Florida Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization of the ELCA



June 2023 Volume 36, Issue 3





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Anne's Advice

Reading reports in various media outlets about the decline in numbers of people who attend church and considering my own observations of declining numbers of women participating in WELCA activities, I've been thinking a lot about why WELCA is so important to me. I wonder how to share my passion for this community of women with others. The answers to the question of why I love WELCA can all be answered by sharing what I experienced at Luther Springs in April. It began at the Pinelands Conference Spring Gathering at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Ocala. The outgoing Conference President, *Shelly Fortin*, overheard *Virginia Robertson* from Hope in the Villages talking about their upcoming retreat at Luther Springs: "Café Chocolate, where women delight in God's

grace." Shelly interjected, "Anne Storan loves chocolate!" The Women of Hope graciously invited me to join them.

FB-SWO Board

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As I reflect on all my wonderful memories of those three days, I can appreciate how the principles of WELCA found in the purpose and mission shaped the fellowship, growth and enjoyment of our time together. Our emphasis on **community of women** has been the foundation for my commitment to WELCA. I've always believed in the power of women working together. The collaborative approach to planning and working is a process that allows each woman to employ her gifts to achieve the best results. Even though I wasn't involved in any of the planning, I saw the resulting effect of thorough planning and attention to detail throughout the retreat.

The Retreat Presenter was *Kathy Uffelman, Minister of Faith Formation* at *Emmanuel Lutheran Church* in Vienna, VA. During our sessions in the beautiful new Atonement Chapel, Kathy led us through activities to draw us closer to each other and to God. She used scripture, chocolate, prayer, chocolate, songs, chocolate, crafts, chocolate, games, chocolate, and a service project. We were able to experience God's extravagant grace as we grew in faith, affirmed our gifts, and supported one another.

Anne's Annals continued from Page 1

I was surprised that the Women of Hope didn't all know each other well. Because the women came from all three campuses of Hope Lutheran in the Villages, many of them were strangers to each other. Yet, we had the comfort of being "community" because of the unity of the body of Christ. Throughout the retreat, Kathy used our activities to guide us into deeper relationships of trust and compassion. The activities helped us discover how to use our unique gifts and experiences to share our faith boldly while we supported one another.

The only discomfort I experienced during the retreat was that my belly got stiff from laughing so much. After each of *Miss Sarah's* delicious dinners, the dining hall was turned into a game room. Each table was filled by women ready to play games and laugh. These women know how to have fun!

hall was mes and ential

I thank the Women of Hope for their hospitality as we shared this quintessential WELCA experience. I feel newly inspired to reach out to women that God brings into my life in order that they may see the sweetness that can be found in God's extravagant grace.

Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President



SUMMER BOARD MEETING

The SWO Board and Fall Gathering Planning Committee will have an in-person Board Meeting on Saturday, August 5, 2023 at St. John, 1600 Orlando Ave, Winter Park, FL.

We will begin at 9:30 AM. Lunch will be provided. Watch your email in July for the agenda and any assignments for this meeting. If you have questions, please contact SWO President, Anne Storan at astoran46@gmail.com or (740)507-7504.

Board Nominations and Voting

by Denise Beumer, FL-BA SWO Vice President

This 2023 Fall Gathering we will be electing a Vice President, Treasurer and 3 Board Members. Have you been thinking about being a SWO Board Member or have you served on the Board in the past? We ask that you consider sharing your time and talents by submitting a Nomination Form.

If you would like to run for an open Board Member position, you will need to submit a FL-BA Synodical Women's Organization Executive Board Nomination Form.

All Congregation Voting Members, please make sure you have completed the following forms for 2023:

- Congregational/Unit Officer Update Form
- Affirmation of Membership Form
- Voting Member Credentials Registration Form

If you require any of these forms, please contact me at 407-782-7662.

Forms can be located on the WELCA Website www.flwelca.com.





Forms, Funds, and Finances...

Greetings SWO Sisters,

Are you attending The Synod Assembly June 8-10? If so, be sure to stop by the SWO booth in the Connection Café to say hi to Ann English and Jackie Haynick who will be representing our organization there. Bring a friend along with you who has never

been to the Fall Gathering and they can enter a drawing to win a free registration to the Fall Gathering this November!!! (You can enter your name as well.)

Speaking of Fall Gathering... our *Co-Chairs Lisa Klima* and *Karen Weinrich* are busy planning an awesome weekend at our new location at the Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center in Fruitland Park. Registration will be open in the next few months.

Speaking of registration... I wanted to remind everyone hoping to attend but worried about the expense, that there are Share the Spirit and Let Your Light Shine Grant monies available for all women and youth to help defray the cost of attending. I'm happy to say the cost for the event, due to our location change, is even a wee bit less than in 2022!

Speaking of us adults... Share the Spirit is for us. This grant program provides funds to attend the Fall Gathering above what the recipient or their unit is able to pay toward the cost. We encourage the participant or their unit to help cover some of the costs of attending the Fall Gathering and then apply for Share the Spirit Funds for the remaining amount. Any woman who would benefit from an awesome spirit filled weekend with sisters in Christ are welcome to apply. This can include women of all ages, first timers, women needing a bit of financial assistance, or any women in your congregation.



Speaking of the youth... Let Your Light Shine is for our Youth and operates just like Share the Spirit but is designed for Grade 6 through college ladies who would like to attend. If you know any young ladies, invite them to attend and take advantage of this grant if needed. Our Youth Shepherd is busy making plans for the youth activities all weekend!

Speaking of the grant details... Grants are awarded to supplement the cost of accommodations, meals, and registration fees. As long as the money lasts, we will award grants so get your registration in early! Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply. Both applications will be available when registration opens at: www.flwelca.com on the Fall Gathering page. Include the grant form with your registration form. Again, a reminder that for both grants, applicants are encouraged to also seek support from their congregation, sponsors, and self to share the costs. This will help spread the funds to more women and youth who need assistance to attend. If you have questions once your application is submitted, contact the *Registrar Diane Cummings* at sworegistrar1@gmail.com.

Speaking of spreading the funds to many of our sisters... I'd like to encourage individuals, units, or conferences to make contributions to these grant programs so many more of our sisters in Christ have the opportunity to attend the Fall Gathering. Contributions may be sent to **SWO Treasurer Tracy Moffatt**, **1944 Crestview Way, Naples, FL 34119** - please make check to Women of the ELCA and designate which fund in the memo line on your check or include a Form A.



2023 Fall Gathering

November 10-12, 2023 Holy Ground - God Still Speaks

Plans continue for this year's Fall Gathering to be held at Warren Willis Conference Center. If you haven't already, check it out at https://www.mccc.org/. We think you will be impressed with the campus and facilities, as well as their alignment with the Florida-Bahamas Women of the ELCA's core beliefs. Although this conference center is new to our WELCA gathering, it will probably feel familiar, as it has all the amenities offered at our previous facility.

Do you have fond memories of summer camp? Do you remember making s'mores over the fire? Check out this beautiful spot by the lake where we will enjoy camp songs and s'mores on Saturday night.

What are your favorite camp songs? If you have one or more you would like to sing, please email it to *Karen Weinrich* at weinrik@hotmail.com so it can be added to



our list.



The board and planning committee are excited to see everyone there, where we will celebrate Holy Ground and discover how God still speaks to us.

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



2023 Women of the ELCA Fall Gathering Holy Ground...God Still Speaks!

November 10-12, 2023

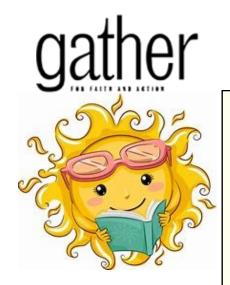
Registration will open mid-June and be available online and via mail. Visit us at www.flwelca.com and follow us on Facebook for updates. Save the Date postcards can be downloaded from the website and shared with friends, congregations and conferences.

-PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW LOCATION-

Warren Willis United Methodist Camp 4990 Picciola Rd, Fruitland Park, FL

"Be still and know that I am God! I will be honored by every nation.

I will be honored throughout the world." Psalm 46:10



summer studies

Free downloadable Bible studies, with the theme Salvation Now written by Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen, are being offered through Gather magazine: Session One: Promised Salvation Now—Jesus Brings Wellness; Session Two: Tangible Salvation Now—Christians Bringing Wellness; Session Three: Needed Salvation Now—A World Wanting Wellness. Each Bible lesson includes opening and closing prayers; suggested hymns to sing; focus verse; introduction; overview; and discussion questions.

Go to gathermazine.org, click on Learn More, then click on the horizontal lines on the right-hand side, go to Bible study (first item), then scroll down and click on **Summer 2023: Salvation now by the Rev. Dr. Anna Madsen**.

A Note from your CONFERENCE COORDINATOR!



I would like to say thank you to everyone who has reached out thus far to me to provide updated details for your Conference and Congregational Units. If you have not sent any information to me or are unsure, I am more than happy to double check. The best way to contact me is via email. Over the next few weeks, I will be reaching out based on previous information to make sure all information is updated. I am excited as I can continue to grow in this position as well as get to know everyone. My email in njageler@gmail.com.

Nina Jageler - FL-BA SWO Conference Coordinator



Called by the Holy Spirit

From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick

In many of our congregations and women's groups, we may find our numbers decreasing. However, as I read the articles contributed to this issue, I find that we continue our work. We meet to share in fellowship, worship and Bible study; we share our gifts and talents with those far and near; we create relationships with others whether Christian or not; we quilt and build needed kits; we promote justice and equality for all; and we help those in need and encourage others to do the same. We continue to provide those around us with what it looks like to behave as a Christian woman—a member of the Women of the ELCA. Though we might be smaller in number, we still follow our Purpose Statement, especially the "created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit" part. Let us continue on to be called by the Holy Spirit to use our fruits as shared in this verse from Galatians 5:22: "By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness."



SPRING GATHERINGS 2023

A few more Spring Gatherings are on the horizon.

We await the planned dates and locations.

WHERE AND WHEN

CONFERENCE	DATE	LOCATION	BOARD MEMBER ATTENDING
Broward-Bahamas/ Miami-Dade/Monroe	After Easter	Pembroke Pines	Donna Person
Caloosa	To be determined		Tracy Moffatt
First Coast	May 13	St. Mark Jacksonville	Sallie Haley
Flagler/Volusia	To be determined	Hope Lutheran Daytona	Anne Storan
Panhandle	To be determined		



HEART OF FLORIDA CONFERENCE

AT ST. PHILIP IN MT DORA



The Heart of Florida Conference met on March 25, 2023 at St Philip Lutheran Church in Mt Dora, FL. We spoke about how our light shines and the importance of it. We were able to hear the amazing testimony from Candace Booth about her journey of healing through a traumatic brain injury.

Pastor Trixie Richter led us through communion and, while coming up for communion, we placed our candles we got as we registered in a cross by the altar.

I was able to share exciting information with our conference on the Fall Gathering and show them photos the board had taken of our new location. We had 35 people total and 7 first time attendees and I handed out their first timer gifts. We sang and had wonderful fellowship while learning about one another and what is going on within the WELCA.



Pastor Trixie Richter



-Nina Jageler, Conference Coordinator

MORE 2023 SPRING GATHERINGS

MID-GULF CONFERENCE

AT EMMAUEL IN VENICE





Right to left: Board Secretary

Laurie Nelson installing officers

Gayle Backiel, President, and

Janise Hanis, Secretary

The Spring Gathering for **Mid Gulf Conference** "Act Justly,
Love Mercy, Walk Humbly with
God" took place at **Emmanuel Lutheran in Venice, Florida** on
April 15th, 2023. It was an amaz-

ing day filled with Bible Study, Speakers, Worship and Praise.

Registration started at 9:30 with Fellowship and continental breakfast.

Holy Trinity, Port Charlotte, shared opening devotions and hymns. Busi-

ness followed with installation of one new officer, **Gayle Backiel** as President and **Janise Hanis** continuing as Conference Secretary. I

then shared our Power Point presentation. The gathering participants consisted of 15 first time attendees. They were enthused to have the information available for them to learn more about the Women of the ELCA and our mis-

sions. Printed educational resources were available for them to take at will and Fall Gathering attendance was

encouraged and information was shared. Donna Batchelor led a Bible study on ancient Hebrew prophet Micah and his witness for justice followed by Pastor Davis **Darrington** leading our worship service. *Kim Vaughan* shared her talent as a Liturgical dancer, teaching us all to express song with physical movement. All enjoyed Fun, Friends and Fellowship and a wonderful lasagna lunch with beautifully decorated scented candles as favors. It was wonderful to see some familiar faces from my old conference before my move to Pinelands.



Kim Vaughan leads Liturgical Dancing





Your Sister in Christ, Laurie Nelson

GULF COAST CONFERENCE

AT NATIVITY IN SPRING HILL

The **Gulf Coast Conference** met March 25 at **Nativity Lutheran Church in Spring Hill.** *President Mary Macaulay* welcomed everyone. *Pastor Giuseppe Mattei* welcomed us and opened with Psalm 18. He continued by encouraging our commitment.

Ross Dietrich from **Lutheran Services of Florida** spoke with us about their services in Florida. This includes helping migrants with education, food and lodging. **Susan Lee** from "Days for Girls" organization explained their program for helping girls through their menstrual cycles by providing them with education and materials that affect their lives. **Margarita Romo** was there to tell us about legislative bills that are going before

our representatives in Florida. She encouraged everyone to write their representatives. She also brought brochures from the Farm Workers Self-Help, Inc. for us to understand what they need. *Karen Gray*, our Conference leader, gave us information regarding Conference business. Mary Macaulay prayed for our lunch, which Nativity had prepared for us. Approximately 35 ladies from five churches attended.

Leone Goding, SWO Representative



MORE 2023 SPRING GATHERINGS

SPACE COAST CONFERENCE

AT JOY IN PALM BAY



Rev. Lori Fuller

Space Coast Conference held their Spring Gathering at **Joy Lutheran Church** with 43 in attendance. The theme was "Let Your Light Shine." The welcome and opening prayer was given by **President, Marjorie Maenpaa**. WELCA Purpose and Mission Statement was given by **Janet Jodoin** as a meditation. Worship with Communion was graciously distributed by **Rev. Lori Fuller, Palms Deaf Church,** along with her wonderful Interpreters.

The Business Meeting was conducted. It was reported that 635 quilts had been donated along with 135 Baby Kits and 142 School kits totaling 2,791 pounds of LOVE donated. Lutheran World Relief report was given by Janet Jodoin for *Siggi McGlothlin, Ascension Lutheran Church*. Table Prayer for lunch was given by *Gisela Khail* with lunch being prepared by Joy Lutheran Church. The SWO Representatives were *Stacia Carter* and *Denise Beumer*. A slide show presentation with

information regarding WELCA including the new location for the 2023 Fall Gathering at Warren W. Willis United Methodist Camp 4990 Piccola Rd, Fruitland Park, FL 34731. First Time attendees were given gifts.

A Bible Study "Let Your Light Shine" was given by **Diane Spicer**. It included the question "What keeps you from letting your light shine?" The Spring Gathering was closed with Closing thoughts and Sending Prayer from Gisela Khail. It was a pleasure for Stacia and me to be in the present of such wonderful Spirit-filled Sisters.

A poem, *Heaven's Grocery Store* (see page 11), was shared with all. Please take time to read and to be blessed.

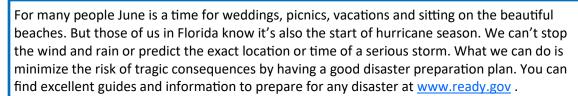


Blessings,

Denise Beumer-SWO Vice President and Stacia Carter-SWO Board Member

Hurricane Beason

by Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President







After using the general information in the www.ready.gov site, begin to localize your plan with contact information for local resources. You'll need to check flood zones and evacuation zones when making your plans. Your county will have an emergency management department with information specific to your community.

Once you have information about the specific risks of your community, you can individualize your own personal plan. If you plan to weather the storm in place, be prepared to be without power for a period of time. Have food that doesn't need to be cooked, have plenty of water, and secure outside items to prevent them from causing damage when the wind throws them around.

If you need to go to a shelter, find the one that will best meet your needs. If you need electricity or refrigeration for medical supplies and equipment, find out its location in advance. If you have pets, find out which shelters are pet friendly, and take all supplies that your pet needs.

Having a plan and taking action in advance will reduce your risk of tragedy when storms come.



OPPORTUNITIES ABOUND

for

Women of the Florida-Bahamas Synod



Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years

To increase awareness of the purpose of Katie's Fund, and inspire exciting new ways to change lives, each WELCA synod

has been awarded a grant of \$1,000 to spend as they chose to support programs, resources, and opportunities in one or more of three key areas:

- Global Sharing to enhance global partnerships, increase multicultural awareness, and to promote service initiatives;
- Leadership Development to enhance organizational participation, provide for personal growth and enrichment;
- Living Theology to nurture growth in faith.

Because the grant money must be spent prior to December 31, 2023, the SWO Board must decide on a project at the Summer Board Meeting in the beginning of August. Any woman or Church Unit can submit their ideas to any Board Member before July 29, so that ideas can be shared with the board for their consideration. To start you off, here are a few ideas that were shared during a July 30, 2022 Zoom conversation:

- Bring someone to the 2023 Gathering from your companion synod.
- Donate the money to the women's organization of your companion synod for a resource or program consistent with Katie's Fund (connect it somehow with the women in your Synodical organization so their lives are impacted too).
- Training session(s) for Synodical board members or congregational unit officer (whether on-line, inperson, or via video)
- Underwrite costs for a retreat for younger women, or an inter-generational retreat or a retreat for women on the roster.
- Purchase Gather magazine subscriptions to be donated to women's shelters or women's correctional facilities or in college settings.
- Make a contribution to the Florida-Bahamas Fund for Leaders Scholarship Fund.

I look forward to seeing how the women of the Florida-Bahamas Synod will use this grant to create new opportunities to boldly share our faith in Christ.

Anne Storan

President, FL-BA SWO President

A POEM FROM SPACECOAST

HEAVEN'S GROCERY STORE

I was walking down life's highway a long time ago One day, I saw a sign that read: "Heaven's Grocery Store" As I got a little closer, the door came open wide And when I came to myself, I was standing inside. I saw a host of angels; they were standing everywhere One handed me a basket and said "My child, shop with care." Everything a Christian needed was in that Grocery store... And all you couldn't carry, you could come back for more. First I got some patience; love was in the same row Further down was understanding, you need that wherever you go. I got a box or two of wisdom, a bag or two of faith I just couldn't miss the Holy Ghost for He was all over the place. I stopped to get some strength and courage, But I remembered I needed some grace. I didn't forget salvation, for salvation that was free So I tried to get enough of that to save both you and me. Then I started up to the counter to pay my grocery bill. For I thought I had everything to do my Master's will. I saw prayer on the next aisle And I just had to put that in. For I knew that when I stepped outside, I would run right into sin. Peace and joy were plentiful; they were on the last shelf. Songs and praises were hanging near. So I just helped myself. Then I said to the angel: "Now how much do I owe?" He smiled at me and said ----"My child Jesus paid your bill, a long time ago."

It's not too late! The early bird registration deadline for Phoenix has been extended.

The early bird registration deadline for the WELCA Gathering JUST LOVE in Phoenix (September 21-24, 2023) has been extended through June 15. Registrations can be submitted via mail or online.

For more information or to register, visit the Triennial Convention page on our website at www.flwelca.com or visit the Triennial Gathering site at www.welcatg.org.





A Message for all the quilt and kit makers from Rev. Lisa Kipp Lutheran World Relief Director of Congregational Engagement



Thank you for all you do to share God's love with the world. I'm writing with a special note for those of you that lead congregations participating in Lutheran World Relief's Quilt & Kit Ministry. Please see the letter below from my colleague *Martha Piedrasanta*. And don't miss our new, <u>powerful video</u> about how quilts are helping to reduce stunting in Tanzania. This video is available to <u>view and share</u> on your congregation's social media or to <u>download and share</u> in worship.

To view this video and to learn more about this ministry, visit www.lwr.org or www.flwelca.com.

Dear Friend:

Greetings from the Quilt & Kit Ministry at Lutheran World Relief. I'm writing to update you about the Quilt & Kit Tracker.

The Quilt & Kit Tracker was launched in 2013 so that faithful people like you, who devote your time and talent so generously, could follow the journey of your quilts and kits to neighbors in need.

Now, more than a decade later, the technology behind the Tracker is obsolete, making the system unreliable and difficult to use. If you have used the Tracker in the last year or more, you have likely experienced lags in reporting or have been unable to retrieve updates. The Tracker is no longer serving its important purpose, and we are sorry for the frustration you experienced.

Therefore, as of May 15, the Quilt & Kit Tracker is officially out of service. This means that moving forward, barcodes should no longer be used and that no reports or updates will be generated by the Tracker for previous donations with Tracker-generated barcodes.

Please rest assured that the quilts and kits you so lovingly assemble and ship to us are reaching neighbors around the world — as they always have. See this list of all the countries (https://lwr.org/downloads/quilt-kit-distribution-map-2022) that quilts and kits reached in 2022.

Your hard work and generosity are as needed and appreciated as ever! In fact, one of the biggest shipments in

Lutheran World Relief history will arrive this summer in Mali, where food prices have risen exorbitantly because of global supply chain bottlenecks and the war in Ukraine. Quilts and kits will reach communities where families are struggling to afford to eat, embracing them in God's love and helping them care for themselves and their families.

At the same time, plans are in motion for a completely new, state-of-the-art system that will allow you to follow quilts and kits from the time they leave your hands to the time they reach their destination. While we do not yet have a target completion date for this system, progress is underway and we will keep you updated as it takes shape. During this period of transition, we are committed to sharing more photos, videos and stories of your quilts and kits reaching your neighbors around the world, like the brandnew video about how your quilts are helping to reduce stunting in Tanzania.

Please share this update with your congregation, quilting group and others who have used the Tracker. And please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions.

Thank you for your unwavering generosity and for being such a caring person. We are deeply grateful to God for your faithful partnership in this ministry

Joy and Blessings,

Martha Piedrasanta

Senior Manager, Quilt & Kit Ministry mpiedrasanta@lwr.org | 410-230-2707

Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory Executive Board 2023

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Planning Committee	Planning Committee		

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D Discipleship
J Justice

S Stewardship



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).



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.

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

Please submit *Tapestry* articles
By July 15 for the August issue.