

# SNOW Newsletter

## Special points of interest:

- WELCA Executive Board Meeting
- Triennial Gathering 2021
- Welcome the Stranger
- Letter Writing



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NW MN Synodical Women's  
Organization Annual  
Convention  
Sept 18-19, 2020  
Zion Lutheran Church  
505 Main Ave N  
Thief River Falls, MN 56732



Love God  
Love Your Neighbor  
Matthew 22:34-40

## All Fall Conference Gatherings




JUST  
LOVE

WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
JULY 16-19, 2020 | PHOENIX



## Greetings from your NW MN WELCA President

Dear Sisters in Christ,

My hope is that you are all well and surviving COVID-19 and the protests that are taking place. I hold all of you in my thoughts and prayers. This letter is to inform you that after prayerful discussion, your SWO board has voted to postpone all SWO activities for 2020. The annual convention is postponed until September 17-18, 2021. Our speaker, Dr. Jacqueline Bussie, is able to join us in 2021. **This means that our 2020 Fall gatherings are postponed until Fall 2021.**

Also the churchwide board voted to postpone the Triennial Convention and Gathering until 2021. **The Convention will be August 3-5, 2021 followed by the Gathering, August 5-8, 2021, in Phoenix AZ.** If you were elected as a delegate to the 2020 convention, you will be receiving an email from churchwide regarding the change of dates and any possible consequences this might entail.

There are several proposed changes to our constitution that will be voted on in August 2021, at the Triennial convention. You can see the proposed changes at [www.womenoftheelca.org/eleveth-triennial-convention](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/eleveth-triennial-convention) under information for voting members.

With all this negative news, what can we look forward to? Please stay positive and as the Synod ponders the opening of our church buildings, we will keep you informed of what is happening via our website and Facebook page. **Please like our Facebook page and invite other women to like our page also.** Please check them often to find out any new information.

Website: [www.nwmnsynod.org/synod-organizations/synod-womens-organization-swo/](http://www.nwmnsynod.org/synod-organizations/synod-womens-organization-swo/)

Facebook: [Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization of the ELCA](#)

Churchwide website: [www.welca.org](http://www.welca.org)

Churchwide Facebook: [Women of the ELCA](#)

I know that you are unable to have in person gatherings but I am sure that there are Zoom and YouTube gatherings happening. Why not go to Facebook or go to the WELCA Facebook page and let us know what your unit is doing to keep in touch.

Here are some ideas of how to connect with your WELCA sisters:

- ◆ Pray for each other.
- ◆ Begin with a telephone call to check in on a sister in Christ. Someone in your congregational group can likely figure out how to have a group phone call.
- ◆ Those who use newer technology can gather your group together via FaceTime, Zoom, or another electronic option. You can hold a Bible study in those settings.
- ◆ Participate within our social media communities. They are ways to gather virtually. Within Facebook, we have a Women of the ELCA community, one centered on Gather magazine and another on Café.

The above ideas are from the WELCA website.

Please continue to send your offerings to our treasurer, **Terry Piphon, 323 49th Ave SW, Moorhead MN 56560.**

Our next SWO board meeting is scheduled for July 21, 2020 at 6:30 PM via Zoom. If you have anything you would like us to discuss, please contact one of the board members, one of the executive committee or myself. I am happy to discuss anything with you.

Your sister in Christ,

Marilyn



# Ways to Give to Women<sup>of the</sup> ELCA

**Send your Offerings to:**

**NW MN SWO TREASURER  
c/o Terry Piphio  
323 49th Ave SW  
Moorhead MN 56560**

**Give Online at:**

***[www.welca.org](http://www.welca.org)***

**One Time Donation or  
Give Monthly with  
Faithful Friends**



## **What Does Our Logo Mean?**

Our logo—with the cross, water and a white lily—identifies women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty, and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It is also a reminder of the mission of the church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).



**Be inspired. Be transformed.**

## EXECUTIVE BOARD POSTPONES ELEVENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION, GATHERING UNTIL AUGUST 2021

**With no Covid-19 vaccine on the horizon,** Women of the ELCA's executive board voted to postpone the organization's convention and gathering until August 2021. The executive board met by video on April 25. "We are postponing not canceling," said Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA. The Eleventh Triennial Convention scheduled for July 14–16, 2020, in Phoenix, Arizona, is being rescheduled for August 3–5, 2021. And the 2020 "Just Love" Gathering, scheduled for July 16–19, 2020, is being rescheduled for August 5–8, 2021. "We hope that everyone who is currently registered will come next year," Bushkofsky said. "And if they aren't able to come, they could gift their registration to someone else." Staff will be working out final arrangements with the Phoenix businesses and communicating directly with all who are voting members-elect for the convention and who have registered for the gathering.

**"We are postponing not canceling," said Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA.**

### Eleventh Triennial Convention

Postponing the convention means that the current executive board will serve another year until "replacements are elected and installed," Bushkofsky said. Then, the board elected in 2021 will serve a two-year term. For the 2023 convention, "we would be back to our three-year cycle. That works best with the churchwide assembly, the youth gathering, and the rostered leaders' event."

**Budgets and finances** "In an April 1, 2020, year-end fiscal monitoring memo from our executive director," Anna Sarver, executive board treasurer, said "we learned revenue underperformed in fiscal year 2019." Nine synodical organizations did not send any regular offerings, she said. "While expenses were significantly under budget, expenses exceeded income," she added. Total revenue received in fiscal year 2019 was \$2,055,194 or 71.3 percent of what was projected.

The board-approved budget anticipated a total revenue of \$2,881,531. Thus, the budget underperformed by \$826,337. Sarver said the organization cannot yet determine how the coronavirus

pandemic will impact giving, but that if women are not meeting in units, clusters, conferences, and at SWO events, it is unlikely that offerings will be collected. "That means less money will be sent to the churchwide organization," she said. "So, we'll need to closely monitor revenue and expenses as we move further into 2020 to determine what mid-course changes to the budget will be needed."

The executive board voted to re-designate four funds into general use and use interest from 13 funds to cover the 2019 balance. Sara Larson, chair of the budget and finance committee, said the committee will present a 2021 budget at the October executive board meeting "because we can't get our hands on hard figures to make any type of decision for now. "We are very aware that the financial status will continue to be fluid," she said. "We will continue to stay in touch with the numbers and the revenue coming in and will manage the situation."

There are two items of good news about the budget, Bushkofsky said. One is that Women of the ELCA is receiving two months of salary and retirement contributions for staff under the federal government's Paycheck Protection Program. The other is that the organization recently learned it is beneficiary of a \$206,885 trust. In a development committee report, Audrey Novak Riley, director of stewardship, reported that in the 2017-2020 triennium, "every one of our 21 board members has made at least one gift of record." The total given by our 21 executive board members and officers during the 2017-2020 triennium is \$30,090.00. A majority give through **Faithful Friends**, a way to give automatically through a credit card or checking account. Learn more about Faithful Friends at [welca.org/faithfulfriends](http://welca.org/faithfulfriends). In other actions, the executive board:

- Approved changes to the Southern Ohio Synodical Women's Organization's and Upstate New York Synodical Women's Organization's constitutions.
- Heard reports from the Office of the Presiding Bishop, Lutheran Men in Mission, and staff.

The next executive board meeting is scheduled for October 23–25.



# ELEVENTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION, GATHERING AUGUST 2021

## Speakers



**Gladys Moore**  
Pastor

The Rev. Gladys Moore will lead the Gathering in Gather magazine's summer Bible study, "Just love," written by Rev. Moore and the Rev. Christa Compton.



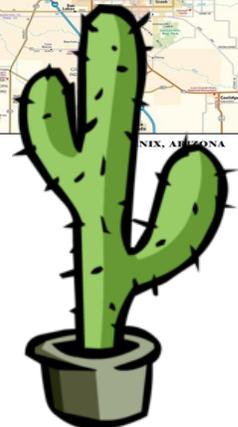
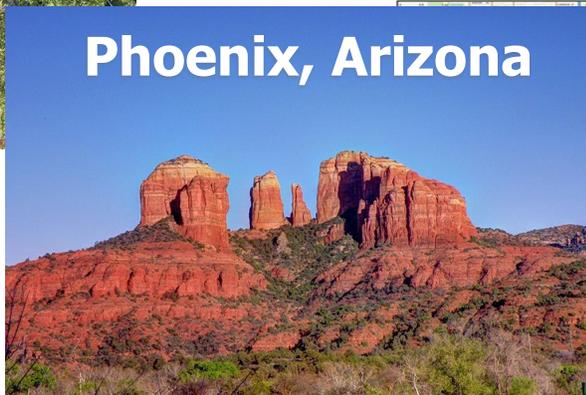
**Elizabeth Eaton**  
Presiding Bishop

The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton was elected as the ELCA's fourth presiding bishop and the first woman presiding bishop at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. She was elected to a second term at the 2019 assembly.



**Kelly Glow**  
Artist in Residence

Kelly Glow is a rapper with a unique style that fuses jazz, rock and hip hop.





## Our Mission

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ

## Our Purpose

As 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.



Daily Grace is an on-the-go companion for your journey, offering a faith reflection every day. Encounter God's extravagant, boundless and often surprising grace by [signing up for a daily email message](#). You can also download the newly updated app for your [IOS](#) and [Android](#) devices.

## Sustain community with unique letter-exchange project

### How does it work?



- ◆ Write a letter. Use the "Dear Friend in Christ" salutation. Fill a page or two, however you are inspired. Among other things, please share your thoughts on these questions: How is your faith in Jesus Christ sustaining you during the global pandemic?
- ◆ What words of encouragement can you offer the person who receives your letter? You can handwrite or type the letter.
- ◆ You could include a drawing, a photo, or a recipe, anything that fits into an envelope.
- ◆ Offer up a prayer for the recipient.
- ◆ You may include your mailing address in the letter if you do not wish to remain anonymous.
- ◆ Print and sign the [Dear Friend in Christ release form](#). If you don't have access to a printer, please use [our online form](#). We cannot exchange letters without a release.
- ◆ Mail your letter and signed release form to Dear Friend in Christ, Women of the ELCA, 8765 W Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631. **Deadline for mailing letters to the churchwide organization is October 15, 2020.**



## Opening our hearts to “Welcome the Stranger” by Lisa Plorin



Lisa, left, and the group who went on the immersion trip.



Earlier this year, I had the privilege of going on an [immigration immersion experience](#) with a group of women from around the U.S. This trip was sponsored by the Women of the ELCA and [AMMPARO](#) (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation, and Opportunities).

I went into this adventure with my eyes and heart wide open, ready to see, hear, and feel what our friends on the other side of the border have been enduring over the past several years.

Now, I'm going to be 100 percent transparent. There was a time several years ago when the thought of “illegal aliens” entering our country needed to stop. I never felt hostile about it, but in my mind (and in the mind of many others I knew), it was important to keep out the “bad people” to protect the “good people” —otherwise known as my family. Many times, I heard that I should “Christian Up” and welcome the stranger. I look back at that time in my life with much embarrassment, but also with thankfulness that I had the guts to let myself seek out the truth and open my heart. I opened up to understanding the plight of those who so desperately want nothing but to provide for their family, be with their family, and, most importantly, live without fear.

### **Stories of horror; stories of perseverance**

The experiences I had while visiting the border wall were so mixed, not because of the physical wall itself, but because of the human touch that was around me all the time.

**These friends of mine (yes, they are friends of mine now) shared horrific stories of torture, starvation, rape, and loneliness. But they also shared stories of perseverance and complete faith and trust in God.**

Their stories touched my heart in ways that I have never felt before. I tried to put my family in their shoes and imagine how I would feel. But, honestly, my mind had a difficult time going there.

Since returning from this immersion, I've been pretty vocal on social media regarding the situation I saw at the border. The feedback I'm getting has been much what I expect. I live in a rural part of North Dakota (population about 120). I drive 25 miles to purchase milk, and 50 to visit my doctor. Happy and hopeful

When I get “build the wall” comments on my social media feed, I respond with respect. I open myself up to friendly conversation. Sometimes, I sense understanding and a “lightbulb” moment from my Facebook friends.

This progress makes my heart happy and hopeful.

Someone asked me recently where I thought Christ is leading me when my term as president of Women of the ELCA's executive board ends: That's an easy answer.

I'm looking forward to volunteering and working more with AMMPARO in any way possible. I intend to immerse myself into learning and educating others about the plight of the immigrants—to try and help others understand that we don't need to fear our siblings on the other side of the border.

It's time to open our hearts, minds, and doors to “Welcome the stranger.”

Lisa Plorin of Upham, N.D., is president of the churchwide executive board, elected in 2017. She recently celebrated her 55th birthday. She believes everyone on earth is created in God's image and that all are siblings in Christ.





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# Women<sup>of the</sup> ELCA

## Triennial Gathering August 5-8, 2021



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
AUGUST 5-8, 2021 | PHOENIX  
WELCATG.ORG

The “Just Love” Gathering, initially scheduled for this July, has been postponed to August 5-8, 2021, due to the global coronavirus pandemic. [Find out what to do](#) if you have already registered for the Gathering.