

The Thirty Third Annual Convention of the
Virginia Synodical Women's Organization
of the Women of the ELCA



September 25, 2021
Held Virtually by Zoom
Updated 9/21/21

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Convention Schedule

Saturday, September 25, 2021

9:30am	Registration
10:00am	Opening Worship Opening of Convention Introduction of special guests Keynote Address-The Rev. Colleen Montgomery Greetings from the Churchwide Representative Adoption of the Rules of Convention Introduction of Nominees- Officers, Board Request of Nominations from the floor
12:00pm	Lunch
1:00pm	Opening Prayer for afternoon session Greetings from the Office of the Bishop President's Message Overview of the 2022-2023 proposed budget Roanoke College Scholarship Report
1:30pm	Non-voting Participants have fellowship and hymn sing along Voting Members go to breakout room Report of the Credentials Committee Acceptance of the Auditor's Report Adoption of proposed budget Presentation of slate of nominees for Officers/Board Members Balloting for Officers-Results Balloting for Board Members-Results Presentation and adoption of any resolutions received
2:15pm	Voting members rejoin non-voting participants Results of elections and other business presented Ritual of Transition Installation of Officers and Board Members Closing Devotions

OPENING OF CONVENTION

Leader: As we gather this day, may we be Planted in Love and Pivotal in Purpose.

Participants: Now thank we all our God, with hearts and hands and voices

Leader: Who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices

Participants: Who from our mothers' arms, hast blest us on our way

Leader: With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

All: Longing for his presence
 Openness to seek Him
 Value yourself
 Envision God's plan for you

Leader: I now declare the thirty-third Virginia Synodical Women's Organization convention now open.

Who's Who

Chaplain – The Rev. Jeniffer Tillman (Apostles Lutheran Church)

Keynote Speaker – The Rev. Colleen Montgomery

Worship Planning - The Rev. Jeniffer Tillman, The Rev. Colleen Montgomery, Deacon Lavelva Stevens

CWO Representative – Becky Shurson

Parliamentarian –

VISIONS Circulation -Jody Smiley

VISIONS Editor - Carol Johnson

Convention Theme: "Planted in Love, Pivotal in Purpose"

Convention Scripture: Colossians 3:17

Convention Hymn: "Now Thank We All Our God" ELW#840

Purpose of the Convention

- To conduct the business of the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization;
- To interpret and provide suggestions for congregational/intercongregational or special units, through their voting member, for the achievement of the purposes of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA);
- To provide a variety of learning experiences to strengthen each woman to value herself, to build up and celebrate relationships, and to articulate and act upon her faith; and
- To provide fellowship, and worship as we celebrate 33 years of rejoicing with bold women.

Women of the ELCA Mission Statement

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ

Women of the ELCA Purpose Statement

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.

Offering -- The offering will be split between Women of the ELCA, Extraordinary Lutheran Ministries (ELM) and Minnick Schools feeding programs (encircle, formerly Lutheran Family Services). For more information about ELM go to www.elm.org and for the Minnick Schools go to www.encircleall.org/minnick-schools .

Rules of Procedure for the Convention

Representation

Voting members of a convention shall be the elected officers and board members of the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization (VSWO) and one voting member from each unit on the roll of the VSWO.

Seat and Voice

The following shall have seat and voice (no voting privileges) in the convention:

- Those congregations not represented by a unit shall be invited to send one representative to the convention;
- Bishop of the Synod or his representative;
- Churchwide Women's Organization (CWO) Representative; and
- Others to whom the voting body shall give this privilege.

Voting Members

- Shall attend zoom voting member orientation to be held 9/23 with Jody Smiley.
- Shall be registered before being placed in breakout room reserved for the voting body.
- Shall not absent themselves from the convention without permission of the President;
- Shall report to the President should an emergency require departure from the meeting. The alternate, if present, shall be re-registered as a voting member;

Speeches

Speeches shall be limited to two (2) minutes unless otherwise determined by a two-thirds vote of the convention.

Elections:

President, Treasurer, three Board members for 2-year terms and Vice President, Secretary, three Board members for a 1-year term.

Motions and Resolutions

- Any voting member may make a motion which is germane to any pending question.
- Resolutions of a general nature shall be written on the form provided, signed by two voting members and submitted to the VSWO Secretary by September 20th at 5:00 PM. Resolutions will be received by the Secretary and referred to the Committee on Reference and Counsel.
- Each voting member who offers a resolution shall be given an opportunity to explain it to the Committee on Reference and Counsel.

Parliamentary Procedures

Robert Rules of Order (R.R.), latest edition, shall be the governing parliamentary law of the convention in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are consistent with the Constitution and Bylaws of the VSWO.

Addressing the Assembly

- Each voting member should use the "raise your hand option in zoom" and when recognized, address the chair ("Madame President"), state her name and congregation, and then proceed. (R.R.)
- All Comments should be directed to the "chair." (R.R.)

Limitations on Debate

- Each voting member may speak twice on the same question on the same day, but should not make a second speech on the same question so long as any voting member who has not spoken on that question desires the floor. (R.R.)
- Any voting member, feeling that debate should be stopped, may request the convention to do so by obtaining the floor and moving the "previous question." If this is seconded and convention decides by a two-thirds vote in favor, then debate is stopped and the vote is taken on the pending question. (R.R.)
- Calls for "questions" by members are not motions for the Previous. They are simply informal expressions of individual members' desires to proceed to a vote. These calls are disorderly if made while another member is speaking or seeking recognition. (R.R.)

Fall 2021



Women
of the
EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
IN AMERICA

Shalom!

Thank you for all you do for Women of the ELCA! Your time, talents and treasures are needed now more than ever, not only to WELCA, but also to the world. You make a huge difference in our churches and communities. Thank you again for all you do and continue to do!

This past August we elected a new board and passed a few constitutional amendments. One of these amendments allows for conventions and SWO meetings to be held digitally/virtually. There are great opportunities with a digital convention. It is a new way of doing business, but it opens the door for more participation. It makes the business meeting more concise and gives working moms a better opportunity to attend.

I will be praying for you and your convention. Please feel free to reach out and let either me or Linda Post Bushkofsky know of any difficulties or wonderful experiences you had with a digital platform.

So here is your challenge:

1. The SWO that comes up with the **worst story** about digital difficulties at their convention will be honored and their story will be shared.
2. The SWO that submits a story on how a digital SWO Convention **brought opportunities** will be honored. Their story will also be shared.

Please submit your responses to me at jmichali@d.umn.edu or Linda Post Bushkofsky at linda.bushkofsky@elca.org by December 31, 2021.

God's Blessings as we embark on this new journey together!

Joy Michalicek

Joy Michalicek
President, 2020-2023 triennium
Women of the ELCA

WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

Southwestern



Minnesota Synod

Dear Sisters in Christ!

The Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization will be with you in prayer when you meet virtually for your convention. May your convention theme, *"Planted in Love, Pivotal in Purpose"* serve you all well as you reconnect with one another and come together in worship and learning!

Our synod organization has not met in convention for two years now due to the COVID-19 rules and regulations that have come and gone, but we are planning to meet in person in 2022, God willing! Our synod women's board has been keeping in touch via Zoom meetings and that has worked well for our board. Between Zoom meetings and e-mails and phone calls, and our synod newsletter, we are still functioning and pivoting in keeping our synod work moving forward.

Our daily routines have changed over the last year and a half, but one thing that has not changed is the fact our loving God is still in control and we can still ask for His divine guidance as we move forward.

May you all *Love.Grow.Serve* as you meet in convention!

May God Bless Each of You!

Joan

Joan Iverson, President
Southwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization, Women of the ELCA

Virginia Synodical Women's Organization Executive Board

Officers--term expiring 2021	Officers –term expiring 2020
<p>President: Jody Smiley 901 Brattle Lane Blacksburg, VA 24060 540-250-6149 Email: jdsmiley29@comcast.net Church: St Michael, Blacksburg Conference: New River</p>	<p>Judy Wilfong PO Box 10 Bayse, VA 22810 540-856-2880 Email: jwilfong@shentel.net Church: Muhlenberg/Harrisonburg Conference: Southern Valley</p>
<p>Treasurer: Deniese Powell 2901 Black Lick Rd. Rural Retreat, VA 24368 603-630-5628 Email: denise.powell@yahoo.com Church: Rural Retreat Par/Rural Retreat Conference: Highlands</p>	<p>Secretary: Judy Castelee 726 W. 4th St Buena Vista, VA 24416 540-264-9998 Email: jcasteele@comcast.net Church: Good Shepherd, Lexington Conference: Southern Valley</p>
Board Members – Term expiring 2021	Board Members – Term expiring 2020
<p>Joann Fawley 6409 W Old Mountain Rd Louisa, VA 23093 703-727-7957 Email: fawley6409@gmail.com Church: Grace&Glory/Palmyra Conference: Germanna</p>	<p>Edith Blake 5137 Portsmouth Blvd. Portsmouth, VA 23701 757-956-5535 Email: ejbwwb@aol.com Church: Holy Communion/Portsmouth Conference: Tidewater</p>
<p>Sylvia Eley 417 Meadow Creek Dr Chesapeake, VA 23323 757-582-0966 Email: seley2005@msn.com Church: St. Andrew, Chesapeake Conference: Tidewater</p>	<p>Theresa Thomas 247 Mount Pisgah Rd Mount Sidney, VA 24467 540-476-0578 Email: prof_tsquared@yahoo.com Church: Salem, Mt. Sidney Conference: Southern Valley</p>
<p>Sheila Sanchez 514 Austin St. Norfolk, VA 23503 765-430-8685 Email: yeshuabear@aol.com Church: St. John/Norfolk Conference: Tidewater</p>	<p>Lavelva Stevens 1369 Beth Scott Dr. Pulaski, VA 24301 540-320-3369 Email: lstevens01@verizon.net Church: Trinity, Pulaski Conference: New River</p>

Special Guests



Becky Shurson Churchwide Representative

Executive Board Vice President, 2017-2020
Woman of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

Becky Shurson was elected vice president of the executive board of Women of the ELCA in July 2017. She is on the executive committee and the constitution review committee. She served as secretary of the executive board from 2014-2017.

At the synodical level, Becky served on the board of Pacifica Women of the ELCA in southern California, and she served in the leadership of her congregational unit. In 2017, Becky and her husband, John, moved from southern California to Eugene, Oregon.

A member of Eugene's Central Lutheran Church, Becky is part of a women's study group that adapts *Gather's* monthly study to a weekly format. She also serves on the Oregon Synod Council.

Becky works from home for a small California-based nonprofit meeting planning company that helps with conferences for religious organizations. John, retired, helps her keep a work-life balance and also keeps them busy supporting University of Oregon sports. Their son, Lucas, a St. Olaf grad, serves as a pastoral intern in Southeastern Minnesota Synod and soon begins his final year at Luther Seminary.



The Rev. Colleen Montgomery
Director for Digital Ministries, Virginia Synod

On March 15, 2021, Pastor Colleen Montgomery began her call as the Director for Digital Ministry. In this call, Pastor Montgomery guides the digital ministry of the Virginia Synod and serve as a resource person to help local congregations and leaders strengthen their digital ministry. This call is ½ time.

In addition Pastor Montgomery was called to a ½ time call as the **Mission Developer for *All Places Together***, an innovative and experimental digital ministry designed to reach those who are not currently connected to a worshipping community and are seeking to connect faith and life.



The Rev. Jeniffer Tillman
Apostles Lutheran Church

On Sunday, January 12, 2020, in a special service attended by her family, congregation members and council as well as numerous clergy of the Virginia Synod and Peninsula Conference, Pastor Jeniffer Tillman was officially installed as the rostered pastor of Apostles Lutheran Church. Pastor Jeniffer comes to Apostles from Georgia by way of California, Alaska, Madagascar and New York. She received her B.S. in Psychology and Minor in Theater from the University of Georgia in 2010 and a Master of Divinity in Theology from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in 2014. The congregation give thanks to the Holy Spirit for leading Pastor Jeniffer to Apostles and are excited to see what plans God has for our future together.

VSWO Board Report

Overview of 2020-2021

The women of the Virginia synod are an active and faithful community. We were last able to gather together in person at First Lutheran Church in Norfolk on August 2-3, 2019. The theme was “All Are Welcome at the Table” following our convention scripture verse, Galatians 3:28. We started our weekend of faith, fellowship, and of course some business, with a wonderful opening devotion by our convention chaplain, The Rev. Leslie Weber of Grace, Chesapeake. During our business sessions on Friday, voting members elected a president, treasurer, and board members. Also elected were voting members to the 11th Triennial convention. During the business sessions non-voting members were able to attend three different workshops: “Reenergizing Your Congregational Unit”, led by Linda Hawks and Erin Bain Hagar, Congregating Digitally, led by Emily Pilat the Director of Communications for the Virginia Synod, “Deskercise” led by Martha Swirzinski. On Friday evening our banquet speaker, Stephen Walker, entertained us with his stories and challenged us change our vision to be more welcoming and loving. Morgan Thomas led us in the Holden Evening Prayer service with accompaniment by Lavelva Stevens.

On Saturday, awareness sessions were held for all participants: “Music Connects Us” led by Becky Watson, “An Immigrant’s Story” led by Fio Lewis, The Rev. John Wertz Jr. Director for Evangelical Mission and Assistant to the Bishop led the day’s bible study. Our closing worship service was led by The Rev. Jean Bozeman and assisted by Edith Blake. Participants brought school supplies collected by their congregations which were donated to Norfolk area schools. In addition, during the year congregational units and individuals took part in projects to support children. These included but were not limited to making blankets and quilts for the Linus Project, making hats for Knots of Love and pillow cases Ryan’s Case for Smiles.

Of course, 2020 greatly changed the way congregational units, conferences, and the synodical organization gathered and stayed connected. Many of the units continued their bible studies and meetings by zoom. The New River conference even had their annual conference gathering by zoom. The VSWO held a Thankoffering service, again by zoom, that was attended by over 40 women across the state and even some visitors from other synods. Our women have continued they faithful support of ministries within their congregations and ministries of Women of the ELCA.

Board Meetings

The VSWO board met in twice in 2020 and twice in 2021. Board meetings were held at Grace and Glory Lutheran, Project Horizon in Lexington, and on-line using Zoom technology. During these meetings, our board conducts the necessary business, planning, goal setting, and visioning that is needed for the work of our organization.

The board voted to donate the funds in the Betty Wilson Triennial Scholarship fund to Women of the ELCA in Betty's name. This was done since there would not be a Triennial Gathering in 2020. The offerings taken at the Gatherings greatly assist the ministries of the churchwide organization. The board planned the virtual Thankoffering service that was held in Nov., 2020. The board worked on planning for the 2021 virtual convention.

Communication

We offer our newsletter "Visions" for free when received by e-mail or accessed from our website. We have a website: <http://vswoweebly.com>. You can also follow the VSWO and Women of the ELCA on Facebook and Pinterest.

Resources

Women of the ELCA offer free downloadable resources that can be used for Bible Studies, Retreats, Conference Gathering, and even individual use. The VSWO invites you to contact board members for program ideas and speakers for your units, events and retreats.

Respectfully submitted,

Jody Smiley,
President
Virginia Synodical Women's
Organization Women of the ELCA

The board recommends:

1. That the convention Rules of Procedure be adopted as printed in the Bulletin of Reports with any necessary corrections.
2. That the Program of the Thirty-third Annual Convention of the VSWO be adopted as printed in the Bulletin of Reports, with any necessary changes.
3. That the Auditor's Report be accepted as printed.
4. That the VSWO Budget for 2022- 2023 be adopted as presented by the Board.



Report of the VSWO President

It is hard to believe that it has been over 2 years since we have been able to meet together. Even though we haven't met in person I have seen how this community of women have continued to live out our mission statement. You have provided support for me and each other. You found ways to continue to have bible studies, support ministries in your communities and the in the world, and provide strong support of your congregations during these difficult times.

As always, I would like to thank the board for all their hard work and support. We too had to find creative ways to meet, support each other, and provide leadership for the VSWO. We all have been very blessed by their service.

Since we last met, I have written articles for "Visions", prepared reports for Synod Council, and led board meetings (mostly by zoom). I have also taken on the role of Visions Circulation Manager. A big thanks to Carol Johnson who serves as our Vision Editor. She does a wonderful job pulling together the articles and fills the newsletter with information to keep us connected.

I am very proud to have taken part in our first virtual Thankoffering service. It was a great success. We even have gotten several shout outs from the churchwide organization for our innovation. I hope that this will encourage those across our synod to continue their Thankoffering services and those that have never held one to do so.

Another exciting change that was actually made possible by the pandemic was the format for the Conference of Presidents meeting. We of course could not meet in person so it was held virtually. This allowed us to be able to invite other board members to join by zoom. JoAnn Fawley, Edith Blake, and Sylvia Eley were able to join. It was very informative and was a way to learn more about Women of the ELCA at the churchwide level.

As I close out my time as president, I look forward to seeing what exciting things are in store for the VSWO moving forward, I know the officers and board members will be wonderful and inspiring leaders.

Thank you for all the support and encouragement you have given me and continue to give. I truly would not be the woman I am today without all the women in this amazing community.

Submitted,
Jody Smiley
President

Report of the Vice President and Convention Planning

Judy Wilfong (VP), Theresa Thomas (Co-Chair)

Of course, due to the Covid-19 pandemic we were not able to meet in 2020 at Mt. Sidney in Salem. We appreciate the women of Mt. Sidney for their wiliness to host.

This year Convention Planning was a collaborative effort by the full board. Due to concerns from the pandemic our convention will be held virtually. A special thanks to the Rev. Jeniffer Tillman, the Rev. Colleen Montgomery, and Deacon Lavelva Stephens for planning our opening worship.

There will be a time for worship, learning, fellowship, and business. We know that is not the optimum format but we hope everyone has a fun and faith filled day.

The 2021-2022 board will discuss possible locations for an in-person convention for 2022. Information will be made available this fall.

Report of the Secretary

Judy Castele

As Secretary, I record meeting minutes and assemble the Call to Convention, the Bulletin of Reports (BOR) and Supplement for the convention. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve.

Report of the Treasurer

Deniese Powell

We would like to say thank you to all treasurers for their dedicated service.

You will continue to send your offerings to Deniese Powell, 2901 Black Lick Rd, Rural Retreat, VA 24368 until January 31, 2022 when the new treasurer will take over. The treasurer position ends at our year end not at convention as other positions end. This gives me time to show the new treasurer the ropes.

Audit Report
February, 2020 to January, 2021

Melissa A. Swain 576 Lake Mount
Airy Road Rural Retreat, VA 24368,
276-686-4798
Melissaswain58@yahoo.com

To Whom it May Concern:

I received the bank statements, checkbook register, and deposits slips for Va Synodical Women's Organization from Deniese Powell for me to audit. I conducted a thorough audit using all the documents that she had given me. Everything balanced and I found no irregularities.

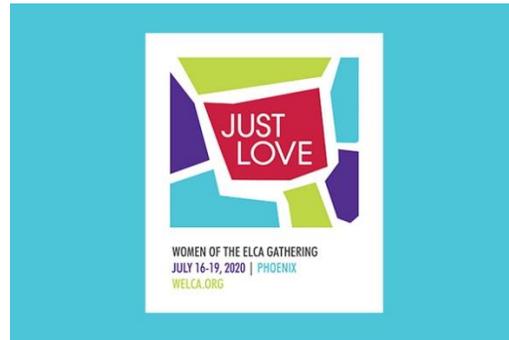
Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa Swain".

Melissa A. Swain

Report of Mission: Justice

*“The Lord loves righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of his unfailing love.”*
Psalm 33:5 (NIV)



Even though we were not able to have our Triennial gathering in 2020 the theme of Just Love is even more needed today. The questions we considered for this theme are still relevant and we may even see them through different lenses.

How can our units reach out to those that don't fit in our communities and world? To continue our focus on refugees, units can review the ELCA's efforts to assist immigrant children and families through organizations such as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS). You can find information on the Women of the ELCA's website

Co-chairs:

Sylvia Eley and Shelia Sanchez

Report of Mission: Stewardship

Although we were unable to meet during the past year the units in all conferences were busy helping others and staying in contact with each other.

Some of the things the ladies were involved in this past year include zoom meetings, bible studies, collecting food to help those in need, and taking care of each other.

All ways of stewardship. For we know that stewardship comes in many forms not just in giving money.

Edith Blake
Co-Chair

Report of Mission: Discipleship

Jesus said, “Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13: 34b, 35

Even though 2020 and 2021 made it difficult for us to come together in our units and as a synodical organization, the women of the VSWO showed their resourcefulness. We had meetings and bible studies by zoom. The VSWO held a virtual Thankoffering Service that had over 40 women join in again by zoom. As we move into 2022, we hope that we will once again be able to join in person together. Whatever the future holds we know that God is at the center of all we do.

Co-Chairs: Lavelva Stevens and Jody Smiley

Report of the Thrivent Endowment Fund

June Nabers, Head Trustee

VSWO Thrivent Mutual Funds Report – 1/1/2021 to 6/30/2021

Thrivent Holdings	Beginning Value 1/1/2021	Money Out	Gain 1/1/2021 to 6/30/2021	Ending Value 6/30/2021	Notes
Moderate Allocation Fund	\$5,456.76	\$1,500.00	\$275.47	\$4,232.23	VSWO Board Donation to Lutheran Disaster Relief Trade Date 03/04/2021
Aggressive Allocation Fund	\$15,945.52	0	1,982.95	17,928.47	
Total	\$21,402.28	\$1,500.00	\$2,258.42	\$22,160.70	

Report of the Synodical Conference Coordinator

Lavelva Stevens, VSWO Conference Coordinator

Thanks to all the Conference Coordinators and conference contacts for their dedication during these difficult times. For Visions we asked them to share what the units in their conferences were up to. Here is what they shared. You can see the women in this amazing community didn’t let the pandemic slow down their ministries.

Germanna-Coordinator: Carol Bailey**Christ in Fredericksburg-Ellen Pabst**

Our ladies have been getting together through zoom and here are our last three activities. In December we had "A Fire Side Chat"-We had a wonderful time telling special memories and sharing a special ornament. In January we had our yearly planning meeting-We set up monthly get togethers. We set up book reads, bible studies, dates to go to the nursing home and our annual retreat. (Some dates tentative because of COVID). February we had an Unbirthday Party via Zoom. Everyone brought a sweet and a candle and we played games.

Resurrection Fredericksburg- Carol Bailey

We have our one group that meets every Wednesday morning for Bible study and support. We are just finishing a great book, Holy Envy by Barbara Brown Taylor, an Episcopal priest. Our monthly WELCA meets on the second Thursday and we use the Gather magazine for study. Our outreach continues as we provide meals as needed for those who are recovering from surgery or otherwise in fragile health. In addition, we take cookies every month to the firefighters at the station very near to the church. We have established phone buddies to contact those in our congregation who live alone

Grace and Glory-Joann Fawley

Our Women of the ELCA unit at Grace and Glory Lutheran Church in Palmyra, Virginia, is called Women at Grace and Glory, lovingly referred to as WAGG. We have two (2) groups that intentionally gather. There is a group for study and a group for quilting. The study group has been holding monthly Zoom meetings using the Gather magazine. The quilters have worked individually at home. Our unit sends in offerings to VA Synod Women. We also purchase a bulk subscription to the Gather magazine to support Women of the ELCA. We initially purchased and now renew annually the magazine by using a Thrivent Action Team Grant. The Women of the ELCA is kept visible to the congregation through monthly submissions to the church newsletter. Every Sunday bulletin contains an invitation and information regarding any meetings. We, also, submit a unit report as part of the annual congregation report. We grow in faith through study together and go forward to act out our faith in service to God through the ministries at Grace and Glory supporting one another in our callings.

Highlands**Rural Retreat Parish- Deniese Powell**

Our women are active with Katie's Pantry, named for Luther's wife. Since the pandemic started we have been filling the pantry 2x a day, 7 days a week. It is a 4-shelf box in our Grace Lutheran Church's parking lot in Rural Retreat, VA with 24/7 availability. We have been blessed with a lot of donations of food, personal hygiene items, baby items, etc. and money.

New River-Coordinator: Alice Schneider

On December 13, the New River Conference had our annual "Gathering" by zoom this year. The theme, *Celebration of Women in Ministry*, was a celebration of the 50th year of the ordination of women in the Lutheran Church. Six area women pastors and a vicar shared interesting and inspirational stories of their journeys to the ministry. We also had a surprise visit from former St. Michael Pastor, Linda Mitchell Motley, now retired in Panama. Over 30 women from the Conference participated.

St. Michael - Alice Schneider

We help gathered donations of food for the Montgomery County Food Bank and supplies for the Women's Resource Center. In September, with the other NRV churches, we supported a collection of cleaning and paper supplies and packaged foods for the Women's Resource Center.

Also, we prepared 24 Easter baskets for children and 8 baskets for mothers at the center. We collected and delivered school supplies for children at Price's Fork Elementary School and also partnered with them to support their Secret Santa program.

Shiloh Lutheran Church- Suzanne Albert

We continue to stay connected to our members and our local community needs through telephone, emails, and cards. Through this trying time our women keep in touch with elderly members in both community and church by phone and dropping off food and periodicals, and occasionally distance visits. Donations continue to the Interfaith Food Pantry in Blacksburg from our members and the local neighbors.

Luther Memorial

The women of our congregation gathered by Zoom during the pandemic for "Soul Sisters" a weekly time to share and pray; and a women's Bible study led by Pastor Monica Weber (ongoing). When the pandemic ends, we hope to resume gatherings including making quilts for NRV Community Action, exercise and other activities.

Trinity Pulaski- Linda Hawks

Our women worked making masks. Over 500 masks were made and delivered to various organizations. We were able to assist with the local 2020 Christmas Store. We were able to provide \$250 worth of children's coats for the store through a Thrivent Action Team. As their 2021 Project, our quilters are planning to give each resident at Fairview Home a quilt on their Birthday. We have donated food items to Pulaski Daily Bread. The Behavioral Health Unit at Pulaski Hospital is a wonderful new addition to our community. We donated personal items, for the residents to receive as Blessing Bags as they are leaving this program.

Our Saviour- Cindy Whitehead

We coordinate an active plastic recycling program with our congregation and others in the community. We send the material to the Trex company which makes decking, benches and other items out of recycled plastic bags and other plastic of similar consistency. To date, we have placed over 8 donated benches to various locations in our area.

Page**Morning Star-Linda Lowry**

Last year we only had 4 fundraisers. But due to a donation from local Trust Fund we were still able to help the organizations the best that we could. We had a "Bakeless" Bakesale for our Easter fundraiser. We usually have a large bake sale. But instead we asked people who fix things, to donate what they think the spend on making things & those who buy, to donate what they usually spend.

The River of Life Ministries (St. Luke, St. Paul, & St. Peter)-Lisa Taglauer

We were able to get together 30 gift bags and take to the Hawksbill assistant living home in December.

Peninsula

Our Saviour-Diane Priestley

We collected a Thank Offering for WELCA, we sponsored a needy family for Christmas through the Christian Appalachian Project (CAP). We had a food drive for our local food pantry (FISH) and baby supplies drive for the Hope Pregnancy Center on Palm Sunday. We distributed blue ribbons on Rachel's Day at our "drive through" communion after Church. We collected donations for a Memorial bench for our Vice President (Karen Dutton) who passed away in November.

Southern Valley- Coordinator: Doris Grant

Good Shepherd-Judy Castelee

Ministries (limited as they are since we're not gathering in person) include stocking our Little Free Pantry on the church wall. We've also recently adopted a family of refugees from Honduras. We're providing clothes, furniture, meaningful work and other support for the family of 6.

Tidewater- Coordinator: Brenda Conway

St. Andrew Portsmouth-Edith Blake

We have not met as a group since the Pandemic started but have participated in various projects the church has been supporting during this time. In the summer we collected food items for a program sponsored by Mercy Drops to provide food to children during the school year who would normally get meals if in school. We have collected food items for the Oasis program who feed the homeless in Portsmouth. We have also collected items for Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless to provide health kits. We have been conducting a bible study on Thursday mornings with the lessons for Sunday as our focus.

CLOSING OF CONVENTION

Leader: As we come to the end of our convention may we take your words of Colossians 3:17 to heart.

All: "And whatever you do in word and deed do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him"

Leader: All praise and thanks to God, the Father now be given

All: The Son and him who reigns, with them in highest heaven

Leader: The one eternal God, whom earth and heav'n adore

All: For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore

Putting trust on God's leading

Investing in learning more

Venture into new challenges

Open to hear God's word

Thankful for God's love and care

Always trusting his guidance

Loving all as one

Leader: I now declare the Thirty-third Virginia Synodical Women's Organization convention now closed. Go in peace and serve the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God

For the Opening and Closing of Convention:

Response words from the hymn "Now Thank We All Our God"

Colossians verse from – New King James Version

Acrostic Poems, Opening and Closing by Edith Blake

Ritual of Transition (L=Leader; C=Community)

L: Sisters in Christ, through your baptism you were called to lives of service as part of the priesthood we all share in Jesus Christ. You have served faithfully and well as leaders in the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization. You have served thoughtfully, graciously and with diligence, offering strategic leadership to this synodical women's organization and to the entire women's organization. We offer to you our gratitude for the wisdom and compassion that you have given so generously in service for Women of the ELCA.

C: We thank God for you.

L: Recognizing that change must be an ongoing process and that diversity and flexibility are essential, will you continue to share your wisdom and your experience with this synodical women's organization? Will you support and encourage the future leaders of this synodical women's organization, praying for and with them?

If so, answer, "I will, and I ask God to help me."

Retiring Leaders: I will, and I ask God to help me.

L: Let us pray.

Loving God, we thank you for these women. Your Holy Spirit equipped them with many gifts that have been used to support the mission and purpose of this organization. Inspire them now to new avenues of service, encouraging them to be risk-takers and making them confident in their faith. May their pathways be filled with peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

C: Amen.

Installation of a Synodical Board

L: A reading from 1 Corinthians:

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

Sisters in Christ, you have been chosen for leadership responsibilities in Women of the ELCA. We rejoice in the gifts God has given you and, in your willingness, to offer them for this service.

Will you continue to seek to grow in faith, attending to God's holy Word, and listening to God in prayer? If so, respond, Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you earnestly seek to affirm the gifts of others, to share the responsibilities of your office in partnership with your sisters, and to encourage others to offer their talents and skills in faithful service?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you seek to lead the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization in ministry and action, extending God's loving promise of hope to those beyond this community?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you seek to promote healing and wholeness within the church, the society and the whole world?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Do you accept the specific responsibilities for which you have been elected and will you seek to serve faithfully?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Will you accept the responsibility for the financial and constitutional order of the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization of Women of the ELCA?

Response: Yes, and I ask God to help me.

Through Holy Baptism, you were gathered into the family of God and called to minister to others, and through your election, you have been chosen to serve as leaders of Women of the ELCA. May God work through you to share hope and healing with the world in which you live. God is faithful and will graciously enable you to fulfill your task. May God's blessing give you peace.

Together with these elected leaders, you are called through Holy Baptism to a life of discipleship. Will you receive these leaders and work with them, pray for them, and support them for the sake of the gospel? If so, answer: We will, and we ask God to help us.

C: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Addressing those being installed:

I now declare you installed as officers and board members of the Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization of Women of the ELCA, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Continuing with prayer.

Let us pray.

Loving God, surround these women with your life-giving Spirit, inspiring them to love and serve all creation. Make them bold and courageous, Holy God, that they may help the women of this organization fulfill our mission and purpose. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Biographical Data of VSWO Board Members Nominees

Officers (2-year Term)

President

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Age Range:

Church:

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit:

Conference/Synodical:

Churchwide:

Hobbies:

Volunteer work:

Treasurer

Name:

Lavelva Stevens

Address:

1369 Beth Scott Drive
Pulaski, VA 24301

Phone:

540-320-3369

Email:

lstevens01@verizon.net

Age Range/Racial Heritage

65 or older/Caucasian

Church:

Trinity, Pulaski, New River Conference

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit:

Current participant, planning team member

Conference/Synodical:

Participant, conference coordinator, current VSWO board member

Churchwide:

convention delegate and attendee

Hobbies:

Sweet Adeline’s, travel, reading

Volunteer work:

Church Women United, Thrivent Action Teams

Officers (-year Term)

Vice President

Name: Sylvia Eley
Address: 417 Meadow Creek Dr.
Chesapeake, VA 23323
Phone: 757-485-2689
Email: seley2005@msn.com
Age Range/Racial Heritage 50 to 64/Black or African American
Church: St Andrew, Portsmouth, Tidewater Conference

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Current participant
Conference/Synodical: Board member, convention attendee & voting member, VSWO board member
Churchwide: 2017 and 2021 Triennial voting member, Triennial Gathering attendee
Hobbies: fishing, mentoring young people, gardening
Volunteer work: Chesapeake Medical Reserves Corps, tutor

Secretary

Name: JoAnn Fawley
Address: 6409 W. Old Mountain Rd.
Louisa, VA 23093
Phone: 703.727.7957
Email: fawley6409@gmail.com
Age Range/Racial Heritage 65 or older/Caucasian
Church: Grace & Glory, Palmyra, Germanna Conference

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Unit coordinator
Conference/Synodical: Participant, conference team, convention delegate
Churchwide: 2021 Triennial voting member, 2011 and 2014 Triennial Gathering attendee
Hobbies: Making Chrismons, reading, knitting, gardening, yoga
Volunteer work: Thrivent Action Teams, Women's Shelter, church bell choir, ALW Retreat Treasurer

Board Member (2-year Term)

Name: Carol Bailey
Address: 604 Gold Valley Rd
Locust Grove, VA 22508
Phone: 540-972-0371
Email: tcmtnest@comcast.net
Age Range/Racial Heritage 65 or older/Caucasian
Church: Resurrection/Fredericksburg/Germanna Conference

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Participant and Officer
Conference/Synodical: Conference Coordinator, Participant and voting member at convention, past board member and officer
Churchwide: Have attended Triennial conventions
Hobbies: Reading, cooking, and baking
Volunteer work: Brisben Shelter and Micah Ministry

Name:

Address:
Phone:
Email:
Age Range:
Church:

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit:
Conference/Synodical:
Churchwide:
Hobbies:
Volunteer work:

Name:

Address: Theresa Thomas
247 Mount Pisgah Rd
Mount Sidney, VA 24467
Phone: 540-453-2230
Email: prof_tsquared@yahoo.com
Age Range/Racial Heritage 35 to 49/Caucasian
Church: Salem/Mt Sidney/Southern Valley Conference

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Current participant
Conference/Synodical: Coordinator, current VSWO board member, participant at convention
Churchwide:
Hobbies:
Occupation: Assistant Professor of Mathematics BRCC

Board Member (1-year Term)

Name: Edith Blake
Address: 5137 Portsmouth Blvd.
Portsmouth, VA 23701
Phone:
Email: EJBWWB@aol.com
Age Range/Racial Heritage 65 or older/Caucasian
Church: St. Andrew/Portsmouth/Tidewater

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Participant and Officer
Conference/Synodical: Participant/Planning Team member/Past Coordinator
Current Board Member/Past Officer/Convention voting member
Churchwide: Attended Triennial
Hobbies: Writing Poetry, Crossword Puzzles, Reading
Volunteer work: Friends of the Portsmouth Public Library

Name: June Nabers
Address: PO Box 733
Basye, VA 22810
Phone: 540-331-3214
Email: jnabers@hotmail.com
Age Range/Racial Heritage 65 or older/Caucasian
Church: Muhlenberg/Southern Valley

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Participant with St. Jacobs-Spaders congregational unit
Conference/Synodical: Participants at the conference level and attended Synodical conventions
Churchwide:
Hobbies: Reading, Gardening, Yoga/Pilates
Volunteer work: Court Appointed Special Advocate for Children

Name: Patricia Seelenbinder
Address: 1605 Pennywhistle Arch
Virginia Beach, VA 23464
Phone: 757-479-2544
Email: pmseelen@cox.net
Age Range/Racial Heritage 65 or older/Caucasian
Church: Emmanuel/VA Beach/Tidewater

Women of the ELCA Experience

Local Unit: Participant and Officer
Conference/Synodical: Participants at the conference level and attended Synodical conventions as voting member
Churchwide: Attended Triennial conventions
Hobbies: Sewing, Gardening, Stamping, Kayaking
Volunteer work: Meals on Wheels, Food Pantry, PIN, CWU, CEnet, Teaching Bible Studies