

## The Synodical Women's Organization Report

The Synodical Women's Organization of the Metro D.C. Synod has had quite the year. Since our last Gathering, we've had a shift in leadership. We were very sorry to see Donna Nelson leave but continue to be grateful for everything she has done for our group, and hope that she is thriving in her new church community. Laura Stall, a member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Gaithersburg, Maryland, stepped in to finish out Donna's term and plan for the 2020 Gathering. We also took on a new treasurer, Cheryl Dwyer, who has been dutifully helping us organize our finances and providing insight from her years of experience with women's ministry. Preceding her was Karen Ager, who, despite having also moved to a different state, was diligently providing assistance and reports through the year. All in all, the board has made some big adjustments, but has been getting on swimmingly.

Most of our time was spent preparing for the 2020 Gathering, which was simply titled *Love: Love Yourself, Love God, and Everything in Between*. We were hoping, with the help of our speakers which included Pastor Ray Ranker and a representative from the Islamic Center of Maryland, to learn how one can 'be church' outside of church walls. We were also going to be collecting and assembling hygiene kits for the N Street Village, and organization that provides care for women experiencing homelessness.

Unfortunately, due to quarantine restrictions, we were unable to follow through with our plans for the 2020 SWO Gathering. It was an emotional decision, but the safety and health of our community is of the utmost importance. We are looking forward for a time where we can gather again. In a small silver-lining, someone who had collected a bulk amount of zip-loc bags, shampoo, soap, and detergent still delivered the items to the N Street village, which is very, very appreciated. We are hoping that our speakers will be open to returning for the next gathering we are allowed to have.

Financial business has been relatively slow recently due to quarantine. We provided money to Churchwide WELCA for their Triennial (which has also been postponed), and have made offerings to the synod, including the Salvador Delegation.

As a side note: as part of an effort to get to know the women of the synod, and also to allow others to get to know her, I (Laura) took time to visit a few churches in the synod. I visited a quilting event at Saint Luke in Silver Spring, where Lutheran World Relief gave a presentation about their work, and the ladies of Saint Luke gave demonstrations of how their quilts were made. I had the opportunity to help tie some knots in the quilts, which is only a tiny portion of the work that goes into these blankets, which are then sent to underdeveloped nations and communities in need. The women work incredibly hard on these quilts, and it was so nice to see. I also had lunch with the women of Augustana and sat in on one of their meetings. They were warm and welcoming, and I look forward to seeing them all again as soon as we can. I am still new to this position, and I am looking forward to gleaning everything I can from the women of this Synod.

It is unfortunate that we cannot gather in a way that we are accustomed to for Synod Assembly, but we very much look forward to seeing everyone again!

Respectfully,  
Laura Stall