

# Your offerings at work

A STEWARDSHIP GUIDE  
FOR WOMEN OF THE ELCA

2013-2014



Women of the  
**ELCA** 

*Inside!*

- New Thankoffering Service
- New Offering Forms
- Learn about Katie's Fund, Thankofferings, Regular Offerings, and more!

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# A Vision for Stewardship

For Women of the ELCA, stewardship is about the bigger picture. It is how we use our God-given gifts to support the ministries that God has entrusted to our care. Stewardship is how we live out our mission and purpose together as Women of the ELCA.

Through stewardship, we do more together than we could ever do apart. Since our beginning, Women of the ELCA has been a self-funded organization. To put it simply, women like you are the stewards of our mission and ministry. When thousands of women in thousands of congregations give boldly, those dollars turn into life-changing ministries that serve the entire church.

What does stewardship look like in your Women of the ELCA unit? When Women of the ELCA was established in 1987, our founders envisioned stewardship that is bold and balanced. In the constitution of Women of the ELCA, they call us to practice four types of giving:

## **Give regularly and without restriction**

See Regular Offerings / page 6

## **Give in gratitude for blessings**

See Thankofferings / page 7

## **Give to specific ministries**

See Designated Gifts / page 9

## **Give on special occasions**

See Special Offerings / page 9

**How does your Women of the ELCA community live out this vision for stewardship?** Please use this Stewardship Guide to learn about how your offerings are making ministry happen and to share stewardship ideas with your Women of the ELCA unit. Thank you for promoting active, faithful, and joyful stewardship in Women of the ELCA.

### **Mission:**

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

### **Purpose:**

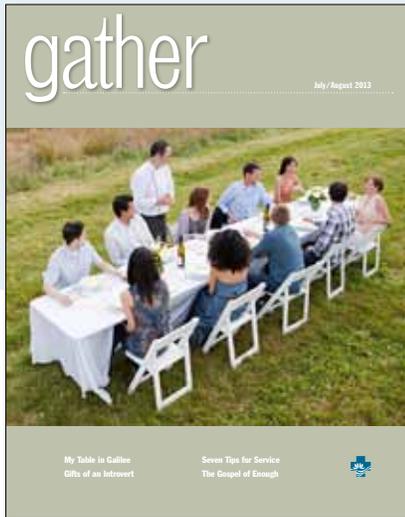
As a community of women,  
created in the image of God,  
called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and  
empowered by the Holy Spirit,  
we commit ourselves to  
grow in faith,  
affirm our gifts,  
support one another in our callings,  
engage in ministry and action, and  
promote healing and wholeness  
in the church,  
the society, and  
the world.



# Women of the ELCA Ministries: Your Offerings at Work

## Providing for the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA

The churchwide women's organization puts your offerings to work in ministries that serve the entire church.



### GATHER MAGAZINE & BIBLE STUDIES

Regular offerings and Thankofferings support editors, writers, and the creative work that goes into *Gather* and its award-winning Bible studies.



### VOICES FOR JUSTICE

Women of the ELCA equips women throughout the church with advocacy tools. This year, we partner with Bread for the World and the 1,000 Days Movement to promote child and maternal health during the first thousand days of a child's life.



### INTERCHANGE AND INTERCAMBIO

Each month, *Interchange* brings free news and program ideas to Women of the ELCA leaders in thousands of congregations. It is translated into Spanish as *Intercambio*.



### CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION

In 2013, women will gather at Rocky Boy's Chippewa Cree Reservation.



### WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Annual trainings and thousands of leadership opportunities equip leaders to serve the wider church with skills ranging from public speaking and marketing to accounting and advocacy.





## PROGRAM RESOURCES

More than 40 free program resources bring Lutheran theology to timely and diverse topics, for use by small groups, individuals and retreats.



## CAFÉ

Awarded “Best in Class” for eight consecutive years, the online magazine and podcast features young women writing about faith and life.



## DAILY GRACE

The free devotional app brings inspiration to thousands of women daily.

## RAISING UP HEALTHY WOMEN AND GIRLS

Our health initiative gives seed grants to congregations to start programs that promote physical, emotional, and spiritual health for women and children in their communities.

## GRANTS

Last year, the grants program awarded \$57,525 in grants to 27 organizations in the United States, Africa and Asia. See page 9 for more about supporting Women of the ELCA Grants.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



Every day, Women of the ELCA reaches thousands of women and men through Facebook, Pinterest,

Twitter, and our blog, to promote opportunities and encourage bold lives of faith.

## RACIAL JUSTICE

Ground-breaking anti-racism work continues through Today's Dream, Tomorrow's Reality, a program that has trained more than 800 racial justice advocates to serve in the ELCA.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Last year, Women of the ELCA gave \$22,000 in scholarships to Lutheran women pursuing careers as diverse as ministry, zoology, teaching, and nursing. See page 9 for more about supporting Women of the ELCA Scholarships.



# Women of the ELCA Ministries: Your Offerings at Work

## Supporting Women of the ELCA in your synod and congregation

Regular offerings also support local ministries and the synodical women's organization (SWO).



*Congregational units of Women of the ELCA are based in congregations.*

**Women of the ELCA is active in thousands of ELCA congregations. Last year, there were 6,479 active units carrying out our mission in local communities.**

## REGULAR OFFERINGS

Regular offerings also support local ministries (in your congregational unit) and synodical ministries (in your synodical women's organization or SWO). Units collect regular offerings, keep a portion, and send 50 percent or more<sup>1</sup> to the SWO. The SWO keeps a portion and sends 50 percent or more to the churchwide women's organization to support the ministries highlighted on pages 3–4.

Units and synodical organizations use their portion of Regular Offerings to support a variety of ministry programs.

Each congregational unit has different ministry priorities. For example, a unit might purchase quilting supplies for relief quilts, pay for childcare during a retreat so mothers with young children can attend, or provide camp scholarships to girls in the congregation.

Synodical women's organizations might use Regular Offerings to support leadership development, organize events, publish newsletters, train congregational officers, and provide scholarships for women to attend conventions, retreats, or the Triennial Gathering.



<sup>1</sup> By action of the 1990 Triennial Convention, units are encouraged to “consider a goal of sending 50 percent or more of regularly received offerings to the Synodical Women's Organization treasurer at regular intervals.”

# Regular Offerings

When does your women’s group gather? For fellowship over lunch? For Bible study or quilting? To plan an upcoming project? Units are encouraged to collect a Regular Offering every time they meet.

Whether the amount is 50 cents or 50 dollars, Regular Offerings help connect every local activity to the larger community of Women of the ELCA. Your unit keeps a portion for local activities and sends 50 percent or more to the synodical women’s organization. The synodical organization keeps a portion for its ministries and sends 50 percent or more to the churchwide women’s organization to support its ongoing ministries (see pages 3–4).

**GOAL:** Last year, Regular Offerings totaled \$510,717.96. In 2013, the goal is set at \$585,000.

**Women of the ELCA** **Offering Form A**  
For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
For offerings to SYNODICAL TREASURER

Use Form A to submit **Regular Offerings** and **SWO Convention Offerings** to your Synodical Women’s Organization. Make check payable to “Women of the ELCA.” **Mail form with check to your synodical treasurer.** For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730.

CONGREGATION		DATE
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE		CONGREGATION NUMBER
UNIT TREASURER NAME		CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER NAME
PHONE NUMBER		
ADDRESS		EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP	

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
REGULAR OFFERING	\$
SWO CONVENTION OFFERING	\$
CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER OFFERING*	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

\* Use this line if you are handling the offering from a cluster or conference event. This line represents the portion of the event offering (50% or more recommended) that is designated for the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

## SEND REGULAR OFFERINGS, SWO CONVENTION OFFERINGS, AND CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER OFFERINGS WITH FORM A TO YOUR SYNODICAL TREASURER.

**Synodical treasurer:** Check the SWO newsletter or contact the churchwide Women of the ELCA office at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730 or [women.elca@elca.org](mailto:women.elca@elca.org).

**Region/Synod code:** Ask your church administrator or call the ELCA Resource Information Service (RIS) at 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2580.

**SWO Convention Offering:** Each synodical organization has an annual or biennial convention. Some units prefer to send their SWO Convention Offerings by mail (using Form A) before the event.

**Conference or Cluster Offering:** This line is to be used only if you are handling the offering collection after a conference or cluster event. Use Form A to send to the synodical treasurer the portion\* of the offering that is designated to the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

\*It is recommended that at least 50% of all offerings taken at cluster or conference events be sent to the synodical treasurer to pass on in full to the churchwide women’s organization for its ongoing ministries.

**Is this is a new design for Form A?**  
Yes! This version is free to download at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). The older version is still accepted.

**Putting the “regular” in Regular Offerings:** How often does your women’s group collect a Regular Offering? This is an undesignated offering that supports all the ministries of Women of the ELCA. Many units collect a Regular Offering each time they meet. Whatever the amount, the practice is important. By collecting a regular offering to share with all expressions of Women of the ELCA, we connect every local activity to the larger mission and ministries.

# Thankofferings

Thankofferings are gifts from individuals in gratitude for blessings. Lutheran women have been carrying out this tradition for more than 100 years.

Many practice the Thankoffering daily by setting aside coins or small offerings in a Thankoffering jar or box at home, to give thanks for blessings in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. Units host a Thankoffering service (see page 13) at least once a year, at which individuals combine their Thankofferings and the unit sends the full amount to the churchwide women's organization. Thankofferings support the ongoing ministries of Women of the ELCA (see pages 3-4).



**GOAL:** Last year, Thankofferings totaled \$857,448. In 2013, the goal is set at \$1,010,000. Every dollar supports the ministries of Women of the ELCA (see pages 3-4).

**Offering Form B**  
For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
For offerings to CHURCHWIDE

Use Form B for **Thankofferings, Katie's Fund, Special Offerings,** and other **Designated Gifts**, including gifts to other ELCA ministries. Make check payable to "Women of the ELCA." For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730 or go online to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).  
Mail form with check to: Women of the ELCA, PO Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256.

CONGREGATION	DATE
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	CONGREGATION NUMBER
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>THANKOFFERING</b>	\$
DESIGNATED GIFTS & SPECIAL OFFERINGS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

**SEND THANKOFFERINGS WITH FORM B TO THE CHURCHWIDE WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION.**

**Also use Form B for designated gifts and special offerings.**

This includes offerings to: Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA Grants, Women of the ELCA Scholarships, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls, and Designated Gifts to other ELCA ministries, such as ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response, Global Mission, ELCA Malaria Campaign, and others.

See page 9 for more about designated gifts and special offerings.

**Learn about the rich history of Thankofferings as a daily practice and community event in "All About Thankofferings," a free program resource available at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).**

Looking for a project for your congregation? Create your own Thankoffering containers using old jars, boxes, or containers. Fancy or plain, the Thankoffering container inspires the daily practice of giving in gratitude for blessings.



**Is this a new design for Form B?**  
Yes! This version is free to download at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). The older version is still accepted.

# Thankoffering: Give with gratitude

For more than 100 years, Lutheran women have given thanks to God and dollars to mission through Thankofferings.



The executive board of the Women's Missionary Society of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1931. Photo: ELCA Archives.



## Today, the tradition continues.

Read "All About Thankofferings" at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) to learn how Thankofferings can be a daily practice for you and inspire stewardship in your community.

Thankofferings support all the ministries of Women of the ELCA — from advocacy and education to discipleship and outreach.

Send your personal or group Thankoffering to Women of the ELCA, PO Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256. Make check payable to Women of the ELCA. Write Thankoffering in the memo line. Groups may attach Form B. See page 7 in this guide.



Read more  
at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org)

- Download new Thankoffering Service
- Create your own Thankoffering box
- Give online



# Special Offerings and Designated Gifts



**Katie's Fund:** This year, you can help make history - to grow Katie's Fund to \$1 million by July 24, 2014 (the start of the next Triennial Gathering in Charlotte, North Carolina). Katie's Fund was established in 1997 as an endowment to honor the life of Katharina von Bora Luther and to support bold ministry for generations to come. Every dollar given to Katie's Fund keeps on giving. Each year, the interest is used to support ministries that develop leaders, build global connections, and share living theology.

To learn more, go to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). Download the Katie's Fund skit, print a free resource about Katie Luther, and see articles and photos about the ministries supported by Katie's Fund.

## Designated gifts to other ELCA ministries

Do you give to World Hunger, Disaster Response, ELCA Malaria Campaign, Global Missions, or another ELCA ministry? Women of the ELCA has a strong tradition of supporting the larger church above and beyond our support for Women of the ELCA ministries. As with other designated gifts, make the check out to "Women of the ELCA," write the designation in the memo line, and send it with Form B. The gift will be passed on, in full, to the designated ELCA ministry. Making these "pass-through" gifts through Women of the ELCA helps us acknowledge and honor the contributions of Women of the ELCA. Last year, Women of the ELCA gave \$454,098 in pass-through gifts to ELCA ministries.



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

**Grants:** Last year, Women of the ELCA Grants awarded \$57,525 to 27 organizations, in the United States, Africa and Asia, that are advancing the health and wellbeing of women and children. Since our founding, Women of the ELCA has given more than \$3 million in grants.

**Scholarships:** Through scholarships, Women of the ELCA lives out our purpose to "support one another in our callings." Last year, \$22,000 went to Lutheran women pursuing careers as diverse as ministry, zoology, teaching and nursing. Women of all ages are encouraged to apply.

Applications for grants and scholarships become available on December 15 at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). The completed application is due February 15.

Gifts can also be designated to: **Racial Justice Advocacy** (also called "Today's Dream Tomorrow's Reality") and **Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls** (the health initiative of Women of the ELCA).

Use Form B for all special offerings and designated gifts. Make the check out to "Women of the ELCA." Write the designation (i.e. Katie's Fund, Grants) on the memo line.





## Offering Form A

For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
For offerings to SYNODICAL TREASURER

Use Form A to submit **Regular Offerings** and **SWO Convention Offerings** to your Synodical Women's Organization. Make check payable to "Women of the ELCA." **Mail form with check to your synodical treasurer.** For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730.

DATE	
CONGREGATION	CONGREGATION NUMBER
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER NAME
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
REGULAR OFFERING	\$
SWO CONVENTION OFFERING	\$
CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER OFFERING*	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

\* It is recommended that at least 50% of any cluster or conference offering be sent to the synodical treasurer to be passed on in full to the churchwide women's organization. Use this line if you are handling the offering from a cluster or conference event.



## Offering Form A

For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
For offerings to SYNODICAL TREASURER

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CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER NAME
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
REGULAR OFFERING	\$
SWO CONVENTION OFFERING	\$
CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER OFFERING*	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>

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**Offering Form B**  
 For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
 For offerings to CHURCHWIDE

Use Form B for **Thankofferings, Katie's Fund, Special Offerings**, and other **Designated Gifts**, including gifts to other ELCA ministries. Make check payable to "Women of the ELCA." For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730 or go online to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).

Mail form with check to: **Women of the ELCA, PO Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256.**

DATE	
CONGREGATION	CONGREGATION NUMBER
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	ZIPCODE REG/SYNOD
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>THANKOFFERING \$</b>	
DESIGNATED GIFTS & SPECIAL OFFERINGS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL \$</b>	<b>\$</b>



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 For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
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DATE	
CONGREGATION	CONGREGATION NUMBER
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	ZIPCODE REG/SYNOD
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP
DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>THANKOFFERING \$</b>	
DESIGNATED GIFTS & SPECIAL OFFERINGS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL \$</b>	<b>\$</b>

# Frequently Asked Questions about Stewardship

## Q: How do I get more copies of Offering Forms A and B?

A: You can copy the samples on pages 8-9 or download the forms free at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). The older design (with carbon copy paper) is available through the ELCA Resource Center for the cost of shipping. Go online to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) and click “Shop Now” or call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2580.

## Q: How often should I deposit checks and cash in the bank account?

A: Deposit cash and checks as soon as possible. It is best practice to hold cash and checks no longer than three days.

## Q: How often should I send offerings to the synodical treasurer or the churchwide women’s organization?

A: Send offerings as soon as possible, and at least monthly.

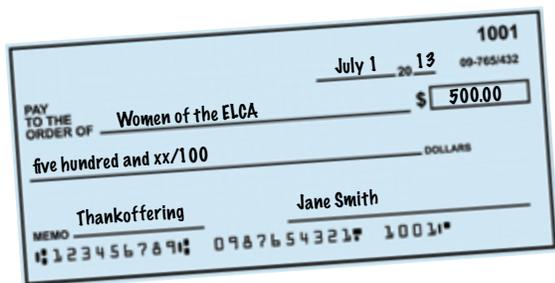
## Q: Will I receive acknowledgement letters when I send offerings?

A: For every offering sent to the churchwide women’s organization (with Form B), you will receive an acknowledgement letter with an itemized receipt. It will be sent to the address associated with your unit. In most cases, this is the address of the congregation. If you do not receive an acknowledgement letter within 4 weeks, call 1-800-

638-3522, ext. 2730 or [women.elca@elca.org](mailto:women.elca@elca.org). For regular offerings and other offerings sent to the synodical treasurer (using Form A), you may or may not receive an acknowledgement letter. Contact your synodical treasurer to find out what you can expect.

## Make the check payable to “Women of the ELCA”

Whether it’s a Regular Offering, Thankoffering, Designated Gift, Special Offering, or conference or cluster offering, encourage the women in your unit to make their checks out to “Women of the ELCA.” Use the memo line to note the type of offering (Thankoffering, Regular Offering) or designation (Katie’s Fund, Grants, Scholarships, ELCA World Hunger, etc.)



## Giving to other organizations

If your unit supports a local ministry that is not directly connected to Women of the ELCA or the ELCA, send your offering directly to the local organization. When determining which ministries to support, please consider these questions:

1. Are we fulfilling our commitment to support the ministries of Women of the ELCA?
2. Does this other ministry help fulfill the purpose statement of Women of the ELCA?
3. Will our financial support of this ministry benefit women?
4. How many women hold positions of influence in the organization?
5. Is the organization tax exempt? Does it publish its financial data?

# Stewardship Resources

Are you looking for devotions or program ideas to inspire bold stewardship? Consider some of these free resources provided by Women of the ELCA.

## Interchange and Bold Connections

Stay informed about the ministries supported by your offerings by reading *Interchange*, the monthly print newsletter for Women of the ELCA units and leaders. If your unit does not receive *Interchange*, contact the churchwide office at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730. Bold Connections is a free monthly e-newsletter for all Women of the ELCA participants. Subscribe for free at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).



## Stewardship Devotions

Monthly devotions appear in *Interchange* and online at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). Use them in meetings, Bible studies, or at other Women of the ELCA gatherings.

## Stewardship Stories

Do you know a story about bold and creative stewardship in Women of the ELCA? For generations, Lutheran women have been connecting money to ministry with joy and inspiration. Read "Stewardship Stories" at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) to be inspired by women acting boldly to provide for mission and ministry.

## Regional Gift Planners

There are many ways to support Women of the ELCA and the ministries you value while providing for your loved ones and your own financial future. Gift planning can help you reach all your stewardship goals. Regional gift planners are stewardship professionals employed by the church to help individuals and congregations prepare for their future and make lasting gifts to ministry. Connect with your regional gift planner today and find out how they can lead workshops for your congregation or meet one-on-one with individuals. There is no cost for their



Alice Benson and Pastor Larry Westfield serve the ELCA as Regional Gift Planners in Washington, D.C., and Wisconsin. To find the regional gift planner in your area, go to the gift planning page at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org)

services. To find a regional gift planner in your area, go to the gift planning page at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) or contact Emma Crossen, Director for Stewardship and Development, at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2736, or [emma.crossen@elca.org](mailto:emma.crossen@elca.org).

## Program resources

These resources are designed to be used as programs in small groups or for retreats. Download stewardship resources free at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org), along with more than 40 program resources on a variety of topics. If you are unable to download a resource online, you can request one copy from the Women of the ELCA office. Call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730.

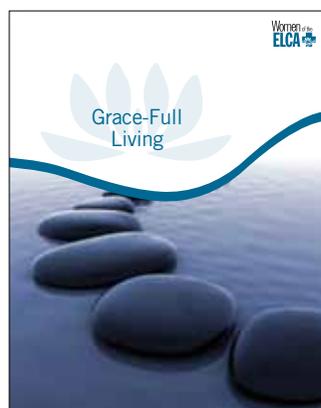
### Kitchen Table Philanthropy



Does your family discuss together your beliefs and values about giving? Have you ever asked your children if there are places or causes they would like the family to support? This short resource has ideas to help you start talking about giving with your family. It includes conversation starters,

questions for personal reflection and ideas on how to make giving a regular part of your children's lives.

### Grace-Full Living



With this resource, Women of the ELCA continues to focus holistically on women's health. Doesn't it make sense to include our financial health in that picture? Grace-Full Living is a good resource for individuals and groups who want to reflect on their own financial story,

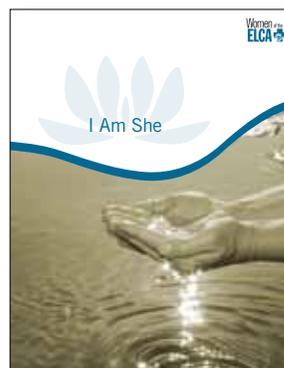
what motivates them to give, and how they can model stewardship for others.

## All About Thankofferings



Did you know that the concept of Thankofferings dates back more than 100 years? This program resource will help you better understand the history and significance of Women of the ELCA's Thankoffering tradition.

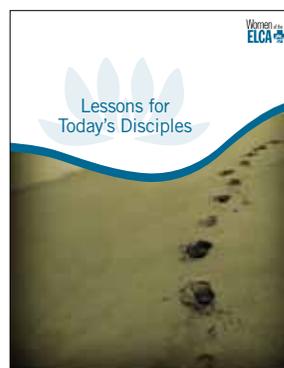
### I Am She



This resource is a do-it-yourself retreat designed for participants to discover their bold! The retreat is grounded in our mission statement and divided into three sessions: "Boldness in Advocacy," "Boldness in Caring," and "Boldness in Teaching." The "Boldness in Caring" session includes

specific examples and discussion questions about how to demonstrate caring through stewardship.

### Lessons for Today's Disciples



This resource will help you discover or recover the seven marks of discipleship, including giving. The lessons include exercises for practical application and biblical texts with a format of reading, reflecting, and responding to the call of discipleship.

# 2013–2014 Thankoffering Service

## GATHERING

**One:** Blessed be the holy Trinity, creator, giver, and gift, one God now and forever.

**All:** Amen

## LITANY FOR GATHERING

**One:** This is the day that the Lord has made.

**All:** Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Today brings the gift of life.

**Creator, you make us in your image.**

Today brings all we need to live with purpose.

**Inviter, you call us to discipleship in Jesus Christ.**

Today brings the strength to live more fully.

**Inspiring one, you empower us by the Holy Spirit.**

Today brings women of many generations who grow together in faith and affirm and support one another.

**Companion, you embolden us with community.**

Today brings a world in need of healing and wholeness.

**Healer, you engage us in ministry and action.**

For the church, the society, and the world,

**God, we humbly enter this worship.**

Prepare our hearts.

**Amen.**

## ENTRANCE HYMN

“The Numberless Gifts of God’s Mercies” (*ELW*, 683)

## GREETING

**One:** We hear you calling, O God.

**All:** Make us bold to listen and to follow.

The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Looking for an alternative to a full worship service? Consider using a Thankoffering devotion during your circle meeting or other gathering where you collect the Thankoffering. Include prayers from this service or use “All About Thankofferings” a free resource about the history of Thankofferings (see page 14).

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

**One:** Creator God, you call us into relationship with you and with all of creation. In Jesus you gave us mercy beyond our understanding and showed us how to live with grace toward each other. Your blessings are like the dew in the morning and the stars in the heavens, not to be counted but to be received with thanksgiving and generously shared. Keep us moving always toward you and our neighbor, eager to share and receive. In the name of Christ we pray.

**All:** Amen.

## FIRST READING\*

## PSALM

## SECOND READING

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

## GOSPEL

## SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY

“Praise and Thanksgiving” (*ELW*, 689)

## PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

**One:** With the whole people of Christ Jesus, let us call upon God for the sake of the church, the world, and all in need of prayer.

God who made all things good, you create us to be caretakers and stewards in your creation. You equip us to provide for the people, places, and ministries that you have entrusted to our care. Draw us together in the light of faith and hope so that we may recognize our calling to this work.

We pray in abundance,  
**All: Creator, draw us in.**

God who blesses our labor, you light our paths with the histories of women who acted boldly on their faith to change the world - women like (insert names of bold women in your community) \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_. Bring their influence to our attention and their stories to our lips and ears. May we see in them our own potential to live boldly.

We pray in abundance,  
**Creator, draw us in.**

God who provides, you endow us with all we need to nurture, harvest, and share the fruits of creation. In this abundance, direct our eyes and feet to our neighbors who are on the margins, both near and far. Give us curiosity and courage to live into the fullness of our communities.

We pray in abundance,  
**Creator, draw us in.**

God who was and is and will be, through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and Women of the ELCA, you have called us more deeply into relationship with you and the world. Bless every church, everywhere, that through our work, all may know your grace and accept your call to love one another.

We pray in abundance,  
**Creator, draw us in.**

God who reaches every people, turn our hearts to see those with us now, gathered at this Thankoffering service to give thanks and praise to you. Urge us on to the fullness of life, in the name of Christ, our lord.

Amen.

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

### THANKOFFERING

You may introduce the offering with these words:

*As we collect the Thankoffering today, we share in a tradition dating back to the 1800s, when Christian women formed “mite” or “cent” societies to fund mission. When others in the church said there was not enough money to carry out these projects, the women believed otherwise. In cent societies, each woman collected offerings at home. They would gather as we do today to worship and combine their offerings and offer them up with thanks and praise, dedicating the funds to mission. When Women of the ELCA was formed more than 25 years ago, we committed to continue this tradition of giving in gratitude for blessings. Each year, in thousands of congregations, Thankofferings are collected and sent to support the life-changing ministries of Women of the ELCA. Together, we do more than we could ever do apart. In gratitude for all God has given to us, and with hope for all that is to come, we now collect our Thankoffering.*

### OFFERTORY

To download this Thankoffering Service as a Microsoft Word document, go to the Stewardship page at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

**One:** God of grace

**All:** You have showered us with abundance and entrusted to us the ministries of Women of the ELCA. Accept these offerings to further your mission. Help us 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. Accept these gifts and this prayer that, nurtured by your Word, filled with your spirit, and fed at your table, we may share with gladness all that you have shared with us until all creation is satisfied. Amen.

## \*\*GREAT THANKSGIVING & WORDS OF INSTITUTION

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

## \*\*COMMUNION

## \*\*COMMUNION PRAYER

## BLESSING

**One:** God bless you with courage, with peace, and with love, that you may freely live for God and freely give for others.

## CLOSING HYMN



To order offering envelopes for your Thankoffering service, contact the ELCA Resource Catalog at 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2580 or go online to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).

## BENEDICTION

\*Scripture readings may be selected from the Revised Common Lectionary for the day of the Thankoffering service.

\*\*Omit if Thankoffering Service does not include communion.

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## Tips for Planning your Thankoffering Service

**Form a planning team:** Try to include women who are very involved in Women of the ELCA and women who are less involved. Invite women of varying ages, including youth. Work with the appropriate leaders in your congregation, like your pastor and music director.

**Choose a date and time:** The service can happen any time of year. In some congregations, the Thankoffering service happens during the weekly Sunday worship. Some host the service at another time.

**Plan the worship liturgy:** The Thankoffering order of service printed here is optional. You may use all or part of it. For scripture readings, a congregation may choose to create a Thankoffering service around the common lectionary (the weekly cycle of texts used by the ELCA) or to choose other Bible texts that evoke discipleship or stewardship themes. Lectionary texts can be found in the hymnal, Evangelical Lutheran Worship, or on the ELCA website, [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org). Decide whether to include communion in the service.

**Choose a preacher:** Consider inviting a woman, lay or ordained, to give the sermon.

**Plan for invitations:** It is appropriate to invite the entire congregation to participate in this service. For instance, you might invite the children's choir to sing or the youth group to usher. Through their involvement, they will learn more about Women of the ELCA. Consider inviting women from other ELCA congregations in your community.

**Educate about Women of the ELCA:** The Thankoffering service is a time to celebrate Women of the ELCA and tell about your commitment to the churchwide women's organization. You can display items, photos and stories, or add personal testimonies to the liturgy. During the weeks leading up to the service, invite women to speak about Women of the ELCA during worship or to lead a Sunday School lesson about Women of the ELCA. Display Gather magazine, program resources, and other items that illustrate the churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

**Be creative with offering collection:** Think creatively about how to collect the offering. For instance, you might invite individuals with their own Thankoffering containers to place them on the altar. This visual highlights an important part of the Thankoffering tradition—the daily practice of making small gifts in gratitude for blessings and bringing those gifts together during a Thankoffering service.

**Make Thankoffering containers:** The Thankoffering service is traditionally a time when individuals bring the offerings they've collected during the year in Thankoffering containers (see page 7). Consider bringing supplies (old jars, decorations) for attendees to make their own Thankoffering containers before or after the service.

**Provide food and fellowship:** Think about how to include a fellowship time before or after the service. Some units host breakfast before worship, lunch after, or a special coffee hour provided by Women of the ELCA. This could include a craft table for making Thankoffering containers and a display area for viewing photos and materials about Women of the ELCA.

**Tips for promoting the service:** Write an article or bulletin insert for the church's newsletter telling the history of Thankofferings and how they support ministry today. Send personal invitations and make general announcements. Promote the service through social media, using your congregation's website, Facebook page, and online calendar.

# There's a little bit of Katie in all of us.

Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. She was also the dedicated partner of her husband, Martin. The example she set as a wife and mother, farmer, entrepreneur, leader, and caregiver continues to inspire us today.

Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by developing leaders, bridging cultures, and nurturing faith.



## Won't you help continue Katie's legacy? Support Katie's Fund!



Your gift will help grow Katie's Fund to \$1 million by July 24, 2014. Together, we will raise up bold women of faith for generations to come.



To learn about including Katie's Fund in your estate or gift plan, talk to your financial advisor or contact Emma Crossen, director for stewardship and development at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2736 or [emma.crossen@elca.org](mailto:emma.crossen@elca.org).

### GIVING AS A GROUP?

Send your check with Form B. (See inside)

### INDIVIDUAL GIVING

Individuals can give online at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org), or mail to **Women of the ELCA**, PO Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256.

Make checks payable to **Women of the ELCA**. Write "Katie's Fund" in memo line.