



# Looking back

# Looking ahead

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

For 20 years, this community of women has committed itself 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.”\*

We’re making a difference in women’s lives.

What might be next? How will we act boldly on our faith over the next 20 years?

\* from the Women of the ELCA Purpose Statement

1800	1987	1988	1989
<p>Women’s organizations give women a voice in the church when they have none.</p>	<p>The women’s organizations of the American Lutheran Church (ALC Women—ALCW); the Lutheran Church in America (Lutheran Church Women—LCW); and the women’s movement of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (Women in Action for Mission—WAM); come together to form Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—Women of the ELCA. The theme of the Constituting Convention, June 12–14, in Milwaukee, Wisc., is Embrace God’s World.</p> <p>W. Jeanne Rapp is elected the first president of Women of the ELCA; Betty Lee Nyhus is named executive director.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ecumenical Decade for Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988–1998)</li> <li>• Women of the ELCA, the ELCA Commission for Women, and women in Namibia join in the Campaign in Support of Women in Namibia</li> <li>• <i>Lutheran Woman Today (LWT)</i> debuts in January; <i>Newsletter</i> in June</li> <li>• Grants and scholarships programs introduced</li> <li>• Literacy program launched: Volunteer Reading Aides (1988–1996)</li> <li>• Leadership events held (1988–2002)</li> <li>• Organization is represented on National Council of Churches of Christ USA Justice for Women Working Group</li> <li>• Doris Strieter named interim executive director</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LWT</i> circulation reaches high of 300,000</li> <li>• Mission areas—Community, Growth, Action—grow</li> <li>• Plastic-foam cups banned; women make mug totes and wash coffee cups</li> <li>• Woman to Woman program launched (1989–1992)</li> <li>• One in Christ program launched (1989–1992)</li> <li>• Speakers Bureau launched (1989–1992)</li> </ul>

## A special way to make a difference during our 20th anniversary

Two resolutions adopted at the Sixth Triennial Convention in 2005 addressed concerns about (1) advocacy for the work of Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem and (2) the effect of water shortages and pollution on women and children worldwide.

As part of our response to those resolutions, we are introducing a special 20th anniversary offering. Half the money raised through this offering will support the Stand With Africa Water Project of the ELCA World Hunger Program and the work of Augusta Victoria Hospital. The other half will support the ongoing work of Women of the ELCA. By supporting these two particular projects, which will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of women and girls, you also voice your support of the Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative.

### Stand With Africa Water Project

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe and Lutheran World Federation have launched an integrated development program to alleviate poverty and suffering in Zimbabwe's rural communities.

Through Stand With Africa, we support bringing life-essential clean water to rural communities through improved conservation and irrigation systems. With



Stand With Africa

A women's group from the Zvishavane district, Zimbabwe, discusses a new irrigation project that enables income-generating activities as well as clean water.

better access to clean water, women's groups are developing stronger income-generating activities, such as fish farming; children have clean water at school; and farmers are better able to conserve water for their crops.

Your anniversary offering will make possible the life-giving gift of water and bring health and wholeness to Zimbabwe's rural communities.

1990	1991	1992	1993
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1st Triennial Convention held: Celebrate God's Creation, Anaheim, Calif.</li> <li>• Multicultural Gathering held</li> <li>• Care for creation emphasized (1990-1993); tree donated to Anaheim, Calif.</li> <li>• 20th anniversary of women's ordination celebrated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Money, Security, and Spirituality events held (1991-1995)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Synodical environment projects take place</li> <li>• Budget, cross-cultural programming, and staff cuts occur</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2nd Triennial Convention held: God's Gift of Hope, Washington, D.C.</li> <li>• Multicultural Gathering held</li> <li>• Women and Children in Poverty emphasis begun</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Infant formula education and action around World Health Organization standards becomes focus</li> <li>• Van given to women's organization in the north of Namibia</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Childstrom scholarship founded</li> <li>• Fund development staff added</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwen Carr elected president</li> <li>• Dr. Charlotte E. Fiechter named executive director</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jan Peterson elected president</li> </ul>



## Healing in the Holy Land: Augusta Victoria Hospital, Jerusalem

For more than 50 years, Augusta Victoria Hospital (AVH), a mission of the Lutheran World Federation (of which the ELCA is a part), has provided life-saving health care services to refugees and other Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territory. The hospital serves all patients regardless of religious beliefs, nationality, ethnic origin, or ability to pay. AVH is the only hospital available to Palestinians that meets the unique needs of children living with cancer or requiring dialysis. The hospital is also the only radiation oncology treatment center for Palestinians.



The conflict in the Middle East is challenging Augusta Victoria Hospital's ability to provide life-saving and life-sustaining services to people in the region.



Lutheran World Federation

Mariam and Alla tape dialysis tubes to a doll on the floor of the Artificial Kidney Unit as part of a play therapy program practiced by the hospital. Every week, the two children spend three days receiving dialysis treatment—and playing.

Without AVH, many people with chronic and severe illnesses, particularly children, will have nowhere to go for treatment. Your support can help keep the doors open at AVH and keep services alive in surrounding villages.

### How to contribute

Send your special 20th anniversary offerings by January 31, 2008, to Women of the ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4101. Write "20th Anniversary" on your check memo line.

1994

- The Witness of Women evangelism strategy introduced
- Newsletter renamed *Interchange*
- Domestic violence programming developed

1995

- Organization represented at Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, China
- Embracing Self and Others leadership events held
- Women of the ELCA Web site inaugurated

1996

- 3rd Triennial Convention held: Proclaim God's Peace, Minneapolis, Minn.
- Women of Color Gathering held
- Women and Children in Crisis emphasis begun
- Campaign to end land mines launched
- Rachel's Day initiated (1996–present)
- Global education seminars begin (Cycle 1: 1996–2005) with a seminar in Mexico

- Sharroll Bernahl elected president
- Agallice Miller named bridge executive director
- Terry Bowes named interim executive director

1997

- Cross-cultural programming renewed
- Disabilities consultation held
- Global education seminar travels to South Africa
- Anti-racism staff hired; anti-racism education training launches the organization's anti-racism efforts

- Catherine I. H. Braasch named executive director

# Praying together in thanks for 20 years

## A Ritual

*Preparation: Ask participants to bring a symbol of their experience of or hopes for Women of the ELCA (a Bible, a magazine article, a photograph, a quilt square, or the like).*

*If possible, arrange seating so that everyone can see one another. Place a table as a focal point, covered with an attractive blue cloth and perhaps a Women of the ELCA silk scarf. Add a candle, perhaps in the Women of the ELCA lotus candle holder, and a glass bowl of water.*

*As the group gathers, light the candle. When all are ready, the leader stands and begins.*

**Leader:** We gather as we always do in the name of the + Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen.

**Leader:** For 20 years, we have gathered as bold, faithful Women of the ELCA. We have prayed together and served together. We give thanks to God for those who have gone before us and shown us the way.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**HYMN:** "For All the Faithful Women," *Worship Boldly*, p. 96; verses 1, 10.

**Reader:** The holy Gospel according to Saint Luke.

**The Gospel reading:** (Luke 10:38-42)

**Reader:** The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** Praise to you, O Christ.

**Leader:** Through our baptism, we are called to take the word of God to heart and empowered to act boldly on our faith in Jesus Christ. Let us place our symbols of the boldness of faithful women close to the water that reminds us of our baptism. *One by one, each participant places her symbol on the table and briefly describes what it represents.*

*After each woman speaks, the group responds:*

**All:** Blessed be God who has called us and empowers us.

*At the completion of this action, reflections may be shared by the group or spoken by the leader.*

**Leader:** Let us pray as our Savior Jesus Christ taught us:

**All:** Our Father . . .

**HYMN:** "For All the Faithful Women," *Worship Boldly*, p. 96; verses 3, 4.

**Leader:** May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, be with you.

**All:** And also with you.

**Leader:** Let us share a sign of Christ's peace.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

*Refreshments and hospitality may follow.*

Look for more devotional and worship resources on [www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/) over the course of the anniversary year.

1998	1999	2000	2001
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4th Triennial Convention held: Live God's Justice, St. Louis, Mo.</li> <li>• Women of Color Gathering held</li> </ul>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Katharine von Bora Luther Endowment (Katie's Fund) founded</li> <li>• Synodical anti-racism training affirmed</li> <li>• Representation on LIRS board gives a presence on immigration and refugee issues</li> <li>• Feasting at Katie's Table events held</li> <li>• Global education seminar travels to Malaysia</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Intercambio</i> debuts</li> <li>• Today's Dream: Tomorrow's Reality anti-racism network launched</li> <li>• Young Women Seeing Visions consultation held</li> <li>• Synodical leadership cycle, part 1, held</li> <li>• Global education seminar travels to Slovakia and Russia</li> <li>• Special units approved as member category</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paths to Wholeness launched</li> <li>• Organization supports 50 new congregations with gift of "Feasting at Katie's Table"</li> <li>• Synodical leadership cycle, part 2, held</li> <li>• Global education seminar travels to Kenya</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>LWT</i> is redesigned from digest into a full-size format</li> <li>• Organization cosponsors ELCA Women's Leadership Roundtable</li> <li>• Women and Children in Crisis consultation held</li> <li>• Organizational self-assessment goals and mission statement adopted</li> <li>• Global education seminar travels to Madagascar</li> <li>• Organization calls for faithfulness to the gospel and refraining from hatred following attacks of September 11</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linda Chinnia elected president</li> </ul>		



## Plan your own 20th anniversary activities

1. Invite 20 women (all ages) to review this material and come up with a proposed plan for celebrating the 20th anniversary of bold women's ministry in your congregation and community.
2. Host a coffee hour, tea, dessert, pool party, or similar event to present the plan to all the women of your congregation. Adapt the plan as needed, and before everyone leaves, get names connected with each activity or occasion.
3. Carry out your plan with good communication in your newsletters and bulletins, in Sunday school classes and adult forums, on your Web site, and with posters, banners, flyers, and notes. Remember to add a link to the 20th anniversary page ([www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/)) on your Web site.
4. Share your plans and accomplishments. Send them to Women of the ELCA at the address below.

## What has been and will be important?

Tell us how participating in Women of the ELCA has empowered you. What resources, events, programs, and activities have helped you in your ministry?

Then tell us what you think we need for the future. What should we never quit doing or offering? What are we not doing or offering that you would like the churchwide organization to consider?

Some of your stories and suggestions will be posted on [www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/20years/). We also will display your contributions at the 2008 Triennial Gathering in Salt Lake City, Utah, to inspire others.

Send your stories and pictures (non-returnable), along with contact information, to:  
 20th Anniversary, Women of the ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631-4101; or e-mail  
[Women.ELCA@elca.org](mailto:Women.ELCA@elca.org)

2002

- 5th Triennial Gathering and Convention held: Listen, God Is Calling, Philadelphia, Penn.
- Way-Making Women event held

- Women urged to pray on verge of war in Iraq
- Global education seminar travels to Tanzania

- Mary Ellen Kiesner elected president
- Linda Post Bushkofsky named executive director

2003

- 90-Ton Challenge launched (2003-2004)

- Organization endorses promotion and use of fairly traded coffee
- Café e-zine launched
- Spanish resources consultation held
- Churchwide office undergoes reconfiguration and downsizing
- Global education seminar travels to Cameroon

2004

- Saying Yes! The Next Step events held
- Cross-cultural immersion held at Rocky Boy Reservation, Mont.
- [www.lutheranwomantoday.org](http://www.lutheranwomantoday.org) debuts
- A Day Full of Light supported to end commercial sexual exploitation
- First Women-to-Women Coffee Tour to Tanzania takes place
- Global education seminar travels to Peru

## 20 ideas for celebrating 20 years

1. Gather 20 women for Bible study with *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine.
2. Encourage 20 young women from your church to subscribe to *Café*, our free online publication: [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org)
3. Surprise 20 women you know with subscriptions to *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine or the *Interchange/Intercambio* newsletter.
4. Organize a fundraiser at your church and sell items for \$20 each. Donate the proceeds to the anniversary projects (see pages 2 and 3).
5. Prepare an anniversary offering collection container and place it in public view on 20 occasions. Create a brief overview of what the offering will be used for, or give a brief presentation on each occasion.
6. Get 20 people to commit 20 hours of time to one of your unit's projects.
7. Recruit 20 women to interview other women and write stories about their bold actions. Publish them in your congregational or synodical newsletter and send them to the churchwide office.
8. Spend 20 minutes a day in Bible reading and prayer. (Use the daily Bible reading on [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)—see "Monday Prayer at Noon" for prayer concerns.)
9. Invite 20 women to join you in 20 minutes of exercise twice a week for 10 weeks at a time. (This could be a great intergenerational project.)
10. Save \$20 a week in 2007 and you will have more than enough money to take part in the 2008 Triennial Gathering in Salt Lake City, Utah.
11. Encourage 20 women to register for the 2008 Triennial Gathering in Salt Lake City.
12. Form a book club and select 20 new books to read throughout the year.
13. Organize a mentor program for 20 young women in your congregation or community.
14. Invite 20 women you know to write letters to your representatives in Congress endorsing or protesting a new bill.
15. Collect 20 gently worn suits for donation to your local women's shelter. Women need proper clothing for interviews and daily attire for work.
16. Encourage 20 women to invite one new woman to your church for worship or for a special event.
17. Plan 20 activities: 20 teddy bears for children's hospitals or police departments; 20 visits to a hospital or nursing home; 20 Braille children's books for your public library; 20 . . . you get the idea. Be sure what you want to offer is needed in your area; find out what the needs are.
18. Surprise 20 friends or family who haven't heard from you in a while with greeting cards.
19. Plan a getaway for 20 women in your group, community, or congregation. Come together for a Women of the ELCA event, or have an event of your own.
20. Get 20 women working on a water need or project in your community.

Women of the ELCA  
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[www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)  
[www.lutheranwomantoday.org](http://www.lutheranwomantoday.org)  
[www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org)

### 2005

- 6th Triennial Gathering and Convention held: Act Boldly, San Antonio, Texas
- Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative launches
- 35th anniversary of women's ordination celebrated
- Executive board initiates anti-racism education at each meeting
- Cross-cultural immersion held at Rocky Boy Reservation, Mont.
- Global education seminar travels to Costa Rica and Nicaragua
- Women challenged to address water issues
- Organization represented on World Day of Prayer U.S.A. Committee: liaison to World Day of Prayer International

- Carmen Richards elected president

### 2006

- [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org) debuts
- MIF Challenge launched
- HEART for Women Act endorsed
- Seminary visits to promote *Café* take place
- Cross-cultural immersion held in Appalachia
- Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls events held in fall
- Global education seminars refocus

### 2007

- Second Women-to-Women Coffee Tour to Tanzania takes place
- Act Boldly events held
- Bold Women of the Reformation tour to Germany organized
- Global education seminar travels to India
- Bold Women's Day launches