

Southwestern Minnesota

Women of the ELCA The Communicator



Special note to Conferences.
I would love to put your Fall Gathering Info out to all.
Please send it to me direct and I can make it available on the Website
swmnwelca@gmail.com

Leadership Training Event
Conference officers
Please attend
Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024
10 am –3 pm
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Redwood Falls, MN

TRIENNIAL GATHERING
is scheduled for
July 16-19, 2026
in Des Moines, Iowa
Start making plans
Less than 2 yrs away

The next business meeting of
the SW MN SWO board
Monday Aug. 12 2024 at
Max's Grill. Olivia
Friday-Saturday, Sept. 6-7,
before and after the
Leadership Training,
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
in Redwood Falls

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“A Word from Your Synodical President”

A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT.....

A review of the Convention on May 4, 2024. What a wonderful day to come together, to hear the word of God and sing His praises.

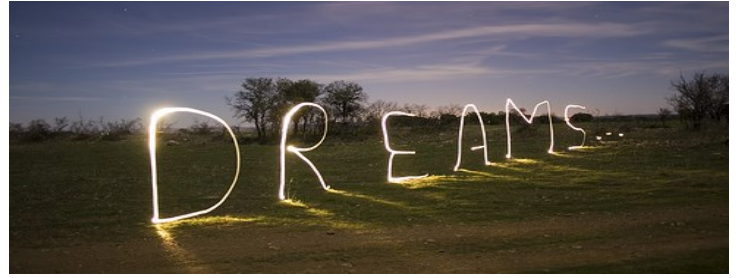
For those of you who could not be with us, we truly missed you. For all of us who were there, we had a great time together.

I am really concerned about the number of board members. We had four go off the board and only one voted to the board. When it comes to getting ready for convention, it takes all board members to work to pull it all together. At this time, the board is short four members. If you feel in your heart, that you could help us on the board, please contact me at 320-510-1261. If you know of someone in church, or conference, that you feel would be a great help for our board, let me know. We as a board have a good time together planning events, and become very good friends.

“SO COME JOIN US”!!

The next event is the training for the Conference Officers, on September 7, 2024. We will be meeting at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, in Redwood Falls. If you are a conference officer, please plan to attend. This is where we learn from each other. The theme is “Leading with Heart”. Hope to see you there.

I hope you all have a great summer and stay healthy. God Bless until we meet again.



I hope you enjoy this Devotion as much as I did!

THE DREAM IN YOUR HEART

Bible Verse: Proverbs 13:12 “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a dream fulfilled is a tree of life”.

When God puts a dream in your heart, don't be afraid to pursue it. Dreams are different from plans. Plans are manageable opportunities, but dreams are often too big to be managed. You plan to assemble a model airplane, but you dream of flying it.

Dreams will always require faith because they are bigger than our own ability to accomplish them. That is why faith-filled dreams are so important. When you dream a big dream for God, you become totally dependent on Him to bring it to pass.

If there is a dream in your heart, be diligent to seek God and obedient to take steps of faith to do anything He leads you to do. Plan on being patient, because dreams begin as seeds in our hearts, and they take time and diligent care to be fulfilled. **WE WILL SEE OUR GOD-GIVEN DREAMS COME TRUE IN HIS TIMING IF WE DO NOT GIVE UP!!!**

(A devotional by Joyce Meyer)

Your President, Ilene Penk

Message from our SW MN Synod Minister



A Message from Pastor Heather

In Psalm 19, we hear these words: “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” During this summer season, we are surrounded with the heavens and earth declaring the glory of God. We are surrounded by creation singing his praises and showing God’s beauty. Where do you see the heavens and creation declaring the glory of God around you? Perhaps it is in the beauty of a sunrise or sunset. Perhaps it is in the amazing aroma of lilac trees blooming. Maybe you see God’s glory as you hear the call of a loon out on the lake. Perhaps as you see the variety and colors of the flowers bursting forth in your garden.

Take some time this summer to look around you and notice all the works of God’s hands. Notice the ways creation declares the glory of God.

Then consider: How do I declare God’s glory? How do I proclaim the work of God’s hands? We are people created by God, meant to share the Good News of God’s love and grace and beauty with our world. We can reach out to our communities, to our neighbors, to our co-workers, to our friends, to our families and share with them where we notice God’s glory, where we notice the beauty of creation. Take time this Summer to repeat the words from Psalm 19 so that they live in your mind and your heart. Then, take time to live out the words of Psalm 19, so that you yourself declare God’s glory and proclaim the work of God’s hands.

Pastor Heather Culuris

SW MN Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders

Email: Heather.culuris@swmnelca.org



EDITORS CORNER:

Note for Units and Conferences: Please send me special Items that may be of interest to others in our Synod. I don’t guarantee to have room in the Communicator or on the Website for everything but, I will try to put out there what I can. Stay in contact with your Liaisons or send items direct to swmnelca@gmail.com Jane Tongen

After reading Pastor Heather’s article this old song may make you think a bit.

Reach Out and Touch
(Somebody's Hand)
Song by Diana Ross (Just google it)

*Reach out and touch
Somebody's hand
Make this world a better place
If you can.*

Just this one line says so much.
And if you take the time to
listen to the whole song
it even says more.
JMT



Galatians 6:2
Carry each other’s burdens,
and in this way you
will fulfill the law of Christ.

Mission Action/Stewardship

*He's the Lord of every season. He's the master of all time.
 And He's come to sow His seeds in the field of human kind.
 The eternal Word of heaven is among us in this place.
 And if you have ears to listen, you can hear Him call your name.
 He's the Father of all mercy, and your silent prayer's been heard.
 He will satisfy the thirsty by the water of his Word.
 As the bread of life is broken and Jesus is proclaimed,
 may your eyes be opened to the One who calls your name.
 HE'S CALLING OUT YOUR NAME.*

2024 IN KIND GIFTS TO LRW

Quilts 1596	Other Quilts/Local 1380
School Kits 1408	Personal Care Kits 1553
Baby Kits 764	Fabric Kits 73
TOTAL KITS 6774	

Local places receiving quilts included Ambulance Services, Fire Departments, Nursing Homes. Food Shelves and Hospitals.

Thank you all for using your God given talents in this special mission.
 There is a LWR Drop Off Site at Sioux Falls, South Dakota.
 It will take in-kind gifts-quilts, kits etc. to Lutheran World Relief in South Saint Paul, MN
 This is the Information for that Drop Off Site

Midwest Motor Express
 2807 North 1st Ave.
 Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 Telephone # 605-335-1600

**It's time to start making your Fall Ingathering Plans!
 Visit lwr.org/ingathering to find one near you.**



Noreen Beranek - Member of Mission Action/Stewardship Committee



Mission Community/Justice

My daughter Emily gave a workshop at our WELCA Synod Convention in Redwood Falls at Gloria Day Lutheran Church on May 4th. She talked about her experiences with a very controlling, manipulative, abusive, and cruel man; as well as other assaults and attempted abductions. She is a true survivor and warrior for others who have been, or may still be in an abusive situation. Her workshop was entitled, "EXPOSURE."

Here are Emily's words:

People, especially kids, can be exposed to a range of experiences both good and bad throughout their lifetime.

The key is to try to maximize the exposure to the good and minimize the exposure to the bad while still being aware that the bad exists. *Not to be constantly afraid, but just more prepared to deal with it when it pops up.

Awareness of these issues, is the exposure of light that can defeat the darkness.

Please believe someone, especially a child, if they tell you something is wrong or that something happened to them. Please take action to the extent you can. It could really be the difference in that person's life.

The article is from Barb and Emily Borth. Barb is one of the Mission--Action--Justice members of the SW WELCA Synod Board.
Mission Community/Justice.

"People don't always need advice. Sometimes all they need is a hand to hold, an ear to listen, and a heart to understand." –

This may have taken place awhile back but still very relevant today.

Calling women to action:

When the voting members of the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017) addressed domestic abuse and violence, they called all expressions of our organization into action. First and foremost, they required women in this organization to educate themselves about the signs of domestic abuse and violence and the services available in their community by inviting shelter workers, social workers, counselors and police officers to speak.

Calling women to action, the voting members offered the following suggestions.

Post information for local domestic violence hotlines and other hotlines in church restrooms, on bulletin boards, in church newsletters and in other publications: National Domestic Violence Hotline 1-888-799-SAFE
[National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline](#) – 1-866-331-9474
National Child Abuse Hotline – 1-800-4-A-CHILD
National Elder Abuse Hotline – 1-800-677-1116

- Assist people in crisis by connecting them with agencies, professionals, and resources, offering financial support to local domestic abuse and violence shelters and donating items for their "needs list", such as personal hygiene items, food, clothing, furniture, toys, quilts, and attending their events and fundraisers.
- Volunteer at a local domestic abuse and violence shelter.
- Make every ELCA congregation, where possible, a safe space for victims of domestic abuse and violence, and making it known.

Further educate ourselves about domestic abuse and violence, such as [ELCA Justice for Women](#), [Faith Trust Institute](#), [National Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#) [Children's Defense Fund](#).

Mission Growth/Discipleship



Mission Growth/Discipleship

By Karen Skarphol

During the Spring I attended a class called Baptized We Live.

It was a booklet written by Daniel Erlander. He was spending a year at Holden Village, a church renewal center in the Cascade Mountains of Washington State.

The class was for those new to the Lutheran Church or those of us who were lifelong Lutherans that wanted a refresher. It was a good class. Our Pastors lead the class, and we learned a lot. We learned that we are a part of the catholic church, the one with a small c, the whole Christian church in all its diversity. People who worship in all kinds of structures, not only traditional church buildings like I grew up in.

Lutheran Christians focus as a way of seeing, hearing, teaching and following. Lutherans do not have a monopoly on certain ways of being a Christian. The Cross is the central visual symbol in every Lutheran worship room. The cross is Gods victory. We are free to let God be God! Free to be human.

God is in all our pain and in our rejoicing. He is everywhere. He is present in the water of Baptism, and in the Bread and Wine of Communion. These are the two Sacraments Lutherans believe.

The Holy Spirit gives us the gift of seeing God in the infant Jesus and on Jesus dying on the cross.

God, in the Holy Spirit, gives us the gift of hearing the truth of the scriptures.

We believe the living word which breaks into our lives.

We have been called to be teachers of God's love for everyone! God forgives us and wants us to live good lives. It isn't by what we do but by grace given freely. He wants us to go out and be instruments of peace.

The Holy Spirit opens our hearts and ears to hear God say, "Follow Me"!

Some of our classmates will renew our Rite of Confirmation or be Confirmed this summer. It will be inspirational for others to see you are never too old to do this. I was Confirmed 60 years ago. I would invite everyone to check into refreshing your Confirmation lessons. You won't regret it.

Summer is upon us, and it is our time to get out and enjoy God's beautiful creation.

The blessing of rain and sunshine has made my flowers vibrant and my lawn nice and green.

One of the ways we sometimes enjoy Summer is by traveling. I want to remind you to remember your congregation by bringing your offering in before you leave. The bills keep coming even if you aren't there.

Support your church. Your church will appreciate it.



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.”

1. *A Prayer for the Ukraine and Russia.*

Bless all who live lives for the peace and wellbeing of others, and make their service fruitful. God, our refuge and strength is in trouble, we pray for the people of Ukraine, and Russia both. We pray for all those who awoke to great fear, For those fleeing their homes, and For all facing danger of any kind.

In your name, Amen.

2. *A Pray for victims of natural disasters.* We come to you today with heavy hearts for all those who have been affected by natural disasters. We pray for those who have lost their homes, their possessions, and even their loved ones. We ask that you would wrap your arms of love around them and bring them comfort in their time of need.

In your name, Amen.

3. *A Prayer for Israel and Palestine*

Jesus, walk amongst your people in the great divide happening right now. We pray that peace would fall upon the heads of each person in that area, and those related to any in those conflicts in lands far away. We pray peace would dwell in their hearts, thoughts, and communications.

In your name, Amen.

4. *Praying at the Time of Election*

Lord God, help us remember that under your law we live, and by your will we govern ourselves. Help us as good citizens to respect our neighbors whose views are different from ours, so that without partisan anger, we may work out issues that divide us, and let the candidates serve the common welfare of all the people.

In your name, Amen.

5. *A Prayer for Everyday.*

Almighty God, We thank you for your love, peace, forgiveness and healing that we have received through your Holy Sacraments. Continue to strengthen our faith that we can be your signs in the world. Help us to courageously bring your love, peace, forgiveness and healing to others around us.

In your name, Amen.

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. Scroll down to learn more about Katie's Fund and the ways in which the fund has aided women across the church.



It's time to say thank you

Linda Post Bushkofsky, former executive director, retired in June. To honor Linda's 22 years of service to Women of the ELCA, you are invited to make a gift to 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years, the campaign to raise \$1 million for this endowment.

Katie's Fund supports ministries focused on global sharing, leadership development, and faith in daily life. Linda has focused her leadership in these areas, too. So, a gift to Katie's Fund in honor of Linda's leadership is a natural way to say "thanks."



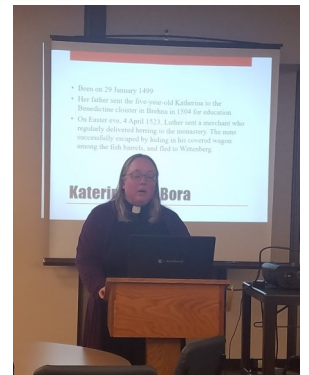
Hope You Remember this Day

Saturday, May 4, 2024 SWO Convention
at Gloria Dei in Redwood Falls

Theme: "Be the Light"

Theme Verse: Psalm 82:4

"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."



DATES & SPECIAL ITEMS

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

“Faithful Friends” is an easy way for you to support Women of the ELCA – automatically! You can start giving online right now.

“[Faithful Friends](#)” supports the Women of the ELCA general fund, which makes it possible for your church-wide organization to act quickly and flexibly in response to any need that may arise.



<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/category/daily-grace>

Leadership Training Event Conference officers

Please attend
Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024
10 am – 3 pm
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Redwood Falls, MN



CONFERENCE LIAISON'S

CROW RIVER (CR): Barb Borth

GLACIAL RIDGE (GLR): Gwen Degner

GREAT RIVER (GRV): Jane Leitzman

LAC QUI PARLE (LQP): Kathy Harwick

LAKELAND (LL): Karen Quistorff

MINNESOTA VALLEY (MV): Brenda Danielson

PRAIRIE (PR): Cathy Blair

SCENIC VALLEY (SV): Ilene Penk

SHETEK (SK): Karen Skarphol

WATONWAN RIVER (WR): Ilene Penk



Jennifer Hockenbery, Ph.D., a college dean, philosophy professor, and editor of the *Journal of Lutheran Ethics*, will serve as interim churchwide executive director of Women of the ELCA, beginning July 1.

Dr. Hockenbery to serve as interim executive director of Women of the ELCA

SYNODICAL BOARD 2024-2025

President:

ILENE PENK

11168 Hwy. 15, Brownton 55312

320.510.1261 ilenepenk45@gmail.com

Grace Lutheran/Brownton

Minnesota Valley Conference

Elected 2023 for one year term

Served 1 yr-with re-election in 2024 for 2 yr. term

Vice-President:

JANE LEITZMAN

30655 Melanie Way, St. Joseph, MN 56374

320.291.6730(Cell) 320.363.4386(Home)

jane.leitzman@gmail.com

Salem Lutheran

Great River Conference

*Appointed 2023

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

Secretary:

GWEN DEGNER

408-8th St. N., Benson 56215

701.261.8920 gwen.degner@gmail.com

Trinity Lutheran/Benson

Glacial Ridge Conference

Elected 2023 for two-year term

Served 2 yr-with re-election in 2025 for 1 yr. term

Treasurer:

KAREN QUISTORFF

46021 County Road 182, Sauk Center, MN 56378

320.282.6368 quistorffk@gmail.com

First Lutheran/Sauk Center

Great River Conference

Elected 2023-to serve 1 yr. With re-election 2024

For 2 years in 2024

Board Members At Large:

CATHY BLAIR

10222 Paul Ave., Fulda, MN 56131

507.370.2909 ciblair68@gmail.com

First Lutheran in Worthington, MN

Shetek Conference

Elected 2024, two yr.-with re-elect 2026, 2 yr. Term

As of now, our board to short four positions.

BRENDA DANIELSON

304 Polar Circle, Arlington 55307

952.956.2954 (Cell) 507.964.1021 (Home)

danielson.brenda6@gmail.com

Zion Lutheran Church, Arlington

Minnesota Valley Conference

Elected 2022-served 2yr., Re-elected 2024 2yr. term

KAREN SKARPHOL

1972 Bud Road, Windom, MN 56101

507.831.5540(Home) 507.822.0785(Cell)

ikskarp@windomnet.com

American Lutheran/Windom

Shetek Conference

Elected 2023-serve 2 yrs.

with re-election in 2025 of 2 yr.

KATHY HARWICK

724-7TH Ave., Madison, MN 56256

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kbearalive@live.com

Faith Lutheran/Madison

Lac Qui Parle Conference

Elected in 2023- serve 2 yrs.

With re-election in 2025 For 2 yrs.

BARB BORTH

2218-10TH AVE S

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mamaborth@gmail.com

Atonement Lutheran/St. Cloud

Great River Conference

Appointed in 2024- with election 2024 to serve 1 yr

Re-elect in 2025 for 2 yr. term

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