

# interchange

VOLUME 32, NUMBER 2

SPRING 2019

WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
JULY 16-19, 2020 | PHOENIX

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## “Just love” Gathering 2020 logo reminds we are parts of one body

By Elizabeth McBride

**AT THE TRIENNIAL GATHERING 2017** closing worship service, the Rev. Angela Khabeb exclaimed: “News flash! Christianity is not comfortable. If you are comfortable in Jesus, you’re doing it wrong.”

Following Jesus is messy. Loving one another is justice. We are not perfect, we are often broken. Sometimes we don’t fit. Sometimes our edges are rough—but we are one body in Christ.

The inspiration for Women of the ELCA Gathering logo came as I walked around downtown Phoenix, the site of the 2020 gathering. I noticed a mural outside of the convention hotel. Its collection of broken mirrors, tiles, shards of plates and painted rocks ebbed and flowed in a kinetic frenzy of color and textures.

The mural reminded me of the body of Christ and how we are all misshapen pieces in one glorious and beautiful work of art.

The palette of deep purple and bright green in the new gathering logo (top left) is reflective of the scenery of the valley in the Phoenix area. Along the streets of this city, dusty earth tones are punctuated with bright purple flowers and vibrant green cacti. The turquoise color connects to the history of native cultures in Arizona and the southwest region. Red signifies love. The shade of red in our gathering logo is not one of fire or caution, but rather one of joy.

As we embrace the theme “Just love,” we remember the words of the Rev. Alexia Salvatierra at the gathering in 2017 in Minneapolis: “I believe that if we follow mercy all the way, go deep into mercy, we end up at justice.”

The Gathering 2020 will be held in Phoenix, Ariz., July 16-19, 2020. Watch for information about registration on [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org) in late summer.



*Elizabeth McBride, director for intergenerational programs and editor of Café, designed the Gathering 2020 logo. She has a bachelor of arts degree from Arizona State University and has designed graphics for Women of the ELCA since 2000. In her bio photo, she stands in front of the mural, “The Earth Dreaming” by Isaiah Zagar.*

*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 ELCA congregations and select Women of the ELCA leaders. Both the Spanish and English versions are posted on our website under the publications link and are available for download.

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**interchange**

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## Praying the Lord's Prayer is the first mark of discipleship

**CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP** is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ so that others may believe. Over the next few issues of *Interchange*, we are going to outline the seven marks of discipleship—praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving—found in our downloadable, free resource: "Lessons for Today's Disciples."

The first lesson of discipleship is Praying the Lord's Prayer.

We are continually called to be in communion with God through prayer. Prayer is both talking and listening to God. Our relationships with God and others grow deeper when we make these conversations part of our daily devotion. As our relationship with God deepens, we also come to know others in Christian love and grow in our understanding of our faith.

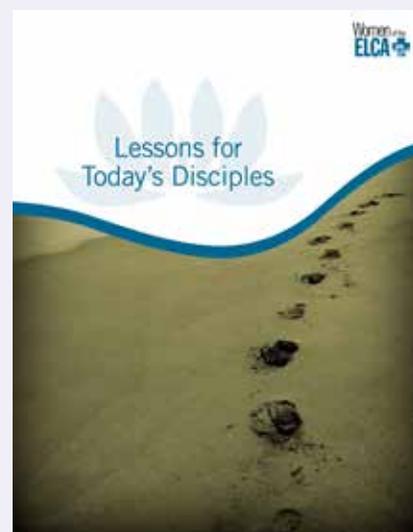
Jesus' ministry was centered in a life of prayer. He constantly prayed to God (Luke 5:16; 16:12). When one of the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he taught the disciples how to be in communion with God.

Read Luke 11:1–13. Notice how Jesus arranged the prayer. First is an introduction that gives God all honor and praise. This statement of praise sets the tone before we continue with our requests: Without praising God first, our prayers can be a laundry list of needs and woes.

Second, this prayer reminds us that God provides for all our needs. In our daily conversations with God, we also witness God's blessing in our lives. Third, the Lord's Prayer teaches us about God's forgiveness. This is the foundation of our relationships with God, others and ourselves. God's forgiveness enables us to release to God our unresolved issues and hurts.

Reflect on and make a list of the different ways that God cares for you as you praise God's name.

"Lessons for Today's Disciples" was written by Valora K Starr, director for discipleship for Women of the ELCA. You can find the resource by visiting [welca.org/resources](http://welca.org/resources) and searching for its title.



# Reach your Hispanic sisters with our Spanish resources

by Eva James Yeo

**ARE YOU LOOKING FOR** more ways to reach out to your Hispanic sisters? You can connect with those women and all women in your church and community through our resources. We offer several Spanish resources to support our sisters on their faith journey.

Resources available in Spanish include the welcome flyer, “Six Models for Missions,” and the A Place for You booklet and Powerpoint. (Find these under the membership section on [welca.org](http://welca.org).) We also have 28 free downloadable resources in Spanish, which you can find at [welca.org/resources](http://welca.org/resources). Click “en Español” under Categories.

These ministry resources are available in a wide array of subjects and are perfect for circles, adult forums, retreats, workshops and conventions. Choose and download one or several resources as you plan your programming for the coming year.

## How can you be a part of Women of the ELCA?

Contact me ([eva.yeo@elca.org](mailto:eva.yeo@elca.org)) to learn more about forming a group in your congregation or finding an established group at a congregation near you. Learn more about our organization through our publications *Interchange* and its Spanish companion, *Intercambio*. Find these and other publications on our website, [welca.org/publications](http://welca.org/publications).



**Eva James Yeo is director of membership for Women of the ELCA.**

# Caribbean Synod to start anew with churchwide support

**ABOUT 80 WOMEN FROM 23 CONGREGATIONS** in the Caribbean Synod gathered in mid-January to talk about Women of the ELCA.

The event, held at Iglesia Luterana Buen Pastor (Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd), San Juan, Puerto Rico, was coordinated by Women of the ELCA staff with the help of Caribbean synodical president Carmen Maisonet.

It was part of a continuing effort of the churchwide organization to support the synod following the devastating hurricanes of 2017.

At its April 2018 meeting, the churchwide executive board extended a “time of grace” to the Caribbean synodical organization as Puerto Rico and other island residents recovered from the storm’s destruction. A “time of grace” relaxes governance expectations and offers churchwide support to the synodical organization and its congregational units. The Caribbean Synod includes 33



congregations in Puerto Rico, St. Croix, St. John and St. Thomas.

“It was a pleasure spending time with the wonderful ladies of the Caribbean Synod,” said Lisa Plorin, churchwide president for the 2017-2020 triennium. “After so much devastation from the hurricanes, it would have been so easy to throw in the towel and shift their

focus away from the Women of the ELCA—but they are a strong group—like Katie Luther!”

To read the entire news story, visit <http://bit.ly/WELCACaribbean>.

# How do we fulfill our organization's mission, purpose?

**SEVERAL WOMEN GATHERED IN JANUARY** to discuss how to best fulfill Women of the ELCA's mission and purpose in a changing world.

An 11-woman exploratory committee met in St. Louis, Jan. 4–6, and centered its work on investigating the organization's current business model. The committee was created at the behest of the churchwide executive board's budget and finance committee at the board's April 2018 meeting. (Search for "Board, staff look for new ways to carry out mission" on [welca.org](http://welca.org) or in Google.)

"On my flight home [from the meeting], I had some time to reflect over the course of the weekend and felt a full and grateful heart," said Lisa Plorin, churchwide president for the 2017–2020 triennium. "It was inspiring to be in the presence of women from all corners of the United States who have the same passion for this organization as I do."

Plorin said she is looking forward to seeing how the committee's plans grow to ensure the life and vitality of the Women of the ELCA. Plorin supported the work of the committee in an ex officio capacity.

The committee began its work examining the organization's governance structure, communication methods, constitutional structure and financial realities. Following a small group brainstorming session, the Rev. Leila Ortiz, chaplain for the committee and an assistant to the bishop in the Metro D.C. Synod, led a Bible study based on 2 Kings 5.

She reminded committee members that everyone is relevant to the issue. Ortiz asked, "Who is not at this

table? Who could give the organization new life? Who has wisdom to share?" Like Naaman's experience in the biblical passage, the process of bringing about new life will likely be messy, Ortiz said, and may take several different approaches.

Ortiz offered the committee members a repeated question over their weekend meeting: What must die so Women of the ELCA can come alive again?

## The many assets of Women of the ELCA

The committee listed the many assets of Women of the ELCA: people (participants, subscribers to *Gather* magazine, elected leaders, staff), publications (*Gather*, *Interchange/Intercambio*, *Bold Connections*, *Daily Grace*, *Café*, program resources, synodical newsletters); giving to the annual budget, Katie's Fund, restricted funds, synodical-held funds, congregational unit-held funds, expectation of planned gifts and intellectual property).

Over the next several months, the committee will engage participants in a variety of ways, asking questions and gathering data. The engagement began in February at the annual Conference of Synodical Presidents. In advance of the conference, synodical women's organization presidents were asked to consider the following three questions:

1. If you could make changes to our constitutions to encourage more participation in the organization, what would they be?
2. The triennial convention costs approximately \$2,400 per voting member. Annual revenue from offerings has been insufficient to pay for the convention over the past two triennium. How could your SWO assist with the costs?
3. Why is this organization important to you? If this organization went away tomorrow, would you miss it? Would it matter? Why?

The committee broke into two sub-groups, one to examine constitutional issues and one to create assessment tools. Following this in-person meeting, the



Photo, left to right, front row, Lisa Plorin, Susan Haukaas; second row, Sheena Foster, Cindy Arnett, Camille Trott, Jody Smiley; third row, Raeann Purcell, Gwen King, Laura Krueger, Phyllis Rude; back row: Sara Larson, Desiree Cole, Leila Ortiz

*continued on next page*

## How do we best fulfill our organization's mission and purpose?

*continued*

committee will continue its work by email and conference calls. The committee will offer an interim report to the churchwide executive board at its April 2019 meeting, with another report scheduled for its October 2019 meeting.

### The following women are serving on the committee:

Ms. Cindy Arnett, Sierra Pacific  
Ms. Desiree Cole, Metro Chicago  
Ms. Sheena Foster, Metro D.C.  
The Rev. Susan Haukaas, Eastern N.D.  
The Rev. Gwen King, Southeastern Pa.  
Ms. Laura Krueger, Grand Canyon and a member of

the churchwide executive board, 2017–2020

Ms. Sara Larson, Southwestern Minnesota and a member of the churchwide executive board, 2017–2020  
Ms. Raeann Purcell, Florida-Bahamas  
Ms. Phyllis Rude, Alaska  
Ms. Jody Smiley, Virginia, and chair of the committee  
Ms. Camille Trott, Metro D.C.

Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA, and Gabriela Contreras, director for meeting planning, also attended the meeting. To see the full story with links, visit [welca.org](http://welca.org) and search for “How do we best fulfill our organization's mission and purpose?”

## We're trying something new for treasurers' training

*by Audrey Riley*

**FOR MANY YEARS**, the churchwide organization has hosted an annual training event in Chicago for new synodical treasurers, picking up the bill for travel, lodging and meals for the event. As you can imagine, the cost of the event just kept going up and up, even as the revenues supporting it didn't.

So, we're trying something All Anew this year. Instead of flying 20 or 30 new treasurers to Chicago for a two-day event, we're going to send one trainer out to more or less central locations for one-day training events that begin about 10 a.m. on a Saturday and end by 4 p.m.

And we're inviting not just newly installed treasurers, but also veterans and treasurers-elect. Networking is great!

The churchwide organization is willing to reimburse treasurers for their travel costs; we'll also pick up lunch for the group.

But if a treasurer wants to stay over in a hotel, we're asking her SWO to pick up her lodging and meal expenses.

In the meantime, all the materials we cover in

treasurers' training are included in the annual Guide for SWO Treasurers, which is posted on our website, [welca.org](http://welca.org), on the Tools for Leaders page. Scroll down until you see it.

We're also going to put together free online video trainings and webinars using YouTube and Zoom (like FaceTime or Skype). Our first centrally located one-day training was near Philadelphia in late January, just in time for the polar vortex to make a stormy sweep across the country, so you see the appeal of technology!

This is an experiment, so please feel free to suggest dates and places that will be easy for several SWO treasurers to gather. Thank you for all you do—you really do make a difference in women's lives. Thank you.



**Audrey Riley is director for stewardship, Women of the ELCA. You can reach her at [audrey.riley@elca.org](mailto:audrey.riley@elca.org).**

# Gather brings back popular Bible study writer the Rev. Kay Ward for summer study on Esther

**THIS SUMMER** *Gather* is excited to present a three-session Bible study on the book of Esther by the Rev. Kay Ward, a bishop in the Moravian Church and author of *Gather's* popular Bible study “In good company: Stories of biblical women.”

Through the story of Esther, this bold biblical woman, we will learn how God is calling us to find and use our voices “for such a time as this.”

## **Session one: Esther the queen—Voices in the king’s court**

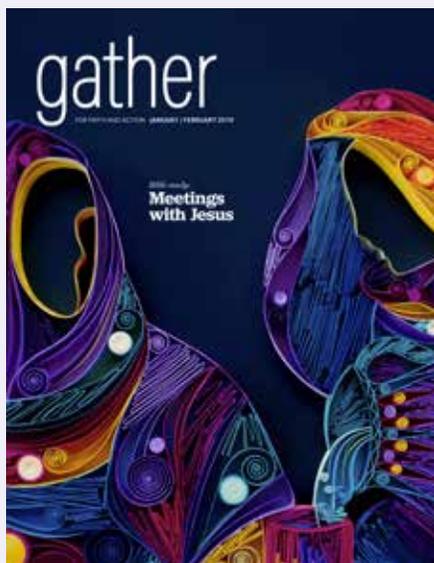
When Esther becomes the queen of Persia, her faith is tested. In this session we will think about how our culture may challenge our faith.

## **Session two: Esther saves the Jews—Finding our voices**

When the Jews are threatened, Esther uses her strong faith and love for her people to embolden her to act. Here we will consider how God reminds us that we need to find our voices as we live out our faith.

## **Session three: Remembering Esther—Using our voices**

The last chapters of the book of Esther are full of hope for the future for the Jews. As women of faith, full of love



for God and others, we will consider ways to find and use our voices in our present circumstances—“for such a time as this.”

## **May: intergenerational devotional**

“One generation shall laud your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts” (Psalm 145:4).

For *Gather's* May 2019 devotional, the Rev. Christa von Zychlin brings us “Two way blessings,” a study of intergenerational relationships in Scripture. Looking at the stories of Miriam, Anna and Simeon, as well as the miracle feeding of the 5,000, Zychlin shows how God uniquely shares wisdom among each of us—

and how our lives are enriched in community with all ages of God’s people!

A frequent *Gather* contributor, von Zychlin has served Lutheran churches around the world through ELCA Global Mission. She currently serves as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Las Cruces, New Mexico.



Presidents gather to discuss agenda



Outgoing presidents say goodbye

# News Briefs

## Faithful Friends make a difference!

Have you heard about the Faithful Friends of Women of the ELCA? These especially dedicated women make a difference in the life of our community of women created in the image of God by giving regularly, every month—automatically!

In fiscal year 2018, our Faithful Friends gave a total of \$23,000 to our churchwide organization by automatic withdrawal from either a checking account or a credit card. This is by far the easiest, most effective way to give generously to Women of the ELCA.

Will you join these 120 Faithful Friends? It's easy to do. Sign up with a credit card online at [welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline](http://welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline), or download the form at [welca.org/faithfulfriends](http://welca.org/faithfulfriends). You can choose to give any monthly amount from \$10 on up. Thank you!

## Save our children; observe Rachel's Day

Rachel's Day is a time set aside to mourn the loss of our children and to renounce the forces of violence and fear. At the 1996 Women of the ELCA triennial convention, voting members passed a memorial to encourage congregations to recognize the first Sunday in May as Rachel's Day, though it can be observed any time of the year.

The day takes its name from Jeremiah 31:15–17, in which the matriarch Rachel grieves for her children. Women of the ELCA offers a free, downloadable Rachel's Day resource with

information about how you can work within your community and congregation to combat gun violence.

Consider using Rachel's Day resource at your church or in your community. The Rachel's Day resource includes a litany for use in a special Rachel's Day service. Find the resource at [welca.org/resources](http://welca.org/resources).

## Katie's Fund supports ministry

Women of the ELCA established the Katie's Fund Endowment in 1997 to honor the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther, raise up bold leaders for the women's organization and support bold and creative ministry for generations to come.

Your gifts to Katie's Fund, whether to the endowment or to the current fund, ensure the organization's continued commitment to community, growth and action. The income earned by the Katie's Fund endowment, along with Katie's Fund current, supports ministry in three key areas: leadership development, global connections and living theology.

Give online at [welca.org/katiesfund](http://welca.org/katiesfund) or by mail to: Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009

Please make your check out to Katie's Fund Current or Katie's Fund endowment. And thank you!



Executive Board President Lisa Plorin, left, talks with Angela Bell, executive board member



Director for Justice Jen DeLeon, left, and Lisa Plorin discuss workshops



Staff unveils Gathering 2020 logo and theme (See page 1)

Women <sup>of the</sup> ELCA 

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Dated material for immediate delivery

Spring 2019

Please route to:

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

Please copy and share with the women in your congregation!

## 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](mailto:Women.ELCA@elca.org).

### APRIL

- 6 **La Crosse Area (5L) SWO convention**, Bethany Lutheran Church, New Lisbon, Wis.
- 6 **Allegheny (8C) SWO convention**, Zion Lutheran Church, Hollidaysburg, Penn.
- 7 **Delaware-Maryland (8F) SWO convention**, Augsburg Lutheran Home & Village, Gwynn Oak, Md.

### MAY

- 3–4 **Southwestern Minnesota (3F) SWO convention**, First Lutheran Church, Marshall, Minn.
- 3–4 **Saint Paul Area (3H) SWO convention**, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Lakeville, Minn.
- 3–4 **Southwestern Pennsylvania (8B) SWO convention**, Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg, Penn.

4

**Metro Washington DC (8G) SWO convention**, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Washington, D.C.

18

**Northeastern Pennsylvania (7E) SWO convention**, Trinity Lutheran Church, Lehighton, Penn.

### JUNE

7–8

**Northwestern Pennsylvania (8A) SWO convention**, Olmsted Manor, Ludlow, Penn.

7–8

**South Carolina (9C) SWO convention**, St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church, Lexington, S.C.

21

**Oregon SWO (1E) convention**, Embassy Suites, Hillsboro, Ore.

21–22

**South Dakota (3C) SWO convention**, Zion Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, S.D.

21–22

**Southeastern Iowa (5D) SWO convention**, First Lutheran Church, Keokuk, Iowa

21–23

**North Carolina (9B) SWO convention**, Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, N.C.

22

**Western Iowa (5E) SWO convention**, Bethany Lutheran Church, Emmetsburg, Iowa

22

**Northeastern Iowa (5F) SWO convention**, Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa

24–26

**Northeastern Minnesota (3E) SWO convention**, Sugar Lake Lodge, Cohasset Minn.

28–29

**Western North Dakota (3A) SWO convention**, Concordia Lutheran, Crosby, N.D.