



# The Joyful News

## Special Post-Convention Edition!!!



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

June 2016

WEBSITE: <http://dwyercl2.wix.com/welca-metrodcswod>

FB: <https://www.facebook.com/MetroDCSWO>

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### President's Message

Dear Sisters,

"*I was a stranger...*" was the theme of our 2016 SWO convention, which focused on immigration and the refugee crisis. Thanks to all who were involved in the planning and an inspiring day it was! This special issue of *The Joyful News* shares some highlights and impressions of the day. The voting members—representing active units and the board—elected some new officers and board members (to join those still serving) as well as our 2017 Triennial Convention voting members. The new board is looking forward to our first

meeting in early June to plan events for the coming year, and I'm excited to be serving as your President during our next two years.

In this 'extra special' issue of *The Joyful News*, I'm privileged to introduce our new editors: *Sheena Foster* (Luther Place Memorial, Washington, DC), *Laura Hamke* (New Jerusalem, Lovettsville, VA), and *Donna Nelson* (Saint Luke, Silver Spring, MD). These lovely and energetic women represent each of our geographic areas, so I feel their volunteering was providential—they've already met and planned some interesting issues ahead! Thank you, ladies, for taking up this important task.

As we begin our journey together, please think a moment about the other women in your church—those you worship with, you volunteer with, you quilt/knit/crochet/serve/whatever with. Growing up, I recall my mom belonging to our church's Ruth Circle. Those women and their families were all a part of my "circle" of life—their kids were in my Sunday School and many of us were confirmed together then moved on to Luther League. I took for granted that they were all simply a part of my family.



As an adult/mother/grandmother and a member of my own church's Ruth Circle (really!), I now realize the importance of those relationships and how vital they were for the women involved. Even through many moves and relocations, I too have felt the joy and sisterhood of such warm and welcoming experiences first-hand wherever we landed! Our sisters in our churches and in the Women of the ELCA truly are a part of our larger family.

Whether you are new to your congregation or a charter member or somewhere in-between, I hope you are experiencing that wonderful welcoming feeling, too. Our hosts for our recent SWO convention invited us into their home sanctuary with open arms just as this part of our theme verse (from Matthew 25:35-36) expressed, "*I was a stranger and you invited me in...*"

Here's our invitation to all of you to join us in our journey—welcome to our new year!

Your sister-in-Christ,

*Cheryl Dwyer*  
President, Metro DC SWO



## Mark Your Calendar!

June 11

### Metro DC SWO Board Meeting

Peace Lutheran Church, Alexandria, VA

June 18

### Metro DC Synod Assembly

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Gaithersburg, MD

July 10-13

### ELCA Grace Gathering

New Orleans: elca.org/gracegathering

September 6

### Registration opens for 10<sup>th</sup> Triennial Gathering

Minneapolis: www.welcatg.org

September 11

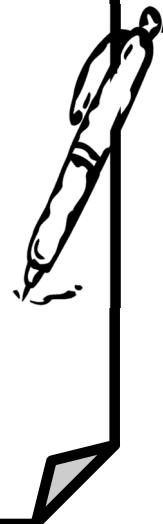
### ELCA Day of Service

Your home church: www.elca.org/dayofservice

October 13-15, 2017

### All Lutheran Women Retreat

Fredericksburg, VA



## Your SWO Board

Position	Name	Church	Email address
President	Cheryl Dwyer	St. Mark's, Springfield, VA	DwyerCL2@verizon.net
Vice President	Wilma Dublin	Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA	wilma.dublin@verizon.com
Secretary	Fran Eck	St. Mark's, Springfield, VA	fran.alaneck@msn.com
Treasurer	Karen Ager	Peace, Alexandria, VA	karenandgus@juno.com
Board Member	Sue Cottrol	Good Shepherd, Alexandria, VA	bgite@aol.com
Board Member	Karen Evans	Saint Luke, Silver Spring, MD	akj3@comcast.net
Board Member	Sheena Foster	Luther Place Memorial, Washington, DC	fostersheena@gmail.com
Board Member	Marcia Ihnen	Holy Trinity, Falls Church, VA	mcihnen@aol.com
Board Member	Bonnie Priebe	First Trinity, Washington, DC	bonnielass_us@yahoo.com

*Be sure to watch for the August issue of The Joyful News for further introductions!*

## **Recap of SWO Annual Convention: "I was a stranger..."**

Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization's Annual Convention held at Saint Luke Lutheran Church in Silver Spring, MD, on Saturday, April 16, 2016, was a moving experience!

The Rev. Connie A. Miller led the opening worship with the homily delivered by The Rev. Elizabeth Platz (both of Saint Luke). The Saint Luke bell choir and organist provided an inspiring array of hymns and music that truly enhanced the worship service.



The Plenary Session on "Immigration and Refugee Crisis: Lutherans in Action" was presented jointly by representatives from Lutheran Social Services/National Capital Area (LSS/NCA) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS). The dedicated people of these organizations do wonderful work in helping to acclimate and resettle the many immigrants that often have to wait years in foreign resettlement camps before they are considered for entrance into the US. They set the record straight on many myths about migrants and refugees, and we learned what we and our congregations can do to help this ongoing crisis.



*Children of  
La Sagrada  
Familia made the  
table centerpieces*

We enjoyed viewing a video of **La Sagrada Familia**, which is the current SWO project through June 2017. La Sagrada Familia is a mission project of the ELCA (Metro DC Synod). 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.

Karen Voris, member of churchwide Women of the ELCA Executive Board, brought greetings and an update from WELCA churchwide. The afternoon workshops were well attended:

- Karen Voris led a Bible study on our Convention theme verse: "... for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." (Matthew 25: 35-36) Her presentation provided a study of what we Christians are asked to do.
- From LSS/NCA, Deacon Kati Miller-Holland, Director, Church and Community Ministries, and Aerlanne Wontamo, Senior Resettlement Manager, provided information and materials to share with our congregations to guide us through the preparation and commitment phases of becoming a co-sponsoring congregation with LSS/NCA. We learned that the Syrian refugee problem is very critical and much help is needed. There are various levels of commitment; see their website at <http://lssnca.org/>.

- Maddie Tallman spoke on her year abroad with the ELCA's Young Adults in Global Mission program in Argentina and on all of the wonderful women who accompanied her along the way. Maddie shared some ups and downs of living in community and what it's like to learn a language by immersion. Her slides gave a great insight into her year there. You can follow Maddie's journey through her newsletters, which are archived at <http://dwyercl2.wix.com/welca-metrodcsynod>. Maddie will be attending seminary in the near future.
- Bonnie Elizabeth Kendrick is an excellent Seated Yoga (or Chair Yoga) instructor from Annandale, VA. Bonnie taught gentle stretching movements in the workshop to bring health, harmony, and balance for body, mind, emotions, and spirit. She also handed out a booklet of those movements along with additional ones for individual home use. She holds classes in her home as well as at various churches and senior centers and is available for additional classes for anyone interested.



Participants brought in-kind gifts for two local organizations: personal items for **Artemis House** (<http://fairfaxcounty.gov/ofw/artemis-house.htm>), a Fairfax County shelter for victims of domestic violence) and gift cards for the **Polaris Project** (<https://polarisproject.org/client-services>), Northern Virginia Human Trafficking Initiative). Voting members from our active WELCA units elected some new officers and SWO board members at the business meeting. They also elected our two SWO voting members for the 2017 Triennial Convention: Marcia Ihnen and Laura Hemke—who, along with our president Cheryl Dwyer, will represent us next year.

Exhibitors included ELCA World Hunger Appeal; Fair Trade Winds; Gifts of Hope; Lutheran Social Services/ National Capital Area; *La Sagrada Familia*; WELCA of Saint Luke; SWO Human Trafficking Task Force; and Women of the ELCA. Shopping was available from Fair Trade Winds and Gifts of Hope. Participants enjoyed a light Continental breakfast and a delicious salad-and-sandwich lunch provided by the Men's Group of Saint Luke, along with shopping and wonderful fellowship with other women in our synod... a good time was had by all!

### Gifts from the Convention greatly appreciated!

Thank you for your very generous response to support Human Trafficking victims. You donated \$600 in gift cards and 92 personal care kits. Very often when victims are rescued, all they have are the clothes they are wearing. With your in-kind gifts of gift cards victims can be accompanied to a store and have the opportunity to purchase a pair of shoes and clothing. The personal care items will be used at the Artemis House where some victims are housed as they begin to focus on their rehabilitation after very complex trauma. Artemis House also addresses their physiological, safety, medical needs.



As the Women of the ELCA, your generosity and kindness reflect your call to discipleship, and your commitment to serve and help others. We are committed to spread awareness, advocate for and help victims of Human Trafficking. THANK YOU!

# Grace Gathering



August 10–13  
New Orleans

## YOU ARE INVITED!

The 500th anniversary of the Reformation is an opportunity to rejoice in the life-giving, liberating power of the gospel. As part of the observance, we invite you to attend the Grace Gathering, in partnership with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. This will be an opportunity to experience the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) when gathered as the ELCA Churchwide Assembly, prepare for further observances of the 500th anniversary and reflect on how the Reformation can continue to guide us today.

"The Grace Gathering will bring people together from all across the ELCA. Participants will see the church in action, worship with churchwide assembly voting members, engage in experiential learning and attend a variety of workshops that will equip congregations and synods with tools to prepare for 500th anniversary observances. And, you know that when you get a couple of thousand Lutherans together, the singing will be great!"

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

### FEATURED

### SPEAKERS

"As a synod bishop I was always delighted by the wonder and excitement of first-time synod assembly attendees. People were happily surprised by the scope of the work we do as the ELCA. They found the worship inspiring and were energized by being around so many other Lutherans. So I thought, why not make it possible for people to have that same kind of experience at a churchwide assembly."



#### GRACE GATHERING OPENING AND PLENARY REPORT

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton

Hear Leymah Gbowee's inspirational message on the confidence we share in God's mercy through Christ. As a Lutheran Christian, she is called to the work of the Gbowee Peace Foundation Africa and Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace.

Photo credit to Michael Angelo for Wonderland.

#### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Prize winner and ELCA International Leaders scholarship recipient

<http://elca.org/gracegathering>

**Save the date** and plan to attend—you'll be glad you did!

SAVE THE DATE!



Triennial gatherings bring Lutheran women together from across the church with life-changing workshops, worship, Bible study and more. Registration will begin September 6. At the Tenth Triennial Gathering, July 13–16, 2017, women will gather in Minneapolis, MN, under the theme “All Anew.”

Early-bird registration, through January 6, 2017, is \$310; after that registration is \$350. Day registrations are \$175. Register at [www.welcatg.org](http://www.welcatg.org) or email women [women.elca@elca.org](mailto:women.elca@elca.org) for a registration packet.



We are real women talking about our faith. About our doubts and challenges. About joy and what inspires us. We'll experience simple conversations between friends—old and new—that will develop into a movement sweeping the church, inspired and infused with the Holy Spirit.

Featured speakers, preachers and workshop leaders will bring the gathering themes to life. Devotions exploring the themes will be posted on the website in mid-summer.

Your elected voting members for the Triennial Convention are:

- Cheryl Dwyer [DwyerCL2@verizon.net](mailto:DwyerCL2@verizon.net)
- Marcia Ihnen [mcihnen@aol.com](mailto:mcihnen@aol.com)
- Laura Hamke [laurah@hamkeeast.com](mailto:laurah@hamkeeast.com)

**Mark your calendars,  
make your plans, and  
join the conversation!**

FOR MORE INFO:  
[welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org)