



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
AUGUST 5-8, 2021 | PHOENIX
WELCATG.ORG

Good News

December 2020
Volume 33
Number 12

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.

From the President

What are the Blessings/Gifts in your life? I count the Women of the ELCA as a huge blessing. I can't imagine my life without it. If you are reading this, then you at least realize there is something more than what happens at your church. There are groupings of churches (clusters) that join together to get our LWR items to the warehouse. There is a gathering of women in our synod that meets annually (SWO Gathering) to elect a board to organize and support women's ministries in the synod. There is a gathering every three years to elect a national board that organizes the ministries of the Women of the ELCA (Triennial Convention). These are all volunteers, just like you. There is a small group of women, employed by the Women of the ELCA that work at the Lutheran Center in Chicago who create resources for us to use in our ministries.

The Women of the ELCA website has resources for you to use. There are two Advent resources: A Different Kind of Journey and Advent: A Season for all Generations. There is also The Colors of Christmas which focus' on preparing for Christmas.

I recently read this blog: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/post/how-can-we-keep-women-of-the-elca-from-becoming-a-parking-lot>. Not only was I intrigued with the blog, but there was a response from someone who had made changes at her local congregation that had a huge impact on how that group is doing.

Go here to see how the pandemic is affecting Women of the ELCA.

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/news/what-does-the-pandemic-mean-for-women-of-the-elca>

Looking to the future and what that means for us? I don't know what the future looks like, but I know it is up to us to ensure the important things continue. I made my contribution by joining the Faithful Friends of the Women of the ELCA and every month I am reminded of what is important to me about this organization.

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/faithfulfriends>

Blessings
Anna Jetson, NE IA SWO President

Stewardship Committee

Women of the ELCA encourages and equips women to consider their responsibility and capacity for stewardship. We create educational resources about giving and managing money, including a monthly stewardship devotion, Bible studies and program materials for individuals and small groups.

One of the many ways to give is Thankofferings. Thankofferings are a long-standing tradition among Lutheran women. They are a monetary symbol of the many blessings we receive each and every day. Thankofferings were established by our founders in 1988. They are used to support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide organization. Our founders would be amazed to see how these ministries have grown! We have an interactive website, online and printed materials, justice and advocacy work, training and development of women leaders, and grants and scholarships, to name a few. After collecting our individual gifts, we can bring them together as a circle or a congregation through a Thankoffering service and then pass these special gifts on to our churchwide organization. And the best part is, you can give any time of the year, not just Thanksgiving!

Go online at <https://community.elca.org/welca> to give by credit card or mail your checks to:

Women of the ELCA
ELCA Gift Processing Center
PO Box 1809
Merrifield, VA. 22116-8009

Submitted by Lea Norlinger

*******Just a friendly reminder*******

We appreciate your support and prayers to help your Synodical Women's Organization meet our commitments to LWR, Wartburg Seminary Theological Students, LSI, Riverside and EWALU Bible Camps. Thank you to all who have sent in your regular offering. If you have not sent them in, please send checks, payable to WELCA, to SWO Treasurer, Bev Sheridan. We also want to thank the units that have sent in convention offerings!

NE IA SWO Executive Committee

Justice Committee

Have you ever tried something new? Maybe you invited someone new to join your “group”? Sometimes, it’s smooth sailing, other times adding someone new to the group puts the dynamics off kilter a bit, then the group gets into a new groove. Sometimes, it just doesn’t seem to find that sweet spot, until the group changes again.

Have you ever had your feelings hurt, so bad, that you question everything you do? I like to learn and understand. I have experienced worship with different denominations, and cultures. But I know myself to be Lutheran, ELCA Lutheran to be exact. I may not agree with everyone who is Lutheran. Faith is not something to be used as a weapon to hurt or injure another. God calls me to be kind and love my neighbor. God calls me to care for those who cannot care for themselves. It doesn’t matter if we look the same, think the same or even live the same.

Now, I don’t always follow the rules. But I try very hard not to be intentionally hurtful to others. Sometimes, I think I am doing the right thing, and I am shocked by the outcome. I try to learn from my mistakes.. How do I go forward? How do I protect the ones I love? And still ripple the complacency to realize, even though, on the surface, we might look similar, our world is not the same. We cannot continue to cluster ourselves based on our heritage. We must be willing to welcome the stranger, even if they are vastly different and in desperate need of belonging. We can’t be so rigid in our beliefs that someone else’s opinion or viewpoint must be invalidated. Remember we are all created in God’s image, Genesis 1:27. Jesus was born Jewish and was raised by a carpenter. God has chosen to love us all, sinners and saints. We need to choose to love one another, lift up those we can, and learn from all our experiences.

, Submitted by Anna Jetson.

Discipleship Committee

In Micah 6:8 the question is asked: “And what does the LORD require of you?” We find these words of Jesus in Mark 9:41 “I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward.” How can we be disciples during this time of distancing and for some, isolation? Some of the words of a song that we have sung during Advent may have an answer for us.

“Christ, Be Our Light”

Longing for peace, our world is troubled
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has power to save us.
Make us your living voice.

Ref: Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
Shared until all are fed. (*Refrain*)

Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stone. (*Refrain*)

Many the gifts, many the people,
Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants one to another,
Signs of your kingdom com. (*Refrain*)

Think about all our women’s groups do: items sent to LWR and local agencies, mask making, food drives, and many others. By sharing these gifts, we become Jesus’ disciples in this world.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

CALENDAR

- Jan 9 SWO Board Meeting, 9-3, Zoom
- Mar 13 SWO Board Meeting, 9-12, Zoom
- May 1 SWO Board Meeting, 9-12, Wartburg Coll.
- Jun 18 SWO Board Meeting, 7-9, Wartburg Coll.
- Jun 19 SWO Gathering @ Wartburg College
- Aug 2-5 Triennial Convention, Phoenix
- Aug 5-8 Triennial Gathering, Phoenix

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Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter (e.g. April 1 for May issue)

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