



December 2023  
Volume 36, Issue 6



Florida-Bahamas  
Synodical Women's  
Organization



*We close 2023*



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### *Anne's Advice*

With the completion of our Fall Gathering, I feel like another page has turned and I can reflect with gratitude on the many enriching experiences I have enjoyed this year as your SWO President. I also know that I must look ahead to what my life could be like when another woman will be chosen at our next Fall Gathering.

The message of *"Holy Ground"* deeply moved me because of surprising experiences I have had in the second half of this year. It takes a lot to get my attention. At the end of August, I caused an auto collision. I made a left turn in front of another car because I misjudged his speed and distance. He slammed into my passenger door. As I climbed out of my car, the driver of the other car rushed over to me. He didn't say, *"You stupid old cow, why didn't you watch where you were going!"* He asked if I was alright, and when I said yes, he said, *"Praise God!"* It takes a while to complete all the legal formalities of a collision and wait for the tow trucks. The amazing thing was the sense of peace that enveloped both Mike and me. We exchanged our names and contact information. We praised God's mercy. My friend Cindy came to wait with me and take me home. She commented on the spirit of caring and peace that we all shared that afternoon. We all prayed together. In the days ahead, Mike would send me a text occasionally to make sure I was alright. At one point, he asked if I'd mind if he sent me information about something important to him. He said that he was kind of a poster child for this organization. He sent me a flyer for the *Cold Weather Shelter*. When I called the phone number on the flyer, I realized that God had gotten my attention so I could make a sacrificial gift to this organization to enable them to purchase supplies before the cold weather brought homeless people into the shelter for a hot meal and a warm place to sleep. Now I will take time to discern if God is calling me to do more.

The Women of Hope Lutheran Church in the Villages invited me to their Fall Retreat at their Lake Weir Campus. Their guest speaker, **Gaye Martin**, joined us by Zoom. The theme was *"Can You Hear Me Now?"* In a few funny, entertaining segments, Gaye shared anecdotes from her personal life about hearing God's voice. Because she is a pilot, she talked about the importance of always listening for the voice of the air traffic controller. Even though the air traffic

### FB-SWO Board

#### President:

**Anne Storan**

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#### Vice President:

**Denise Beumer**

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#### Secretary:

**Laurie Nelson**

nlsnlaur@yahoo.com

#### Treasurer:

**Tracy Moffatt**

tracymoffatt@aol.com

controller is watching many planes at a time, and sometimes his directions may not make sense to you, he is watching you and you must trust him to guide you home. My favorite of the stories she told made the point that we may not recognize at the time that God has given a message through another person. At her first dance as a young girl, she lined up along the gym wall with the other young girls, worrying that no one would ask them to dance; then worrying that someone would. A boy came up and asked, and she said yes. When that song was over, he asked if she wanted to do it again. That went ahead with no difficulty. He asked if she wanted to try again. When Gaye answered yes, he said, "Can I lead this time?" It was more than sixty years before Gaye realized that she should let God lead.

Just as we heard at Fall Gathering, God may speak to us in unexpected and surprising ways. I don't want to meet God by accident again. It would be better if I be still and listen for the voice of the one who will bring me in for a safe landing at the right destination. I need to spend more time reading the Bible with intention, seeking God's instruction for me. I need to set aside time for prayer and ask for discernment. I ask that all of you may lift up a prayer for me. I need to let God lead in my daily dance through life, and listen for his voice to tell me how I can use my gifts to serve him better.

**Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President**



### Forms, Funds and Finances...

Greetings SWO Sisters,

We were blessed with Holy Ground to gather on as we enjoyed our Fall Gathering at a new location – *Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center*. We gathered around the campfire, had wonderful programs and speakers, and enjoyed the company of our sisters. If you missed this year's Fall Gathering, make plans now to attend next year!

Thank you to all who shared their generosity at Fall Gathering in both our regular Communion Offering and our Love Offering for **Sozo Kids**. Please remember all Love Offering donations made until January 31, 2024 will go to **Sozo Kids**. Our New Love Offering will receive any donations sent after February 1, 2024. Several donations were also received for our Fund for Leaders Scholarship.

Here are the totals:

- **Communion Offering:** \$2,526.00 (50% will be sent to Churchwide)
- **Love Offering-Sozo Kids:** \$3,756.00 (composed of the following)
  - Cash and Checks: \$3,016.00
  - Gift Cards: \$ 740.00

*Total gifts to SoZo Kids so far this year are: \$5,037.00*

- **Fund for Leaders Scholarship Endowment:** \$1,180.00

Thanks to ALL who contributed! Also, many thanks to **Deb Lovelock**, **Michele Hilton** and **Tina McCloud** for their expert help in counting the offerings over the weekend. Please reach out to me with any questions about offerings and all things treasurer: [fbswotreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:fbswotreasurer@gmail.com) or 239-848-7274.

Donations are always graciously accepted to any of the funds above - make checks payable to FL-BA SWO and mail to: **SWO Treasurer, Tracy Moffatt, 1944 Crestview Way, Naples, FL 34119**

**Tracy Moffatt, FL-BA SWO Treasurer**



## Fall Gathering Business Summary

The business of the 2023 Fall Gathering was led by President Anne Storan. In attendance were 134 Sisters in Christ, four youth, and three spouses. Thirty-nine voting members were present to address the proposals and nominations of the three business sessions held.

**Denise Beumer** was also reelected as Vice President and **Tracy Moffatt** was reelected as Treasurer. Three board Members were reelected for another term: **Leone Goding**, **Sallie Haley**, and **Nina Jageler**. After acknowledging the resignation of board member **Debra Lantz** due to illness, **Raeann Purcell** was nominated from the floor and unanimously approved to fill a one year term in her place. There were no Resolutions presented. The Board will meet with Conference leaders on Friday, January 26 through Sunday, January 28, 2024, at Luther Springs to make plans for Spring Gatherings and the next Fall Gathering. The 2024 Fall Gathering will be held at Warren Willis Conference Center on November 8th through 10th.

Peace, **Laurie Nelson**, Secretary

### *Thank You to All the Helpers at Business Sessions*

I am grateful for all the women who faithfully shared their time and talent to be leaders as Committee Chairs during the business sessions at our Fall Gathering:



Parliamentarian  
Timekeeper  
Claims and Offerings  
Conduct of Elections  
Credentials  
Nominating Committee  
Committee on Minutes  
Committee on the Report of the President  
Reference and Counsel/  
Reference Committee

**Tracy Moffatt**, Caloosa  
**Nina Jageler**, Heart of Florida  
**Tracy Moffatt**, SWO Treasurer, Caloosa  
**Gayle Backiel**, Mid-Gulf  
**Judy Driesbaugh**, Flagler/Volusia  
**Denise Beumer**, Heart of Florida  
**Laurie Nelson**, Pinelands  
**Marilyn Kreitzinger**, Heart of Florida  
**Sallie Haley**, Pinelands

### *Thank You for Helping with Hospitality and Inspiration*

Communion  
Saturday Morning Devotions  
Sunday Morning Devotions  
Prayer Room/Meditation  
Hospitality  
Ushers  
In-Kind Gifts  
Elections  
Registration  
Audio-Visual

**Denise Coller**, Broward-Bahamas  
**Mary Bollingberg**, First Coast  
**Gisela Khail**, Space Coast  
**Melissa Kennedy**, Caloosa  
**Marilyn Kreitzinger**, Heart of Florida  
**Mary Macaulay**, Gulf Coast  
**Linda Greilick** and **Phyllis Berlage**, Suncoast  
**Gayle Backiel**, Mid-Gulf  
**Irene Brissel**, Pinelands  
**Karen Weinrich**, Flagler-Volusia

Thank you to **Tabitha Richter** for the Youth Program

Thank you to **Jonathan Weinrich**, **Piper Spencer**, **Eileen Soler**, and **Lynn Steger**  
for leading us in music

Thank you to **Jonathan Weinrich** for valet golf cart service

**Anne Storan**—FL-BA SWO President

## A Look Back at Fall Gathering 2023

**Wow!** What a successful fall gathering we had at our new location, **Warren Willis Retreat Center**. We spent the weekend on Holy Ground, learning how God still speaks to us, and reminiscing about summer camp.

HOLY GROUND -  
GOD STILL SPEAKS

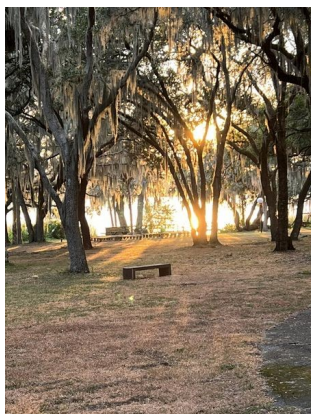


A huge thank you to all who led and participated. **Trixie Richter** led our worship services and **Michelle Collins** led our Bible Study, as we contemplated the meaning of Holy Ground. **Tabitha Richter** led not only our youth, but also many of our worship songs. **Jonathan Weinrich** pulled double duty as guitar player and golf cart driver, which was much appreciated by those with mobility issues. We had wonderful workshop leaders and music led by **Lynn Steger**. Although we had a rainy Saturday night, we did have a campfire and some s'mores.

Psalm 46: 10  
"Be still, and know that I am God!  
I will be honored by every nation.  
I will be honored throughout the world."

We also want to thank all you who attended at our new site. We know that change is difficult and we will continue to work through issues next year. Many of the evaluation sheets mentioned issues with the rooms and showers. Be assured we have passed on all of those concerns to the retreat center.

It was a great honor to be co-chairs for this retreat. We now pass the torch on to **Donna Person, Nina Jageler, and Gayle Backiel**. We are confident they will have a wonderful gathering planned for us in 2024!



**Lisa Klima & Karen Weinrich**  
Co-Chairs - 2023 Planning Committee





# As we Gathered on Holy Ground A Gallery of our 2023 Fall Gathering



A place for grace & meals

Greetings from Pastor Nicole Eastwood, Assistant to the Bishop, and Michele Hilton, VP of FL-Bahamas Synod council



President Anne Storan welcomes Yma Mulero, Churchwide Board Representative of Puerto Rico



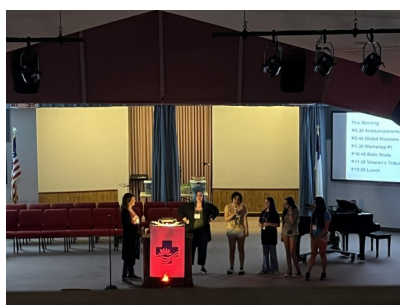
Opening Devotions Friday night



Deacon Michelle Collins leads Saturday morning Bible Study



One of the many workshops on Saturday and Sunday



Youth Shepherd Tabitha Richter introduces the youth attending



Musicians Jonathan Weinrich, Piper Spencer, Eileen Soler, and Music Leader Lynn Steger keep us in tune



Diane Spicer introduces new Love Offering representative beginning February 1, 2024  
Chrystal Netherton of GraceWay Village in Fort Pierce

## **My First Triennial Gathering**

by **Denise Beumer**-Vice President

After the Triennial Convention, I attended my very first Triennial Gathering on September 21<sup>st</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>. To my amazement, over 1,100 WELCA women gathered at the Phoenix, Arizona Convention Center. I hope that I was not on camera with my shocked look as I entered the convention meeting room. I have never been surrounded by so much love. There were my Christian sisters from all over the United States. They handed out gifts presented from their Conferences. To my surprise, I was told that this was the lowest attendance and the first face to face Gathering since COVID. The pre-COVID attendance was at least 3,000! WOW! Being my first, I did not think 1,100 in attendance was bad at all. The speakers were very informative, even some funny. The Worship Service was meaningful and Spirit-filled.

There were a few things that I took away from the Gathering and that will remain in my mind, forever. One thing I will remember to never say is *"Refugees,"* but instead *"New Americans."* I will remind myself that no one ever wants to leave their home. But sometimes it is necessary for the survival of self or family. Just think if someone or the government made our very existence unbearable and life threatening and we had to make the sacrifice of leaving the place that we call home. Just think what would that be like for you and your family? Scary thought, isn't it? The statement *"Justice is what love looks like in public."*

### **Workshops you could Attend:**

- Tell your story- A Writing Workshop for Women
- Practices for Sabbath Keeping: How to stop working on Your days off.
- Preparing your Congregation for Leaders of Color
- Gathering our hopes and dreams through Katie's Fund
- Showing God's Love by showing up-The Ministry of LDR
- Just Love Connecting Women
- Today's Disciples: Modeling How to Just Love
- Indian 101
- Introduction to Truth & Healing Movement
- Book Discussion: Love Without Limits
- AMMPARO and Engagement in Migrant Ministry
- Love Transcends Borders: LIRS and the Work of Welcome
- Talking Circle with Native American Urban Ministry



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023 | PHOENIX  
WELCATG.ORG

### **Learning Opportunities/Service Events that you could participate in:**

Community Lab hosted Building Beloved Community and House of Refuge Sunnyslope

RUHWG Lab hosted:

Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls

African Girls Scholarship & Mentorship Program

My Friends House Inc.

Del La Mana con Jesus

Other events included:

Migration Lab

Trafficking Lab

Innovation Lab

Better Chance Lab

In Kind Gifts Lab

The Quilting Lab

The Knitting Lab

Earth Lab

The Language Lab

Women Of the ELCA

The Bookshelf

The Quilt Challenge Gallery

I even sang in the Choir. Boy, I had a great time! Please come join me at the next Gathering in 2026 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Your Sister in Christ,

**Denise Beumer**

MOVING  
*forward* into 2024

**Florida-Bahamas SWO  
Executive and Advisory Board Members  
&  
Conference Leaders Meeting**



On January 26-28, 2024, the Executive and Advisory Board Members of the Florida-Bahamas SWO will meet with the Leaders of the Conferences at **Luther Springs Camp and Conference Center, 264 Vause Lake Road, Hawthorne, FL 32640**. We will begin at 4:00 pm on Friday and dismiss before Noon on Sunday. This is an opportunity to get to know each other better, worship together, share ideas, and plan for Spring Gatherings and Fall Gathering.

The President (co-chair or leader) of each conference should plan to attend this important meeting. If the president is unable to attend, she should arrange for one of the other officers of her conference to attend in her place.

Details about the meeting will soon be sent to the FL-BA SWO executive and advisory members and to the Leader of record of each conference. If your conference has recently held an election, please contact our **Conference Coordinator, Nina Jageler** at [conferencecoordwelcafl@gmail.com](mailto:conferencecoordwelcafl@gmail.com) to confirm contact information for the President (Leader).

Save the date and be ready for a blessed time.

**Anne Storan** - President, FL-BA SWO

*Are you interested in attending  
a Church Women United Human Rights Day event?*

*Church Women United remembers that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms... without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status" (Excerpt taken from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, written by the UN in 1948).*

These words should be in the forefront of our minds as we support, work towards, and fight for the rights of all humans. This is the same message that Jesus gave while on earth. When He said, "Love one another as I have loved you," He did not mean for us to love just some people, He truly meant for us to love everyone. This has been the message of CWU since our beginnings in 1943 and will continue to be one of the pillars that supports and drives our movement.

**Please find your nearest CWU unit or check with me if you would like more information.**

**Leone Goding**, FL-BA SWO - CWU representative 352-223 1925 or [leone-goding@centurylink.net](mailto:leone-goding@centurylink.net)







2024

Thank you

and



To those serving on our Board

Churchwide Board Member of the Women of the ELCA Yma Mulero installed our new Board at our Installation and Sending Service on Sunday, November 12, 2023.

Board includes President Anne Storan, Vice President Denise Beumer, Treasurer Tracy Moffatt, Secretary Laurie Nelson, continuing Board members Stacia Carter, Leone Goding, Sallie Haley, Nina Jageler and Donna Person and new Board member Raeann Purcell.



### **Continuing Officers**

Anne Storan	President (left)
Denise Beumer	Vice President (upper right)
Tracy Moffatt	Treasurer (middle right)
Laurie Nelson	Secretary (lower right)



### **Continuing Board Members**

Stacia Carter (upper left)  
Leone Goding (lower left)  
Sallie Haley (upper right)  
Nina Jageler (middle right)  
Donna Person (lower right)



### **New Board Member**

Raeann Purcell (right)



Thanks so much to Debra Lantz for your years of diligent service on our FL-BA SWO Board. May God be with you on your journey.





by Donna Person, FL-BA SWO Board Member

## ELCA Fund for Leaders *Scholarship*



Do you know a seminary student who is currently attending one of the ELCA seminaries? Encourage them to apply for the Fund for Leaders Scholarship(s) awarded by the Board of the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization ("SWO").

Seminary students must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Applicants must be in the candidacy process and have been verified with the Florida-Bahamas Synod Candidacy Chair.
- 2) Seminary students must be attending one of the eight ELCA seminaries and are either in the Master of Divinity (M.DIV), Master of Arts (MA), or Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) programs.
- 3) Preference will be given to residents of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, female applicants, and active members of congregational units.
- 4) Applications will be accepted each year beginning on November 1 with a deadline of December 15 for submission.
- 5) The selected candidate(s) will be invited to attend the SWO's Fall Gathering, to participate in the weekend's activities, and to present a brief greeting. If the scholarship recipient(s) is unable to attend the Fall Gathering, a video may be submitted.

The Fund for Leaders Scholarship Application for the 2024-2025 academic year is available on our website, [www.flwelca.com](http://www.flwelca.com). **The deadline is midnight, December 15, 2023.** Applications should be sent to **Donna Person**, SWO Secretary, 7418 Corkwood Circle, Tamarac, FL 33321, or [dperson7@aol.com](mailto:dperson7@aol.com).



## The End and the Beginning

From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick

We finished the end of our liturgical church year with the celebration of the feast of Christ the King on November 26th and we have begun our next liturgical church year on December 3rd, the first Sunday in Advent. Both times of celebration, are they not? We end our year celebrating the fact that Christ is our Messiah. Such very good news! And we begin each year in anticipation of the coming of our Savior, his very birth in Bethlehem. Each Sunday we light a candle that helps us prepare for his coming. First, a candle of Hope, then Peace, then Joy, and finally Love.

As we close this year, 2023, as Women of the ELCA, let us think of the celebrations that we have shared together...our Bible studies and friendships shared in our congregational units, our conference gatherings when we joined with more of our sisters, the worship and events at the Triennial in Phoenix where 1,100 of our sisters gathered, the service projects, quilts, and kits that we poured our hearts into, and our annual Fall Gathering where we came together to worship, learn, and laugh, to name a few. Thanks to our God who guides us each and every day for all the blessings of 2023. We look forward to see how our God will lead us in 2024 and for that Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love as we follow the path before us.

# Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory

## Executive Board 2024

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
<b>Anne Storan</b> astoran46@gmail.com Planning Committee	<b>Denise Beumer</b> dbeumer1000@gmail.com Planning Committee	<b>Laurie Nelson</b> nlsnlaur@yahoo.com	<b>Tracy Moffatt</b> tracymoffatt@aol.com

## Board Members and Missions\*\*

Stacia Carter staciamlc@gmail.com J-Justice & Reconciliation	Sallie Haley misssallie56@gmail.com J-Global Missions	Donna Person dperson7@aol.com S-Fund for Leaders
Leone Goding leonegoding@centurylink.net J-LWR, CWU	Nina Jageler njageler@gmail.com D-Conference Coordinator Fall Gathering Workshops	Raeann Purcell raeannpurcell@hotmail.com D-Publications

## Non-Board Members

<u>Registrar</u> <b>Diane Cummings</b> sworegistrar1@gmail.com	<u>Love Offering Coordinator</u> Diane Spicer dlscl@juno.com
<u>Tapestry Editor</u> <b>Linda Greilick</b> lindag65@verizon.net	<u>Planning Committee Co-Chairs</u> Donna Person dperson7@aol.com
<u>Webmaster/Web Advisor</u> <b>Cheryl Semmel</b> clsemmel@gmail.com	Gayle Backiel rbackiel@verizon.net
<u>AV Tech</u> <b>Kris Dines</b> kdines1@comcast.net	

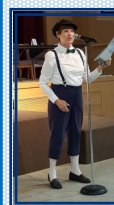


### What does our logo mean?

Our logo—with the cross, water and a white lily—identifies women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty, and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It is also a reminder of the mission of the church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

\*\*Missions

D Discipleship  
J Justice  
S Stewardship



### **Tapestry**

The *Tapestry* is published six times per year. It is available online under the *Tapestry* link of the FL-Bahamas Women of the ELCA website located at [www.flwelca.com](http://www.flwelca.com).

To submit material for publication, contact  
**Linda Greilick, Tapestry Editor**  
lindag65@verizon.net

**Please submit *Tapestry* articles  
By January 15 for the February issue.**