



Reflections...

A Newsletter of the Women of the ELCA + Northern Great Lakes Synod

GREETINGS FROM MARY ELLEN PERKINS, SWO PRESIDENT



OBSERVING LENT

This season of Lent is a time intended for self-reflection and repentance, engaging in prayer, fasting and charitable giving. We thus prepare ourselves for the observance of Jesus' death and the celebration of His resurrection.

The Northern Great Lakes SWO is also engaged in a self-evaluation, exploring how we can better reach and serve the needs of women in our area. During COVID we avoided gathering and it weakened our organization. We are struggling now to schedule cluster gatherings, but increasingly our congregations' women's groups are withdrawing from participation in the SWO. In many cases it relates to our aging population and the decline of regular worship by younger families. We have fewer young women participating in women's groups. In many congregations, women's ministries have simply been folded into the general church ministries served by men and women together. There are still quilting groups and other women's groups, but they are not engaged in women's Bible studies. Our SWO saw a precipitous drop in attendance at last year's convention and retreat.

How can our congregations and the SWO reach younger women, and how can we keep our older members involved? The SWO offers scholarships to assist women with the expense of attending our convention and retreat, which this year will take place on October 13-15, 2023. Our clusters need to resume holding their bi-annual gatherings and to invite all women in our area congregations to attend, even if they are not members of a formal women's group. All women who are members of ELCA congregations are Women of the ELCA. We can encourage women to sign up for subscriptions to our *Reflections* newsletter which can be received electronically via email, or in hard copy for a \$5 fee to cover mailing. Women can also subscribe to WELCA's magazine *Gather*, which offers excellent articles and Bible studies that can be used by women's groups.

Individually we can do a prayerful self-examination to review how we can be better disciples of our Lord. Are we engaged in regular study of the Word, whether in personal devotion times or in small groups? Are we regularly praying, offering praise and thanksgiving to God, confessing our weakness, asking for help, healing and comfort for ourselves and others? Are we worshiping regularly and receiving the Lord's Supper? Are we engaged in our church's or community's ministries to serve others in need? Are we giving of our time, treasures and talents to spread God's love and good news?

And what about the practice of fasting? During Lent we can "fast" from certain foods or activities. It is a practice of self-sacrifice. But even more than simply giving up something, what can we do with the cost or time saved by this sacrifice? If we give up a favorite food or drink, can we donate the cost-saving as a special offering? If we refrain from television or screen time, can we instead devote that time to prayer, Bible-reading or volunteering? Can we spend time sending cards to shut-ins? The substitution of worthier activities is as important as the thing sacrificed. (continued on next page.)

Regarding charitable giving, I learned that Lutheran World Relief has a special Lenten project to send out personal care kits to areas suffering from disasters. The article I saw was focused on sending kits to Tanzania, obviously of interest to our synod, given our partnership with the Eastern and Coastal Diocese of Tanzania. I am including with my article instructions for assembling and shipping these personal care kits to our distribution center in Minnesota (see pp. 7&8). I encourage our women's groups and even individuals to participate in the LWR project. It will be a worthwhile Lenten observance for us all.

A WORD FROM NGLSWO VICE PRESIDENT & HISTORIAN

As the Historian, I have been remembering my own history with the SWO and women in the church in general. I began attending Bible studies for women with my mom as a baby. Of course, I don't remember much of the discussion topics. She continued to bring me with her until I started school, but it's what I don't remember that impacted my memories.



The group of women who gathered to talk to each other about life, spouses, children and theology were much more than casual acquaintances. They supported and uplifted each other in all avenues of life. Many were strong-willed and opinionated, but others were very passive women. I don't remember any talk about politics, but I would bet there were a variety of political views. However, these women came together to share the love of God with one another. I don't remember any judgmental moments of discomfort as occur in other social situations. I don't remember any body shaming, or fashion jealousy. There was no malicious competition or bragging. The women came from different backgrounds, cultures, and family situations, but always focused on the things they had in common.

Each woman had their own special style, personality and grace. They worked hard to be good friends, listen to each other, celebrated with each other, and give the best advise they could. There was a genuine spirit of dependability among the group. As I grew up, these Women of the ELCA often treated me like their own child. They watched out for me when I was out and about in town, they kept me accountable for my behavior, they loved me, and taught me about God. Better than that, they encouraged me to depend upon God for the greatest love that exists.

The way they shared the love of God is what has called me to serve on the Synodical Women's Organization board and grow in relationship with this group of women.

NEWS FROM BARB MARDEN, NGLSWO TREASURER



After a busy January for me at my job at Florence Parish (Bethlehem Lutheran Church and First Presbyterian Church), Kris Carlson and I were finally able to meet to transfer the bank account and the treasury records. Thank you, Kris, for your faithful service as Treasurer and for spending significant time with me to explain the duties and go over the materials. Therefore, all deposits should now be sent to me at 4515 Lake Anna Road, Florence, WI 54121.

In my personal life, I'm spending more time helping my 92-year-old dad, who I live with. He has had some issues this past week, and we are awaiting an appointment with a neurologist. He is generally quite healthy, and his father lived to 104, so I'm hoping to have him with me a good few years yet. I have been thankful for the support of Pastor Cathy Morris and my church community during this time. Prayers for my dad, John, are appreciated.

DEPARTING MESSAGE FROM OUTGOING NGLSWO TREASURER, KRIS CARLSON

THANK YOU – THANK YOU – THANK YOU



Thank you to all of you for prayers over these 6 ½ years as I served as SWO Treasurer. I have been encouraged and supported by the SWO Officers and Board Members and all of you. Your faithful offerings through the years support Churchwide programs, scholarships, advocacy, ELCA programs like disaster relief, and many more; support the work of the SWO and aid many agencies helping our neighbors in need.

Barb Marden from Florence WI officially took over as treasurer on February 1, 2023. Blessings to all of you as the Northern Great Lakes Synodical Women's Organization moves forward in the future.

2023 NGLSWO BOARD MEMBERS

INTRODUCING JOANN NURMI, CLUSTER 1 REPRESENTATIVE



Hi, My name is JoAnn Nurmi. I grew up in Wakefield, MI and have been a member of the All Saints Lutheran Church since I was a child. My parents are Delores Will and my stepfather was the late George Will. Mom, Delores, has been a member since she was younger too. I have 6 siblings – Dale, Danny, Doug, Janice, Joyce, and Judy. I have one grown daughter, Dyon, who is a nurse. She is married to Jason and they live in lower Wisconsin.

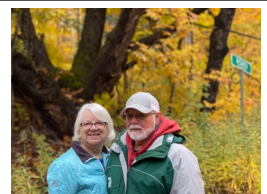
Some things that I enjoy are spending time with friends and family, attending church, traveling in our motor home, attending Bingo, going snowshoeing.

I have spent my whole life in All Saints Lutheran Church. I have been a communion assistant, spent two terms on council, helped with Fortune Lake, and served as a greeter.

COMMENTS FROM CONNIE SCHMIDT, CLUSTER 6 REPRESENTATIVE

2 Corinthians 2: 15 - "There is a sweet wholesome fragrance in our lives. It is the fragrance of Christ within us!"

Ladies...all you Lutheran ladies...you are unique, special, hard-working, and have talents! We need you to answer the call. Our SWO board is ALL NEW and should have a representative from each cluster area. All were filled except one at the time of the convention in September. Now we have three openings – clusters 2, 3, and 5.



I have been here and there and everywhere and have seen active, caring, unique women doing various things, so please talk up our situation – say YES yourself or ask others you know, recognizing their gifts to add to our wonderful fragrance - SWO 😊 Muster up that tad of courage and join in Christian fellowship on the SWO board !

THINK big, THINK healing, THINK success, THINK peace, THINK happiness, THINK growth in mind-set!!!!

1 Corinthians 1: 4-6 - "Thank God for grace given to you - how you are enriched in HIM - in speech and knowledge - you are not lacking in any spiritual gift!"

You will grow thru your experience of fellowship on SWO level. You will raise your voice to tell everyone what HE has done! Rejoice and bear Christ's Holy Name...See the love of Christ in yourself and all you meet on a daily basis!

MUSINGS FROM DIANE GENDRON, BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Since I wasn't sure what to write, I took the time to research on Google. The first thing I did was look up the true meaning of discipleship.

Discipleship in the Christian sense is the process of making someone become like Christ in everything. According to the bible discipleship is referred to imitating the teacher's life, inculcating his values, and reproducing his teachings. Discipleship is a long-term process. It happens when a saved person decides to obey Jesus on a daily basis.



The first step to Christian discipleship is a genuine conversation. Unbelievers must clearly understand the gospel, then sincerely embrace it. Jesus famously said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19) with different language but the same purpose. He also said "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up the cross daily and follow me".

The qualities of true discipleship are: Love God Above Everything Else, Follow God's Will, Submit to God's word, Embrace Suffering and Conclusion.

Jesus defines a disciple as one who has been baptized and is willing to take upon themselves the name of the Savior and follow Him. Disciples strive to become as He is by keeping His commandments in mortality much the same as apprentices seek to become like their master.

The four basics of discipleship are: We share the word; we speak about the gospel as we live according to the gospel. We share the word; once we share the word with people and people put their faith in Christ, we baptize them. We teach the word. We serve the world.

Two requirements for discipleship are repentance and belief. (Matthew 16:24-28)

So as I leave you with this information on discipleship my question for you is where are you in your Christian walk? Are we doing what God calls us to do?

(Resource: <https://seminary.grace.edu/what-is-the-true-meaning-of-christian-discipleship>)

FROM THE EDITOR, BARB RICE



As always, I enjoy reading the submissions of our board members and officers! What a wonderful witness each of them is to the work of the Synodical Women's Organization as it continues to be God's hands and voice in this crazy, sometimes hopeless feeling world. As Connie Schmidt suggests in her article, you would do well to consider filling one of the empty board seats. You will be blessed in ways you cannot imagine...learning about how God is active in the lives of our church communities in the U.P.

and northern Wisconsin, being united in projects that reach far and wide to help others, gaining awareness of how you can be active in promoting justice and peace, and new friendships with the other women on the board, to name a few. Please continue to pray about how you might find a niche in this organization, pray for the women who have answered this call and are there for you now, and pray for the work being done in Jesus' name all across the U.P. and throughout our world.

We are adding a new feature to the newsletter, Transitions, from the Synod E-Notes. It is our hope that this will aid our conference/cluster leaders in keeping up with the changes in pastoral leadership in the NGLS. Look for it on page 5.



CLUSTER NEWS



Spring Cluster 1 (IGO) Gathering

The Spring Cluster 1 Gathering is scheduled for Sunday April 23, 2023 beginning at 1:30 pm CT (2:30 ET). The Host Church will be Zion Lutheran in Ironwood, Michigan located at 100 Midland. The meeting will be held in the Fellowship Hall on the lower level. The entrance door opens on to the parking lot north of the church. More information will be provided to the churches in April.

A planning meeting is scheduled for Saturday, March 4, 2023 at Salem in the fellowship hall beginning at 9:00 am CT (10:00 am ET). Prior notifications will be made to the church contacts.



FORTUNE LAKE
A place of grace in Crystal Falls, MI

INTERGENERATIONAL CAMP "SCHOLARSHIP"

The Synodical Women's Organization will be awarding a scholarship that is available if you are attending the Intergenerational Camp (one for the weeklong camp and one for the mini week camp). Please use the attached scholarship application to apply. Consideration will be given to first time attendees and to those who have not received scholarships in the past. The form can be found on page 6.



TRANSITIONS



- Pastor Christine Olson is a full-time interim at Emmanuel Lutheran in Menominee as Pastor Keith Kolstad is leaving the position of Administrative Interim.
- Pastor Gran Van Lishout has been called to serve Prince of Peace in Eagle River, WI.
- Pastor Diane Srutowski, Bethany in Perkins and Trinity in Stonington retired from active ministry on January 1, 2023.
- Pastor Terry Frankenstein is serving as Administrative Interim to Bethany in Perkins and Trinity in Stonington.
- Pastor Lon Hider has been called by Christ the King in Escanaba and Faith in Rock.
- Pastor Lily Brondyke was installed Sunday, February 12 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Escanaba.

Northern Great Lakes Synodical Woman's Organization
SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION
Intergenerational Camp

The Synodical Women's Organization will be awarding a scholarship that is available if you are attending the Intergenerational Camp (one for the weeklong camp and one for the mini week camp). Please use the attached scholarship application to apply. Consideration will be given to first time attendees and to those who have not received scholarships in the past.

You must be a member of an NGLS/ELCA Congregation.

Complete this form and mail by deadline.

Event for which you are Requesting a Scholarship: (check only one) Amount Deadline

_____ Intergenerational Camp Weeklong \$100 April 1, 2023

_____ Intergenerational Camp Mini \$80.00 April 1, 2023

**Please remit the required \$25 check with *EACH APPLICATION*
made payable to SWO (Synodical Women's Organization).**

This will be refunded after you attend the event and may not be used as part of your registration monies. If you do not receive a scholarship, it will be refunded after the participants have been chosen.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip, _____

Telephone: Home (_____) _____ Work/Cell (_____) _____ E-mail _____

Church Name and City _____

Please state your involvement with Women of the ELCA as well as other church activities _____

What are your reasons for requesting scholarship support? _____

Why is attending this event important to you? _____

Are you participating in this event for the first time? Yes _____ No _____

If no, have you ever received a SWO Scholarship for this event before? Yes _____ When _____

How will you use this experience when you return home? _____

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Signature of Applicant _____ Date _____

Mail this application to: Barbara Marden, 4515 Lake Anna Road, Florence, WI 54121 (847.970.0641)



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



PERSONAL CARE KITS

SOME IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER

- Be sure to shop for light- or medium-weight towels, which are easier for Kit recipients to hand wash and air dry, take up less storage space and are considerably less expensive than the fluffier towels we may prefer to use.
- Bath towels vary in size. The 52" X 27" size listed in the guide lines is the maximum size. 20" x 40" is a good guide line for a minimum size.
- Please give new items only.
- Please do not donate items with any religious symbols, messages or your group's name.
- Please do not donate any items decorated with a U.S. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage.
- Do not add other items or leave out any of the items listed.
- All items should be new and in good condition.
- Do not enclose the Kit or any of its contents in plastic bags.

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH PERSONAL CARE KIT

- ONE** light-weight bath-size towel (between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27"), dark color recommended
- TWO** or three bath-size bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz., any brand, in original wrapping
- ONE** adult-size toothbrush in its original packaging*
- ONE** sturdy comb, remove packaging
- ONE** metal nail clippers (attached file optional), remove packaging

* Toothbrush multi-packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business-size envelope; no plastic bags or wrap

HOW TO PACK YOUR PROJECT PROMISE KITS

- Fold the towel in half. Place the rest of the items in the towel, fold and roll so nothing falls out, and secure with yarn, ribbon, string or rubber bands.
- Pack completed Kits, like items together, in boxes. Label contents in LARGE, BLOCK LETTERS on the outside of the boxes.
- Use strong cartons secured with packing tape, not to exceed 40 pounds.
- Do not use plastic or paper bags to pack donations.
- Include the name and address of your group or congregation on each box and label the contents

LWR.ORG

LWR PERSONAL CARE KIT SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

1

PACK YOUR PERSONAL CARE KITS

Place completed Kits snugly in strong cartons secured with packing tape, **not to exceed 40 pounds** (do not use plastic or paper bags to pack donations). Label the outside of the boxes **PERSONAL CARE KITS**.



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
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Minnesota Warehouse Label



Maryland Warehouse Label



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
398 East Richmond Street
South St. Paul, MN 55075
651.457.9009



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF
601 Main Street
PO Box 188
New Windsor, MD 21776
410.635.8795

2

JOIN AN INGATHERING

Each year, dedicated volunteers coordinate LWR Ingatherings — local collections for LWR Quilts & Kits. Groups and congregations pool their donations and share the costs of getting the Quilts & Kits to LWR.

Find Ingatherings planned for your area at ingathering.lwr.org.

No Ingathering near you?

Use these shipping labels to **ship or drop off** your congregation's Personal Care Kits at the LWR warehouse closest to you. Don't forget to include your return address on each box (name and address of your congregation).

The warehouses accept items year-round. Call ahead for driving directions and hours of operation if you are personally delivering your donations.

NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

Revised 01/03/23 (mlj)

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NORTHERN GREAT LAKES SYNOD
WOMEN OF THE ELCA
P.O. Box 57
Mass City, MI 49948

REFLECTIONS Newsletter – March 2023



If this box has an X in it your subscription time is up! Please help support the Women of the ELCA by renewing your subscription today!



Our Purpose

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

Our Mission

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.