

Wisconsin Federation of
Lutheran Altar Guilds
54th Annual Meeting - April 25th, 2015
St. John's Lutheran Church, Portage WI

The day began with registration, continental breakfast, and tours of the church and childcare facilities.

President Ben Seidler welcomed all those attending, and Irma Brockley of St. John's greeted us, touching on the theme of jars of clay created by the Potter, and noted that the pottery on the tables and serving area were reminders of the Potter's Hand in creating us for service.

Our Advisor, Pastor Ricky Schroeder, led Divine Service, Setting Five. The readings were: Isaiah 64:7-9; II Corinthians 4:7-18; and John 15:1-11. The sermon centered on "jars of clay" from the II Corinthians reading, reminding us that we have been created for service; that it is not 'about us,' but about Christ, Who is in us, Whom we are able to carry to others. President Ben Seidler assisted Pastor Schroeder in the readings and in the celebration of Holy Communion.

After the service, Pastor Schroeder opened the meeting with prayer, and President Seidler thanked the women of St. John's for hosting our meeting. He welcomed three new churches who had joined us for this meeting. He introduced the WFLAG officers – Vice President Tim Baumann, Treasurer Gail Siewert, and Secretary Judy Weber. The Treasurer's Report and Minutes from 2014 were read and approved. We also read a 'thank you' message from Dr. William Chandler, last year's presenter.

Nominations from the floor were entertained for office of president and treasurer. There were no new nominations; the current office holders, Ben Seidler and Gail Siewert agreed to continue their service as president and treasurer, respectively. They were elected unanimously and Pastor Schroeder installed them into their positions. Pastor Schroeder indicated his willingness to continue as our advisor; nevertheless, he stressed that if we know of other pastors who we would like to serve, we should not hesitate to ask them.

President Seidler asked for suggestions on churches to host our 2016 and 2017 conventions. He has one or two possibilities for 2016, but asked that we think about this and get in touch with him if our church would be willing to host.

One question from the floor led to a discussion on communication. We would like to make use of our email address to facilitate a Q & A forum on the website. This possibility will be reviewed further. Another suggestion was that we use email to keep members informed, and to ensure that the notices of our convention would be read. (We do use red stickers on the envelopes to highlight the fact that this is intended for Altar Guild.) Unfortunately, we have been told that as our email is coming from an 'unknown business' we are probably being treated as Spam, even though we tried sending in smaller batches. Judy Weber will look into whether anything has changed since our original attempts to email to church addresses. Another recommendation was to make use of more extensive advertising in LCMS publications. The suggestions included the websites of the districts and the Lutheran Witness.

Gail Siewert, asked for areas of interest that she could research for the Newsletter. These can be sent to our email address and will be reviewed. The address is altarquilds@wflag.org. Judy Weber highly recommended the last newsletter's suggestion to provide a folder of details needed by leader(s) of each Altar Guild. The details include day-to-day administrative needs, e.g. where supplies are purchased, etc.

Pastor Schroeder exhorted us to read President Harrison's letter, posted on the South Wisconsin District website (www.lcms.swd) regarding same sex marriage. The Supreme Court of the United States will hear arguments on same sex marriage during the coming week. There is real concern about eradication of freedom of expression and action on the part of Christians in this matter.

Irma Brockley asked whether the group would be willing, during lunch, to hear from a husband and wife team representing Lutheran Bible Translators. We agreed to this. It was then suggested that we use the monies that normally go to missions in the North and South District offices, to be presented to this couple, who serve in Ghana with their three children. It was moved, seconded, and approved that we do this, and Gail made out a check to LBT, noting the Paul Federwitz family as recipients.

During an excellent lunch provided by the women of St. John's altar guild, we heard a brief presentation from the Federwitz's. Their Ghana experiences have generally been positive – their children love living in the small village. The whole family will have an adjustment to make, as they will be moving to a large city to facilitate Paul's work of providing technological support to LBT. They expressed surprise and gratitude when the check for \$200.00 was presented.

After lunch, our speaker, Doreen Fehr of Divine Savior in Hartford, presented some of the items she has created for use by the pastor and the altar guild of her church. We saw beautiful stoles made of a variety of materials, some of which matched banners and/or paraments. A number of the stoles were made from patterns by Ann Calle Myers; others were created by Doreen. Some of the more time-consuming creations consisted of cut pieces sewn together on the diagonal. There were stoles for Christmas, Lent, Advent, and one to use when celebrating the Sacrament of the Altar. Pastor Schroeder asked about the cost of time and materials for one of the elaborately patterned stoles, and Doreen said the cost is about \$125.00

Doreen makes use of the embroidery patterns on her sewing machine in some cases; in other situations she takes a drawing and enlarges it to create liturgical symbols on banners or paraments. Some are actually done by freehand drawing. Doreen indicated that she typically lines her work with cotton. As for storage of banners, she has a system worked out in which the banners are numbered and there is a corresponding number in the storage area, to keep order. She also has a book with pictures, also numbered, to make it easier to find a specific banner.

What symbols can or cannot be used? Pastor Schroeder noted that the Lutheran Church takes the position that if something is neither forbidden nor commanded by the Word of God, it is a matter of indifference (adiaphora). Even so, it is important to discuss with your pastor any plans for elements that will be displayed in the sanctuary.

After the presentation, Pastor Schroeder showed us a Cavanagh product - individually wrapped host for those who have a gluten allergy, from T.H. Stemper in Milwaukee. They have online ordering if you don't get to Milwaukee often.

After entertaining any other questions, we closed our meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Judith A. Weber
WFLAG Secretary