

# “Visions”

## 2018 VSWO CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS



Can it have been two weeks already since the 2018 VSWO Convention?

Our theme this year was “Let Us Encourage.” And we are certainly encouraged by the numbers! Despite unrelenting downpours on Friday, 92 participants gathered at Bethel Lutheran Church in Winchester. That number included seven young women (a chronological designation only!) and over a dozen first-time attendees. There were seven recipients of the Sophie Wilson Grant for first-timers — that’s over three times as many as last year in both “young” and “new” categories.

We were blessed to have three pastors leading worship and learning: Cheryl Griffith (St. Stephen, Williamsburg), Karen Van Stee (St. Mary Pine, Mt. Jackson), and Heidi Young (Bethel).

Awareness Sessions included an Ice Breaker activity, a Bible Study based on Hebrews led by Pastor Heidi Young, “**Steps for Encouraging One Another**” presented by Judy Wilfong, and “**Empowering the mind, body and spirit to encourage others through rhythm**” offered by Music Therapist Becky Watson. Each session was interactive, engaging participants minds, bodies, and spirits in a variety of activities.

Convention participants enjoyed meeting and hearing from Churchwide Representative Lydia Dávila, Executive Board member and past president of the Caribbean Synod Women's Organization, and Gabriela Contreras, Director for Meeting Planning. She briefly recapped the 2017 Triennial Convention in Minnesota and whetted our anticipation for the 2020 Triennial in Phoenix.

Service projects for 2018 included making walker caddies and non-skid socks for residents of nursing homes and rehab facilities selected by each unit. Representative samples only were brought to Convention, and units reported a total of 265 caddies and 120 pairs of socks given to local recipients. With an unusually large number of natural disasters occurring in 2017-18, our global project was once again Personal Health Kits for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. The items for kits were gathered in local units and then assembled at Convention. A total of 266 kits were prepared, and “leftover” items were shared with some units’ individual food and care ministries.

In addition to the service projects, the offerings received were as follows:

**Worship Offering:** \$1662.00 50% designated for VSWO and 50% designated to WELCA.

**Love Offering:** \$1302.00 divided between WATTS (*Winchester Area Temporary Thermal Shelter*) and CCAP (*Congregational Community Action Program*). WATTS provides temporary shelter and other services to the homeless. CCAP offers a food pantry and clothing distribution.

**Betty Wilson Triennial Scholarship Raffle: \$170**

Many thanks to pianist Linda Hawks, song leader Lavelva Stevens, Holden Evening Prayer soloists Kelly Francis and Molly Beyer, the members of Bethel, the planning committee, and everyone who worked together to make this a smoothly running, memorable, and all-around excellent Convention experience!



# CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS (CONT)

## ELECTIONS AND BUSINESS

The following persons were elected:

**Vice President** – Judy Wilfong

**Secretary** – Judy Castele

**Board Members:**

Two-year terms – Bonnie Mantta, Theresa Thomas

## Officers and Board of Directors for 2019

President - Jody Smiley

Vice President – Judy Wilfong

Secretary – Judy Castele

Treasurer – Edith Blake

Members of the Board - Ellen Greene, Michelle Poore, Linda Lowry, Sylvia Eley, Bonnie Mantta, and Theresa Thomas

## Constitutional Change

The following changes to the Constitution were approved. The changed passages appear in **bold** print.

Article VII, Section 1, Item 1: There shall be a board of this synodical women's organization consisting of the four elected officers together with **six elected members**. [*changed from eight*]

Article VII, Section 6, Item 1: There shall be **six members** [*changed from eight*] of the board elected by the convention of the synodical women's organization for a term of two years.

## LOOKING AHEAD

Carol Bailey announced that the 2019 Annual VSWO Convention will be at First Lutheran Church, Norfolk, August 9-10, 2019. More information about the theme, accommodations, etc. will be forthcoming in the Fall 2019 *Visions*.



## FROM THE EDITOR

The Fall 2018 *Visions*, which will come out around Thanksgiving, will include complete board and staff listings with contact information, more extensive articles from individuals, updates and reports from the Justice, Stewardship, and Discipleship Mission Teams, and more. Any Virginia Lutheran woman is invited to contribute to *Visions*. You can email me at [sunlion7@gmail.com](mailto:sunlion7@gmail.com) or send snail mail to Carol Johnson, 1589 Rocky Hollow Rd., Atkins, VA 24311. A submission date of November 10 would be much appreciated.

## 2019 SERVICE PROJECTS

Our focus for the coming year will be on children, so in that effort our service project for 2019 involves ways we can help children in need of comforting. We have found several organizations that have items that you can sew, knit, or crochet that will make children who are ill or in need of a hug feel loved. You may know of other groups that you would like to support instead, and that is great. We just ask that each unit or conference find organizations in your community that may need these items and donate them. Keep a count of what your unit makes and how many. Bring that information along with pictures (if you like) and a few samples of your handiwork to the 2019 convention in Norfolk. Below are three suggestions of organizations you can help.



**Knots of Love:** <http://www.knotsoflove.org/>

“Our mission at Knots of Love is to warm the hearts and heads of those experiencing traumatic hair loss. Our volunteers lovingly hand-knit and crochet caps for those struggling with treatment-induced hair loss and tiny Neonatal blankets for fragile new lives in incubators. Knots of Love caps and blankets server as a constant reminder to the patient and their loved ones that they are not alone.”

**Project Linus:** <http://www.projectlinus.org/>

“We provide love, a sense of security, warmth and comfort to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need through the gifts of new, handmade blankets, and afghans, lovingly created by volunteer ‘blanketeers’.”



**Ryan’s Case for Smiles:** <http://caseforsmiles.org/>



“A hospital experience can be terrifying and traumatic for both a child and their family. While others strive to find a cure, Ryan’s Case for Smiles helps with the stress and emotional impact of illness in the here and now. Our whimsical pillowcases give children an emotional boost while resources and tools help families better understand and cope with the experience.”

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### **Let Us Encourage**

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Let us encourage one another to enliven their faith and share that faith with boldness.

Let us encourage one another to serve those in need as we share our time and talents.

Let us encourage one another to foster compassion and empathy for those around us who are different.

Let us encourage one another to inspire us to go beyond our comfort zone and try something new and not be close minded to change.

Let us encourage one another to grow in trust to let go and let God move in our lives and not be afraid to follow his lead.

Let us encourage one another to reach out to others and encourage others to use their gifts and talents.

Let us encourage one another to rise about petty differences and see each other as God sees us.

So, as we are enlivened, inspired, and fostered, to grow, reach out, and rise above we are filled with God's joy, peace, and love.

