



CONNECTIONS

EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWSLETTER

Volume 27 No. 1

<https://eandwelca.gobilly.net>

October-December 2023



Our Website has a new address:

<https://eandwelca.gobilly.net>

We have a new webmaster and a new address for you to access information and news about Eastern ND Women of the ELCA. We hope that you will find this site much easier to navigate. Just bookmark it on your device for all new updates. As we go through the process, we hope to post our newsletters as they are published.

Thank you for your patience!

What has happened in the past 3 months?

- The 12th Triennial Convention & Gathering took place September 19-24, 2023 in Phoenix, Arizona. (Photos inside)
- The 35th Convention of Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization was held September 30, 2023 at Messiah Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND. (Photos inside)
- Plans are underway for a Spring Cluster Jamboree in April 2024.
- The 36th Convention of EaND SWO has been scheduled for September 28, 2024 at Sharon Lutheran Church in Grand Forks, ND.
- The Canceled Stamp Collection Project for Lutheran World Relief is continuing for a few more months. (See information below!)
- Lutheran World Relief has received over \$70,000.00 to cover shipping costs from your collection of cancelled stamps through STAMPOREE PROJECT participants!!!!!!

NO CLUSTER GATHERINGS in 2024

(instead)

***Come to a Roundup
at Sheyenne Riverbend
for a
Day of Relaxation and Learning***

***You are invited to join your friends at
Sheyenne Riverbend Resort for a
totally free event just for women.***

***Free Child Care is available so bring your
children.***

***A catered meal is provided free of charge
by "Casa de fe" for all who
register for this event.***

***Sponsored by
Eastern North Dakota
Synodical Women's Organization with a
grant from Katie's Fund***

STAMPOREE PROJECT

Information update for the Cancelled Stamp Collectors in WELCA units

The goal of the Stamporee Project is to support LWR's Quilt and Kit Shipping Fund, which provides funding for the shipping of goods to those in need around the world. All LWML groups are encouraged to collect and save cancelled postage stamps instead of discarding them.

Questions and to learn more, contact Stamporee Project Coordinator Sara L. Frank by email: saralfrank@yahoo.com.

Do not send stamps to PO Box in Kyle, TX.

NEW ADDRESS

Sara Frank

710 Arrow Point

Unit #1

Cedar Park, TX 78613

2022-2023 EaND 3-B Synodical Women's Organization Board

Please keep this list for your future reference.
(indicates the end of term & # of terms)

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NOT FILLED

CONNECTIONS

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President's Message

My Christmas cards still haven't been mailed--(maybe by Valentine's Day?) I feel as though this past year has been a blur. My days have been filled with appointments, meetings, caring for others, and the list goes on.

How do I get through a year of loss? It seems as though I can't catch a break. I seem to be moving from one crisis to another. Where is God in all this upheaval?

Have you ever felt like this? I'm sure many of you have felt the burdens of the day and wondered if God has forgotten you.

As I struggled to make sense of it all, our pastor challenged us to read the Bible in one year. What else can be added to my "to-do-list"?

This challenge has become a mixed blessing. I am finding (barely) the time to read the stories of the struggles of the chosen people of God and am reassured that God is faithful. The Holy Spirit guides us through scripture and those around us. I am assured of salvation through Jesus. The presence of the Triune God keeps me from despair and, when I rest in those promises, I know He will carry me through.

The good news? Well, I'm reading the stories of those early servants of God, I'm seeing His guidance. I cry out through the Psalms, I am comforted. I absorb the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, my heart and soul are set at ease.

So what if my Christmas cards become Valentine's cards! My heavenly Father will keep me in His love and I am okay. The worries of this world are still there, but I can relax and rest in God's arms.

In Christ's love,

Karen Retzlaff SWO President

SPONSORSHIPS

In order to continue hosting spring cluster gatherings & the fall EaND Synod WELCA Convention, we need your financial help. Sponsorships cover the expenses of both of these functions and individual registration fees are not needed.

Will your WELCA unit please continue to support the EaND Synodical Women's Organization with an annual gift of \$80 - \$100? This money will be used to reimburse clusters hosting spring gatherings as well as fall convention expenses.

Sponsorships can be sent to:

Jeanne Wobbema, Treasurer EaND SWO 1053 E Main # 409 Valley City, ND 58072



Round-Up at Riverbend

Nestled in the Sheyenne River Valley, Sheyenne Riverbend Farm is a delightful venue for gathering and events. It was chosen by EaND SWO as the site of a Spring Round-up of Clusters. Instead of hosting eight Cluster Gatherings, one site has been selected for a day of relaxation and learning. This peaceful setting will be balm for the busy mind and soul.



This event will feature speakers, opportunities for quilting (for experienced and novice quilters), entertainment by Triplicity (a trio of women from the Mayville area who perform 50s and 60s music as well as spiritual songs to brighten your day), and a chance to network with other women of faith

“Casa de fe”, a group from Trinity Lutheran Church in Valley City, will be catering the meal and break out times as part of their mission support in Guatemala. All meals are free of charge thanks in part to a Katie’s Fund grant from Churchwide Women of the ELCA.

Area vendors are being contacted to provide shopping opportunities for attendees.

Child care will be provided on site with certified care providers at no charge.

Plan to join your friends at Riverbend on Saturday, April 20, 2024!!!!

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. Presiding Bishop Eaton encourages all women to support 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years with a gift.

Katie's Fund provided \$1,000.00 grants to Synodical Organizations in 2023 to provide support for education, leadership training, and spiritual growth worldwide.

Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization received the grant which is being used as seed money for the "Round-Up at Riverbend" event to be held on Saturday, April 20, at Sheyenne Riverbend Farm. This is one event for all eight Clusters in Eastern North Dakota.

In the past the SWO has assisted Cluster Gatherings with costs by allotting \$400.00 to each Cluster to help cover expenses of speakers and programming. The host churches provided the venue and food by charging an amount to cover those costs.

In hosting one event, the SWO is adding Sponsorship money that was not used last year to the grant from Churchwide. The goal is to encourage women to attend this event instead of carving more days from already busy schedules to take part in WELCA events.

"We would encourage our women to take a day to meet and relax at the river," said Joan Huso, Grand Forks Cluster Representative. She and other members of the Synodical Women's Board have been planning this day since October when the grant was awarded.

"I can think of no better way to spend a spring day than to come to this beautiful setting," declared Karen Retzlaff, EaND SWO president. "I've heard Triplicity perform and it lifts my heart to hear the harmony and faith-based musical message!"

DON'T NEGLECT THE POWER OF YOUR WORK

By Kimberly Knowle-Zeller

"Let all that you do be done in love" (1 Corinthians 16:14).

I am where I am because of the church ladies. At my Ordination, there was one table of mostly women gathered to celebrate this milestone in my life. They were women who I attended church with growing up. They were the women who saw gifts in me and asked, "Have you ever considered being a pastor?" Their words took root over the years, their belief in me a balm to my soul. Inevitably, whenever I talk about my path or ordained ministry, it includes Women of the ELCA. I remember Mary Jane who directed the choir. I remember Ruth who faithfully attended Thursday Bible study for decades sharing her faith. I remember Nadine who organized volunteers. I remember Sally who sent handwritten cards to every member of the church on their birthdays and anniversaries. I remember Connie who always had a sweet treat and hot coffee ready for meetings and Bible studies. I remember Andrea whose eyes lit up when she talked about attending Triennial gatherings with her mother and sisters and thousands of other women. I remember the women who quilted and knitted week after week. Over and over again, Women of the ELCA showed up for me.

You have your own list of women who have impacted you over the years. And I'm sure you, too, have been that woman offering her support and encouragement to others.

Don't neglect the power of your work, showing up to set up and cook, baking, sending care packages to college students, quilting, passing out Thankoffering boxes and envelopes, and donating your money to organizations. Don't hide your gifts or your love but keep your eyes open for where God's people could use a word of encouragement.

Your work is seen. Your work matters.

I saw you.

The boys and girls of your congregations see you. They're watching you live out your callings as disciples of Jesus. They hear you when you invite them to lead, or when you offer them a compliment on an accomplishment at school or when they read at church. When you encourage them in their gifts, you're lifting up the body of Christ.

Let us pray: Gracious God, help us to immerse ourselves in community; loving others as you love us. Open our hearts to see what gifts you've given us and encourage us to share them lavishly with others. Amen.

***Kimberly Knowle-Zeller is a writer, pastor, wife, mother of two, and the co-author of *The Beauty of Motherhood: Grace-Filled Devotions for the Early Years*. She lives with her family in Cole Camp, Mo.

Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization Convention held



Fargo Cluster Representative Sharon Syrdal welcomed the group to Messiah Lutheran Church for the 35th convention of the EaND Synodical Women's Organization.



Pastor Lexi Steile led the Bible Study and worship service using the Convention theme, "Just Love...Without Limits". She also provided special music.



Worship with Communion began the day.



Keynote speaker Pastor Kim Adams, Crossroads Campus Ministry at NDSU spoke about challenges faced when Christ commands us to love one another. Her family motto is "Love Wins"

The 35th Convention of the EaND SWO was held September 28, 2023, at Messiah Lutheran Church in Fargo, ND with 48 in attendance. Of the 48, 19 were counted as voting members.

President Karen Retzlaff called the convention to order and appointed Kelly Swenseth, Devils Lake, as parliamentarian. Business was conducted with the reading of the previous year's minutes, which were approved by the body. The Treasurer's report was given by Jeanne Wubbema and accepted by the group.

The Nominating Committee reported the following: Vice President, Karen Tabor; Prairie Rose Cluster, Corrina Olson; Fargo Cluster, Sharon Syrdal; Grand Forks Cluster, Joan Huso; with no nominations from Grafton Cluster, Mayville Cluster, Spirit Lake Cluster, and Wahpeton Cluster. Those positions with nominations were elected unanimously by ballot.

The offering report was given by Jeanne Wubbema, who reported a total of \$1,761.00 received and to be distributed as follows: \$880.50 to Churchwide, \$440.25 to EaND SWO, and \$440.25 to Campus Ministry. The 2024 budget was presented. Due to some confusion as to numbers, the budget was referred to the SWO Board for review and will be sent to congregational units when approved..

Installation of elected Board members was held.

The invitation for the 2024 convention was presented by Mary Adams, Sharon Lutheran Church, Grand Forks. The date has been set for Saturday, September 28, 2024, at Sharon Lutheran.

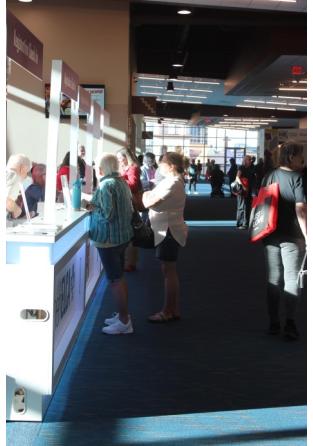
12th Triennial Convention & Gathering in Phoenix, Arizona 19-24 September 2023



EaND SWO delegates (l-r: Karen Retzlaff, Jennifer Hayes, Joan Huso, Pam Neumiller, Mary Jo Kinzler, Renae Olson, Sharon Syrdal, Marilee Eikom, & Corrina Olson.



Joy Michalecek calling the Triennial Convention to order.



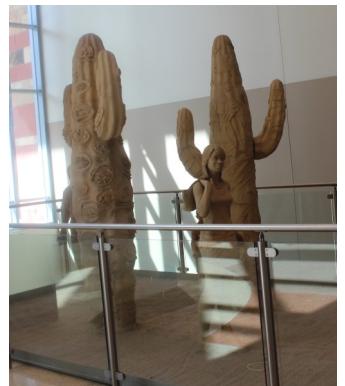
Registration for the Gathering



Deliberating Memorials & Budget



Myrna Wells-Ulland, newly-elected President of Women of the ELCA



Sand sculpture in the Convention Center



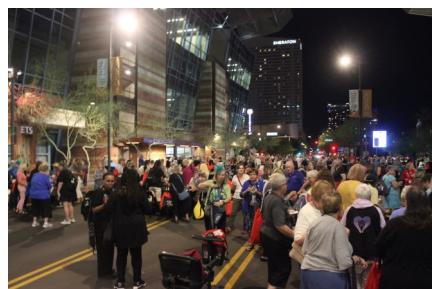
Community Lab discussion group led by Prairie Rose Seminole and Rev. Albert Starr.



Quilting for Lutheran World Relief



Opening reception for the Triennial Gathering featured Arizona specialties for food, music, and fellowship for about 2,000 attendees on a 96° night on the street in front of the Convention Center. Music provided by a DJ for line-dancing!





Vendors shared information as well as had items for sale at various tables. Attendees used their "Just Love" tote bags to collect items for gifts, brochures and flyers to share with their clusters and congregational units. Renae Olson, (above) and Mary Jo Kinzler were among those who enjoyed learning about various missions from vendors.

Grand Forks Cluster members took the opportunity to take a photo at the entrance. (Judy Larson, Joan Huso, & Karen Retzlaff)



Closing worship was held on Sunday, September 24.

The Gathering Choir participated by presenting and leading worship music. EaND delegate, Joan Huso, was part of the choir. (upper right in the photo below.)



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

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PRSR STD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Return Service Requested

WANTED

FOUR WOMEN WILLING TO SERVE AS CLUSTER REPRESENTATIVES!!!

ONE FOR EACH OF THESE CLUSTERS:

**GRAFTON
MAYVILLE
SPIRIT LAKE
WAHPETON**

DUTIES:

- 1) TWO YEAR TERM WITH OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE A SECOND TWO YEAR TERM;
- 2) ACT AS LIAISON BETWEEN CONGREGATIONAL UNITS WITHIN THE CLUSTER AND EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION;
- 3) PROVIDE INFORMATION ABOUT HAPPENINGS WITHIN EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION;
- 4) ASSIST LOCAL UNIT HOSTING A CLUSTER GATHERING WITH PLANNING THE EVENT;
- 5) BE PART OF THE SWO BOARD OF DIRECTORS WHICH MEETS 4 TIMES A YEAR.