



CONNECTIONS

EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWSLETTER

Volume 20 No.4 www.eandsynodwelca.org July-October 2017



EaND SWO Convention held

On Saturday, September 16, 2017, The EaND SWO held its 30th Annual Convention at Faith Lutheran Church, Valley City, ND. There 141 attending the day long meeting which featured Pastor Ryan Jerome discussing the needs of Millennials and how the church can reach out to them.

Karen Voris, Anchorage, AK, represented the Churchwide Executive Board and brought greetings from the newly elected president, Lisa Plorin, and her board. Ms. Voris shared some of the information from Churchwide and encouraged women to participate in their local congregational units, **Gather** Bible studies, consider running for office in their Synodical Women's Organization, and continuing in the good work they have been doing over the years.

Faith Lutheran WELCA was presented with a banner created by Julie Garrett, past president of EaND SWO. Julie has created banners for each congregational unit that has hosted Synodical Conventions since at least 2006, although it may be longer.

Elections were held for Vice President, Jeanne Wobbe; Treasurer, Connie Radcliffe; Fargo Cluster, Linda Monge; Grand Forks Cluster, Camilla Stover; Prairie Rose, Marilee Eikom. These women join the current board members; Karen Retzlaff, president; Pam Neumiller, secretary; Devils Lake Cluster, Darla Thiele; Grafton Cluster, Marlene Arneson; Jamestown Cluster, Mary Jo Johnson; Mayville Cluster, Karen Leslie; and Wahpeton Cluster, Kathy Johnson. Completing their service were Sharon Rostad, Julie Garrett, Nadine Olson, and Laura Munski.



Opening worship with communion was led by Pastor Jolene Knutson-Hanse as was the Bible study preceding lunch. Joanne Knutson, mother of Pastor Jolene, sang a solo, "Thy Word" prior to the Bible study. She was accompanied by Cindy Hill, pianist.

The devotional for the day featured the story of Faith

Lutheran and its rise from the ashes of an arson fire that

destroyed the building several years ago. It featured

the reflections of some of its members as the decisions were being made for the future of the congregation's home. Cheryl Foell, President of Faith WELCA, began the reflections, followed by Kylie & Angela Van Bruggen, Val Moritz, Nancy Ost, Martee Lunde, Connie Peterson, and Lois Brandvold.



A total of 141 women attended (49 voting members, 86 participants, 6 guests) from congregations in the Eastern North Dakota Synod. Offering total on the day of convention was \$2374.00 with \$1,187 designated to the Churchwide organization, \$593.50 to EaND SWO, and \$593.50 to the Central African Girls High School Scholarship fund. A final total will be given when funds mailed in are received.

The 31st Synodical Convention will be held on September 22, 2018, at Red Willow Bible Camp near Binford, ND. Hosting the event will be the EaND SWO Board and the Bible Camp staff. The 25th anniversary convention was held at the camp in the fall of 2012 and proved to be very successful. We are hoping to repeat that success in 2018. Please set that date aside!!!!

2017-2018 EaND Synodical Women's Organization Board

Please keep this list for your future reference.

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Greetings from your EaND SWO President,

Summer is over. This past summer has been filled with changes, recreation, work, gathering, and now it is time to settle in for the season of celebrations, holidays, and a different kind of busy-ness — or is it business?

We look at the holidays (Holy Days) beginning with Halloween (All Hallows' Eve) as a so-called holiday when we should be focusing on the 1st of November as All Saints' Day, a day to remember those saints in our lives—that neighbor who comes by just to see how you're doing; the teacher who took the time to counsel us when we were failing or not working hard enough; the pastor who visits the hospitalized; the highway patrol person who keeps watch for dangerous drivers in order to keep us safe in our travels. We can also rejoice in the day that Martin Luther spoke out against the abuses practiced by those in power by nailing the 95 Theses on the door of the Wittenburg Cathedral (October 31, 1517).

Thanksgiving is a holiday, but not a Holy Day of the church. We are reminded that every day should be a day of Thanksgiving, yet we have only one secularly observed day that has become the "opening day" for "holiday shopping". What a contrast!

Advent is next in the listing of Holy Days, this is the time of preparation for the celebration of the coming of our Savior. It isn't regarded as holidays in the secular world—unless one counts the frantic shopping and sales to entice shoppers!

As Christians we are reminded that Jesus came into the world to bring us the greatest gift—eternal life; but the world would have us focus on the material gifts of the holiday season! We are called to rejoice in that wondrous gift of Jesus and to celebrate the Christmas season with reflection on that greatest gift of all. Even non-Christians celebrate Christmas with parties, gifts, and joy; but Christians know the true meaning of this season!

New Year's Day and New Year's Eve are considered holidays, but not Holy Days—yet January 6th is not a holiday, but a Holy Day!!! It is the day of Epiphany, the day of revelation to the Gentiles when the wisemen found the baby Jesus after following a star.

Yes, there is a difference in what makes a holiday and a Holy Day. Let us keep focused on the Holy Days as we enter this season of holidays!!!! Blessings!

Karen Retzlaff, EaND SWO president

WELCA 101

Congregational Unit Packets

_packets of materials usually distributed at Spring Cluster Gatherings by Cluster Representatives. These materials are to be distributed within the WELCA units. Information covers many topics relevant to Women of the ELCA.

◆ **Congregational Unit Cards**

Postcard sized (usually neon green) that are sent to the Synodical President with the contact person's name, address, and other information about the unit. This is used to update records at Churchwide and in the SWO as well as the records of the Cluster Representative. This should be completed and mailed when leadership change occurs.

◆ **CONNECTIONS subscription Cards**

Postcard sized (usually yellow) that are used to order subscriptions to the quarterly newsletter for Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization. Each Congregational unit receives a complimentary copy mailed to the church office. Cards can be used by individuals wishing to receive a personal copy.

◆ **Lutheran World Relief Information**

Items needed by LWR, kit information, quilt information, pick-up dates and sites, and more contact information.

◆ **DVD Listing**

DVDs available for programs within the local units. Title, subject, and length of program so it can be adapted to your needs.

◆ **Upcoming event information**

Convention and retreat information for the remainder of the year.

◆ **Updated treasurer's information**

Current forms and updated addresses for the WELCA Treasurer to use.

◆ **Model Constitution for Congregational Units**

If you need help revising or updating your local unit's constitution, this is an easy "fill in the blank" way to complete your task! Once your WELCA has voted to accept the constitution as revised, simply keep a copy in your records, mail a copy to the SWO President.

Ask your president to share information and not to file it away. Your SWO Board wants you to know what is going on and wants you to be an active part of our organization.

Has your Congregational Unit sent a copy of your Constitution to the SWO President yet?????

Your Synodical President is required to have a copy of your constitution on file. At this time only 16 units have sent a copy to the SWO President. Now, since we have about 190 congregational units, that is not a good number.

Here is your assignment:

I. Find your constitution;

II. Read it carefully;

** IF it begins with: "Mindful that our Lord, Jesus Christ, the divine head..."*

** IT is time to update it—this was the purpose statement of the ALCW over 30 years ago!*

III. Appoint a committee (two or three) who can draft an up-dated version. You can use the Model WELCA constitution found in your congregational unit packets (see WELCA 101 on the left side of this page).

IV. Keep a copy of your updated constitution on file with your secretary's minutes, in your President's records, and in your Church office.

V. Mail a copy to the Synodical Women's Organization president—she is required to keep a copy on file as well.

VI. Update after every Triennial Convention when an updated model constitution is posted.

This is the current list of Constitutions on file:

Augustana (Grand Forks)

Christ (Neche)

Michigan (Michigan)

Ostervold (Finley)

Reynolds (Reynolds)

Sigdal (Tolna)

St. Luke (Streeter)

Trinity (Cooperstown)

Trinity (Litchville)

Trinity (Edinburg)

Trinity (Sharon)

Trinity (Valley City)

United (Cavalier)

United (?)

Waldheim (Kathryn)

Zion (Hoople)

The 2017-2020 Triennium Board for Women of the ELCA



Row 1: Lisa Plorin, president (left); Becky Shurson, vice president; Freddie Jordan, secretary; Anna Sarver, treasurer. Row 2: Angela Bell (left), Elizabeth Burgess, Lydia Davila, Karen Voris, Rev Dinah Dutta, Anissa Canova, Tina Bigelow, Keala Si-moes. Row 3: Lois Bylund (left), Sara Larson, Barbara Tormondsen, Kandy Pflaster, Sandra Grier, Joy Michalicek, Laura Kruegar. Not pictured: Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Lynette Todd.

Mary Jo Mettler, Northeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization shared her story of raising funds for solar panels for Phebe Hospital in Liberia. She inspired many to contribute, including Women of the ELCA who provided a grant at the last Triennial. The formal ribbon cutting at Phebe Hospital is scheduled to take place November 16, 2017. A portion of this Triennial's offering was designated to this project.



Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addressed the Convention body. She stated, "We are not a dying church, we are a changing church. Lutherans share the story of Jesus in a special way. If you educate a man, you have an educated man. If you educate a woman, you educate a family or a village!"

At the end of her address, "Rocking Region Four" gifted her with a pink t-shirt and a fascinator which she modeled for the group. "I'm not sure if this portrays the gravitas of the Bishop's office," she quipped as the delegates laughed and applauded.



Would you like to see Connections in color?

Go to the website <http://www.eandsynodwelca.org/>

10th Triennial Convention EaND SWO Delegates & Gathering Participants



Back row: Mary Gay Frojen, Jeanne Wobemma, Janet Hughes, Nancy Kainz; front row: Karen Retzlaff, president, Julie Garrett, Kristi Houska, Pat Schutt, and Nadine Olson.

Some of the EaND SWO participants in the Tenth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA at the Minneapolis Convention Center got together for a group photo. This is approximately half of the EaND women who attended. Total attendance for the Triennial was 3,400+ women who learned about justice, human trafficking, reaching out to others, and so much more! They worshipped, laughed, cried, walked, and sang. They heard Lehyma Gbowee, the National Lutheran Choir, powerful messages of God's work, and Bible studies. When they went home, they were enthusiastic, renewed, and filled with purpose.



Central Lutheran Church was just across the street and noon organ concerts were amazing. The National Lutheran Choir

performed its concert there on Saturday evening to a sold-out crowd.

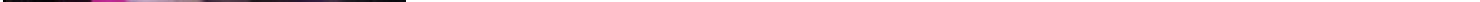
An outdoor reception for Bishop Elizabeth Eaton was held in a park near the Convention Center.



Opening worship featured a processional of pastors and lay leaders who brought the cross to the stage area. Pastor Angela Khabeb, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wisconsin, preached at the closing worship. Bishop Eaton spoke at the opening worship.

A volunteer choir sang during closing worship (Ruth Clemenson, past EaND SWO president, was part of the 200+ group!).

At the end of the Gathering, the cross was recessed to the strains of the hymn, *Blessed Assurance*. The voices of the 3,400 attendees raised in song was moving and inspirational.



***The Eleventh Triennial Convention and Gathering
will be held in Phoenix, Arizona, July 12-16 & 16-19, 2020.
Make plans to attend this event!***

You are the Light of the World

The 5th Annual Women's Retreat was held on August 19, 2017 at Maryvale Provincial Center at Valley City. The theme of the retreat was **"You are not here to bring light into the world, You are the light..... There is a difference".**

The guest speakers were Kathy Fick, who led us in a bible study based on Matthew 5:14-16, and Amanda Brumfield with a talk entitled, "If I Could Say Just One Thing". Her talk centered on life choices and her walk with her faith.



We had a group workshop that involved putting women's health kits together for the Abused Person's Outreach Center of Valley City. The group packed 68 total kits and about 2 dozen miscellaneous items.



Lunch was served by Maryvale and consisted of cold meat sandwiches, potato salad, vegetable and dessert.

Participants were encouraged to take a walking tour of the grounds after lunch to enjoy the beautiful gardens maintained by the Sisters.



***Mark your calendars!!!!
Maryvale has been reserved for
August 18, 2018
for the 6th Annual Retreat.***

The committee for the 2017 retreat was, Kathy Johnson, Nadine Olson and Jeanne Wobbema.

LISTENING TO MR. ROGERS' MOM'S ADVICE

By Audrey Riley

Do you remember Mr. Rogers, the kind man with the sweater (knitted by his mother) who hosted a children's TV show for so many years? He said more than once that when he was small and something in the news frightened him, his mom would tell him to look for the helpers, that there are always people helping. And that made him feel better, knowing that there are always people helping their neighbors in times of trouble.

I thought of Mr. Rogers and his mother's comforting insight when I was reading about the recent hurricanes and the people who are helping in so many ways. And among those helpers we always find people of faith. (Mr. Rogers was a person of faith himself. Did you know he was an ordained minister in the Presbyterian church? The Rev. Mr. Rogers was officially authorized to carry out his ministry in children's television.)

Anyway, back to those faithful helpers Mr. Rogers' mom said to look for. Our friends at Lutheran Disaster Response tell us that our church helps in times of trouble as part of a national coalition of helpers called VOAD, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.

Lutheran Disaster Response is one of 110 national faith communities (of all faiths) and voluntary organizations who work together with local, state and national government agencies to serve in coordinated and collaborative ways to prepare for and respond to disasters. It really is an incredible movement of organized helpers who carry out their mission effectively and efficiently. What a wonderful way to love and serve our neighbors in times of trouble.

How can people like us join that movement? How can we be among the helpers Fred Rogers' mother said to look for? Here are two good ways:

GET TRAINED AND GET ORGANIZED.

A trained volunteer with a recognized disaster response organization is an effective volunteer. Ask your synod office or local Lutheran Social Services affiliate about training opportunities in your area.

GIVE.

Our friends at Lutheran Disaster Response ask that we send financial contributions, which are the most versatile and useful gifts we can make. When you give through Women of the ELCA, every cent is passed on to Lutheran Disaster Response immediately—and people know that this gift is coming from the women of the church, promoting healing and wholeness in the society and the world.

Support Lutheran Disaster Response by giving through Women of the ELCA. Here's how:

Make out your check to Women of the ELCA and write "Lutheran Disaster Response" on the memo line.

Mail it to:

Women of the ELCA
ELCA Gift Processing Center
P.O. Box 1809
Merrifield VA 22116-8009

Audrey Riley is director for development and stewardship for Women of the ELCA.

SAY YES TO BECOME PART OF A COMMUNITY OF FAITHFUL WOMEN

by Eva James Yeo

Recently, I worshiped and gathered with more than 20 women at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, Chicago, who were interested in learning more about Women of the ELCA.

I was invited by Anna-Kari Johnson who was excited about the opportunities Women of the ELCA could offer. Anna-Kari, a member of Pilgrim where her husband, Kristian Johnson, is pastor is an advocate of our organization. She appreciates its mission "to mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ." An associate program director for the ELCA's Domestic Missions, Anna-Kari says she's inspired by Katie Luther.

The opportunity to share information about our organization started this past summer when Anna-Kari asked me about a Bible study that the women of Pilgrim could use. I gave her copies of *Gather magazine* and put together samples of our free downloadable resources. I told them about *Cafe*, our e-zine for young women. I also provided them with our "A Place for You" booklet, which we are updating, and invited them to attend the Tenth Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis last July.

ACTIVE IN MINISTRY

More than half of the women at Pilgrim had never heard about Women of the ELCA. They are active in various ministries at their church: quilting, a mother of preschoolers group, food outreach, a book club and others.

They shared memories of women who had participated in women's society many years ago. We shared how Women of the ELCA participants united to raise funds for solar energy at Phebe Hospital in Liberia, and how we are working to end human sex trafficking and domestic violence.

When we talked about our advocacy work, including racial justice, the women decided to become part of our organization. With their vote to join us, the Pilgrim women will now be part of Women of the ELCA.

FOUR SIMPLE WAYS

There are four simple ways to become an active unit. If you agree with the mission and purpose of Women of the ELCA, say "yes" to a community of women that gathers to support each other on their faith journey. Are you ready to say yes?

Eva Yeo is director for membership for Women of the ELCA. Call her (773.380.2450) or email her (eva.yeo@elca.org) if you'd like to start a unit.



Connections

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Please Note: Update

your Unit Mailing Address. If you are no longer president, please pass this on to her. If you are a subscriber, your expiration date is coded with your name, e.g., Jane Doe JA/16 (expires January 2016).

*Frequency of Publication Information
CONNECTIONS is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November. Subscription rates are four (4) issues for \$3.00. Subscription requests and address changes should be sent to :*

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Please share the information in this newsletter. Photocopy as needed for your unit members, your bulletin boards, and church newsletters. Don't file this away! It's your message about what is happening in the Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization!

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Unit Presidents, Please Note!

If your Congregational unit has any special events or programs you would like to share, please send a photo and story to:

Connections c/o Karen Retzlaff 11995 19th St. NE Aneta, ND 58212

Or

Email to retzlaff@polarcomm.com

Your stories make this newsletter more interesting and may help other units with some ideas for programs or events!

Thank you!

Check for more information in future issues of Connections, the packets received at the Spring Cluster Gatherings, and on the website:

If you would like to see CONNECTIONS in color, go to our website

<http://www.eandsynodwelca.org>