

Visions Newsletter

Virginia Women's Synod Organization

Convention Issue 2022



Twelfth Triennial Gathering

Is currently scheduled for September 21 – 24, 2023 in Phoenix, AR



The Grand Canyon Synod is the host synod for the 12th Triennial nation-wide gathering of Women of the ELCA. We will now gather to now, worship, sing, learn, participate in service opportunities, and party together the week of September 18th, 2023 at the Phoenix Convention Center. Updated information should be available at this link when more information is known: welcatg.org

Our delegates to the Triennial Convention (September 19-21, 2023) elected at convention are Syliva Eley, Pat Seelenbinder, and Jody Smiley.

VSWO 2023 Convention!!!

Down in the Valley” or “We’ll Be Coming Round the Mountain When We Come”

Put it on your calendar now so you won’t miss the 2023 VSWO convention to be held July 21-22 at Roanoke College. Dorm rooms are \$29 a night plus a one-time linen fee of under \$11. We will use the dining facilities so we won’t have to walk far for meals. We hope to have a large turnout as we return “home” once again.



The recipient of our Love Offering will be Project Horizon in Lexington. Our treasurer, Judy Castele, has been executive director for 20 years. For the seamstresses, Cheer Bears will be a welcome gift to comfort children as they must testify of their abuse. For those who are shoppers rather than crafters, products to control stress can be ordered from Amazon and shipped directly to Lexington. Look for more information on the bears see article on VSWO Service Project for next year.

2023 VSWO Service Project



Project Horizon

We have a non-sewing and a sewing option. Both of these will benefit Project Horizon in Lexington, Virginia. The non-sewing option is to purchase supplies that are needed for the clients of Lisa's House. These are paper towels, toilet paper, kitchen size garbage bags, and deodorant. From Amazon: Squishy Stress Balls 12 per pack for kids and adults and Hedgehog Finger Rings a stress relief fidget sensory toy 10 per pack. Wish List items can be brought to convention or ordered from Amazon and delivered directly to Project Horizon at 120 Varner Lane, Lexington, VA 24450. Contact Judy Castele with questions at ph@rockbridge.net.

You may also wish to contact an organization in your community who shelter and counsel domestic and sexual abuse victims and ask them for their most needed items as a local outreach, but please bring your Project Horizon items to the 2023 convention.

The sewing option is Charity bears which are given to the children of domestic and sexual abuse. The bears will be a comfort and a healing tool used by counselors when working with a child. The pattern can be found at this link:

<https://www.shinyhappyworld.com/2014/04/warren-charity-bear-free-teddy-bear-pattern.html>

IMPORTANT: Two pockets have been added to the bear that are not on the original pattern. A small pocket on the front sewn over the heart, and a larger pocket on the back between the bears shoulders. These pockets are very important, so please don't eliminate them. They are used by the counselors when working with a child. If you did not pick up the bear pattern/instructions and/or the donation list for Project Horizon at the convention, please send an email to vswovirginiasyndicalwomen@gmail.com and either or both of these will be emailed to you.

Social Media Outreach

It is very important that the Virginia Synod Women of the ELCA stay current by having a presence on social media. Social media is a valuable outreach to highlight our many ministries and all the good works that Lutheran women are doing locally, nationally and around the world.



Here are easy ways to help:



1. INVITE others to LIKE the VSWO Facebook and/or Instagram. Please take time during your monthly meetings to help others connect to our social media pages. Check every month until everyone in your group that uses Facebook/Instagram have joined our pages. Ask how many invites they sent out to friends.

2. SHARE VSWO posts on your Facebook and/or Instagram.

3. SEND pictures of events and projects that your group has organized and completed to: vswovirginiasyndicalwomen@gmail.com. This is your Facebook and Instagram pages and we need your pictures and a brief description of the event to bring our social media pages alive.

Facebook and Instagram have algorithms and I know you are saying "What is this?" The algorithm determines what posts people see every time they check their social media accounts. A lot of this depends on what you like and share, but this can help or hurt us. What helps us is when you LIKE, SHARE and INVITE. This sends us out to a wider audience. I'm not sure how all this works, but the magic of algorithms depends on us LIKING , SHARING and INVITING.

So, please INVITE, SHARE and LIKE so that the VSWO social media pages will reach those who have never heard about Women of the ELCA, and they will want to seek us out and be apart of our amazing community. I am excited to watch the numbers grow on the VSWO Facebook and Instagram. I will post updates of our progress on the pages. LET'S GO!!

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/VSWO.WomenoftheELCA>

Instagram: vswovirginia_synod

Summary of the VSWO 2022 Convention



Offerings - The Love offering total was \$1,526 given to Valley Mission. The general offering total was \$966 with half going to Churchwide Women of the ELCA and the other half going to Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Sock Report – We had a total of 5,441 plus collected. The top three churches were 1. Resurrection – Fredericksburg 2. St. Michael – Blacksburg and 3. Mt. Sidney – Salem. Some of the places that the various churches donated their collection were Richmond Friends of the Homeless, schools clothes closet for Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro, warming station, Fairview Homes, Free store, Behavioral Care, Clothing room at Western State Hospital, hospice patients, Caritas Shelter, elementary school children, just some of the many places that benefitted from our project for this year. Thank you to all who participated.



**2023-2024 Virginia Synodical Women's Organization
Executive Board and Other Positions**

Officers – term expiring 2023	Officers – term expiring 2024
President – Lavelva Stevens 1369 Beth Scott Dr. Pulaski, VA 24301 Phone: 540-320-3369 Email: lstevens01@verizon.net	Vice President – Sylvia Eley 417 Meadow Creek Drive Chesapeake, VA 23323 Phone: 757-582-0966 Email: seley2005@msn.com
Treasurer – Judy Castele 726 W. 4 th Street Buena Vista, VA 24416 Phone: 540-460-7376 Email: jlcasteele@comcast.net	Secretary – JoAnn Fawley 6409 W. Old Mountain Road Louisa, VA 23093 Phone: 703-727-7957 Email: fawley6409@gmail.com
Board Members – Term expiring 2023	Board Members – Term expiring 2024
Carol Bailey 12706 Cavalryman Ct. Fredericksburg, VA 22407 Phone: 571-438-0273 Email: cobailey42@gmail.com	Pat Seelenbinder 1605 Pennywhistle Arch Virginia Beach, VA 23464 Phone: 757-479-2544 Email: pmseelen@cox.net
Theresa Thomas 247 Mount Pisgah Road Mount Sidney, VA 24467 Phone: 540-476-0578 Email: prof_tsquared@yahoo.com	Diane Priestly 116 Norman Davis Dr. Toano, VA 23168 Phone: 757-561-5491 Email: DMP625@aol.com
Kathy Thompson 205 Monument Avenue Harrisonburg, VA 22801 Phone: 540-058-4830 Email: thompskb@jmu.edu	
Non-Board Member Edith Blake 5137 Portsmouth Blvd. Portsmouth, VA 23701 Phone: 757-956-5535 Email: ejbwvb@aol.com Newsletter Editor	Non-Board Member Jody Smiley 901 Brattle Lane Blacksburg, VA 24060 Phone: 540-250-6149 Email: Jdsmiley29@comcast.com Vision Circulation/Website Manager

Convention Workshops

Attendees at the 2022 VSWO convention in Staunton were delighted to hear from 3 awareness session leaders

Susan Richardson, Executive Director of Valley Mission, spoke to group about the mission's work to provide shelter, support, and hope in the Staunton area since 1971. Their history is rooted in a love of Christ and a commitment to share that love with others, at a time when the people they serve need love the most. Susan was delighted to accept the love offering on behalf of Valley Mission, as well as bags of socks to be distributed to their residents.

Two speakers presented on Saturday: Sabrina Dorman-Andrew of New Creation in Harrisonburg and Judy Castele of Project Horizon in Lexington.

New Creations works creatively to counteract human trafficking, locally and globally. They operate a fair-trade shop featuring items from over 60 vendors around the globe. All proceeds from the shop are used to benefit victims of human trafficking and provide prevention education about human trafficking. Convention attendees were encouraged to "shop with a purpose" at the pop-up shop during the convention.

Finally, Judy Castele, Executive Director of Project Horizon, spoke on their work to address human trafficking on the local level. Project Horizon has worked in the Rockbridge community for 40 years with a mission of eradicating domestic, dating and sexual violence. The VSWO board chose Project Horizon as their 2023 convention project.

NEW CAMPAIGN HOPES TO BUILD WOMEN'S MINISTRIES INTO NEXT CENTURY

(From [womenoftheelca.org](https://www.womenoftheelca.org))

2122 is a \$1 million campaign for Katie's Fund that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Learn ways you can give to the campaign at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/katiesfund>

Katie's Fund is an endowment that supports ministry in three areas: leadership development, global connections and living theology. It was established in 1997 to honor the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther, raise up bold leaders for the women's organization and support bold and creative ministry for generations to come.

Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology.

Virginia Synodical Women's Organization
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Here are some projects supported by Katie's Fund in recent years:

Providing documentaries to ELCA resource centers

A workshop about bullying and outreach to youth leaders at the ELCA Youth Gathering

Enabling two young adult women to participate in the 25th Anniversary Liberia Tour.

Tanzania journey to promote fair trade coffee challenge

Young Women's Leadership Event at United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Words Matter language project, program resources of Women of the ELCA

I Believe You an Emmy-nominated documentary about domestic violence and how faith communities respond.

2018 ELCA Youth Gathering interactive exhibit to create awareness about Human Trafficking.