

NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN



The Northwestern

Newsletter for Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin

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Northwest Synod of Wisconsin – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

Our Savior's Lutheran Church

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THE FAMILY CIRCUS

By Bil and Jeff Keane



from JoyfulNoiseletter.com

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Greetings dear Sisters in Christ,

I'm not a winter person. Period. I don't like cold. I don't like snow. And I really don't like ice. So why do I still live in Wisconsin? That's a good question and one I have asked myself many times in the past few weeks as I'm shoveling snow for the umpteenth time.



The answer is quite simple. This is where my roots are. Where my family is. Where God needs me to be. So instead of focusing on what I don't like about winter, I am trying – really hard – to focus on what I do have to deal with winter. Unlike so many, I have a warm house to live in, protecting my family and me from the harsh elements. I have warm clothes, coats, boots and mittens. We have the tools to remove the snow and ice. I have no legitimate reason to complain about the cold, so I won't. Or at least not often.

Even though the snow banks are high and the sub-zero temps are back, spring is in the air. Several of the conferences have set the dates for their Days of Renewal and summer retreats. We've also set the dates for our second annual Days of Enrichment so please, check out the list of upcoming dates and get them on your schedule.

For a more inclusive environment, I have asked our conference coordinators to meet more frequently with our SWO Board. Our recent meeting took place in mid-January at Augustana Lutheran in Cumberland. (A shout out to the Barb Garling and crew for the great hospitality). Using a workshop format, we focused on the Circle of Influence/Circle of Conflict (from Stephen Covey's works) and determined where we were as an organization. It provided the basis for the afternoon session, where using the APA process (thanks Bishop Laurie!), the women identified (as an organization) what we wanted to accomplish, what we wanted to preserve and what we wanted to avoid. The day ended with draft action plans that included creation of a Facebook page, updated website design, and future learning opportunities for women. These action plans are a work in progress and once firmed up will be shared with all. In the meantime, please feel free to ask your conference reps about them.

Continuing our support of Women of the ELCA, SWO of NW Wisconsin again awarded scholarships to women who have been called to ordained ministry or other full-time work in the church. Out of ten potential applicants, five women applied and received scholarships this year. Recipients are: Bethany Ringdal (Pilgrim-Superior), Emily Stelling (Milltown), Jenny Hatleli (Central-Chippewa Falls), Katie Wagner (Christ-Menomonie), and Hannah Olson (Immanuel-Strum). Please keep these sisters in your prayers as they continue their journey of faith.



"Give justice to the weak and fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalms 82: 3-4.

Acting to end human trafficking is a priority for Women of the ELCA. We are joining our Sisters throughout Wisconsin to push for a Safe Harbor Bill in Wisconsin. Currently, youth under the age of 18 can be prosecuted for prostitution instead of being recognized as the victims they are. The Women of the East Central Wisconsin Synod recently visited their representatives and Senators in Madison to discuss this subject and to urge their elected officials to sponsor and support LRB 0568 – Safe Harbor for Trafficked Youth. Instead of being prosecuted for prostitution, we want them to receive the help and services they need to heal and become productive members of society. I urge each of you to contact your state legislators and ask for their support in this endeavor.

If you don't know who your state legislators are, you can find their contact information by visiting the Wisconsin State Legislature webpage <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/> and typing in your address to the "who are my legislators" box on the right-hand side of the page.

Sign/give your name and address. It is great if you want to include that you are a Lutheran woman or part of Women of the ELCA.

A second bill that we are asking for support is LRB-1118/1 – Fighting Human Trafficking – Truckers Representative, Jeremy Thiesfeldt and Senator LaTonya Johnson have a bill, Assembly Bill 22, that all new

truck drivers receive education in human trafficking signs, to help prevent human trafficking and to help law enforcement save girls lives and catch the traffickers.



This bill made it far last session but did not get to the Senate floor in time before session ended. The bill will receive a public hearing at 10:00 am on Thursday, March 14th at the State Capitol. The bill needs three people from the public to come and testify in support of the bill in order for it to move forward. My counter-part from the East Central Synod of Wisconsin, Shirley Paulson, will be one of the three to testify.

I realize that discussions regarding human trafficking and our efforts to stop it is an uncomfortable topic for many. That is unfortunate. I sincerely mean no disrespect to anyone; however, not discussing the horrors of trafficking, and the negative impact it has on the women and children involved, only supports it. We must be **BOLD** in our efforts to end human trafficking and our support to the victims. I believe it is what God is asking us to do.

Please *pray for our elected officials* that they see the worth in passing these bills. Please *pray for the thousands and thousands of women and children that are being exploited / trafficked*. And please *pray for those of us that are working so hard to stop it*.

God's blessings to all,
Lori Wells
SWO President.

FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

I have nearly completed a 'Grandma, Tell Me Your Story' book for my granddaughter. I will give it to her this May on the day she graduates from college. There are dozens of questions in this book: What is a special meal your mom made for you?" "What's the best thing that's been invented since you were a kid?" "Did you ever fall in love at first sight?"



One of the questions at the end of this book is, "What would you most like to be remembered for?" That question gave me pause. I answered some typical grandma responses such as being a nurturing mother, a person with a sense of humor, someone who is organized but also flexible. And then I stopped to realize that I wanted something more profound, more ME. So, I wrote, "Someone who knows where I've been, where I'm going and is content and hopeful in the present."

As I apply this answer to my Christian faith, I do know where I've been; I have been brought to the baptismal font where my parents presented me as an infant to receive the gift of holy baptism – a grace-filled water of life "through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-7).



I know where I'm going. At my death I will be raised up to "share with all the faithful the endless joy and peace won through the glorious resurrection of Christ our Lord." I will be acknowledged as a "sheep of [Jesus'] fold, a lamb of [Jesus'] own flock, a sinner of [Jesus'] redeeming" and will be received into the "blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light" (from the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 283).

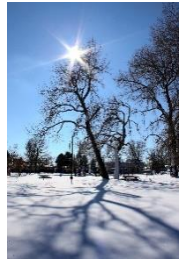
And now, the all-important present where I can be content and hopeful in God's promises each day no matter what my stress, concerns and worries are. Hebrews 13:5 expresses this promise so clearly, "Be content with what you have; for he has said, 'I will never leave you or forsake you.'" It's not always easy to trust that promise, but it is always there to help us see the light at the end of the tunnel. And the next promise adds the dimension of hope, "For surely, I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope (Jeremiah 29:11). Thanks be to God for these life promises!

Dawn Olson, Vice President

FROM THE TREASURER

“O sing to the Lord a new song; for he has done marvelous things.” Psalm 98:1

For me, February has been a very exasperating month with what seemed like a snow storm every other day. I personally was not praising God for all the snow as I shoveled to clear the driveway, paths and decks for the umpteenth time. But when the sun shone so bright, the landscape and mounds of snow were indeed beautifully and marvelously created and glimmering white. The words of the hymn “Earth and All Stars” spoke to me. In these verses, a host of natural and cultural phenomena, including the elements of snow, wind, and hail are invited to sing to the Lord. Indeed, may each of us make a joyful noise, sing praises to our creator and celebrate the marvelous things that God shares.



We also thank and praise God for the active, faithful, and joyful stewardship of Women in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. It is through you that the SWO and the Churchwide Women's Organization can fulfill their mission and ministries. The SWO fiscal year ended January 31st and I am delighted to report that the offerings from your units totaled \$21,169. The Synodical Women's Organization sent one half of the total offering received to Churchwide Women of the ELCA (\$10,604).

The ministries supported by the Synodical Women's Organization from the retained offerings include: the Northwestern newsletter, scholarships for lay school of ministry students and women seminary students, gifts to Luther Park and Luther Point Bible camps, the two Days of Enrichment held last fall, and SWO board expenses.

REMINDERS:

- Now is the time to send the yearly \$30 for the Convention Expense Fund (if you haven't yet). Each congregational unit shall submit this yearly to the SWO treasurer to help defray the expenses of the convention, enabling a lower convention registration fee and encouraging more to attend.
- Maria Bvumbwe shared with the SWO board that they have established literacy training for the women in Malawi. Please continue to pray for this program in Malawi and that more teachers can be found for the literacy training. If your unit would like to contribute funds for the book used in the literacy training, please send your Malawi Literacy funds to the SWO treasurer.
- Thrivent members can request **two** Thrivent Action Team grants yearly, each for \$250. These can be used to purchase batting and other quilting supplies, items for Lutheran World Relief kits, diapers for the food pantry.... consider needs of your congregation or community and apply for the Thrivent Action Team grants.
- Units are encouraged to collect a Regular Offering every time they meet (Bible Study, fellowship over lunch, making quilts, assembling kits, planning an event). The unit treasurer shares one half of the offerings received with the Synodical Women's Organization, who then shares one half of that amount with the churchwide organization of Women of the ELCA
- If you're unsure of where to send offerings and which form to use, request an offerings summary page from me. I will e-mail or mail the guide to you.
- **Be sure to share the information in this newsletter with your officers and especially your treasurer.**



Northwest Synod
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in Malawi



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From the Secretary

Thank you to all of you that have shared officer information with your conference secretary and me. Some of you are using a printed form and some have used the online format. Thanks for sharing information in whichever way is most convenient to you. Conference Secretaries are:

Lake Superior - Kathy Rewalt, 5620 US Hwy 2, Iron River WI 54847 (springlake@cheqnet.net)

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Dairyland - Vicki Amundson, 842 N 8th St., Black River Falls, WI 54615 (vamundson6928@charter.net)

Women Seminary Scholarships

This synod has been giving out scholarships to women seminary students since 1996, we have awarded scholarships to **sixty-one different women!** Scholarships for 2018-2019 are being given to: Jennifer Hatleli, Hannah Delaine Olson, Bethany Ringdal, Emily Stelling, and Katie Wagner. Awarding scholarships to women who have been called to ordained ministry or other full-time work in the church, is one way we can support women in their calling.

Connie Anderson, Secretary

DO YOU WANT TO FAST THIS LENT?

In the words of Pope Francis

- Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
- Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
- Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
- Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
- Fast from worries and have trust in God.
- Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.
- Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
- Fast from bitterness and fill your hearts with joy.
- Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others.
- Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
- Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.

pietrafitness.com

Stewardship

"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it"
(Psalm 24: 1)

A steward is someone who takes care of or looks after another's property. God created us in His image to be His managers over the world that he created. We are responsible to God for how we manage the resources that he has provided for us.

Many of us think of stewardship only as financial support. Stewardship is much more than that. It is all about how we manage the resources that God has provided for us, such as our time, our talents, our treasures, relationships, jobs, love God, love our neighbors both inside and outside of the church walls and our homes.

We as women of the W/ELCA need to focus on our personal and congregational stewardship ministry. We provide education regarding regular unit offerings, support the ministries of Women of the ELCA, participate in monthly bible studies through the Gather magazine, and being notified of stewardship projects through the Interchange. Our individual units continue to provide for their local communities

We get to manage all that God has created for us. This is awesome! It is a honor and also a great responsibility that God has given us. We are BOLD Women and we can make a difference with our stewardship.

Jean Larson
Dairyland Conference Representative



THE FAMILY CIRCUS By Jeff and Bill Keane



"Why did I get a new toothbrush in my Easter basket?"

from JoyfulNoiseLetter.com
Reprinted with permission of Bill Keane

The Stripping of the Altar and reading: "Remembering Holy Week"



On the night of the Passover meal, Jesus unwrapped the unleavened bread from the linens during this special night. *When we uncover the communion vessels and elements, we remember our Lord and the night on which he gave instructions to celebrate communion.*

Jesus then took bread and gave thanks, broke it and gave it to the disciples to eat. "Do this in remembrance of me". *When the bread from communion is removed from the altar, we remember that His body was broken for us.*

Jesus also took the cup and gave thanks. "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, given for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me". *When the cup is removed from the altar, we remember that his blood was shed for all of us.*

The blood of Jesus was shed for many for the forgiveness of sins. *When we remove the communion trays with many cups, we remember that this sacrament is not for us individually, but for all people—here and around the world.*



After his trial, the cross upon which Jesus hung, was carried out of the city to the place called the 'skull' - Golgotha. *When we remove the cross from our midst by carrying it away, we remember the pain of His being mocked and ridiculed, then whipped and made to carry the cross beam. All this he did to carry the burden of our sin.*

The women cried loudly when Jesus was led away to be crucified, because they were filled with helplessness, denial and fear of what was taking place. *When we remove the joyful presence of flowers from our midst by carrying them away, we remember the hurt and pain of the women, and we share with them in our own sadness.*

Jesus, the son of God, experienced the depth of humanity in his innocent suffering and painful death upon the cross. *When we remove the two candles from the altar, which reminds of the divinity and the humanity of Jesus, we remember that Jesus humbled himself even to the point of dying upon the cross.*



Jesus fell silent while hanging on the cross. *When we remove from our midst God's word which speaks to us, we also experience a deep silence and what seems to be an absence of God's presence.*

The women who had followed Jesus, now standing near the cross, watching Him die, crying out in pain and grief. *When we remove the worship book and stand from our midst, we remember in our worship, our cries for mercy and prayers of longing. Our worship in times of grief is made real in the death of Jesus.*

A few days before the Passover meal, Jesus was anointed by a woman. He said that it was done for his burial; it was a gift that she had given. *When we remove the offering plates from our midst, we remember the offerings that we have given to Him.*



At some time during His crucifixion, the soldiers divided up the clothing of Jesus. *When we remove the cloth from the wooden cross, we remember that the clothes worn by Jesus were divided among the soldiers and taken away.*

After His death, the body of Jesus was taken down from the cross. His lifeless body was wrapped in white linen and placed in a nearby tomb. The entrance was closed. *When we remove the white linens from the altar, we remember the burial of Jesus.*

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He cried out with a loud voice, "It is finished" ... and then He died. *When we remove the cloth paraments with symbols describing our Lord's passion, it seems as if it is finished. Christ has died. Now we are confronted with the stark harshness and emptiness of His death.*



The light of Christ has gone out. It is done. Christ has died. *When we remove the Christ candle from our midst, we remember that the light of the world appears to have been defeated by death.*

So it is, that Jesus was laid to rest in a new tomb. Since it was evening, and the beginning of the Sabbath, all who were helping or watching, went to their own homes, filled with sadness, grief and despair. *All departed in silence.*

Preparing for Lent

The stars of my Variable Star quilt are made of a wide array of fabrics, everything from florals to dachshunds to paisleys. This scrap quilt is a generous queen size, so in order to make it fit our bed just right, my husband and I know that a particular star has to go on the bottom corner of the bed, just so, and then the rest of the quilt will fall into place. That particular star is made from a wild red floral print, creating a memorable block and placeholder. When that wild red floral print star is in the bottom corner of the bed, the rest of the quilt will hang just right: equal lengths on either side of the bed, with just the right amount to fold back at the top for the pillows.

When I was making up the bed the other morning, it struck me that Lenten disciplines are a bit like that wild red floral print star. When you engage in Lenten disciplines—prayer, fasting, almsgiving, self-reflection—the rest of your life falls right in to place. Your priorities are set in motion, you achieve balance in your life and your relationship with God is realigned.

Ash Wednesday is this week, and we'll recite the extended Confession of Sin that marks the liturgy. We'll be asked to reflect on our lives and examine our thoughts and behaviors. What's the wild red floral star of your life that will help your life fall right into place this Lenten season?

This is adapted from a blog post, "[A lenten lesson found in a scrap quilt](#)", written by Linda Post Bushkovsky, that was published on the [Women of the ELCA blog](#) on February 24, 2011

A LENTEN IDEA

This is a recycled article from 10 years ago, received from Zion American Lutheran in Granton (Chequamegon Conference). They had used this as a fund-raiser for several years. It helps to get all the members of the congregation involved, entire families can put in their own idea of what to do.



The congregation began by purchasing colored bags (any color will do) for each family. The instructions are to place a specific amount of money into the bag (or other container) for each time a certain action is performed each day. For example, the family may decide to place 5¢ (or other amount, as decided) each time someone in the family "shoveled snow that day" ... (this year would have brought in LOTS of money) ☺

Many different slips can be put in each bag or other container, with various activities, taking a walk, feeding a pet, sneezing that day, talking on your phone, checking your email, smiling at someone, went shopping, wearing a belt, drinking a soda or coffee... the list could go on and on and on. You may also want to include other things as a specific amount for each pair of shoes you own, # of TVs/radios you own, # of calendars you have up, # of light bulbs in your living room (or home), # of hammers in your home, make the list fun and unusual. Get a committee together and work to create some entertaining and fun ideas, the more the better. Type the ideas onto slips of paper, cut apart and then placed into the previously purchased bags or containers. Distribute the containers with the slips to the congregational families/members as decided. Each family can decide on how much money will be donated for each 'yes' answer. If you choose to do an activity daily, every other day or weekly, attach it to the container where the money is to be collected. Remember, the amount of money can be small or large, it is your choice.

The committee could also choose the final recipient of the money collected, a certain mission project, LWR, the Synod Resource Center, quilting supplies, or your Bible Camp, or one of many different worthy recipients. The idea is to have a project that everyone can have fun doing together!



***** FROM DIANE KAUFMANN: *****

A new movie has been released on Netflix entitled "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind".

If you want to get a real sense of village life in Malawi, this movie is for you!

Inspired by a science book, 13-year-old William Kamkwamba builds a wind turbine to save his Malawian village from famine. Based on a true story.

"STUFF"

Every spring I start stirring my *stuff*. There is closet *stuff*, drawer *stuff*, attic *stuff* and basement *stuff*. I separate the good *stuff* from the bad *stuff*, then I *stuff* the bad *stuff* anywhere the *stuff* is not too crowded, until I decide if I need the bad *stuff*.



When the Lord calls me home, my children will want the good *stuff*, but the bad *stuff* - *stuffed* wherever there was room among all the other *stuff*, will be *stuffed* in bags and taken to the dump, where all the other people's *stuff* has been taken.

Whenever I have company, they always bring bags and bags of *stuff*. When I visit my son, he always moves his *stuff* so I will have room for my *stuff*. My daughter-in-law always clears a drawer of her *stuff* so I will have room for my *stuff* too. Their *stuff* and my *stuff*... it would be so much better to use their *stuff* and leave my *stuff* at home with the rest of my *stuff*.



This spring I had an extra closet built so I would have a place for all the *stuff* too 'good' to throw away, and too bad to keep with my good *stuff*. You may not have this problem, but I seem to spend a lot of time with *stuff*... food *stuff*, cleaning *stuff*, medicine *stuff*, clothes *stuff* and outside *stuff*. Whatever would life be, if we didn't have all this *stuff*?

Now there is also all that *stuff* we use to make us smell better than we do...there is the *stuff* to make our hair look good...*stuff* to make us look healthier...*stuff* to hold us in and *stuff* to fill us out. There is *stuff* to read, *stuff* to play with, *stuff* to entertain us and *stuff* to eat. We *stuff* ourselves with the good *stuff*.



Well, our lives are filled with *stuff*... good *stuff*, bad *stuff*, useful *stuff*, junky *stuff* and everyone's *stuff*. Now when we leave all our *stuff* and go to Heaven, whatever happens to our *stuff* won't matter. We will have **all** the good *stuff* God has prepared for us there.

---author unknown



2019 CALENDAR OF EVENTS



APRIL

- 6 – Apple River Conference Spring Day of Renewal, Bone Lake Lutheran, Luck
- 6 – Chippewa Valley Conference Day of Renewal, New Hope Lutheran, Downsville
- 13 – St Croix Valley Conference, Morning of Renewal, Redeemer Lutheran of Burkhardt
Speaker- Moira Kneer: Peanuts gang “With age comes wisdom...of a sort”
- 14-15 – Chippewa Valley Conference Retreat, Luther Park, Chetek
- 17 – Dairyland Conference Morning of Renewal, Our Saviour’s Lutheran, Whitehall

JULY

- 18 – St Croix Valley Conference Summer Retreat, First Lutheran, New Richmond
Speaker-Betty Bergland: Bethany Indian Mission

AUGUST

- 17 – Apple River Conference Fall Retreat, North Valley Lutheran, Centuria

SEPTEMBER

- 21 – Day of Enrichment, Osseo area, location to be announced
- 28 – Day of Enrichment, Long Lake Lutheran, Sarona

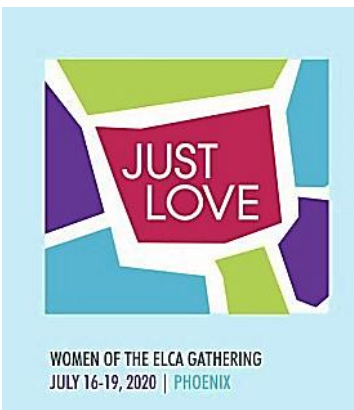
2020

APRIL

- 17-18 – SWO Convention, Location TBA

JULY

- 16-20 - Eleventh Triennial, Phoenix, AZ



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NW SYNOD of WI Website

www.nswiswo.org

Articles/photos of your W/ELCA activities
are encouraged.

SYNOD RESOURCE CENTER housed at:

Grace Lutheran Church

202 W Grand Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54703

www.synodresourcecenter.org

NW SYNOD OF WI OFFICE at:

Luther Park Bible Camp

944 24 ¼ Street, Chetek, WI 54726-7942-

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W/ELCA Churchwide OFFICES at:

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General email: women.elca@elca.org

Website: www.womenoftheelca.org

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The Northwest is published four times a year by the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Women's Organization. Local units are encouraged to subscribe for all of their officers, including the president and your pastor.

Subscriptions to the newsletter are **\$8.00 per year.** The due date of your subscription appears on the address label. Reminders are not sent, so please watch your label for your expiration date and renew.

Address changes and questions concerning subscriptions should be addressed to Eleanor Johnson, Editor, at the address below. [Or email at hdjebjohnson@tds.net. If you are emailing, please include Northwest or W/ELCA or subscriptions in the subject line]. This newsletter may be photocopied.

DEADLINE for next issue of *The NORTHWESTER* is **June 1, 2019**

✂-----

Enclosed is payment of **\$8.00** payable to:
WOMEN OF THE ELCA, Northwest Synod (SWO)

Name _____

New _____ Renewal _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip +4

Home Telephone _____

Church _____ Conference _____

(Email) _____

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