



Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization

President's Message

Important Dates:

- 12/15/16 Deadline for Scholarship Applications for 10th Triennial Gathering
- 12/15/16 Deadline for Seed Grants for "Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls" for WELCA
- 5/6/17 SWO Convention, "All Anew"
Peace Lutheran Church,
6362 Lincoln Rd,
Alexandria, VA
- 7/13-16/16 Tenth Triennial Gathering, Women of the ELCA, "All Anew"
Minneapolis, MN
- 10/13-15/17 All Lutheran Women Retreat,
Fredericksburg, VA

*See Connections for Links

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My dear Sisters-in-Christ,

Ah, the joys of the year-end holidays... we look forward to spending time with family and friends as we celebrate Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, and then we ring in the New Year—as we tell ourselves that it seems like just yesterday that we were welcoming 2016.



Thanksgiving has come and gone, and I hope you were able to give your thanks in a meaningful way. As we near the end of this calendar year, we find ourselves looking forward to Christmas and celebrating Christ's birth. Our anticipation includes the season of Advent ("the coming" in Latin) and for us, awaiting the coming of Christ. This year Advent begins on Sunday, November 27th, which is actually the earliest date that the season can begin.

While Christmas is the BIG event, Advent has long been a time of spiritual reflection as well as of cheer and anticipation. Even as the Christmas season has become more secular with advertisers urging holiday gift-givers to buy and buy some more, Advent still brings joy and the observance of family customs. Does your family have Advent customs that you follow? Lighting candles (purple and pink, blue, white) for Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love in an Advent wreath? Weekly or daily devotionals geared to the season? Advent calendars to count the days until Christmas? Decorating your house in anticipation of Christmas? An annual open house to welcome friends? Buying gifts for someone less fortunate? Donating time and/or money to help make someone else's holiday less stressful?

Perhaps you'll decide to create a new family tradition that you and yours will remember with wonderful memories as the years go by. Such childhood memories are very special to us as adults and become priceless as we approach the 'winter' of our years. Whatever your plans, I hope we all find time to do the things that NEED doing as well as those things we WANT to do.

As we near 2017, the Tenth Triennial Gathering comes to my mind. I went to my first TG in 2014—it was such a moving experience that I would encourage all of you to try your best to go to Minneapolis next July 13-16. I have never felt as close to my Sisters-in-Christ as I did during those worship opportunities, workshops, and times of fellowship. It is a wonderful opportunity to get to know yourself and the women in your congregation, your synod, and even churchwide on a more personal basis. I truly hope you'll be able to go to share this exciting opportunity that only comes to us every three years.

Have a blessed Advent and Christmas and a safe and joyous 2017!

Your sister-in-Christ,
Cheryl Dwyer
President
Metro DC SWO



SWO Board Updates: Where Your SWO Dollars Go

by Karen Ager, SWO Treasurer



Karen Ager
Peace
Alexandria, Virginia

"Make love
your aim."

1 Corinthians 14:1



"For where
your treasure
is, there will
your heart be
also."

Matthew 6:21

Hello, ladies. I am proud to be serving as your treasurer. Lately, some folks have been asking where your Regular or SWO Convention Offerings go after you send them to the SWO treasurer (yours truly).

Designated Offerings

If I receive a Regular Offering that is designated for a particular ministry, it is treated differently from an undesignated Regular Offering. If the designated offering is for one of our SWO projects such as *La Sagrada Familia*, then 100% of the offering is earmarked for that project with actual disbursement, either immediately or at the end of the "campaign." Some of our other recent yearly campaigns include our local Lutheran Campus Ministries at the University of Maryland, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (Mar-Lu Ridge and Caroline Furnace), and our Roanoke College Endowment Fund that provides a yearly scholarship to a deserving student. If the designated offering is for a churchwide Women of the ELCA project, such as the 2017 Triennial Gathering, then 100% of the offering is sent to the churchwide WELCA treasurer, with your church's group donation duly noted.

Undesignated Offerings

With undesignated Regular Offerings, 50% of the amount is sent to churchwide WELCA and 50% is used to support our SWO ministries and operations. Your SWO has provided materiel support to *La Sagrada Familia* in the past—and they are also our current SWO project through June 2017. We provide scholarships for our Conventions and the Triennial Gatherings. Recently, we donated to [Lutheran Disaster Response](#) and to assist [Phebe Hospital in Liberia](#) to obtain

solar panels for more reliable power. We do keep some of the money from Regular Offerings as operating funds to cover some printing and mailing expenses from time to time, as well as to fund advance expenses for our annual convention. This advanced money is replenished through registration fees at the time of the convention.

(Speaking of conventions, the 2017 SWO convention will be Saturday, May 6 at Peace Lutheran Church in Alexandria.)

Thankofferings

I didn't mention Thankofferings because they should be sent directly to the churchwide WELCA treasurer without passing through the synod level. Note that we are Region 8, Synod G when you complete the top of Form B to send along with your Thankofferings and other gifts to churchwide WELCA.

I hope this helps to shed light on the money process. You can be confident that designated offerings are used only for the designated project and that undesignated Regular Offerings are used for ministry opportunities as voted on by the SWO board. If you have a question or suggestion, contact a board member directly or through our website at <http://dwyercl2.wixsite.com/welca-metrodcsynod/contact-us>.



Human Trafficking

~ Wilma Dublin, Metro DC SWO VP, Human Trafficking Awareness Committee Chair

You can help
with our

Poster Campaign

January 11, 2017

**National Human
Trafficking
Awareness Day**

Collectively we can
make an impact to
allow victims to
report their situa-
tion, to get help
they so desperately
need, and to stop
those who want to
harm them.

**National Hotline
1-888-373-7888**

POSTER CAMPAIGN: During the month of January 2017, our Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization will conduct a "**Poster Campaign**" to increase awareness about Human Trafficking in our communities. Together we can help protect our children and help other victims. Posters, suggestions for placement, and information about Human Trafficking will be delivered or mailed to your churches during December. We greatly appreciate your help in placing these posters in your churches and in your communities.

Two Churches Host Human Trafficking Awareness Events and Show the Film "CHOSEN": Shown by Wilma Dublin, the film "CHOSEN" highlights how predators operate to manipulate our young people, how you can respond if you recognize the signs, and what you can do to prevent it from happening. The film is appropriate for youth 13 years and older.

On November 5th, St. Mark's Lutheran Church hosted a presentation on "Engaging Communities - Ending Human Trafficking." The main speaker was Officer Robert Urps of the Northern VA Human Trafficking Taskforce. He gave a comprehensive explanation of Human Trafficking, its local and national implications, how to identify potential victims and their vulnerabilities, current laws to address the problem, and the resources available to help restore victims.

On November 13th, Saint Luke Lutheran Church hosted a Human Trafficking Teach-in—Protecting Our Community's Children. During the luncheon questions were provided for discussion at the tables for the 40 people in attendance. This event is part of the congregation's task force on Human Trafficking, which is led by their Women of the ELCA unit.

From an October 17, 2016, FBI Press Release: "The Federal Bureau of Investigation, along with representatives from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) and several international law enforcement partners, today announced that, domestically, 82 minors were rescued and 239 traffickers and their associates were arrested as part of Operation Cross Country X, an international effort focusing on underage human trafficking that ran from October 13 to 16, 2016..."

"This is the 10th iteration of FBI-led initiative, which took place across the United States and, for the first time, also in several countries around the world. Law enforcement partners from Cambodia, Canada, the Philippines, and Thailand had operations in their respective countries..."

"Operation Cross Country aims to shine a spotlight into the darkest corners of our society that seeks to prey on the most vulnerable of our population," said FBI Director Comey. "As part of this effort, we are not only looking to root out those who engage in the trafficking of minors, but through our Office for Victim Assistance, we offer a lifeline to minors to help them escape from a virtual prison no person ever deserves." [See the entire press release at <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-announces-results-of-operation-cross-country-x>.]

Leader of VA Sex Trafficking Ring Sentenced to 35 years in Prison - <http://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/Leader-of-Virginia-Sex-Trafficking-Ring-Sentenced-to-35-Years-in-Prison-400056941.html>

Three Indicted for Human Trafficking of More than 40 Victims in Maryland - <http://smnewsnet.com/archives/407378/3-indicted-maryland-human-trafficking-case/>

Let us continue to Raise Awareness: Educate yourselves by reading about it. Follow events in the news; talk to friends, family, and colleagues. Participate in the "Poster Campaign." Pray for victims, survivors, traffickers, and professionals involved in anti-trafficking work. For information contact Wilma Dublin at Wilma.dublin@verizon.net and Cheryl Dwyer at DwyerCL2@verizon.net.

Prayer Shawlers Make Knitted Knockers

~Karen Ager, Peace (Alexandria)

On October 7, 2016, the Prayer Shawl group of Peace Lutheran Church (Alexandria) took on a special project—Knitted Knockers (knittedknockers.org). These are hand-knitted or crocheted breast prostheses for women who have undergone mastectomies. The organization, Knitted Knockers, was founded by Barbara Demorest following her mastectomy to reach out and help others. They collect the knockers from volunteers across the country and provide them free-of-charge to anyone who requests one.

The Peace Prayer Shawl group decided this would be a perfect project to match with Breast Cancer Awareness month in October. It is especially appropriate since several women in the congregation have been affected by breast cancer.

The group applied for and received an Action Team Grant from Thrivent Financial before the project started. The grant included \$250 to purchase yarn and stuffing for the knockers and a T-shirt for each participant. (As an aside, each Thrivent member is allowed to receive up to two Action Team Grants per year. Find more information at <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/>.)

Some members of the Prayer Shawl group are expert knitters or crocheters, always generous with their time to help the less-experienced group members (or even those with no experience). The group is about fellowship as well as using their talents for the glory of God and in service to others.

The group will continue making knockers through the fall. If you or someone you know would like one (or a pair), contact Karen Ager (karenandgus@juno.com) with size and color preference. Otherwise, they will be sent to the Knitted Knockers organization for distribution nationwide.

Knitting as a
spiritual practice

RESOURCES

Apply for your Thrivent Action Team grant here:

<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/>

Download the Knitting as a Spiritual Practice guide here:

<http://www.womenofthelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/Knitting.pdf>

See knit and crochet patterns and learn about Knitted Knockers here:

<http://www.knittedknockers.org/>



Knitted Knockers

Help Make a Difference in
Thousands of Women's Lives

Soft, comfortable, knitted or crocheted breast
prosthetics for breast cancer survivors

Gutsy Gals Learn, Grow, and Share at Hallowood.



COURAGE

"...Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."

- John 7:38

Courage. Resilience. Persistence. Advocacy. Boldness.

These were just a few of the things that were on the minds of women from Saint Luke Lutheran Church, Hope Lutheran Church, and Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church who delved into the study of the "Gutsy Gals of the Bible" at Hallowood Conference and Retreat Center in October. They remembered Jesus' words from John 7:38 "...Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." In this way, they prepared their hands for service, their minds for learning, and their hearts for renewal. Professor Marty Stevens led them in learning how the Hebrew midwives, with very low status in society, stood up to the Pharaoh and protected Moses at his birth. They then went on to understand Deborah's role in history and Tamar's courage in standing up for her rights. And the common thread for all these women was their trust in God. Through worship services led by Pastor Platz, they were refreshed in God's grace as they reflected on what it means to be baptized believers and to be salt and light in the world.

The Hallowood staff and setting were just right for their needs as they rested with free time for fellowship, crafts, movies, and walks. Through the generosity of Saint Luke Lutheran Church and a grant from Thrivent Financial, they were able to send 80 Personal Care Kits to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you to all who supported the retreat with prayer, leadership, gifts, and presence. You are a blessing to the world!

Save the Date!
Friday - Sunday
Oct 13-15, 2017



Retreat Theme:

Getting the Point – Living as God's People

Retreat Leader: Pastor Brett Davis

Contact: JoAnn Fawley
alwretreat2015@gmail.com
540-967-1702

Fredericksburg Hospitality House &
Conference Center
2801 Plank Road, Fredericksburg, VA

“GOD’S WORK. OUR HANDS”

Every year in the month of September, New Jerusalem Lutheran Church in Lovettsville, Virginia sponsors an event to give back to the community. This is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. This year **Sunday, September 11th**, was dedicated as the day of service for **“God’s work. Our hands.”**



Throughout the previous months the congregation collected food and healthcare products to build care kits/personal care kits. These kits are donated to Lutheran World Relief.



We also made quilts and prayer shawls that are given to adult communities and people in need.



The congregation beautifies the public spaces in the town by weeding, spreading new mulch, and providing a general clean up where needed.



All in all it was fun and successful. These activities bring the congregation closer together with a sense of accomplishment in helping others.

We were able to provide the following:

- 82 care kits assembled (local)
- 80 health kits assembled (global)
- 50+ yellow food bags collected (937 items)
- 141 quilt squares cut; 7 quilts pieced; 1 quilt tied
- 5 prayer shawls delivered to residents of Lovettsville Home
- 154 cubic feet mulch spread in church garden and two town of Lovettsville sites

“You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we will do great things.” - Mother Teresa

METRO DC WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

GIVING CAMPAIGN FOR *LA SAGRADA FAMILIA* (THE HOLY FAMILY)



IN LANGLEY PARK, MD
2015-2017



La Sagrada Familia is a mission project of the ELCA (Metro DC Synod) and works closely with Saint Luke Lutheran Church. It has over ten years of experience in accompanying the Latino and other immigrant populations in defending housing rights of apartment dwellers, creating jobs, and especially improving educational opportunities for children. Langley Park is one of the most densely populated and crime-ridden locations in the DC area. The children are at high risk for gang violence, substance abuse, and teen pregnancy.



Pastor Rosario Cruz and her volunteers from Saint Luke and a group of students from the Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Maryland provide food, clothing, school supplies, and help with homework, crafts, and games during an after school program. Psychological help is also available as is an ESOL program geared to adults.



Let's help this blessed service by acting boldly in our faith with the gifts God has given us.

Please make checks payable to METRO DC WELCA noting *La Sagrada Familia* in the memo line and send to:

Karen Ager
PO Box 44735
Fort Washington, MD 20749-4735

JOIN THE “PHEBE \$100 CHALLENGE”!

~ Cheryl Dwyer, President, Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization

Phebe is a small hospital in Liberia, which has been slowly recovering from decades of civil war. This war destroyed many things in the country, like the power infrastructure, leaving rural hospitals like Phebe to rely entirely on generators. Liberia is in a delicate balance, leaning forward but at great cost. Current scant resources at Phebe Hospital are spent on very expensive diesel fuel to power generators, making essential hospital functions possible. At US\$4.50 per gallon, this comes at an incredibly steep price of up to US\$400,000 per year.

At the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, the voting members approved the “Supporting Mission Phebe Hospital through Photovoltaics” memorial (proposal). In 2014 at the Ninth Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA, voting members were called to support Northeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization efforts to work with the Rural Renewable Energy Alliance (RREAL) project and the National Lutheran

Church Women Fellowship of Liberia to develop a proposal for providing solar power to the Phebe hospital in Liberia.



With your help, solar panels can save Phebe Hospital \$380,00/year.

The Northeast Minnesota Synod Women, in partnership with RREAL, are leading the initiative to bring photovoltaics (PV) energy to Phebe Hospital in Liberia. They are asking all ELCA congregations to join in their enterprise so that this mission can be realized in near future. By taking the **Phebe \$100 Challenge**, it should assure success. The challenge is in response to a National Geographic Matching Grant. See below for a link to the challenge poster.

It is easy to take the challenge by using a credit card. If your church unit does not have a credit card, perhaps an individual could use their own card and then be reimbursed by the church unit/congregation. Time is of the essence. We all have an opportunity to change lives, strengthen lives, and save lives through our faith in the One who gives us all that we need to accomplish great things. *God's work. Our hands!*

Please share this information with your congregation and support this effort. Thanks for your support!

Important Links for the **Phebe \$100 Challenge**:

[Challenge Poster](#)

[Informational Project Flyer](#)

[Bulletin Insert](#)

[A Three-Minute Project You Tube Video Clip](#)

[RREAL'S resource page for PV Phebe](#)



Phebe Hospital was founded by the Lutheran church in 1921, in partnership with the Methodist and Episcopalian churches. Phebe serves a **population** of approximately **450,000 people**; it is the **foremost hospital** in Bong County.

“ALL ANEW”—Tenth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA



By now, you are aware that the **Tenth Triennial Gathering** of the Women of the ELCA will be held in **Minneapolis, Minnesota**, on **July 13-16, 2017**, under the theme of “**All Anew.**” You probably know that they are only held every three years. But here are some facts that you may *not* know:

- ♦ **Early-bird registration** of \$310 is open and ends January 6, 2017. The cost will then go to \$350.
- ♦ **Husbands are welcome** to register and participate.
- ♦ Have a **young daughter/niece/friend** you would like to bring? Special programming is available for those ages 6-18 and they are encouraged to participate in main activities, too—registration for them is \$100 through January 6th—it is \$150 after that date.
- ♦ **Participation** in life-changing workshops, worship, Bible study, Servant Events, and film viewings (“Dreamcatcher” and “Beauty of Their Dreams”) is yours for the taking.
- ♦ Featured **speakers, preachers, and workshop leaders** bring the gathering themes to life.
- ♦ Have **relatives in Minnesota** you’d like to visit? Encourage them to attend the gathering and enjoy the participation together!
- ♦ One of our **keynote speakers** is Nobel Peace Prize winner and ELCA International Leaders scholarship recipient [Leymah Gbowee](#).
- ♦ **Special events**—see them at <http://www.welcatg.org/special-events>—*need advance sign-up*. They include an Evening with the National Lutheran Choir; Lounge ’70, ’80, ’90; Run, Walk and Roll; and joining the Gathering choir.
 - ◇ The **National Lutheran Choir** will present a concert and hymn sing on Saturday evening, July 15, 2017, at the historic downtown Central Lutheran Church, adjacent to the Minneapolis Convention Center—tickets can be purchased when you register for the gathering.
 - ◇ **Lounge ’70, ’80, ’90** is a late-evening gathering especially for women born in those years featuring dessert and cash bar.
 - ◇ The **5K Walk, Run and Roll** is a popular repeat event (since 2005) to raise money for [Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls](#).
 - ◇ Join the gathering choir and make a joyful noise with other participants in our gathering choir and lead worship on Sunday, with [Kevin Anderson](#).
- ♦ There are seven **Tours** taking place before and after the gathering as well as two post-gathering tours. See them at <http://www.welcatg.org/tours>.

If you haven’t been to a Gathering or haven’t spoken with anyone who has gone to one, you are not aware of the connections to be made—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. It’s an inspiring event you’ll remember always! Check it out at <http://www.welcatg.org/> and please join us!



The Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Synodical Women's Organization's Spring Convention

"All Anew"

"Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert."
~ Isaiah 43:19

**Saturday, May 6, 2017
8:30 AM–4:00 PM
(Delegates meet at 8:00 AM)**

**Peace Lutheran Church
6362 Lincolnia Road
Alexandria, VA 22312**



Registration Fee: \$35 per person (\$40 after March 14)

Final Registration Deadlines: Mail-in by March 31, Electronic by April 10

Delegate registration due March 14

Discounted registration:

\$15 for women under the age of 40 or first time attendees; \$10 for hostesses from Peace
(Lunch included)

Registration will be open in February, 2017

Eucharistic Worship Service

The Reverend Sarah Scherschligt, Peace Lutheran Church, Alexandria, VA, will preside.
The Reverend Richard H. Graham, Bishop, Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, will deliver the homily.

Plenary Session

We are especially pleased to announce that **Patti Austin, President, Church-wide Women of the ELCA**, will lead our plenary session as well as one of our workshops.

Workshops:

In addition to Patti Austin's workshop, we have the Reverend Michael Gutzler, Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA discussion **"Post-Modern Christianity"** as well as a **"Tai Chi"** workshop presented by Alan "Rob" Robertson, Catalyst Personal Fitness. One additional workshop is in the planning stage.

Exhibitors

Our exhibitors include Fair Trade Winds, Human Trafficking Awareness, Women of the ELCA, Lifeline Partnership, and Lutheran Disaster Response.

Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization



**Wishing you all a
Blessed Christmas and
a Joyful New Year!**

**- from your Officers
and Board Members of the
Metro DC Synodical Women's
Organization**

We are WELCA



What is WELCA? It's an easy way to say Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Quite a mouthful, we know. Our organization includes Lutheran women who gather in over 7,000 locations in the U.S. and the Caribbean, for service, study, advocacy, fellowship, and more! WELCA embraces all kinds of ministries that support our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. There is a place for you in Women of the ELCA.

Connections

Please submit articles for the March issue of *The Joyful News* by February 15, 2017 to

metrodcsw@gmail.com.



Women of the ELCA
<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>



SWO Website (Scholarship application for Triennial Gathering)
<http://dwyercl2.wixsite.com/welca-metrodcsynod>

N H T R C

National Human Trafficking Resource Center
<http://polarisproject.org/national-human-trafficking-resource-center>



Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls
<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/november-2016--time-to-apply-for-ruhgw-seed-grants-news-487.php?category-id=6>



Metro DC SWO Convention
<http://dwyercl2.wixsite.com/welca-metrodcsynod/events>



Triennial Gathering and related churchwide resources
welcatg.org



Like us on Facebook
[facebook.com/MetroDCSWO](https://www.facebook.com/MetroDCSWO)



Thrivent Grants
<https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-action-teams/>



Knitting as a Spiritual Practice
<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/Knitting.pdf>



Knitted Knockers
<http://www.knittedknockers.org/>

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