

interchange

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As Christians, we must see Jesus in every person who crosses our border

by Elizabeth McBride

THEY LEFT THEIR NATIVE LAND OF MEXICO because of violence, and they wanted to provide a safe and healthy upbringing for their children. They know they'll get paid more in America though they'll likely need to work two or three jobs to provide for their families.

Often, these migrants become victims of unscrupulous bosses looking for inexpensive labor, and many don't have the resources to learn English to fight their own cause. They rely on faith communities willing to offer support.

They live in fear every day as they see their friends deported or sent to detention centers. And changing immigration laws and conflicting information don't make it easy for them to follow and obey policy.

All they want is a good life for their children.

These are the stories I heard on a Feb. 1–5 border immersion trip to El Paso, Texas, Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

I went with Jen DeLeon, director for justice for Women of the ELCA, Lisa Florin, president of WELCA's executive board, Mary Campbell, program director for AMMPARO, and four women who expressed interest through our Facebook page. AMMPARO (Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) is a strategy of the ELCA.

We saw first-hand the work of two ELCA churches that support migrants or asylum seekers on both sides of the U.S. and Mexico border: Cristo Rey Lutheran Church, El Paso, and Border Servant Corps, a ministry of Peace Lutheran Church, Las Cruces.

Through heart-wrenching stories, we learned about the complex issue of always-changing immigration laws.

Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey, El Paso

Located in central El Paso, the Cristo Rey community is a beacon for those who seek support as they navigate the immigration process. The church offers several programs that support people on both sides of the border: in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

The Rev. Rose Mary Guzman-Sanchez, pastor of Cristo Rey, feeds and clothes homeless migrants that stop by the church every day. While we were

in this
issue

Border immersion

7 Marks of Discipleship

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Interchange is a quarterly e-newsletter of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The e-newsletter equips and empowers leaders and participants to carry out the organization's mission and purpose. *Interchange* and *Intercambio*, the Spanish translation, are available for free download at welca.org under the Publications tab. You may also sign up to receive *Interchange*, *Intercambio*, and *Bold Connections*, the organization's monthly e-newsletter, by email at welca.org. Scroll to the bottom of the page and fill in the "Stay in Touch" field.

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Encouraging one another is the fifth mark of discipleship

Editor's note: *Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ so that others may believe. Over several issues, we have and will describe the seven marks of discipleship found in "Lessons for Today's Disciples" written by Valora K Starr. You can find the resource by visiting welca.org/resources and searching for its title.*

ENCOURAGING OTHERS is work disciples can only do in community. This lesson will examine Jesus' example of encouragement as a natural part of teamwork and motivation to get the job done.

Encouragement from others at just the right moment speaks volumes. It can mean the difference between giving up and knowing you're okay. The receiver knows someone cares and feels that she matters. Just as Jesus encouraged Peter to walk on water, we also are called to encourage others to stretch beyond what they think they can do. Encouragement in the faith community is not just a pep talk: It is an affirmation and blessed assurance of what God can do in our lives.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:11–24. Jesus left a trail of "encouraging" accounts for the disciples and the early church. This mark of encouraging is meant to be practiced in community. The practice appears to be about how we treat others, but it has less to do with others than it does with the change that occurs in ourselves. The act of encouraging another places the encourager in the other's shoes. A deep sensitivity for the other's situation and circumstance is important, and you make a conscious decision to let your actions be guided by the Holy Spirit. Your words of encouragement have a two-fold effect—they are affirming for the other and faith-building for you.

Reflect on the ways we are called to encourage others. Make a list and explain how you would carry out each one. Hint: There are 11 more directives in verses 12–18.

Respond: Describe how you are encouraging others.

Personal Reflection

This reflection will help you assess your practice of encouraging others. Be as honest and open as you can so that you get an accurate picture of where you are and where you want to go with this practice.

Assess the basics. Take a quick read of your practice of encouraging others.

- When do I encourage others?
- What prompts me to encourage others?
- Whom do I encourage?
- How do I encourage others?

Remember that when we encourage others, we are ourselves encouraged. Our faith grows and the community benefits.

As Christians, we must see Jesus in every person who crosses our border

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L-r: WELCA executive board president Lisa Plorin, New Hope Lutheran, Upham, N.D.; Mary Meierotto, Bethesda, Bayfield, Wis.; Laurie Tanner, Denver, Colo.; WELCA director for justice Jen DeLeon, Iglesia Luterana De La Trinidad, Chicago, Ill.; Diane Kaufman, Immanuel, Eau Claire, Wis.; Dinah Halpoka, Christ the King, University City, Texas; Mary Campbell, ELCA program director, AMMPARO; and Lois Griffiths, Good Shepherd, Harrisburg, Pa. (All photos by Elizabeth McBride)

there, she arranged for legal help for a migrant mother from Africa with blind twin babies.

Cristo Rey helps fund the Cristo Rey medical clinic in Anapra, a working-class neighborhood near Juarez, Mexico. Dr. San Juana Mendoza-Bruce provides medical and dental care for refugees seeking asylum for 30 pesos or about \$1.50.

The clinic is the only place that will help these asylum seekers. Even if they can find a factory job (earning about \$50 to \$60 a week), their medical care is often inadequate.

Our sister seeks asylum in a shifting political landscape

We also heard stories from people seeking asylum who fled their home country for safety in the United States.

We met one mother, age 21, who escaped El Salvador after she was raped by a family member. Eight-months pregnant, she fled with her young children and a partner, but her partner ended up abandoning them, and she was raped again during her escape.

Now, she's living in a shelter in the U.S. and waiting for a sponsor. She needs someone to stand up for her until she can plead her case for asylum before an immigration judge.

In January 2019, the current administration enacted Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP). Known by some

Six ways you can help:

1. Become a Welcoming Congregation and connect your congregation with the AMMPARO network in the ELCA ([elca.org/ammparo](https://www.elca.org/ammparo)). Currently, 170 congregations accompany migrants spiritually, physically, and financially.
2. Join the ELCA advocacy network: <https://www.elca.org/advocacy>
3. Pray. Pray for all who are strangers in a foreign land. Pray for safety for the child separated from their parents. Pray that one day they'll see their families again.
4. Vote for a candidate who does not support the criminalization of migrants and militarization of our southern border.
5. Don't share a social media meme about immigration until you understand the issue. Contact the ACLU in your area to learn what issues need visibility and advocacy.
6. Go on a border immersion trip to understand the issue. Learn how you and your congregation can make a difference in the lives of migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

as the "Remain in Mexico" policy, non-Mexican asylum seekers are deported to Mexico with no due process. Many "face kidnapping, sexual assault, exploitation, lack of basic necessities, abuse and other dangers in Mexico, with no meaningful access to due process in the United States," according to Human Rights Watch.

Border Servant Corps, Peace Lutheran Church, Las Cruces

We visited a shelter for asylum seekers at a Las Cruces armory. Before Remain in Mexico, the site housed more than 600 people a night. U.S. Border Control agents dropped off asylum seekers by the hundreds. When the city notified Border Control that shelters in the city were at capacity, agents dropped off asylum seekers at a bus stop in town.

Border Servant Corps works to support these migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers.

Our group also saw what happens in Federal U.S. District Court when people enter between the U.S. ports

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What is God calling you to do?

by Terri Lackey

A RECENT IMMERSION TRIP to the southern border of the United States was a “life-changing experience,” Women of the ELCA’s executive board president Lisa Plorin told women at the Conference of Presidents’ meeting in Chicago, Feb. 21–23.

When asked by presidents what God is calling her to do next, Plorin said she wants to “help AMMPARO help others.” [AAMPARO](#) (Accompany Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) is an ELCA strategy.

“Thanks to [Women of the ELCA] and the opportunities I’ve had, my life was impacted overwhelmingly three weeks ago when I was able to visit the border,” said Plorin. She ends her three-year term as president of the churchwide organization in July at the Eleventh Triennial Convention in Phoenix.

Plorin said that the [border immersion trip to El Paso, Texas; Las Cruces, New Mexico; and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico](#); was emotional, sad, joyful, and life-changing.

“I was so touched.”

State of ministry reports

The 64 presidents or their representatives heard state of the ministry reports from Plorin and Executive Director Linda Post Bushkofsky. They attended workshops about community organizing and immigration issues, learned about proposed constitutional changes (see page 6), heard staff reports, engaged in Bible study and worshipped together.

Reporting that financial challenges continue to exist, Bushkofsky said that both regular offerings and Thankofferings were down in fiscal year 2019.

She said the books have not closed in FY2019. But with one month to go, “conference and cluster offerings were down, and 20 percent of synodical women’s organizations had not sent in any regular offerings.”

“The organization cannot rely on how things have always been done if it is to grow and thrive into the future,” she said. “That is true in circles, in congregational units, in conferences and clusters, in synodical organizations, in



Conference of Presidents 2020 planning committee, l-r, Dixie Hanson, Southwest California; Linda Miranda, chair, Metro Chicago; Michelle Schaffer, Northwestern, Ohio.

the churchwide organization, within the executive board, and within the staff.

“If we rely on how things have been done before, we will surely bring about the demise of the organization,” she said.

Enliven congregational units

Meanwhile, Plorin challenged the presidents to enliven congregational units in their synods. “If I had a nickel for every time I heard ‘Our unit is not active,’ ‘Our members are old,’ or ‘The interest isn’t there,’ Katie’s Fund would be crazy flourishing.”

A missing link exists between units that are active and excited and those that don’t know what Women of the ELCA does, she said.

One of the organization’s free, downloadable resources, “Six Models for Mission,” (see [Six Models for Mission—English](#) and [Seis Modelos para la Mision—Espanol](#)) offers different ways to organize and revitalize a unit.

“Challenge yourself to get units active this year,” she said. “Make a goal to boost your active units by a certain percentage by this time next year.”

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What is God calling you to do?

continued

“I love this organization. It’s going to take some legwork, but we want to see it thrive, don’t we?” she asked.

Offerings and gifts

Presidents gave Florin a journal and a parting gift of \$1,870 to designate for a ministry of her choice. She’s chosen to give half to Women of the ELCA to use where needed most and half to AMMPARO.

During the Saturday evening worship service, presidents gave an offering of about \$7,000. Half will go to Women of the ELCA’s ongoing ministries, and half to AMMPARO,

ministries selected by the conference’s planning team.

The conference theme, “The Power of Community, was drawn from Hebrews 10:24-25: “The Power of Community.”



Terri Lackey is director for communication for Women of the ELCA.

(Read about the border immersion trip by Elizabeth McBride starting on page 1.)

Online treasurers’ training is a big hit

by Audrey Novak Riley

MORE THAN TWO DOZEN treasurers and presidents of synodical women’s organizations—incumbent, outgoing, incoming, and prospective—joined together online for SWO treasurers’ training in January.

Your churchwide organization uses Zoom for online video meetings, which is free for you to download and inexpensive for the churchwide organization to use. It works very much like Skype or FaceTime if you’ve ever used one of those to video chat with family or friends.

We’ve found that this is the most efficient and economical way to gather women from across the country for this training, which took up less than four hours of everyone’s time.

In previous years, the churchwide organization offered one annual training event in Chicago for newly elected treasurers, but that was not only inconvenient, it was expensive—at least \$7,000 each year (and sometimes much more). Our Zoom subscription is less than \$200 annually! So, offering the training via Zoom is much better stewardship for all of us, especially since we can offer it over and over again.

Would you be interested in online training?

As a congregational unit treasurer, would you be interested in an online video training session customized for your needs?

It would take only a little more than half an hour. If so, please email Audrey Riley, audrey.riley@elca.org, and leave a note to say so. If there is enough interest, we’ll put one together.



Audrey Novak Riley is director for stewardship for Women of the ELCA.

The churchwide executive board is monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic and will make a decision by April 25 regarding the possible postponement of the triennial convention and Just Love Gathering 2020.

Eleventh Triennial Convention to consider memorials, constitutional changes, elect board

THE ELEVENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION (2020) will be held July 14–16, 2020, in Phoenix, Arizona. The voting members of the convention—nominated by women in congregational units and elected at synodical conventions—will carry out the business of this organization.

They will consider many proposals relating to the governance of this organization in its three expressions. Also, they'll consider memorials from synodical organizations on topics including human trafficking, the “MeToo” movement, school shootings, and immigration, among others.

Voting members will elect churchwide officers and board members for the 2020–2023 triennium and engage in Bible study led by the Rev. Rebecca Boardman, who heads up Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The women of every congregational unit are invited to prayerfully consider making a generous Triennial Convention Offering (see page 8). The offering will be

divided equally between the ongoing churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA and those of Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest whose mission is “showing kindness, doing justice and serving those in need.”

A mailing to every congregational unit provides the simple details on how to make this contribution. Questions can be directed to Audrey Riley at 800-635-3522, ext. 2736 or at audrey.riley@elca.org.

Complete information about the triennial convention can be found at welca.org/convention. There you will find the proposed agenda, information about the seven business committees and more. The Convention Program and Reports, with reports from the Nominating Committee and the Memorials Committee, will be available there in early June.

Visitors are welcome at the convention and no advance registration is required. The convention is being held at the Sheraton Grand Phoenix, 340 N. 3rd Street, Phoenix, Ariz.

Voting members to decide on constitutional changes

VOTING MEMBERS at our Eleventh Triennial Convention, July 14–16, will decide on several important proposed changes to our constitutions. Many of these seek to make room for more flexibility in the way we live out our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ, some streamline our leadership structures, and some bring us into the 21st century.

If these changes are passed by the convention, they will go into effect immediately.

Below are some highlights.

Flexibility

Instead of mandating that every woman in leadership must be a participant in a unit, proposed constitutional language encourages each leader to be a participant in a unit. (She still must be a voting member of an ELCA congregation, however.)

Likewise, instead of mandating that every synodical women's organization must have clusters or conferences, proposed constitutional language encourages each synodical women's organization to foster clusters or conferences.

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Voting members to decide on constitutional changes

continued

The traditional titles for synodical women's organization (SWO) leaders are sometimes intimidating to possible candidates for leadership. Proposed language offers the option of calling these leaders chairs, co-chairs, coordinators, or the like. The only SWO officer who must keep the traditional title is the treasurer, to facilitate her work with banks and other outside entities.

Streamlining

Our churchwide constitution currently mandates that SWO boards must consist of a certain set number of people, and if the SWO wants to change that number, it must submit a formal request and wait for the churchwide executive board to approve the request. Proposed language does away with that—it merely says “three or more” board members, and each SWO board may make its own adjustments as circumstances require.

Our constitutions currently rule out electing two women to the SWO board from any one congregational unit; proposed language allows for the election of one officer and one board member from the same unit.

Proposed changes include streamlining the churchwide board as well. Currently the board has four officers and 17 other elected members, for a total of 21. Proposed language calls for four officers and 11 other elected members, for a total of 15. These 11 members would consist of one from each of the nine ELCA regions, plus two at-large members. Proposed language also expands and adjusts our recommendations for diversity and inclusion so that we don't recommend fractions of people.

Many synodical women's organizations struggle with the process of electing voting members to triennial



convention. Proposed language simplifies that thoroughly, calling for three voting members from each SWO: the president and two others. The proposed language takes into account our updated goals for diversity and inclusion in nominating and electing the members of this three-person delegation.

Into the 21st century

We recognize that our commitment to diversity and inclusion within our organization calls for updates to our constitutions from time to time. Proposed language now encourages the inclusion of women age 45 or younger and the inclusion of members of the LGBTQIA+ community in leadership, including in the election of voting members to the triennial convention.

Proposed changes make clear that board meetings need not involve travel. Many of us are happy to use videoconferencing (for example, Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, or the like) for meetings, and the proposed changes recognize that reality.

It took a lot of work

These proposed changes grew out of the recommendations of the exploratory committee whose charge was to seek ways to help our community of women created in the image of God stay healthy and growing far into the future. Our elected churchwide board pondered and considered and amended the committee's proposals over several meetings (some by videoconference). What you see here is the result of a lot of study, a lot of thought, and a lot of work. Our voting members in convention will have the final say on whether they go into effect.



Give generously to offerings at the Eleventh Triennial Convention and Gathering

WHENEVER AND WHEREVER WOMEN GATHER as a community created in the image of God, they give generously to promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world. Here's how you, your unit, and your synodical women's organization can participate in the offerings that will be received at our Eleventh Triennial Convention and Gathering 2020.

Triennial convention offering

At every triennial convention of Women of the ELCA, an offering is received during opening worship from the voting members, both as individuals and on behalf of the synodical women's organizations that elected them.

At our convention in Phoenix in July 2020, the offering will be divided equally between the ongoing ministries of the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest.

Voting members wishing to make individual offerings may give cash or bring a personal check made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Convention Offering" written on the memo line.

Voting members wishing to give on behalf of their synodical women's organization are asked to coordinate with their SWO treasurer and bring a check from the SWO's account, made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Convention Offering" written on the memo line. That way the offering can be properly credited to the synodical women's organization.

Triennial gathering offerings

Offerings will be received during both the opening and closing worship services of the triennial gathering in July 2020.

Opening Thankoffering service

The opening worship service will be a Thankoffering service. Our founders determined many years ago that Thankofferings are directed to the support of the ongoing ministries of the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA. Women in attendance may make Thankofferings on their own behalf or on behalf of their congregational units at this service.

Women wishing to make an individual Thankoffering may bring cash or a personal check made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Gathering Thankoffering" written on the memo line.

Women wishing to make a Thankoffering on behalf of their congregational unit are asked to coordinate with their unit treasurer and bring a check from the unit's account, made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Gathering Thankoffering" written on the memo line. That way your unit can be properly credited for the offering.



Closing Worship Service

The offering received during the closing worship service will be distributed as follows: 50 percent to support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA; 25 percent to support the Dream Center Phoenix; and 25 percent to support the ELCA's AMMPARO program.

Women wishing to make an individual offering may bring cash or a personal check made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Gathering Closing Worship" written on the memo line.

Women wishing to make an offering on behalf of their congregational unit are asked to coordinate with their unit treasurer and bring a check from the unit's account, made out to Women of the ELCA with "Triennial Gathering Closing Worship" written on the memo line. That way your unit can be properly credited for the offering.

Nominating committee submits candidates

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE met in Chicago Feb. 7-8, 2020, to submit a slate of 38 candidates for the churchwide executive board, including secretary and treasurer. President and vice president are nominated by ecclesiastical ballot.

The report of the nominating committee will appear in the Eleventh Triennial 2020 Convention Program and Reports that will be posted online by June 2020. Go to welca.org/convention and scroll to Nominations. Nominations are also accepted on the floor of the convention. Consult the proposed agenda for more information about floor nominations and voting times.



Participate in the Gathering 2020 Run, Walk and Roll

by Valora K Starr

EARLY SATURDAY MORNING, July 18, women and girls (and a few good men) will board buses for a quick ride to Cesar Chavez Park, the site of the 2020 5K Run, Walk and Roll fundraiser to benefit our health initiative, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls. The event will take place at the Gathering 2020 in Phoenix, July 16–19.

This year, we'll celebrate our health initiative's 15th year. We're offering more activities on the lawn, like tai chi, yoga, Zumba, and Bible study by the lake. Then, we'll continue the celebration that afternoon in the exhibit hall at the convention center.

This 5K-plus encourages additional fundraising to

support the ongoing and new work of the Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative.

If you are interested in the 5K, exercises, or Bible studies, the cost to participate is \$40 per person. That amount includes a limited-edition T-shirt. Sign up for the Saturday morning event when you register with the Gathering (welcatg.org).

Are you already registered? You can add the Run, Walk and Roll to your existing registration.

Not coming to the Gathering? We will miss you! But you can still participate in this pledged fundraiser. Email me (valora.starr@elca.org) with RWR+ in the subject line for ideas to design your participation at home, registration instructions, and pledge kit.

When you register, you'll receive additional information about fundraising for Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls.



Valora K Starr is director for discipleship for Women of the ELCA.

As Christians, we must see Jesus in every person who crosses our border

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Book drive

of entry. If caught entering more than once, the courts charge them with a felony. In the past, it was a misdemeanor. With a felony conviction, they have no chance to gain legal entry despite the danger they might be in their home country.

Vulnerable people

Through these stories from migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and those who care for them, we got a glimpse of the complex immigration issue.

As Christians—we must see Jesus in every person who crosses our border. Children are being separated from their families, and they’re sitting in a private prison with little concept of what is happening to them. Women are raped and abused while trying to flee to safety.

Anyone legally seeking asylum must enter at a U.S. port of entry. Asylum officers then conduct a credible-fear interview to determine if returning them to their country of origin would be dangerous. Almost 90 percent pass the U.S. credible fear test.

We must see Jesus in them. “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Mathew 25:40)



Elizabeth McBride is the director for intergenerational programs and editor of Cafe, Women of the ELCA’s online magazine for and with young adult women and their friends.

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.

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| APRIL | | |
| 17–18 Northwest Synod of Wisconsin (5H) SWO convention , Bethany Lutheran Church, Rice Lake, Wis. | 2 Southwestern Minnesota (3F) SWO convention , Redwood Area Community Center, Redwood Falls, Minn. | 12–14 North Carolina (9B) SWO convention , Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, N.C. |
| 18 LaCrosse Area (5L) SWO convention , Trinity Lutheran Church, Cashton, Wis. | 2 Metro Washington D.C. (8G) SWO convention , Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, Md. | 15–17 Northeastern Minnesota (3E) SWO convention , Sugar Lake Lodge, Cohasset, Minn. |
| 18 Allegheny (8C) SWO convention , Evangelical Lutheran Church, Duncansville, Pa. | 8–9 Northwestern Pennsylvania (8A) SWO convention , Olmsted Manor Retreat Center, Ludlow, Pa. | 20 Northeastern Iowa (5F) SWO convention , Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa |
| 18 Delaware-Maryland (8F) SWO convention , Augsburg Lutheran Home and Village, Gwynn Oak, Maryland | 16 Northeastern Pennsylvania (7E) SWO convention , Hope Lutheran Church, Tatamy, Pa. | 25–27 South Dakota (3C) SWO convention , First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls, S.D. |
| 25 Saint Paul Area (3H) SWO convention , Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minn. | JUNE | 26–27 Southeastern Iowa (8B) SWO convention , Hotel at Kirkwood Center, Cedar Rapids, Iowa |
| MAY | 6 Southeastern Pennsylvania (7F) SWO convention , St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Springfield, Pa. | 27 Western Iowa (5E) SWO convention , First Lutheran Church, Algona, Iowa |
| 1–2 Southwestern Pennsylvania (8B) SWO convention , Christ Our Shepherd Center, Greensburg, Pa. | 12–13 South Carolina (9C) SWO convention , St. Philip’s Lutheran Church, Newberry, S.C. | |

News briefs

Do you listen to Cafe's podcasts?

Cafe, our online magazine for and with young adult women, offers a podcast for each of its monthly issues.

Listen now to one or more of *Cafe's* podcasts for young adult women who want to build Community, participate in Advocacy, strengthen Faith, and strive toward Enlightenment (boldcafe.org).

Gather's summer Bible study on 'Just Love'



The Revs. Gladys Moore and Christa Compton are authors of *Gather's* 2020 summer Bible study, "Just Love." This three-session Bible study invites readers to consider how justice and love intersect. What does "just love" look like? How is this kind of love more than a sentimental or sanitized emotion, but is instead a love-in-action that seeks to

dismantle the various systems of sin that damage God's creation and harm God's people?

The Rev. Dr. Christa M. Compton is pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Chatham, N.J.; and The Rev. Gladys Moore is pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church, Summit, N.J.

Pastor Moore is leading *Gather's* summer Bible study, Just Love, at the Gathering 2020 in Phoenix, July 16–19. Visit welcatg.org for more information.

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 2019, 132 Faithful Friends gave a total of \$28,234 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 Faithful Friends? It's easy to do. Sign up with a credit card online at welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline, or download the form at 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.

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 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!