

# Visions



A Closer Look at the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization

SPRING 2018

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

### Let Us Encourage

“Let us encourage.” When you hear that phrase, don't you think about your congregational unit, the women you have met, read about, or connected with through the VSWO and Women of the ELCA? I know I do.

This year we are going to explore “Let Us Encourage” using Hebrews 10:23-25 at our gathering on August 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> at Bethel Lutheran Church in Winchester. I am really excited about our theme and this year's gathering. The convention planning committee and the board have some new and exciting things planned for this year.

For starters, the voting members and the board will gather on Friday afternoon to conduct the business of the VSWO as mandated in our constitution. All are welcome (I know some are like me and really enjoy this part), but the only women required to attend are voting members, the board, and folks assisting with the business. There will be a service project for those who are arriving early and don't want to come to the business session.

On Friday evening we will begin the gathering. This is the really exciting part. Remember attending the VA Synod youth gatherings either as a group leader, chaperon – or yes, some of you may be young enough to have attended as a youth and how much fun that was. Well, with the blessing of Dave Delaney, we are going to pattern our gathering after the youth events. I am calling ours a “Youthful Event.” We will have large group with skits and lots of singing and small sessions (like our workshops in the past).

Something else new is that the board is sending an invitation to all the women pastors in the Virginia Synod to attend our gathering. The VSWO will cover all registrations fees, including the Saturday lunch. Please encourage these women to come and join us for this wonderful event.

Thanks to past boards, Risse Snelgrove, and Lisa Taglauer, we have been moving in the direction of having our business session followed by fellowship, service projects, and educational opportunities. We hope you will enjoy and be renewed by this new format. We will be asking how you think things went, so be prepared to share that with us.

Keep up with the plans as they unfold on our website, the Call to Convention, and future *Visions*.

~ Jody Smiley

**Save the Date**  
**VSWO Gathering-August 3rd and 4th**  
**Bethel Lutheran Church, Winchester**

## Tentative Schedule for VSWO Conference/Retreat

**August 3-4**

**Bethel Lutheran Church, Winchester, Virginia**

**“Let us encourage...” Hebrews 10:23-25**

### **Friday, August 3**

12:00-1:00 p.m.	Devotions, Lunch, Orientation
1:00-5:00	Business Meeting for all Voting Members; anyone may attend. Judy Castelle will present Social Statement on Women and Justice Service Project – Assembling of Health Kits
5:00-6:30	Dinner on your own
6:30-7:00	Fellowship (coffee; snacks, etc.)
7:00	Large Group Assembly Introduce Theme/ Opening Devotions Introduce Churchwide Rep (Lydia Davila)
7:30 -8:15	Session 1: Small Groups – Icebreaker Activity May include Bible stories told by storytellers, then smaller group discussion
8:15-8:30	Closing Devotions/Song

### **Saturday, August 4**

8:45-9:00 a.m.	Gathering Music
9:00-9:30	Morning Devotions Bishop Humphrey introduced; Skit(s) related to theme
9:45 – 10:45	Session Two
11:00 – 12:00	Session Three
12:15 – 1:00	Lunch
1:15 – 2:15	Session Four
2:30 – 3:30	Closing Worship



### **Triennial Resolution to Go Green**

**In support of Resolution #2 from the Tenth WELCA Triennial (Go Green 2020), and as a cost-saving effort, the VSWO Board would like to encourage voting members and participants to download the 2018 Convention Bulletin of Reports and bring to convention on a portable device. Hard copies would be available upon advanced request for \$5.00. Please let one of us know if you have concerns or questions.**

# MISSION TEAMS

## JUSTICE MISSION TEAM

*Michelle Poore-Chair; Sylvia Eley, Co-chair*

### Social Statement on Women and Justice

In 2009, the Churchwide Assembly authorized the development of a social statement on women and justice. The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ has been at work since 2012 and brought the work to a crucial stage: On November 15, 2017 it released the Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice. The comment period on the Draft is open until September 30, 2018.

The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ invites you to read and evaluate the "Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice."

-The Draft can be found at <http://www.elca.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Current-Social-Writing-Projects/Women-and-Justice/Draft>

-You can give your opinion on the social statement by filling out the response form found at [bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft](http://bit.ly/womenandjusticedraft).

You can also sponsor a hearing on the social statement for your congregation or conference. Hearings are an opportunity to gather as a group to talk about what's good in the social statement or make suggestions for changes. To sponsor a hearing, contact Judy Castelee at [jlcasteele@comcast.net](mailto:jlcasteele@comcast.net). Judy is serving as the hearing convener for the Virginia Synod.

## DISCIPLESHIP MISSION TEAM

*Linda Lowry-Chair; Shelia Sanchez, Zelda Whetzel, Judy Wilfong*

### 2018 Global Service Project

The Discipleship Mission team has decided to once again put together health kits for our sisters and brothers experiencing natural disasters and human crises. These simple kits, distributed by Lutheran World Relief, can mean so much to so many people who have lost everything. It is a wonderful way to share Christ's warmth and love.

Please collect the following items to make complete kits and bring them to Convention in August. But please do not assemble them. Kit assembly is one of the activities planned at Convention.

Each kit includes:

- 1 – Light-weight bath-sized towel ( between 20" x 40" & 52" x 27"). Dark color recommended.
- 2 – bath-sized bars of soap equaling 8 to 9 oz. Any brand, in original packaging.
- 1 – adult-size toothbrush, in original packaging \*
- 1 – sturdy comb, remove packaging.
- 1 – metal nail clipper (attached file optional).

\*Toothbrush multi packs may be used by sealing an individual toothbrush in a business- size envelope. No plastic bags or wrap.

For more information, visit <https://lwr.org/get-involved/build-kits-of-care/personal-care-kits>

---

## STEWARDSHIP MISSION TEAM

*Ellen Greene, Edith Blake—Co-chairs*

Convention is coming quickly...it is already Spring in spite of what the weather app or weather person says, and summer will be around the corner. **We would like to remind each Unit or Conference (depending on how you gathered to make the Walker Caddies) to bring one sample to Convention for the Blessing of the Caddies on Saturday. Please take the rest of them to one of your Conference area Nursing or Assisted Living or Adult Day Care Centers for their clients' use. Please remember that we will NOT be collecting or delivering these items at the Convention, but we want to know the number of Caddies made and name and of location where you delivered them!!**

**NOTE:** Before you decide to make the skid-less socks, please make sure that the facility where you plan to take them will be able use them. We have found that most places in the Tidewater area cannot use the homemade socks for safety reasons.

As you plan your Fall Gatherings, please feel free to find ways in your Communities to use your time, talents, and financial resources to support *Women And Justice*, our theme for our 2018 -2019 Fall and Spring Gatherings. Please write down what you did and plan to bring it to the 2019 Convention which is being planned for the Eastern side of the state.

# CONFERENCE NEWS

## *Happy Spring, Ladies!*

The board met on March 10, 2018. I believe we are going to have a wonderful convention in August. We will have some rewarding and fun workshops and lots of opportunities to get to know each other.

The two service projects are personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief and walker caddies for local care facilities. More information for these projects is in another article in this *Visions*. Please be sure and bring the personal care kit materials unassembled; they will be assembled at convention.

The board has decided to include the Coordinators as part of the nominating committee as we feel they know the ladies in their conferences and could assist us with this. You may be receiving a call or email from the committee chair.

Jody forwarded me the information on the Central Valley and Germanna gatherings in April. Hope you have a wonderful time.

Those with fall gatherings, please let me know the date and location after your planning meeting. The focus for this period is from Women of Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Tenth Triennial Convention regarding domestic abuse and violence and its prevention. See the article in *Visions* addressing this topic. We'd like to have all the conferences focusing on the same topic for their gatherings. This will run from Fall 2018 through Spring 2019.

Please prepare and submit your conference reports. Please send one copy by snail mail to me and one copy by email to [hkweaver@comcast.net](mailto:hkweaver@comcast.net) by May 15.

If you have any questions, please contact me.  
Bonnie Mantta, Coordinator Chair

## PERSONAL CARE KITS



Personal Care Kits are shared by Lutheran World Relief with people who have lost everything from a natural disaster or life-threatening violence. Please collect the items in your units/conferences, but do not assemble the kits; we will do that at Convention.

**We would like to have the right numbers of the items to assemble the kits as described on page 3 of this *Visions*. For example, 8 combs, towels, nail clippers, and toothbrushes, and 16 bars of soap will make 8 kits. But an assortment of 7 combs, 12 toothbrushes, 4 clippers, 10 soaps, and 2 towels will provide only 2 kits and lots of leftovers! One possibility is to receive an monetary offering in your unit and designate one or two women to shop for the needed number of each item as funds allow. Remember: don't assemble the kits ahead of time!**

## WALKER CADDIES



ADOPT A NURSING HOME IN YOUR AREA...MAKE WALKER CADDIES FOR THEM...AND BRING YOUR COUNT OF CADDIES AND ONE EXAMPLE TO THE CONVENTION. In the pockets of the Caddies you might want to add non-slip socks and Scripture Teas. Here are some Websites to help you with these ideas:

<https://mellysews.com/2014/07/walker-caddy-tutorial.html>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Non-Slip-Socks>

**How to Make Your Own Scripture Tea** - <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/190980840421465519>

## LETTER FROM BISHOP EMERITUS JIM MAUNEY

As you will remember, Bishop Mauney gave the keynote address at Convention last August, and the VSWO members voted to make a contribution toward *Forwarding Faith*. We received the following letter from Jim.

*Dear Sisters in Christ,*

*I want to thank you all for your very generous and supportive gift to the Forward Faith Campaign in my honor! What a wonderful way to do so! How important for us all to work for youth to grow in faith, to take an aggressive approach to further faith in the generations to come.*

*And the women of the synod have been faithful in such powerful ministries for generations!! Your walking in active, generous, loving ministry through the decades has done so much to bring faith to many, teach so many, brought relief to the needy, begun new missions and ministries, helped candidates enter ministry, clothed children around the world, and on and on! Thank God for you all!!!*

*That my last real presentation was with you was very special to me! May our Lord bless and keep you all as you continue to Forward Faith in so many powerful and important ways!*

*Thank you so much!*

*Yours in Christ,*

*Jim (James F. Mauney)*



**Pour Out**  
**By Edith Blake ©**

Pour out your blessings  
Showering us with gifts

Pour out your spirit  
Giving us understanding

Pour out your forgiveness  
Granting us mercy

Pour out your love  
Showing us grace

Pour out your words  
Showing us the way

Pour out your hope  
Filling us with joy

Pour out your light  
Opening our eyes

Pour out your fullness  
Releasing our burdens

Pour out your direction  
Guiding our lives

Pour out your wisdom  
Enlightening our minds

Pour out your power  
Strengthening our will

Pour out your joyfulness  
Lifting our spirit

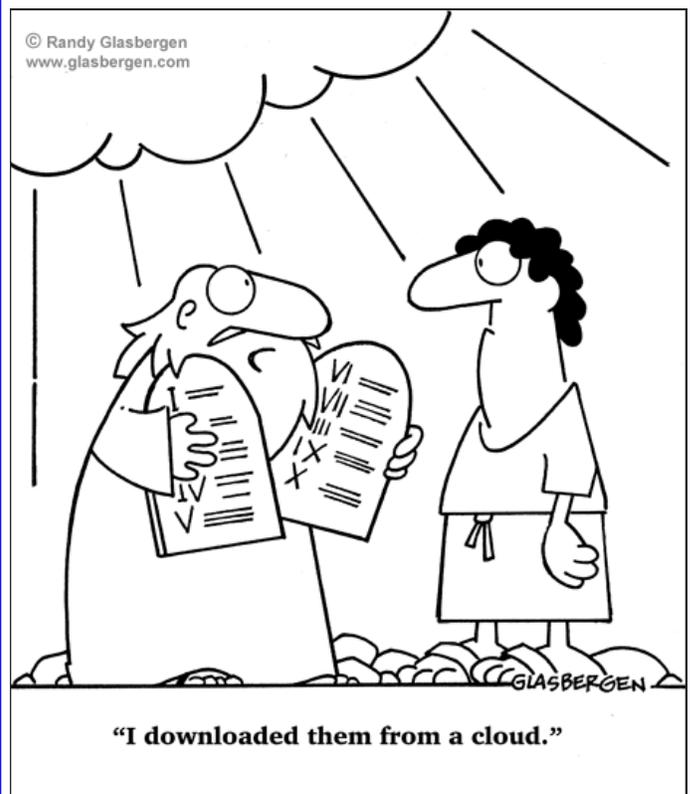
Pour out your peace  
Quieting our hearts



Note to self...

When things seem dark and hopeless, I need to remember that Christ is risen...that fact changes everything...that fact brings hope to every situation I face...the apostles thought everything was dark and hopeless after Christ died, but the news that Jesus was alive changed everything. He's alive! He's still doing miracles. Things aren't over until He says they are over.

© Note to self: Daily Reminders For The Broken Hearted by Debbie Kay



**Stay connected!** Check out our Facebook page — search for VSWO for news, updates, and inspiration. Also, please visit our website at [www.vswoweebly.com](http://www.vswoweebly.com). We will try to keep updating it. If you have something you would like posted, please send it Helen Weaver [hkweaver@comcast.net](mailto:hkweaver@comcast.net)

**Most people want to serve God,  
but only in an advisory capacity.**

## 2017-2018 VSWO Contact Information

### BOARD MEMBERS

**Jody Smiley, President**  
[jdsmiley29@comcast.net](mailto:jdsmiley29@comcast.net)

**Renée Ballentine, Vice President**  
[reneedove515@gmail.com](mailto:reneedove515@gmail.com)

**Helen Weaver, Secretary**  
[hkweaver@comcast.net](mailto:hkweaver@comcast.net)

**Edith Blake, Treasurer, Stewardship**  
[EJBWWB@aol.com](mailto:EJBWWB@aol.com)

**Sylvia Eley, Board Member, Justice Team**  
[seley2005@msn.com](mailto:seley2005@msn.com)

**Ellen Greene, Board Member, Stewardship**  
[clemgreene@aol.com](mailto:clemgreene@aol.com)

**Linda Lowry, Board Member, Discipleship Team**  
[Llowry5@embarqmail.com](mailto:Llowry5@embarqmail.com)

**Bonnie Mantta, Board Member, Conference  
Coordinator Chair**  
[bonniemantta@gmail.com](mailto:bonniemantta@gmail.com)

**Michelle Poore, Board Member, Justice team**  
[Michelle.l.poore@gmail.com](mailto:Michelle.l.poore@gmail.com)

**Zelda Whetzel, Board Member, Discipleship Team  
(no email)**

**Judy Wilfong, Board Member, Justice Team**  
[jwilfong@shentel.net](mailto:jwilfong@shentel.net)

### STEWARDSHIP OF GIFTS AND TALENTS

**Discipleship**  
**Chair**, Linda Lowry – [llowry5@embarqmail.com](mailto:llowry5@embarqmail.com)  
**Co-chair**, Zelda Whetzel – (no email)  
Shelia Sanchez – [ygshuabear@aol.com](mailto:ygshuabear@aol.com)

**Justice**  
**Chair**, Michelle Poore – [Michelle.l.poore@gmail.com](mailto:Michelle.l.poore@gmail.com)  
Co-chair, Sylvia Eley – [seley2005@msn.com](mailto:seley2005@msn.com)  
Nancy Watkins – [nanwatkins@msn.com](mailto:nanwatkins@msn.com)  
Kathy Thompson – [thompskb@jmu.edu](mailto:thompskb@jmu.edu)  
Jackie Casey – [jcb23237@gmail.com](mailto:jcb23237@gmail.com)  
Judy Casteel – [jlcasteel@comcast.net](mailto:jlcasteel@comcast.net)  
Susan Posey – [suposium@gmail.com](mailto:suposium@gmail.com)  
Carol Johnson – [sunlion7@gmail.com](mailto:sunlion7@gmail.com)

**Stewardship**  
**Chair**, Ellen Greene – [clemgreene1979@gmail.com](mailto:clemgreene1979@gmail.com)  
**Co-Chair**, Edith Blake – [EJBWWB@aol.com](mailto:EJBWWB@aol.com)  
Darlene Crumb – [Darlene.crumb@yahoo.com](mailto:Darlene.crumb@yahoo.com)  
Roxanne Harvey – [rnharveyva@verizon.net](mailto:rnharveyva@verizon.net)

**Conference Coordinator**  
Bonnie Mantta – [bonniemantta@gmail.com](mailto:bonniemantta@gmail.com)

**Convention Planning**  
**Chair**, Renée Ballentine – [reneedove515@gmail.com](mailto:reneedove515@gmail.com)  
**Co-Chair**, Judy Wifong – [jwilfong@shentel.net](mailto:jwilfong@shentel.net)

**Long Range Planning**  
Chair, Carol Bailey – [tcmtnest@comcast.net](mailto:tcmtnest@comcast.net)  
Joann Fawley – [fawley6409@gmail.com](mailto:fawley6409@gmail.com)

**Thrivent Endowment Fund**  
Chair, June Nabers – [jnabers@hotmail.com](mailto:jnabers@hotmail.com)  
Joann Fawley – [fawley6409@gmail.com](mailto:fawley6409@gmail.com)  
Judy St. Pierre – [wagstpjudy@gmail.com](mailto:wagstpjudy@gmail.com)

**Visions**  
Editor, Carol Johnson – [sunlion7@gmail.com](mailto:sunlion7@gmail.com)  
Circulation Manager, Genie Brown –  
[Grandmag2@cox.net](mailto:Grandmag2@cox.net)

Virginia Synodical Women's Organization  
Genie Brown  
Visions Circulation Manager  
5517 South Village Drive  
Roanoke, VA 24018

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit# 212  
Roanoke VA

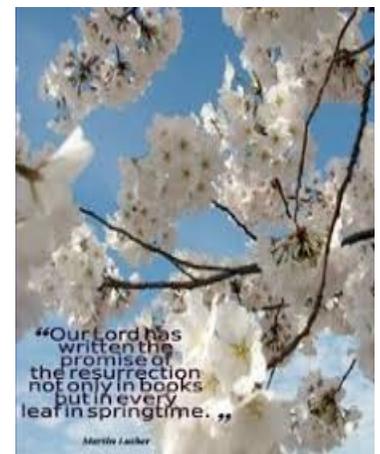
† With rare exceptions, Passover and Easter are celebrated in the same week. This is no surprise, of course, because Jesus was celebrating Passover with his disciples when He was betrayed by Judas. In the Passover Seder, participants are reminded of Israel's deliverance from slavery by the hand of God. The meal includes three pieces of matzo (unleavened bread) which are placed in a special pouch containing three compartments. The leader of the Seder breaks the middle matzo in two and hides half of it (the *afikomen*) in a white linen cloth until the end of the meal. After the children finish their meal, they search throughout the house for the afikomen – and the one who finds it receives a reward in exchange for returning it.

Interestingly, “afikomen” is not a Hebrew word, but comes from a Greek word loosely translated as “that which comes after.” Now granted, this may be stretching the metaphor a bit, and if so, I hope you’ll forgive me. But as I thought about that parallel, I thought further: The matzo is pierced and striped, reminding us that Jesus “was wounded for our transgressions” and “by His stripes we are healed.” In the Seder tradition, only the middle matzo is broken – as the Son, the central figure in the Trinity, was broken for us. The afikomen, like Jesus’s body, is wrapped in linen before being “hidden.” And here is the final parallel: just as the afikomen is searched out and found by the children, so Jesus can be found through becoming “like a little child.”

In the Seder, a piece of the matzo is the last thing eaten, and many consider it a symbol of salvation in the future. Jesus is He who comes “after” – the fulfillment of the promise of deliverance and salvation.

~ Carol Johnson

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!



Women of the  
**ELCA**