



Tapestry

August 2020
Volume 33, Issue 4



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Phyllis' Ponderings

Dear Sisters,

In my article for the June *Tapestry*, I talked about the time of sheltering in place being a wilderness experience. Here we are in August and I am more than ready for this wilderness experience to be over and done with! I feel like a whiney 3 year old saying "Are we there yet?" What I really am is "weary". Merriam Webster describes "weary" as (1) *exhausted in strength, endurance, vigor, or freshness* or (2) *having one's patience, tolerance, or pleasure exhausted*. I particularly like the second definition because I am definitely weary of COVID-19!

I doubt that I am alone in this feeling of weariness. Many of us are weary of not feeling comfortable going to the grocery store—delivery to my car or front door is nice, but I would really like to squeeze the produce. Perhaps you are weary of wearing a mask, or trying to remember to social distance, or washing your hands, or wiping hard surfaces with disinfecting wipes. The list could go on and on.

I'm also weary of all the things that I don't feel like risking my health to do. I'm weary of not going to in-person WELCA meetings, Bible studies, worship, of being able to fellowship with my sisters and brothers in Christ. I sometimes find myself asking "How long will this last?"

In Psalm 13, we see the words "how long": *How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? ²How long must I bear pain in my soul, and have sorrow in my heart all day long? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? ³Consider and answer me, O LORD my God! Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death, ⁴and my enemy will say, "I have prevailed"; my foes will rejoice because I am shaken. ⁵But I trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. ⁶I will sing to the LORD, because he has dealt bountifully with me.*

At the beginning of this passage, the psalmist feels God is no longer with him, but it ends with joy as the psalmist tells us he trusted in God's steadfast love. This is a reminder that as we all try to navigate the "new normal" of our daily lives and are weary of asking "how long, O Lord" is this going to last?, it is my prayer for all of us that we will remember that there is always hope in God's steadfast love. God is here—with each one of us—in the midst of this storm—and it isn't going to last forever; we just need to rest (and be patient) in His love a little longer.

FB-SWO Board

President:
Phyllis Wade
secretary@htlc.gccoxmail.com

Vice President:
Lisa Klima
lisamarie274@yahoo.com

Secretary:
Donna Person
dperson7@aol.com

Treasurer:
Laurie Nelson
nlsnlaur@yahoo.com

The theme for this year's Spring Gatherings was to be "Faith, Hope, and Love Abide" with the theme verse Isaiah 54:10: ¹⁰ *For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you, and my covenant of peace shall not be removed, says the LORD, who has compassion on you.* (NRSV).

My dear sisters, the Isaiah passage is just one of many scriptures that affirms that God's love is always with us; nothing, can separate us from God's love, and that He is here to help ease our weariness.

Please stay healthy, continue to reach out to those you can't visit in person by email or phone, stay grounded in the scriptures, and know that while we can't gather as a group, you are not alone.

I would like to leave you with this prayer from a Bible Study I led years ago which seems very appropriate for today: *God of grace, your love shields us from every terror. Thank you for your constant assurance that we belong to you and that you are always with us. Even death cannot separate us from you, in Christ Jesus. Surprise us, God, and show us how to really see your kingdom in our lives. Show us how to cherish your creation, this precious earth. Reveal how we can show compassion to your children who suffer and cry, "How long?" Pull back whatever blinds us to peace. We ask, trusting you, in Jesus' name. Amen.*

With love
Your sister in Christ,



August Board Meeting Update



Due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Florida and following the recommendation of the Churchwide Board regarding in-person meetings, the August Board Meeting scheduled for **August 8th has been changed to a Zoom meeting that will begin at 10 a.m.** Board Members should watch their email for more details. If you have any questions, contact **SWO President Phyllis Wade.**



Share your memories and photos of past Fall Gatherings, Spring Gatherings, or events at your church. Please e-mail any remembrances and photos to dperson7@aol.com or give them to me along any keepsakes at next year's Fall Gathering in November 2021.

Submitted by **Donna Person, SWO Secretary and Historian**



*I may have all the faith needed to move mountains-
but if I have no love, I am nothing.*

I Corinthians 23:2b GNT



Greetings from your Fall Gathering Planning Committee. When the decision was made to use this theme for our gathering for 2020, we did not know how much our faith would be tested during the past five months. We have learned through these trying times that our faith has truly been our stronghold.

So, ladies we have decided to keep in touch and share our faith via a [mini-virtual Fall Gathering](#). Throughout the next few weeks, you will be receiving information about these exciting events planned for you. We know how important it is to stay in touch, so this may help us feel connected.

Faith Can Move Mountains will continue to be our Fall Gathering theme for next year. We cannot wait to see all of you face to face and share this exciting weekend November 12-14, 2021.

If we do not have your email, please send it to us so we can connect you with our exciting events very soon. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ann at 954-612-0147.

Stay safe Sisters and we will be in contact with you real soon.

Blessings,

Your Fall Gathering Co-Chairs



Loraine Van Haecke and Ann English

USE CAUTION WHEN PLANNING IN-PERSON EVENTS



We recently received this message from Churchwide which they have also published in Bold Connections and have posted on their website and want to share it with you. As we are preparing to publish this issue of Tapestry, the number of cases and deaths due to COVID-19 in Florida continue to rise. We can only add our recommendation to seriously consider other ways to meet rather than in person until the numbers are down.

The churchwide executive board of Women of the ELCA strongly encourages congregational units to carefully monitor current federal, state, and local governmental orders and recommendations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the recommendations of their synod.

All caution should be taken to protect the health of participants and their families. Where appropriate, postponing or canceling in-person events may be necessary. If in-person gatherings are being considered, the pastor and congregational council should be consulted.

Congregational units are encouraged to explore virtual opportunities for gathering, and the churchwide staff stand ready to consult on ways to gather virtually.

The churchwide executive board previously encouraged all synodical organizations, conferences, and clusters to postpone or cancel all in-person events through the end of 2020.

Just Love



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
AUGUST 5-8, 2021 | PHOENIX
WELCATG.ORG

Mark your calendars

Women of the ELCA
Triennial Gathering
will be
August 5-8, 2021
in Phoenix, Arizona

What an exciting theme for our Triennial Gathering 2021. The timing for this is so appropriate as we seem to live in a world of dissension. God created us in his image but each of us has our own personalities and opinions. What seems to get us in trouble is our failure to accept someone whose opinion is different from ours. We don't have to agree with each other to get along.

Whether you're at home with way too much time on your hands or facing the challenges of working in the midst of this pandemic, I would like each of you to spend some of your devotion time reflecting on the theme. If you can't think of anything, I want to suggest a couple of songs and some scripture.

Two of my favorite songs that come to mind when I hear, *Just Love*, are "What the world needs now, is love sweet love" and "They'll know we are Christians by our love."

In Mark 12:28-31 it is written, "One of the teachers of the law came and heard them [Jesus and the Sadducees] debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these." Another scripture is I Corinthians 16:14, "Let all that you do, be done in love."

Once you reflect on songs or scripture about 'Love', you'll probably find others. I would love to hear from you about your experience. There was a posting from Women of the ELCA on Facebook from Maya Angelou that read, "Hate, it has caused a lot of problems in the world, but has not solved one yet." Maybe *Just Love* is the answer.

Diane Spicer, Triennial Gathering Promoter
dlsic@juno.com

Website and Social Media

by Cheryl Semmel

www.flwelca.com is being updated with new information and features regularly. If you haven't already done so, we encourage you to bookmark the page in your web browser. Check out these tools to help navigate the site quickly:

- The **important updates banner** at the top of each page that highlights recent news of the FL-Bahamas SWO and Churchwide
- The **new search bar** to help find resources by keyword(s)
- All **forms are PDF writable**, meaning you can fill them out on your computer – allowing you to save and email them OR print and mail them.



Be sure to like the Florida-Bahamas SWO Facebook page at www.facebook.com/flwelca. Not only will you find daily inspiration, but it is a great way to get up to date information from your board and Churchwide. And don't forget to share information with others – including your congregations. This is a great way to stay connected even though we aren't together physically.

A call to ministry and action

We can always learn and grow

COOPERATION

by Denise Beumer, Racial Justice

In today's social and political environment, the deaths of many African Americans has put the issue of cooperation among us in a renewed light. The issue of how we interact and cooperate with one another has been a hot topic lately. How can we find an ability to get along with one another when there is constant arguing and conflict about everyday issues? We all seem to have such diverse differences and opinions. If humans are the most intelligent beings on earth and can't seem to find common ground, how are we move forward? I recently read an article in *The Wall Street Journal* which states where in the animal world do we find cooperation and the ability to live in peace with each other? Some may use this as an argument that humans can't possibly have any hope for cooperation if it is simply non-existent in the animal world.



Well, let's look at an example of cooperation of the birds—literally. The first is the Cuckoo from the tropics, which collec-

tively raise their young by building a nest together. Female lay their eggs and then the entire clutch watches out for one another.

The second example is the green parrots known as Kea. Tests were performed using a device with four separate strings that must be pulled at the same time to release a treat. The Kea will wait for the

fellow birds work together before pulling so that they all can enjoy the treats. It seems that many in the animal world display models of cooperation.

Cooperation in our own human family can sometimes seem like it's for the birds—but maybe it should be! With each of us learning more about one another, we might be able to understand each other. The Bible tells us that we were made in God's image. Knowing and believing that truth, we can overcome social barriers that are placed in our way of loving and cooperating with one another. If God made birds that can get along and learn to live together, then certainly we can too.

The SWO Board will start this process of love and cooperation at a workshop titled "*Begin with Loving One Another.*" The Board Meeting is on Saturday, August 8th. This workshop will be made available later in the month by recording for those of you who wish to view it. We invite each of you to put aside your preconceived notions about other people, leave your ego at the door and let's talk to one another. Together we can understand what makes each of us unique human beings made in God's image and loved by God.



A Call to Ministry and Action—Cooperation continued on page 6

GEORGE FLOYD. “I CAN’T BREATHE.” BLACK LIVES MATTER.

by Karen Weinrich, Publications

The issues of policing, Black Lives Matter, and White Privilege are at the forefront of our country right now. What does your congregation look like? Chances are, it is mostly white. According to the Pew Research Center, the ELCA is the whitest mainstream denomination in the United States, with 96% whites. As members of the ELCA we have a duty to learn more about these issues. Since I have been at home all summer, I have had plenty of time to start the learning process. Here are some resources to consider in your journey.

Movies:

Just Mercy: This movie is based on a true story about Walter McMillian, who was wrongfully convicted of murder and sentenced to death. It follows the fight to save his life.



13th is a documentary that traces the history of racial inequality in the United States. Our family watched this movie together and were shocked by what we learned.



BLACKkkLANSMAN is based on a true story about an African American detective that goes undercover in the KKK, teaming up with a white

detective to infiltrate the organization.

Podcasts:

Do you like to listen to podcasts? If so, try *Silence is Not an Option*, hosted by CNN’s Don Lemon. He says, “America is in crisis now. A lot of people want to help, but have no idea where to start. In our new podcast, we are going to dig deep into the reality of being Black and brown in America, and explore what you can do to help find a path forward.”



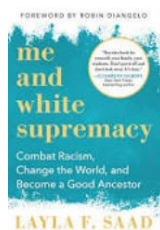
1619 is a podcast that stems from the 1619 project in the New York Times. This podcast explores how slavery has transformed America. It is very enlightening and can be found at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>



Books:

If you have looked at the New York Times bestseller list recently, you have seen that books about race have consistently been in the top 10. There are so many books to choose from, so I will highlight just a few.

So You Want to Talk About Race by Ijeoma Oluo may be a good place to start. Each chapter talks about a different issue and helps the reader see topics from a different perspective. If you enjoy this book, she also has a podcast titled *How to be a Good Ancestor*.



Me and White Supremacy by Layla Saad teaches the reader about white privilege – what it is, and how it affects everyone in our society.

Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America by Ibram X. Kendi is the book I am currently reading. There is also a young adult version for middle/high schoolers called *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You*.



Dear Church: A Love Letter From a Black Preacher in the Whitest Denomination in the US is written by Lenny Duncan, an ELCA pastor. Part manifesto, part confession, and all love letter, *Dear Church* offers a bold new vision for the future of Duncan's denomination and the broader mainline Christian community of faith. It includes a discussion guide that could be used in a church book club.



This list could go on and on. No matter which way we choose to learn, it is imperative we all take the time to learn and grow on this topic. I'm going to warn you – it will not be easy. I have had to reexamine some of my past beliefs and actions. But it is worth it. Now is the time we can create a more inclusive congregation, city, county, and country if we do the work.



NEWS FROM POLARIS PROJECT COVID-19'S AFFECT ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

by Phyllis Wade, FL-BA SWO President

Because Women of the ELCA continues to work to end human trafficking, we wanted to let you know how organizations helping victims are being impacted by the pandemic.

Polaris, founded in 2002, and named for the North Star, which people held in slavery in the U.S. used as a guide to navigate their way to freedom, operates the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline. Much like the Underground Railway helped get slaves from the plantations in the south to freedom north of the Mason-Dixon line, Polaris, through the hotline, helps get victims of trafficking to safe places.

Like many other parts of our lives, work to assist victims of trafficking has been impacted by COVID-19. Polaris has started tracking the potential impact of the pandemic. They used three time periods for comparison: April 2019; February 14-March 15, 2020; and April 2020.

April 2019 and February 14-March 15, 2020 are pre-shelter in place and April 2020 is post-shelter in place. When comparing statistics from the two pre-shelter-in-place time periods, the number of crisis situations increased by more than 40% in April 2020, the post-shelter-in-place time period. More concerning is that during March 2020 Polaris contacted service providers where they refer crisis cases to assess the impact on available services. Of the 80 providers who responded, 50% were either considering or already implementing measures that would limit receiving referrals, and another 4% had already stopped accepting new referrals.

Polaris admits that there are limitations in the findings at this point. One month is not long enough to establish a trend but they do plan on continuing to monitor the situation and will keep updating their findings. You can review their study at www.polarisproject.org.

Holy time is theme of Gather's fall 2020 bible study. In this three-session Bible study, *the Rev. Meghan Johnston Aelabouni* invites us to remember the past, recognize the present and reimagine the future. Themes and questions will be presented based upon both Old and New Testament scriptures. Subscribe now at (www.gathermagazine.org/subscribe) to receive the magazine and Bible Study.

New Assignment

ELCA forms task force on government and civic engagement;

Cheryl Semmel selected to serve

<p>The 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly authorized the development of an ELCA social statement on government, civic engagement and the relationship of church and state that will allow thorough attention to scriptural, historical, theological, and social issues.</p> <p>In response, the ELCA has established a task force to lead this work on behalf of the church, seeking individuals with a diversity of knowledge, insight, background, political perspective, and competence related to civic life in contemporary church and society. Cheryl Semmel, a member of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Vero Beach (Space Coast) and an ex-officio member of the Florida-Bahamas SWO Board, was one of 20 individuals selected to serve on the newly formed task force.</p>	<p>The ELCA has not yet released a formal announcement, but the task force is expected to begin its work this fall. The process for developing social statements comprises several phases and will take place over a four-and-a-half-year period, with the task force completing its work in February 2025.</p> <p>Like many others, this group will be considering how best to convene and navigate given the current public health crisis. We look forward to hearing more about Task Force. In the meantime, if you would like to read the ELCA’s social message on government or would like to learn more about the responsibilities of the task force, visit https://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Government-and-Civic-Engagement.</p>
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Another Way to Serve

by Laurie Nelson, FL-BA SWO Treasurer

Thank you to all the women who are serving as financial officers for your units. I was so looking forward to seeing everyone at our Fall Gathering. We know now more than ever that our lives are not our own and God’s plan is not always ours. Understandably, we know some units have chosen to postpone their gatherings. As Women of the ELCA, we engage in ministry and action. When we submit monetary donations to our mission areas, we are fulfilling our commitment to the promise we made when joining as Sisters in Christ. Your gifts are important to meet our commitments.

REGULAR OFFERING: Our regular offerings that you send to our SWO enable us to accomplish these goals. However, this year our offerings are down 13% for the same time period last year. Ladies, we really need your help!

- Consider increasing your percentage of giving to your SWO. It is suggested that we give at least 50%. Remember 55% of what we receive from you goes directly to Churchwide.
- If your Unit is fortunate to have a balance which has not been designated for a given cause, please prayerfully consider sending it to your SWO.

MINISTRIES AND ACTION: One of our ongoing ministries is our Love Offering. Three other very important ministries are Share the Spirit, Let Your Light Shine and Fund for Leaders. Your board is recommending that each Unit send at least \$10 for each of these ministries to your SWO Treasurer. All three of these ministries assist our sisters financially to continue to grow spiritually and spread the Good News.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Please send your offerings made payable to Florida-Bahamas SWO to support our organization as well as our Churchwide Women of the ELCA Programs. Please do not make checks payable to me. When your check is received, I will mail out a receipt for your records. Listed below is my contact information. Please mail your offering to my address. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via e-mail or directly via telephone.

Please be sure to use the proper form when sending in an offering and clearly designate where your funds are to be recorded. Feel free to call, email or text me if you have any questions.

Your Sister in Christ, **Laurie Nelson**

<p>Contact Information:</p> <p>Laurie Nelson 716-499-7166 CELL nlsnlaur@yahoo.com</p>

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 electronically to: wade.phyllis73@gmail.com or secretary@htlc.gccoxmail.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**. Be sure to indicate that it is for the Fund for Leaders Scholarship.

ATTENTION
CONGREGATIONAL
UNITS

Dear Sisters,

During this strange and difficult time, I pray for comfort and peace for all of you. Please know that we love and miss you all. If you find yourself with 'extra' time and are wondering if your constitutions are up

to date, check out the information below that was taken from www.womenoftheelca.org.

Blessings and stay safe!

Lisa Klima—Your SWO Vice President

Our constitutions describe how Women of the ELCA operates as an organization. The constitutions are living documents that explain how we will live our lives together as a community of women created in the image of God. From time to time additions and deletions are made to the constitutions (through the process for change that is laid out in the constitutions themselves), as our circumstances change.

[Download the latest versions of the constitutions](#) that reflect changes voted on at the Tenth Triennial Convention (2017).

[Descarga la última versión de las constituciones](#)

Synodical Women's Organizations (SWO's) seeking to amend their SWO constitution must fill out and email this [Request for Constitutional Review](#) to Women.elca@elca.org.



From the Editor

Zooming!

From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick

When I turned my calendar page to July, I realized that I had not physically met with my circle since February. I'd hoped that we'd resume in July but now the pandemic has increased its presence all around us. What was next? I so missed my friends, our fellowship, and Bible study. The summer *Gather* study "Just Love" looked promising. What was I to do? I'd watched a video that my friend Elaine Heine had presented earlier in the pandemic. I knew that I couldn't create a video! I really didn't want to set up a Zoom meeting, but guess what? With the help of my pastor, a Zoom meeting invite was sent to my circle friends. With session one of "Just Love" prepared, about eight of us "zoomed in" on July 13th! We agreed to Zoom again on July 27th for session two. Sadly, not everyone can join us, but we're trying to fix the problems that we can. In August, we'll finish session three. Who would have known! **We are "Zooming!"**

Florida Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization Directory

Executive Board 2020

<p><u>President</u> Phyllis Wade secretary@htlc.gccoxmail.com Planning Committee</p>	<p><u>Vice President</u> Lisa Klima lisamarie274@yahoo.com Planning Committee</p>	<p><u>Secretary</u> Donna Person dperson7@aol.com J-Historian</p>	<p><u>Treasurer</u> Laurie Nelson nlsnlaur@yahoo.com</p>
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Board Members and Missions**

<p>Gayle Backiel rbackiel@verizon.net J-Global Missions</p>	<p>Mae Haines stevemae@verizon.net J-LWR, CWU, Rachel's Day</p>	<p>Marilyn Kreitzinger manyjoys2u@gmail.com S-Katie's Fund, Disaster, Scholarship</p>	<p>Karen Weinrich weinrik@hotmail.com D-Publications</p>
<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>	

Non-Board Members

<p><u>Registrar</u> Diane Cummings sworegistrar1@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Triennial Promoter</u> Diane Spicer dlsic@juno.com</p>
<p><u>Tapestry Editor</u> Linda Greilick lindag65@verizon.net</p>	<p><u>Planning Committee Co-Chairs</u> Ann English aenglish228@yahoo.com</p>
<p><u>Webmaster/Web Advisor</u> Cheryl Semmel clsemmel@gmail.com</p>	<p>Loraine Van Haecke loraine.vanhaecke@gmail.com</p>
<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).



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 15th for the October issue.**

**Missions

D Discipleship
 J Justice
 S Stewardship