Summer 2026

Northwestern Minnesota
Synodical Women's Organization of the ELCA

SNOW Newsletter

From the Desk of the President

Special points of interest:

- Triennial Highlights
- Seminary Stipend
- Silent Auction
- Summer Retreat
- NW MN SWO Convention
- I Am Worthy Summer Bible Study
- First Lutheran Supports LWR

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Sisters in Christ,

In my last letter to you I emphasized the Triennial and ways to register to attend the Gathering. This issue I want to encourage you to be a part of our own NWMN Synod Convention/Gathering in Crookston, MN at Trinity Lutheran Church on September 18th & 19th• The convention call letter was mailed to each church in the conference but unfortunately we hear that some of our sisters do not see this information for one reason or another. All of the information that was contained in that mailing is featured on our website, including the registration form to attend. You spoke and we listened - for those of you who do not wish to attend the business meeting and Friday evening banquet, a separate registration at a reduced rate is offered for Saturday's gathering festivities. We would love to see you there, if you are a regular attendee, please invite someone from your congregation who has never attended or better yet, someone from another congregation whose church no longer has an active WELCA group! My Convention Committee has worked very hard to put together a program that we hope will leave you refreshed, informed and full of the Holy Spirit.

Thank you to those of you who answered the call to be placed on the ballot for the open positions on our synod board. The calling to serve can seem daunting but in our installation ceremony each woman present makes a promise to pray for you and for God's guidance. Remember, with God all things are possible. If you feel that calling or know of someone who has an interest in serving on our board, please contact one of the members of the nominating committee. Contact information for the members of the Nominating Committee can be found on the nomination form on the synod website.

In my last newsletter I had indicated that our webpage was undergoing a facelift and that project is finally complete. Simply type NWMNSynod.org in your search engine which will take you to the Synod website. Once there, on the left side of the page you will see several categories listed - select Ministries - that will take you to another listing of ministries conducted by the synod. We are listed at the very top! Click on that and it will take you to our webpage where the most updated information about our activities and the personnel responsible for the various responsibilities are listed. Make this your "go-to" for information. Of course, if you cannot find what you are looking for or have questions that are not answered there, give either myself or your board conference representative (our contact information is on the website) a call or shoot us an email. If we don't have the answer immediately, it is our responsibility to find the answer for you.

Ladies, until next time, I hope to see you in Crookston! Blessings one and all,

Carol Balk, SWO President

Triennial Convention and Gathering Highlights



Thirteenth Triennial Convention, voting members elected Sheena Foster (8G) as president; Gwendolynn Edwards (4A) as vice president; Miranda Searcy (4C) as secretary; Linda Clark (5E); as treasurer; Mary Ann Nelson (1C); Kristal Shipp (2B); Marie Lokensgard (3F); DaMisha McFarland-Pollock (5D); Paula Dusselejee (6D); Carmen Colon-Brown (6F); Noelle Heinrich (7B); Dawn Talley (7E); Andrea Lundgrend Osilkova (8D); Risse Snelgrove (9C); and Ginger Cutrell (9D).



Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry







Part of the NW MN SWO Group to the Triennial Gathering: L to R—Marilyn Grandstrand, Ardys Horner, Patti Cummins, Phyllis Nuenfeldt, Arlene Teigen, Terry Pipho and Pam Olson





Outgoing Churchwide Executive Board 2023-2026

NW MN SWO 38th Annual Convention

Keynote Speaker



Gaye Lindfors

Inspirational Christian Speaker and Author. Native of Climax, MN. Leading a human resources department that supported 11,000 employees and serving as Special Assistant to a university president are career highlights. I have an M.A. in Industrial Relations and have served in leadership roles in associations, non-profits, and volunteer and professional women's organizations. It was a joy to serve as president of the National Speakers Association/Minnesota chapter, and as Regional Director for Christian Women in Media. Volunteering rocks! My husband Steve and I live in St. Paul, MN. "Ooftah" is one of my favorite words and I believe problems are most quickly solved when Hawaiian pizza or chips and salsa show up … or Häagen-Dazs ice cream. Football, jazz, small town cafes, and books create some of my Happy Places.

Check out nwmnsynod.org for more information and updates along with Registration and Application Forms

Tentative Schedule

Date	Time	Event
Friday	1:00 - 2:00 PM	Registration
	2:00 - 4:30 PM	Business Meeting
	4:45 - 5:00 PM	Devotions
	5:00 - 6:00 PM	Banquet
	6:00 - 7:00 PM	Entertainment: Songfest, Led by Pastor Michele Jensen
Saturday	8:00 - 9:00 AM	Registration & Coffee/Water & Muffins
	9:00 - 9:30 AM	Welcome and Opening Devotions
	9:30 - 10:30 AM	Bible Study with Pastor Rebel Hurd
	10:30 - 10:45 AM	Break - Refreshments provided
	10:45 - 12:00 Noon	Keynote Speaker - Gaye Lindfors
	Noon - 1:00 PM	Lunch
	1:00 - 1:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
	1:45 - 2:00 PM	Break - Refreshments provided
	2:00 - 2:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
	3:00 PM	Closing Worship with Bishop Bill Tesch

Mary Magdalene Awards Presentation will be on Saturday, (Time to be determined)



Faith Lutheran Church Supports Lutheran World Relief



Faith Lutheran Church in Bagley recently delivered 23 boxes containing 193 Personal Care Kits and 18 quilts to the Lutheran World Relief (LWR) ingathering site in Thief River Falls. The items will be sent to LWR's warehouse in Baltimore, Maryland, for distribution to people in need.

LWR began providing aid to war-torn Europe after World War II and continues to support communities around the world and, more recently, disaster victims within the United States.

Faith Lutheran youth Kaden and Brennen Melander helped load the shipment, while longtime volunteers Jerry and Sue Davidson, accompanied by their pup Cindi Blu, delivered the kits and quilts to Thief River Falls. Their dedication helps bring comfort and care to those facing hardship.



"I am worthy" Bible study in Gather

This summer, Women of the ELCA participants will gather in Des Moines, Iowa, under the theme "I am worthy." When Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee spoke in 2017, she invited WELCA participants to reclaim space for women and girls to lead and love in bold ways. This three-part Bible study will help us to define who we are, what we can be, and what we do in the world, in light of our God-given giftedness, identities and relationships.
(Download all 3 sessions of the Study) Video's available as well at: https://www.gathermagazine.org/summer-2026-i-am-worthy-by-the-rev-sara-olson-smith/

SILENT AUCTION BASKETS NEEDED



Once again we will offer a Silent Auction at the WELCA SWO Convention on September 18 & 19 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Crookston, MN. All WELCA units are encouraged to create baskets to contribute to this auction. The baskets need not be large. Better to have more small baskets that are less expensive than one extra large one. Popular themes for this auction have been: baby, gardening, spa, popcorn/movie night, chocolates, homemade items, fresh vegetables. Proceeds from the auction will help to defray costs for women to attend the upcoming Triennial Convention. Auction items may be brought to the convention on Friday or Saturday.

Accepting Nominations for Mary Magdalene Award

We are now accepting nominations for the Mary Magdalene Award. We will be honoring Women from our conferences at our annual convention. These special and treasured women will be given a rose, a certificate and a monetary donation to a charity of their choice that is associated with the Women of the ELCA.
The nomination form can be found on the Synod website: www.nwmnsynod.org.
Please send your nomination form to:
Luella Thom
PO Box 103 Carlos, MN 56319
Phone: 320-815-7701 or email: *thom17@wisper-wireless.com*

KATIE'S FUND 2122—Grant Applications are Open!



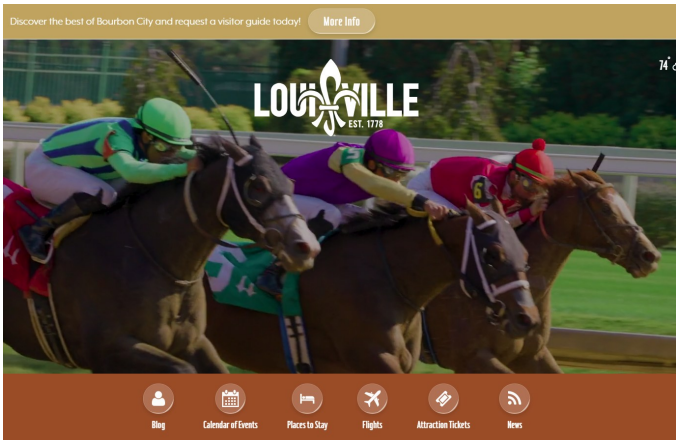
Katie's Fund Grants are allocated to support programs, resources, and opportunities in the areas named when the Fund was first begun.

These grants in the amount of $500-$5,000 are designed to support project resources, and opportunities in the areas of leadership development, global sharing and living theology.

You will need to register before you can submit your application.

Katie's Fund Grants processes will have two annual cycles. The first cycle opens on June 30 each year, with all completed applications due by September 1. Determinations will be made by October 1, with the distribution of funds completed by November 1. A final report from the grantee is due by November 1. The second cycle will open on November 1 each year, with all completed applications due by February 1. Determinations will be made by March 1, with the distribution of funds completed by April 1. A final report from the grantee is due by April 1. Use this link to apply for WELCA Grants: https://www.elca.org/resources/financial-information/grants-and-scholarships/welca-grants

Pre-register for the 2029 Triennial Gathering in Louisville!



The link will remain active through

September 1, after which it will be removed.

Early Bird Pre-registration rate is $295.00

https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page

Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery accepts WELCA Executive Director position



With "joy and gratitude," Dr. Hockenbery accepted the position, which was finalized in May. "I was so honored to be hired as interim executive director of Women of the ELCA in 2024, to work with WELCA's wonderful churchwide staff," she said. "In that time, I have attended conventions and retreats all over the country, as well as the Churchwide Assembly; the installation of our presiding bishop, the Rev. Yehiel Curry; ELCA Church Council meetings; and many other ecumenical and churchwide events. Everywhere I go, I see the impact Women of the ELCA has had on the lives of women and all those whom these women serve. And there are so many people these women serve!"

Mark Your Calendar

SNOW Newsletter Deadline

Sept. 30, 2026



Sabbath at the Lake

Tuesday, August 18th, 2026
Trinity Point on Maple Lake
Mentor, MN

- One Day Retreat on scenic Maple Lake
- Sing-alongs with Carol Petersen and DeeAnn Leines
- Breakout Sessions
- Awesome Women Pastors

Time: 8:45 – 3:00

Registration cost: $30.00 *(includes lunch)*
Make checks payable to: Women of the ELCA

Mail your Registration Form by 8/10/26
Forms are found on our website:
nwmnsynod.org/synod-womens-organization/

Sponsored by NWMN Synod Women's Organization

Women of the ELCA



Seminary Stipend Fund
Give a gift of Gratitude in 2026

The Seminary Stipend Fund provides a way for you to show your support and gratitude for our ELCA women seminarians. Monies donated to this fund will be collected throughout the year, divided equally and give to each student seminarian as a gift in January 2027 to use as they wish.

Donations can be sent to the SWO Treasurer Write "Seminary Stipend for Women" on the memo line or use the Offering Form A

Send to: **Janet Olson**
PO Box 567
Warroad, MN 56763

Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

OUR MISSION

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

OUR PURPOSE

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.



NWMN Synod WELCA
Leadership Day!
Friday, October 30, 2026

Leaders from units, conferences, and the synod are invited to join us. We're here to provide the support and resources you need to succeed in your role.

Join us at:
Little Norway Church
10802 423rd St SE
Fertile, MN

Guest Speaker: Pastor Genelle Netland

No Charge, and lunch will be provided!
More details in the coming months.

To Register: Contact Marlene Block (SWO Board Member)
Marleneb@gvtel.com or call 218-289-4046 by Oct. 15th

Women of the ELCA

Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization Convention
September 18 & 19 @ TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
205 S Broadway, Crookston, MN 56716

Convention Registration – ALL ATTENDEES MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM

EARLY .. Registration due by August 22, 2026
All registrations must be received by September 1st

NO CASH… CHECKS ONLY…. PAYABLE TO: NW MN SWO
All registrations MUST be postmarked on or before due dates. **Full payment** is required with registration form.
No refunds after September 1st, however registrations are transferable.

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM … WITH CHECK TO:

NWMN SWO CONVENTION
Attn: Luella Thom
PO Box 103
Carlos, MN 56319

Phone: 320-815-7701
Email: Thom17@wisper-wireless.com

*** **Please make your own hotel reservations. See attached list**

PLEASE PRINT:
Name: _____ **Phone** _____

Address: _____ **City** _____

State _____ **Zip Code** _____ **E-mail** _____

Conference # _____ **Name of Congregation** _____ **City** _____

Are you the contact for your Congregation Unit? Yes _____ **No** _____

____Voting Member (1 per Congregation) _____ Non-Voting

Please register early to save money and facilitate Convention Planning!!

_____ **Friday & Saturday $100.00** **Attending meals both Friday** _____ **Saturday** _____

_____ **Saturday only $ 75.00**

_____ **Postmarked after September 1st $ 125.00**

Please indicate any special dietary needs: _____
_____

For Office use only: Name: _____ **Check #** _____ **Amt:** _____

NW MN SNOW Newsletter
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UP COMING EVENTS

Sabbath at the Lake

Tuesday, August 18th, 2026

Trinity Point on Maple Lake
Mentor, MN

8:45 AM – 3:00 PM

Mail your registration form by 8/10/26
Registration cost: $30.00 (includes lunch)

Fall Conference Gatherings

Conference 5— October 15 at Our Savior's Lutheran Moorhead, MN

Conference 8— October 24 at Grace Lutheran Church, Brandon, MN

38th Annual NW MN SWO Convention

September 18-19, 2026

Trinity Lutheran Church
205 S Broadway
Crookston, MN 56716

