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For Christians, November 29th marked the beginning of a NEW Church Year. This wonderful, beautiful season of the four weeks before Christmas is often over shadowed with all the glitter and glitz of holiday lights, parties, shopping and of course, the traditional baking of those yummy cookies.

Most of our homes will have a Christmas tree, beautifully decorated and shinning with lights ... this year let us pause and remember that Martin Luther is credited for bringing the first tree indoors and lighting it. Then let each one of us be reminded that all of this honors HIM who is the “Light of the World”.

Lets pause during this season of Advent and remember God revealed Himself as “Light” to His people in Old Testament days as well as in the New Testament. In Genesis 1:3 we read “Let there be Light” … and in Luke 2:29ff we read the story of Simeon as he lifted up the Baby Jesus and said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace … for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation … thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light……”

Yes, Advent is definitely a time to prepare to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus. BUT REMEMBER, Advent is also the time to prepare for Jesus’ second coming … a time to repent … a time for prayer … a time to be diligent in searching the Scriptures and hear what Jesus wants us to do in our everyday lives … worship Him … forgive one another as He has forgiven us … Thus says the Lord: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come and my deliverance be revealed”. Isaiah 56:1

These four weeks of ADVENT are filled with Preparation and Promise … Joy and Delight … we will celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior and we will look toward the day when the Risen Lord welcomes us into the kingdom He has promised and we hear “well done thou good and faithful servants”.

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.
On a beautiful Saturday morning, October 3rd, women from throughout the Greater Milwaukee Synod gathered at Norway Lutheran Church in Wind Lake for their 28th Annual Convention.

Registrar, Jan Fox helped convention goers find their name tags.

Morning coffee and goodies were prepared and served by the gracious women from Norway.

In-Kind Gifts: Tangible items of napkins, paper towels, toilet paper, laundry and dish soap, shampoo, tooth brushes and toothpaste canned fruits, vegetables and meats and hearty soups were brought for Norway’s Helping Hands Food Pantry.

Pastor Kristie Jaramillo, from Norway Lutheran Church, lead us in a very inspirational opening worship.

Pastor Sandra Chrostowski, Director for Evangelical Mission, brought us greetings on behalf of Bishop Jeff who was attending the Conference of Bishops.
Cindy Arnett, our Churchwide Representative brought us greetings and a “State of the Union” address from the Women of the ELCA.

Dann & Tracey Stadler, who experienced “One Horrific Crash” … “One Impossible Rescue” and how their lives have been changed forever, shared their story.

We elected a new President … Donna Yourell.

Left to Right … Front Row Debbie Burns, Convention Chair; Nancy Sack, Treasurer.

Left to Right … Middle Row Karen Hoffman, Secretary; Sue Seidemann (Treasurer through January 31st); Judy Lee Tarbox, Mission Team; Gail Cameron, Anti-Racism; Vivian Johnson, Mission Team;

Left to Right … Back Row Marilyn Day, Mission Team; Donna Yourell, President; Pastor Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Anti-Racism; Caitlin Vang, Convention Intern & Facebook Coordinator; Jan Fox, Vice-President.

A tour of the “Old Norway Church was enjoyed by many of the women.
As Convention Chair and planning for the Greater Milwaukee Synod convention this year on October 3rd I choose the theme Bold Women Hope. The Bible verse was from Romans 15:13. “May the God of HOPE fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with HOPE by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

The mosaic on the promotional materials and in the Gleanings had deep meaning for me. It was chosen as a representation to all broken HOPE. HOPE so shattered but by putting the pieces back together, now it is not how it was before, but it is placed in a new way, a way I could not have ever imagine except through Jesus Christ.

I am beginning a new familiar chapter with the Women of the ELCA. I would like to thank Betty Warber for all she has done building up the Greater Milwaukee Synod as President. Betty will continue as Gleanings Editor.

I have served on the Synodical Board before from 1998 to 2005. I only bring this up as we look to our future for women to share in this amazing experience to serve on committees, fellowship and leadership. If you have a ministry you would like your Synodical Board to lift up, please contact me and we can start the conversation or continue it whatever it may be.

The Tenth Triennial will be held in Minneapolis, July 13-17 2017. The theme for the gathering is “all anew”. Each Synod will not have a Triennial Promoter as we have had in the past so I will be relying on those reading the Gleanings, Gather and letters or emails to churches to pass the information needed. You may visit the website welcatg.org or call 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2730 for more information.

Thank you to the Women of Norway Lutheran in Wind Lake for all their assistance and hosting the Greater Milwaukee Synod, Women of the ELCA convention.

I had chosen Lord of Hopefulness for our convention hymn. In closing, this is a prayer from the Worship Resource Book 2. Lord of all hopefulness and Lord of all joy; you have called us to a life of trust in you. Open us to new visions, new ideas, and new neighbors. Help us to remember the whole Church, our sisters throughout the world and especially those who suffer poverty and injustice, Help us to witness confidently to the hope that is within us; hope for life eternal, abundant and free in Jesus Christ, Amen

Donna Yourell,
President
Treasurer’s Report … October 31, 2015

Stewardship: Everyone has a Different Definition.

Here’s one that works for me … Audrey Novak Riley

Stewardship means to use the gifts God has generously given to us to care for the gifts that God has graciously entrusted to us so that those who come after us can rejoice in them in their turn. Our loving God has given us so much—everything we have, everything we are, everything. And one of the many gifts that God has graciously entrusted to us is our beloved community of women created in the image of our loving, generous God.

When you lovingly, generously use some of what God has given you to care for Women of the ELCA, you are helping to sustain our organization for our daughters, granddaughters, nieces and great-nieces, young friends and younger friends for generations yet to come. Your faithful support of Women of the ELCA will make a difference in the lives of women you may never meet, maybe even in the lives of women not yet born—who, through the organization your generous giving sustains, will reach out to love and serve our neighbors in Christ just as you have done. That’s the power of grateful, generous stewardship! Thank you.

*Reprinted with permission from Interchange, the Churchwide newsletter of Women of the ELCA,*
JOINT CLUSTER

Clusters I, II, III and IV will hold their spring gathering at Atonement Lutheran Church … S70 W16244 Martin Drive Muskego, WI on an April Saturday in 2016.

Watch for details in your March Gleanings

CONGREGATIONAL UNITS

Are you in need of resources for your meetings? Go to www.womenoftheelca.org and you will find a wealth of resource materials - all free to be downloaded. A few samples are….

♦ THE COLORS OF CHRISTMAS - A REFLECTION OF PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS: Our celebrations are often sprinkled with seasonal traditions that bring us joy and remind us of times gone by or people who have graced our lives. Do you know where or when your traditions began and the meaning behind them? This resource takes a look at some of the customs that surround Christmas.

♦ A DAY FULL OF LIGHT - ENDING COMMERCIAL SEXUAL EXPLOITATION: This introductory resource to commercial sexual exploitation (CSE), or sex trafficking, includes background on CSE and why Women of the ELCA is involved in the effort to end it, action steps, worship resources, links to online resources, and a list of ministries that work to address the challenge of CSE and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

♦ HOW TO LEAD A BIBLE STUDY whether you are a confident, experienced leader or are struck with terror when someone asks, “could you help lead the Bible Study?” This resource offers practical suggestions and will motivate and inspire you to claim, or reclaim, your role in building up the body of Christ through teaching.

Christmas

♦ Christmas is the LIGHT that burns eternally. It is a glow that warms the hearts of people wherever the message of “Peace on earth to those of good will” is believed.

♦ Christmas is PEACE in a world where people have been alienated from each other by hatred and jealousy.

♦ Christmas is JOY of fellowship, of giving, of sharing, of lifting, of caring and of being what Christ wants us to be.

♦ Christmas is FORGIVENESS, the time for fresh beginnings, a time to right the wrongs of yesterday.

♦ Christmas is GIVING to those who cannot give to us. It is visiting the neglected, lifting the fallen, giving hope to the hopeless, assuring victory to the defeated, living the spirit of good will to all humankind.

♦ Christmas is SURRENDER of one’s life to Christ in renewed dedication, which makes Christ the Lord of our Lives.

29th Annual SWO Convention
Saturday, October 15, 2016
Trinity Lutheran Church
140 N. 7th Avenue
West Bend, Wisconsin 53095
Theme Verse: I Peter 4:8

Put this important date on your calendars now and watch for more details in the March 2016 Gleanings.
Save the Date!

Churchwide is in the early stages of planning our 2017 triennial gathering and we don’t want you to miss it. Mark your calendars for the **Tenth Triennial Gathering, July 13-16, 2017**, which will be in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

We are real women talking about our faith. About our doubts and challenges. About joy and what inspires us. We’ll experience simple conversations between friends—old and new—that will develop into a movement sweeping the church, inspired and infused with the Holy Spirit.

**“All Anew”**

This theme **“All Anew”** is supported by several biblical texts that speak of renewal. The Churchwide Executive Committee accepted this theme following a July 20th conference call meeting; Because the Tenth Triennial Gathering falls during the observance of the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017, the theme resonates with reformation and transformation images. At the Gathering, participants will explore ways in which the Holy Spirit changes us, acknowledging that reformation and transformation have happened and continues to happen within the community of women know as Women of the ELCA.

One theme verse, Psalm 104:30: “Lord, send forth your spirit ... and renew the face of the earth” calls on God to send the Holy Spirit to renew not just God’s people, not just God’s church … but all God’s earth, the creation that God called good.

Other verses that support Psalm 104:30 are Romans 12:2 … II Corinthians 4:16 … Titus 3:4-5

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**REGISTRATION OPENS SEPTEMBER 2016**

It’s not too early to begin planning for this event … several women from the Greater Milwaukee Synod already pre-registered at the 2014 event.

While this is an official event of Women of the ELCA, all women in the church are invited to attend. One need not be a participant in Women of the ELCA.

We invite all our ecumenical partners to attend as well, so share this invitation.

Go to **womenoftheelca.org**       Click on the “Triennial Tab” for more information
QUILTS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF - 2015

27 Congregations reported a total of 4,203 to LWR

Plus more quilts to other places ... read the impressive list below

Grace ... Kenosha ..................................................160
Cross ... Burlington..................................................419
plus 11 to Love, Inc and 5 to Lutheran Bible Camp
Gloria Dei ... Menomonee Falls .............................177
plus 25 to Froedtert Hospice ... 8 to Pine Ridge Indian Res.
12 to Hope Network. To LWR 12 School Kits
Abiding Savior ... Milwaukee .................................268
donated the same amount locally
First Lutheran ... West Allis ......................................30
2 quilts given to their Food Pantry.
Nativity ... Wauwatosa .........................................300
87 School Kits
Our Savior's ... West Bend ......................................36
43 School Kits plus 66 quilts delivered within Washington Co.
St. Olaf ... Rubicon .................................................70
57 School Kits
First United ... Sheboygan ..................................109
50 Personal Care Kits ... 50 School Kits ... 12 Baby Care Kit
2 or 3 boxes filled with bars of soap
Trinity ... West Bend .............................................175
Christ ... Paddock Lake ...........................................96
6 to High School Graduates ... 25 to Women’s & Children’s
Horizons in Kenosha and 8 designated to Homeless High
School Students in Paddock Lake
Faith ... Cedarburg .............................................128
Holy Communion ... Racine ..................................113

Dr. Martin Luther ... Oconomowoc .........................150
Atonement ... Muskego ...........................................262
Bay Shore ... Milwaukee .........................................39
St. Paul’s ... Radom Lake .......................................87
Martin Luther ... Milwaukee ....................................39
plus 3 blankets
Trinity ... South Milwaukee ....................................78
Plus 13 to Pine Ridge Indian Reservation
St. Luke's ... Greendale .........................................191
Norway ... Wind Lake .............................................648
15 more quilts were made and divided between Lutheran
Bible Camp and Native Americans on the Menominee Reserva-
tion in Northern Wisconsin
St. Stephen the Martyr ... Greendale .......................120
230 School Kits
Mount Carmel ... Milwaukee ..................................216
St. Mary’s ... Kenosha ..........................................127
403 School Backpacks ... 28 personal kits ... 4 layettes
7 pounds of soap
St. Luke ... Sheboygan Falls ................................. 40
38 Layettes ... 30 Personal Care Kits ... 36 School Kits
20 pounds of soap
St. Peter ... Sheboygan ...........................................33
165 Baby Care Kits .. 79 Personal Care Kits .. 196 School Kits
Galilee ... Pewaukee ...........................................92

THANK YOU to everyone who participates, in any way, to the LWR quilting project and putting together Baby Kits,
Personal Care Kits, School Kits ... we say to each one “well done thou good and faithful servant”.

If you do not see your congregation listed, please send Betty Warber (betty@warber.net) an e-mail and we’ll continue
this list for the March 2016 Gleanings.

LAKOTA QUILTING NEWS
Submitted by LaVerne Mueller

Although Thanksgiving has past, it is never too late to say thank you.

Since 2001 when the Pine Ridge Lakota quilting project began, there have been many opportunities for our quilters to
show their love for the Batesland School children. One project was making the small quilts kindergarten students use at
nap time. Their teachers sent thank you letters and pictures.

Your quilts are given to families who have a limited budget for propane, and need to make it stretch through the winter
to heat their homes. Quilts were first distributed by a teacher, Joe Two Lance, my dear friend who died in 2008. Now
they are given out by school counselor Melody Bohlender, and all those families are thankful to receive them.

One day, Melody wrapped crying children in your quilts when they arrived at school, cold and miserable, after spending
the night in a house with just one small space heater. Melody was thankful to have those quits to send home with each
child, along with extras for their desperate parents.

My husband Bill and I visited the Pine ridge reservation in 2005, and we saw many old cars surrounding the houses.
They looked abandoned, and when Bill asked Joe Two Lance why there were so many junker cars all over Batesland she
gave a one word reply: “bedrooms”. I imagine anyone sleeping in one of those cars is thankful to have your quilts.

God has blessed us. Pray for the Batesland families during the coming winter. And for your continuing support I bless
you, I pray for you, and I say Wopila, THANK YOU, in the Lakota language.
BACKPACK PROJECT COMPLETED

Our “Backpack Project” has been completed. Through some generous donations we were able to fill 97 backpacks with a hand towel and wash cloth; soap; toothbrush and paste; hand sanitizer; school supplies (pencils, pens, crayons, note books); some type of snack; a juice bag and a stuffed animal. Although we failed to meet our goal of 200 backpacks, some homeless children have been touched through this effort. These backpacks were distributed to the following places:

- Shalom House in Kenosha ….. 29
- Bridgeway & Beyond in Sheboygan ….. 27
- Women’s Center in Waukesha ….. 25
- Hopkins Street School in Milwaukee ….. 10 (plus 8 empty backpacks to give to student without a backpack and a large box of school supplies.
- Incarnation Lutheran Church ….. 6 for a school in that neighborhood plus a large box of school supplies.

Thrivent gave us $250 toward the purchase of the backpacks and Walmart gave us a $50 gift card. In addition to the items brought in we received $535 in cash donations. THANK YOU TO EVERYONE who supported this project.

There were extra snack items and duffle bags that were leftover and given to the Food Pantry at Ascension LC.

“Thanks to Ascension Lutheran Church” for allowing us to use their facility as a drop-off point for supplies. Thanks also to the following SWO Board members who worked so hard, on two occasions, filling the backpacks … Jan Fox, Karen Hoffman, Donna Yourell and Betty Warber.

THE ELCA MALARIA CAMPAIGN
has reached its $15 million goal
-by Ashley Debilzen

Friends, we did it! The ELCA Malaria Campaign has exceeded its fundraising goal of $15 million dollars! That means 15 million reasons to say THANK YOU.

Your generosity and dedication made this moment possible. As a result of your support, malaria programs in 13 African countries have been fully funded. Together we have had great success – millions of community members were educated about the disease, nearly 10,000 local volunteers were trained on disease prevention and treatment methods, 50,000 nets were distributed, 32,000 pregnant women received prevention medication and more.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton also thanks you for your hard work: "We began the Malaria Campaign in the depths of the Great Recession and at a time of considerable turmoil in this church. The goal of raising $15 million might have sounded improbable at the time, but our people responded generously. We are honored to accompany our global companions in the Lutheran churches in Africa in their work to make malaria history." Although the campaign's financial goal has been met, the ELCA will continue its anti-malaria work post 2015 through ELCA World Hunger.

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

These children of farmers are among a total population of 46.4 million people in Tanzania, according to the World Health Organization. Of Tanzania’s population, 73 percent are at a high risk of contracting malaria. The Lutheran malaria program in Tanzania is working through education, prevention and treatment to combat the effects of malaria, directly benefiting 82,600 community members by 2015. The malaria program supported by the ELCA Malaria Campaign in Tanzania is implemented by Lutheran World Relief (LWR) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. Photo courtesy of LWR.
The bells of Christmas chime once more;  
The heav’nly guest is at the door.  
He comes to earthly dwellings still  
With new year gifts of peace, good will.

The SWO Board wishes each and everyone a blessed Holy Season

Donna Yourell
Jan Fox
Pastor Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld
Sue Seidemann
Karen Hoffman
Nancy Sack
Karen Hoffman
Caitlin Vang
Debra Burns
Karen Hoffman
Judy Lee Tarbox
Gayle Cameron

The Holiday Shopping Season is in full-swing … below are a couple of suggestions that will delight the recipients as well as benefit others … these are gifts that will warm the soul.

The Rev. Becca Stevens, an Episcopal Priest and founder of Thistle Farms, spoke at our 2014 Triennial Gathering in Charlotte, North Carolina. She told about starting Magdalene, a residential program in Nashville, Tenn., for women who survived prostitution, trafficking and addiction.

Thistle Farms became a way to support the residential program and Women of the ELCA is helping that effort by selling Holiday Hope candles this Christmas season.

This 8 oz. white, balsam fir scent soy candle in a glass holder with gold accents. Each candle sells for $22.00.

With each Holiday Hope candle Women of the ELCA sells, it promotes healing for residents of Magdalene and workers at Thistle Farms. Women of the ELCA’s purpose statement says we “promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.”

To order go to www.womenoftheelca.org. On the opening page you’ll see these candles pictured and a short paragraph to the right … click on “read more”. Then as you continue to read the article, you’ll see the words “buy a limited edition candle” click on that and you are on your way to a purchase.

Another gift that will delight the recipient 10 times each year is a subscription to Women of the ELCA’s magazine: GATHER

This magazine offers a mix of articles, theological reflections, devotions and stories of comfort and challenge that help readers grow in faith and engage in ministry and action. This is a monthly magazine with the exception of January/February and July/August which are combined.

Subscribe by calling: 1 (800) 328-4648

One year subscription: $15.00
Two year subscription: $28.00

Another great idea for a seasonal greeting would be to write a note to a younger woman and introduce her to CAFÉ, a free monthly on-line magazine written especially for young women. Many contributor's to this magazine are women in their 20’s and 30’s … some are pastors … some are seminary and college students.

This on-line magazine explores topics that are relevant to women and how faith relates to these issues. Many also use it to learn more about what the Lutheran Church has to say about certain issues.
# Greater Milwaukee Synodical Women’s Organization

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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## BOARD MEMBERS

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To receive an individual subscription mailed to your home, send $5 for a one-year subscription (4 copies) or $9 for a two year subscription (8 copies). Make check payable to “Women of the ELCA” and mail your order to Julie Starks, 3259 S. Swain Ct., Milwaukee, WI 53207-3107.

Name____________________________________________________________________________________

Address________________________________________________________________________________

Congregational Unit________________________________________________________________________

ANOTHER WAY TO RECEIVE THE GLEANINGS … THIS IS FREE

You can receive the Gleanings free of charge via e-mail. To do this send your name and your e-mail address to Julie Starks at jastarks@earthlink.net You may also access Gleanings through our new website at……….

www.greatermilwaukeeleswo.org.