

“VISIONS”



A Closer Look at the Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization

Fall 2023

Please share Visions with women in your congregations that may not receive it. We no longer are mailing hard copies so we need your help sharing the news about the VSWO.



Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization 2024 Service Project

Thank you so much to the Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization for choosing **Micah Ecumenical Ministries as your 2024 Service Project!** This project will allow the Health Ministry at Micah to provide needed basic health supplies to our neighbors over the course of the next year.

Most of the items you donate will be distributed at our Health Screening Program which is held every Tuesday in our Hospitality Center. Basic health screenings are provided to our neighbors in conjunction with local nursing students. This includes an assessment of vitals, gathering of general health information and screening tools for health concerns that may need further follow up. The items you donate will improve the health and wellness of our neighbors.

The larger first aid kits that are donated will be distributed to our newly housed neighbors in their “Welcome Home” baskets. They will provide access to basic home first aid supplies that they are not receiving now.

If you or your women’s organization would like to donate items for this project, you can find a Micah Ministry Wish List on Amazon at the following link: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/161FRE53NH45?ref=wl_share



You may purchase the item(s) you want to donate to Micah directly from Amazon or any other outlet where you can get a comparable item and good price. Amazon items can be sent directly to me at: 11 Caroway Drive, Fredericksburg, Va. 22405.

Items purchased at other locations can be sent to my address, or you can arrange a drop off/delivery with someone coming through Fredericksburg. My phone number is: 540-373-4769. Or you can bring your items to the 2024 VSWO Convention next July in Norge, Virginia.

The quilts that your quilter’s groups make for Micah will provide warmth and comfort for our newly housed neighbors. They will surely feel loved by your group when wrapped in a warm homemade quilt!

Lastly, if you prefer to donate money to this project, the funds that you donate will enable our neighbors to continue to have health and wellness supplies.

If you have any questions about this exciting project, please reach out to me! My contact information is above.

With a grateful heart,

Teresa Bowers,
Health Ministry Coordinator at Micah Ecumenical Ministries, Fredericksburg

Mark Your Calendars! Save the Date: July 26-27, 2024

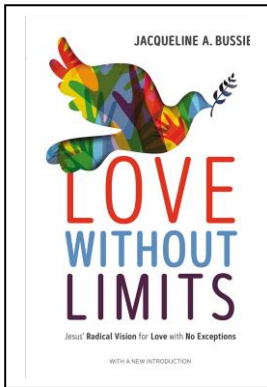
The 2024 Annual VSWO Convention will be at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church-Norge, 7479 Richmond Rd. Williamsburg, VA 23188. The dates are July 26-27, 2024. Look out for more information in future Visions, on our Facebook page, and our website.

Our convention hotel is Holiday Inn Express, Williamsburg North, 720 Lightfoot Rd., Williamsburg, VA 23188. We will let you know how to make reservations in January.

Make plans to join in the fun and fellowship.



Dates and Fundraising Information for the 2024 All Lutheran Women's Retreat



The 2024 All Lutheran Women's Retreat (ALWR) will be held on November 7-9, 2024 at the Hilton Garden Inn Richmond Innsbrook, 4050 Cox Road, Glenn Allen, Virginia. The retreat leader will be the national bestselling author Jacqueline Bussie. She is the author of the very popular book "Love Without Limits: Jesus' Radical Vision of Love With No Exceptions" which is trending across the United States and being read and discussed by book clubs. Ms. Bussie also was a Keynote Speaker this past July at the 2023 Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering in Phoenix.

More information can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/alwretreat> . For hotel information visit

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/ricibgi-hilton-garden-inn-richmond-innsbrook/>
Registration brochures will be available early 2024.

The All-Lutheran Women's Planning Committee is honored to host a nationally acclaimed author, but this opportunity does not come without the increase in site and food costs due to post-covid inflation. Your one-time gift is very important in helping us meet our \$7,500 fundraising goal which will cover the speaker expenses as well as an endowment to provide scholarships for participants who cannot afford to pay the entire registration fee. Please prayerfully consider a one-time gift. The fundraising information can be found by clicking here <https://sites.google.com/view/alwretreat/2024-fundraiser> .

Checks can be mailed to ALWR, c/o Treasurer, Carol Troxell, P.O. Box 503, Stuarts Draft, VA 24477.

Thank you, Edith!

For many years Edith Blake has been our Visions Editor. She has done an amazing job putting together articles from our board and others and also sharing some of her original poetry. As many of you know Edith is also one of the planning team members for Power in the Spirit, a big job! As you can imagine she is a busy woman so after much thought she has decided to step down as our editor. You will be missed but we know you will still be active with the VSWO in other ways. THANK YOU!



If you or you know of someone that would like to be our next Visions editor, please contact Jody Smiley, jdsmlley29@comcast.net.



2023 Awareness Session Videos Available

As promised, videos of the amazing Awareness Sessions we had at our 2023 VSWO convention are now available. A big thank you to Pastor Colleen Montgomery for putting these together.

These videos will make great programs at your circle meetings or a way to introduce women in your congregations to the VSWO. Goto vswoweelca.org for links to all three.

Micah's Ecumenical Ministries is our Love offering project for 2023-24. Their video is a wonderful way to tell folks about this ministry. The New River Conference used this video as their program. It was well received and really inspired the ladies to back to their units to encourage them to collect offerings for this project.

Have you had a Thankoffering Service or Program?

Thankofferings are a long-standing custom among Lutheran women. We give in thanksgiving for blessings received—and we do receive so many blessings, don't we? And we are so grateful. That's why we give Thankofferings. You can make an individual offering or have a program or service for your unit and make an offering as a group.



For more information about Thankofferings visit <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/thankofferings>.

Conference News



Southern Valley, Tidewater and New River conferences have all had their Fall Gatherings. Has your conference had a gathering or are planning one for the Spring? If so, please contact Carol Bailey, cobailey42@gmail.com. We want to put you on our calendar and help spread the word about your gathering.

Conference gatherings are a wonderful way to meet women from congregations near you. You can share project ideas and support one another's ministries. A VSWO representative will be present to update you on synodical and Women of the ELCA news.

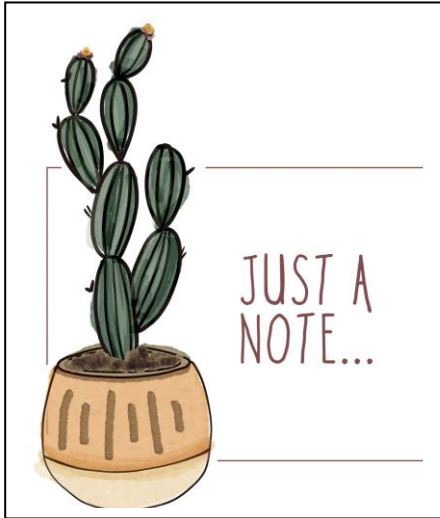
Some of our conferences do have not have planning teams in place. If you are interested in serving on a planning team again, please contact Carol. We would love to have you involved.

Matching Funds for our Thrivent Investment



At our convention this year a challenge was issued by a generous donor to match total funds donated to the VSWO Thrivent account up to \$500. You have till 12/31 to get your donation matched. We haven't quite reached the goal of \$500. Please consider making a donation. Send your checks to Judy Castele, our treasurer. Make your checks payable to the VSWO and in the memo line say "For Thrivent Investment".

Our Thrivent investment has helped fund conventions (to keep registration fees low), workshops, donations to ELCA ministries, and much more.



A Note from Lavelva

Hello!

Greetings to our amazing group of Virginia Women of the ELCA who are working together to make Christ known in our state organization and in our own communities, as well. We heard through our Bulletin of Reports from our convention in July that so many activities are taking place in our congregations; we were able to contribute to Judy Castele's Project Horizon through our Bear project, through collection of needed items, such as fidgets and paper towels, etc., and through a Love Offering of \$1513 for our 2023 focus! And, as a special treat, we were introduced to Rain, the service dog from Project Horizon, who charmed everyone.

Our focus in 2024 is Micah Ministry, located in Fredericksburg, and in this edition of Visions you will find a letter from Teresa Bowers, one of our newest board members, who is connected with this wonderful organization. It is 'owned' by 9 different churches—a truly ecumenical group. If you have not seen the presentation which Megan Cotter made in July at our convention at Roanoke College, please contact me and I will get it to by email. Teresa's letter explains how we can help all through this year to support Micah Ministry.

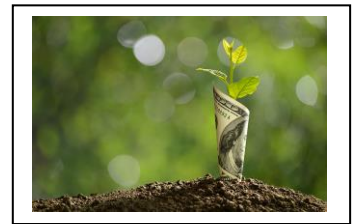
We have a full board for VSWO this year and we are excited to be working together! Our newest members are Teresa Bowers, Christ, Fredericksburg; Ashley Saunders, Muhlenberg, Harrisonburg; and Nicole Ocheltree, Salem, Mt. Sydney. They join Carol Bailey, Diane Priestley and Pat Seelenbinder; and officers, Sylvia Eley, Vice-President; JoAnn Fawley, Secretary; Judy Castele, Treasurer until January 31st; and Jody Smiley, Treasurer who will begin her term on February 1st.

Please note that we are in the planning stages for our 2024 convention, scheduled for July 26 and 27...Friday and Saturday...in Norge, which is outside of Williamsburg. We would love to see you all there!

Lavelva, President
lstevens01@verizon.net
540-320-3369

God's Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely Series from WELCA

Beginning October 7 and continuing for five weeks, Women of the ELCA offered a free, online educational series entitled God's Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely as a component of the 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years campaign. In the sessions, participants explored basic financial concepts, methods of charitable giving, biblical foundations for giving, retirement strategies and much more. A team of experts guided the explorations and invited participants into discussion. All sessions were recorded and are available for viewing. Each are about one hour in length. Here is the link to the Katie's Fund page where you can view the videos, <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/katiesfund>. Just scroll to the bottom of page. They would make great programs for all the women in your congregation.



When you open the link to Katie's Fund page take some time to learn about the fund and the difference it has made in women's lives. There is also information about the 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years campaign.

Contact Information for Your 2023-2024 Board

| Officers – term expiring 2024 | Officers – term expiring 2025 |
|--|---|
| <p>Vice President – Sylvia Eley 417 Meadow Creek Drive Chesapeake, VA 23323 Phone: 757-582-0966 Email: seley2005@msn.com Church: St. Timothy/Norfolk Conference: Tidewater Mission Justice</p> | <p>President – Lavelva Stevens 1369 Beth Scott Dr. Pulaski, VA 24301 Phone: 540-320-3369 Email: lstevens01@verizon.net Church: Holy Trinity/Wytheville Conference: Highlands</p> |
| <p>Secretary – JoAnn Fawley 6409 W. Old Mountain Road Louisa, VA 23093 Phone: 703-727-7957 Email: fawley6409@gmail.com Church: All Places Together/online Conference: Germanna Social Media Manager/Long Range Planning</p> | <p>Treasurer – Judy Castelee (Ends 1/31/2024) 726 W. 4th Street Buena Vista, VA 24416 Phone: 540-460-7376 Email: jlcasteele@comcast.net Church: Good Shepherd/Lexington Conference: Southern Valley</p> |
| Board Members – Term expiring 2024 | Board Members – Term expiring 2025 |
| <p>Nicole Ocheltree 63 Valley View Dr. Mt. Sidney, VA 24467 Phone: 540-292-2179 Email: wldptch@yahoo.com Church: Salem/Mt. Sidney Conference: Southern Valley Convention Planning</p> | <p>Carol Bailey 12706 Cavalryman Ct. Fredericksburg, VA 22407 Phone: 571-438-0273 Email: cobailey42@gmail.com Church: Resurrection/Fredericksburg Conference: Germanna VSWO Conf Coord/Long Range Planning</p> |
| <p>Diane Priestly 116 Norman Davis Dr. Toano, VA 23168 Phone: 757-561-5491 Email: DMP625@aol.com Church: Our Saviour's/Norge Conference: Peninsula Mission Discipleship/Convention Planning</p> | <p>Teresa Bowers 11 Caroway Drive Fredericksburg, VA 22405 Phone: 540-373-4769 Email: ctbowers@cox.net Church: Christ/Fredericksburg Conference: Germanna</p> |
| <p>Pat Seelenbinder 1605 Pennywhistle Arch Virginia Beach, VA 23464 Phone: 757-479-2544 Email: pmseelen@cox.net Church: Emmanuel/VA Beach Conference: Tidewater Mission Discipleship/Convention Planning</p> | <p>Ashley Saunders 420 Acme Company St. Broadway, VA 22815 Phone: 540-746-8102 Email: saunders@muhlenberglutheran.org Church: Muhlenberg/Harrisonburg Conference: Southern Valley</p> |
| <p>Visit our website, weebly.vsw.com for information and resources from the VSWO and WELCA.</p> | <p>Non-Board Member Jody Smiley, Circulation/Website Manager 901 Brattle Lane Blacksburg, VA 24060 Phone: 540-250-6149 jdsmiley29@comcast.net</p> |