



# CELEBRATE BOLD WOMEN'S DAY

A resource from Women of the ELCA

**Women of the ELCA's mission is mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. We know that each woman will act boldly in a way that's unique to her, so we talk about each of us "finding our bold."**

Boldness comes in many forms. Some boldness is firm and quiet. Some is bright and loud. We want to help each other find that bold.

Bold Women's Day—observed annually on the fourth Sunday of February—celebrates all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Some women are bold in their unceasing prayers. Other women are bold in their service to those in need. Still other women are bold in their advocacy or through their hospitality. Whether we live out our bold story of faith in the workplace, family home or community, our faith compels us to make a difference in the lives of others. It's all about living out our baptismal call, about being a disciple of Christ.

"Sin boldly" is a popular Luther quotation, but that statement needs to be understood in its full context. Luther recognized that we are sinful in this life even as we respond to our baptismal call to discipleship. "Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong," says another translation, "but let your trust in Christ be stronger" yet and rejoice in Christ who conquers sin and death.

We Lutherans have a theology that gives us great freedom to be risk takers. Our ability to act boldly is rooted in our baptism and continually enabled, empowered and supported by God's grace.

## How to use this resource

*Use this resource as a starting point in planning your annual observance of Bold Women's Day. We encourage you to celebrate Bold Women's Day on the fourth Sunday of February, but if another day is a better fit, that will be fine. Pull together a small planning team, including women of different generations. Provide each with a copy of this resource in advance, and have everyone read through the resource before your first meeting.*

*Start with "When you gather in community" and "Bold program resources available." Feel free to mix, match and be creative, designing an event that is exactly right for the women who will gather.*

*Women in your congregation may also want to observe Bold Women's Day as individuals. You might suggest ways for women to do that. Take some of the ideas in "Ways to celebrate on your own" and turn them into a newsletter article, a bulletin insert or a Sunday morning announcement (or all of those) as a way to invite individual participation. Once your celebrations have taken place, send an e-mail to Women.ELCA@elca.org or post on Facebook (Facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA).*

### **When you gather in community**

Create an illustrated timeline of women's leadership in your congregation. Post a long sheet of paper (6' to 10' long) in your fellowship hall. Begin with the date your congregation was formed (or an earlier date, if ministry had occurred before then) and note the decades along the top of the sheet. Invite members to add dates and activities of women in your congregation, such as the first time a woman was elected to the congregational council or the first time a woman served as a lay reader or assisting minister. You'll have fun recalling these events, and the younger people in your congregation might be surprised at when some of these firsts took place.

Discover stories about the women in your congregation who have contributed greatly to ministry in your community but with little recognition. Interview these women. Document their lives and ministries. This would make a great oral history project, especially for high school students. Consider sharing their stories in a printed or video format, perhaps on the congregation's website. This would be a real gift to your congregation.



Books provide great jumping-off points for a Bold Women's Day observance. Pull together a display of books about bold women from your church library.

For congregations with book clubs, select three books about bold women and meet in February to discuss them (perhaps one a week for three weeks). Then culminate your literary discussions with a meal together on Bold Women's Day itself. Don't have a book club? Try one out for February.

Hold a family night in your congregation. Start with a meal, then invite families to discuss questions together. Use these or come up with your own: What's the boldest thing someone in your family has done? Whom do you admire for his or her boldness? What does acting boldly on your faith in Jesus Christ mean to you? Create a bold chain: Using construction paper cut into strips, have family members write their responses to these questions, one answer per strip. Have each family construct a short chain, then have the families connect their chains as a witness to their boldness.

Arrange a viewing of a documentary film. Hold a discussion afterward. Use our *Katie Luther: A Bold Life of Faith* program resource to learn what you have in common with Katie.

Honor the women in your congregation with a Bold Women's Day certificate.

Invite the women from the campus ministry group at your local college out for coffee. Find out what you have in common. Pray with and for these women. Tell them about *Café* ([boldcafe.org](http://boldcafe.org)) and invite them to subscribe.

Sponsor a fair-trade fair.



Plan a noon tea, bake sale, car wash, spa day or flea market. Contribute the money you raise to Women of the ELCA.

Honor women from your community who have acted boldly for the community's sake. Hold a special celebration in their honor.

## Ways to celebrate on your own

Reflect on the question, "Who have been the bold women in my life?" Use *Journaling: Create Your Own Sacred Writing* as a guide in putting your reflections in written form. Make a gift to Katie's Fund ([welca.org/katiesfund](http://welca.org/katiesfund)) in honor of a bold woman who has inspired you. If you can, let her know what a difference she made in your life. Or invite her out to lunch and tell her why you think she's bold.

Capture your own life story. Reflect on the question, "How have I acted boldly on my faith in Jesus Christ?" Record this in some way—in a journal, a blog post, a video, a letter to your future children or grandchildren.

Use your favorite search engine and learn more about some bold women. Start with Elizabeth Fedde (1850-1921), a Lutheran deaconess who established the Norwegian Deaconess Home and Hospital in New York, and Dr. Anna Sarah Kugler (1856-1930), who was the first of several female doctors sent as Lutheran medical missionaries to India.

**How are you celebrating Bold**

**Women's Day? Send an e-mail**

**to [Women.ELCA@elca.org](mailto:Women.ELCA@elca.org) or post**

**on Facebook ([Facebook.com/](https://www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA)**

**[WomenoftheELCA](https://www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA)).**

Some other individual ideas include:

Donate a book about a bold woman to your church or community library.

Read the biography of a bold girl or woman. Try a biography of Katharina von Bora Luther or Hildegard of Bingen. For a contemporary woman, read *This Child Will Be Great*, a memoir by Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the first woman elected president of an African nation. Your librarian can suggest others.

Commit to three new ways you can act boldly on your faith in Jesus Christ during the coming year.

## Bold program resources

Several of the Women of the ELCA resources on our website, [welca.org](http://welca.org), speak to being bold. Visit the resources page ([welca.org/resources](http://welca.org/resources)) to download the free PDFs. Then print and photocopy for all who participate. Be sure to read through the sections "How to use this resource" to help in planning your event.

### **Finding Your Bold: An Ice-Breaker**

Explore what "bold" is and determine your best bold. This is the perfect resource for opening a retreat or a celebration of Bold Women's Day.

### **A Bold Life of Faith: Katharina von Bora Luther**

There's a little bit of Katie in all of us. Learn about Katie while learning more about yourself. (1 one-hour session)

### **Act Boldly bookmark**

Make this easy-to-assemble bookmark for yourself or as a group project. It's a reminder of the mission of Women of the ELCA.

### **Act Boldly for Health**

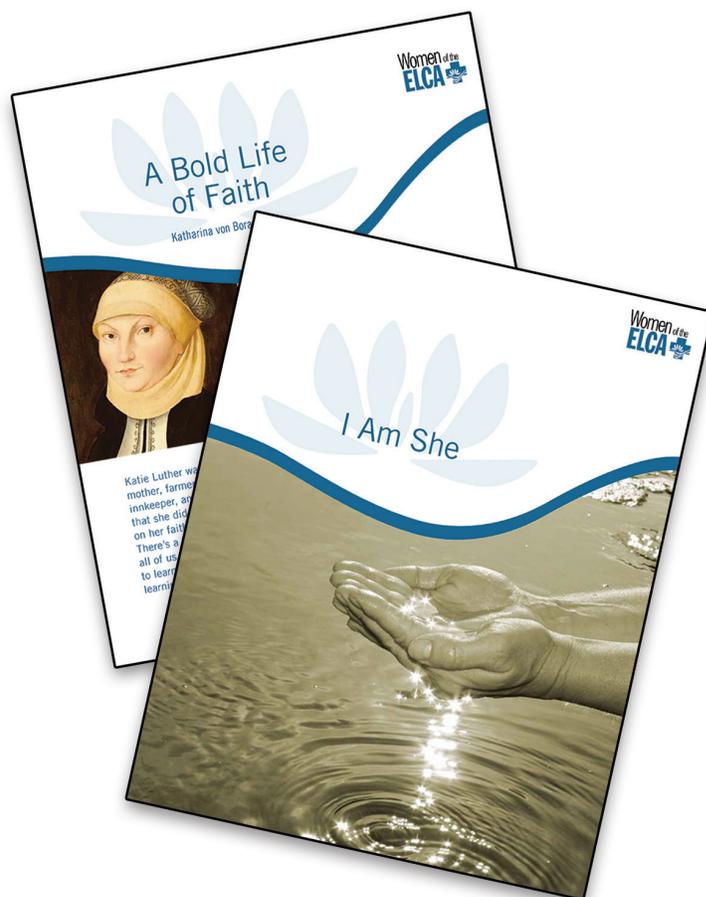
This three-part Bible study supports "Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls," the Women of the ELCA health initiative. (3 one-hour sessions)

### **Act Boldly for Mission**

This three-part Bible study explores how women can boldly take part in God's mission to love, bless and save the world. (3 one-hour sessions)

### **I Am She**

This multi-session resource, perfect for a weekend retreat, helps participants discover their "best bold" and put it into action.



## A Litany of Boldness

L: O Creative God, you made us in your image.

**C: You call us into discipleship in Jesus Christ.**

L: You empower us through the Holy Spirit.

**C: Let your loving kindness be upon us as you accept our prayers.**

L: O God of our ancestors, we remember the bold witness of our foremothers who paved the way for all women, lay and ordained.

**C: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: O Holy One, who breathes life into us all, we raise before you the bold women among us today.

**C: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: For those who pray, for those who parent, for those who study, for those who advocate,

**C: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: For those who laugh, for those who share, for those who extend hospitality, for those who smile,

**C: We give you thanks, O God.**

L: O Gracious One, forgive us when we are too timid to live up to the boldness you have placed within us.

**C: We pray to you, O God.**

L: O Gracious One, enable us to recognize, honor and support the boldness you have placed within others.

**C: We pray to you, O God.**

L: O God of infinite possibility, grant to us all the opportunity to act boldly on our faith in Jesus Christ.

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: O God of abundant life, grant to us all emotional, physical and spiritual wholeness so that we might best serve others in your name.

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: O God of strength, give us courage, hope and open hearts, that we might experience expanding possibilities and grow through change.

**C: Hear our prayer.**

L: Nurturing God, you have inspired and empowered women throughout all ages.

**C: Give us the courage and wisdom to act boldly on our faith in you, O creating, redeeming and sustaining One. Amen.**

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## A Litany of Thanks for Bold Women

*This litany may be used during congregational worship and women's organization events, or at other times and places. It would be fitting to share the "Leader" role among several women. If there are musicians in the group, they might softly play background music as the leaders speak each bidding and then accompany the response with a brighter harmony. Women and girls speaking the responses may answer in any or all of the roles they live: For example, one may speak up as married woman, mother, and grandmother; another as young woman, sister, and single woman.*

*Members of the assembly may lift up other bold women in prayer near the end of this litany. Biblical women not otherwise named, other women in church history, and bold women in your own community may be named here.*

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Leader: Lord our God, we give thanks today for the witness of bold women. From the earliest times until today and on into the future, bold women show all of us how to live as God's beloved children in God's beloved creation, carrying out our baptismal call to work for justice and peace for all God's creatures.

Leader: For Eve, mother of us all, sinful and beloved, we say:

**All: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For Miriam, who danced beside the Red Sea, we say:

**Young women: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For Mary, mother of Jesus, who pondered the angel's words in her heart, we say:

**Mothers: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For Mary Magdalene, first to hear the voice of the Risen Christ, we say:

**Single women: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For Naomi, who rejoiced in her grandson Obed, we say:

**Grandmothers: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For the Syro-Phoenician woman, bold enough to challenge Jesus himself for her child's sake:

**Daughters: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For Mary and Martha of Bethany, who served the Lord together in their different ways, we say:

**Sisters: Thank you, Lord!**

Leader: For the persistent widow, who would not rest until she won justice, we say:

**Widows: Thank you, Lord!**

## A Litany of Thanks for Bold Women (continued)

Leader: For Katharine von Bora Luther, who ran to embrace change in her world, we say:

### Married women: Thank you, Lord!

Leader: There have been bold women all around us on our way, if only we look for them. For whom do we thank the Lord today? Name her aloud and let us thank God for her witness.

(Members of the assembly may speak the names of other bold women aloud, briefly describing her witness. After each one, the group responds:)

**All: Thank you, Lord!**

(When the group is done naming bold women, the leader concludes:)

Leader: For the witness of all bold women, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, Lord our God, we thank you and we praise you. Lord our God, let their boldness flourish in our own hearts as we live out our baptismal call to serve you and our neighbor, with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength.

**All: Thank you, Lord! Alleluia, Amen!**

**Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology. Will you help continue Katie's legacy?**

[welca.org/katiesfund](http://welca.org/katiesfund)

