

Southwestern Minnesota

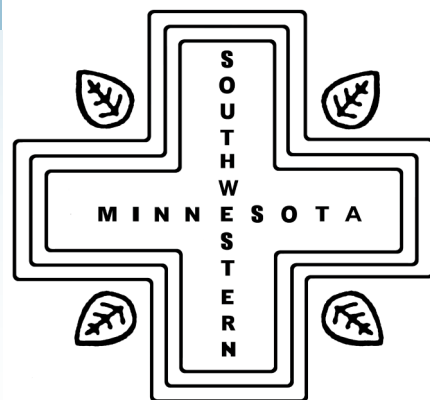
Summer 2023

July, Aug, & Sept

Volume 6, Issue 3

Women of the ELCA

The Communicator



The Twelfth Triennial Convention

September 19-21, 2023,
Phoenix, AZ.

Women of the ELCA Gathering

Theme "Just Love"
September 21-24, 2023
Phoenix, AZ.



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

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

Conference officers

Please attend

Leadership Training

Saturday, Sept. 9, 2023

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Redwood Falls, MN



Shetek Lutheran Ministries
[Outdoor School Programs](#)

[Maple Syruping](#)

[Pre-Marriage Retreat](#)

[Quilting and Crafting
Retreat](#)

[Confirmation Retreat](#)

[Octoberfest](#)

[Winter Fun Day](#)

Click on links

The next business meeting of
the SW MN SWO board
Friday-Saturday, Sept. 8-9,
before and after the
Leadership Training,
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
in Redwood Falls

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“A Word from Your Synodical President”

A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT.....

SUMMER IN SW MN.....

As I sit outside grilling chicken for this evening's meal, I thank God for summer. The neighbors are grilling, visiting and going for walks. The highway is busy on Thursdays and Fridays, of campers going north and south. Families are making memories. Then on Sunday all those campers come home again, going south and north. Lord, we ask that you be with these campers and keep them safe.

I just attended the SW MN Synod Assembly, a few days ago. What wonderful music we heard. The speakers were great and the food was tremendous. The day and half went by so fast. I had the privilege of seeing good friends and meeting new ones.

It has been five weeks since our SW MN Women's Synod Convention. What a good turn out we had. We had about 118 voting delegates and visitors attend. The board members did such a great job of getting everything done for the day. I can't say "THANK YOU" enough for each of you. You just did your jobs, and everything fell into place. Last year's convention had tornados and this year the rain (I mean flood). I heard a few days later that they had four inches of rain in two hours. WOW!! As I was leaving, I noticed that those who were stuck, were out and on their way home. I can't help but wonder, what God has planned for us next year. All in all, we had a great day at Shetek Ministries.

We voted in three new board members; three re-elected board members and we are still short a Vice President and two board members at large. During the meeting I asked if anyone at the convention could feel the Holy Spirit tapping them on the shoulder, and two women came forward to say they would think about it.



The Holy Spirit does work in mysterious ways. I will be contacting them soon. Keep us in your prayers, that these wonderful women will say "YES".

I am so amazed at what the women of the SW MN Synod can get done in our churches. The numbers for quilts and kits were outstanding, and the numbers keep coming in. Our women also give other items to police, fire and shelters in SW MN. "KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK", and let's make 2024 numbers even better. Thank the Lord for each and everyone of you for do God's work with your hands.

The board will have their transition meeting, on July 15, 2023, at 9:00 am, at the Synod office. This meeting is for the outgoing members to hand over board information and books to the new members. I sure hope everyone will be there.

Next the board will be inviting Conference board members to the "Training Event" on September 9, 2023. We will be meeting at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, MN. We, as the board, are looking forward to meeting with all you conference board members. We sure hope to have a good turnout.

The board will soon be making plans for the Conference Training Event, which is September 9, 2023, in Redwood Falls, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church.

Next is the exciting Triennial Gathering, that will be September 21-24, 2023, in Phoenix, Ariz. Information for the Gathering will be on the Women of the ELCA, web site soon, welca.org/convention If you have any questions, please feel free to call me.

“A Word from Your Synodical President”- Cont’d

The Triennial Convention and Gathering, in Phoenix, AZ, is next on the agenda. There will be six voting delegates plus me, as your Synod President, will fly out on September 18, 2023. We will be there to vote on resolutions, memorials and new churchwide board and at large members. We the, SW MN Synod Women are so proud that our treasurer, Maria Lokensgard, is running for churchwide board. We sure wish her good luck.

Then on September 20, 2023, all visitors will fly in to attend the Gathering. We are looking forward to hear and sing to the music, hear the speakers, take tours of Phoenix, see and visit is friends and make new friends. So, if you are interested, please register and join us. The theme is “JUST LOVE”. We need to just love each other.

So that’s about it from your, Women’s Synodical President. Until we meet again, have a safe and wonderful summer.

JUST LOVE, Ilene Penk
Your Synodical President,



Operation Just Love In-Kind Gifts Collection

Just Love, our gathering theme, has become a statement of faith over the last three years of weathering the COVID-19 pandemic that equipped us with the gifts of urgency, unity, and unleashed generosity.

Continue above



Rev. Dee Pederson, **Bishop**
Rev. Heather Culuris, *Synod Staff*

“Operation Just Love” calls us to continue to use these gifts to not only meet the immediate needs of those served by our six in-kind gifts but to also make it possible for them to catch up with room to breathe.

This tradition of collecting in-kind gifts to bless our host city is a “feeding of the 5,000” kind of effort. No one must do more than they can do, and all can participate. Women of the ELCA participants never cease to amaze with its generosity. Here you will find a complete In-Kind Gifts list and instructions for collecting and preparing gifts for the gathering.

Get started by—

- Inviting others to join your Operation Just Love team. Think outside the box. Anyone can join your team. Send them to the website welcatg.org. Check in with them often. Especially as deadlines approach.
- Pray for this effort daily and visit the website often for updates. Gifts can be brought to the gathering on September 21st or mailed between August 1st and September 8th to:

Women of the ELCA
Operation Just Love In-Kind Gifts Collection
8765 W Higgins Rd.
Chicago IL 60631-4101

[**DOWNLOAD THE INKIND GIFT FACT SHEET**](#)

Message from our SW MN Synod Minister



A Message from Pastor Heather

What makes you feel welcome when you visit a new congregation? What makes you feel welcome when you visit someone's home? Perhaps it is a simple smile that lets you know that you are welcome and valued there. It might be a spoken greeting, a "Hello" or a "It's so GOOD to see you!" that tells you that you are welcome. Someone might hold the door for you or ask you if you need anything. Perhaps you feel welcome and at home when someone offers you a cup of coffee and a brownie or they invite you to sit in their special comfortable chair.

Hospitality is an important part of our lives as Christians and in our congregations. How we welcome one another matters. How we welcome those who are visiting for the first time matters. How we reach out in our community to those looking for a place to belong matters. Our words, our actions, our **hospitality** matters.

Hospitality is a common theme in the Bible. 1st Peter, Chapter 4 says: "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer **hospitality** to one another without grumbling." Paul's letter to the Romans in the 12th chapter reminds us: "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice **hospitality**." The book of Hebrew is also clear: "Do not forget to show **hospitality** to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown **hospitality** to angels without knowing it."

This summer, as you are out and about perhaps at family gatherings like weddings and reunions, graduations and other celebrations, consider what **hospitality** means for you. Practice **hospitality**, showing hospitality to those you love and those you barely know. Then consider your own congregations. How do you show **hospitality** to one another? How do you show **hospitality** to your neighbor who nervously visits for Vacation Bible School Sunday? How do you show **hospitality** to the person looking and longing for a place they can belong? This summer, practice **hospitality**. In your words and in your actions, show **hospitality** to strangers and you may entertain angels without knowing it.

Pastor Heather Culuris

SW MN Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders

Email: Heather.culuris@swmnelca.org

EDITORS CORNER:

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. Stay in contact with your Liaisons or send items direct to swmn-welca@gmail.com

Jane Tongen

Hospitality is Simply an Opportunity to Show Love and Care



Hospitality (noun)

hos-pi-tal-i-ty [häspə'talədē]

the friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers:

friendliness, welcome, helpfulness, neighborliness, warmth, warm-heartedness, kindness, kind-heartedness, congeniality, geniality, sociability, conviviality, cordiality, amicability, amenability, generosity, liberality, open-handedness, hospitableness, warm reception, bountifulness

Hospitality - Wikipedia Article

Hospitality is the relationship between a guest and a host, wherein the host receives the guest with some amount of goodwill, including the reception and entertainment of guests, visitors, or strangers. Louis, chevalier de Jaucourt describes hospitality in the Encyclopédie as the virtue of a great soul that cares for the whole universe through the ties of humanity. Hospitality is also the way people treat others, that is, the service of welcoming and receiving guests for example in hotels. Hospitality plays a fundamental role to augment or decrease the volume of sales of an organization.

Mission Action/Stewardship

One of my favorite hymns is "For The Beauty of The Earth". As I glance out my kitchen window this morning, I can't help but see God's creation all around the farm. The grass is green, the birds are singing and flowers are in bloom.

Psalm 148:3 "Praise Him, sun and moon; Praise Him, all stars of light!"

On May 5, 2023, the 36 Annual Convention of the SW Synodical Women's Organization of the women of the ELCA took place at the Shetek Lutheran Ministries.

Our In-Kind Offering Report was given for June 2022-May 6, 2023.

It is as follows-

Quilts to LWR	1,420
Quilts to others	1,794
School Kits	1,330
Personal Care Kits	398
Baby Care Kits	548
Fabric Kits	66
Bandages to Global Ministries	2003+5 boxes of bandages
Newborn Kits to Global Ministries	30

Other donations:

Fleece blankets-nursing homes, police department, and ambulance services

Baby quilts/blankets, hats to children's hospitals or area hospitals

Prayer blanket and pillow, baby quilts for baptism

Sundresses sent to Cambodia

Quilts for graduates, Green Lake and Shetek Bible Camp auction & bazaars

Knitted squares for African ladies to sew together for afghans

Santa's Closet, Sharing & Caring Hands, -Minneapolis Homeless

Pies at church food booth at local festivals care meals

Our hands have been busy and praise God for the ability to help others in need and to share the wonderful news of the gospel.

Thank you! Our prayer is that we continue to use our talents as God has given us. We encourage you to think outside of the box and continue to come up with ways of helping others.

Carolyn Enstad - Mission Action



Mission Community/Justice

In this issue of the Communicator, I asked a friend of mine, Janet Lange, to write about her experience doing mission work in Costa Rica this last spring. Janet has previously done trips to Guatemala so she's quite experienced at volunteering her resources, time & talent helping where needed. I enjoyed reading about this place and the tremendous work being done for the children along with teaching them about God's love for everyone.

ROBLEALTO CHILD CARE ASSOCIATION SAN JOSE de MONTANA, COSTA RICA

On March 25, 2023, First Lutheran Church of Litchfield sent a team of eight adults to Costa Rica for a 9-day (MST) Mission Study Trip. We flew into Liberia, Costa Rica, leaving the cold and snow of Minnesota behind, and boarded a 12-passenger bus for a 4 1/2 hour ride to Roblealto Bible Houses near the capitol of San Jose.

Roblealto Child Care Association began in 1932 when a European missionary couple came to Costa Rica and felt a need to care for the children on the streets of San Jose. They bought a farm in the mountains northwest of the capitol, built a house and began caring for the children. This simple beginning has evolved today into 10 Bible houses, each with 10 bedrooms and a mommy and poppy, accommodating 10 foster children, ages 5 to 12 in each house. There are medical and dental facilities available on site for the children, plus a chaplain and social workers who provide for the mental, emotional and spiritual needs of the children. There is a school on site and regular educational classes plus spiritual instruction are taught each day to the children of Roblealto. Also on site is a community center, a cafeteria, laundry for the homes and administrative buildings. The farm includes a dairy, producing cheese, and a baby chick hatchery, along a building of laying hens providing eggs.

The goal of Roblealto is to provide a safe, normal and encouraging home situation for the children, while social workers interact with the families in their respective homes to break the cycle of poverty, abuse, drug use and other dysfunctional behavior so the children can eventually be returned to the care of

their families. There has been a 95% success rate for those children completing the program.

Roblealto Child Care Association also has 4 daycare facilities in the area with 685 children, ages 9 months to 12 years attending each day so their parents or parent can work to support their children. Roblealto also conducts a voluntary alumni program of 100 adolescents, ages 11 to 18 who meet weekly, giving support to Roblealto program graduates.

While the First Lutheran team was staying at Roblealto, we painted one of the houses, the Iris House, and interacted with the children. We ate with the families, played with the kids, watched their reenactment of the Passion Play and gave out hugs. We brought soccer balls for the kids and gifts for the Mommies. We also enjoyed the warm weather and beautiful flowers of Costa Rica, the bright sunrises and sunsets, the rain clouds coming over the mountain in the afternoon and the rainbows that followed the rain.

First Lutheran Church sponsors one of the Bible Houses monthly and there are many individuals who also sponsor a child or children in the program every month. First Lutheran, Litchfield has sent a mission team to Roblealto for a number of years to do for organization whatever needs to be done: maintenance, painting, concrete work, etc. If anyone is interested in spending a rewarding week volunteering at a wonderful place, another team will go to Costa Rica in 2025.

More important than the "work" volunteers have done at Roblealto, are the relationships that have been built through the years with the staff, foster parents and also the children. God is at work in Roblealto and it is a Holy place where children, who otherwise may be forgotten, are cared for, nurtured and loved.

What can you do: pray for the children, staff and foster parents; choose to donate to sponsor a Bible house or a child for a month, months, a year; become part of a mission trip to Roblealto. More information can be found at Roblealto Child Care Association.org.

Blessings, Connie Dallmann
Mission Community/Justice.

Let the little children come to me

Mission Growth/Discipleship

DISCIPLESHIP

What does discipleship mean to you? Women of the ELCA participants are active disciples in many ways. **dis·ci·ple·ship noun [di-'sī-pəl'ship]**

a: discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

b: disciples are followers of Jesus who are intent on carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and the Great Command (Acts 1:8).

At WELCA, participants practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Whether it be making quilts and health and school kits for [Lutheran World Relief](#) or [studying the Bible together](#), or assisting in worship, they grow in faith and share what they've learned with friends and neighbors.



Summer Greetings from Mission Growth!

Often our circle Bible study groups take a summer vacation. In summer our gardens grow, our lawns need mowing, and the weeds need pulling. Are you also taking some time to grow your faith this summer?

One way is reading your Bible. Coffee or tea on the deck in the beauty of God's world is a great way to start. Bible reading followed by some time in prayer can surely anchor your day.

Through the Bible in one year? It sounded like a great plan. There are parts of the Bible which are old friends and very familiar. There are other parts not so familiar to me. So, I thought I would try it. I got a paper from our church years ago and decided to follow it. My plan suggested reading starting at Genesis in the morning and Matthew in the evening and reading a chapter or three each day. I find that some passages read quickly and others I want to reread, study, or ponder for a while. So, it is time for true confessions. I am in year 2 and still have not finished. I plan to keep going though. What is lacking for me is self-discipline.

There are several books available about this topic. You can get some free schedules to download on-line, or you could ask your pastor for a suggestion of where to get a plan. I think that it would be better to have a friend reading at the same time. This would give you a discussion partner and an accountability partner. You may want to be selective about your reading plan. I read about one method to read the Bible in one year that really made me chuckle. It said: Find the number of pages in your edition of the Bible; divide that by 365 and read that many pages per day. It makes sense mathematically but not in the context; stopping in the middle of a chapter or story or Psalm.

I think it does not matter **how** you read your Bible, but that **you do** read your Bible. If you have some suggestions about this, feel free to E-mail them to me at danielson.brenda6@gmail.com and I will share them with everyone next time.

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that **God may open to us a door for the word**, to declare the mystery of Christ.

Colossians 4:2-3a

Have a blessed and healthy summer in whatever are your favorite pursuits.

Grow in Faith. Serve the Lord.

Brenda Danielson

Mission Growth

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. We implore you, O Merciful God, look with grace upon those who courageously defend their land. Remember the mothers and fathers, the innocent children, widows and orphans, the disabled and helpless, those seeking shelter and refuge, who reach out to you and to their fellow human beings looking for mercy and compassion.

In your name, Amen.

2. A Prayer for victims of natural disasters. Protect all who are in any form of danger; provide practical help to those in need; strengthen the weary, console the grieving, heal the suffering; and bless those engaged in disaster relief efforts with safety and courage.

In your name, Amen.

3. A Prayer for the Triennial

We ask that you bless every aspect of the event, from the speakers and attendees to the organizers and volunteers. May this Convention and Gathering be a time of spiritual growth, learning, and fellowship, all for the glory of your name. .

In your name, Amen.

4. A Prayer for Church Leaders

We pray for the leaders in our churches and ministries, that they would look to you alone to guide and direct their paths. Give them the wisdom of heaven, which is pure, peace-loving, considerate, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere. *In your name, Amen.*

5. A Prayer for Everyday.

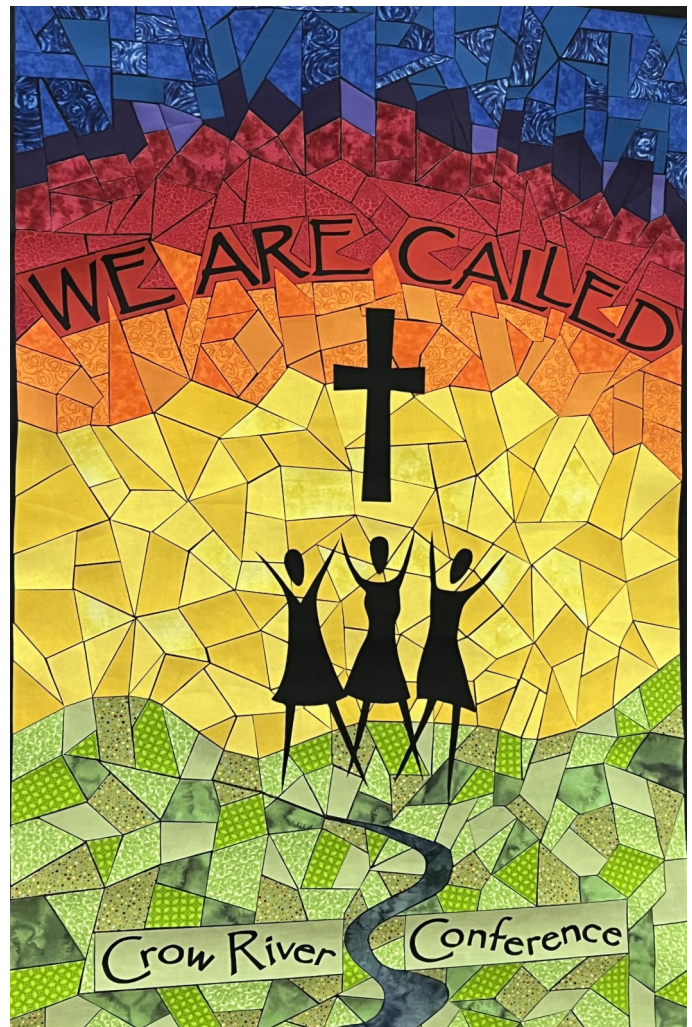
Lord, today I pour my heart out to you. Right now, I am in desperate need of your strength and hope. Help me to remember that you are always with me, and that you will give me the courage I need to conquer this day with your grace.

What is Katie's Fund?

Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology. **2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years** is a one-million-dollar campaign for Katie's Fund that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Scroll down to learn more about Katie's Fund and the ways in which the fund has aided women across the church.

2122

Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years



Crow river Banner by Carol Kraig

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>



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

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

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



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2023 Spring Conference Gatherings



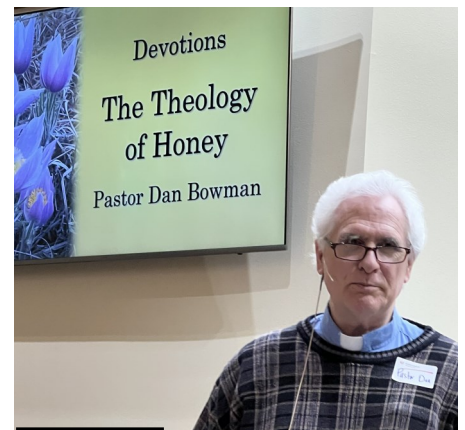
Crow River Conference



Glacial Ridge Conference



Conference Gatherings



BEE safe

Great River Conference



Great Singers



Angel Dress



Scenic Valley Conference

SYNODICAL BOARD 2023-2024

President:

ILENE PENK

11168 Hwy. 15, Brownton 55312

320.510.1261 ilene@wildbluecoop.com

Grace Lutheran/Brownton

Minnesota Valley Conference

Elected 2023 for one year term

Served 1 year-with reelection in 2024 for 2 yr. term

Vice-President:

JANE LEITZMAN

30655 Melanie Way, St. Joseph, MN 56374

320.291.6730(Cell) 32.363.4386(Home)

jane.leitzman@gmail.com

Salem Lutheran

Great River Conference ***Appointed 2023**

Serve 1 yr. with re-election 2024 of 2 year

Secretary:

GWEN DEGNER

408 – 8th St. N., Benson 56215

701.261.8920 gwen.degner@gmail.com

Trinity Lutheran/Benson

Glacial Ridge Conference

Elected 2023 for two year term

Served 2 year-with reelection in 2025 for 1 yr. term

Treasurer:

KAREN QUISTORFF

46021 County Road 182, Sauk Center, MN 56378

320.282.6368 quistorffk@gmail.com

First Lutheran/Sauk Center

Great River Conference

Elected 2023

to serve 1 yr. With re-election For 2 years in 2024

Board Members At Large:

CONNIE DALLMANN

1385 Jefferson St. SE, Hutchinson, MN 55350

320.583.2311 cjdallmann@gmail.com

Peace Lutheran/Cosmos

Crow River Conference

Elected 2023

Serve 2 yr. with re-election 2023 for 1 yr.

May be re-elected for 1 yr. in 2024

NOREEN BERANEK

P O Box 83, Gibbon 55335

507.834.6817 naberanek@gmail.com

Augustana Lutheran/Gibbon

Minnesota Valley Conference

Re-elected 2022

serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

Total years served in 2024: 4 years

CAROLYN ENSTAD

25463 Co. Rd. 7, Walnut Grove 56180

507.822.0506 dcenstad@mvtvwireless.com

Old Westbrook Lutheran/Westbrook

Shetek Conference

Elected 2022

serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

BRENDA DANIELSON

304 Polar Circle, Arlington 55307

952.956.2954 (Cell) 507.964.1021 (Home)

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Zion Lutheran/Arlington

Minnesota Valley Conference

Elected 2022

serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

CARMEN MAUS

1408 – 40th St. SE, Murdock 56271

320.424.0272 carmen.m.maus@gmail.com

Kerkhoven Lutheran/Kerkhoven

Lakeland Conference

Elected 2022

serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

KAREN SKARPHOL

1972 Bud Road, Windom, MN 56101

507.831.5540(Home) 507.822.0785(Cell)

jkskarp@windomnet.com

American Lutheran/Windom

Shetek Conference

Elected 2023

serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2025 of 2 yr.

KATHY HARWICK

724 – 7TH Ave., Madison, MN 56256

320.598.3268(Home) 320.361.0243(Cell)

kbearalive@live.com

Faith Lutheran/Madison

Lac Qui Parle Conference

Elected in 2023

serve 2 yrs. With re-election in 2025 For 2 yrs.

*At this time there are **two** open*

Board Member At Large positions

SW MN Synod Staff Liaison:

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BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS 2022-2023

MISSION ACTION (Stewardship) Noreen Beranek, Carolyn Enstad ,
Carmen Maus

MISSION COMMUNITY (Justice) Connie Dallmann, Kathy Harwick

MISSION GROWTH (Discipleship) Branda Danielson, Karen Skarphol

SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE LIAISON: Ilene Penk, Gwen Degner

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE Ilene Penk, Jane Leitzman, Gwen Degner,
Karen Quistorff Maria Lokensgard