

NORTHWESTER

NEWSLETTER



SERVING THE LORD

"Choose you this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." Joshua 24:15

As we have celebrated the holidays in November and December, we often gather with family. I got to thinking that each of us could have many families. We have our family of origin, parents and siblings; we may have married and gotten a new family of in-laws; perhaps we have children who may now have families of their own. Some of us have a group of coworkers or perhaps college friends or even neighbors who feel like family. For me, my biggest family group is my church family, who are very dear to me. I also count my WELCA friends as another extended family. I hope you are also fortunate enough to have many family groups.

Next, I have a word of apology. Because new SWO board members were not elected until the end of September at our convention and due to scheduling conflicts, our board was not able to meet until the middle of November. We felt there was not enough time to get

everything needed in place to send out a December newsletter, so we chose to delay the Northwester until January. Thank you for your patience.

You are probably aware that in September, we held a convention to conduct business and continued the next day with a Day of Awareness, under the banner of Caring for God's Creation: Reduce • Reuse • Repurpose. We worshiped together, heard from our Keynote speaker, Dr. Jim Boulter, and had five breakout sessions available, which were all very well received. At our business meeting, representatives from your local church units elected delegates to attend the WELCA Convention that will be held in the summer of 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa. They also elected new officers and Board members for our Northwest Synod of Wisconsin Synodical Board. Each conference has one elected representative. We are lacking a representative from the Lake Superior Conference, but the board does have the authority to appoint someone to fill this role.

Several of our seven conferences are also struggling to fill positions for their conference team. These teams or committees usually plan only one or two events each year, so it is not an ordeal to be part of these conference teams. One or two conferences are also lacking a treasurer. This person will have the guidance of our new synodical treasurer, Nancy Priebe, so they would not be working alone. I ask you to prayerfully consider how you may be of service to our synod's WELCA organization, to become part of our family. I ask, if you are called upon to fill one of these roles, that you please say **yes**.

Blessings to you all.
Joan Moe, SWO President



*And now we welcome the new
year. Full of things that
have never been.*

-- Rainer Maria Rilke

YOUR NEW VICE PRESIDENT!

Hi, I'm Carol Medchill, new SWO Vice President from the Apple River Conference. With this new responsibility, and with God's help I will do my best to serve you.

I also hope you folks had a wonderful and Blessed Thanksgiving, Christmas and looking forward to a New Year.

At my church, First Lutheran, Cushing, we have started our quilting project for the new year. It is so much fun to see the pretty material that has been put together to make quilts for those in need. We even see pockets in the quilts giving those folks places to put items in.

With the January and February GATHER magazine that just came out a few days ago, our W/ELCA will be enjoying the Bible Study found in that magazine. I'm looking forward to all the wonderful articles waiting for me to read during these cold winter Wisconsin Days!!

With a Song in my Heart, take care and God Bless,

Carol Medchill, Vice President

♪♪ NOTES FROM YOUR TREASURER ♪♪

It is with grateful hearts that we thank and praise God for the active, faithful, and joyous stewardship of Women in the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. It is you and your offerings that support the many worthwhile ministries of your community, the ministries within the Synodical Women's Organization and churchwide Women of the ELCA.

I am pleased to report the 2024 SWO convention offering totaled \$2,930.00. To this \$820 was added from convention offerings received in 2021-2023, and an additional \$250 from SWO funds for a grand total of

\$4000.00. The four offering recipients, Women of the ELCA churchwide, 2122 Katie's Fund, ELCA Disaster Relief, and Malawi each received \$1000 from the offering. The 2020-2021 convention expense funds of \$3,415 provided supplemental funding for this convention. Total cost of convention will be approximately \$5500.

THANK YOU, Diane Campbell, and all at Spirit Lutheran Church for sharing your space, staff, and all who assisted in any way to welcome and host our convention business meeting and Day of Awareness. Attendee enjoyed your spacious facility and evaluations comments were very positive about the speakers, awareness session leaders and whole event.

At the SWO convention one year 'new' Gather subscriptions were awarded to: Monica Bahr, Shahla Brown, Sandy Harelstad, Theresa Jones, and Sue Kirt and one year "renewal" subscription awarded to Janet Allison, Karen Bohm, Audrey Parrett, Jean Sivertson, and Judy Staszczuk.

In September \$650 seminary scholarships were awarded to Kellie Heath, Amanda Swanson, and Dana Paulson.

Reminders:

- Thankofferings are sent in full to Women of the ELCA on Form B (the address is on Form B.)
- The SWO fiscal year ends January 31st so please mail your unit year-end offering or additional financial gifts for Women of the ELCA by mid- January so they can be recorded in this year's activity. Thank you for your faithfulness and continued support for ministries of Women of the ELCA.
- If your unit has extra funds at the end of the year, use them to spread

God's love where needed. Consider sending an extra gift to Women of the ELCA churchwide for 2122 Katie's Fund or to our Bible Camps, Lutheran Social Services of WI, LWR shipping fund, ELCA World Hunger, ELCA Disaster Relief or local needs such as the food pantry, homeless shelter, organizations that provide services for those in crisis.

- YEARLY each unit shall send \$30 to the SWO treasurer for the convention expense fund. The purpose of this fund is to help defray the expenses of the convention and to keep the convention registration fee low enabling more women the opportunity of attending. This \$30 can be sent to the SWO treasurer in February, March, or April.
- If you need offering forms A or B or the Treasurers Guide which guides you as to which form to use and where to send that offering, e-mail or text me and I can e-mail them to you.
- Nancy Priebe was elected SWO treasurer at the convention in September. The audit for our fiscal year ending January 31, 2025, must be completed before she begins. We anticipate she will begin in mid-February or by March 1st. Treasurers – as of February 15, 2025, please send Nancy your offerings: Nancy Priebe, 2881 140th St, Frederic, WI 54837.

Have a Blessed Advent and Christmas!
Phyllis Beastrom
SWO Treasurer

*Year's end is neither an end
nor a beginning but a going
on, with all the wisdom that
experience can instill in us.*

-- Hal Borland

CONFERENCES

Chippewa Valley Conference

Darlene Bertelsen

The Board planned and carried out a successful Convention in September which was held at Spirit Lutheran Church in Eau Claire. On Friday night, the 27th, A business meeting was held, with election of

officers for the next 2-year period. The evening service ended with Holden's evening prayer. On Saturday, the 28th, an informative Day of Awareness concentrated on the theme of Caring for God's creation was well presented. The Board is now busy planning for the Day of Renewal scheduled on April 5, 2025.

Trinity Lutheran, Eau Claire

Lots of things going on from the past and looking forward to the Advent and Christmas season. Our quilters have been very busy, finishing lots of quilts and comfort care packages. We worked closely with a refugee family from Africa, which was challenging and interesting. The family liked it here in Eau Claire, but moved to Ohio as the father was unable to get a job in Eau Claire. They had relatives in Ohio who they went to be with.

On November 22 & 23 we had a 2-day presentation on making Lefse. We will be having Wednesday night Advent Services. December 3rd, over 150 women will gather in the Trinity Room for an Advent Tea. On Saturdays, December 7, 14, and 21 our Parish Nurse, Vicki, will be leading Advent Reflections in the Fireside Room.

North Running Valley Lutheran, Colfax

They reported that in early November their Sunday School made Thanksgiving treats Colfax Senior

Living, and then delivered them. This was greatly enjoyed by both the Sunday School and the recipients!

Our Savior's Lutheran, Chippewa Falls

Their Elementary Class practiced to "serve all people, following the example of Jesus" by making fleece blankets to share with other kids who may need extra warmth and comfort this season.

Trinity Lutheran, Boyceville

Exceeded donations for Mission Madness so were visited by Bishop Halom. Had a Gathering for all the women of the Congregation on 12/4.

St. Croix Valley Conference

Anne Janda

Hello! I am your new Synod Rep for the St. Croix Valley Conference. My husband and I (and two cats) moved to River Falls and we have been members at Ezekiel Lutheran Church since October of 2023. Besides our involvement at Ezekiel, I am a first-year student at the NWS Lay School of Ministry.

Carol Hajicek has been your representative for several years and left big shoes to fill. I would like to visit your WELCA group during the upcoming year. We are also looking forward to getting our NWS web site pages updated. We have been collecting updated contact information for each of your churches in order to create a database that will allow us to send you pertinent information as well as the Northwester on a regular basis.

As for conference activities, Ezekiel held its annual Christmas Tea and Boutique in December. This is actually a two-day preparation activity followed by a one-day event. Several days prior to the event, "the men" spend the better part of a day peeling potatoes. The next day is spent making lefse or learning to

make lefse. What an education! It was a very well-attended event.

Looking forward to 2025, mark your calendars for the Spring Event at Mt. Zion in Hudson on April 5. Watch for more information in your WELCA mail.

Trinity Lutheran in Hammond has offered to host our Summer gathering in 2025. Thanks for that! We will update you with the date and schedule.

While gathering updated information for our database, I was reminded of my mother getting ready for "Ladies Aid" about 65 (maybe 70?) years ago. We borrowed folding chairs from our country church and set them up in our tiny living room. Mom got out the "fancy cups and saucers" for the cake and coffee. The women arrived all dressed up; even wearing gloves and carrying handkerchiefs. The house smelled of freshly brewed egg coffee and perfume.

Quite a change, isn't it? Well, I am here to tell you that the days of "Ladies Aid" may be gone, but the commitment remains! With the decline in church attendance post-COVID, the membership in the individual WELCA units has also dwindled. I am encouraged, though, that some of these women have adjusted their groups to fit "what works for them." They are still active, no matter the size or the frequency of their gatherings. For instance, when I reached out to Toni Lubich from Rush River Lutheran, she sent the following:

As the years have passed, our WELCA group has aged and there are few original active members. We have another group of people who formed Friends of Rush River many years ago, now known as Friends of RR/WELCA. This group continues to do activities, such as a Bingo afternoon, a Silent Auction every year, and the Country

Store during our Harvest Dinner. All funds collected are distributed to local and worldwide organizations.

We organize coffee and cookies for everyone to enjoy following our Sunday School Christmas Program. Our church feels such joy that we still have parents and children who attend our Sunday School.

Our group collects items for Basics for Kids, collects used ink cartridges, and is now collecting books and pajamas for a local program. We donate and participate in the River Falls School Supply giveaway, the Spring Valley School Supply, and donate to filling backpacks for LWR. Our Sunday School children fill the backpacks on one of their Sundays of Service.

In October, our group makes and serves a dinner for the young adults being Confirmed, their parents, and sponsors. They share their Faith Statements during that time. We encourage others to participate in these activities and let it be known that everyone is considered a member, whether contributing through donations, participating in the activities, or as an active member.

This is one example of “making it work.” Our individual units do not need to follow a uniform format. We can adjust. It’s okay to change! We need not be uniform; just united. We can follow the WELCA mission together: “To act boldly on our faith in Jesus Christ.” In this mission, no matter how often we meet or the age of our members, we are united.

My contact information is listed on the SWO board directory page later in this newsletter. Please use this to fill me in on any of your events or updates for your church. If you have any articles or photos taken at your events, please share!

Heart of the North Conference Day of Renewal Janice Ahneman

It was a day of New Beginnings at the 2024 Heart of the North Conference Day of Renewal held on October 27 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Rice Lake.



HON Board President Amy Brekke welcomed everyone and introduced HON Synod Representative, Janice Ahneman, and Synod Women’s Organization President Joan Moe who gave greetings and updated attendees about activities at synod and churchwide. Major events of the past year were the Retreat at Luther Park, Chetek, in June, and the Synod Convention at Spirit Lutheran Church in Eau Claire in September. Elections took place at the convention for representatives to the next WELCA triennial gathering will be held in Des Moines, Iowa in 2026.

Pastor Susan Odegard presented an inspiring devotion based on her own “New Beginnings” as a second career pastor. We were lead in Sharing the Peace, hymn, prayer, and communion.



The guest speaker was Duana Bremer, Salvation Army Director for Barron, Polk, Burnette, and St. Croix counties. Her inspiring presentation taught us much about the Salvation Army, its history, its missions and programs and its current activities in our area to aide homeless people and those with addiction and mental health issues.



During the business portion of the morning, roll call of the churches was taken (59 people were in attendance), offering collected, installation of officers was conducted.

On a light note, we enjoyed a skit based on a modern version of the story of Mary and Martha from Luke 10: vs 18-42, which pointed out to us how busyness can interfere with our sitting at the feet of Jesus.

During a time of sharing, a person from each congregation present told of the ministries going on in their congregations.

The offering amount was \$592.00. The SWO will get half and H.O.N and Salvation Army Family House Shelter will share half. An In-Kind Offering was also collected of items to be donated at the Salvation Army.

After a wonderful lunch, everyone came away with a new appreciation and gratitude for the work of the Salvation Army as well as the contribution we, as Women of the Heart of the North, do for our communities.

NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN

Synodical Board Members
(Officers and Conference Reps)
2024-2026

PRESIDENT

Joan Moe
1483 Truax Blvd.
Eau Claire, WI 54703-1471
C-715-533-3820
Hope Lutheran, Eau Claire
presidentnwsWiswo@gmail.com
moejoan@gmail.com



VICE PRESIDENT

Carol Medchill
2364 250th Ave
PO Box 772
Chushing, WI 54006
715-648-5817
First Lutheran, Cushing
medchill@lakeland.ws

SECRETARY

Deanna Lear McGinnis
2705 5½ Ave
New Auburn, WI 54757
C-715-642-3713, H-715-237-2592
Chetek Lutheran, Chetek
Deannamcginnis@gmail.com



TREASURER

Nancy Priebe
2881 140th St
Frederic, WI 54837



*Articles/photos of your W/ELCA
activities are welcome.*

LAKE SUPERIOR Conf #1

Vacant

APPLE RIVER Conf #2

Tricia Olson

HEART OF THE NORTH Conf #3

Janice Ahneman
1070 11th Ave
Cumberland, WI 54829-9110
H-715-822-4475 C-715-671-8154
Augustana Lutheran, Cumberland
tjahneman@gmail.com



ST CROIX VALLEY Conf #4

Anne Janda
612 Oak Knoll Ave
River Falls, WI 54022
C-612-664-2648
Ezekiel Lutheran, River Falls
annejanda81@gmail.com



CHIPPEWA VALLEY Conf #5

Darlene Bertelsen
743 Yosemite Way, Apt 104
Altoona, WI 54780
715-456-1878
Trinity Lutheran, Eau Claire
daleanddarlene@gmail.com



CHEQUAMEGON Conf #6

Barb Krug
883 Brucker St
Medford, WI 54451
C-715-965-5696
Our Saviour's & St. Paul's, Medford
barbkrug@charter.net



DAIRYLAND Conf #7

Amelie Lindberg-Livingston
W1980 50th Avenue
Stockholm, WI 54769-8707
C-218-340-1102
Sabylund Lutheran, Stockholm
ajl55810@msn.com



NORTHWESTER NEWSLETTER Editor

Kimberly Vlcek
715-577-7198
vlcekk@yahoo.com

WEBMASTER & FACEBOOK Editor

Dawn Wicklund
H-715-394-2507, C-218-348-8557
dawnwicklund@gmail.com



Website
<http://www.nwsWiswo.org>



Facebook
www.facebook.com/WomenoftheNorthwestSynod/

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 vlcekk@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.