



**METRO DC SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION (SWO)
2014-2015 REPORT TO THE SYNOD**

PURPOSE STATEMENT OF THE METRO DC SWO

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.

THE METRO DC SWO MINISTRY MARCH 2014 THROUGH MAY 2015

Our Annual Convention. The Annual Convention, with the theme of “Love Thy Neighbor,” was held at The Village at Rockville, in Rockville, Maryland. It has been a number of years since we have held a Convention in Maryland, and we were pleased to have a total of 89 participants, exhibitors, speakers, and guests, from all three areas of our Synod – Maryland, Washington, DC and Virginia.

The SWO hosted a two-hour long seminar on “Human Trafficking,” in partnership with The Global Peace Foundation’s Safe Harbor Project. The Safe Harbor Project is an inter-faith program to educate, build advocates, and ultimately stop this horrendous violence against woman and children in our world. Gail Hambleton, Vice President of the Global Peace Foundation, drew upon Assistant District Attorney for the State of Virginia, G. Zachary Terwilliger; human trafficking survivor Barbara Amaya; with The Rev. Dr. Charles Oberkehr, as moderator. Because churches are one of the top two places victims of human trafficking will go when in need of help, we must be aware of the ways to identify women and children that are victims. This session was the first step in a program the Synodical Women’s Organization has embarked upon to educate the women in our units on the issue of human trafficking.

The special worship service developed by Pastor Christine Dunn, homily given by Assistant to the Bishop Philip Hirsch, and the Bishop’s remarks provided a much needed faith balance to the morning activity.

Offerings given during our worship were split evenly between the Women of the ELCA and the Lutheran Campus Ministry Campaign. In-kind offerings were donated to the residents of The Village at Rockville.

Delegates to the business meeting adopted a budget of \$11,282 and elected the following Officers and Board Members: Vice President, Wilma Dublin, Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA; Treasurer, Cheryl Dwyer, St. Mark, Springfield, VA; Board Member, Karen Agar,

Peace, Alexandria, VA; and Board Member, Barbara O'Keefe, Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA. Elected to the Nominating Committee Mary Seale, All Saints, Bowie, MD with two more to be appointed by the President and with Board approval in the near future.

Communication. The website and Facebook page created in 2013-2014 have enjoyed a growing level of activity. The website is being used to promote SWO events and Metro DC Synod events, to post links to the Women of the ELCA and the WELCA Blog, and to follow the adventures of Maddie Tallsman as she serves in Argentina with Young Adults in Global Mission. There is a link to *The Joyful News*, and this allows ALL women in the Metro DC Synod to see the SWO news, events, activities, and stories. This year more than half of the SWO Convention registrations were made using the website.

The Facebook page is also enjoying a growing level of activity. Like us and become our friend so you can follow us and share what is happening with your fellow sisters-in-Christ. For your information: Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/metrodcswo> and SWO Website: <HTTP://DWYERCL2.WIX.COM/WELCA-METRODCSYNOD>

Ninth Triennial Gathering 2014. And what a time it was. 2,400 women celebrating the theme “of many generations” through incredible speeches in the plenary sessions, worship, workshops, a plethora of exhibits, and wonderful times of fellowship. This Triennial Gathering was an experience and a blessing. I encourage you to read the numerous stories and reports from the Triennial Convention and Gathering by going to the SWO Website, click on *The Joyful News*, and then click on August 2014.

The **Tenth** Triennial Gathering will take place in Minneapolis, MN on July 13-16, 2017. This is going to be a wonderful Gathering with lots of exciting speakers and special events. Start planning now, save those pennies, and join us in Minneapolis for a great experience.

The Joyful News. The SWO newsletter was published in August, December, and March and sent to all synod congregations. A “special edition” was published in June that promoted the Triennial Gathering. The August edition contained reports from the delegates participating in the Triennial Convention Business Meeting, as well as stories from those who attended the Gathering. *TJN* is available to **ALL** women on-line through the SWO web site, and we have begun delivering it as a PDF document via email to make it easier for everyone to share with others. Printed copies continue to be sent to those units not able to receive e-mail. If you have not read *The Joyful News*, do take a minute and check it out thorough the website.

Growing the SWO. This is a mission to expand our active units in the Synodical Women's Organization. Presiding Bishop Eaton tells us, “We are church together.” With this in mind, as we talk with unit contacts to better understand their needs and desires, we are also sharing the message that we are able to do more together than we could do as an individual church. This is a diverse group and we are “of many generations.” The WELCA of today provides many opportunities for women from

subjects for circles and bible study groups, ideas and opportunities for service, the Café group younger members that provides topics for discussion, and a blog filled with great conversations. We are involved in social justice issues, offer scholarships and grants, participate in the global efforts of the ELCA. Please invite us to come to your congregation and explore with you the opportunities with the WELCA of today.

The 2014-2015 giving project for the SWO. The Lutheran Campus Ministry campaign has been our focus of our giving this past year and will be active until June, 2015. You can explore the story of being a Christian on the University of Maryland campus, and learn about the “caring” programs in which these students are involved, by visiting (www.lutheranterps.com and www.lutheranterps.com/caring.html).

We are pleased to announce that we have met, and slightly exceeded, our goal. Funds will be distributed in the very near future. A new project is being researched and developed.

A Thank You. To all women in the congregational units, and to our Pastors, administrative assistants, and church leaders - thank you for the support and leadership you provide to your congregations’ ministries and to the ministry of the Metro DC Synodical Women’s Organization. It is a sincere pleasure serving together and carrying out God’s work with our hands.

CURRENT OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

April, 2015 – April, 2016

OFFICERS:

President – Kathleen Meier, St. Matthew’s, Woodbridge, VA
Vice President – Wilma Dublin, Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA
Secretary – Sue Orndorff, St. Matthew’s, Woodbridge, VA
Acting Secretary – Fran Eck, St. Mark’s, Springfield, VA (appointed)*
Treasurer – Cheryl Dwyer, St. Mark’s, Springfield, VA
(*serving as Sue Orndorff recovers from medical situation)

BOARD MEMBERS:

Karen Agar, Peace, Alexandria, VA
Marcia Ihnen, Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA
Kay Garrett, New Jerusalem, Lovettsville, VA
Barbara O’Keefe, Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA
Bonnie Priebe, First Trinity, Washington, DC