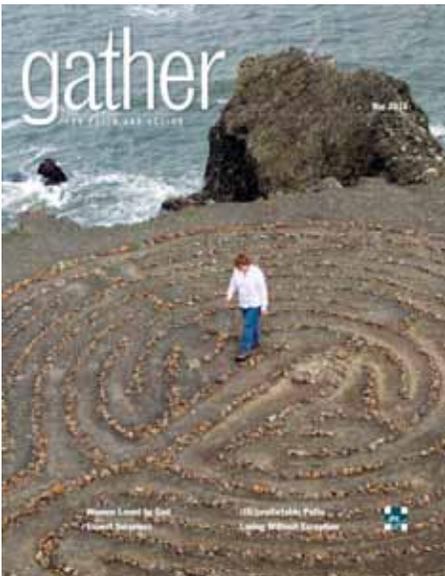


interchange

VOLUME 28, NUMBER 1 | SPRING 2015



SWO SPOTLIGHT

Creating ripples that change lives

WHEN KANDY PFLASTER, president of the Nebraska Synod SWO (4A), asked women to respond to a request to buy subscriptions to *Gather*, it was like throwing a pebble into a pond. The ripple effect was fascinating, she said.

The Rev. Bob Bryan, director of Prison Ministry for the Nebraska Synod, asked Kandy if she could find women or units to give 12 subscriptions of *Gather* to women at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women, York, Neb. The Nebraska SWO had partnered with Rev. Bob on men's prison ministries, and so he felt comfortable asking.

"I told him that I didn't think it would be a problem [to get subscriptions to *Gather*], Kandy said. "I didn't get it done right away, so when a couple of weeks later I remembered [his request], I frantically put out an e-blast asking if units would be willing to buy subscriptions, and that I needed 12 of them."

Over the next few weeks, Kandy said, the response was overwhelming.

"I was past 30 subscriptions, so I started telling the women when they would contact me that we had received what we wanted."

But after a conference call with presidents in Region 4, Kandy found other ways to use *Gather* subscriptions.

"I thought, 'Let's send any more responses with subscriptions to our eight campus ministries in Nebraska. So I directed calls from units to the campuses that needed more subscriptions.'"

Kandy said her desire is that *Gather* magazine will reach women in both ministries: campus and prison. "Our hope is that women can pick up a *Gather* and that the articles and Bible study will make a difference in their lives."

Kandy said when she shared the subscription story at the 2015 Conference of Presidents, she thought about how Women of the ELCA has a ripple effect on the lives of other women.

Last Christmas, one of her board members gave her a note that said:

As we go through our day, we are sending out ripples that make a difference in the world. Even by doing simple things as smiling, calling a friend or visiting someone who is in need, we have no idea how far the things we do will go. You have touched me with a ripple of strength and encouragement through your words and actions this year.

"I just felt as I was sharing this story about subscriptions that the ripple was evident," Kandy said. "Think about how you can share *Gather*."

in this issue

SWO spotlight

2015 ELCA Youth Gathering

Ninth Triennial Convention addresses social issues

"A Place for You"

Nominations are open for 2017 promoters

Young women to experience Holy Land

Global ministry update

#WeLoveWELCA

Women of the ELCA Interchange is a publication of the women's organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The purpose of *Interchange* is to equip and empower Women of the ELCA participants with the information and resources necessary to carry out the organization's mission. *Interchange* is distributed free of charge to the congregational, synodical and churchwide leadership of Women of the ELCA, and to Women of the ELCA cluster and conference coordinators and newsletter editors.

Linda Post Bushkofsky, *executive director*
Terri Lackey, *director for communication*
Union Design, *layout/design*
Copyright © 2015 Women of the ELCA

Editorial Office

Women of the ELCA
8765 W. Higgins Rd.
Chicago, IL 60631-4101
Phone: 773-380-2730 or
800-638-3522, ext. 2730
Women.ELCA@elca.org
womenoftheelca.org
facebook.com/womenoftheELCA
twitter.com/womenoftheELCA

Permission to Reproduce

Articles may be reproduced by Women of the ELCA units and synodical organizations provided each copy carries the notice "Reprinted with permission from *Interchange*, the churchwide newsletter of Women of the ELCA, Copyright © 2015 Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." When applicable, permission to reprint external cited sources in this publication should be obtained before reprinting. Printed on recycled paper.



Women from more than 7,000 ELCA congregations in the U.S. and the Caribbean are committed to raising awareness and preventing human trafficking.

Join us as we inform, educate and mobilize women in their congregations and communities, through prayer, ministry and political action.

Tell the youth and adult leaders in your congregation to find Women of the ELCA at the ELCA Youth Gathering in July. Learn how you can get involved and help us by visiting our website womenoftheelca.org.



Women of the ELCA photos by Jim Veneman. Detroit skyline photo by Pat (Cletch) Williams. Background photo by Ed Jones. Used with permission. <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>

2015 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

Youth asking women to “rise up” to diaper challenge

by Heidi Hagstrom

ELCA Youth Gathering participants will collect diapers as a part of their in-kind gifts when they meet in Detroit, July 15–19. The youth are asking Women of the ELCA to partner with them in the diaper collection.

IN JULY, THOUSANDS OF ELCA YOUTH AND ADULTS will visit Detroit for the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering. Key messages from Mark’s gospel are designed to inspire them to “Rise Up Together” and return to their home communities to “build bridges, bear burdens, break chains, and bring hope,” the mission statement of the gathering’s host synod, Southeastern Michigan.

ELCA Youth Gathering participants have historically left an in-kind donation in each of the host cities. When the youth gathering planning team charged with identifying the 2015 in-kind offering began its research in Detroit, diapers consistently emerged as a need. Non-profits that work with families and individuals living in poverty list diapers as a top concern.

The youth gathering team learned that a healthy change of diapers can cost up to \$100/month—for all ages. A family in Michigan must be more than 44 percent below the poverty line to receive any kind of cash assistance.

Then, a family of three only receives \$492 a month.

Rose Coletti works with Starfish Family Services in Inkster, Mich., a nonprofit that has agreed to store and distribute the diapers brought to Detroit as in-kind gift offerings by youth gathering attendees.

Rose said that some of her clients try to potty train their children too young to avoid needing diapers.

The greatest need of diapers is for children’s size 4, 5, and 6, but all sizes will be appreciated, including incontinence supplies for adults. Wipes are also needed.

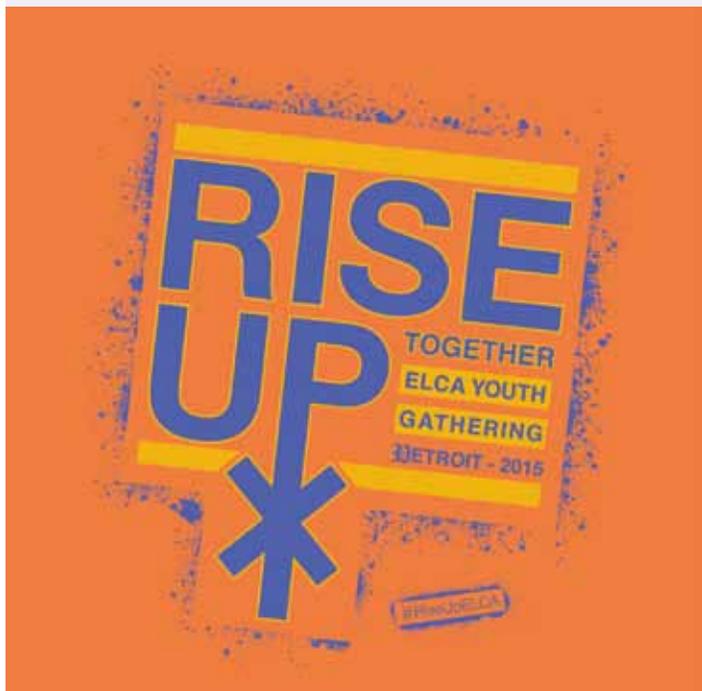
You are invited

Women of the ELCA groups are invited to join ELCA youth in collecting diapers for their in-kind gifts to Detroit. Connect with young people in your congregation who are going to the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering to find out how you can help. Perhaps a gift of money would be easiest for the youth to carry. If so, they could buy diapers in Detroit and help its economy.

If your congregation is not sending youth to the gathering, you might connect with a gathering synod coordinator (www.elca.org/gathering) to find a congregation near you that is. At the request of youth in your congregation, you can send a check made out to Women of the ELCA with “Youth Gathering—Diapers” in the memo line to Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. You also can ship the diapers directly to Immanuel Lutheran Church, 13031 Chandler Park Drive, Detroit, Mich., 48213.



Heidi Hagstrom is director for ELCA Youth Gathering.



You are called into action

Voting members of Ninth Triennial Convention address social issues

By Linda Post Bushkofsky

WHEN THE VOTING MEMBERS of the Ninth Triennial Convention met last July in Charlotte, N.C., they debated and discussed several social issues, resolving to involve all expressions of Women of the ELCA in addressing human trafficking, bullying, care of children, and solar power for a hospital in Liberia.

One action, “Creating Safe Churches for Children,” encouraged participants and congregational units (CUs) to support their congregations in reviewing their childcare policies and providing child abuse education and prevention training for all staff and volunteers who have contact with children and youth.



Voting members at the 2014 triennial convention.
Photo by Jim Veneman

An action that originated in the Northeastern Minnesota Synodical Women’s Organization (SWO) relates to the Western African nation of Liberia. It called all expressions of the organization to hold Liberia in prayer as it recovers from civil war (this action was taken before the devastating Ebola outbreak in Liberia). The action encourages women throughout the organization to support the work of the Northeastern Minnesota SWO with Rural Renewable Energy Alliance and the National Lutheran Church Women Fellowship of Liberia to develop and provide solar power to Liberia’s Phebe Hospital. Go to nemnsynodwomen.org or skipthegrid.org for more information.

Responding to the thousands of unaccompanied minors who were making their way across the U.S. border last year, the voting members called all SWOs and CUs to educate themselves about this humanitarian crisis and to work with established programs such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). Voting members further called SWOs and CUs to encourage their congregations as places of hospitality to reach out to local Latino communities and to offer assistance and shelter for children. A video with discussion guide is available at lirs.org, along with other resources to assist your CU in responding.

On the matter of bullying and harassment, all expressions of the organization are called to “champion this concern for safety of our children and to advocate for congregational education to prevent bullying, harassment, and related violence in church, school and society.” Synodical organizations are called to partner with other organizations working in this area and to offer presentations at synodical events on this topic, seeking to change bystander behavior into ally behavior and creating partnerships between youth and adults.

Finally, SWO boards were called to convene a committee to review and promote resources on the prevention of human trafficking so that the SWOs can help CUs inform, educate, and mobilize their congregations and communities to prevent human trafficking through prayer, ministry, and political action. SWOs are to report back at the 2016 Conference of Synodical Presidents.

The complete text of all these actions can be found by going to womenoftheelca.org and following the link on the home page.



Linda Post Bushkofsky is executive director of Women of the ELCA.

Nominations are open for 2017 TG promoters

WOMEN OF THE ELCA IS SEEKING A FEW WOMEN who are passionate about the work of our organization to become triennial gathering promoters (TGPs) for our 2017 event. Work would begin in 2016 for the Tenth Triennial Gathering, July 13–16, 2017, in Minneapolis, Minn.

Requirements include having attended at least one gathering (preferably in 2014) and being an active participant in a unit. Candidates should also be comfortable speaking in public, enthusiastic about travel, have hands-on knowledge of social media, and be able to tell a story about why they love Women of the ELCA. Experience with marketing is a bonus.

Candidates must also be computer literate and reachable by email on a daily basis. Any woman considered will be asked to submit a two-minute video

about why she would like the opportunity to promote the next triennial gathering.

This volunteer job comes with no pay, but plenty of perks.

And while the name “triennial gathering promoter” is the same as used in the past, the plan is different. A small group of TGPs—perhaps 9 to 15—will serve the whole organization. Individual synodical women’s organizations will not have their own appointed TGP.

Submit your own name or someone you know to women.elca@elca.org with TGP in the subject line. Include name, address, email address, phone number, and church membership of the candidate.

The deadline for receiving nominations is July 31.

Take “A Place for You” on the road with PowerPoint

By Eva James Yeo

YOU LOVE OUR “A PLACE FOR YOU” BROCHURE, and now you can take it on the road. Some of you have requested that we make it into a PowerPoint presentation, and *voilà*, we have!

You can now share the mission, purpose, and ministries of Women of the ELCA using the PowerPoint, which comes with notes in the outline that we suggest you use as a script.

You can access the free PowerPoint presentation on our website (www.womenoftheelca.org). Currently, you can find it on the home page’s featured section. We suggest you download it and use it as a presentation at your next event to welcome newcomers or potential new members to our community. Use it in your congregation, at a retreat, or at other creative venues where women gather to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

For more information, contact Eva at 800-638-3522, ext. 2450, or email Eva.Yeo@elca.org.



Eva James Yeo is director for membership for Women of the ELCA.

THANKS TO KATIE'S FUND

Young Women to Experience Holy Land

by Audrey Novak Riley

THE ELCA'S PEACE NOT WALLS CAMPAIGN and the ELCA's Young Adult Ministry are coordinating a series of Holy Land pilgrimages of peace and justice for young adults—and thanks to your generous gifts to Katie's Fund, 12 young women will make the journey in May and June.

According to the Peace Not Walls Young Adult Trips organizers, these pilgrimages are not merely about enlightening young adults to social, political, historical, and cultural realities; they are about deepening faith and connecting one's beliefs to one's actions in the world.

These goals fit perfectly with the stated purpose of Katie's Fund: to support global connections, leadership development, and living theology. Pilgrims will connect with Palestinians and Israelis working for peace and justice in the Holy Land, and will build relationships with local Lutherans, other Christians, and representatives of the Jewish and Islamic faiths.

Throughout the 10-day pilgrimage, participants

will reflect deeply and faithfully on their experiences in preparation for sharing conversations and increasing engagement back home.

The 12 young adult women whose travel is sponsored by Women of the ELCA represent a variety of life experiences—from pastors to students to young professionals. Please pray that the women find new insights on their journeys and that they return with renewed faith in Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace: Alyse Barelmann, Jeanette Bidne, Megan Doucette, Sharei Green, Krystal Hemphill, Emma Parsons, Elyssa Salinas, Phyllis Smoot, Andi Tucker, Erin Wenger, and Erin Wesley.



Audrey Novak Riley is director for stewardship for Women of the ELCA.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA GLOBAL MINISTRY UPDATE

Pack your bags for our global mission trip to Tanzania

by Valora K Starr

HABARI GANI OR "WHAT'S THE NEWS?" in Swahili is an important phrase to know if you are traveling to Tanzania, East Africa. And the news is Women of the ELCA Women Building Global Community travel seminar will take you to Tanzania Nov. 6–14, 2015.*

Why Tanzania? As we look toward celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation in 2017, we'll retrace many of the same steps we did when we visited Tanzania in 2000.

The focus of the seminar will be discipleship and the ministry area of Mwangaza's Binti/Mama Initiative (<http://mwangazaint.org>) that trains intergenerational groups of women on issues of health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, conflict resolution and gender violence. We will also visit Lutheran World Relief projects and take time to worship and fellowship with Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania Women (ELCT) in in local churches, and we'll take a day for safari.

The seminar is open to all women. We have heard from mothers and daughters excited about traveling together, health care workers seeking a global experience, elected leaders of Women of the ELCA, and women who have supported and prayed for the organization over the years who are interested in learning about the work of ELCT women.

If you are interested in making the journey, call us at 800-638-3522, ext. 2741, or email valora.starr@elca.org for more information and to receive seminar updates.



Valora K Starr is director for discipleship for Women of the ELCA.

*Total cost \$3,400 is inclusive of domestic and international airfare, meals, lodging, ground transportation, travel fees, and safari.

Thoughtful, well-written resources for all

SO OFTEN WHEN I'M LOOKING FOR A RESOURCE, I turn to the Women of the ELCA to see what has been posted or shared. WELCA has provided many great, thoughtful, well-written gifts to the church—the ELCA and beyond.

This morning I responded to a post on Facebook about where I've seen acts of kindness with a reference to the story that WELCA shared in January about the scarf bombing "Chase the Chill" initiative—a small seed of kindness that started, yes, with Susan Huxley in Pennsylvania, but was shared by WELCA and planted a seed in my own life to start something similar here. I've shared the initial story a few times—it's a great story.

A few days ago a colleague was looking for a spiritual gifts resource to use with her congregation during Lent, and I recalled having seen one on the WELCA website.

A little while later she posted, "Thank God for the Women of the ELCA—that resource is great!"

Last week I used a Bible study on hospitality with the women I gather on Thursday mornings that I found on your website. We take much for granted in ministry, often to the detriment of the collective. Today I wanted to let you know that I'm deeply thankful for what you, and everyone who makes WELCA possible, do for the church.

With gratitude,
Jenn

Pastor Jenn Moland-Kovash
All Saints Lutheran Church
Palatine, Illinois
www.allsaintspalatine.org

Calendar

For information on any of these events, contact Women of the ELCA at 800-638-3522, ext. 2730, or email Women.ELCA@elca.org. Executive board members (EBM), if known, are listed with events.

APRIL 2015

- 11 Metro Washington DC SWO convention, The Village at Rockville, Rockville, Md.** (EBM Joyce Gibson)
- 18 LaCrosse Area SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran, Sparta, Wis.** (EBM Jody Smiley)
- 24–25 Churchwide executive board meeting, Arlington Heights, Ill.**
- 25 Delaware-Maryland SWO convention, Luther/Center Our Redeemer, Glen Burnie, Md.** (EBM Syd Brinkman)

MAY 2015

- 1–2 St. Paul Area SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran, North Branch, Minn.** (EBM Joyce Gibson)
- 2 Allegheny SWO convention, Location TBD, Altoona, Pa.,** (EBM Nancy Giddings)
- 8–9 Northwestern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Olmstead Manor, Ludlow, Pa.** (EBM Dina Dutta)

- 15–16 Southwestern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Bishop Connare Center, Greensburg, Pa.** (EBM Jody Smiley)

JUNE 2015

- 12–13 Western North Dakota SWO convention, Baymont Inn & Suites (formerly Seven Seas), Mandan, N.D.** (EBM Becky Shurson)
- 12–13 North Eastern Minnesota SWO convention, University of Minnesota Duluth, Duluth, Minn.** (EBM Jody Smiley)
- 12–13 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin convention, Good Shepherd Lutheran, Verona, Wis.** (EBM Joan Iverson)
- 12–13 South Carolina SWO convention, St. Stephen's Lutheran, Lexington, S.C.** (EBM Dawn Smith)
- 13 Northeastern Pennsylvania SWO convention, St. Paul's Lutheran, Fleetwood, Pa.** (EBM Lisa Plorin)

- 19–20 Southwestern Minnesota SWO convention, University of Minnesota at Morris, Morris, Minn.** (EBM Dawn Smith)

- 19–20 Southeastern Iowa SWO convention, Iowa Community College, Fort Dodge, Iowa** (EBM Patti Austin)
- 19–20 Western Iowa SWO convention, Iowa Community College, Fort Dodge, Iowa** (EBM Jackie Wilson)
- 19–20 Northeastern Iowa SWO convention, Iowa Community College, Fort Dodge, Iowa** (EBM Cindy Arnett)
- 19–20 North Carolina SWO convention, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, N.C.** (EBM Barbara Miller)
- 20 Northwestern Ohio SWO convention, St. Mark's Lutheran, Bowling Green, Ohio** (EBM Karen Voris)
- 26–27 South Dakota SWO convention, Faith Lutheran Church, Rapid City, S.D.** (EBM Gwen King)

Non-Profit
 Organization
 U.S. Postage
 PAID
 Wheeling IL
 Permit No. 38

Dated material for
 immediate delivery

Spring 2015

Please route to:

- Women of the ELCA leaders**
- pastor(s)**
- other church leaders**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Ripples that change lives	1
Diapers in Detroit	3
Voting members of Ninth Triennial Convention address social issues	4
Take "A Place for You" on the road	5
Nominations are open for 2017 TG promoters	5
Young Women to Experience Holy Land	6
Pack your bags for Tanzania	6
#WeLoveWELCA	7
Calendar	7

Please copy and share with the women in your congregation!

Being Made New

by *Kate Sprutta Elliott*

HAVE YOU HEARD? *Gather* is changing the format of its Bible studies. Instead of a nine-month study and a three-month summer study, we will run several studies during the year. And we will no longer publish a separate leader guide and companion Bible. Over the years, many readers have asked that the leader information be contained right in the magazine, and now we will do that.

Traditionally, we have asked a scholar, often retired, to write the nine-month study. Typically this person has the time, experience, and academic background to write a study and leader book—as well as the freedom to travel to Bible study introductory events. However, *Gather* is finding it increasingly difficult to identify new writers who are able to commit to such a large project. We hope that by shortening the studies, we can get new authors who could not make a commitment to write a longer study. And we think readers will enjoy hearing the perspectives of a larger, more diverse group of writers.

The Shape of the Year

SUMMER: Three sessions (June, July/August)
FALL: Three sessions (September through November)
ADVENT/CHRISTMAS: Shorter seasonal devotional (December)
WINTER: Four sessions, probably on a book of the Bible (January/February through April)
SPRING: One session, an intergenerational lesson (May)

Also, we hope that shorter Bible studies will be more appealing for new people who might want to join your monthly study group.

Check our website to learn more about upcoming writers (www.gathermagazine.org). Send us an email at gather@elca.org if you would like brochures about the new study and format. Or you can download the brochure from the website.



Kate Sprutta Elliott is editor of Gather.