



Tapestry

October 2024
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Anne's Advice

Summer is officially over. I had an amazingly memorable summer. I was blessed traveling to spend personal time with family and friends. I also had new enriching and thought-provoking times through new church experiences.

Even though it wasn't officially summer on April 8 when a total eclipse of the sun thrilled people in a large swath of the USA, I count that event as one of my premier memories. I flew to be with three of my grandchildren in Medina, OH, to see my very first total eclipse. To share that spectacle with those three awestruck children was unforgettable.

In May I flew to New York City to spend Mother's Day with my son and his family in Brooklyn. We went to the Brooklyn Botanical Garden and I was filled with gratitude for the blessing of sharing God's beautiful creation with this loving family. I flew from New York to Ohio to celebrate the high school graduation of another granddaughter. Even though I had to miss the graduation ceremony, I'm grateful that God protected me and got me through Covid with very mild symptoms.

In June, I escaped Florida's heat when I flew to stay with a friend in Wisconsin for three weeks. God's creation in the North Woods is filled with white birch trees, pine trees, maples and oaks. I felt like joining the birds singing with joyous abandon every morning. I could wear sweatshirts and jeans instead of t-shirts and shorts. Hostas, ferns, and daisies are everywhere in landscaping at the edge of the forests. It was a time to relax.

In September I was asked to return to Mount Vernon, OH, the town I called home for thirty-one years. One of my children needed care for two granddaughters while my daughter was vacationing with her husband. Of all my grandchildren, I had spent the least amount of time with Esha and Abra. I'm so grateful for the time we had to get to know each other better. I learned so much about them as I watched them play. Making new memories with children is one of my favorite ways to use my time.

In addition to the personal time I enjoyed this summer, I took advantage of new opportunities to grow spiritually and increase my understanding of our church and become a more effective disciple of Christ.

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Regardless of my frequent travels this summer, I was able to take advantage of two of the three Zoom meetings with our sisters from our companion churches in Surinam and Guyana. The Florida-Bahamas Synod Global Mission Table organized this opportunity to worship with our sisters and discuss the issues we have in common. I found so much encouragement during our time together. I was happy to see some of you joining us.

In June, I went to the Juneteenth observation on Facebook. Joining remotely in events like this, that I see announced in the weekly e-Spirit letter from the Bishop's office, allows me to participate more fully in the life and mission of our church.

In August, I was happy to sit in remotely on the Region 9 meeting, "Love made Real," moderated by Bishop Eaton and Bishop Suarez. Bishop Eaton emphasized that whether we are conscious of it or not, God's presence is real. She asked us to think about times in our lives when God's love was real to us. We could respond in the chat feature. Some of those responses were shared. In response to one chat question, Bishop Eaton urged us to evaluate situations in this divisive time by focusing on community and justice. Let us all do our best to create a beloved community.

Faith, hope, and joy,
Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President

Forms, Funds and Finances...

Greetings SWO Sisters,

The Fall Gathering is fast approaching! We will gather once again at the Warren Willis Conference Center. Registration is now open until October 10th – so please join us! This year will have an exciting difference as we will be sharing our Worship space with 550 Methodist Youth at the camp for a retreat! We have had to adapt a few things and use a few new spaces but it will still be an awesome reconnecting weekend for our sisters from around Florida. Our young ladies – and those young at heart – are also invited to join the Youth for Worship and we may have some of them with us Friday Evening.

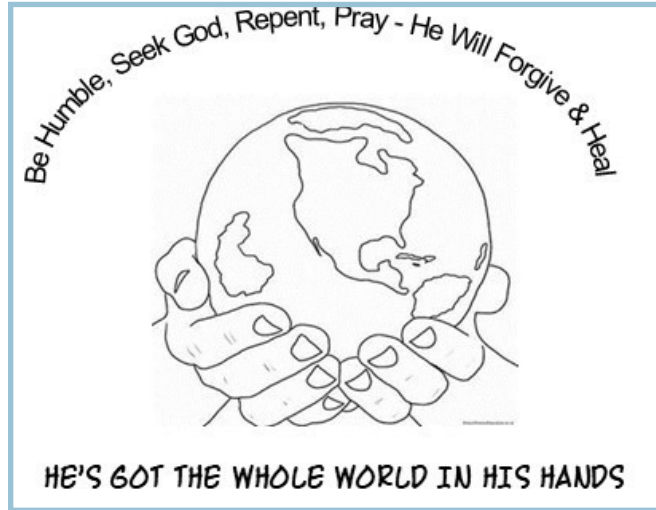


A few reminders for the weekend:

- If you are sending a voting member to the Fall Gathering, be sure you have made at least one regular offering to the SWO this year. This means sending an offering from your unit to the SWO Treasurer using a Form A. It is different than a Love Offering or offering collected at a Spring Gathering.
 - ◊ If you would like me to check on your unit's status, please email me at: fbswotreasurer@gmail.com or call 239-848-7274.
- We will be collecting two offerings at the Fall Gathering - one Saturday during the Love Offering presentation and the other during our Worship Service on Saturday Evening. If you plan on writing a check for either or both of these offerings, please plan to write two separate checks.
 - ◊ For the Love Offering (GraceWay Village), make the check payable to the FL-BA SWO and indicate Love Offering in the memo line or on the envelope.
 - ◆ **Do not** make the check payable to GraceWay Village.
 - ◊ For the regular worship offering, make the check payable to the FL-BA SWO and indicate regular offering in the memo line or on the envelope. If it is an offering from your unit, please also include what church the offering is from.

Thanks for your continued support of the works of our SWO - I look forward to seeing you all in November.

Tracy Moffatt, FL-BA SWO Treasurer



The deadline to register is extended to October 10, 2024.

Fall Gathering for Women of ELCA is scheduled for **November 8, 9 and 10th** at **Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center, 4991 Picciola Road, Fruitland Park, Florida.**

There will be great food and friends, old and new. There will be fun times and opportunities to learn about God and time to worship Him. Forms, a list of workshops and more information are available in the web site (www.flwelca.com).

Remember He's got the Whole World in His Hands.

Donna Person & Gayle Backiel
2024 Fall Gathering Co-Chairs

GET THIS JEWELRY ON YOUR HANDS AT THE FALL GATHERING

We are excited to share a variety of jewelry at our Fall Gathering including theme related items. All sales will benefit our Fund for Leaders Scholarship fund. Please be prepared to support this ministry. All are welcome!



Submitted by *Raeann Purcell, SWO Board Member*

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](#)).



Florida-Bahamas
Synodical Women's
Organization

by Donna Person, SWO Board Member

Each year the Board of the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization ("SWO") awards a scholarship(s) to seminary student(s) who meet the following criteria:

1. Applicants must be in the candidacy process and have been verified with the Florida-Bahamas Synod Candidacy Chair.
2. Seminary students must be attending one of the eight ELCA seminaries and are either in the Master of Divinity (M.DIV.), Master of Arts (MA), or Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) programs.
3. Preference will be given to residents of the Florida-Bahamas Synod, female applicants, and active members of congregational units.

Applications will be accepted each year beginning on November 1 with a **deadline of December 15 for submission**. The selected candidate(s) will be invited to attend the SWO's Fall Gathering, to participate in the weekend's activities and to present a brief greeting. If the scholarship recipient(s) is unable to attend the Fall Gathering, a video may be submitted.

GraceWay Village - Love Offering 2024 through January 2026

IN-KIND GIFT LIST

*You can bring these items to the 2024 Fall Gathering
at Warren Willis United Methodist Conference Center.*



Their mission is to feed those who are hungry; provide clothing to children and teens of low-income families; and to conduct workshops to improve lives and productivity. GraceWay Village is planning to expand its commitment to those in need by building a Family Living Facility for families threatened with homelessness.

Their In Kind Gift List includes the following:

- Amazon Gift Cards
- Walmart Gift Cards
- Sam's Club Gift Cards
- Visa Gift Cards
- New Socks & New Undies including:
 - ◇ Ladies' size 5, 6, & 8 undies - bikini preferred (no thongs)
 - ◇ Ladies' size 9-11, no-show, low cut ankle socks
 - ◇ Men's size Small, Medium undies - boxer briefs ONLY (no briefs or white)
 - ◇ Girl sizes 2-3, 4, 6 undies - no white (They love the princess/cartoon styles)
 - ◇ Girl sizes Toddler, Small, Medium, and Large ankle socks
 - ◇ Boy sizes 4, 6-8, 10-12, 14, 16-18 undies - boxer briefs ONLY (no briefs or white)
 - ◇ Boy sizes Toddler and Large ankle socks



The truck schedules have been set up for February 2025. There are new faces for us at Trinity Lutheran in Jacksonville and Emmanuel Lutheran in Venice. Joining us this year are **Karen Brown** in Jacksonville and **Kathy Wittersheim** in Venice. We cannot forget the faithful servants of **Donna Person** in Ft. Lauderdale, **Chris Morse** in Clermont, **Pat Zwick** in Tampa and **Shirley Bow** in Fort Walton Beach. Each of these ladies with their

Churches have continued to serve willingly year after year. The drop offs will be the week of February 3 with the trucks coming the week of the 10th. We hope each of you will take the time to prepare your boxes properly and **not have them over 35 pounds**. Thank all of you for what you do for Lutheran World Relief; the need is so great. Please call or e/mail me anytime.

Leone Goding 352 223 1925 or leonegoding@centurylink.net

Is this for Real? A Discussion of Project 2025

Project 2025

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROJECT

by Stacia Carter—Advocacy and Reconciliation Board Rep

Have you ever heard something so unreal that you think, this can't be true? But you stop what you are doing to fact check? While watching the news on Hurricane Debby, I saw a social media post that said Project 2025 aimed to eliminate the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This is the agency that tracks and predicts storms such as tornadoes, snowstorms and HURRICANES. I currently live in Florida where hurricanes are an annual occurrence. Previously I lived in what's known as Tornado Alley for the number of tornadoes that region experiences each year. I did a little research and found it to be true. Detailed in Project 2025 (pg. 674) are plans to dismantle NOAA and the six agencies it consists of. All these services would be dismantled, and future data collected would be required to fit the official policies of future Presidential Administrations versus setting policies based on the scientific data collected by these agencies.

I thought WOW!! Who in the world would approve of this? As I read further, I read plans to commercialize the info collected on potential storms. States would have to pay for this information. States, cities and private citizens would no longer have free access to weather predictions. We all would have to pay a company to get the weather forecasts. What on earth??

I had already been hearing various aspects of Project 2025 and how it would affect women, children, minorities, etc. So, I decided to do my own research. Below, I've touched on a few of the categories I've read and researched.

Federal Government

Many of the plans written in the 2025 Mandate for Leadership (P2025) overlap in this category. There are plans to eliminate the Department of Education, eliminate National Public Radio, eliminate up to 50,000 federal employees and replace those employees with people who pledge loyalty to the specific administration in power, instead of to the United States. This includes having the heads of agencies such as the FBI, DOJ and others be charged with carrying out the President's political agenda. P2025 also plans to eliminate the federally funded preschool program for low-income children, the Head Start program.

Marriage & Family & Faith

The Department of Health and Human Services would be replaced with the Department of Life. It seems the most important aspect for much of this leadership mandate is to return the U.S. to what some refer to as the "good ole days." Throughout the document, Judeo-Christian traditions and the nuclear family are stressed. P2025 (Pg.451) stresses a traditional heterosexual marriage between a man and a woman as the ONLY acceptable family. A "family" is a married biological man, a biological woman and children. Marriage between two people of the same sex is not recognized. Marriage without children is not a family. Children without a legal marriage is frowned on. In this family, the father is the breadwinner, women who bear children are heroic and the conservative Christian church is front and center.

In the documents I read, Christianity is our implied national religion. Prayer will be brought back to schools. School choice programs will allow federal dollars to go to religious school tuition. Christian principles must be taught at home and at school. I must ask, what about our Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and other brothers and sisters? Will they be penalized for not being Christian? Will their children be forced to recite Christian prayers and read from the Christian Bible in schools? In Oklahoma, it was recently mandated that the Ten Commandments be hung in every classroom and that teachers teach lessons from the Bible. Non-Christians are being forced to teach the Christian Bible; does that make sense? What happened to separation of church and state? Our ELCA doctrines welcome ALL. Many of our congregations are Reconciling in Christ congregations which means we accept all who believe, no matter whom they love.

Healthcare

The ELCA took a stand on the right of a woman to obtain an abortion at Churchwide Assembly in 1991. We state in our doctrine that abortion is a private choice between a woman, her Pastor, medical personnel and hopefully the father. Access to abortion is more than abortion-on-demand; it's part of a woman's healthcare. Under many of the laws passed since Roe Vs Wade was overturned, women have been denied healthcare after suffering miscarriages, having a fetus

continued on Page 7

die in-utero, suffering ectopic pregnancies, and suffering partial miscarriages. Women have been denied emergency services in some states because medical personnel fear being prosecuted while trying to save a woman's life. Women have died being transported to other states, bled out in parking lots or lost the ability to have more children due to lack of proper medical care. Reading through P2025, I read of; a national abortion ban; a ban on abortion drugs such as Mifepristone being mailed across state lines; a ban on stem cell research using the cells of aborted fetuses; a law making it illegal for a male, including a woman's husband or father from transporting her across a state line to obtain abortion services; and a ban on federal money to fund Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood provides family planning, contraceptives, teen counseling and yes, some provide abortion services. In some cases Planned Parenthood is a woman's only available option for these services. I also read of intentions to ban anyone on Medicaid or Medicare or in the Armed Forces from obtaining abortion services.

P2025 also bans healthcare using federal funds for transgender services, including counseling for LGBTQIA+ teens. Many teens suffering identity issues need somewhere safe to turn. Teens are a very vulnerable group. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–24 year-olds. According to research, LGBTQIA+ youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than their peers due to mistreatment and stigmatization by their peers, family and others. How will this affect the teens in our communities and in our congregations who are struggling?

Justice & Civil Rights

P2025 includes a mandate to restructure the Department of Justice including requiring federal litigation to be compliant with the President's agenda, refocusing the Civil

Rights Division, reinstating the federal death penalty and eliminating all existing federal consent decrees. Federal consent decrees are used by the Justice Department to ensure that businesses, industries, municipalities and agencies adhere to laws in areas of environmental law and employment and civil rights discrimination. In other words, companies and agencies that have binding agreements and performance plans to end various forms of discrimination will no longer be bound by those agreements. If one is no longer bound by a decree without achieving the stated goal, what is to prevent them from resuming the same behaviors? One police department in Florida was under a consent decree because eight Black men were shot and killed by police in less than a year. New policies were written; officers received bias and de-escalation training; and goals were set. This agency completed the terms of its consent decree and is no longer in the news.

A specific P2025 mandate is to refocus and reorganize the Civil Rights Division. This will eliminate all existing LGBTQIA+ protections and all references to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion protections in labor and government policies. DEI seems to be a "hot button" issue for many. If these programs are eliminated, how will women, people of color, legal immigrants, or the LGBTQIA+ community be assured that we will receive equal protection and treatment? P2025 states new policies should focus on "what's good for the family." The problem is that all families are not the same. And what does this mean?

There are other "mandates" in Project 2025 that can strip away protections and rights of women, people of color, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ and others. I encourage everyone to read about these "mandates" some want enacted. Let's learn how to protect ourselves and our sisters and brothers in Christ that P2025 will affect.

Church Women United-World Community Day

Most often held on the first Friday of November

World Community Day began in 1943 from discussions at a meeting of denominational presidents and executive secretaries asking that a day be set aside in the fall for the study of peace by church women. Although many denominations were printing their own studies on the new world order, it was determined at this meeting that their unity would be strengthened on one day of united study.

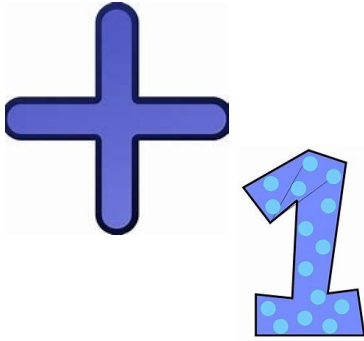
World Community Day continues to emphasize peace but has been broadened to include justice, a vital partner of peace. The once clear categories of "domestic" and "foreign" were consciously blurred so the global scope of the wide range of problems could be emphasized on World Community Day.

Please check with you local region for the nearest Church Women United Unit.

Leone Goding, Coordinator 352 223 1925 or leonegoding@centurylink.net



PLUS ONE



Plus One - At the November Fall Gathering, new circles are recognized that have formed in the past year. Do you know of any new circles in your Conference or area that were created in 2024? Please notify the **FL-BA SWO Conference Coordinator**:

Nina Jageler at njageler@gmail.com.

From the Editor's Desk — Linda Greilick



From the Editor

After the storm is over

And so Hurricane Helene has passed over us leaving her path of devastation. Hurricane Helene, which left massive destruction along the Florida coast since making landfall Thursday, September 26th, has caused historic flooding, wide-range power outages, and other damage in an 800-mile northward path affecting the Carolinas, Tennessee, Georgia, and other states. More than 100 deaths have been attributed to the Category 4 hurricane in the southeast U.S. More than 2 million homes and businesses are without power. How damaging this storm has been to so many!

We all go through hard times in life. Each of us has difficult days and moments that can feel so overwhelmingly challenging. It's almost like we are going through the midst of the storm and we sometimes need a reminder that better times will come again. This is when our family, friends, and our community wraps us in their arms. This is when those of us who can rise up to support those who are suffering do just that!

Check out the ways you can help in your community. Maybe you can help with some crisis and debris cleanup. Or you can provide donations of food, water, tarps, or dollars. Check with your church or county government. Collection sites might be set up in your community. You can donate to Lutheran Disaster Response and designate your dollars to Hurricane Helene relief in a chosen area. After the storm is over, we all need to help others to find steady ground.

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble."

~Psalm 46:1



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

Hurricane Helene: Acting quickly to rush aid

Earlier this week, as families boarded up their homes and prepared for the worst, Lutheran World Relief was also busy preparing to respond. Thanks to our compassionate donors who are always ready to help, Lutheran World Relief was able to mobilize components of our response in advance.

Before Helene made landfall, our team was already preparing a shipment of LWR Quilts and Personal Care Kits to comfort those in need. Amazingly, this delivery will arrive just days after LWR announced the expansion of our Quilt & Kit Ministry to serve our neighbors in the U.S.

Sending aid to Florida, North Carolina and beyond

Powered by compassionate people like you, Lutheran World Relief is teaming up with local organizations to meet various needs, including food, water, shelter and essential supplies. This is an unprecedented crisis for our neighbors in Helene's path, and we are praying that, with your help, our response can rise to the immense challenge.

Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory

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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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To submit material for publication, contact **Linda Greilick, Tapestry Editor**
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**Please submit *Tapestry* articles
by November 15 for the December issue.**