

# SNOW Newsletter

## From the Desk of the President



Greetings to you, my sisters in Christ,

As I was thinking about what I wanted to write to you about in this edition of our newsletter I looked at the calendar and realized that almost 1/12th of 2025 has already slipped by. I am reminded of someone telling me as a child that one day I would not have enough time in the day to accomplish all the things I wanted or needed to do. Little did I know they were referring to the fact that age would be the culprit to slow me down. We are already in the month of February, the month in which we celebrate St. Valentine's Day, the month of expression of love. I cannot help but be reminded of a statement my husband made to me early on in our relationship about Valentine's Day wherein he, in no uncertain terms, told me not to expect gifts and cards on Valentine's Day which I must admit took me back a bit. He went on to say that if he wasn't able to show his love and respect for me everyday and to let me know how special I was, certainly a bouquet of flowers and a Hallmark card wouldn't do the trick. As I thought about it, I realized the wisdom of his words. The important thing is that we continuously strive to love as God has loved us. Were you aware of how many times the word love appears in the Bible? In the King James version, love appears 442 times; the New Living Translation, 759; and the New International Version, 686. That makes it one of the most frequently used words. Love is described in a minimum of four contexts: Agape, Phileo, Storge and Eros. Further, Agape love is described as unconditional, selfless, and sacrificial, the kind of love we experience from our God. Imagine how the world we live in would be today if we could just replicate that love to mankind. Phileo is described as friendship and brotherly love; the love we express to our friends and neighbors near and far. Storge love is the love we express within family relationships and Eros that expression of romantic or passionate love. God meant for all of us to live in an expression of love. May we all strive to more perfectly love and support each other in 2025.

Looking forward, and knowing how fast time flies, my board advisors are working with your conference officers in the planning of Conference Spring Gatherings. Watch for information concerning the date, time and place for yours. Those individuals work tirelessly to make these events entertaining and interesting. Please support them with your attendance and input. Our entire synod is interested in hearing about your gathering and I am urging you to send a synopsis of your event to Lois Bylund at [snoweditor@gmail.com](mailto:snoweditor@gmail.com). As soon as your date, time, and meeting place have been determined, please email me that information to: [cbalk1005@gmail.com](mailto:cbalk1005@gmail.com). I will attend as many of the gatherings as I possibly can.

At our recent board meeting we voted to increase our budget to support leadership growth within our synod. We need to continuously develop leaders within our organization in order to maintain a vibrant community of women, committed to do God's work with our hands and monetary gifts. Ordinarily our leadership event is conducted in the fall. Details of that event will be made available as the year progresses. I would like to personally thank each and every unit who has submitted a gift to the Women of the ELCA, designated or as needed. Your gifts are important and help us carry on the work of our organization.

*Continued on Page 2*



### Special points of interest:

- Fall Gathering Reports
- Board Position Openings
- Mary Magdalene Nominations
- Scholarships
- Convention Speaker
- Leadership Event
- Idea Corner
- Gift of Love 2025

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The Convention Committee is also diligently working with the women at First Lutheran in Alexandria to plan a meaningful and inspirational two days. Mark your calendar for September 19 & 20, 2025, and plan to attend our annual convention. We have chosen the theme of “How to be an authentic woman of God today”. We have engaged Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery, who is the Interim Director of the Women of the ELCA (churchwide) as our keynote speaker. We will again be having a silent auction and it is not too early for you to be thinking about your unit’s (or individual) donation. Last year this was such a wonderful part of the events taking place we hope that with your help we can replicate.

We are also examining ways in which we can more successfully communicate with the women of our synod congregations. We have numerous tools available to us, but are challenged with making the information available timely in as many means and formats as we can. Watch for information from us on the NWMN Synod Women of the ELCA website, in this quarterly SNOW Newsletter, the Northern Lights and our Facebook page.

Finally, please, please let Lois know about the hands-on projects your units are engaged with. We are all interested and you just might interest others in something similar. As the line from the song “Pass It On” states, “It only takes a spark to get a fire going”. Let’s share those sparks and start some fires in the NWMN Synod!

Sincerely in Christ,  
Carol Balk, SWO President

Laura Holm



## Fall Conference Gathering Highlights



**Conference 3—** Was held on October 23, 2024 at Concordia Lutheran Church, Fertile. The theme verse: Colossians 3:12 “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience”. Devotions were given by Jamie Morvig, UCLP SAM from Little Norway congregation. Guest Speaker, Pastor Michele Jenson, giving insight into our theme verse. Some of the main points she gave us were that we must take action and to show compassion in our daily lives; being alert to our friends and people we are in contact with daily. We must be showing kindness in words, deeds and actions and we must have a kind attitude, that is something we can control. A hug or handholding is way to show gentleness. Patience is sometimes overlooked, but we must have patience with others; we may not know what they are going through. Marlene Block, Conference 3 Board Rep brought greetings from the Synod board. Lori Walters installed Karen Thoreson of Climax, as Financial Recorder. Janice Morvig and Rachel Roggenbuck gave the Benediction. We closed with the Hymn “We Are Called”



**Conference 4—** Was held on October 5th at Faith Lutheran Church in Bagley co-hosted by Bethel and Zion churches of rural Bagley. We were welcomed by Karen Kappedal and recited our WELCA statement. Our theme was Faith like a Mustard Seed based on Matthew 17:20-21. Special music was shared by Cathy Feeney, Becky Agnew on guitar, Jeanine Brand, and Chris Ross. They also led our assembly singing. Our speaker for the day was Treven Quade, of the Mustard Seed Home which is a voluntary men’s residential program for those with addiction problems. Mustard Seed Home is a training center that provides a safe environment to maintain sobriety, stabilize mental health, and transition to independence. Treven had graduated from the program in 2019, and is now the coordinator. What a success story! We were blessed to have the SWO past president Marilyn Grandstrand, the new president Carol Balk, treasurer Terri Pipho and the Conference Board representative Julie Paulson join us. New officers were elected Becky Colbank, and Sandy Sather. A delicious lunch followed with the drawing for many door prizes.



## Fall Conference Gathering Highlights Continued



**Conference 6**—Lake Park Lutheran welcomed the women of Conference 6 to their fall gathering on Saturday, October 19th. The women of First Lutheran of Audubon shared delicious muffins and quick breads and a sweet bit of chocolate for morning coffee. An inspirational program was presented which included devotions and a message shared by Pastor Devlyn Brooks with stories of his ministry, including at Churches United. Taunya Todd shared her message "Dispatched: in pursuit of purpose" through words and music. The business meeting followed with the highlight being the election of a new Conference 6 coordinator, Gretchen Henrikson. A big thank you to out-going Co-Coordinators Terri Olson and Daria Anderson. We also were honored to have the SWO President, Carol Balk join our Gathering, share news of the synod women's events of note and the installation/deinstallation of officers. The day ended with a delicious luncheon.



**Conference 7**—Fall Gathering was held Saturday, October 26, 2024, at Zion/Hedemarken Lutheran Church, Fergus Falls. The theme, "Serving with a Passion and Purpose" followed the verse "Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12. Pastor Salim Kaderbhai provided a devotional based on Matthew 25:35-40 reminding us that we are called to service. When we serve with passion and purpose, we pray for another and do as much as we can because our neighbor's lives may depend on it. The opening hymn, "We Are Called" was sung. Music was provided by pianist/organist Kathy Jacobson. The keynote speaker was Joy Ryan who is CEO/President of Boys and Girls Ranch. Joy spoke of 2 children who received care at the Minot campus, the struggles they had endured and the gains and the successes they achieved to be able to live a productive life. The closing hymn "We All Are One in Mission" was sung. The meeting concluded with singing the Lord's Prayer and Benediction.

### The Idea Corner

Are you looking for ways to put your faith into action?

How about holding a **BABY SHOWER** at your next meeting or gathering.

Have your guests bring layette items for LWR. Kits.

Decorate like you were holding a baby shower for your friend.

Play games that you would play at a baby shower.

Be Creative!  
Invite the youth!!  
Have a Party!!!



Lent: Penitence,  
Pilgrimage,  
Preparation



### GO DEEPER INTO LENT

Several Lenten devotions and meditations, examples of spiritual practices, and guides for discussion or journaling are included in this resource, available under the Resources tab of the [Women of the ELCA website](#).

### Yes! what's next?

Is your physical energy out of line with your Yes! as a servant disciple-leader these days?

Join us to explore what's next and how we accomplish what God is calling us to collectively and individually focused on God's mission.

**2025 Leadership Event**  
April 5, 2025  
Zoom ★ 12:00-4:00 pm CST

Women of the  
ELCA



Attention women of the NWMN Synod:

*Give a gift of love in 2025!*

To encourage and to show support of the women in the ELCA seminary, we would like to treat them with a gift of money to use as they desire!

Donations will be collected throughout the year and then divided equally and given to the women seminarians in January 2026.

This is a gift; it is not for any service rendered.

Donations can be sent to the SWO Treas. Write Seminary Stipend for Women on the memo line or use the Offering Form A!

Send to: Janet Olson

PO Box 567

Warroad, MN 56763

## Accepting Nominations for Mary Magdalene Award

We are now accepting nominations for the Mary Magdalene Award. We will be honoring Women from our conferences at our annual convention. These special and treasured women will be given a rose, a certificate and a monetary donation to a charity of their choice that is associated with the Women of the ELCA. The nomination form can be found on the Synod website:



[www.nwmnsynod.org](http://www.nwmnsynod.org).

Please send your nomination form to:

**Luella Thom PO Box 103 Carlos, MN 56319**

**Phone: 320-815-7701 or email: [thom17@wisper-wireless.com](mailto:thom17@wisper-wireless.com)**

## SWO High School Scholarships Available

If you, or anyone you know is a high school senior graduating this spring, and is planning to attend an ELCA College, they may be eligible for a scholarship through the SWO W/ELCA. A letter detailing the qualifications, plus a form to fill out can be found online at: [nwmnsynod.org/assets/High-School-Scholarship-Letter-and-Application.pdf](http://nwmnsynod.org/assets/High-School-Scholarship-Letter-and-Application.pdf)

The four criteria for eligibility are:

1. Be a graduating High School Senior with a "C" average or above.
2. Be a member of an ELCA Church.
3. Be a resident of the Northwestern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA.
4. Be attending an ELCA College.

If you have questions, or want to submit a completed form, contact:

**Luella Thom**  
**PO Box 103 Carlos, MN 56319**  
**Phone: 320-815-7701**  
**[thom17@wisper-wireless.com](mailto:thom17@wisper-wireless.com)**



## Convention Speaker



Jennifer Hockenbery, interim executive director of Women of the ELCA as of July 1, 2024, loves to read, write, jog, and spend time with her young adult children. She comes to WELCA from St. Norbert College where she was Dean of Humanities and Professor of Philosophy. Before that she taught

philosophy at Mount Mary University, a women's college in Milwaukee, Wisc. for 22 years. While there she became especially attuned to women's issues and the need to talk about the way women consider their own nature and vocations. Her book, *Thinking Woman*, published in 2015 guides readers through different perspectives about what being a woman might mean and what supporting women might look like. Throughout her academic career she has been most interested in how people might learn to pursue wisdom through conversations with each other. Her book, *Wisdom's Friendly Heart: Augustinian Hope for Skeptics and Conspiracy Theorists*, shows readers how the African theologian, St. Augustine, found a way to promote dialogue and hope in times of dangerous and violent political divide in the Roman Empire. She has also written numerous articles and book chapters on Martin Luther as both theologian and philosopher and is very interested in the role of Katie in the development of Lutheran understandings of marriage, family, and power.



**September 19-20, 2025**

**NWMN SWO  
 Annual Convention**

**First Lutheran Church  
 1655 18th Avenue E South McKay  
 Alexandria, MN 56308**



## LEADERSHIP

- ✓ Inspire People
- ✓ Empower People
- ✓ Shared Vision
- ✓ Lead Change

### Call for Nominations

At the convention this year, we will be electing a **Vice-President, Secretary, and 3 board members.** All 2 Year Terms. *(The goal is to elect 1 board member from Conferences 1,2,3; 1 board member from Conferences 4,5,6; and 1 board member from Conferences 7,8.)*

**3 Nominating Committee Members** (1-Year) and **8 Triennial Convention Voting Members** (Virtual Convention July 14-16, 2026). **If you or if you know someone that would be interested in any of these positions, please contact:**

Terry Pipho  
323 49th Ave. SW  
Moorhead, MN 56560  
[terry.pipho@gmail.com](mailto:terry.pipho@gmail.com)



### OUR MISSION

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

### 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.



### SILENT AUCTION BASKETS NEEDED



Once again we will offer a Silent Auction at the WELCA SWO Convention on September 19 and 20 at First Lutheran Church in Alexandria. All WELCA units are encouraged to create baskets to contribute to this auction. The baskets need not be large. Better to have more small baskets that are less expensive than one extra large one. Popular themes for this auction have

been: baby, gardening, spa, popcorn/movie night, chocolates, home-made items, fresh vegetables. Proceeds from the auction will help to defray costs for women to attend the upcoming Triennial Convention. Auction items may be brought to the convention on Friday or Saturday.

**Mark Your Calendar**  
**SNOW Newsletter**  
**Deadline**

**April 30, 2025**



**bold**  
connections

View the latest issue of [Bold Connections](#), the monthly e-newsletter that features the latest news and information about our programs and activities. *Bold Connections* is delivered via e-mail on the first of every month. [Subscribe now.](#)

# NOMINATION FORM

Check below those positions in which the nominee is willing to serve. The individual nominated must consent to serve if elected. All terms are two-year terms unless specified otherwise.

- Vice-President  
 Secretary  
 Board Member  
 Nominating Committee (3 positions-1 year)  
 Triennial Convention voting member (July 14-16, 2026)

Name of Nominee \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Cell # \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ Conference # \_\_\_\_\_

Church Address \_\_\_\_\_

Participation in Women of the ELCA: regularly \_\_\_\_\_ occasionally \_\_\_\_\_ never \_\_\_\_\_

Previous Triennial Voting Member: \_\_\_\_\_ Yes or \_\_\_\_\_ No

Person Submitting nomination: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ cell # \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and return to:

Terry Pipho, 323 49TH AVE SW, Moorhead, MN 56560 or email [terry.pipho@gmail.com](mailto:terry.pipho@gmail.com)

DUE: May 15, 2025



## Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization of the ELCA

NW MN SNOW Newsletter  
Lois Bylund, Editor  
1911 19th Street S  
Moorhead, MN 56560

Cell: 701-261-3481  
E-mail: snoweditor@gmail.com

## Conference Spring Gathering's 2025

Conference 1	April 26	Faith Lutheran, Badger—Registration at 9:00 AM
Conference 2	April 12	Trinity Lutheran Church, Thief River Falls—Registration at 8:30
Conference 3	April 26	Kingo Lutheran Church, Fosston—Morning Event
Conference 4	April 12	Zion Lutheran Church, Blackduck Registration at 9:00 Theme: "Maintaining your Sense of Humor During Life's ups and Downs"
Conference 5	April 26	Comstock Lutheran, Comstock—Morning Event Three Cultures/Three Faiths, Pastor Jill Steichen
Conference 6	April 29	Calvary Lutheran Church, Perham—Registration at 9:00 AM Theme: Philippians 4:13
Conference 7	April 28	Breckenridge Lutheran, Breckenridge—Registration at 4:00 PM Theme: "Women On Their Knees Keep Their Families Standing"
Conference 8	March 1	Calvary Lutheran, Alexandria—Registration 8:15 Theme: "Homelessness"

