

2013 Convention Edition

Rejoice with Bold Women!

Rejoice with Bold Women was the theme of the VSWO Convention held **July 19-21, 2013** at Roanoke College in Salem, VA.

With the convention scripture of **“Rejoice in the Lord always” (Philippians 4:4)** at the forefront of our convention, women came from congregations across the synod to conduct business, worship and learn together.

Patti Austin of Decatur, GA brought greetings from Women of the ELCA staff and board, and led two awareness sessions; and **Julie Swanson, CEO of Lutheran Family Services** served as our banquet speaker.

We were blessed this year with the presence of **The Rev. Kathleen Miko** of Brandon Oaks who served as convention chaplain. She kept our worship and devotions centered on our biblical theme and provided a wonderful healing service on Friday night. **Anita Gutschick** provided our entertainment with monologues from Women of the Bible.

Convention highlights

- ◇ We enjoyed **uplifting opening and worship music** by musicians Mary Hicks, Linda Hawks, and Lavelva Stevens.
- ◇ We generously gave **\$1,797 in a love offering for A Common Thread** supporting victims of domestic violence.
- ◇ **Awareness sessions** were offered including how to make pillow case dresses, spiritual writing, Bible Study, God Colors Outside the Lines, How to Change when Change is Hard and Real Money Talk for Women.
- ◇ **Officers and board members were elected** including Risse Snelgrove, president (Northern Valley); Peggy Baseler, treasurer (Central Valley) and board members Christel Williams (Richmond); Anna Barb (Central Valley); Connie Saunders (Highland); and Iris Will (Richmond).

“Rejoice in the
Lord always.
Again, I will say
rejoice!”
Philippians 4:4

- ◇ **Jana Snelgrove, Triennial Gathering Promoter**, kept us informed and excited about the 2014 **Triennial Convention** to be held in Charlotte under the theme “of many generations.”
- ◇ **The Rev. CeCee Mills, Annette Griffith, and Jana Snelgrove** were elected to represent the VSWO as Triennial delegates at the 2014 Women of the ELCA convention in Charlotte, NC.
- ◇ We thanked out going officers and board members **Sherry Castelee, Imogene Ryman, and Judy Ann Fray** for their faithful service.
- ◇ Women across the synod donated **school supplies** for the children served through Lutheran Family Services Minnick Education Center
- ◇ Jody Smiley coordinated the **Young Women's Guest** program with three participants.
- ◇ **Nia Indelicato** shared the VSWO long range planning committee report and urged women to play an active part in the organization's future.

- ◇ We heard an **inspiring presidential message** entitled “*Who Are We?*” from Risse Snelgrove. She expressed how the women of the Virginia Synod and Women of the ELCA are all about using our hands, feet, and mouths to do what we are called to do. She thanked us for being bold women and encouraged us to continue to do God's work on behalf of the Women of the ELCA. Risse challenged us to make **1,000 pillow case dresses** by the 2014 convention to donate to an organization called Little Dresses for Africa (see page 3 for more details.)
- ◇ Next year we're moving to Harrisonburg for a 2-day convention (due to it being a Triennial convention year) at **Muhlenberg Lutheran**. Watch Visions for more details!

Rejoice with Bold Women

(Editor's Note: The message below was printed in the convention Bulletin of Reports. The words were so inspiring, they bear repeating. For the full text of the report, check out the 2013 BOR.)

“Rejoice with Bold Women”, what an awesome theme for this year’s convention. As I write this report for you I reflected on our convention Bible verse, Philippians 4:4-7. “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say again Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus”.

I know without a doubt that this verse touched me in so many ways and truly spoke to me making me so aware that God has placed me in your midst during my fight with breast cancer. I have read these words over and over I think of all the prayers, love and support you have given me these past few months. This convention will be a special one for me and it is an honor to be your President.

Over the past two years I continue to grow in my faith and my confidence as your President, but I could not do this job without each of you sharing your gifts and talents for our organization. I could also not do this job without your VSWO Board. These remarkable ladies give and give for this organization. Without all of you we would not be able to continue our work acting on our mission and purpose statement. Thank you for all you do and for your confidence in me to lead you these past two years.

This past year we assigned each board member as a conference liaison for each conference. Their job was to be a resource for your conference coordinators and congregational units. It is very important that each of you know your board liaison and that you are utilizing her within your conferences and unit events. We are also here for you to help with program ideas, elections of officers, planning conference gatherings and updating contact information for each congregational unit. Our desire is to help with communication between the conferences and units. One of our goals for the next few years is to add new active units or assist units who may be struggling to stay active. Please do not hesitate to contact me or your board liaison in time of need. New liaisons will be announced in the next Visions.

This year we created a line item in the VSWO budget to help with conference expenses. Each conference was given \$225 a year to help with their gathering expenses and conference operation expenses. We encourage you to take advantage of this budgeted item. We never want conference expenses to be a burden on any one person or congregational unit.

On a personal note, I thank each of you from the bottom of my heart for all of your visits, phone calls, emails and cards. Each of you has brought joy to my life and is so supportive and loving during my fight with breast cancer.

The Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization of the Women of the ELCA is that place where women can come to be embraced and be supported in so many ways. God has put me in the midst of you. At first I didn’t know why, but now without a doubt I can say He knew that I would need each of you in my life to encourage me, pray for me and give me the strength each day. I am so blessed to be a part of this organization.

Risse Snelgrove
VSWO President

Little Dresses for Africa

Our president, Risse Snelgrove, has put the challenge out for us to make 1,000 pillow case dresses in time for the 2014 convention. Check out the simple instructions below. If you prefer to use a pattern, there's a free pattern at the link below:

http://www.nancysnotions.com/text/pdf/LittleDressesforAfrica_pattern.pdf

Following the simple steps below, any size new or gently used pillow case can be quickly turned into a prized possession for a grateful little girl in Africa. Pillow case patterns are only a suggestion, so feel free to use your own simple pattern and material if you'd rather!

4 Easy Steps to make pillow case dresses:

This pillow case pattern is only a suggestion. Any simple pattern is fine! Avoid buttons and zippers if you can as they are difficult to repair in Africa.

1. Cut the sewn end of the pillow case top off leaving the hem.
2. Fold the pillowcase in half and cut out the arm holes so they will be the same on each side. The measurements depend on the size of the pillow case but it's about 4 inches down and 2 inches in. (Check out www.littledressesforafrica.org for examples)
3. Fold down the top of the strip about 3/8 and stitch a casing. Slide a 6" piece of elastic at the top so it will be gathered.
4. Finish the arm holes with double biased tape leaving enough at the ends to tie at the shoulders.

Don't be concerned about exact measurements. All sizes are welcome and variations are fine. Add pockets or lace if you want to be creative, but all styles and patterns will be appreciated by the little girls. Dresses should be sized them by length from the shoulder to the hem.

Small = 2, 3, and 4 (16-22 inches long)

Medium = 5, 6, and 7 (24-28 inches long)

Large = 8, 9, and 10 (30-34 inches long)

X-Large - size 11 and above (anything over 35 inches long)

Bring your pillow case dresses to the
2014 convention.

*Help us meet our goal of 1000
pillow case dresses!*



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VSWO Committees
Want to serve on a VSWO Committee? Are you interested in one of our Mission areas, such as Justice & Action, Spiritual Growth and Development, Stewardship or perhaps Convention Planning? Contact Carol Bailey, VP at tcmtnest@comcast.net and she'll put you in touch with the appropriate committee chair.

