

interchange

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Members of the Weekend Snack Pack program were included in a 2016 community calendar that promotes organizations and businesses. The program was highlighted in April. Barbara Bullock is seated at the front right.

Snack program offers weekend meals to schoolchildren

by Eva James Yeo

MORE THAN A YEAR AGO, the “Weekend Snack Pack” program began making a difference in the lives of schoolchildren in Berrysburg, Pa., thanks to Barbara Bullock. The idea came to Barbara, a member of St. John Lutheran Church and a board member for the Lower Susquehanna Synodical Women’s Organization, when she volunteered to help pack more than 300 food packages for individuals and families in her community. After noticing the needs of children at the local school, she decided to start the Weekend Snack Pack program.

Barbara placed information about the program in the bulletin of her church, known to many as The Church on the Hill. Seven people attended the first meeting to learn how they could become involved. After two months, the program committee was formed and the logistics confirmed with the local elementary school and the Pennsylvania food bank.

The school provides the names of children who are eligible for reduced or free lunches. Their parents are asked for permission to allow their children to participate. In addition to the food bank, other support comes from food drives as well as donations from members of St. John and surrounding churches. Individuals can sponsor a student from January through June for \$80.

About 15 to 20 volunteers gather at the school every week to pack and distribute 72 to 105 snack packs to students from kindergarten through fifth grade. At the end of each school week, students receive two breakfasts, lunches and suppers, plus two snacks — a weekend’s worth of nutritious food. The weekend snack program is not offered during the summer because school is out. The next step, Barbara said, is to provide nourishing weekend snack packs for middle school students and work toward a solution to serve students during summer vacation. “It’s been a rewarding program,” Barbara said.



Eva James Yeo is director for membership for Women of the ELCA. Do you have an active ministry you would like to share? Share your ideas by emailing eva.yeo@elca.org.



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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.

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Women of the ELCA 
interchange

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The power of women gathered

by Jessica Miller



all anew

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

TENTH TRIENNIAL GATHERING

JULY 13-16, 2017

I NEVER KNEW THE POWER OF WOMEN GATHERED...

until my first triennial. I never knew the beauty of women affirming and encouraging . . . until my first triennial. I never knew the possibility of women in ministry . . . until my first triennial.

I was 20 weeks pregnant with our first child and my husband had just lost his job. We would need to move from a community where we had deep roots, though we didn't know to where. I was angry, scared and trying to trust.

Before our first pregnancy test was positive and before we received the nonrenewal letter, I had made plans to attend the 2005 Triennial Gathering in San Antonio, Texas, as a very grateful scholarship recipient.

Suddenly, with all the unknowns in life, the gathering theme "Act Boldly" seemed incredibly distant. But then, like coming in for a lovely cup of warm tea after a storm, I was steeped over the next four days in this community of the Women of the ELCA from around the world.

Four days of conversation, prayer, laughter, worship, praise, lament, challenge and invitation—to be women who act boldly on their faith. I was reminded this boldness can have many forms and all have been divinely created, grace-gifted and Spirit-filled. I was reminded that Women of the ELCA may often be known locally for quilts and funeral dinners, but that it is also much broader than that. I was reminded that each woman in this church is a woman of the ELCA who has been called by God to share her gifts in a world that desperately needs each of us to act boldly every day.

I now have a sacred pilgrimage every three years to this holy triennial gathering. My soul needs that. God has called this community to gather and mobilize women to act boldly on their faith, and the triennial gathering does that in the most transformative ways. Ways that have blessed me, disturbed me, kept me up at night and given me deep peace, knowing I'm always in good company, as I continue to seek and discern, "How, O God, are you calling me to act boldly today?"



Jessica Miller is a triennial gathering promoter from Fargo, N.D.

Raise your voice through memorials, resolutions

LOCAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES COME BEFORE A TRIENNIAL CONVENTION for study, discussion, debate and action. Issues are presented in two ways: 1) in advance, through actions of a synodical convention in “memorials” and 2) on site during the convention, through actions of voting members in “resolutions.” Memorials and resolutions can direct future actions of all expressions of our organization.

As we prepare for the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017), what will be the issues we’ll debate? As you gather in synodical conventions this year, what are the issues that you will bring forward in memorials? Where is the Holy Spirit calling you and the women of your synodical organization to witness here and now in the 21st century? And those of you elected as voting members to the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017), what resolutions will you present on the floor of the convention?

There’s a standard format used with memorials and resolutions. You begin with a series of statements that describe the issue. Each thought on the issue begins with “whereas . . .” It’s an organized way to introduce the issue to the voting members. After the issue has been described in sufficient detail, a series of statements follow, each beginning with “be it resolved . . .” These statements set out the actions being requested.



Voting members at the ninth triennial convention

Here’s a memorial that came before the Ninth Triennial Convention (2014). It can serve as an example for you.

- **WHEREAS, human trafficking is the illegal trade in human beings, through abduction, the use or threat of force, deception, fraud, or “sale” for the purpose of sexual exploitation or forced labor.**
- **WHEREAS, human trafficking is a growing problem and each year it is estimated that two million people are trafficked worldwide, 27 million people are enslaved around the world and it is a \$9 billion business.**
- **WHEREAS, the number of trafficking victims in the United States is largely unknown, hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizen minors are estimated to be at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. Therefore, be it**
- **RESOLVED, that each synodical board convene a committee, in which at least one but no more than half of committee members shall be board members. This committee shall be charged with reviewing resources and helping the synodical organization to promote resources that can help units to inform, educate, and mobilize their congregations and communities, through prayer, ministry and political action;**
- **RESOLVED, that units use this committee and the resources they recommend to inform, educate and mobilize their congregations and communities, through prayer, ministry and political action; and be it further**
- **RESOLVED, that each synodical president report to the 2016 Conference of Presidents about how the recommended committee has functioned in her synodical women’s organization.**

What issues is the Holy Spirit calling you to address?

Lutheran World Federation wants to hear your story

by Linda Post Bushkofsky

EVER SINCE MARY MAGDALENE and the other Mary met the resurrected Jesus at the tomb, women have been telling their stories of encountering Jesus, stories of how their lives have been changed.

As the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation approaches, we have a new, important opportunity to tell our stories.



As the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation approaches, we have a new, important opportunity to tell our stories. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is championing a process to collect women's stories from around the globe, stories that tell how women have provoked change in church and society, stories that tell how women have empowered others and engaged in theology.

To assist the LWF, our organization will collect up your stories throughout 2016. The LWF-driven collection of stories will help future generations to do what we seek to accomplish every day: mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

The churchwide women's organization will record the significant movements of the whole organization, such as advocating for the banning of land mines and boycotting Nestle and American Home products.

We need you to contribute the local stories, stories about supporting transitional women's housing, creating after-school programs or clothing closets, making relief quilts and layette kits. You may see these as ordinary, commonplace activities. "Why, that's just what we do," you might say. These ordinary, commonplace activities are our prayers, our worship, our acts of love that transform the world around us. These are the stories we must capture for future generations.

Stories can be presented in many different forms: written essays, videos, blogs, art, interviews, even quilts or photo collages. Involve multiple generations in the process. (Have a teen interview an older woman—or vice versa.)

Address questions like: What are the main contributions of the individual woman (or a women's group) to the lives of the people in your congregation or community? Highlight one or two important moments in the woman's life. What or who contributed to the development of that woman's life of faith? What did the woman or women do to bring about reform in the congregation, the community or society? Basic information should be included: name(s), dates of birth (and death), address.

Start your story collecting this month and continue your efforts all year long. Send your contributions to women.elca@elca.org or drop in the mail to Women of the ELCA, Attn: LWF Stories, 8765 W Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631. Direct your questions to me, linda.bushkofsky@elca.org or 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2740.



Linda Post Bushkofsky
(linda.bushkofsky@elca.org) is
executive director of Women
of the ELCA.

Called to discipleship—a lost practice?

DISCIPLESHIP IS NOT AN EVERYDAY KIND OF WORD. However, you cannot get very far in reciting the Women of the ELCA purpose statement without speaking it.

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.

Is God still creating women in God’s image and calling them to discipleship today? The answer is yes!

True, mainline denominations and their women’s organizations are experiencing declines in membership. And that is all the more reason to practice discipleship.

Women know Jesus’ instructions, and many respond. “Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age’” (Matthew 28:18–20).



Servant event at the ninth triennial gathering.



Encouragement cards for victims of human trafficking

Many women know they should be disciples, but they are unclear what to do, or if they’re already doing it. Jesus’ words are still the blueprint for discipleship today, yet many might say, “I’m not a teacher, and on most days I’m not sure I understand what God has commanded me.”

Each disciple must establish her own practice of carrying out Jesus’ command. A doctor may be part of a practice with a team of doctors, but each physician brings her own gifts and skills to the group.

You can do that, too, as disciples. Here’s how to start:

1. Claim your identity. Read Matthew 28:19–20.
2. Examine the instructions. Read Women of the ELCA’s purpose statement. There you will find Matthew 28:19–20 in greater details.
3. Ask the Lutheran question: “What does this mean in my daily life?” Discipleship is daily practice.
4. Journal. This will help you to be intentional and assess how you are practicing.



Valora K Starr (valora.starr@elca.org) is director for discipleship for Women of the ELCA.

Change is good when it makes subscribers happy

GATHER, THE AWARD-WINNING MAGAZINE of Women of the ELCA, has announced a change in its subscription services that will benefit new and current subscribers.

A new fulfillment company has been hired to handle subscriptions and provide top-notch customer service—the kind of service *Gather* readers deserve.

“Over the course of the past year, the customer service



offered to you, our subscribers, has not been what you or the staff have come to expect,” Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA, wrote in her March column in *Gather*. “We’re thankful that many of you took the time to let us know of your frustrating experiences. The phone calls and emails made the problems come alive for staff. We’ve heard your complaints. We apologize.”

The change also comes with some new features—including the option to “go green” with a digital-only subscription, discounts for group subscribers (groups of 11 or more), the ability to update personal information online and more.

Current subscribers should have received a “Change is good” postcard that provides new contact information. To purchase a new or gift subscription, contact the new fulfillment center by calling (844) 409-0576, writing to Gather Subscription Order Center, PO Box 336, Congers, NY 10920-0336 or emailing gather@cambeywest.com.

Visit gathermagazine.org to learn more.



Sarah Carson (sarah.carson@elca.org) is associate editor of *Gather*.

Gather magazine completes staff with Sarah Carson

SARAH CARSON JOINED WOMEN OF THE ELCA’S STAFF Jan. 19 as associate editor of *Gather* magazine. She and Liz Hunter, who began working for the magazine in early 2015 as managing editor and moved into the editor position when Kate Elliott left for medical reasons, complete the magazine staff.

Sarah holds a bachelor of arts degree in communication (with concentrations in film production and broadcasting) from Spring Arbor University in Spring Arbor, Mich., and a master of fine arts degree in creative writing (with concentrations in screenwriting and poetry) from National University in La Mesa, Calif.

Sarah has held various positions (editor, public relations specialist, director of communication, marketing and communications manager, freelance writer) and her work has received awards from the Religion Communicators Council, among other honors.

Sarah previously worked for the ELCA; from 2010–2012 she was an associate producer and editor, producing videos and from 2012–2013 she was editor of *Seeds for the Parish*, the resource newspaper of the ELCA.

“I ASK YOU TO THINK ABOUT THREE QUESTIONS:

- ▶ **HOW DID YOU COME TO BE INVOLVED IN WOMEN OF THE ELCA?**
- ▶ **WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GOD’S PURPOSE FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE WOMEN IN YOUR SYNOD?**
- ▶ **WHAT VISION DO YOU HAVE FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR SYNOD AND FOR WOMEN OF THE ELCA?”**



Patti Austin, Women of the ELCA executive board president, speaking at the Conference of Presidents in February



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.

APRIL 2016

- 16 Lacrosse Area SWO convention, Westby Coon Prairie Lutheran Church, Westby, Wis.**
Metro Washington, D.C., SWO convention St. Luke Lutheran Church, Silver Springs, Md.
- 29–30 Northwest Wisconsin SWO convention, Plaza Hotel, Eau Claire, Wis.**
Saint Paul Area SWO convention, Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Church, Saint Paul, Minn.
- 30 Delaware-Maryland SWO convention, Evangelical Lutheran Church, Frederick, Md.**
Allegheny SWO convention, St. James Lutheran Church, Altoona, Penn.

MAY 2016

- 13–14 Northwestern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Olmsted Manor, Ludlow, Penn.**
Southwestern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Bishop Connare Center, Greensburg, Penn.

JUNE 2016

- 3–4 South Carolina SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran Church, Greenville, S.C.**
- 4 Southeastern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Silver Springs Martin Luther School, Plymouth Meeting, Penn.**
- 9–10 Northeastern Minnesota SWO convention, Sugar Lake Lodge, Cohasset, Minn.**
- 11 Northeastern Pennsylvania SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lehighton, Penn.**

- 17–18 Southwestern Minnesota SWO convention, Vinje Lutheran Church, Willmar, Minn.**

- 18 Northeastern Iowa SWO convention, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa**

Western Iowa SWO convention, St. Mark Lutheran Church, Sioux City, Iowa

- 22–24 North Carolina SWO convention, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, N.C.**

- 24–26 South Dakota SWO convention, First Lutheran Church, Mitchell, S.D.**

Southwestern Washington SWO convention, Embassy Suites, Lynwood, Wash.

- 24–25 Southeastern Iowa SWO convention, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Ely, Iowa**

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Dated material for immediate delivery

Spring 2016

Please route to:

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

Please copy and share with the women in your congregation!



Your purchase of jewelry, aprons, shawls, T-shirts, mugs and pewter ornaments support the mission of Women of the ELCA.

Visit womenoftheelca.org and click on Shop Now at the top of the page or call 800-638-3522.