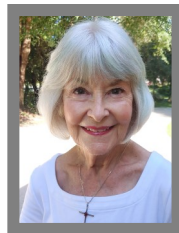




June 2024
Volume 37, Issue 3

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Anne's Advice



My final year as your Florida-Bahamas SWO President has brought me unexpected joy and thought-provoking conversations in time spent with our community of women. I was blessed to be present at four of our Spring Gatherings this year. I shared in all of their unique worship services, singing, Bible studies, community service, and election of conference officers. During informal conversation and intentional listening sessions, I heard the women's shared satisfaction of serving the church, the society, and the world through food banks, winter shelters, clothing distribution, quilts, and personal care kits. But I also heard concerns about declining participation. I heard worried comments about lack of unity in their families, their churches, and the nation. They thought that people were too busy with individual pursuits and personal achievements. They admitted that at times it was difficult to resume activities they used to enjoy. It is harder to prioritize relationships, community, and unity.

Perhaps in the future WELCA will need to include more than a lifetime commitment to Lutheran World Relief quilts, more than a monthly "Gather" Bible study on Thursday afternoon at 1:00 PM. Maybe more variety and flexibility would create new opportunities and raise interest. We need to make a commitment to being open to new relationships to be able to learn how to serve new women through living the Purpose and Mission of WELCA.

Churchwide WELCA held a Zoom leadership event in May. I recommend that you watch this event by visiting WELCA.org and scrolling down to **Servant Leader: Present, Equipped, Here**. In this session, you will learn to appreciate a deeper connection to the various communities you are a member in. Each member belongs to the others as they act as the body of Christ. Servant leadership in the community involves recognizing the value of your gifts and discerning how that shapes your unique role in the community. We are all called to live our gifts at our baptism. Each of us is already equipped to fulfill our role as a leader in our community.

FB-SWO Board

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astoran46@gmail.com

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I have faith that if we continue to look to our Mission and Purpose to determine future activity; if we use our gifts with humility; and ask God for guidance, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will continue to be a leader-full community long into the future.

Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President

Forms, Funds and Finances...



Greetings SWO Sisters,

“He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands” is the theme for the upcoming Fall Gathering - November 8-10. Registration is now open and I’m excited to say we were able to hold the cost of the weekend event to \$230.00 again this year. Need a “helping hand” to defray the cost of attending the Fall Gathering? We have funds available to share!

Share the Spirit Grants are the “helping hand” for us adults. 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.



Let Your Light Shine provides a “helping hand” 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!

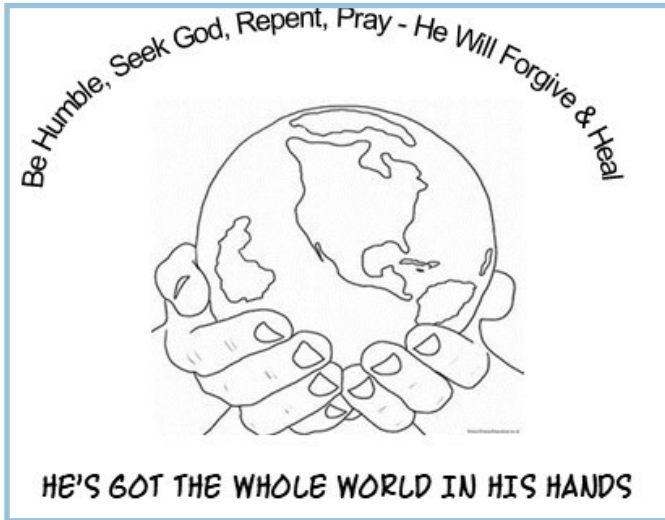
Grants are awarded to supplement the cost of accommodations, meals, and registration fees. Previous grant recipients are eligible to apply. Both applications are now available: www.flwelca.com on the Fall Gathering page. Include this form with your registration. Again, a reminder that for both grants, 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 one your application is submitted, contact the Registrar Diane Cummings at sworegistrar1@gmail.com.

I’d like to also encourage individuals, units, or conferences to make contributions to these grant programs so we can continue to provide a “helping hand” to allow many more of our sisters in Christ 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.

Tracy Moffatt, FL-BA SWO Treasurer



Marilyn Kreitzinger serves at the Florida-Bahamas SWO Table at Synod Assembly in Kissimmee the weekend of May 31—June 2.

Summer is not here yet but the Fall Gathering will be here before you know it;

November 8, 9, and 10th at Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center, 4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, FL

At the Synod Assembly we were able to set up a WELCA table and pass out about 300 Save the Date cards to invite many to our Gathering this fall. Thanks also to Anne Storan, Denise Beumer, and Donna Person for their help.

At the Gathering, there will be exciting speakers and workshops, great food, friends old and new, and many opportunities to learn about and worship our wonderful awesome God.

The web site (flwelca.com) is ready to take registrations and a list of workshops is available. Workshop leaders are busy making preparations for you.

Remember whatever is happening in the world, the country or your own life, He has the whole world in His Hands.



Marilyn answers questions.

**Donna Person & Gayle Backiel
2024 Fall Gathering Co-Chairs**



Marilyn provides information..



*Meet our Churchwide Representative
at our November 2024
Fall Gathering*

Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer was elected to the Executive Board of the Women of the ELCA for her first term in August 2021. Jennifer now serves as Treasurer on the Churchwide Executive Board and as chair of the budget and finance committee.

Previously Jennifer served many years on the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synodical Board (8B) as a board member, vice president, and president. Jennifer is the editor of the synod's newsletter, *Friends Inc.* and helps out with tech support to the board.

Jennifer is originally from Racine, Wis., and grew up in Fremont, Ohio. She attended Carthage College, an ELCA College, in Kenosha, Wis., and attended graduate school in Gettysburg, Pa. Jennifer works as a training supervisor for a non-profit case management organization.

Jennifer lives in Latrobe, PA with her husband, Bill, who is an ELCA Pastor. Jennifer and Bill have two children, Noah and Angeline. Noah is in college at West Chester University majoring in Music Education and Angeline is in 12th grade and is a Cosmetology student at the Vo-Tech High School. Jennifer and Bill enjoy walking their two dogs, helping out with the high school marching band, and taking vacations, especially to Walt Disney World.

Jennifer is a member at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Latrobe. Jennifer is a member of the bell choir, is an usher, and a lector. Jennifer attends women's Bible studies at area churches and has led women's Bible studies at Prince of Peace Church too. Jennifer also serves as a Lay Supply Preacher for the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod.





The SWO Board and Fall Gathering Planning Committee will have an in-person Board Meeting on **Saturday, August 3, 2024** at **St. John Lutheran**, 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.

2024 Fall Gathering

*****REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN*****

He's Got the Whole World in His Hands

November 8-10, 2024

Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center, Fruitland Park

REGISTRATION OPTION 1:

Download, email, and mail the following writable PDF registration forms to mail or email to our conference registrar, Diane Cummings. These forms can also be printed and shared electronically with friends in your congregation and conference.

Step 1. Select the appropriate form (**Overnight, Commuter, or Youth Registration**) and complete all fields. Mail with check to address on form.

Step 2. Review the workshop list, download and complete [WORKSHIP REGISTRATION](#) form and return with your registration.

REGISTRATION OPTION 2:

Online Registration is now open at www.flwelca.com. Click on 2024 Fall Gathering.

Please complete the following steps to register:

Step 1. Select the appropriate form (**Overnight, Commuter, or Youth Registration**) and complete all fields, including the payment section.

Step 2. Review the workshop list, and submit your choices using the links provided ([WORKSHOP LIST](#) and [WORKSHOP REGISTRATION](#)).

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF DROP OFF INFORMATION Truck Schedule for February 2025



The truck pickup routes will be Monday, February 10, and Tuesday, February 11, 2025. Below is a list of Churches who have agreed to be pick-up points for these dates & times. We encourage you to call and make an appointment before delivering to the pickup site.

- Christ Lutheran Church, 1955 E. Oakland Pk Blvd., Ft. Lauderdale - Phone 954 564 7673
Contact Person Donna Person @ 954 592 6323. Delivery to Church Week of February 3 - 7, 10am-1pm. Please call for appointment. Truck pick up Monday, February 10 @ 9am - TRUCK #1
- Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church, 13600 Caspian Ln., Clermont - Phone 352-394 3382
Contact Person Chris Morse @ 262-617 6633. Delivery to Church Week of February 3 - 7, 9am-Noon. Please call for appointment. Truck pick up Monday, February 10 @ 4pm(need 28-30ft of 53ft truck) - TRUCK #1
- Trinity Lutheran Church, 1415 S. McDuff, Jacksonville - Phone 904 389 5341
Contact Person Karen Brown @ 904-401-5373. Delivery to Church Week of February 3 - 7, 10am - 1pm. Truck pick up Tuesday, February 11 @ 9am - TRUCK #1
- Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 790 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice - Phone 941 488 4942
Contact Person Kathy Wittersheim @ 941-484-5865-preferred or 630-253-2356. Delivery to Church Friday, February 7, 9am - 2pm. Please call for appointment. Truck pick up Monday, February 10 @ 9am - TRUCK #2
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 501 S. Dale Mabry, Tampa – Phone 813 877 3105
Contact Person Pat Zwick @ Cell 813-810-0103. Delivery to Church Week of February 4 - 7, 10am- 1pm. Please call for appointment. (30 pounds per box) Truck pick up Monday, February 10 @11am - TRUCK #2
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 363 Miracle Strip Pkwy, Fort Walton Beach -Phone 850-243 0788
Contact Person Shirley Bow @ 850 642-1649. Delivery to Church Week of February 4 - 7, 10am-12noon. Truck pick up Tuesday, February 11 @ 9am - TRUCK #2

If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Leone Goding:

leonegoding@centurylink.net

Cell Phone 352-223 1925

7824 Live Oak Lane, Leesburg, FL 34788



LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF



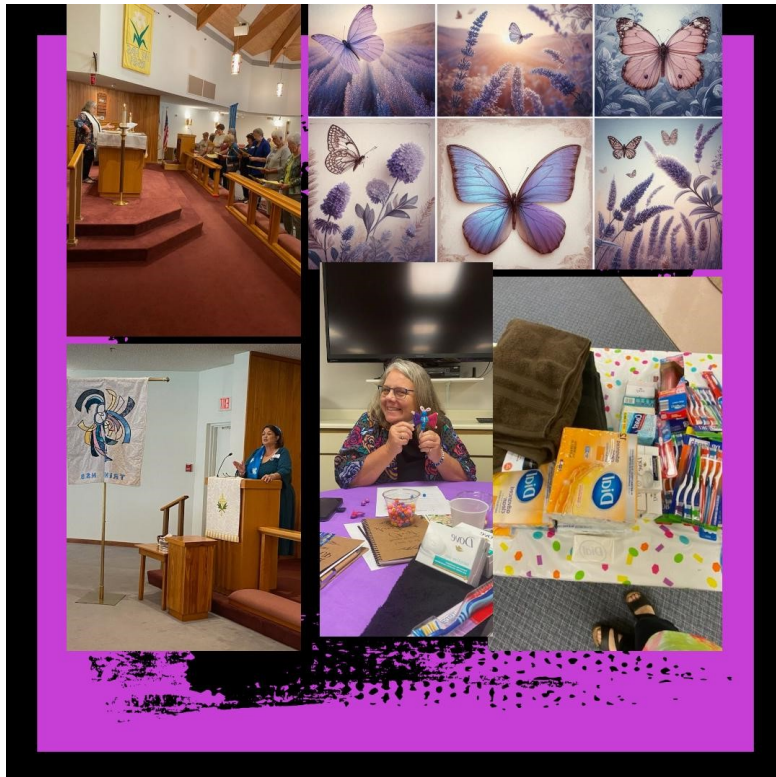
2024 Conference Spring Gatherings

Where and When

CONFERENCE	DATE	LOCATION	BOARD MEMBER ATTENDING
First Coast	June 8	St. Andrew's Jacksonville Beach	Raeann Purcell
Panhandle	To be determined		

FLAGLER/VOLUSIA CONFERENCE

AT TRINITY LUTHERAN IN NEW SMYRNA BEACH



The Flagler/Volusia Conference met on Saturday, April 6 at **Trinity** in New Smyrna Beach. We started with a light breakfast and proceeded to worship, led by **Pastor Julie Frank**. Nine first time attendees were recognized by **FL-BA SWO Board Representative Raeann Purcell**. **Conference President Judy Driesbaugh** asked for all to consider serving as a conference officer. As Judy is no longer eligible to serve, we require leadership. We pray the Holy Spirit brings us the leader we need. **Michele Hilton**, Synod Vice President, led us in Bible study. Attendees brought items for personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. After a salad lunch, we were treated to instruction on a butterfly craft.

Raeann Purcell
FL-BA SWO Board Representative



CALOOSA CONFERENCE

AT GATEWAY TRINITY IN FORT MYERS

Forty Eight Women from the Caloosa Conference gathered at **Gateway Trinity Lutheran Church** on Saturday April 27th for a wonderful day filled with worship, fellowship, and learning! The day began with worship led by **Pastor Jen Moore of Gateway Trinity** and an inspirational message from **SWO Scholarship Recipient Beatrice D'Angelo** of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Naples. A short business meeting followed highlighted by welcoming 23 first time attendees to the gathering.

A few pickle themed icebreakers were followed by a German themed lunch that was served while we enjoyed an episode of **"The View"** with a very special guest all the way from Wittenberg - **Katie Luther**. We all learned lots about the details of Katie's life from her escape from the convent to managing the Black Cloister. During commercial breaks, each table worked through the questions from the WELCA Katie Luther Bible Study. Katie marveled at learning of things such as grocery stores and how the Florida heat stayed outside while it was cool inside.

Katie declined to settle the dispute concerning her escape from the convent being in a pickle barrel or a herring barrel saying her sisters had sworn each other to secrecy on some things.



The ladies of "The View" (L-R):
Melissa Kennedy, Messiah; Jane Schroeder,
Messiah; Lucie Fuson, Christ; Pr. Jen Moore,
Gateway Trinity; Lisa Peters, Faith; Julie Hunter,
Christ

Tracy Moffatt
FL-BA SWO Treasurer

HEART OF FLORIDA CONFERENCE

AT ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN IN LONGWOOD

The Heart of Florida Spring Gathering was held on Saturday April 20th and was hosted by **St Stephen Lutheran** in Longwood. What a joyful gathering. We had 29 attendees from six different congregations and 10 first time Spring Gathering attendees. Each of the first-time attendees were awarded a small gift.

The day started off being led in devotion by **Co-Chair Marilyn Kreitzinger** then on to the business of the day. Our Synod Board reps, **Vice President Denise Beumer** and **Social Justice and Advocacy Rep Stacia Carter** brought greetings from the FL Bahamas WELCA Board along with information on activities in the FL Bahama Synod, our Fall Gathering, and upcoming WELCA elections. Elections were held for the Heart of Florida conference with **Lisa Klima**, outgoing Co-Chair presiding. Afterwards we heard a presentation by **Leone Goding** on Lutheran World relief before we adjourned for lunch.

After lunch our speaker, **Steph Wemberg**, a licensed mental health counselor, spoke to us on caring for ourselves. An affirmation that Steph gave us to repeat when stressed is **"I am**

love, I am capable, I am enough". Afterwards Denise and Stacia recognized our outgoing **Co-Chair Lisa Klima** and outgoing **Secretary/Treasurer Ann English**. We then installed our newly elected officers; **Co-Chair Marilyn Kreitzinger**, **Co-Chair Lorraine Van Hecke**, and **Secretary/Treasurer Arlene Kelly**. A warm round of congratulations welcomed our new Heart of Florida leaders.

We closed out our day with a Navajo blessing by Marilyn. Then we all gathered together as we sang **"Let there be peace on Earth"**. Let there be peace on earth.

Stacia Carter
FL-BA SWO Board Representative



**PINELANDS
CONFERENCE**

AT ST. TIMOTHY LUTHERAN IN CRYSTAL RIVER

Women of the ELCA enjoyed a wonderful gathering at **St. Timothy Lutheran Church** in Crystal River on Saturday, May 4. The churches in attendance were Good Shepherd, Hernando; St. Matthew, Ocala; Ascension, Ocala; Hope, The Villages; Rock of Ages, Wildwood and of course St. Timothy from Crystal River. Good Shepherd in Hernando provided a terrific breakfast for the group.

President Irene Brissel welcomed everyone and requested we start by nominating new officers. *Bev Conklin* from Rock of Ages was nominated the new President, with **Irene Brissel** from St. Timothy moving to the Vice-President chair. *Jan Kurtz* from Hope will serve as Secretary. It was a real pleasure to install these dedicated ladies.

Irene Brissel led the Bible Lesson from Philippians 4:6-7 encouraging everyone to pray about everything, which was very motivating. *Anne Storan* requested the churches to share what they had done this past year, and each church presented their service activities. I spoke about **GraceWay Village** in Fort Pierce, our new Love Offering, and handed out pamphlets. We discussed the new guidelines that Lutheran World Relief has requested for the quilts and how we are going to comply. I advised the group to try to make the different kits because they are just as important as the quilts. We have found that making the gowns & diapers from T-shirts brings the cost of the baby care kits down considerably.

A delicious lunch was served by St. Timothy with *Randy (Pastor Joanie's husband)* in the kitchen, making everything go smoothly.

The afternoon was dedicated to a Communion Service by *Pastor Joanie*. She advised that Jesus sits next to each of us in the pews and our daily life. *Sally Hennessy* provided music accompaniment.

We are very grateful to St. Timothy for hosting our Spring Gathering and encourage everyone to plan to attend the Fall Gathering at Warren Willis United Methodist Camp and Conference Center in Fruitland Park November 8-10.

Leone Goding, FL=-BA SWO Board Representative



Leone Goding installs Bev Conklin, Rock of Ages, as President; Irene Brissel, St. Matthew, Vice President; Jan Keller, Hope Lutheran the Villages, Secretary/Treasurer.



Investigating the Power of Prayer



The Space Coast Conference and Tradewinds Conference of the Florida-Bahamas Synod of WELCA met at **St. Andrew Lutheran Church** on April 13, 2024. The theme of the gathering was *"Peace, Be Not Anxious."* (Phil 4:6,7) Approximately fifty women were greeted by **Clare Maschek**, President of St. Andrew WELCA. She led us in prayer and recitation of the WELCA Purpose.

Following a prelude by **Bill Drake**, **Pastor Reverend Randy Kennedy** welcomed us, gave announcements, and worship service began. The message, *"Nourish your child's spirit with His spirit,"* was given by seminary student, **Maya Pinhassian**. Reverend Kennedy continued with the liturgy and communion.

The business meeting began with reading the minutes of conference meetings in 2023 by Space Coast Conference Secretary **Janet Jodoin**. **Space Coast Conference President Gisela Khail** introduced me and I invited everyone to the Fall Gathering at Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center. Space Coast is responsible for Registration at Fall Gathering. I encouraged everyone to prayerfully consider using their gifts by filling out a nomination form to serve on the SWO Board. I explained the importance of our Webmaster and the need for someone to volunteer to serve in that volunteer position.

Gisela reported that the officers were all eligible and willing to serve another two-year term. She asked if there were nominations from the floor. There being none, the officers were elected. They are: **President Gisela Khail**, **Vice President Diane Spicer**, and **Secretary Janet Jodoin**. I installed the officers. Then I was happy to recognize the fifteen women who were attending a Spring Gathering for the first time. The women continued their meeting by sharing recent events and activities of the church units. **Conference Vice President, Diane Spicer**, spoke of the importance of recognizing the gifts of the women of WELCA and encouraging one another. She encouraged the value of nurturing leadership through mentoring.

We recessed for a delicious lunch prepared by the women of St. Andrew and **Joseph Lochlar**. The buffet had a variety of salads

and mini-pastries for dessert. Following lunch, **Chrystal Netherton**, C.E.O. of **GraceWay Village**, was introduced as our speaker. She told us how blessed she felt that GraceWay Village had been chosen as the 2024-2025 Love Offering recipient of Florida-Bahamas SWO. She shared news of the incredible growth in clients being served as needs increase in the community. Most compelling is the number of children who are not only without shelter, but also without parents. Chrystal shared her faith that God will be faithful in showing her solutions and giving her strength to respond to needs. The women of Space Coast Conference demonstrated their commitment to support for GraceWay Village by generously donating 210 pounds of food at their Spring Gathering.

Our Bible study, based on the theme, *"Peace, Be Not Anxious,"* was led by **Dorothy Tate**. She shared a guide to learning how to put your trust in God. She drew the thoughts from *Life Meets Theology* by Dr. Joel Dorman. She used the acronym S.I.P.S. to create a system to find Peace by trusting God. *"S" is for Sing.* Worship God with music. *"I" is for Investigate.* Read the Bible. *"P" is for Pray.* Talk to God, praise him in prayer, thank him for blessings. *"S" is for Stay.* Stay close to God, persist in your faith, and don't just turn to him when you're in trouble. Following these steps will help you have peace by learning to truly trust God. Conference Secretary Janet Jodoin gave the final statistics. Conference President Gisela Khail gave closing thoughts and closed with a prayer.

Anne Storan

FL-BA SWO President

MID-GULF
CONFERENCE

AT LIVING WATERS IN PORT CHARLOTTE



What a trip! Getting up early in the morning to go to the Mid-Gulf Conference at **Living Waters** in Port Charlotte! Watching the sun rise and seeing God's world from the big opposing bridge over the bay! That was just the start of what was going to be a good day. I drove to Living Waters not really sure of what I was getting into. But from the moment I was greeted in the parking lot to the time I said goodbye, I was surrounded by a group of about 35 fantastic women, twelve of which were first timers, all connected by their love of God.

After a light breakfast, we went into the sanctuary for our business meeting and election of officers. I gave a talk about the many parts of WELCA including forms, publications and the who, how and why of offerings, where to find forms, and who to send them to. Fall Gathering and availability of scholarships was brought to the attention of all. Any questions were answered.

We then had a nice lunch of soup and sandwiches. After lunch, we had a service with a meditation on the theme of the gathering. Our **guest speaker Jan** told us about a project she and her late husband was involved with - putting a million Bibles in the hands of Russian soldiers. It was fascinating to hear the red tape of dealing with the Russian Government. The day ended with Communion. It was then time to say goodbye to my new friends. I hope to see them at Fall Gathering.

Sallie Haley



Summer 2024—After certainty: A biblical guide

This three-part Bible study series focuses on what it means to live in faith after certainty. In these years of a worldwide pandemic, escalating climate change, political turmoil, and a changing religious landscape, it may feel like the days of predictability and stability are behind us. What will the future bring now? Let's see how God leads us beyond certainty to curiosity, community, and compassion in the June—August issues of Gather.



From the Editor

A Way to Honor

From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick

Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, is retiring at the end of the month. She's served this organization with dedication, creativity, and tenacity, inspiring and mentoring many in their Christian discipleship. Now it's time to offer thanks.

To honor Linda's 22 years of service to Women of the ELCA, you are invited to make a gift to 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years, the campaign to raise \$1 million for this endowment.

Katie's Fund supports ministries focused on global sharing, leadership development, and faith in daily life. Linda has focused her leadership in these areas, too. So, a gift to Katie's Fund in honor of Linda's leadership is a natural way to say "thanks."

Will you consider a gift today to show your gratitude and support for the future of Women of the ELCA?

To make a gift:

Send a check made payable to Women of the ELCA to Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009. Note "Katie's Fund WOG0206/retirement" in the memo line.

Or go to welca.org/donate to make an online gift, selecting Katie's Fund in the drop-down designation list; in the "additional information" section, indicate the gift is in honor of Linda's retirement.



Called to be political
(But I don't want to be political!)



**AS LUTHERANS ARE
WE CALLED
TO BE POLITICAL?**

especially Lutheran Christians, are called to participate in the political arena. Let's briefly explore this charge before you cast your next vote.

Before you vote for a candidate, please ask yourself if this candidate's policies will hurt or cause harm to a sister in Christ. Does this candidate promote racism, sexism, homophobia, hate or any of the other ills we should be wary of. No matter your personal stance on abortion, will this candidate cut off life saving measures for a pregnant woman? Do you want a candidate who will put your loved ones at risk because of their personal feelings? Do you want a non-medical professional making medical decisions for your daughter, niece, daughter in law, cousin or you?

Before you vote for a candidate, ask yourself if this candidate is someone with empathy or concern for the welfare of others? Recently Florida House Bill 433 was signed. This bill prohibits local governments from requiring employers of outdoor workers to provide water breaks, shade

On the WELCA.ORG website under resources, there is an article titled **"Called to be Political."** This article begins *"Like it or not, Christians are called to be political. Fears or questions about our church's involvement in politics may reflect a misunderstanding of how Christians, and*

or opportunities to cool down. HB 433 eliminated the opportunity for municipalities to offer preference to employers who provided this humanitarian treatment to their employees. Instead, employees especially agricultural employees picking fruit, working in fields, etc. are denied this basic human treatment that none of us would deny someone we love. Is this something you support? Is this a policy that reflects your conscience?

No matter how you feel about the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and/or asexual (LGBTQIA) community, we are brothers and sisters in Christ and in life. Almost every family has a family member who fits into the LGBTQIA+ category. That family member may be too afraid to come out to you, but it is still their life. Do you back candidates who promote harm, promote denial of employment, education, opportunity because of who they love?

Matthew 22:39 says to love one another as we love ourselves. Does your candidate promote inclusion or hate? The ELCA says we love all. Does your candidate?

I'm not asking you to stand up and denounce a candidate or a family member or friend who supports candidates who support and preach hate. If you can't or won't, then quietly go into the voting booth and select candidates that aren't promoting policies to hurt your sisters and brothers in Christ. Vote for candidates that you can say, "I voted to protect you," "I voted to love you," "I voted to give you not only equality but equity." I voted for love and integrity, for all my brothers and sisters in Christ. As Lutherans, as Christians, we ARE called to be political.

Finding Hope in a Complex World

April 17 and 24, 2024 Zoom Workshops

On two Wednesday evenings in April I joined the first ever virtual workshops for women hosted by the Global Mission Table. More than thirty women from Suriname, Guyana, and the Florida-Bahamas synod gathered online to worship and reflect on the topic "Finding Hope in a Complex World." **Rev. Katie Carroll** opened the meeting and welcomed each of us. She reminded us that in Spanish "waiting" and "hoping" are the same word.



Worship on April 17 included Psalm 130:5-6:

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, more than those who watch for the morning.

continued on Page 13

We also read Romans 5:1-5:

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast of our hope of sharing the glory of God. And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Sister Kurtzious from Guyana shared how we find hope in our faith and in serving our community. **Sister Nellie Braun** spoke of recalling past times of God's faithfulness leading to a good outcome. **Elocia Smith from ELCG** closed our worship by leading us in singing, "I the God of Sea and Sky."

Following worship, **Rev. Kathryn Carroll, Chair, Global Mission Table Florida-Bahamas Synod**, suggested four questions for our consideration during our discussion time. The technology assistant, **Megan Valle**, broke us into chat rooms with 5 or 6 participants. The women in each chat room engaged in lively discussions. We acknowledged that regardless of our location, we had all experienced ongoing disruptions in our community life.

On April 24, we continued our discussion on "Finding Hope in a Complex World." Once again our conversation was focused on Psalm 130:5-6 and Romans 5:1-5. The centerpiece of this session was a presentation by **Manon Sanchez, PhD**, on the topic "Impact of Domestic Violence on Children." We heard that domestic violence occurs everywhere. It is found in all cultures, in all countries, in all income levels. Dr. Sanchez explained that domestic violence inflicts damage on the body, spirit, and mind of the victim. Times of stress often increase the frequency and intensity of the violence.

In our chat rooms, we were guided to discuss actions that we could take to reduce the likelihood of violence occurring, ways to help victims heal from the damage, and assistance with building a future life free from violence.

We returned from the chat rooms and shared details of our discussions. Before praying "The Lord's Prayer" together, we all agreed that these two sessions had been a blessing and we were hopeful we could come together again soon.

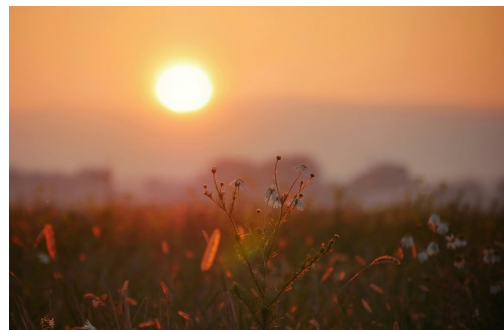
Respectfully,
Anne Storan

JUNE DEVOTION

KEEP SHINING YOUR LIGHT

We are called to notice the light of God's love so that we can share it with others. When discussing stewardship, it's essential to notice the light the organization brings so that we may share it with others in the church and beyond.

Read the June devotion at
www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/devotions



Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory

Executive Board 2024

<u>President</u>	<u>Vice President</u>	<u>Secretary</u>	<u>Treasurer</u>
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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

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