

interchange

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Women from the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin who attended Human Trafficking Advocacy Day in Washington, D.C. are (l-r) Nancy Becker-Nagan, Gloria Jaeger, Shirley Paulson, Phyllis Christie, Wanda Fischer, Pam Schuelke

Be bold! Do justice! Wisconsin women grow into advocacy

by Shirley Paulson

“**DO JUSTICE, LOVE MERCY,** and walk humbly with our God” (Micah 6:8).

How did a bunch of modest Lutheran women grow into bold advocates helping to end human trafficking in Wisconsin? It was a journey of faith and calling. We started from a place where many did not believe that sex trafficking was a problem in our state. And hardly any of us felt comfortable talking about anything that had to do with sex (shhhh!).

Now, a few short years later, we have grown to be some of the loudest voices in support of three bills in our state.

The more we learned about this horrible crime, the bolder we got. We followed a pattern championed by Cherish All Children, a Lutheran organization that works to prevent child sexual exploitation and trafficking. Their model suggests we Pray, Educate, Connect, and Act.

The first two were easy. We’re Lutheran women, after all. Praying and educating are as natural as breathing for us. But connecting and acting were a different story.

PRAY: After learning about the problem of human trafficking, we prayed for the victims and listened to hear what God was calling us to do. We encouraged others to engage the power of prayer by proposing a resolution—A Time of Prayer to End Human Trafficking—at our synod assembly in 2016, the churchwide assembly in New Orleans in 2016, and Women of the ELCA’s triennial convention in Minneapolis in 2017. We compiled prayer petitions for each day from January 11 through Super Bowl weekend and shared the prayers via church and synod newsletters.

EDUCATE: We felt God calling us to organize an event to educate ourselves and others about human trafficking. More than 300 people attended, and they were so generous in their offerings. We were able to use the money we budgeted for our event to offer seed grants to Women of the ELCA groups to hold trafficking awareness events.

CONNECT: Connecting with others helped us grow as advocates. We were venturing out of our comfort zones but soon connected with two Catholic nuns. They helped us plan our first awareness event, and they became our friends. They taught us about other groups, all begun by bold people passionate about helping victims and addressing the root causes of human trafficking.

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Women of the ELCA
interchange

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clickable links by visiting
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Studying God's word is the second 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. In the spring 2019 issue of *Interchange*, we included the first of seven acts of discipleship—praying — found in our downloadable free resource: "Lessons for Today's Disciples." Over the next few issues, we will explore the remaining marks of discipleship.

The second lesson of discipleship is studying God's word.

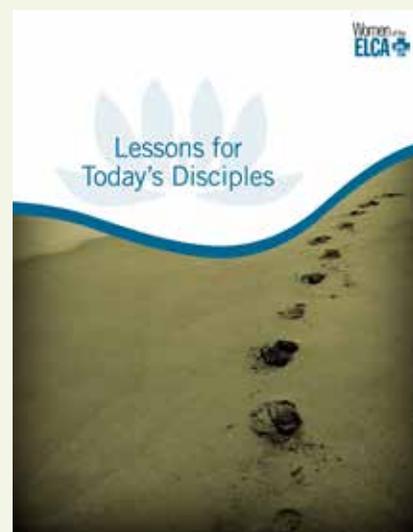
Studying God's word is fundamental to the process of discerning, understanding, articulating, and applying the meaning of God's word in the life of a disciple. This lesson will highlight standard practices that were followed by disciples in the early church.

When Jesus was about 12, he went to the Temple to study and listen to the elders. Studying God's word in community is one mark of discipleship. It is essential to be with each other so that as we study God's word and pray, we grow in faith together. Community is the activator that encourages us and others to grow. Jesus always taught in community because that is where his ministry took place. Jesus frequently spoke to his disciples in parables and explained to them in community so that they might struggle together to find a common understanding.

Read Acts 2:42–47. This was an exciting time for the new church. Peter was preaching the good news, and thousands of new believers were coming into the community. In studying God's word, hearing the apostles' teachings, fostering fellowship, breaking bread together, gathering to pray, and sharing financial resources, the community came alive. When we study together, we begin to see that the mission is larger than any one person could imagine or accomplish. Fellowship, which comes from studying in community, gives disciples opportunities to build deeper relationships with God and with others as brothers and sisters in God's family.

Reflect on verse 42 and make a list of the opportunities available to you for studying God's word in community and fellowship.

"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 and searching for its title.



Be bold! Do justice! Wisconsin women grow into advocacy

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One of the best connections we made is with our Lutheran Office of Public Policy in Madison, Wis. Director and pastor Cindy Crane has become our mentor and point person for advocacy at the state capitol. She provides us with updates on bills and notifies us when it is time to contact legislators.

ACT: We became bolder in our advocacy, acting to end human trafficking in more ways. We serve on a workgroup of Wisconsin's Anti Human Trafficking Task Force. We make recommendations for resources to educate young people about the dangers of trafficking. We sponsored an advocacy training event with a state representative talking about civic engagement and workshops on how to help with specific issues. We featured speakers on human trafficking at our convention and conference events. We joined with women from other synods and sent hundreds of postcards identifying ourselves as Women of the ELCA and asking our legislators to support anti-trafficking bills. We arranged carpools to get women to the capitol to attend a committee hearing on the Safe



Harbor for Trafficked Youth bill and filled the hearing room.

One of the most satisfying things we did was attend a Human Trafficking Advocacy Day at the capitol. There, we visited our state senators and representatives to convince them to co-sponsor the Safe Harbor bill. Which they did.

So how did women in our synod grow from concerned but shy Christians into strong advocates to end human trafficking? We did what we felt God was calling us to do, one step at a time, one act leading to another, using what we had learned and the connections we had made.

We will continue to grow in being bold and doing justice. And you can too!



Shirley Paulson is president of the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin women's organization. You can read the complete story at welca.org/news.

Staff collects 19 communicator awards in April

WOMEN OF THE ELCA staff collected a total of 19 awards at two religion communicators awards ceremonies April 10–11 in Chicago.

For work created in 2018, staff took home eight awards at the Religion Communicators Council (RCC) DeRose-Hinkhouse Memorial Awards ceremony, April 10, and 11 awards at the Associated Church Press (ACP) Best of the Church Press Awards ceremony, April 11.

At the RCC banquet at Fourth Presbyterian Church in downtown Chicago, April 10, Women of the ELCA staff won four awards of excellence and four awards of merit.

At RCC, *Gather* magazine won two awards of excellence, one for advertisement and one for a

fundraising appeal. Women of the ELCA blogs won an award of excellence as did the Human Trafficking Exhibit at the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering.

Also at RCC, *Interchange* and Women of the ELCA's website each received an award of merit. And *Gather* received two awards of merit, one for its table-top display and one for its May 2018 cover.

At ACP, April 11, *Gather* won eight awards and *Café*, three, one in the Best in Class category. *Gather* won an award of excellence, three awards of merit, and four honorable mentions. In addition to its Best in Class award, *Café* won an award of merit and an honorable mention.

To read the list of awards, visit welca.org/news.

Organization commits to growth even as revenues decline

WOMEN OF THE ELCA'S EXECUTIVE BOARD continues to explore ways to grow the organization, holding up the Caribbean Synod as an example.

"I can't help but smile when I think about what is happening in the Caribbean Synod," Executive Board President Lisa Plorin said during the board's biannual meeting, April 26–28, in Chicago.

When Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico in 2017, "our sisters lost so much. And that includes their documentation and unit constitutions."

About 80 women from 23 congregations in the Caribbean Synod gathered in mid-January to talk about how to remain committed to Women of the ELCA. The event, coordinated by the churchwide organization, was an effort to find ways to support the synod following the hurricane.

"Like Katie Luther these resilient women are up and thriving," Plorin said. "They are living out our mission statement by growing in faith, affirming their gifts, supporting one another in their callings, engaging in ministry and action, and promoting healing and wholeness in their church.

"If they can do this, so can every other synodical organization."

New units, new future

In another example of growth, the executive board approved a new special unit based at Egner Chapel at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa.

In her application for a special WELCA Campus Unit, the Rev. Kristen Glass Perez, college chaplain and director of religious life at Muhlenberg, said she is "excited about exploring the possibilities for new programs, partnerships, and service with Women of the ELCA."

The new campus unit plans to address human trafficking, domestic violence, immigration, and racial justice.

Meanwhile, executive board members responded to a report from a newly formed exploratory committee that is looking into the organization's future by answering three questions posed by the committee. Anyone can answer

the questions at welca.org/future.

The new exploratory committee formed two subcommittees. One committee will review any proposed constitutional changes, and the other will oversee surveys and examine the data.

In other action, the executive board:

- installed a new board member, Raeann Purcell of New Smyrna Beach, Fla. (Florida/Bahamas Synod), to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Anissa Canova, of Gouldsboro, Pa.
- approved a recommendation to move up to \$250,000 from the New Ministries Fund to cover operational expenses due to a shortage in revenue. Because the revenues fell short of the budget, no funds were added to the reserves for the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020) as earlier budgeted.
- implemented a plan for each executive board member to establish and strengthen a personal relationship with three synodical presidents. Through these relationships, the executive board will thank the presidents for their support, offer assistance, and:



Sara Larson, left, and Sandy Grier show off their new Just Love bandanas

continued on next page

Organization commits to growth even as revenues decline

continued



Liz Burgess gives a devotional

- ♦ strongly encourage the synodical board to financially support at least one voting member for the next triennial convention.
- ♦ strongly encourage the synodical board to make a commitment of 50 percent of all convention offerings be sent to the churchwide organization.
- ♦ strongly encourage the synodical board to send a minimum of 50 percent of regular offerings to the churchwide organization.
- ♦ strongly encourage all units within the synodical women's organization to make at least one Thankoffering per calendar year to the churchwide organization.
- approved the recommended distribution of grants to India and Japan.

- approved a process for designating and disbursing Women of the ELCA-held global purpose endowment funds, including the India grants.
- approved an update to Women of the ELCA's travel policy.

In triennial convention and gathering business, the executive board:

- adopted rules of procedure for the 2020 convention (July 14–16, 2020 in Phoenix).
- adopted the proposed agenda for 2020 gathering (July 16–19, 2020).
- approved the designated offerings for the 2020 triennial convention and gathering as follows:
 - ♦ Eleventh Triennial Convention, 50 percent to Women of the ELCA ongoing ministries; 50 percent to Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest.
 - ♦ Eleventh Triennial Gathering, 50 percent to the ongoing churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA; 25 percent to the Dream Center, Phoenix; and 25 percent to AAMPARO.

The executive board heard reports from:

- the 2019 conference of synodical presidents.
 - The office of the presiding bishop.
 - The conference of bishops.
 - Women of the ELCA staff.
- The next executive board meeting is set for Oct. 23–25 in Chicago.



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

Gathering 2020 registration opens September 30. Visit welca.org for more information and welca.org/shop to order Gathering 2020 logo items.

How do issues get before our triennial convention?

WHEN WOMEN GATHER in convention and need to conduct business, a formal method is needed for presenting and acting on business. If we didn't have that, a convention could quickly devolve into something like an unruly classroom. We conduct organizational business through the formal method of resolutions and memorials. This might seem antiquated in today's informal world where people communicate through social media, but that's the formal way to present business to a convention.

Think of a resolution as:

- a way to participate in the democratic process and have your voice heard,
- a means of educating women about a particular need or concern,
- a vehicle for inspiring others to take a particular action.

Resolutions are also a way to plan and think ahead and to hold our community accountable for the commitments we make at conventions.

What's the difference between a resolution and a memorial?

A memorial is the way in which one expression of our organization formally makes a request of another. A memorial comes to a triennial convention by and through actions taken at a synodical women's organization.

Imagine a synodical convention considering a resolution that has as one of its actions a request that the churchwide organization produce resources around a



For guidelines on how to write a resolution, visit welca.org/convention.

given theme or that the executive director communicate the organization's position on a topic to an elected official. The resolution, once adopted in the SWO convention, becomes a memorial to the triennial convention. The SWO, through the resolution, is memorializing the issue, asking the triennial convention to consider the subject and take an action.

So why talk about resolutions now?

The Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020) will be held in July 2020. As we meet this year in synodical conventions, what issues should come to the triennial convention, the highest legislative authority in our organization?

Should Women of the ELCA address climate change or refugee issues? World hunger or human trafficking? These and more topics? Which expression can best address a given issue? Congregational units, synodical organizations or the churchwide organization? Will our call to act be within the organization only or will we extend the call to others? To our congregations? Or involve ecumenical or interfaith partners?

Now is the time, when you are meeting in synodical conventions, to take actions to be considered by the triennial convention in 2020.

The deadline for submitting memorials to the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2020) is November 30, 2019. All memorials must have been considered and acted upon by an SWO in convention.

Find out how to address an issue that arises after November 30, 2019, by reading the rest of this article online at welca.org/news.

Executive board nominations open July 30–November 30

THE ELEVENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION of Women of the ELCA is July 14–16, 2020 in Phoenix, Arizona. The voting members to the convention, the highest legislative body of Women of the ELCA, will elect four officers and 17 women to serve on the churchwide executive board as part of the business they will conduct.

The president and vice president are elected at the convention by nominating ballot; thus no advance nominations are needed for these two positions. See the churchwide women's organization constitution Article XIV, Section 5, items 1–2. Find the constitution at welca.org/toolsforleaders.

Nominations will be received by the nominating committee for secretary, treasurer and board members. These position descriptions are online. You should obtain the consent of the person being nominated before submitting her name for consideration.

Questions and answers about the nomination process plus an online form can be found on the Women of the ELCA website at welca.org/nominations. Nominations will be accepted between July 30 and November 30, 2019. Nominations must be made online. Only nomination forms submitted online will be accepted.

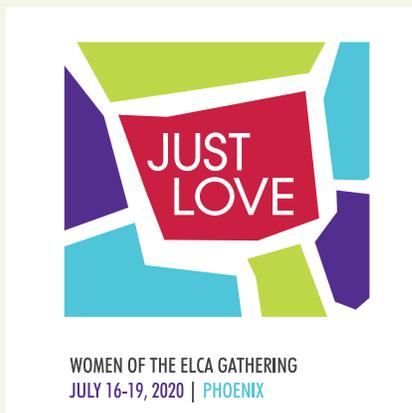
News Briefs

Gathering 2020 registration opens Sept. 30

Triennial gatherings bring Lutheran women together from across the church with life-changing workshops, worship, Bible study and more.

The Eleventh Triennial Gathering, July 16–19, 2020, will be no exception. Women will gather in Phoenix, Ariz., under the theme “Just Love.”

Registration opens September 30. Early-bird registration, through January 6, 2020, is \$325; after that registration is \$375. Day registration is \$200. Register at welca.org after September 30 or email women women.elca@elca.org for a registration form.



Interchange is going all digital in 2020

In 2020, *Interchange* is going digital. Beginning with the winter 2020 issue, you can download *Interchange* and *Intercambio* online at welca.org/publications. To sign up to receive the PDF copy, visit welca.org/publications and complete the Stay In Touch form. For more up-to-date news, please sign up for Bold Connections. The cost of printing and mailing *Interchange* requires this change.

Poetry of the Old Testament

In the fall—September, October and November—*Gather* subscribers will study selections of Old Testament poetry from Job, Psalms and Lamentations.

Drawing from the experiences of these ancient writers, readers will learn to look for God in times of deep emotions, such as joy, anger, celebration, depression, misunderstanding and contentment, finding hope and grace along the way.

The Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen is writing the series. Madsen is a freelance theologian and mother. She works with OMG: Center for Theological Conversation (omgcenter.com). For more information or to subscribe, visit gathermagazine.org.

Women of the ELCA interchange

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Dated material for immediate delivery

Summer 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, email Women.ELCA@elca.org or check the online calendar at welca.org under Events.

JULY

20 Upper Susquehanna (8E) SWO convention, Camp Mt. Luther, Mifflinburg, Penn.

AUGUST

2–3 Virginia (9A) SWO convention, First Lutheran Church, Norfolk, Va.

9–10 West Virginia-Western Maryland (8H) SWO convention, Bishop Hodges Pastoral Center, Huttonsville, W.V.

16–17 Lower Susquehanna (8D) SWO convention, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Lititz, Penn.

16–18 Central States (4B) SWO convention, Holiday Inn East, Wichita, Kan.

16–18 Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast (4F) SWO convention, Lutherhill Camp & Retreat Center, La Grange, Texas

23–25 Southwestern Texas (4E) SWO convention, Courtyard Marriott, Pflugerville, Texas

SEPTEMBER

13–14 Indiana-Kentucky (6C) SWO convention, Holiday Inn Airport, Indianapolis, Ind.

14 Metro New York (7C) SWO convention, The Wartburg, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

18–20 Sierra Pacific (2A) SWO convention, The Bishop's Ranch, Healdsburg, Calif.

19–20 Eastern Washington-Idaho (1D) SWO convention, St. John's Lutheran Church, Medical Lake, Wash.

19–22 Southeastern (9D) SWO convention, Music Road Resort, Pigeon Forge, Tenn.

20–21 Northwestern Minnesota (3D) SWO convention, Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, Minn.

20–21 South-Central Synod of Wisconsin (5K) SWO convention, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Verona, Wis.

20–21 Southern Ohio (6F) SWO convention, Ascension Lutheran Church, Cincinnati, Ohio

20–21 Northwestern Ohio (6D) SWO convention, Sauder Village, Archbold, Ohio

20–22 Northern Great Lakes (5G) SWO convention, Fortune Lake Camp, Crystal Falls, Mich.

21 Eastern North Dakota (3B) SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran Church, Valley City, N.D.

21 Southeastern Minnesota (3I) SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran Church, Owatonna, Minn.

21 Northern Illinois (5B) SWO convention, Trinity Lutheran Church, Moline, Ill.

21 New Jersey (7A) SWO convention, Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Rockaway Township, N.J.

26–28 Montana (1F) SWO convention, Bethel Lutheran Church, Great Falls, Mo.

27–28 North/West Lower Michigan (6B) SWO convention, Zion Lutheran Church, Cadillac, Mich.

27–29 Alaska (1A) SWO convention, Lutheran Church of Hope, Anchorage, Alaska

27–29 Arkansas-Oklahoma (4C) SWO convention, Faith Lutheran Church, Little Rock, Ark