agree or disagree. These issues need to be put out there to raise awareness to the injustice in our world.

Mission Growth/Discipleship



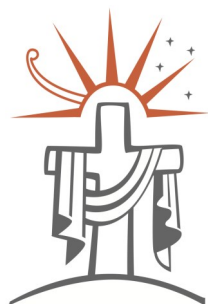
As we near the closing of the Lenten Season and Celebrate Jesus's triumphant journey into Jerusalem, we are in awe of his presence and the leadership role he is playing coming into Jerusalem as King. Luke 19:38 - "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord." The disciples and the people rejoiced over seeing His miracles. They spread their cloaks on the ground before Him and waved palm branches as he rode on a donkey into Jerusalem.

Our Redeemer's Lutheran Church of Benson, MN presents **"The Living Last Supper"** on Palm Sunday. This dramatization is authored by Ruth Elaine Schram using message and music to recreate the painting of THE LAST SUPPER painting by Leonardo da Vinci in 1498. This painting has become one of the most influential paintings to the Christian community.



"The Living Last Supper" portrays the night before Jesus was crucified. It depicts Jesus at the center of the table, surrounded by the 12 disciples; the men he chose to be at his side that night. Throughout the performance, each disciple tells how they came to know and follow Jesus. As Jesus shares the bread and wine, he speaks of that one of them would betray him. Each disciple ends his story in disbelief that one of the 12 would betray Jesus. "Is it me, Lord?" they ask.

The experience of attending this moving presentation is exceptional. Hopefully, people may have a chance to experience this drama.



EASTER: A joyous and glorious morning arrives, and we can be thankful for the "Living Lord". It is a celebration of life and living. As the apostle Peter states, "You are the Christ!" This is a celebration every day in our lives. Jesus died to save us from our sins so that we may have eternal life! Thank you, heavenly Father.

In closing, I have chosen a Mission Growth meditation that was used at a leadership event some time ago.

MEDITATION ON HANDS

Sit erect.

Feet flat on the floor.

Close your eyes.

Rest your hands in your lap, palms up.

Relax your tension points.

Become aware of the air at your fingertips, between your fingers, and on the palm of your hands.

Experience the fulness, strength and maturity of your hands.

Think of the most unforgettable hands you've known – the hands of your father, mother, grandparents.

Remember the oldest hands that have rested in your hands.

Think of the hands of a newborn child, of the incredible beauty, perfection and delicacy in the hand of a child.

Think of all the learning your hands have done and how many activities they have mastered, the things they have done.

Our hands are not just for ourselves, but for others.

Oh, how often they have been folded in prayer, a sign of both power and of their powerlessness.

How often they were given to help one another.

Remember all the kinds of work they have done—the tiredness and aching they have known – the cold and the heat – the soreness and the bruises.

Remember the tears they have wiped away, the blood they have bled, the healing they have experienced.

Remember the gentleness, the tenderness and the love they have given.

Think of the handshake – the wave of the hand in “hello” or “goodbye”.

The hands of a man and a woman in love – hands that are never forgotten.

Now raise your right hand slowly.

Gently place it over your heart.

Press firmly until your hand picks up the best of your heart.

Now lower your hand to your lap, very carefully, as if it were carrying your heart. For it does!

When you extend your hand to another, it is not just bone and skin, it is your heart.

A handshake is a real heart transplant.

Think of all the hands that have left an imprint on you. Handprints are the “heartprints” that can never be erased.

Think of all the places that carry your handprints and all the people who bear your heartprint.

They are indelible and will last forever.

Now, without opening your eyes, extend your hands to either side and find another hand.

Do not simply hold it but let your hand convey a message of friendship and concern for this person. Let your hand speak to it and let it listen to the other. Express your gratitude for this hand stretched out to you in the dark.

Bring your hand back to your lap.

Experience the presence of that hand lingering in yours.

The afterglow will fade, but the print is there forever.

Who hand was it?

It could have been Jesus' hand. It was.

For He has no other hands than ours.

It is with these hands that we do the will of our Lord Jesus Christ.

You may now open your eyes.

THANKS BE TO GOD (AUTHOR UNKNOWN)

BLESSINGS TO YOU

AS YOU CELEBRATE THE RISEN LORD!

- Dianne Doscher



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

Highlights & Special Items



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."

1. A Prayer for the Ukraine and Russia

Pray that Ukraine and Russia would be places without corruption. Pray for leaders of both countries to know God's truth and peace and be transformed by his Holy Spirit, that they would seek to lead their countries in the way of peace. **In your name, Amen.**

2. A Prayer for the senseless deaths caused by gun violence

God, our hearts are broken with pain at the senseless deaths caused by gun violence. Families mourn and children live in fear. Let our hands reach out and connect with those who feel alone, those who live in fear, and those suffering from mental illness. Let our voices be raised asking our Lord to protect all in our society, especially those most vulnerable. We ask this in the name of God, who desires that we live together in peace. **In your name, Amen.**

3. A Prayer for Resurrection

Dear God, Thank you that you make all things new. Thank you for the victory and power in your Name. Thank you that you hold the keys over death, that by your might, Jesus was raised from the grave, paving the way for us to have new life with you. We also confess our need for you...fresh...new...again. We ask that you renew our hearts, minds, and lives, for the days ahead. Shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. **In your name, Amen.**

4. A Prayer for The Women of the SWMN Synod

Heavenly Father, thank you that you are gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Our desire is to be women of gratitude and thanksgiving for the countless ways you have blessed us throughout our lives. As your children, we pray that we would reflect your love in every thought, word and deed. We pray that you would guard our hearts against jealousy and help us have compassion for each other. Strengthen us in our areas of weakness, so that we may develop strong character in your likeness. Fortify our minds to protect us against the attacks of the enemy and the lies of the world. Thank you, that you care for us as we walk in your path. May we be women of prayer in constant communion with you. **In your name, Amen.**



2023 SW MN

SWO Convention

Date: Friday, May 5, 2023

@ Shetek Lutheran Ministries,

14 Keeley Island Drive

Slayton, MN

Theme: Renew, Redo, Rejoice

In-Kind Offerings: The LWR Focus for this year is school kits, though there is a need for all kits and quilts. For more information see <https://lwr.org/kits>.

There will be **NO** collection of In-Kind Offerings at the convention. However, units are asked to bring their In-Kind offering forms to the convention, or send them to Noreen Beranek ahead of time.

Convention Offerings: Offering forms may be brought to the convention or mailed to Maria Lokensgard ahead of time.

Offering Objectives:

-25% to Shetek Lutheran Ministries

-25% to Shetek Environmental Learning Center

-50% to Churchwide Women

Katie's Cans:

Bring your loose change for Katie's Fund.



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.



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



[For More Info on the TWELFTH TRIENNIAL GATHERING Click Here](#)

[For More Info on the TWELFTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION Click Here](#)



Leadership Training

Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Redwood Falls, MN
[Please Watch for more information](#)

The Twelfth Triennial Convention

September 19-21, 2023,
Phoenix, AZ.

Women of the ELCA Gathering

Theme “**Just Love**”
September 21-24, 2023
Phoenix, AZ.

2023 Spring Conference Gatherings

Conference	Date/Time	Location	Program
Crow River	Saturday, April 22nd 8:30am	Gethsemane Lutheran Dassel MN	Patty Hauer with "Angel Dress Ministry"
Glacial Ridge	Tuesday April 18 Registration 4:00 pm	Fron Lutheran Church Starbuck MN	"Create a Legacy, Love One Another"
Great River	Saturday April 29th 8:30 a.m.	Our Savior's Lutheran Church 840 Lake Ave. Albany MN 56307	Theme: "We Are Called"
Lac Qui Parle	April 18 8:30 a.m.	To be Announced	To be Announced
Lakeland	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced
Minnesota Valley	Sat. April 15 12 Noon Registration 11:30	First Evangelical Lutheran Church Hector MN	Sharing Traditions "Santa Lucia Festival"
Prairie	April 22 8:30 a.m.	Bethany-Elm, Ivanhoe	To be Announced
Scenic Valley	April 20 5pm	Hawk Creek Lutheran Church, Sacred Heart MN	To be Announced
Shetek	Saturday April 22 10am Registration 9:30	American Lutheran Church 906 Prospect Ave Windom MN 56101	God's Gardening Tools Katie Chapman Environmentalist Shetek Lutheran Ministries
Watonwan River	To be Announced	To be Announced	To be Announced

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

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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

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507-246-5828 507-317-0365 (Cell)

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Congregation: Scandian Grove, St Peter

Conference: MN Valley (3rd term expires 2023)

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Noreen Beranek

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naberanek@gmail.com

Congregation: Augustana Lutheran, Gibbon

Conference: MN Valley (2nd term expires 2024)

Marcella Chapman (*appointed 2022)

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Congregation: Grace Lutheran, Westbrook

Conference: Shetek (1yr expires 2023)

Connie Dallmann

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Conference: Crow River (1yr expires 2023)

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Conference: Minnesota Valley (1st term expires 2024)

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Congregation: Old Westbrook Lutheran, Westbrook

Conference: Shetek (1st term expires 2024)

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Congregation: Kerkhoven Lutheran, Kerkhoven

Conference: Lakeland (1st term expires 2024)

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MISSION ACTION (Stewardship) Noreen Beranek, Carolyn Enstad,
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