



August 2023
Volume 36, Issue 4



Florida-Bahamas
Synodical Women's
Organization

In This Issue

Anne's Advice.....	1
Summer Board Mtg.....	2
Upcoming Elections.....	2
Global Missions.....	2
Forms, Funds, Finances.....	3
Historian Request	3
FG Registration Open.....	4
Stand for Justice.....	5-6
Archives Corner.....	6
Gather in the Fall.....	7
ELCA Fund for Leaders.....	7
From the Editor's Desk.....	7
Katie's Fund 2122.....	8
Renewed in Christ.....	8
Spring Gatherings	9
Just Love Request.....	9
Board Listing.....	10



Anne's Advice



Anne's August: The month of August has always been a time of sabbatical for me. As a child, I went with my family to the lake in northern Wisconsin where I was the fourth generation of my family who appreciated the white birch trees, loons, and wild rice that God placed there. Even as a child, I found it easier to turn my thoughts to my awesome God when I was immersed in the beauty that he provided in such great abundance. In those hours of quiet thought, I could express my gratitude, not just for this vacation, but for all the blessings of my life. The foundation was laid for me to consciously spend time with God in quiet moments outdoors.

A time of sabbatical that begins with prayer can lead into more activity. A sabbatical is typically used for learning, planning, and doing. As a child on vacation in Wisconsin, that meant reading dozens of books while sitting on the porch and swatting mosquitoes. Planning would involve anticipating the school year that would begin shortly after returning to our home in Ohio. The "doing" involved countless adventures in the woods and around the lake, exploring with my big brother. As an adult, I still follow my pattern of contemplative time outdoors to express gratitude to the Creator God and request discernment to plan my present and future activity. This summer my plans for the future include the trip to Phoenix for the Triennial Gathering. This will be my first Triennial and I am looking forward to all that I will learn from the women from around the country. They come with different experiences and from different circumstances, but all are united in our mission. I also need to confess that I have some concerns about the responsibility of my role in shaping the future of WELCA. I continuously remind myself that God is always faithful and will be with me as I try to use my gifts to serve.

I am also looking forward to our first Fall Gathering at Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center. **Lisa Klima** and **Karen Weinrich** are planning to use the facilities and beautiful grounds to provide a program that will reawaken the same joy and faith that many of us experienced as young women at summer camp. This is in addition to the worship and workshops that are a welcome and familiar part of our Fall Gatherings.

FB-SWO Board

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We will have our chance to hear from **David Houck of SOZO Kids** in his final appearance as the founder of our current Love Offering recipient. We will also be introduced to our new Love Offering Recipient for 2024-2025. Don't miss out on this fun and enriching time with your WELCA sisters.

Allow yourselves time to take your own sabbatical. There is no requirement to travel great distances, or to take days or weeks. Set aside your routine. Breathe. Pray. Repeat.

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 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.



Upcoming Elections

FL-BA Synodical Women's Organization

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.

Global Mission

The Global Mission team is proud to announce that 50 female goats have been distributed through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Haiti to families in Les Cayes. All of the goats have been fully vaccinated by **Pastor Octanis Joseph of Les Cayes** who has training in Veterinary Medicine. It is hoped that more money can be raised to send an additional 50 goats.

Sallie Haley, FL-BA SWO Global Mission



Forms, Funds, and Finances...

Greetings SWO Sisters,

It is time to get your voting members all lined up for the Fall Gathering in November where all kinds of important business will be conducted! ALL ACTIVE units are able to send one voting member to the Fall Gathering to participate in the business of our organization.

What makes your unit ACTIVE? Two things:

1. Constitution or Affirmation of Membership on file with the SWO. These are help by the SWO Vice President - Denise Beumer.
 - a. If you are not sure your unit has one on file, please contact Denise at: dbeumer1000@gmail.com or 407-782-7662.
 - b. If you need to complete a new Affirmation of Membership visit: <https://www.flwelca.com/programs-1> to download the form.
 - c. If you need to establish or update your Constitution visit: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/tools-for-leaders/constitutions> for the latest versions of a Unit Constitution. These are templates you can use as is or adjust to closer fit your unit's needs.
2. Support the SWO through a regular offering - this means having sent one regular offering to the SWO Treasurer this year.
 - a. If you are not sure you unit has made an offering, please contact me at fbswotreasurer@gmail.com or 239-848-7274 and I can check for you.
 - b. To send an offering, use Form A which can be found at: <https://www.flwelca.com/programs-1> and mail with your check to me at:

Tracy Moffatt, 1944 Crestview Way, Naples, FL 34119

Finally, if you would like to help one of your more financially challenged sisters attend the Fall Gathering, please consider a donation to one of our Scholarship Funds. Let Your Light



Shine is for Youth attendees while Share the Spirit is for the rest of us. Both funds are quite low and in need of your support so we can help as many attend Fall Gathering as possible. Contributions may be sent to me at: 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.

HISTORIAN REQUEST

**While you are creating your vacation scrapbooks,
gather your Women of the ELCA photos and keepsakes!**



Would you like to share your memories and photos of your Spring Gatherings and events at your church? Please e-mail any remembrances and photos to dperson7@aol.com or give them to me along with any keepsakes at this year's Fall Gathering scheduled for November 10-12, 2023.

Donna Person, SWO Secretary and Historian.



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

Did you know? Fall Gathering Registration is LIVE online! All of the information can be found at <https://www.flwelca.com/2023-fall-gathering>. The website includes resources you can download to promote the gathering in your congregation.

At the bottom of the page are the registration buttons. Simply click and

Resources to promote the Fall Gathering

- B&W postcard (PDF, 4 per page)
- Color one page flyer (PDF, can be printed in B&W)

you can register online.

REGISTRATION FORMS:

Online Registration is now open. Please select the appropriate form and complete all fields, including the payment section.

OVERNIGHT REGISTRATION

COMMUTER REGISTRATION

YOUTH REGISTRATION

The Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization has programs available to help defray the cost of attending the Fall Gathering! We know it's not always easy being you. We don't want you to choose between paying for prescriptions, groceries, or daycare and being in fellowship and worship with your sisters in Christ.

If you are interested in attending the Fall Gathering and resources are a concern, we encourage you to first reach out to your congregational unit to determine what, if any, local funds may be available. We then invite you to complete the Share the Spirit or the Let Your Light Shine (for youth grades 6-12) application and submit it with your Fall Gathering Registration Form. Funds are limited and are administered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Grants are not announced publicly.

As a reminder, if you have a favorite camp song you would like to sing, please email it to Karen Weinrich weinrik@hotmail.com so it can be added to our list.



The board and planning committee are excited to see everyone at our NEW site, Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center, where we will celebrate Holy Ground and discover how God still speaks to us.

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

STAND YOUR GROUND! NOW PERMITLESS CARRY! OH MY!!

Statutes 776.013 and HB543

by Stacia Carter, FL-BA SWO

Justice & Reconciliation

The state of Florida adopted a Stand Your Ground Law in 2005. As of July 1, 2023, the state of Florida has adopted a permit-less carry law. Now before people get their dander up assuming I am against owning a gun, let me be clear. I am a gun owner. But also let me be clear. I am a trained gun owner. I have a conceal and carry permit which means I've taken a firearms class. I go to the range. I know enough about guns to take my personal firearm apart and clean it myself. I don't leave firearms unsecured throughout my home. I am a RESPONSIBLE gun owner. I have also NEVER shot a person or shot at a person. My firearm is strictly for protection. I value life and would never want to shoot someone if my life or a loved ones' life wasn't in imminent danger.

Regarding the Stand your Ground law: This law allows people who feel they are in danger or their property is in danger the choice of not retreating but shooting instead. This law allows you to legally shoot someone and possibly take a life rather than try to de-escalate the situation or call law enforcement. My question is "how has this law affected people of color"? When someone uses this defense, how is the law applied and are the results equitable? Many people will say "of course". But if you are African American or a person of color you know the answer is a resounding NO. For this article I wanted to find out if what I and my African American friends believe is true or not. So, I went looking for facts.

Let's start with the most recent case to hit the news. Ajike Owens, a Black woman and mother of four children, was shot through a closed and locked door where she stood with her young son by Susan Lorincz, a White woman. Neighbors have reported that Owens children have repeatedly been subjected to racial slurs, being yelled at by Lorincz and have had items thrown at them while playing with other children over the past two years. It has also been shown that Lorincz researched the Stand Your Ground Law on at least two recent occasions.

On this day Lorincz has been accused of throwing a roller skate at Owens 10-year-old son hitting him. When the boy and his 12-year-old brother tried to speak to Lorincz, Lorincz swung at them with an umbrella and told them to "go get your mother". When the boys told their mother, Ms. Owens went over to speak with Lorincz. She knocked multiple times and shouted for Lorincz to come outside. Owens was visible on Lorincz's doorbell cameras so she could see Owens was unarmed, yet Lorincz fired through the closed door striking Owens who later died at a local hospital. Lorincz then called 911 stating that she feared for her life, was being threatened and shot her neighbor. Was Lorincz arrested? Not immediately. She claimed "stand your ground" and was allowed to remain free for at least two days. Lorincz has since been charged with one count of manslaughter and one count of assault. Despite researching SYG in the days before the shooting, despite hitting one of the Owens children with a skate and other objects, despite calling neighborhood children racist names, the local authorities have not charged Lorincz with murder or a hate crime. Lorincz was granted bail by the judge overseeing the case, which she has not been able to raise as of this writing.

Would she have been allowed to remain free for days if she had been Black and Owens White? Would Owens have been granted bail if she was the shooter? That's a good question. There have been definite disparities in the application of this law, especially when the shooter and the victim are different races. In this case, it is clear that Lorincz was repeatedly the aggressor, even assaulting the Owens children as well as other neighborhood children.

In the latest comprehensive study I could find, it was shown that despite the perception, Stand Your Ground (SYG) laws do not deter crimes. Rather, they have been shown to increase firearm homicides in states with SYG laws. In Florida, the law was associated with a 45% increase in firearm homicide rates.

A study by the Urban Institute (2013) found that in cases where both the shooter and the victim are White, 11% of the cases were deemed justifiable. When both parties were Black, the percentage of justifiable shootings dropped to 8%. However, the most telling of racial bias occurred when the shooter and victim were of a different race. If the shooter was Black and the victim White, the shooting was ruled justifiable only 3% of the time. Yet, if roles were reversed and the shooter was White and the victim Black, the rate of being ruled justifiable rose to 34%. This was after taking into account circumstances of the shooting such as if the victim was involved in committing a crime against the shooter or the shooters' property. Three (3%) percent vs thirty-four (34%)? Wow! Other cases that come to mind where the SYG law was applied was the killing of Trayvon Martin. Martin was a 17-year-old returning from the convenience store after buying candy when he was accosted by George Zimmerman because as Zimmerman told the 911 operator he

continued on Page 6

(Martin) looks suspicious". Despite Zimmerman being told to not confront Martin, he did. When Martin defended himself, Zimmerman shot Martin killing him. Zimmerman was later acquitted with the SYG defense, despite being the initial aggressor.

There have been numerous other cases where Blacks have been the victim yet their White aggressor was able to successfully use the SYG defense despite initiating the conflict. A few have resulted in jail time for the aggressor such as the Ahmad Aubery case in GA and the Jordan Davis case in Jacksonville. We also have cases not yet adjudicated where the SYG defense is being utilized such as the Ralph Yarl case in Kansas City. This young man went to the wrong house to pick up his younger brothers and was met with a bullet to the head. Miraculously Yarl survived, but he will be scarred physically and emotionally for the rest of his life. Question: Will Yarl's shooter be one of the 34% who get away with shooting a person of color, in this case a Black teen honor roll student, primarily because the shooter is White and the victim is Black? Please, consider these statistics when pushing for laws that unwittingly or unfortunately and unfairly target people of color.

Now my new concern is the concealed carry law that took effect July 3rd. What happens when a Black man has a concealed weapon and someone notices the tell-tale bulge. Will HE be considered a threat despite it being legal to conceal and carry without a permit? Will my son or my husband, minding their own business, be considered a threat, treated differently than their non-melanated neighbors? Do I need to worry about my son or husband being shot by someone who then uses the Stand Your Ground law to cover their bigotry of a person of color exercising the same right to bear arms as a non-person of color?

As women of faith, as women of the ELCA, I ask that everyone think about this. Please think about the effect of these laws and the consequences on our brothers and sisters of color. This is me. I am affected by these laws.



by Mary Flekke, Synod Archivist

It was suggested that I submit a column to *Tapestry* at the Synod Assembly this year. I debated upon a topic, and decided to do the first one on an issue we all face sooner or later!

Most of us have boxes of photographs in our collections that we hate to throw out. Yes, a lot of us are now digitized, but our parents and some of us born before digital cameras have many print photos. Who are these people? Where were we when we took this photo?

If you still have parents living who know some of the strangers in your picture box, don't waste any time-in asking for their help in identifying the people you don't know. A friend inherited a box of photos from her aunt and tried to get her father's assistance in identifying the people. But he wasn't interested in helping, so it just was a box of old photos. Your photos may get a relative to tell you a story you hadn't previously known. You might learn family history previously unrevealed!

Common lore has it that you want to write on the back of photos with pencil so it doesn't bleed through, but experi-

ence has shown me that pencil doesn't always work on photo paper. So, if you use ink, make sure any labels are written on the edges of the back of the photo, so if they do bleed through, they are not across someone's face! You can also use labels if you are making an album or scrapbook.

If you choose to put these photos in an album or scrapbook, use photo corners if you can find them. Hobby and office supply stores usually still carry them, or you can order acid free corners online. Do not use the "magnetic, plastic sheets" they discolor your photos after a time.

If there is no one of the previous generation to identify photos and you know no one in them or have no clue where the picture was taken...you can discard them with no regrets. Though, maybe an antique store might want them! I have seen old photos in antique stores and wondered who didn't want them anymore!

If you have a question you are curious about for a future column in *Tapestry*, let the editor know and she can pass it on!



Subscribe today!

Call 844-409-0576
or visit gathermagazine.org

Gather's Fall 2023 magazine will present a three-session Bible study entitled "*Holy Places*" by the **Rev. Dr. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni**.

Physical places often shape our identities, relationships and faith. "*Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it,*" Paul writes. Part of what this means is that faith doesn't just reside in our thoughts or emotions. Faith resides in our whole bodies, and how our bodies "live and move and have our being" in the sacred places where God encounters us. In this Fall 2023 Gather Bible study, written by an ELCA missionary living in Jerusalem, we'll explore what holy places mean, not only for the Holy Land of the Bible, but for each of us, wherever we may be. In the October–November issues, Holy places will include Home, Sanctuary, and Pilgrimage.

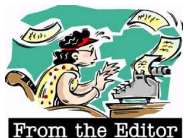
Intro offer for new subscribers: One year of Gather for just \$9.95

ELCA Fund for Leaders *For the church and for our future*

The Fund for Leaders Scholarship Application for the 2024-2025 academic year is available on our website, 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.

The scholarship will be awarded by the decision of the Florida/Bahamas SWO board at their January 2024 board meeting using the following criteria:

- ◆ 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 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 in the community.



From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick

Phoenix-area agencies to benefit from your generosity

Just Love, our 2023 Triennial Gathering theme, helps us see the needs of neighbor in a different way. By collecting and preparing in-kind gifts at the gathering, we can connect with gift recipients in Phoenix and around the world.

Whether or not you are attending the Gathering, you can offer in-kind gifts. To learn more, download the Complete In-kind Gift List at www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page/inkind. Scroll down the page for the link. Begin preparing and collecting items to be given at the Just Love Gathering, September 21-24, 2023 in Phoenix. Gifts can be brought to the gathering on September 21st or mailed between August 1st and September 8th to:

Women of the ELCA
Operation Just Love In-Kind Gifts Collection
8765 W Higgins Rd.
Chicago IL 60631-4101

2122

Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years

Katie's Fund,

named for **Katharine Von Bora Luther**, wife of Martin Luther, who was a practical and bold woman. The

fund was established in 1997 as an endowment to support leadership development, living theology, and global connections. Through the years, the fund has supported many projects, such as: providing documentaries to ELCA resource centers, creating a workshop about bullying and outreach to youth leaders at the ELCA Youth Gathering, holding a Young Women's Leadership Event at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, producing "I Believe You," an Emmy-nominated documentary about domestic violence and how faith communities respond, and many others.

In 2022, the Women of the ELCA initiated a campaign to grow Katie's Fund to \$1 million to support the next 100 years of mission and ministry. To allow women throughout the country to participate in life changing support for activities to promote leadership development, global connections, and living theology. You can share in this mission to provide these opportunities for women of faith for the next hundred years by making your own donation to Katie's fund.

It's easy to contribute to Katie's Fund. Go to: womenoftheelca.org and click on the **Ministry & Action** button. You will see Katie's Fund. Scroll down to see all the exciting news about the **2122 Campaign**. Follow the directions found there. You can donate on line, you can download a pledge form, or you can write a check. The endowment will fund projects to support leadership development, living theology and global connections for the next 100 years.



FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2023

On June 8-10, the Florida-Bahamas Synod held the 23rd annual Assembly at the Caribe Royale Resort in Orlando. The opening service prepared us well for our theme of renewal.

The voting members were anticipating their responsibility to elect a bishop for a six year term. Once the first ballot was collected, business proceeded. When the results of the first ballot were read, the applause rocked the room. **Bishop Pedro Suarez** had been re-elected on the first ballot. The subsequent business proceeded just as smoothly throughout the Assembly.

The Synod introduced a new program at this Assembly. Vision 2 Action is a grant funding mission that was developed in response to the results of a year-long listening process. The thou-

sands of responses to questionnaires distributed throughout the Synod in numerous ways were sorted and categorized to identify eleven goals. Five of those goals were selected as the basis for grants to be given in 2023. For information about the Vision 2 Action Grants and the process for application, go to v2agrants.org.

Raeann Purcell and **Tracy Moffatt** presented a Breakout Session titled "Not your Mother's WELCA." They highlighted many of the changes implemented by Church-wide and by the Synodical Women's Organization that allow for a more flexible structure and greater

variety of activities. The participants used discussion time to share great ideas to include more women and to dispel some of the myths that have stood in the way of women organizing WELCA groups in their churches.

Ann English and **Jackie Haynick** hosted the FL WELCA table in the Connection Cafe at Assembly. They answered questions and shared general information about WELCA. They encouraged registering for the Fall Gathering at Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center. Many women expressed interest and picked up their registration forms. More than 50 women entered our raffle to win a free registration for the Fall Gathering. The drawing winner for the raffle is **Margarita Romo** from Dade City.

SPRING GATHERINGS 2023



*Awaiting to hear
about your event!*

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		

Plan Now



Women of the ELCA Gathering September 21-24, 2023 Phoenix, Arizona

The **Just Love** Triennial Gathering is less than two months away. It is time to make your final arrangements so you can truly enjoy all of the activities that are being offered.

- Are you aware of the Quilt Challenge?
- How about the in-kind gifts?
- Are you participating in any of the optional tours?
- Have you seen the schedule of events?



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

The website is <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page>.

I would like to hear from you if you are attending the Triennial Gathering. Please email me your name, email address and telephone number. I will need to get in touch with you regarding the gifts that the Florida/Bahamas attendees are providing as well as a get-together while we are in Phoenix. With all the changes of the last three years, I am uncertain about who is attending. I am waiting to hear from you and will see you in Phoenix.

Diane Spicer dlsic@juno.com

Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory

Executive Board 2023

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
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Leone Goding leonegoding@centurylink.net J-LWR, CWU	Nina Jageler njageler@gmail.com D-Conference Coordinator	Donna Person dperson7@aol.com D-Publications, Fund for Leaders

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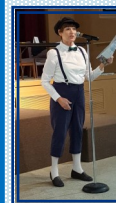


What does our logo mean?

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 September 15 for the October issue.**