



World Day of Prayer • March 1, 2019

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World Day of Prayer is March 1

by Hannah Hawkinson

“COME—EVERYTHING IS READY!” This invitation from Jesus also serves as the foundation for the 2019 World Day of Prayer (WDP) on Friday, March 1, “a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year.”

Celebrated by thousands of women and women’s groups, including Women of the ELCA, in more than 170 countries, the World Day of Prayer seeks to facilitate “informed prayer and prayerful action” by gathering “women of different races, cultures and traditions together in fellowship, understanding and action throughout the year.”

The World Day of Prayer, officially celebrated since 1927, has its origins in the women’s mission boards of late nineteenth-century America. Addressing a specific theme each year, from creation care to human rights to interfaith relations, the movement invites women to “affirm that prayer and action are inseparable and have immeasurable influence on the world” by engaging with the following values: listening, speaking, faithfulness, creativity, inclusion, giving, receiving, sisterhood, trust, learning, wisdom, action, ecumenical work and being a Christian neighbor in a multi-religious world.

This year, the World Day of Prayer will be facilitated by the WDP Slovenia Committee and will focus on the parable of the great banquet (Luke 14:15–24). “At the core of the theme for WDP 2019, an invitation—Come,” writes the committee. “And to enable the response—Everything is ready. Come to praise, thank, and proclaim the kingdom of love.”

To learn more or to download resources, visit wdp-usa.org.



Hannah Hawkinson served as intern for Gather magazine last summer. She is a master of divinity candidate at Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey.

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interchange

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Celebrate National Quilting Day

by *Melanie Gibbons*

"THOSE WHO SLEEP UNDER A QUILT, SLEEP UNDER A BLANKET OF LOVE."

March 16, 2019, is National Quilting Day (NQD). Now, I may be biased, but I believe we in the Lutheran tradition have a lot to celebrate!

For nearly 70 years, compassionate people just like you have put their faith into action and made quilts for people in need around the world. And not just a few quilts—hundreds of thousands of quilts every year. These gifts of love make life brighter, softer, and a bit more comfortable for our neighbors around the world struggling with displacement, chronic poverty, illness, natural disaster or conflict.

So, on National Quilting Day, Lutheran World Relief wants to celebrate you! We want to lift up your ministries and show others the phenomenal work you do. You can join the party in several ways:

Share your stories, photos, and fun tips via social media that weekend, and tag Lutheran World Relief (@LuthWorldRelief on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). You can also use the hashtag #NQD2018 to join in the wider conversation!

Hop on to the LWR Quilters & Kit Makers Community Facebook group (facebook.com/groups/lwrquilters) to watch live video feeds from LWR NQD events happening across the country.

Ask your congregational leaders to include a petition in the prayers of the church on Sunday, March 17, lifting up quilters and those who receive quilts.

Have a reception between or after Sunday services on March 17 to honor your quilters.

Visit lwr.org/nqd to let us know you're celebrating. There you can download resources to help you plan your own National Quilting Day event!

Thank you to all quilters, supporters of quilters, packers, drivers and cheerleaders of quilters! Your faithfulness in sharing your gifts and time weave the Holy Spirit into each and every quilt sent around the world. We at Lutheran World Relief thank God for you every day!



Melanie Gibbons is quilt and kit ministry manager at Lutheran World Relief.

Bold Women are part of our faith's genealogy

by Linda Post Bushkofsky

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT MARY AS A BOLD WOMAN? Our Advent memories of Mary's song of justice have not waned so much that we can't appreciate her boldness.

During Epiphany Mary persists, caring for the infant Jesus as visitors follow the star to find the Savior. How extraordinary is Mary's faith, acceptance and willingness to serve! Her vision of God's world foretells the bold landscape that her son Jesus ushers in.

Bold women are a part of our faith's genealogy, e.g., the woman at the well, the persistent widow, the women at the tomb, and those certain women who supported Jesus and the disciples.

Within Women of the ELCA we celebrate bold women the fourth Sunday of February every year, on Bold Women's Day—this year on Feb. 24. On this day, congregational units honor or remember bold women from their community. These women may be members of the congregation, notable for acting boldly on their faith in some way. They may also be part of the larger community, notable for their boldness in helping to bring about healing and wholeness for the church, the society or the world.

Celebrations can take many forms, limited only by the creativity of the women in your congregational unit. To help you with your Bold Women's Day planning, turn to our resource, "Celebrate Bold Women's Day," available for

Bold women are a part of our faith's genealogy, e.g., the woman at the well, the persistent widow, the women at the tomb, and those certain women who supported Jesus and the disciples.

**BOLD
WOMEN'S
DAY 2019**

**Celebrate bold women.
Sunday, February 24**

Visit welca.org/bwd
for ideas for observing
in your congregation.



free download at welca.org/bwd. Certificates to use in recognizing these women can be found there too, along with a downloadable poster to promote the day. We even have a Bold Women's Day cover photo you can use on Facebook!

Additionally, this year we are introducing a new resource, a Bold Women's Day liturgy that lifts up women from the Reformation. Written by two seminarians at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg (now United Theological Seminary), the liturgy includes a litany of thanks in which worship participants are invited to name bold women they know or remember. (This litany—and the prayers included—are also appropriate for use by themselves during a circle or congregational unit meeting.)

In lieu of a sermon, the liturgy includes a script that shares the faith stories of four Reformation-era women: Katharina Schutz Zell of Strasbourg; Olimpia Fulvia Morata of Italy; Argula von Grumbach of Germany; and our own Katharina von Bora Luther. Or you can customize the script to tell the faith stories of bold women in our own time or in your own community.

You can find the liturgy and scripts at welca.org/bwd. Share your Bold Women's Day celebration ideas on the Women of the ELCA Facebook page (visit [facebook.com/womenoftheelca](https://www.facebook.com/womenoftheelca)) or send them to Women.ELCA@elca.org. Your creative ideas could be featured next year!



Linda Post Bushkofsky is executive director. This article appears as "Celebrating Bold Women" in the January/February 2019 issue of Gather magazine.

Budgets, planning, and reports fill board meeting

THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA EXECUTIVE BOARD held its fall meeting, October 18–20, 2018, in Scottsdale, Ariz., at the Franciscan Renewal Center. The weekend meeting included a tour of the Sheraton Grand Phoenix, the site of the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020), and the Phoenix Convention Center where the next triennial gathering will be held.

Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020)

The board established a policy against electioneering, for use leading up to and during the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020), and also established a policy for the appointment of at-large voting members. The board adopted a \$741,530 budget for the triennial convention.

Coming from committees

The board adopted a \$3,081,531 budget for FY2019 on recommendation of the budget and finance committee. It also approved the audit report presented to the budget and finance committee by Crowe, LLP, auditors, for FY2017 and adopted a \$1,033,953 budget for the 2020 gathering.

The board received the annual review of the executive director, presented through the executive committee by the executive director evaluation committee.

On the request of the programs and communication



The executive board tours triennial convention and gathering sites in Phoenix, Ariz.

committee, the board encouraged the executive director to move forward in the development of a letter writing campaign directed at the six global manufacturers of baby formulas, urging them to comply with code provisions around marketing.

The board learned that the constitutional review committee referred to the recently appointed exploratory committee a constitutional change request from the 2018 Conference of Presidents that would allow women to serve in elected leadership in the organization without being a member of a congregational unit. This would signal a fundamental shift, if it were proposed and adopted.

Strategic planning

Working individually, in pairs, then in small groups and as the whole board, the board members continued strategic planning work begun in April, answering two questions: What are the most critical areas of concern for the organization and what would you like to see the churchwide women's organization achieve. Both questions drew answers centering on financial sustainability, reaching more women, developing leaders and increasing communication. A visioning exercise—



The executive board and advisors met in Phoenix, Oct. 18–20. Photos by Jim Veneman

continued on next page

Budgets, strategic planning, and committee reports fill board meeting

continued

what will be the news about Women of the ELCA in 2030?—concluded this stage of strategic planning.

In other matters, the board:

- Received reports from the executive director and staff, including several new initiatives that are being planned and will be unveiled in the near future.
- Heard reports from representatives of the Office of the Presiding Bishop, the ELCA Conference of Bishops and Lutheran Men in Mission.
- Adopted a theme for the 2020 gathering (theme and accompanying art will be unveiled at the 2019 Conference of Synodical Presidents in February).
- Engaged in racial justice education from Jennifer DeLeon, Women of the ELCA’s director for justice.
- Engaged in stewardship training with Audrey Riley, director for stewardship.
- Held a Service of Holy Communion sampling a draft Bold Women’s Day liturgy that will be introduced for BWD 2019. An offering of \$1,925 was received at worship, one-half of which was designated by the executive committee for the Refugee and Immigrations Services of Lutheran

Social Services of the Southwest. Members of the Grand Canyon Synodical Women’s Organization and a former churchwide executive board member joined the board and staff for worship and a reception following.

The next board meeting is April 26–28, 2019, at Loyola University Chicago – Water Tower Campus.



Tina Bigelow chairs the programs and communications committee.



Kandy Pflaster, left, and Lydia Davila, executive board members, confer.



Staff and board members pray before a planning meeting.

2020 triennial gathering theme to be unveiled at COP

FEBRUARY DAYS IN CHICAGO can involve biting winds, swirling snow and icy temperatures. Whatever the weather, when the presidents of our 64 synodical organizations gather the last weekend of the month, the atmosphere is warm and inviting. The annual Conference of Synodical Presidents, taking place February 22-24, 2019, at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, is called for by our churchwide constitution. Among its several goals, the conference seeks to develop leadership skills within our synodical presidents and foster community and renewal.

Planners for the 2019 conference have chosen the theme Child of God, focusing on Matthew 18:1-5. Churchwide executive board president Lisa Plorin will preside at the conference. Churchwide staff will take several leadership roles, including Jennifer DeLeon, who, in her first year as director for justice, will lead an Advocacy 101

workshop. Elizabeth McBride, director for intergenerational programming, will address Women of the ELCA's commitment to being an intergenerational organization. Valora Starr, director for discipleship, will introduce preparations for international guests attending the 2020 triennial gathering.

Staff will also unveil the theme for the triennial gathering, set for July 2020 in Phoenix, Ariz.

The Rev. Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, assistant to the presiding bishop and executive for administration, will bring greetings on behalf of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and other ELCA colleagues will lead workshops and serve as chaplain.

Responding to actions taken at the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017), synodical presidents will be reporting back to the churchwide organization at the Conference of Presidents, identifying the work they've accomplished to date.

News Briefs

In 2019, study the Bible with *Gather* magazine

Start 2019 off right with *Gather's* four-session (January through April) Bible study, "The Gospel of John: Meetings with Jesus," written by the Rev. Julie A. Kanarr.

Kanarr, pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in Belfair, Washington, helps us understand Jesus' message through his interactions with the people we meet in John's Gospel. Together we'll explore the way Jesus engages people in honest, sometimes difficult conversations that lead to faith, renewal and transformation. The four sessions are:

1. Come and see: Seeking and finding faith (John 1-2)
2. By night and day: Coming to faith in Jesus (John 3-6)
3. Friends for life in Christ (John 8-9; 11-13; 17)
4. Seeing the risen Christ (John 20-12)

Learn more about *Gather's* Winter 2019 Bible study and other studies at gathermagazine.org/bible-study. Visit gathermagazine.org/subscribe to order today!

Express yourself with WELCA identity items

If you are attending or planning your synodical women's convention, a synod assembly, or a special event, why not order some Women of the ELCA identity boxes to take along? Choose among three boxes: \$100 (worth \$220), \$250 (worth \$558) and \$400 (worth \$883). Best of all, shipping is free! Download the order form at welca.org and mail it in with your check.

For additional items not on the order form, visit our online store at welca.org/shop. Identity items make great gifts!

Scholarship applications open February 1

The application process for the Women of the ELCA 2019-2020 Scholarships begins Feb. 1. Applications must be submitted online, eliminating paper and mailing. Applicants must create an online profile to access applications, provide references and upload supporting documents. Visit welca.org/scholarships for descriptions of the scholarships available. The process opens Feb. 1 when a link will be provided, closes April 1, and scholarship winners are notified June 1.

Put your dollars to work to support important ministries

DOES YOUR WOMEN OF THE ELCA GROUP have money sitting unused in a bank account? Consider how you can put those dollars to work supporting the ministries of Women of the ELCA.

When you give to the churchwide women's organization, you are making an investment in your future. Your giving comes back to you in the form of resources, publications, events and support that enable you and the women of your congregation to live out our shared mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

For the entire life of this organization—now spanning more than 30 years—the churchwide executive board has encouraged congregational units (CUs) and synodical women's organizations (SWOs) to spend down their excess reserves each year and direct the money to ministry, especially the ongoing ministries of Women of the ELCA.

CUs and SWOs are encouraged to spend down their monetary reserves in a way that reflects the interdependent relationships between the units, the synodical organizations and the churchwide women's organization.

With fiscal year 2018 coming to a close on January 31, 2019, it's now time to make those decisions.

Sufficient reserves

In most cases, reserves of \$1,000 or less are sufficient. For instance, your CU may need money to place a down payment on a retreat facility for the next year or to respond to emergency needs that arise early in the next fiscal year. It is up to each CU and SWO to annually decide how much to keep in reserves for the next year, while recognizing that every dollar saved is a dollar that does not support ministry today.

The churchwide executive board has consistently encouraged spending the dollars in a way that reflects the interdependence between congregational units, the synodical organizations and the churchwide women's organization. *Interdependence* is an important word for Women of the ELCA. Our founders used it many times in our constitutions, especially pertaining to finances. Interdependence means that all expressions of Women



of the ELCA (unit, SWO, and churchwide) should consider the needs of the others when making financial decisions.

Women of the ELCA is organized so that the SWOs and CUs do not need to keep large reserves from year to year. Neither CUs nor SWOs maintain staff, property, or ongoing liabilities for which significant reserves are necessary.

Instead, units are called to be communities of women that support each other and act to bring about healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world. SWOs connect units in mission with the churchwide organization. These purposes are best lived out by putting dollars to ministry, not storing those dollars away in a savings account.

Give to Women of the ELCA Where Needed Most and support our ongoing ministries of advocacy, leadership development, discipleship and program resources, *Gather* magazine, *Café* e-zine and podcast, racial justice education, Bible studies, and more. Give to Katie's Fund and help it grow. Become a Faithful Friend of the organization by giving monthly through automatic withdrawal from your checking account or automatic charge to your credit card. Learn more at welca.org/faithfulfriends.

Through the Katie's Fund endowment, your dollars will keep giving year after year to support bold ministry.

Visit womenoftheelca.org/donate to learn more.

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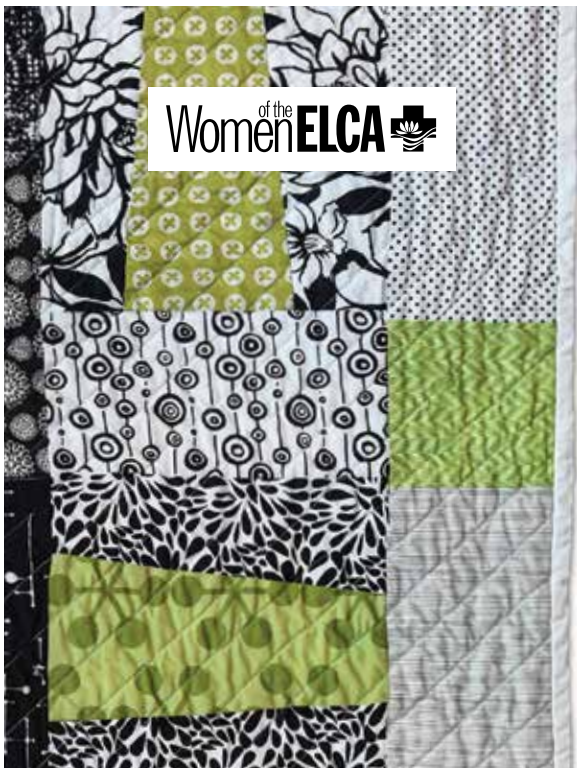
Dated material for
immediate delivery

Winter 2019

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

Please copy and share with the women in your congregation!



Woman of faith.
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Lifelong learner.

Katie Luther left a lasting legacy.
And so can you.

The All Anew Campaign
for **KATIE'S FUND**

Email women.elca@elca.org or
call 800.638.3522, ext. 2740 to learn how.