

Southwestern Minnesota

# Women of the ELCA

## The Communicator

Fall 2023  
Oct, Nov, & Dec.  
Volume 6, Issue 4



2023 TRIENNIAL  
GATHERING FOCUSES ON  
“JUST LOVE”



Read all about the great time!

[https://](https://www.womenofthelca.org/blog/post/2023-triennial-gathering-focuses-on-just-love)

[www.womenofthelca.org/  
blog/post/2023-triennial-  
gathering-focuses-on-just-love](https://www.womenofthelca.org/blog/post/2023-triennial-gathering-focuses-on-just-love)

## SWMN Synod Women at the “JUST LOVE” Gathering in Phoenix

### The next meetings of the SW MN SWO board

- Saturday, January 13, 10 a.m., in Olivia.
- Saturday, February 17, 10 a.m., in Olivia.
- Friday, May 3  
at Gloria Dei in Redwood Falls
- Saturday, May 4, SWO Convention  
at Gloria Dei.

### Inside This Edition

<a href="#">“A Word from Your Synodical President”</a>	2
<a href="#">Special insights from the Triennial</a>	3
<a href="#">A Message from Pastor Heather</a>	4
<a href="#">Mission Community/Justice</a>	5
<a href="#">Mission Action/Stewardship &amp; Mission Growth/Discipleship</a>	6
<a href="#">Prayers</a>	
<a href="#">Highlights &amp; Special Items</a>	7
<a href="#">Special Items to Remember</a>	8
<a href="#">2022-23 Synodical Board</a>	9

## A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT...

Here it is fall already. The leaves are changing, the farmers are harvesting and the gardens need cleaning up. God gives us aplenty. Thank your Lord!

On September 8, 2023, we did the Training for the conference officers. The theme was “Hand and Hand Together”. That went along well with last year’s theme “Beautiful Feet.” The board is already thinking about what the theme will be for next year.

On September 8, 2023, seven of the voting members of the SW MN Synod, who were the delegates, flew to Phenix, AZ, for the Triennial Convention. We spent the first two and half days right at the hotel we were staying at. The convention room was large enough to hold all delegates from the 64 synods and our meals were served right outside the meeting room.

It was a great experience to be a delegate and be able to vote in new members of the churchwide board. We are very proud that our treasurer, Maria Lokensgard, was voted to be member at large.

**CONGRADULATIONS MARIA!!!!!!**

A special thank you to our delegates, Betty Brandt, Dawn Planting, Jane Tongen, Karen Skarphol, Maria Lokensgard, Nancy Rossler and myself, for giving up your time to be part of the voting and great discussions. On September 21, 2023, 21 women from SW MN Synod joined us for the Triennial Gathering. We heard wonderful bible study leaders, speakers, and workshop leaders. We learned many good ideas to bring back

to our women for SW MN Synod.

Now the board will be preparing for the Synod Convention on May 4, 2024. It will be held in Redwood Falls, at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. So, mark your calendars for the date.

Hope to see all of you there.

Here is where I will end this letter. Have a safe “FALL”. God Bless each of you until we meet again.

*Ilene Penk,*

*your SWMN Synodical President*





## *Special insights from the Triennial Convention and Gathering*

Karen Skarphol

As a voting member, I learned that it will take a group of officers and 11 board members to do the work of the Women of the ELCA. I am very proud to have been one of 254 women to listen and vote to elect them. I liked the fact that we voted to keep the board at 11 instead of 3 or 4. I can't imagine how they would be able to bring all the wonderful programs to us with a small board.

I believe the best part of the Triennial Gathering was the morning services. The speakers were amazing. I will be looking for ways to share some of the lessons I learned there!

Nancy Roessler

Triennial was an absolute wonderful experience again! Being a voting delegate for the first time was very interesting as I saw how invested our church women are from all over our nation in our church and special projects. Our Gathering speakers drew us in to their personal experiences and causes that keep the fire burning in their own lives. "Just Love" for all!

One of our attendee's traveled by car giving us a little different view point.

As I view the Grand Canyon,  
I am reminded of God's Power, Grace  
and Love he has for all of us.  
It is amazing how beautiful and  
breathtaking his creation is.  
He put us on this earth to enjoy and  
care for his creation, ALL OF HIS CREATION,  
We are all God's people.  
God created all of us.  
No matter the color of our skin,  
we all Bleed Red and all our tears are salty.  
We need to Love as Jesus Loves.  
God's work is in our hands.  
Help us to open our hearts to God's Love.  
Sharon Carrigan

Jane Tongen

I so enjoyed every moment of Convention and Gathering. Learned so many things during the entire time.

One small thing that took place was we got ducked by our outgoing president Joy.. If you don't know what this means I got a partial explanation from her.

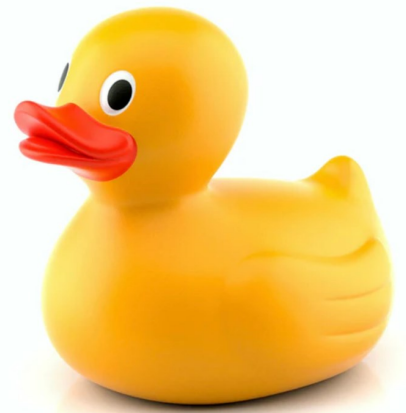
As we are all one, we are going to do something together. We are all going to get ducked –

that's duck with a "D". Ducks are resilient, they let water literally run off their backs. There may be times during this convention that you may not agree with a motion or a comment.

That is okay. We are all in this together, it doesn't matter what your role is – you matter. So, these little rubber duckies are a sign that you belong to this group and that your role matters.

Following this short explanation the Executive Board distributed rubber duckies..

**We got  
Ducked**



As we come to the fall season, we begin to focus on new beginnings and learning. College students load up their cars to head off for new discoveries and adventures. School has been in the stores since July, get ready for the start of a new school year. School lessons and plans are being made. Sometimes, we might be tempted to think that the focus on learning is simply for the youth in our lives, but as people of faith, we continue to learn throughout our lives and our world.

Take time this fall to learn more deeply about God and our world. Open your hearts and lives to what God is teaching you, through the Bible, through worship, through relationships, and through new experiences.

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Jane Tongen



**<https://us02web.zoom.us/join/join?from=addon>**  
**[https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/  
tZwpce2vrjorGNI6sK5kJEbiv5EjdA-  
jUuoYJ#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwpce2vrjorGNI6sK5kJEbiv5EjdA-jUuoYJ#/registration)**

## Mission Community/Justice

“The Cold Within” is a poem written in the 1960’s by American poet Patrick Kinney.

According to the poet’s widow, he submitted it first to the Saturday Evening Post, but it was rejected as it was “too controversial” for the time.

The poem gives a strong message against racial discrimination. It is a simple but powerful reminder that if we selfishly hold on to world’s resources, and the wealth offered by it, and we persist in discrimination on grounds of race, religion, caste, gender and ethnicity, we are all lost.

The message Kinney gives is that harboring prejudices against each other will ultimately prove fatal, the poem teaches how in today’s generation prejudices, malices, biases, discriminations and racisms can destroy human beings and eventually the world.

### THE COLD WITHIN

Six humans trapped by  
happenstance

In bleak and bitter cold.

Each one possessed a stick of wood  
Or so the story’s told.

Their dying fire in need of logs,

But the first man held his back.

For of the faces ‘round the fire

He noticed one was black.

The next man looking ‘cross the way.

Saw one not of his church.

And couldn’t himself to give

The fire his stick of birch.

The third one sat in tattered clothes,

He gave his coat a hitch,

Why should his log be put to use,

To warm the idle rich?

The rich man just sat back and

thought of the wealth he had in  
store,

And how to keep what he had earned  
from the lazy, shiftless poor.

And the black man’s face bespoke  
revenge as the fire passed from his  
sight.

And all he saw in his stick of wood  
was a chance to spite the white.

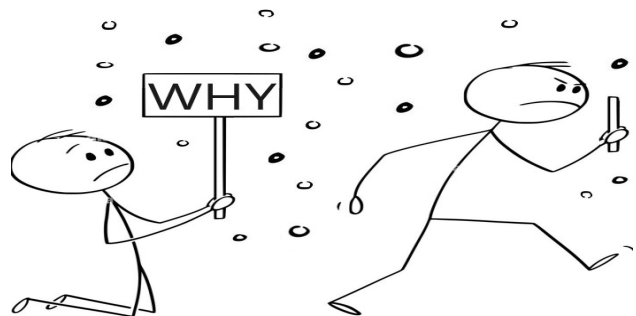
The last man of this fallen group did  
naught but except for gain,

Giving only to those who gave, was  
how he played his game.

Their logs tight in death’s still hands  
was proof of human sin.

They did not die from cold without  
They died from cold within.

Kathy Harwick





## Mission Growth/Discipleship

Occasionally people are called to extraordinary discipleship. Abraham and Sarah. Moses. Esther. Almost everyone is called to uncommon faith and obedience sometime in life. A child dies, a spouse leaves, a job is lost, or the diagnosis is bleak.

But most discipleship is ordinary and mundane. Most of the time, discipleship is getting up each day and trying to make the best of it. Our spiritual lives, we may feel, are boring or trivial, quite unlike those of people with “real callings.”

The words “disciple” and “discipleship” are first cousins to “discipline.” I know (and so do you) some people whose lives have been shaped by the discipline of following Jesus. Because they practice, these disciples make it look easy, even though it isn’t. Their lives, molded by Christ’s own, have warmed and brightened mine.

*This message is adapted from “Just a Little Light” written by Karen Melang in the June 1992 issue of Lutheran Woman Today (now [Gather](#)) magazine.*

## Mission Action/Stewardship

If you’ve grown up in a Christian church or participated in a Bible Study, chances are you’ve heard the term stewardship and have some idea what it means. Typically, the first thought we have is that it means tithing or relates to our finances. I believe that is true but not the whole story. To me, good stewardship is carefully managing what God gave you to serve.

**To Serve Others** As it says in 1 Peter 4:10-11, *“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.”* In this example good stewardship means using your gifts to serve others. The writer then continues and lists ways you could serve, *“If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides...”*

We were all created differently and given different abilities. Some of us are better at encouragement, while others possess the gift of teaching. Both are needed along with many other gifts and very rarely do you see people who are gifted with everything. No matter what you’ve been given, it’s important to use these gifts to help those around you.

**To Serve God** From the parable of talents found in Matthew 25:14-30, we find a lesson on serving God. In the parable, each servant is given an amount of talents or gold based on their ability. The servants who used their talent to produce more were admonished, and the one who buried their talent was criticized. The message is clear, don’t waste the talents given to you by the master.

It doesn’t matter how much talent you have; all that matters is that you use it. Again this looks different for different people, but if you’ve been given a certain skill, then there’s probably an area that skill can be used.

# 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."*

## Prayer for peace in the Holy Land

Please pray that the nation of Israel will know the Lord's comfort and see Him as a loving God who offers them a plan of salvation through Jesus their Messiah.

O God of peace, you have established Jerusalem as the Lord's House and a place of peace, and you have called on all who live there to love you and prosper. Instill in her inhabitants - Jews, Christians and Muslims - a hunger for justice and dignity and a resolve to end the distrust that culminates in violence.

For the protection of the Holy Land and all those within it. ... For both Jewish and Arabic people to find unity in Jesus Christ!

## 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.





## SPECIAL ITEMS TO REMEMBER



**Our own SWMN Maria Lokensgard  
New Board Member at Large**

## SWMN Voting Delegates





# SYNODICAL BOARD 2023-2024

## **President:**

### **ILENE PENK**

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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**

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Salem Lutheran

Great River Conference **\*Appointed 2023**

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

## **Secretary:**

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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**

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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**

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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

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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

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Shetek Conference

**Elected 2022**

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

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Minnesota Valley Conference

**Elected 2022**

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

### **CARMEN MAUS**

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Kerkhoven Lutheran/Kerkhoven

Lakeland Conference

**Elected 2022**

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

### **KAREN SKARPHOL**

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American Lutheran/Windom

Shetek Conference

**Elected 2023**

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

### **KATHY HARWICK**

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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