

Southwestern Minnesota

Women of the ELCA The Communicator



Saturday, May 4, SWO Convention at Gloria Dei in Redwood Falls

Theme: "Be the Light"

Theme Verse: Psalm 82:4

"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Theme Hymn: "Christ Be Our Light"

Registration begins at 8 a.m.

The Quilt truck will be back!

It will be open from 7:30a.m. to 10:30a.m..



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The next meetings of the SW MN SWO board
Friday, May 3 Gloria Dei in Redwood Falls

“A Word from Your Synodical President”

A WORD FROM YOUR PRESIDENT...

Dear Friends....

It's that time of the year when our church units, conferences and synod boards are calling potential friends to become officers and board members. The voting usually takes place at our Spring meetings, Gatherings and Convention. If you get the call to be on the ballot, what will you say? “NO”, “MAYBE” or “I DON'T HAVE TIME"! Just take some time to think about these responses. God says in the bible, “that He will not give us more than what He knows, we can handle.”

“NO”, do you mean you don't want to help spread God's word? You don't want to work on or for projects that help others.

“MAYBE”, you need to pray about the call. God always knows what is in our hearts. He knows you can do the job. So, pray and then say “YES!”

“I DON'T HAVE TIME”, we are all busy. Some of us more than others. Most of us on these boards are getting older, but until we can't possibly walk anymore, we go and do our parts, for the Glory of our God.

Now, I want you to sit back and think for a few minutes. What if we are praying to God and He said, “NO, MAYBE, or I DON'T HAVE TIME.”

Now you may be wondering why I am writing this letter in this way. Well....the nominating committee is now calling and your phone could be ringing, if it already hasn't. Please remember to pray about the call and job you are being informed about. Serving on one of these boards is an awesome experience, and you will feel the Holy Spirit working as you attend meetings. You will make lifelong friends. You will feel joy and sorrow with each other. So, PLEASE come and join us, because “God is calling YOU”. You are in my prayers. Let us each play a part in God's plan.

Please take time to read the rest of this communicator, there are many dates to keep up with. The dates for the eight Conference Gatherings are listed. Please feel free to attend other conferences than your own. There are going to be some wonderful speakers.

The synodical board is still working on the 2024 Convention in Redwood Falls at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church. The informational packets have been sent to all the churches, conference

presidents and secretaries. Be sure to check with your church office. If your church or organization did not receive one, please let me or Gwen Degner know.

I challenge each of you to come to the Convention on May 4th, 2024 in Redwood Falls, and bring husbands, friends, sisters, cousins, daughters, granddaughters, and church sisters. Make it a joyful trip for all.

God's blessing to each of you,

*Ilene Penk,
your SWO President*

Just for Today By: VIRGINIA ELY

Just for today I will try to live through this day only,

and not tackle my whole life problem at once....

Just for today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln

once said, that “Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.”

Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind.... I will not be a mental loafer.

I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to

my own desires. I will take my “luck” as it comes, and fit myself to it.

Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out. I will do at least two things I don't want to do- just for exercise.

I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt...

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will... not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

Just for today I will have a program... I will save myself from two pests: worry and indecision.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax.... I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for today.... I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.



Message from our SW MN Synod Minister

A Message from Pastor Heather

In the very first verses of the book of Genesis, we hear the story of creation: "When God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was



complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day."

In the very first actions of creation, as darkness covered the face of the deep, God called out and created light. In the midst of chaos and darkness and wind, God speaks: "Let there be light" and there was light. The very first act of creation calls light into being and we hear that God saw that the light was good!

As spring arrives in MN, we know how much we appreciate this gift of light! We love the longer days that give us more light each day. We love the feeling of the sun's warmth. We are grateful for God's gift of light.

This year's theme for the Synod WELCA Convention is all about light: BE THE LIGHT! God created light, the light of the sun and the moon, the light that shines in each of us. You as God's people help carry God's light into our world.

When you sew quilts for people in need, you carry God's light. When you serve funeral lunches to provide strength to those who are grieving, you bring God's light. When you gather in Bible study and have a moment of new understanding, you glimpse God's light.

BE the light, Women of the ELCA here in SW MN! Carry God's light! Help make our world a kinder and more grace-filled place by the light that you bring!

Pastor Heather Culuris

SW MN Synod Minister for Engaging Leaders

Email: Heather.culuris@swmnelca.org

EDITORS CORNER:

Note for Units and Conferences: Please send me special Items that may be of interest to others in our Synod. I don't guarantee to have room in the Communicator or on the Website for everything but, I will try to put out there what I can. Stay in contact with your Liaisons or send items direct to swmnelca@gmail.com

Jane Tongen

To all Treasurers 2 Important items for you.

1. If you got a notice about Secretary Of State about filing Beneficiary. We do not have to do that because we are a "non profit religious organization." But just a reminder you should have your WELCA group sign up every year under the sos.state.mn.us website.

2. If any of you are going to be at the Convention in May, I am asking for help to count after the offering. God Bless

Karen Quistorff SW MN WELCA Treasurer



Theme Verse: Psalm 82:4

"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

"BE THE LIGHT"

**Join us for the Convention.
Saturday, May 4**



BOARD COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS 2023-2024

MISSION ACTION (Stewardship) Noreen Beranek, Carolyn Enstad, & Carmen Maus

MISSION COMMUNITY (Justice) Connie Dallmann, Kathy Harwick, Barb Borth

MISSION GROWTH (Discipleship) Branda Danielson, Karen Skarphol

SYNOD NOMINATING COMMITTEE LIAISON: Kathy Harwick

ADMINISTRATION/FINANCE Ilene Penk, Jane Leitzman, Gwen Degner, Karen Quistorff

Mission Community/Justice

LIVE WELL AGE WISELY

With Laura Thomas, Director of Aging Well at Prairie Five Community Action Council

The statistics are sobering: at least one in ten adults over the age of 60 is a victim of elder abuse and the majority of the abuse is perpetrated not at the hands of strangers but by family members who are loved and trusted. Elder abuse can take many forms including physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, maltreatment, or financial exploitation and often it is many of those types at the same time.

It may look like a grandson calling his grandma and bullying her for money to support his spending habits. She doesn't want to disappoint him and loves him but deep down knows that she is being taken advantage of. It may happen in a facility, for example, medications continuing to go missing from a loved one's room or a constant high level of confusion around the older adult's care.

The Executive Director of the Minnesota Elder Justice Center, Amanda Vickstrom, explained that often when older adults or their loved ones come to the realization that abuse may be occurring, they don't know who to turn to, aren't sure where to go and often feel uncertain about whether they will be believed. "It's essential and critical that they have someone who listens to them and can walk them through their options." She explained that when someone calls the Minnesota Elder Justice Center, they are always taken seriously.

Although the Center is located in St. Paul, their helpline is available to anyone statewide. The number is 651-440-9300. The helpline description says, "Help is just a phone call away for elders or vulnerable adults and those who care about them. Minnesota Elder Justice Center advocates can provide support and empathetic listening, help you find resources or access to legal information, and assist you with planning next steps."

Not only do they provide services for victims and loved ones but they have robust public education opportunities and trainings for a wide range of professionals including long term care staff, law enforcement, attorneys, and bankers. Topics include what to look for and clues elder abuse may be taking place and what to do if they suspect it is happening.

Some trainings are eligible for CEU or CLE credits. Their website at elderjusticemn.org has wonderful resources available such as "How to Get Help," "How to Talk to a Loved One," and "How to Make a Report" as well as more details about the different types of elder abuse and what it may look like.

The Minnesota Elder Justice Center is an independent non-profit organization and is not able to receive reports for investigation. If you have an immediate concern and would like to make a formal report of suspected abuse or maltreatment, please call the Minnesota Adult Abuse Reporting Center toll free at 844-800-1574. This is a statewide number available 24 hours a day and reports can be made anonymously.

In a video on the Minnesota Elder Justice Center's website, a board member commented that often as people discover more issues or clues that they felt believed less and less when they raised concerns. It is reassuring to know that there is an organization committed to making sure that concerns of abuse are taken seriously and addressed appropriately!

Submitted with permission by: Kathy Harwick
Community/Justice Committee member

SAVE THE DATE

WHAT 18th Annual Minnesota World Elder Abuse Awareness Day Conference

WHEN June 13th, 2024

WHERE Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center
Brooklyn Center, MN

We Must Care for and Protect our Elders,
They are what we will one day be!



Mission Action/Stewardship

Mission Action/Stewardship

Take my life, and let it be Consecrated, Lord to thee;
 Take my moments and my days, Let them flow in ceaseless praise.
 Take my hands, and let them move At the impulse of thy love;
 Take my feet and let them be Swift and beautiful for thee.
 Take my love; my Lord I pour At thy feet its treasure-store;
 Take myself, and I will be Ever, only, all for thee.



This hymn sums it up. Life, hands, feet, and love are the keys for “Mission In Action”.

In-Kind Offering Reporting Form will be in the convention Packet you will be receiving soon. First page is for donations going to Lutheran World Relief - bring to convention. The second page is for local donations and to whom given during the last year.

You may email that form “Donations to Other Causes and Other Projects” to: naberanek@gmail.com before the convention. You may include donations from June 1, 2023 to present day. You will be given credit for them.

Thank you for all that you do and have done.

I do hope you take the opportunity to attend the Spring Gatherings in your conference.

I also hope you will take the opportunity attend the 2024 SW MN SWO Convention at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Redwood Falls on May 4th. Come and "Be the Light".

Let your light shine!

Noreen Beranek Mission Action/Stewardship Committee



Mission Growth/Discipleship

Prayer Journals

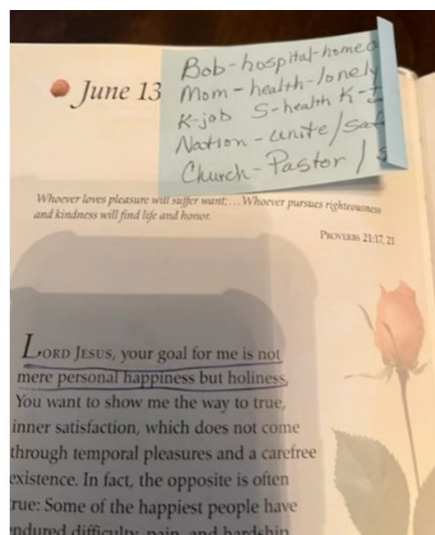
Martin Luther wrote beautiful prayers for morning and evening. He said prayer should be our first business in the morning and the last business at night. So, how's your prayer life?

At different ages and stages of life, our prayer life varies. As a young mother with 4 kids to get off to school, then running off to work myself, errands, carpool driving, cooking. Cleaning, helping my spouse (I know you can relate!), prayer time was mostly fast. Only in the evenings was there more time to pray. We would sneak in prayer while driving, cleaning, or whenever we could. Now, with my gray hair and quiet house, it looks a little different. I can sit peacefully at my table, read my Bible or devotion, and spend time in prayer. Both methods work! Anyway, any time, prayer works!

Do you have a prayer journal? I have had several options over the years. I have used an old spiral notebook to list prayer topics. I had a daily prayer book in which I put sticky notes of prayer concerns. It was good to look back to see what I was praying about six months ago and send up prayers of thanks for answered prayers. One of my favorites was an unlined notebook in which I doodled with colored pencils while I prayed. Color makes me happy. I looked online and there are several free and purchasable prayer journal resources if you want to get fancy. But I also noticed that there were some resources which took the joy out of praying. A calendar on which you were supposed to check off your praying task. Prayer needs to be from our heart, soul, and faith not just another task to put on our schedule. So, if you explore resources, get some that make you feel good, not regimented.

Try to get your congregation praying. At our church this year, we had Lenten prayer partners. For many this was a good idea, because it had a time span. We put our names into the box if we were interested and drew out the name of someone for whom to pray during Lent. You can reveal who you are praying for or not. Maybe you could get a prayer partner program going within your circle by having a prayer partner for a year. Let it be a choice to participate. But the most important part is to PRAY! Sending prayers to you for a meaningful year as you work to serve your church, the community, and the world.

Brenda Danielson Mission Growth/Discipleship Committee



Highlights & Special Items



OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

“As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.”

A prayer for the people of Israel and Palestine.

We pray—

That weapons of war be laid down
That walls of separation be dismantled
That prisoners be released
That demonizing of “the other” cease
That political leaders seek the good of all people in Palestine and Israel.

Prayer for the people in the Ukrainian and Russia

Pray for God’s protection. Pray for the safety of people on both sides of this border. Ask God for their physical protection but also their spiritual protection— Ask him to help people seek the truth during the conflict.

A Prayer for after Easter

Jesus, keep convincing me that you are the resounding “Yes!” to every promise God has made through the prophets—not just with respect to your cross, but also to your crown ([2 Cor. 1:20](#)). Things in our world are not as they appear. Having risen from the dead, you are now making all things new. You are sovereign over everything. Faith, not fear, is the order of *this* and every day. Amen

What is Katie’s Fund?

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.

2122: Growing Katie’s Fund for the next 100 years

is a one-million-dollar campaign for Katie’s Fund that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry.

2122

Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years

CONFERENCE LIAISONS 2023-24

CROW RIVER (CR): Connie Dallmann

GLACIAL RIDGE (GLR): Gwen Degner

GREAT RIVER (GRV): Jane Leitzman and Barb Borth

LAC QUI PARLE (LQP): Kathy Harwick

LAKELAND (LL): Carmen Maus

MINNESOTA VALLEY (MV): Brenda Danielson

PRAIRIE (PR): Carolyn Enstad

SCENIC VALLEY (SV): Noreen Beranek

SHETEK (SK): Karen Skarphol

WATONWAN RIVER (WR): Ilene Penk

Deborah 'Deb' Ann Nied

passed away Nov. 16th 2023 at age of 70. Surviving is a daughter, a son and a sister, and extended family

Deb served on the SW MN Synodical Women's Board from 1990 to 1994.

A Celebration of Life is planned for Saturday, April 13, 2024 at her son's home in Big Lake MN. Joe Nied, 12140 - 10080 Avenue SE, Big Lake, MN 55309

<https://www.cookcountynews-herald.com/>

Resources for Women of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA Website:

(Includes a wealth of resources for ministry, action, programming and study)

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

Bold Café (online magazine):

<https://www.boldcafe.org/>

Bold Connections

(monthly e- newsletter):

[Women of the ELCA: Lutheran Women,](#)

Convention Offerings

forms and checks may be brought to the convention or mailed to: Karen Quistorff ahead of time.

Offering Objectives:

--50% to Terebinth Refuge

--50% to Churchwide

Women Gifts cards to Target,

Walmart, CVS, and Walgreens will

be collected for the women served by Terebinth Refuge.

Katie's Cans

Bring your loose change for Katie's Fund. Cans will be on our tables at lunch.

Gather Magazine

(subscription needed):

<https://www.gathermagazine.org/>

Daily Grace (Daily email devotions):

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/category/daily-grace>

FAITHFUL FRIENDS

"Faithful Friends" is an easy way for you to support Women of the ELCA – automatically! You can start giving online right now.

[Evangelical Lutheran Church in America \(elca.org\)](https://www.elca.org/)

"[Faithful Friends](#)" supports the Women of the ELCA general fund, which makes it possible for your church-wide organization to act quickly and flexibly in response to any need that may arise.



You are Called to be Faithful Friends

2024 SW MN SWO Convention



Saturday, May 4, 2024

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church

301 North Lincoln Street, Redwood Falls, MN 56283



Theme: "Be the Light"
Theme Verse: Psalm 82:4

Theme Hymn: "Christ, Be Our Light"

Opening Worship with Holy Communion
Rev. Heather Culuris officiating

Guest Speaker: Aliyah Ewing, Terebinth Refuge

Registration Fee: \$40.00

Note: There will be a truck for In-Kind Offerings this year.

- Convention Offerings: 50% to Churchwide Women, 50% to Terebinth Refuge
- In-Kind Donations of gifts cards to Target, Walmart, Walgreens, and CVS will be collected for Terebinth Refuge.
- Katie's Cans available – Bring your loose change for Katie's Fund.

Convention Schedule

7:30 – Truck opens,
8:00 – Registration begins
9:00 – Opening Worship
4 p.m. – Convention Closes

Women ^{of the} **ELCA**



CONVENTION REGISTRATION

Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization
of Women of the ELCA

Saturday, May 4, 2024

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 301 N. Lincoln St., Redwood Falls, Minnesota

Please type or print clearly.

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____ E-MAIL _____

CONGREGATION & CITY _____

CONFERENCE _____

Please circle the one that applies to you: VOTING MEMBER VISITOR CONFERENCE PRESIDENT

***Note: Conference President registration is paid by the Synod Board. If you have circled Conference President you do not need to send any payment – just the completed registration form.*

*(The Conference Vice President qualifies **IF** she is coming in the president's place – make that note here _____)*

ALL registrations DUE BY APRIL 22, 2024

Do you have special dietary needs? _____

REGISTRATION FEE: \$40.00

*Cost includes:
registration, coffee time, noon lunch*

Refer all registration questions to:

Karen Quistorff
karenquistorff.kq@gmail.com or 320-282-6368

Make checks to: SW MN WOMEN OF ELCA

**Send complete form and check to: Karen Quistorff, Convention Registrar
10704 Co. 95
Sauk Centre, MN 56378**

TRANSFERABLE BUT NOT REFUNDABLE

2024 Spring Conference Gatherings

Conference	Date/Time	Location	Program
Crow River	Saturday, April 20th Registration 8am Brunch at 8:30	Peace Lutheran, Cosmos	Speaker will be from Terebinth Refuge, a shelter for hope & healing.
Glacial Ridge	Monday, April 15 Registration 4:00 pm	Trinity Lutheran, Benson	Bits of Grace
Great River	Saturday April 6th 8:30 a.m.	Glendorado	To Be Announced
Lac Qui Parle	Tuesday April 16 9:30 a.m. Registration 9:00 a.m.	Garfield Lutheran, rural Madison	Speaker Kim Derich on mission work in Guatemala Little Blessings will sing
Lakeland	Not planned at this time		
Minnesota Valley	Saturday April 13 th Registration at 11:30 lunch at 12	Grace Lutheran in Brownton	To Be Announced
Prairie	Saturday, April 20, 8:30 a.m.	Bethany Lutheran, Arco	theme is "ANGELS AMONG US". Our speaker will be Scott Gottschalk
Scenic Valley	This is a Change Thursday April 25, 2024 Registration 5 p.m	St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Evan	Presentation by a woman who is ex- periencing declining eyesight, and about how she is learning to navigate her new situation.
Shetek	Saturday, April 20 th snow date April 27 th 9:30 am to noon	Jasper Evangelical Lutheran Church, Jasper	Stephanie Darnell speaking on Human Trafficking.
Watowan River	Not planned at this time		

Please reach out to your Conference Officers if you would like more information about Gatherings.

SYNODICAL BOARD 2023-2024

President:

ILENE PENK

11168 Hwy. 15, Brownton 55312
320.510.1261 ilenepenk45@gmail.com
Grace Lutheran/Brownton
Minnesota Valley Conference
Elected 2023 for one year term
Served 1 year-with reelection in 2024 for 2 yr. term

Vice-President:

JANE LEITZMAN

30655 Melanie Way, St. Joseph, MN 56374
320.291.6730(Cell) 32.363.4386(Home)
jane.leitzman@gmail.com
Salem Lutheran
Great River Conference
*Appointed 2023
Serve 1 yr. with re-election 2024 of 1 year

Secretary:

GWEN DEGNER

408 – 8 th St. N., Benson 56215
701.261.8920 gwen.degner@gmail.com
Trinity Lutheran/Benson
Glacial Ridge Conference
Elected 2023 for two year term
Served 2 year-with reelection in 2025 for 1 yr. term

Treasurer:

KAREN QUISTORFF

46021 County Road 182, Sauk Center, MN 56378
320.282.6368 quistorffk@gmail.com
First Lutheran/Sauk Center
Great River Conference
Elected 2023 – to serve 1 yr. With re-election
For 2 years in 2024

Board Members At Large:

CONNIE DALLMANN

1385 Jefferson St. SE, Hutchinson, MN 55350
320.583.2311 cjdallmann@gmail.com
Peace Lutheran/Cosmos
Crow River Conference
Elected 2023
Serve 2 yr. with re-election 2023 for 1 yr.
May be re-elected for 1 yr. in 2024

NOREEN BERANEK

P O Box 83, Gibbon 55335
507.834.6817 naberanek@gmail.com
Augustana Lutheran/Gibbon
Minnesota Valley Conference
Re-elected 2022 – serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.
Total years served in 2024: 4 years

At this time there is one open
Board Member At Large position

CAROLYN ENSTAD

25463 Co. Rd. 7, Walnut Grove 56180
507.822.0506 dcenstad@mvtvwireless.com
Old Westbrook Lutheran/Westbrook
Shetek Conference
Elected 2022 – serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

BRENDA DANIELSON

304 Polar Circle, Arlington 55307
952.956.2954 (Cell) 507.964.1021 (Home)
danielson.brenda6@gmail.com
Zion Lutheran/Arlington
Minnesota Valley Conference
Elected 2022 – serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

CARMEN MAUS

1408 – 40 th St. SE, Murdock 56271
320.424.0272 carmen.m.maus@gmail.com
Kerkhoven Lutheran/Kerkhoven
Lakeland Conference
Elected 2022 – serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2024 of 2 yrs.

KAREN SKARPHOL

1972 Bud Road, Windom, MN 56101
507.831.5540(Home) 507.822.0785(Cell)
jkskarp@windomnet.com
American Lutheran/Windom
Shetek Conference
Elected 2023 – serve 2 yrs. with re-election in 2025 of 2 yr.

KATHY HARWICK

724 – 7 TH Ave.,Madison, MN 56256
320.598.3268(Home) 320.361.0243(Cell)
kbearalive@live.com
Faith Lutheran/Madison
Lac Qui Parle Conference
Elected in 2023 – serve 2 yrs. With re-election For 2 yrs.in 2025

BARB BORTH

2218 – 10 TH AVE S
St. Cloud, MN 56301
320.492.3590
mamaborth@gmail.com
Atonement Lutheran/St.Cloud
Great River Conference
Appointed in 2024- with election 2024 to serve 1 year

SW MN Synod Staff Liaison:

PASTOR HEATHER CULURIS

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heather.culuris@swnelca.org

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