

NORTHWESTER

NEWSLETTER



FOR YOU ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

I feel so honored to have been able to represent you at the Twelfth Triennial Convention in Phoenix this past September. Our synod was well represented at both the convention and the Gathering that followed. We participated in daily Bible study, attended workshops, and worshiped together, all based around the Just Love theme. Connecting (and reconnecting) with old friends and meeting lots of new friends was definitely a highlight for me.

There were so many amazing speakers throughout the week, including Dr. Kelly Conroy-Smith, Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, Vance Blackfox, Rev. Angela T. !Khabeb and Prairie Rose Seminole. It is hard for me to choose a favorite, for they all seemed to speak to my heart. Some of these names you may recognize as having contributed to our *Gather* magazine, others have been guests at the online monthly *Bold Café* forums.

We heard from many young women who face hardships in their home countries around the globe and most all of whom face

discrimination while seeking higher education in the U.S. I suspect many of you are like me: I like to think that I do not carry prejudice or bias toward others, but in my heart, I know that I still have a lot to learn about justice and equality. I encourage you to read *Love Without Limits* by Jacqueline Bussie.

In this season of Advent, please take time to reflect not only on the Son of God in the form of a beautiful baby, but also on the Father who loves all his children, not just me, not just you or those who are like us, but all of us who are one in the family of God.

Blessings to you all.
Joan Moe, SWO President



Women from the Northwest Synod of WI attending the 2023 Triennial Convention



CHRISTMAS IS THE SEASON OF PEACE

"The LORD gives strength to his people; the LORD blesses his people with peace." - Psalm 29:11

Why do we make ourselves so busy and frazzled during the holiday season that we completely forget why we are celebrating the Christmas season? We lose our focus on the birth of our Savior, the greatest gift we will ever receive. Instead, we work hard and use up our energy to try to provide a wonderful Christmas for our loved ones.

During all the Christmas preparations we should spend the first part of our day with God. This will help to bring us into his peace. Spending the start of our day in God's presence will give us the peace we need and desire. So, if God is our peace, being in his presence will bring us peace.

While we are busy making our preparations, we worry about making the holiday season the best we can make it. We worry about the plans we have made or dwell on things that God will and can handle for us. Another way we can activate peace is by casting our worries onto God. He will take care of everything for us. God didn't put us on the earth to worry about anything!

It is so easy to overlook so much in our lives that is good. Practicing gratitude will put into perspective all the good God has provided to us and this will bring us his peace. Daily we can think of at least a couple of things in our lives we can be grateful for. Each day we should thank God for all his provisions and show our gratitude and in turn this will bring us peace.

Let's start today by receiving God's peace. The enemy wants us to be amongst all the chaos and worry. The enemy wants us to take our eyes off the reason we are celebrating Christmas, which is the birth of our Savior. But God is with us and so God's peace is with us every day, in everything.

Gloria Rolstad
SWO Vice President



GIVE THANKS FOR GOD'S BLESSINGS!

"All good gifts around us, are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord, O thank the Lord for all His love."

We Plow the Fields and Scatter, ELW p. 681-82

Thankofferings. Traditionally, we give thanks for God's blessings with our Thankofferings. Many women's units hold their Thankoffering service in the fall of the year, but thankofferings can be done at any time of year. If your unit hasn't had a Thankoffering Service, consider having one in 2024, perhaps on Bold Women's Day, observed the first Sunday of March (or choose another Sunday), which celebrates all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Some women are bold in their unceasing prayers. Other women are bold in their service to those in need. Still other women are bold in their advocacy or through their hospitality. Whether we live out our bold story of faith in the workplace, family home or community, our faith compels us to make a difference in the lives of others. It's all about living out our baptismal call, about being a disciple of Christ. Are you bold?

The Thankofferings are sent entirely to Women of the ELCA to support the many life-changing ministries of Women of the

ELCA. Please use Offering Form B and send to the address on the form.

Offerings. Your regular offering supports all expressions of Women of the ELCA and the ministries they support. Offerings are received in your congregational unit when women gather for Bible study, circles, meetings, etc. A portion is kept for your local ministry, a portion (recommended 50%) is sent to me, your Synodical Women's Organization Treasurer to support the ministry of the Synodical and Churchwide Women's Organizations.

For example, when you give a \$20 offering to your unit, your unit keeps \$10 and sends the other \$10 to the Synodical Women's Organization. The SWO keeps \$5.00 and sends the other \$5.00 to Churchwide. Your offering, given in gratitude supports many ministries in your local, Synodical, and Churchwide expressions of Women of the ELCA. **Together our offerings make a larger impact than what we individually could do.**

Units and individuals are also reminded to make a commitment to support **Katie's Fund 2122**, a one-million-dollar campaign for Katie's Fund designed to raise up bold leaders and also to support and build women's ministries into the next 100 years. Individuals and units are encouraged to make a pledge – either a one-time pledge or a pledge to fulfill over 3 years. Find the pledge sheet and more information at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/katiesfund>

The **2024 Treasurer's offering guide** for local units and treasurers has been updated and published on the SWO website <https://www.nswiswo.org/> or call/e-mail me and I'll get it to you.

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Triennial 2023 Pictures



News from the Northwest
Synod of WI Conferences

Heart of the North Conference

Janice Ahneman

The Heart of the North Conference held a "Day of Renewal" on October 14 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Rice Lake. Coffee and treats were available as people arrived. Sixty ladies were welcomed by HON President Amy Brekke. The morning's activities were centered around the theme, "Falling Boldly in Love with Jesus". Musical performances by the Bethany Bells and Linda Mullikin were lovely enhancements to the morning. We heard from speakers about Malawi and the triennial convention held in Phoenix in September. Pastor Sue Eidahl led an engaging devotion. Communion was served. Attendees heard an inspiring presentation by Dori Pulse. A brief business meeting was held that included election of new officers. Another emphasis of the morning was about the mission and ministry of our church women and the quilts and kits they make to help others through donations to Lutheran World Relief and local community activities. The morning concluded with a delicious lunch catered by Adventures of Rice Lake.

First Lutheran of Arland, Clayton

In September, we had our annual Fall Auction & Dinner. Meal, bake sale and auctions off crafts, quilts, embroidered dish towels, produce, canned goods & lefse. During October we donated school supplies to three area school districts. In November we collected and donated supplies for "The Benjamin House" homeless shelter in Barron County. The first Saturday of December we had our annual "Cookie Walk" where each woman brought twelve dozen cookies or specialty items. At year end we give out monetary donations to a variety of organizations. Gifts or fruit baskets are put together for the home bound and nursing home residents. We are a small congregation but enjoy doing outreach projects!!



Chetek Lutheran, Chetek

Karen Theesfeld spoke on "The Women of Malawi" for our October program. Her pictures and the items from Malawi she displayed helped us visualize the lives of our sisters in Malawi. Karen is willing to present at other churches in the HON. Malawi now has the first female ordained pastor. Our annual Lefse baking day produced 635 rounds of lefse which were sold the Sunday before Thanksgiving and at the upcoming Christmas Cookie Walk. On November 1 we held our Pilgrim Brunch of Egg bakes for the public, followed with entertainment by the Red Cedar Rousers Barbershop singers. On November 12 we celebrated Thankoffering Sunday life with a special service and offerings by the women of the church.

On December 1 we volunteered to ring bells for the Salvation Army Bell Ringing fund raising project. On December 9 is our Annual Christmas Cookie Walk fundraiser to provide mission work to our friends here and around the world.

Augustana Lutheran, Cumberland

The women's group completed 383 quilts, 135 School Bags, thirty Fabric kits for Lutheran World Relief and eleven quilts for Beds for Kids and five quilts for community use. The group is planning a silent auction fundraiser of several items at the Annual Cookie Walk on December 2. On Friday, December 8, Augustana will hold its annual St. Lucia Festival which is open to the girls and women of the community followed by a traditional Swedish breakfast of Lucia buns, rice pudding, fruit soup and Christmas cookies. The St. Lucia festival has been an Augustana tradition since 1977.

Chequamegon Conference

Peggy Erickson

The Chequamegon Conference held their fall retreat on October 14 at Faith Lutheran Church in Marshfield. The theme was "Join Us on A Journey" based on Proverbs 16.9 – "We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps."

The morning started with light snacks and then we toured the stained-glass windows of

the church. Each had their own story. We tried to see the story from the way the glass was arranged. Then we watched the movie "The Way" about a father that took his son's ashes on the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage. The people he met on the trail each had their own story.

Just like us we all have a story and try to follow our plans. Like the people in the movie, their plans didn't always follow the way they thought they should. Ours are the same. God is there to determine our steps. It is our task to learn, listen and follow God's way. I pray you each follow the Way of God.

Side note: Our conference women are very impressed with all the different activities the other conferences are doing and enjoy hearing about them.

We wish all of you a very blessed Christmas.

Apple River Conference

Suzanne Grill

Joy Lutheran, Centuria

A "joyful" experience making lefse for the Fall Bazaar on October 7!



First Lutheran Church, Amery

The WELCA group meets the third Thursday of the month at 9:30 am for Bible Studies from the Gather magazine.

At the December meeting packets of candy, nuts and homemade cookies were packed for delivery to homebound members. The quilters meet weekly on Thursdays at 8:30 am and have made 90 quilts this year for Lutheran World Relief, fire victims, the Amery homeless shelter, and graduating seniors. Some quilts are sold to members to use for gifts. These busy women also made thirty-seven lap robes and quilts with patriotic designs that were given to veterans in the three nursing homes in Amery. The quilts were displayed in the church sanctuary before being to LWR.

The entire church donated items for the new homeless facility, located near Barron, that will serve Barron and Polk Counties. Donations needed include hygiene products, bedding, towels, washcloths, disposable dishes and cutlery, and food items that can be heated in a microwave. When the shelter opens, they will also hope for furniture donations. [Email](#) or call 715-606-4150 for more information.

Peace Lutheran, Dresser

Quilters at Peace made and donated 250 quilts to Lutheran World Relief. The quilting group is growing and even includes people from the community!



Peace Lutheran Quilters

West Immanuel Lutheran, Oseola

A huge rummage sale is held every year to provide funds for special projects. The congregation serves food at community events including the Polk County Fair and the annual lutefisk dinner. The women support children and young people by helping with Sunday School, WOW, confirmation, and youth activities; serve on church council, as church officers and as paid staff; and are also active in several Bible study groups.

Mission work includes cash donations to both local and global organizations that provide services for people with special needs. In recent years the group has given annual gifts amounting to over \$2000 to more than twenty organizations. Other local mission work includes collaboration with the Open Cupboard food shelf to serve a free "Last Wednesday" community meal in Osceola as well as refreshments at the neighborhood's annual Lake Association meeting.

One hundred personal care kits were provided to the LWR Lenten "Season of Hope" project. This fall, an additional 20 personal care kits, 34 baby kits, nearly 70 school kits and more than 30 fabric kits were donated. The school kit project was used as an instructional opportunity for our Sunday School children.

The quilters created 43 beautiful quilts for Lutheran World Relief and fourteen graduates and provided 26 sturdy blankets for area homeless shelters. A supply of quilts is maintained for local emergencies. Gifts of warm mittens, gloves, scarves, slippers, etc. have been collected on our "mitten tree" and distributed locally.

Chippewa Valley Conference

Diane Campbell

November and December are always busy months. During these months our churches host Bazaars, Community Dinners, special music programs, and Programs that feature our Youth (Christmas Programs) in addition to the weekly contributions we make to our congregations.

The Chippewa Valley Board has taken on the additional project of connecting with ALL the churches in our Chippewa Valley Conference during November and December. Our first step is to call the church office and ask for a name of someone that we can connect with on a regular basis about the activities in their church. Consider it more like a neighbor-to-neighbor opportunity, or a chance to "talk church" with a new friend. The goal of our Chippewa Valley Conference is to connect regularly, an idea we borrowed from the Dairyland Conference.

So often, in the past, as I have connected with someone in a church I have been told, we don't do WELCA anymore. We are too old. Our group is too small. We no longer hold meetings.

Here's the surprise: **EVERY WOMAN**, in every congregation **IS PART OF THE WELCA**. I love that as Women of the ELCA, **WE ENCOURAGE** women on the journey of life. **WE SUPPORT** one another, **WE SHARE** skills we have learned **AS WE BECOME** Strong Women, and we have become an essential part of our church and community. As women who are involved in a church, we do a lot. Which means, yes, your church is an active member of WELCA.

As a Synodical Board, we still need each unit to send in yearly contact information because that information serves a different purpose.

Another way the Chippewa Valley Conference is changing has to do with the yearly Retreat at Luther Park. Since Covid restrictions were lifted, the Chippewa Valley Conference officers provided our

Yearly Retreat at Luther Park and invited the entire Synod. Our Retreat Committee is currently working with the Synodical Board to be its own entity. We will have a Synodical Retreat Committee....at least until they create a catchier name. I'm sure you will hear about more opportunities to work with this amazing committee.

From now on the Chippewa Valley Board will concentrate on hosting a Day of Renewal AND getting to know the women in our conference better.

A date and location for our **Spring Day of Renewal** has been set for **April 20, 2024 at Hope Lutheran Church, in Eau Claire**, thanks to our two carryover board members: Carol Peterson and Claudeen Obser. They, plus our new board members: Peggy Erickson, Kris Nelson, Becci Olson, and Holly Sweeney will be reaching out to the churches in our Conference to find a woman from each church that we can share information with and create new friendships.

2024 promises to be a year of change, once again. Learning to do things differently. Learning from our churches what information they would like from the Chippewa Valley Board, and our church women sharing all the amazing activities that take place within their church to help other women grow in their faith and to become strong women.

Lake Superior Conference

Kathy Rewalt

Winter season is here and how fun to be "Getting Ready" for Christmas as we travel through Advent. Lake Superior conference has been busy as usual. With the many dinners and bazaars that are taking place, our communities are spreading Christmas cheer. Here are some highlights from four of our congregations.

First Lutheran in Port Wing has been busy preparing for their Lutfisk and Swedish Meatball dinner. Plans are being made for their Christmas Eve Service as well as their LCW Christmas Party. They enjoyed seeing the neighborhood children when they

passed out candy in the church for Halloween. They also run a special program each year where they serve an after-school meal to the South Shore athletes during their home games. They are presently working with both boys and girls' basketball teams. Students come to the church basement to enjoy their meal.

Good Shepherd in Ashland continues with their Sweet Dream project for New Day Advocacy. Along with pajamas and a book for each child, they will be adding a toy. They continue with their monthly bus passes for the homeless. During Thanksgiving, they provided 22 full meals for Ashland County families. Quilters continue their quilting, and they help where needed with the Stone Soup meals.

Hope in Oulu has been doing many fundraisers this year to help support their remodeling project for their bathroom to make them handicapped accessible. Their Martha Circle helped with a rummage sale, fall dinner and quilts. They sent quilts to LWR, and funds to St. Jude's and LWR disaster. They also continue to volunteer at the Fig Leaf in Iron River.

Our Saviors in Iron River had a very successful Fall dinner with all proceeds going to the VFW for their building fund. Halloween night had many neighborhood children enjoying the candy treats. A successful Cookie Walk and Lefse Sale helped support our Women's group and their projects.

All of us up North on the Lake would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and New Year. We look forward to the opportunities that God will send us as we support our local congregations and neighborhoods.

Dairyland Conference

Amelie Lindberg-Livingston

The 2024 Morning of Renewal is scheduled for Saturday, April 13, 2024 at Central Lutheran Church, Mondovi. Guest speakers will be Mercedes Falk and John Rosenow. Mercedes Falk, President of the Board of Directors for Puentes/Bridges, Inc. located

in Fountain City, WI, works to help farming communities in west central Wisconsin and southeastern Minnesota bridge the cultural and language gaps between Mexican workers, the farmers with whom they work, and the communities in which they live. John Rosenow, co-owner of Rosenholm-Wolfe Dairy and Cowsmo Compost, rural Cochrane, WI, is active in Puentes/Bridges and employs farm workers from Mexico. One of the ways Puentes/Bridges fulfills their mission is to facilitate travels to Mexico for employers to meet families of their farm workers and learn about the Mexican culture. The PBS Newshour did a [segment](#) in 2019 about immigrant farm laborers in Western Wisconsin. This episode was discussed in the book "[Milked.](#)" written by Wisconsin native Ruth Conniff and features John Rosenow and his farm.

Upcoming Events in the Dairyland Conference

December 9, 10 am to 1 pm

Independence Public Library,
Independence

Health Fair - by Neighbor to Neighbor Ministry

December 10, 2 pm

Whitehall High School Auditorium
Stouthearted Men & Friends Christmas Concert, also featuring: Whitehall Elementary Norse Singers and many area musicians and special guests. Free will offering at the door.

December 17, 10 am to noon

St. Luke's Lutheran, Foster
Holiday Craft and Bake Sale

December 19, at noon

Central Lutheran, Mondovi
CLCW Christmas Luncheon, with entertainment by the quartet Heart Strings

December 26, 6 pm

Immanuel Lutheran, Strum
Christmas Dinner and Concert



NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN

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(Officers and Conference Reps)
2022-2024

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*Articles/photos of your W/ELCA
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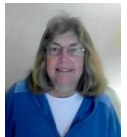
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The NORTHWESTER

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of the NORTHWESTER. This digital publication continues to be a work in progress and your ideas and comments are welcome! Submit individual comments and ideas, as well as news and photos from your conference, congregation or women's group to Kim Vlcek at vlcekkr@yahoo.com.



Women of the ELCA

Our Mission – Mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Our Purpose – 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.

Women of the ELCA -- Northwest Synod of Wisconsin -- Synodical Women's Organization
CONGREGATIONAL UNIT CONTACTS FOR YEAR _____

NAME OF CHURCH

Conference

Location, if different than mailing address

Mailing address of Church

Church Phone Number

Email address

CONTACT PERSON AND/OR PRESIDENT

Name

Address

Phone

Email Address

TREASURER

Name

Address

Phone

Email Address

PLEASE return with current information electronically at your earliest convenience:

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Thank you!