

# The Joyful News

## Annual Convention Edition!!!

The Women of the ELCA  
Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization

June 2015



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### A Message from the President

Wow! What a Convention we had on April 11<sup>th</sup> at The Villages at Rockville. We are so excited to have had such a wonderful turnout and delighted to share the day with participants representing the entire Metro DC Synod. This newsletter is an "extra," and it is filled with articles recapping the various pieces of our Convention program. It is good reading for remembering highlights if you attended as well as reading about what you missed if you didn't.

Most of you are probably aware that the Constitution requires we gather annually for delegates to discuss the governing process of the SWO. Each congregation is asked to send one delegate, and depending upon the current status of the congregation, the delegate may have voice and voting privileges or just voice privileges. This year we had 22 "voice and voting" delegates. Praise the Lord!

Required reports were read or reviewed and accepted. Committees were appointed, we discussed what Board actions were taken over the past year, and we conducted elections (the results are on page 2). We also welcomed our newest active

member – Bethel Lutheran, Manassas, Virginia. We listened to the report of the Treasurer, approved a new SWO Budget for 2016 of \$11,282 and, as required by a new directive from WELCA churchwide, approved a second proposed budget for 2017 in the amount of \$10,500.

While waiting for election results I provided a picture of our SWO status. The Metro DC SWO is on the move. The Board has been working very hard to grow active participation in the SWO. Those efforts have included improved communications, using social media to reach out in a different way, and using our Web page to provide links to important information or items of interest on timely issues. You have opportunities to subscribe to *Gather* magazine, *Café*, *Daily Grace*, etc. Our newsletter continues to provide this and similar information in print form, and the electronic version is sent to your church office or your particular contact for them to send in email form to you.

The information I shared with our delegates included asking them to become involved in helping us grow. We discussed the need to hear from our delegates and invited them to talk with their women (groups and individuals) on what they would like to see from the SWO Board—how might we generate more energy and

excitement? What things would cause both young and older women to engage? And, we talked about the need for increased stewardship—taking care of your organization in all respects (participating, sending delegates to Convention, offerings, engaging in the churchwide efforts to bring health, healing, and education to our international communities).

The Synodical Women’s Organization was founded on the principles outlined in the Purpose Statement. It says “mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.” Presiding Bishop Eaton has stated we are stronger if we are “church together.” We have strong support from Bishop Graham and the Synod Council. Now is the time for us to take affirmative action—be good stewards of the SWO.

The new Board will be meeting in early June. We will be working on continuing the program we discussed on Human Trafficking. A committee is working on development of a program with speakers to come to your church to talk about being a “Safe Haven” for victims of Human Trafficking. This will involve mostly education for your congregation on how to identify a victim and what to do if you suspect or know that an individual is a victim. You will hear more about this after our June meeting.

We are grateful for all you are currently doing in your units. I personally and sincerely ask you to communicate with us. There are several ways in which you can be in touch to provide comments: use the “Contact Us” link in the upper right-hand corner on our website pages (your communication will come directly to me); you may email me your thoughts and comments at [kathleenmeier@comcast.net](mailto:kathleenmeier@comcast.net); and I can be reached by telephone at 703-881-3333.

*AN INVITATION:* Would you like to know more about the SWO today? It would be my pleasure to visit with your women on a weekday evening or a Saturday, or a Sunday afternoon. I will tell you where we want to go. I am open to your thoughts and ideas for what you feel will help us become true Disciples of Christ in this world. We have many opportunities; join with us in being “church together.”

In Christ,

Kathy Meier  
President, Metropolitan DC Synodical Woman’s Organization



**SWO delivers fleece blanket and quilt donations: from our Spring Convention (10 fleece), 2 quilts from Good Shepherd (Alexandria), 17 quilts from St. Matthew’s (Woodbridge), and 7 fleece from First Trinity (DC) along with 131 Personal Care Kits from the Sunday School children at Good Shepherd**

*Barbara O’Keefe and her husband transfer bags of ten blankets and Personal Care Kits to LWR Warehouse in New Windsor, MD.*



*Box is filled! Thanks for all your hard work, ladies! See accompanying story on page 5.*



## SWO Annual Convention Highlights from April 11, 2015

The annual convention of the Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization was held on Saturday, April 15, 2015, at The Villages at Rockville, formerly the National Lutheran Home, in Rockville, MD. The staff at The Village at Rockville did a great job of feeding our attendees, all 86 of us! Yes, 86—a wonderful turnout!

The theme of **Human Trafficking** was presented in our morning plenary session, and while the topic is a tough one to learn about, the presenters did an excellent job of educating us about this insidious problem. The Rev. Dr. Charles H. Oberkehr, pastor of Epiphany Lutheran Church of Mount Vernon in Alexandria, introduced the three speakers.



Left to right: Gail Hambleton, G. Zachary Terwilliger, and Barbara Amaya (with her back to the camera)

Our first speaker was Gail Hambleton, Vice President of the Global Peace Foundation-USA, Director of Interfaith Partnerships, and National Director of the Safe Haven Campaign, Interfaith Alliance to Abolish Human Trafficking. Ms. Hambleton has been a driving force in humanitarian aid for women, both internationally and here in the USA. She spoke about the efforts to introduce the Safe Haven Campaign—which is now active in eight states—to the churches in our area, which involves teaching congregants how to recognize when a woman—especially a young woman—is in jeopardy and introducing effective ways to help without putting yourself in harm's way, even if that help is just to call 9-1-1.

We next heard from G. Zachary Terwilliger, who is currently an Assistant United States Attorney in the Eastern District of Virginia-Alexandria Division and the Co-Chair of the Northern Virginia Task Force on Human Trafficking. Mr. Terwilliger spoke to us on his experiences with federal grand jury investigations and jury trials involving organized crime and gang prosecutions with respect to the human trafficking problem—I don't think any of us in the audience had imagined the extent of the problem or how long such things have been going on both internationally or even in our own neighborhoods.

Even more eye-opening was the testimony of Barbara Amaya, who is much more than a survivor of domestic sex trafficking—she is an internationally recognized award winning advocate, speaker, author, and survivor leader in the movement to eradicate modern-day slavery. Her testimony and telling of what she endured was riveting, brutally honest, and poignant. For those of us in the audience, it was also difficult to learn about what she suffered and the truth of what is going on in our world—even in our own neighborhoods—but it was a message we all needed to hear and to learn what we can do to help.

*One attendee summed up the "Human Trafficking" Plenary session with this observation: "I don't think there was a single person that wasn't moved and glad that they were there to hear the awesome speakers."*

The five workshops were well attended as well:

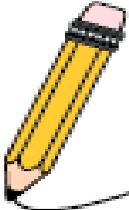
- Joyce Gibson, our WELCA Executive Board rep, took us in an exploration into praying.
- Paul Culler, owner of Fair Trade Winds and Jubilee Traders, discussed his recent trip to Northern India to visit fair trade artisans and shared stories of women who work in fair trade cooperatives worldwide.
- SWO Board Member Bonnie Priebe had a wonderful book workshop on *One Thousand Gifts* by Ann Voskamp, and as many attendees had read the book, there was a

lively discussion after a short video. (You may borrow her DVD and Leader's Guide.)

- Our own Sheri Swackhamer and Laura McDowell, "Today's Dream; Tomorrow's Reality" Leadership Team, hosted a viewing and discussion of the DVD series, "Making Whiteness Visible," followed by learning sessions on the awareness of racism as well as understanding the definitions of institutional racism and prejudice, especially in light of current events.

- The Lutheran World Relief blanket project was the perfect ending to the day—Barbara O'Keefe had everything organized so that people could jump right in and cut or tie. It was well structured so that people could stay as long as they were able to.

For those of you who attended, we hope that you had an uplifting experience and that you will come again and encourage others to join you at our annual convention in 2016!



### IT'S ALL ABOUT SHARING...

**SHARE YOUR SUGGESTIONS...** for any 'successful fundraising' suggestions from your church's women's groups!

**SHARE YOUR ACTIVITIES...** on any fun and/or interesting events your church's women's groups have put on.

**SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS...** on any relevant topic that might interest your fellow sisters-in-Christ.

**SHARE YOUR INTERESTS...** on any fun and/or interesting events you or your church's women's groups have attended.

**... WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

Send your article to Cheryl Dwyer at [DWYERCL2@VERIZON.NET](mailto:DWYERCL2@VERIZON.NET)

### Metro DC SWO Women of the ELCA, 2015-2016

#### Officers and Board Members

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

Treasurer – Cheryl Dwyer –  
St. Mark's, Springfield, VA

Board Members:

Karen Ager –  
Peace, Alexandria, VA

Kay Garrett – New Jerusalem,  
Lovettsville, VA

Marcia Ihnen –  
Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA

Barbara O'Keefe –  
Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA

Bonnie Priebe –  
First Trinity, Washington, DC

\* *Fran Eck, St. Mark's, Springfield, VA, is filling in during Sue's illness.*

**EDITOR NEEDED...** Do you enjoy interacting with others? Do you like to get satisfaction from an experience? Do you wish to express yourself in words? Then we have the perfect job for you... as editor of *The Joyful News!* Contact Cheryl Dwyer for all the details!

## Bulletin Board

## Trip to LWR Warehouse in New Windsor, MD

We [Barbara and her husband] had a good trip to New Windsor...

In addition to the 10 fleece blankets from the SWO Convention and two quilts from the Good Shepherd (Alexandria, VA) sewers, there were 131 Personal Care Kits that the Sunday School kids at Good Shepherd assembled with two bars of soap per kit.

Hopefully are things will be in Nepal in the near future.

~ **Barbara O'Keefe**  
Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA

\* \* \* \* \*

Our thanks also to **Bonnie Priebe** (First Trinity, DC) for transporting the quilts and blankets from St. Matthew's (Woodbridge) and First Trinity (DC).



## Here's The Latest from Maddie Tallman, Our YAGM Contact in Argentina...

Hello all!

I hope this newsletter (see <http://dwyercl2.wix.com/welca-metrodcsynod>) finds you well. Here is the 4<sup>th</sup> newsletter of my year with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission. The past two months have been go, go, go! So check out what's been going on.

For more pictures and updates, check out the *El Arca Argentina* Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/elarcaargentina?fref=ts>), the *Santo Sacramento* Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Congregaci%C3%B3n-El-Santo-Sacramento/259700307373851?fref=ts>), and my blog (at <http://www.maddie-yagm.tumblr.com/>).

Also, some new and exciting things are happening with YAGM, like a new country program in Cambodia starting up this year. Check out more official information at <http://www.elca.org/en/Our-Work/Global-Church/Global-Mission/Young-Adults-in-Global-Mission/Cambodia>, or the program's Facebook page (at <https://www.facebook.com/yagmcambodia>). That's a lot of links!

Have a wonderful weekend everyone! I'll be home in July, which seems to be approaching faster and faster every day. I'd love to hear more updates for you all as well! If you can spare a few extra minutes, a reply to this email with your own news would make my day.

Love and prayers,  
Maddie

[Note: Maddie's newsletters can be linked to from the SWO's website's Home page at <http://dwyercl2.wix.com/welca-metrodcsynod>.]

## Human Trafficking

**What is human trafficking?** You may have heard the term “human trafficking” or “modern-day slavery.” You may have heard a news clip about foreign women being forced into prostitution or to work in sweat shops. But the issue of modern-day slavery is more horrific than most of us can imagine. According to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, in the past decade, human trafficking has emerged as one of the fastest growing criminal enterprises worth over \$30 billion and claiming over 20 million victims. Traffickers use violence, debt bondage and other forms of coercion to manipulate victims to engage in commercial sex acts and labor services against their will. Contrary to popular belief, human trafficking is happening in the United States, in our neighborhoods, and it targets our children. Northern VA is one of the top five hubs for sex trafficking in the US and has more gang-related prosecutions related to that crime than any other jurisdiction according to Detective Bill Wolfe of the Fairfax County Police Department Human Trafficking unit.

Lutheran Women have responded to the call for care and action with regard to the issue of human trafficking. Delegates at the 2014 Triennial Convention passed a resolution that Synodical Women Organization (SWO) Boards convene a committee to review and raise resources for the prevention of Human Trafficking. In response, our Metro DC SWO has gone into action. Our Annual Spring Convention hosted a Human Trafficking Forum that included an overview of Human Trafficking in America and the Metro Area, illuminating the complexities of the issue. This overview was followed by a survivor’s poignant yet instructive testimony of the dreadful circumstances that led her to become a victim. Of equal importance, this event highlighted the outstanding efforts presently being engaged in by faith-based organizations like “Safe Haven Campaign” and our local government taskforce that are working to educate and mobilize our communities to prevent Human Trafficking.

We have made a start. Our commitment is to help eradicate human trafficking by creating awareness in our communities, continuing to advocate for more protection and rehabilitation for victims, and to participate in anti-trafficking campaigns in our churches, schools and neighborhoods.

**What can you do?** We are committed to help our church units inform, educate, and mobilize our congregations and communities to prevent human trafficking through prayer, ministry, and political action. The following are some of the main activities:

- The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice has prepared study materials that provide six one-hour sessions for beginners on the facts of human trafficking and how we can respond to effect change and bring an end to human trafficking. These sessions can be accessed at: [www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice) .
- **Be informed:** educate yourself by reading about it and following events in the news. The internet is a great source of information. Here are some of the websites that provide useful background information:  
[www.globalpeace.org/project/safe-haven-campaign](http://www.globalpeace.org/project/safe-haven-campaign)  
[www.novahti.com](http://www.novahti.com)  
[www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org)  
[www.iustask.org](http://www.iustask.org)
- **Raise awareness:** talk to your family, friends and colleagues.
- **Get involved:** participate in an anti-trafficking movement that helps victims to become active members of their communities again. Make donations. Host a speaker from a service provider or maybe even a survivor at an event at your own church.
- **Pray** for the victims, the traffickers, law enforcement, and organizations that work to end human trafficking.

- **Be an advocate:** We were pleased when the US Senate passed the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act, which expands law enforcement tools to target sex traffickers and creates a new fund to help victims. In April Virginia passed its first sex trafficking law. However, there is more work to be done. It is important that we direct our efforts to urging our law makers to craft more comprehensive and effective anti-trafficking legislation that includes labor trafficking. We also want to ensure that the new laws are effective in their implementation.

As bold Lutheran women, we are called to pray, to listen, to learn, to care, and to take action... to seek justice for the victims of human trafficking.

~ Wilma Dublin (Holy Trinity, Falls Church)  
for the Human Trafficking Committee of the Metro DC SWO

For more information please contact: Wilma Dublin at [Wilma.dublin@verizon.net](mailto:Wilma.dublin@verizon.net) or Kathleen Meier at [kathleenmeier@comcast.net](mailto:kathleenmeier@comcast.net).

## Stewardship: What's It All About?

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Stewardship, defined... **stew-ard-ship noun [stü'-ərd-ship]**

- a. Stewardship is careful and responsible management of the money, property, and resources that God has entrusted us.
- b. Stewardship is providing for the ministries that God has entrusted to our care.

Women of the ELCA encourages and equips women to consider their responsibility and capacity for stewardship. They create educational resources about giving and managing money, including devotions, Bible studies, and program materials for individuals and small groups.

Following are just a few of the many resources available to you and your units to help us all become better stewards through our earthly journey; they can also be found at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/stewardship-pages-43.php>:

- **All About Thankofferings**

Download full PDF at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/AllAboutThankofferings.n.pdf>

Download en español at

[http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/stewardship/Servicio\\_de\\_Ofrendas\\_de\\_Gracias.pdf](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/stewardship/Servicio_de_Ofrendas_de_Gracias.pdf)

This program will help you better understand the history and significance of Women of the ELCA's Thankoffering tradition. Did you know that the concept of Thankoffering celebrations dates back more than 100 years and beyond Lutherans? Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us.

- **Kitchen Table Philanthropy**

Download full PDF at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/KitchenTablePhilanthropy.r.pdf>

Download en español at

[http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/spanish\\_resources/Filantropia\\_Familiar\\_Philanthropy.pdf](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/spanish_resources/Filantropia_Familiar_Philanthropy.pdf)

Do you discuss your beliefs and values around giving together as a family? Have you ever asked your children if there are places or causes they would like the family to make a commitment to? This short resource has ideas to help you start talking about giving with your family. It includes conversation starters, questions for personal reflection and ideas on how to make giving a regular part of your children's lives.

- **Grace-Full Living**

Download full PDF at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/GracefullLiving.pdf>

Download en español at

[http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/spanish\\_resources/Filantropia\\_Familiar\\_Philanthropy.pdf](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/spanish_resources/Filantropia_Familiar_Philanthropy.pdf)

We continue our focus on women's health in all its many facets. If we look at our complete and total health holistically, doesn't it make sense to include financial health? When we consider health in mind, body, and spirit, do we ponder how financial health and giving are integral to our wellbeing? Grace-Full Living can be used in its entirety all at once or divided over a longer period of time. It is divided into three parts of about 60 minutes each. Use in a congregational setting, as a conference event, or as a workshop.

## Resourceful Stewardship

ELCA Resource Centers are like libraries for the church. They loan books, movies, Sunday School curriculum, resources for confirmation class and small group ministry, and so much more. There are approximately 54 resource centers located throughout the country.



Women of the ELCA was pleased to partner with the resource centers, in May 2014, through our most recent Katie's Fund (see information at <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/katie-s-fund-pages-115.php>) initiative. The churchwide women's organization sent copies of two documentaries, *I BELIEVE YOU* (see info at <http://www.divacommunications.com/programs/i-believe-you/>) and *HARVEST OF EMPIRE*, (see info at <http://harvestofempiremovie.com/>), to ELCA resource centers in May 2014. Now, these important films are available throughout the church for congregations and Women of the ELCA groups to use in ministry. The films were also shown at the Ninth Triennial Gathering in July, 2014.

ELCA resource centers are important centers of stewardship. They collect resources, take care of those resources, and make them available to congregations. In their care, one copy of one book can reach hundreds of readers. A single

DVD can reach multiple congregations. When you borrow a resource, you are help continue this cycle of stewardship. You care for that gift while it's in your possession, using it to educate and inspire, and you return it to the resource center so it is available for the next user.

As stewards of Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA used Katie's Fund dollars to purchase films. As stewards of the DVDs, resource center staff now make the films available for others. Upon receiving the DVD in May, Bonnie Weber reminded us that all these acts of stewardship are rooted in gratitude. She wrote:

"As assistant director of the NW Synod of WI Resource Center, located in Eau Claire, I just received the 2 DVD's in the mail. I...am thrilled with this addition to our Center. Thank you, churchwide women, for the thoughtfulness of sharing these timely, touching and soul-searching videos..."

Our SWO is the Resource Center for the Metro DC Synod; contact our SWO President, Kathy Meier, at (703) 881-3333 or at [KATHLEENMEIER@COMCAST.NET](mailto:KATHLEENMEIER@COMCAST.NET) for these resources. In addition to the two documentaries mentioned above, we also have a copy of *MISS REPRESENTATION* (see info at <http://www.therepresentationproject.org/films/miss-representation/>) dealing with women in the workplace; it was also shown at the Ninth Triennial Gathering last July.