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Phyllis' Ponderings

A Call to Support Women of the ELCA from your SWO President

We were not prepared to “be WELCA” during a pandemic so our Circle Leaders, our Unit Leaders, our Conference Leaders, and our Synodical Leaders are often struggling to find ways to include everyone—those who are once again meeting in person without forgetting those who aren't joining those in person meetings for whatever reason. I am grateful for all of you as you travel this new and challenging road. I also encourage you to share things you are doing to encourage and support your community of women with our *Tapestry* Editor, Linda Greilick.

Faith reminds us that God is always with us, walking beside us, holding us in the palm of His hand, and whispering in our ears with words of encouragement and, maybe, giving us new ideas about how we can do things—how we can grow and change during this very unusual season of our lives.

One of our challenges has been financial. Talking about money is not comfortable or easy, but this organization exists because of your financial support. What does your financial support look like for this organization?

- Spring Gathering Offerings & Registration Fees – We were not able to have our Conference Meetings, so the Synodical Women's Organization didn't receive that offering. Did you know that we use that offering you send us to pay travel expenses for your Conference President to attend our January Board Meeting? While at the meeting, she can share what you are doing in your Conference and hear what others are doing, get ideas, help plan Spring Gathering, participate in Bible Study and worship with the SWO Board, give us valuable feedback, hear about the upcoming Fall Gathering, etc. We also use that Spring Gathering offering to help reimburse your Board Representative for her travel expenses to attend your Spring Gathering (many of your Board Members did not ask to be reimbursed).
- Regular (Circle) Offerings – Traditionally, a regular offering is received at our Circle Meetings with the Unit Treasurer forwarding part to the SWO Treasurer. The SWO Treasurer then forwards 55% to our Churchwide Women's Organization (CWO). When you make a regular offering, you are supporting the ministries of your Unit, the ministries of the SWO, and the ministries of the CWO. What does the SWO and CWO do with your offerings? Within the SWO, we try to keep our operating expenses to a minimum. No one on the Board is paid, but we do like to be able to reimburse a Board Member for travel or other out-of-pocket expenses if she

makes the requests. She is giving us her time, and we would never want any woman to feel she could not share her gifts with us because she doesn't have the financial means. One of the most valuable things the CWO does with our offerings are all those resources that someone takes the time to write and make available for us. The staff is also always more than ready to answer questions or help in other ways.

- Share the Spirit and Let Your Light Shine Scholarships Offerings— These scholarships help women of all ages attend our Fall Gathering. Without your financial support for these two scholarships, some of our ladies, both young and old, would not be able to attend. (A personal thank you for your support of these scholarships: I didn't have the money to attend one year so because of your faithful and generous support, I could attend; and no one knew until now).
- Fund for Leaders Scholarship Offerings— Your support of this scholarship helps offset a small portion of the expense of attending seminary. Over the years, your support has helped so many who are now serving the ELCA as rostered leaders. To date, we have helped 11 women.
- Fall Gathering Offerings – Each year, we receive a “Convention Offering” during our Eucharist Service with 50% staying within the SWO and 50% going to the CWO. We also receive a Love Offering. I encourage you and your Unit to prayerfully consider making both a Convention Offering and a Love Offering.

When our lives were turned upside down, the financial support of our organization was very much impacted, and when we made the very difficult to decision to cancel this year's Fall Gathering, we lost our deposit for this year's Gathering. We will be able to make the deposit for the 2021 Fall Gathering when it's due, but it will leave us with very little in reserves.

I am calling on each one of you to take some time to prayerfully consider what this organization means to you and what your life would be like without WELCA, without this community of sisters. Then, if this organization is an essential part of your life and it is important to you for WELCA to continue, I'm challenging you to make at least a regular offering or to increase your regular offering. If you can make an offering to one (or more) of our scholarships and/or to our Love Offering, thank you! Your support will be a blessing, not just to the organization but to so many other women.

Many of us are on fixed incomes. We often use that as a reason for not giving. But stop and think about that—you have an income; you know how much you are receiving each month. There are people right now who would be incredibly thankful and feel blessed to have the assurance of a certain amount of income each month. Perhaps you could share the blessing of having a fixed income and make a small offering? Remember we serve a God who fed thousands with just a few fish and a few loaves of bread...so even if you can only make a small offering, He will be able to do amazing things with your gift.

In His love,
Phyllis Wade
SWO President



Communication Keeps Us Connected

Interchange and *Intercambio* are digital-only now, like our FL-BA SWO Newsletter, *Tapestry*. FL-BA SWO Board, Conference Officers, and Congregational Unit Leaders, we hope that you have signed up to receive the electronic copy by email of *Interchange* and *Bold Connections*, which is monthly. Current information about events, business meetings, updates, and decisions about our organization are offered in these publications. To sign up, visit:

www.womenoftheelca.org/publications



YOUR FALL GATHERING TEAM HAS SOME REALLY EXCITING SURPRISES FOR YOU



STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER
DETAILS BEING ANNOUNCED
BY EMAIL AND POSTED ON OUR
WEBSITE

ACT
NOW!



URGENT

Dear Sisters in Christ,

As we prepare for our annual February 2021 LWR Ingathering of quilts, **I have an emergency request for you.**

Barbara Cilik and the volunteers at **Redeemer Lutheran in Winter Park** have done an amazing job of coordinating the in-gathering for many, many years. They have requested that we find another pick-up site for our 2021 LWR Ingathering of quilts.

We are looking for a church with a parking lot large enough for the tractor trailer truck to be able to maneuver down the street and into the parking lot plus the church must have enough room to store many cartons for the week prior to pick up. Several different congregations and conferences (*Flagler-Volusia, Heart of Florida, Lake, Pinelands, & Space Coast*) also bring their completed quilts to the Winter Park site. Can any of you help?

In addition, we are in need of a Coordinator for the new pick-up site. This should be someone with organizational skills to confirm what was delivered to the site on the unit report form that is available online and then send to me following the pickup.

Bear in mind, this might be the perfect year to start a new project by becoming one of the new pick-up sites for our annual LWR Quilt in-gathering. I ask you to please prayerfully consider volunteering your congregation.

Do hope you are all keeping safe in these stressful times.

Peace,
Mae Haines

PS:
Please note that I now have a new email address:
Groveland55@aol.com

Hello Ladies,

I have been in contact with **Wanda Siefke**, the secretary at CALM. In March they made the decision that it was too risky to take any new applicants into their program. However, since then (June 1) they have reopened the application process. Covid-19 has greatly impacted them by increasing their need for PPE and extra cleaning supplies. Since there is no school, extra babysitters are necessary and therefore the need for much of these extra supplies. Covid concerns caused them to not be able to rent their on-site venue to outside businesses, causing a loss of revenue. Even though they have been financially impacted, it has not stopped them from serving their community. During isolation, they allowed musicians to come in one at a time and record performances that were broadcast over Facebook. Local craft artisans were provided a free venue with social distancing for local community members to attend. They are collecting school supplies for a drive-thru give away happening August 15; any extra supplies will be donated to local schools.

What do they need from us?

- 1) Prayers for the wisdom to lead the organization into the unknown future
- 2) God's protection for all their residents and volunteers that they stay healthy and safe
- 3) Any monetary donations possible would be very appreciated due to their loss of income due to loss of rental revenue
- 4) As do most people, they need cleaning supplies, paper products, personal hygiene items, etc.

They have a church that was meeting at the local High School looking to rent their venue and live stream services. However, the rental property has minimum bandwidth internet which is not sufficient for that usage. Installation upgrades would be \$750 and the monthly service fees would be \$715. The income generated by this rental would be \$1,000 per month.

I wish that we could meet their financial needs with a sizeable donation, but as with all organizations and small businesses we are all struggling to make ends meet and survive this pandemic. I do know that as Women of the ELCA we can pray for them. Pray that God keeps them all safe and healthy, pray that God guides their leadership, and pray that somehow they are able to make ends meet during this difficult time.

Jackie Haynick
Love Offering Chairperson

A CALL FOR YOUR ideas

From your Conference Coordinator

The circumstances caused by the coronavirus have certainly caused all of us to change the way we live our lives. It has impacted the way we worship together, and the way we live as a community of women created in the image of God. In addition to being the SWO Conference Coordinator, I'm also a Church Unit officer. The women of our church miss our times together terribly. We continue to search for ways to virtually plan strategically to engage in ministry, hold our Circle Meetings and Bible studies. We're beginning to be able to use Zoom for some of our meetings, but too many are excluded. We're looking for creative ways to reach out to our community. I want to hear from all of

you Church Unit officers. What is being done by the women of your church? What have been your greatest challenges? What have you done that was successful? What plans are you making for the future? Send an email to me and I will pray for your challenges and share your ideas and successes in a future issue of *Tapestry*. During this time of isolation, good communication is more important than ever to keep us connected. Please send names and contact information: email, phone, and mailing address of the officers of your church unit. You can send them to me as soon as possible.

Anne Storan, Conference Coordinator
astoran46@gmail.com

HOW CAN WE HELP PROMOTE ANTI-RACISM WORK?

by Karen Weinrich, Publications

Last issue I wrote about books, movies, and podcasts that are resources for learning more about racism in our country. Did you know that the Women of the ELCA also has many resources to help promote anti-racism work?

A visit to <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/ministry-action/justice> will take you to many different justice resources dealing with human trafficking, racial justice, and domestic violence. Let's look at the resources to help us work toward racial justice.

How to have helpful conversations about race in the church

Click on "Racial Justice Advocacy" and scroll down to find a resource called

"How to have helpful conversations about race in church." This provides a wonderful guide on how to start having conversations in your church. It will walk you through three steps: context, connect, and advocate. This resource also includes more ideas for how to use movies and book studies in your congregation.

JUSTICE

Human Trafficking

Racial Justice Advocacy

Racial Justice Advocacy Network resources

Domestic Violence

On this webpage, you can also find a timeline of race relations and a Bible study called "Listening to the third slave," which takes a fresh look at the parable of the talents.

Want to be even more involved? Join the Racial Justice Advocacy Network by clicking on the green "Join the network" button. Joining will give you a password that opens more network resources.



Racial Justice Advocacy Network

Living into our baptismal call we are a network of bold women working towards systemic change through racial justice education and advocacy. If you are not already a member of our Racial Justice Advocacy Network, please use this form to get involved:

[JOIN THE NETWORK +](#)

This is very important work, and it will take all of us to make a change in our church and our society. The Women of the ELCA has wonderful resources to get you started!

Global Mission Table News August 2020

Submitted by Gayle Backiel, Global Missions

The Global Mission Table (GMT) met by ZOOM on August 24, 2020. Reports from the five Companion Church Committees are outlined below.

Cuba is our newest companion church. **Rev. Dr. Russell Meyer**, head of the Cuba task force, reported that the situation in Cuba is deteriorating due to the regressive policies of the U.S. Government. Cuba has a new monetary system which can only be used in state owned stores, and the U.S. government will not allow U.S. dollars to be spent in these stores. The ELCA is working with the United Church of Canada (a Presbyterian connection) to funnel money to Cuba. The World Council Of Churches is trying to act as a bridge. Cuba did receive a COVID grant.

Haiti – **Alonzo Batson** is the head of the Haiti Task Force. There have been a couple of meetings with Haiti. The Haiti team is trying to emphasize the importance of records, even if they are informal ones. **Pastor Livenson** reported that Emmanuel Lutheran of Venice is sending COVID supplies but they had not yet been received as of August 24th. He indicated that customs fees will need to be paid and Alonzo reported that along with customs fees, in order to pick up the supplies, ELH (*Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti*) will need documentation stating it is an official religious institution.

Jamaica – **Judy Olsen** is the Task Force Leader. **Pastor Khader** reported that the work on the sponsored class-

room is progressing. It is almost finished and pictures of the progress will be sent out soon.

Guyana and Suriname – Task Force Leader is **Marcee Wilkes**. Their churches have been closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They are slowly starting to reopen. There was a meeting earlier in August with FB mission leaders and representatives from Guyana. There has not been much action between the FB Synod and these two companions since the virus started. We are hopeful to be able to work together soon.

YAGM (Young Adults in Global Mission) – Many of you will remember the young woman Ashley Fyle from the YAGM program who served in Australia and attended our Fall Gathering in 2018. She gave an interesting talk about her experiences there doing God's work. YAGM is on "sabbatical" this year, due to COVID. However, donations can still be made to the ELCA for this program. GMT approved a \$1000.00 donation.

PJ May has done an excellent job for the last several years as chair of the GMT in Florida Bahama Synod. She has decided to retire, and this was her last meeting as chair. She will remain on the Cuba and Jamaica Task Forces. She welcomed **Pastor Katie Carroll** to the leadership of the Global Mission Table and told us all good-bye.



Greetings from Guyana in these trying times

Submitted by Gayle Backiel, Global Missions

Dear friends,

I fell in love with Florida because of the precious weekend I spent there and the special people who graciously and lovingly welcomed me. I listen to your story on the news and am deeply saddened. I feel your pain because I feel I belong.

Guyana too is inflicted with the wicked virus but with less intensity. Our churches have also closed their doors but, occasionally, services are held by the ELCG (*Evangelical Lutheran Church in Guyana*) via zoom. However, only a minority get the privilege to hear because of the lack of internet and computer facilities. We are spiritually hungry, really.

Notwithstanding, a political/racial virus, unmindful that we are already weakened by the assault of Covid-19, callously gnaws at our minds. We need God more than ever. Let us pray for one another.

The God of Mercy be with you and with us.

Peace,

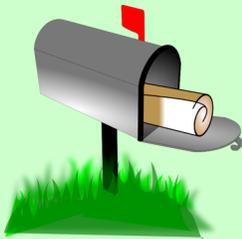
Stephanie Bowery

How to Help in Extraordinary Times

by Laurie Nelson, FL-BA SWO Treasurer

In ordinary times, women gather in our circles and congregational units, and when we do, we give **Regular Offerings**. These are living proof of our interdependence – the congregational unit's treasurer keeps a share of the offering for the unit's own ministries and forwards the rest to the synodical women's organization; the SWO treasurer keeps a share of that for its own ministries and forwards the rest to the churchwide organization. Regular Offerings are *really* powerful.

But these aren't ordinary times, are they? If we aren't able to gather in our circles and congregational units, how can we give to support the organization we love, in all its expressions? It's simple. Make out a check to Women of the ELCA, write "Regular Offering" on the memo line, and – instead of handing our offering to our congregational unit treasurer in person -- mail it to her. She will deposit the checks and write one Regular Offering check just like always, fill in a copy of Form A just like always, and mail it to her synodical treasurer just like always. It's good to know some things only change a little! OR



You can send your offerings directly to:

Laurie Nelson
22223 Buffalo Ave
Port Charlotte, FL 33952

(Be sure to earmark how you want the offering designated in the memo line.)

ELCA Fund for Leaders *for this church and for our future*

The Fund for Leaders Scholarship Application for the 2021-2022 academic year is available on our website, www.flwelca.com. The deadline is midnight, December 15, 2020. Applications should be submitted to **Phyllis Wade, SWO President**, 412 North Sea Lane, NW, Unit C, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548 or wade.phyllis73@gmail.com.

The scholarship will be awarded by the decision of the FL-BA SWO board at their January 2021 board meeting using the following criteria:

- ◆ The applicant must be a student in the candidacy process attending one of the eight ELCA seminaries in either the Master of Divinity or Master of Arts program, or a student in an approved extension program of one of the ELCA seminaries and be enrolled in an approved program, such as the Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) program.
- ◆ Preference will be given to residents of the Florida-Bahamas Synod.
- ◆ Preference will be given to female applicants.
- ◆ Preference will be given to an active member of a congregational unit of the Women of the ELCA.
- ◆ Applicant should exhibit faith qualities that empower others.
- ◆ Applicant should demonstrate leadership qualities in church and the community.

Thank you, Florida-Bahamas Women of the ELCA for your generous support of our Fund for Leaders Scholarship! It is your financial support that allows us to make scholarships available which, in turn, reduce the amount of debt our recipients will have after leaving seminary. If you would like to donate to the Fund for Leadership Scholarship, please send your donation to our **Treasurer, Laurie Nelson**, 22223 Buffalo Avenue, Port Charlotte, FL 33952. Be sure to indicate that it is for the Fund for Leaders Scholarship.

Encouraging Words from Lisa Plorin!

2020 has certainly been a trying year. Isolation and uncertainty, two words that describe what everyone is feeling due to COVID 19. This summer was to be the 11th Triennial Convention and Gathering of the Women of the ELCA in sunny Phoenix, AZ, but due to the circumstances this event was postponed until August of 2021. Many other events were also cancelled or postponed, events that we, as women of the ELCA look forward to. Retreats, conventions, bible studies, regular worship just to name a few. We are all in the same boat!

Over the past several weeks, myself and **Executive Director Linda Post Bushkofsky** have been meeting with the regional Synodical presidents over ZOOM. We use this time to connect and brainstorm ideas on how to thrive as a community of women. Yes, there is some lamenting, but the common denominator is shared through the words of our purpose statement “*As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.*”

I’d like to take this opportunity to remind you that this amazing organization is there for YOU! Yes, we still need to practice social distancing and conduct much of our business virtually – but it can be done. Whether you need ideas to revitalize your group or simply inspiration on how to live out our ministry as individuals, we’re here for YOU!

Please take some time today to remember your calling. Go to womenoftheelca.org and re-familiarize yourself with the many resources available. Take advantage of simple things like Tuesday prayers at noon. This is an opportunity to pray with Lutheran women across the church every Tuesday at noon (in your time zone) in prayer. Design a Thankoffering container and make a conscious decision to look for things to be grateful for each and every day. Drop a few coins in the container and forward these Thankofferings on to churchwide. Reach out to the Region 9 liaison **Linda Post Bushkofsky** (800-638-3522, ext. 2740) for support. These small gestures will help you feel connected to your siblings in Christ across the entire churchwide expression.

Hang in there, my Friends, for soon we will be celebrating together in fellowship and praise in Phoenix in August of 2021!

Lisa Plorin
President Women of the ELCA

Lisa prepared this article for the *Western Whirlwind*, the Women of the ELCA newsletter for the Western North Dakota Synod. She graciously allowed Region 9 to include it in our Synod newsletters.

“Reprinted with permission from Lisa Plorin, President Women of the ELCA (2017-2020 Triennium)”



From the Editor

A Franciscan Blessing that speaks to these times

From the Editor’s Desk — Linda Greilick

May God bless us with *discomfort* at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that we may live deep within our hearts.

May God bless us with *anger* at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that we may work for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless us with *tears* to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, hunger, and war, so that we may reach out our hands to comfort them and turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with enough *foolishness* to believe that we can make a difference in this world, so that we can do what others claim cannot be done, to bring justice and kindness to all our children and the poor.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen

A Word of Caution as we proceed through Fall and Winter

Though our state of Florida has recently moved to Phase 3 of the COVID-19 Recovery Plan, some of us may still need to use caution for various reasons. Below are some suggestions from the Women of the ELCA Regional Calls with synodical presidents. Some might work for your group.

In the midst of Covid-19, congregational units should use caution in meeting and planning events. See <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/news/congregational-units-should-use-caution-when-planning-events> for more information.

Resources are available to keep women engaged as we shelter in place:

- Basic suggestions are found in this blog post: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/news/supporting-your-community-of-women-virtually>
- Gather women (virtually) in prayer each Tuesday at noon as we continue to pray for the world and its inhabitants as we live through this pandemic, using this call to prayer: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/prayer2020fi.pdf>
- Encourage women to participate in the Dear Friend in Christ project, an effort to sustain community through letter writing. Details are found here: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/special-initiatives/dear-friend-christ> and you can read some letters from the project here: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/special-initiatives/dear-friend-christ/read-letters-from-dear-friend-in-christ>. The project continues through November 1, All Saints Day.
- Use the PowerPoint *A Place for you* available in English and Spanish by hosting a virtual introduction to Women of the ELCA.
- Other resources available are sharing and signing women up for Bold Connections and inviting women to participate in a virtual *Gather* Bible study.

What are you doing to keep women engaged? You can share by sending your story to: eva.yeo@elca.org.

A Gather Advent devotional

In times of turmoil and uncertainty such as we've experienced this year, it can help to name these days as "liminal." The word "liminal" comes from the Latin word for threshold—a place that represents the ending of one thing and the beginning of another. The **Rev. Jordan Miller-Stubbendick** wrote *Gather's* 2020 Advent devotional, "The beginning and the end," for the December issue. The devotional focuses on another liminal story: Mary's journey as she follows God's call into motherhood. While exploring Mary's story, we think about the liminal days in her life, and how she might have traveled spiritually and emotionally during her own uncertainty. As we embark on our own emotional and spiritual journeys this Advent, we'll explore four practices that can help to ground and steady us: gratitude, movement, song and honest conversation. Subscribe to *Gather* magazine to get the devotional and other inspiring articles of faith (www.gathermagazine.org).

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Florida Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization Directory

Executive Board 2020

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Board Members and Missions**

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<p>Denise Beumer dbeumer1000@gmail.com J-Anti-Racism, Justice Advocacy</p>	<p>Jackie Haynick jackiehaynick@yahoo.com</p>	<p>Anne Storan astoran46@gmail.com D-Conference Coordinator, Plus One</p>	

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<p><u>Human Trafficking Committee</u> Phyllis Wade secretary@htlc.gccoxmail.com</p>	<p><u>Churchwide Board</u> Raeann Purcell raeannpurcell@hotmail.com</p>



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.

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

**Please submit *Tapestry* articles
 By November 15th for the December issue.**