

Friday, July 11

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Triennial Times

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Beth G. Wrenn, new churchwide executive board president.

Beth G. Wrenn Elected President


The Seventh Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah, elected a diverse group of women to serve the churchwide organization as officers and executive board members for the 2008–2011 Triennium.

Beth G. Wrenn, member of the churchwide executive board and executive committee during the 2005-2008 Triennium, was elected president. Charlene Spillmann, also a member of the executive board during the past Triennium, was elected vice president. The delegates elected Betty Brandt secretary and Anjanette Hodges treasurer. (For a complete list of the new board, see page 2–3.)

Wrenn, of Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, is a member of Kure Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, Kure Beach. She is a past president of the ELCA North Carolina Synod women's organization. At Kure Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church, she has also formerly served as council president.

“We have ‘Come to the Waters’ this week for many reasons,” Wrenn said in her acceptance remarks to the delegates. “We have ‘Come to the Waters’ with a thirst for inspiration. We ‘Come to the Waters’ seeking challenges to help us find ways to act boldly in our faith. When we leave this place, we must take these life-giving waters with us and share our mission and our enthusiasm with all women.

“There are women who have never been a part of this organization because they don't know who we are,” Wrenn said. “They don't have any idea what strong advocates we are for those who cannot speak for themselves, so we have to share that good news. We have to be willing to accept change and to listen to women, hear their stories, let them know that there's a place for them in this organization.”

The newly elected officers and board members were installed at the closing plenary on Thursday, July 10, by ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson. 

Delegates approve 2009 budget, act on requests, changes



Carmen Richards, board president, opens the convention. Parliamentarian Joyce Opjorden and Vice President Liz Gaskins, look on.

In addition to approving a \$3.1 million churchwide budget for fiscal year 2009, delegates to the Seventh Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA acted on several memorials, resolutions, and changes to the constitution.

The 381 delegates also elected a new slate of officers and board members and selected five to serve a second term. The voting body included five churchwide officers, 63 synodical presidents, and 314 elected and appointed delegates.

Of the newly adopted churchwide budget, 21 percent is allocated to programs, 27 percent goes to management and general expenses, 10 percent is set aside for the 2011 triennial gathering, 6 percent goes to governance, and 7 percent to the annual gift to the ELCA.

In her address to delegates, Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA, said a recent survey of participants found that what women like best about the organization is the friendship and support they get from each other. Opportunities to study God's word and serve other people also topped the list.

"And that's what this board has been about and what we all have accomplished together throughout this

Triennium," she said. Highlighting some of the accomplishments, she mentioned the inauguration of Bold Women's Day in 2007 and participation in women's health issues through the Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative, endorsement of the HEART for Women Act, and articles in *Lutheran Woman Today*. Women of the ELCA



Delegates using voting machines

has also given away a quarter of a million dollars in grants to help women over the last three years and more than \$3 million in 20 years; they took in nearly \$100,000 in celebration of the organization's 20th anniversary, and exceeded the Mission Investment Fund challenge by investing nearly \$3 million in MIF.

"About 200,000 or so women are participants in Women of the ELCA, but there are about three million Lutheran women out there," Post Bushkofsky said. "Tell them what our organization means to you. Invite them to experience what you cherish about Women of the ELCA."

Delegates wrapped up business Thursday morning with the installation of the 2008–2011 churchwide executive board and an address by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson. Hanson praised the women for their faithfulness in studying the Bible. Referring to the ELCA's new Book of Faith initiative to become "more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture," he said. "This is not a new initiative to you. This has been the core of what you do."

Executive Board elected

The newly elected officers include: Beth G. Wrenn (Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, 9B) president; Charlene Spillmann (Kyle, Texas, 4E) vice president; Betty Brandt (Grand Rapids, Minnesota, 3E) secretary, and Anjanette B. Hodges (Christiansburg, Virginia, 9A) treasurer.

Elected to second terms on the churchwide executive board were Marlene J. Bergum (De Pere, Wisconsin, 5J); Diane L. Brauer (Lincoln, Neb., 4A); The Rev. Rosalind M. Brathwaite (Astoria, N.Y., 7C); Cam Martin (Minocqua, Wisconsin, 5G); and Marie A. Tesch (Waseca, Minnesota, 3I).

New board members include vEnessa Acham (Lebanon, New Hampshire, 7B); Kristine E. Brugamyer (Dickinson, North Dakota, 3A); Marjorie Dykstra (Akron, Iowa, 5E); Diane J. Frederick (Oak Park Heights, Minnesota, 3H); Jo Ann Fuchs (West Columbia, Texas, 4F); Sandra S. Lange (Choteau, Montana,

1F); Glynis Reid-Megargel (Old Bridge, New Jersey, 7A); Jennifer S. Michael (Tampa, Florida, 9E); Vickie L. Murph (Columbus, Ohio, 6F); Phyllis Rude (Anchorage, Alaska, 1A); Charleen Walker-Horton (York, Pennsylvania, 8F); Sharon L. Heck (Whittier, California, 2B).

Constitutional changes

A deadline for bowing out of delegate responsibilities at the Triennial Convention was added to Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution. "The roster of delegates shall be final thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the convention." The result of a delegate canceling after the 30-day deadline is loss of that vote for a synod. No substitutes will be made.

Memorials acted on

Minimizing or eliminating use of plastics: "Making bottles to meet Americans' demand for bottled water requires more than 1.5 million barrels of oil annually, enough to fuel some 100,000 cars for a year," the memorial states. Delegates encouraged women to look for ways to eliminate unnecessary use of plastics at events, within the congregations, and in homes and to raise awareness about bottled water issues.



Delegates stretch during breaks.

Mountaintop removal mining:

Mountaintop removal is a quick, cheap method of mining used by coal companies of Appalachia, devastating



hundreds of square miles of land and polluting rivers. Delegates encouraged women to actively explore ways to raise awareness of mountaintop removal mining within the church and to work with synods and social service agencies in the region to provide aid to residents harmed by effects of mining.

Financial accounting: Delegates adopted an action that gave synodical women's organizations (SWOs) freedom to appoint committees to review their financial activities rather than go the more expensive route of hiring an independent outside accountant to audit the group's finances. The committee appointed by the SWO board must be made up of at least three members, none of whom are members of the current board or of the treasurer's congregational unit.

Filling slates for SWO boards:

Delegates adopted a memorial that calls for an amendment to the Constitution and Bylaws Synodical Women's Organization Article VI, Section 4, Item 5b to allow

two women from one congregational unit to serve on the SWO board rather than the one it now allows. The amendment requires a constitutional change and served as the first of

two readings. The second reading will occur at the Eighth Triennial Convention.

Pastoral support for Women of the ELCA: Delegates called for congregational units to invite their clergy to activities of their units and acknowledge with gratitude the support provided by their clergy and demonstrate that the work of Women of the ELCA can be a mutual ministry with the congregation.

Resolutions acted on

Resolutions brought to the convention floor by delegates included:

Closing the gap: Delegates encouraged congregational units to invite teen girls and young women to participate as advisors to their synodical women's organization.

Church Women United: Delegates voted to refer to the 2008-2011 executive board a resolution to reinstate financial support from the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA to Church Women United
Women of color gathering: Delegates voted to refer to the 2008-11 executive board a request to hold a one-to-three-day event for women of color prior to the 2011 Triennial Convention and beyond.

Families of special needs children: Delegates voted to refer to the 2008-11 executive board a request that the Women of the ELCA take an active role in providing support for families of special-needs children by offering a link on its Web site where those families can find support from other families and spiritual leaders. It was pointed out that Women of the ELCA churchwide staff is actively engaged in disability ministries.

Gather at the River in Hall C



Deborah Williams (right) directs participants in assembling school kits.



Patricia Williams (right) instructs a volunteer at the quilting area.



At the Deaconesses booth, tired feet get washed.

Have you been to Gather at the River in Hall C? That's where the action is! Don't miss the Women of the ELCA display area. There you will find plenty of free items—note pads, coasters, brochures, and more. Learn about resources and take home ideas and tools for use in your congregation.

Make some time to check out the rest of Hall C. You can peruse the many displays, visit the Augsburg Fortress store, meet speakers and workshop leaders at book signings, and hear lively discussions on a variety of topics at the Landing.

And, of course, there are many opportunities to shop. See the Gathering Guide for details.

Servant opportunities

Gather at the River is also the site for this Gathering's servant opportunities. At the eight docks you will find everything you need

for producing finished in-kind gifts that will be distributed locally, domestically, and globally.

Learn about advocacy at Dock 1. Come to Dock 3 to assemble school kits and health kits to support agencies in Salt Lake City. The Knitting Cottage at Dock 4 is a comfortable place to sit and knit caps for premature babies. Dock 5, the Sewing Cottage, is a chance to make blankets and quilts that will be a sign of hope and comfort for people in times of trouble.

At Dock 6, you will learn how your congregation can start a feeding ministry in your own community. At Dock 7, you will learn about housing, homelessness, and disaster relief. You can explore water projects at Dock 8.

And don't forget to drop off your in-kind gifts at Dock 2. An in-kind gifts presentation will be made

during the Saturday morning plenary. The exhibit hall is open Friday and Saturday 11 a.m. until 7 p.m.

Exhibitor Update

Unfortunately, two of the scheduled exhibitors, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia and In Stitches, had to cancel and will not be present at the Gathering. However, there are two new exhibitors:

Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi —Booth 324

Enrich, a program of Lutheran Episcopal Services in Mississippi, serves academically at-risk school children in grades K-6 through half-day summer programs.

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch

—Booth 121

Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch is dedicated to helping at-risk children and their families. ~~~~~

News you can use

Meet new board and officers

Come meet the newly elected churchwide officers and executive board members. They will be available for a “meet and greet” on both Friday and Saturday in the Women of the ELCA area in Hall C, “Gather at the River,” from 12:15 to 1 p.m.

MIF service center

Participants who have a personal MissionPlus account with the Mission Investment Fund can access a service center in room 151A. Account holders may cash checks against their accounts while in Salt Lake City. Hours are 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. July 10 through 12.

Free “Book of Faith” pin

Stop by the Augsburg Fortress store in Hall C, “Gather at the River,” to get a free “Book of Faith” pin (one per customer) in exchange for your e-mail address. You’ll get the latest updates on the ELCA Book of Faith initiative and information about the latest resources available from Augsburg Fortress Publishing.

Volunteers needed

You can find the sign-up table for volunteers at the right of the registration area in the South Foyer.



We still need help! Volunteers are especially needed to act as greeters in Hall C, “Gather at the River,” and to assist with worship as ushers, offering collectors, communion assistants, and sacristy helpers. *Also note: The lounge for volunteers has moved from Room 251D/E to Room 151G.*

New book signing scheduled

Diane Jacobson will sign her book, *Opening the Book of Faith*, Saturday from 5–5:30 p.m. at the Augsburg Fortress store in Hall C, “Gather at the River.” Diane is the director for the Book of Faith initiative and professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Sunday worship rehearsal

There will be a rehearsal for Sunday’s worship leaders at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday morning in Hall E, “Come to the Waters.”

Metro New York get-together

Participants from the Metro New York Synod are invited to get together at the nearby Olive Garden restaurant at 4:45 p.m. Friday evening. Call Marion at 347-463-4892 for more information.

First Aid

There is a first aid station on the lower concourse in the North Foyer, next to the 150 meeting rooms.

Chaplains available

If you would like to visit with one of the Gathering chaplains during your time in Salt Lake City, you can find them in Room 150C from 11 a.m. until 7 p.m. A chaplain is also available at each of the Gathering hotels; contact the hotel’s front desk to be connected. ~~~~~

The next issue of *Triennial Times* will be distributed on Sunday morning in various locations around the convention center. You can find additional photos from the Convention and Gathering at the Women of the ELCA Web site. Go to www.womenoftheelca.org for more pictures and stories.

The Seventh Triennial Convention Offering over \$73,000

At the Convention’s opening worship service on Tuesday night, \$34,113 was collected for the Triennial Convention offering. At the closing worship service of the Convention, the offering collected was \$10,148. Before the Convention began, individuals and congregational units sent \$28,935 for this offering, bringing the total of the Seventh Triennial Convention offering to \$73,196.

Half of this offering will support the ongoing ministries of the Women of the ELCA churchwide organization. The other half will be divided equally

between Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service for its work in the area of commercial sexual exploitation and the Stand With Africa/Lutheran World Federation for a water project. The issues of commercial sexual exploitation and clean water were lifted up in resolutions adopted by delegates to the Sixth Triennial Convention in 2005. ~~~~~



Plunge into the Living Waters: The Gathering begins

As the shadows of the mountains lengthened over Salt Lake City on Thursday, July 10, 2008, Hall E of the Salt Palace Convention Center was transformed into a vibrant sacred space, by the presence of more than 2,000 Lutheran women from all over the United States and several other countries to participate in the Seventh Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA.

The Rev. Angela Shannon, the lead chaplain for the Gathering, brought the women together around the font in a service of Affirmation of Baptism, assisted by the Gathering's chaplains and international guests, who thoroughly splashed the assembly with water from the font. Their festive procession included women bearing streamers of blue and aqua ribbons. The Triennial Gathering band brought the assembled women to their feet, singing and clapping joyfully.



The Rev. Angela Shannon

President-elect Beth Wrenn introduced the newly elected officers and executive board of the churchwide organization (see pages 1–3 for more about them) and Executive Director Linda Post Bushkofsky introduced the churchwide organization's staff.

After the excitement of coming together with friends old and new, seeing who's here and hearing their news, and praising God in word and song, the participants streamed out of the convention center to hear one of the most famous singing groups in the world: the Mormon Tabernacle Choir in its open rehearsal for its national radio program. ~~~



Chaplains and international guests fill the font.

Leaders receive fair-trade gift

Seventh Triennial Gathering speakers, and leaders of workshops and worship received a batik textile reflecting life in the Mt. Kilimanjaro region as a thank-you gift from Women of the ELCA. The batiks were hand-painted by the Micchi Women's Group in Tanzania.

You can get one too by visiting the Asante Network booth in Hall C. Asante Network assists women's groups in East Africa, all with a similar goal: education. Asante is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization that offers only fair trade products. It empowers women to develop their traditional arts into money-making home-based businesses and connects them with U.S. markets. Profits and donations are returned to East Africa to fund projects and interest-free micro loans. Items Asante offers include baskets of natural materials, jewelry, Christmas ornaments, and clergy stoles. Stop by today and help a woman in East Africa get an education. ~~~



Soaking in Scripture: Bible Study at the Convention

The Rev. Karen Bockelman, author of *Lutheran Woman Today's* summer Bible study, "Come to the Waters," led delegates of the Seventh Triennial Convention down into the biblical roots of baptism and up to the daily remembrance of the sacrament that unites us with and in Jesus Christ.

She described the Samaritan woman who met Jesus at the well as a model evangelist—spreading the Good News and splashing living water everywhere.

Calling the participants to remember Martin Luther's deep comfort in the daily remembrance of his own baptism, she suggested ways women can engage in the same daily remembrance themselves. She pointed out that Luther's Small Catechism, printed in the back

of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, is as relevant today as when he wrote it—and when we learned it in preparation for confirmation. Bockelman suggested that women who have a young relative or friend preparing for confirmation might study the catechism along with that confirmand.

And then Bockelman called the women of the Convention not only to remember their baptism, but to act on it—to "walk wet."

Bockelman will lead the study for Gathering participants this weekend at evening worship.

The study, "Come to the Waters," also appears in the June and July-August issues of *Lutheran*



Woman Today. Both of those issues are included in the packets participants received at registration. The study can also be downloaded for free from the magazine's Web site, www.lutheranwomantoday.org.

“ Overheard ”

"I am happy that this year the plenary sessions are set aside from all the other events. It's also good for people coming in on the weekend who can't get away during the week."

Helene Pearch, Lacy, Washington

"I love using the Women of the ELCA Bible studies. I put them in folders, by text (for example, John 3:16), and often quote from the study in my sermons. I just picked up transcriptions from the *Grace Matters* Radio program (in Hall C), which I will use in the same way."

The Rev. Ellen Skatrud-Mickelson, Billings, Montana

"Good for women to come—it's inspirational and we get recommitted to the global community."

Anonymous



"I am going to tell my friends about this. I want more people to know about God and this is a place where you share and learn with people from all over the world." *Laura (left, pictured with mother Doris and sister Sarah)*

"I enjoy coming for the fellowship, worship, and workshops. I run into folks I haven't seen in two years. I enjoy the whole thing!"

The Rev. Vickie Hamilton, Jacksonville, Florida

"When I come to the Women's gatherings I get a broader sense of the church, not just regionally like at a synod assembly, but globally."

Anonymous ~~~~~

Coming Up...

Get ready for the 4K Run/Walk/Roll

There is still time to sign up to participate in the second Women of the ELCA Run, Walk, and Roll on Saturday, in support of the organization's health initiative. To register, stop by the desk in the South Foyer (near the registration area) by **3 p.m. Friday**. On Saturday morning, participants should gather on the outdoor plaza by the South Foyer of the convention center by **5:45 a.m.** The buses will leave at 6 a.m. to take participants to Liberty Park.

Don't miss the book signings

Several of the Gathering's speakers and workshop leaders will be signing books in the Augsburg Fortress store. Make plans to see them:
Betty Christiansen, Sat. 5-5:30 p.m.
Joan Chittister, Friday 3:30-5:30 p.m.
Heidi Neumark, Sat. 3:30-5:30 p.m.

Gwen Sayler and Ann Fritschel,
Friday 5-6 p.m.
Mark S. Hanson, Friday 4-5 p.m.
Just announced: Diane Jacobson,
Saturday, 5-5:30

Thankoffering service on Friday

The Friday evening plenary will begin at 7 p.m. with a Bible study led by the Rev. Karen Bockelman. Then ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson will preside at a Thankoffering Service and Holy Communion. The Rev. Marysol

Diaz, pastor of St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, will preach. Plunge into the living waters and celebrate the gift of baptism with with your own gift of thanks and support.

your congregation and service to your community."

Stop by The Landing

Stop by The Landing in Hall C to find out more information about



"Yes, Your Church! Ministry with Young Adults" Workshop

On Friday only, 3-4:30 p.m. in Room 150 D-E, Kristen Glass will show participants how "Your congregation already has all the things it needs to be a place of energizing, effective, and engaging ministry with young adults. Examine some generational characteristics of young adults and look at some models for effective young adult ministry. Learn how to tap into your strengths in order to partner with people age 18-30 for ministry in

a variety of topics like health and wellness, knitting, fair-trade chocolate, and bridging the generation gap. Check your Gathering Guide to see a schedule of speakers. ~~~~~

Oops!

We've heard reports that some copies of the Gathering Guide might be missing pages. Take a look at yours--do you have page 42? If not, go to the Registration Desk to get a new copy.

Special sale: Women of the ELCA products

Don't miss the special sale discounts at the Augsburg Fortress store on Women of the ELCA products at the Gathering. For example:

- Act Boldly T-shirts were \$12 now \$4
- Worship Boldly* book was \$5.99 now \$3
- Mayaworks tote was \$13, now \$7
- Stuffed lamb toy was \$7, now \$5

You will also find scarves, sweatshirts, denim shirts, vases, and candles at discounted prices. Many other products and resources are also on sale.

Also available at the Augsburg Fortress store: Lucinda pins and Bible study companion materials. ~~~~~

