



# THE ECHO

NW Washington Synodical Women's Organization

NOVEMBER 2023



## Purpose Statement

As a community of women **created** in the image of God,  
**called** to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and **empowered** by the Holy Spirit,  
we commit ourselves to

**Grow** in faith

**Affirm** our gifts

**Support** one another in our callings,

**Engage** in ministry and action, and

**Promote** healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

## Mission Statement

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

## COMING UP

Our next SWO convention  
will be in October 2025

The **next Triennial** is in  
Des Moines, IA in 2026.



## *Greetings to my Northwest Washington SWO Sisters in Christ!*

This has been a busy time for our synod WELCA group these past three months! We finalized and executed our October convention after seven months of planning...and it was definitely worth the efforts of the board and other very helpful volunteers!

Some great comments and questions came from our guest speaker that need repeating. “Who helped you become a woman of faith?” “We all have a journey, a story, but it is not always linear.” “What is God calling you to be and to do in your work? In your community? Through your faith life?” “How can we be the church in the world?” Hard questions...maybe...we can ask ourselves these questions and work through the answers at our pace. God will be right by our side as long as it takes.

Over twenty-five of our synod’s women attended the twelfth Triennial in Phoenix in September...notice the front cover! It was three-and-a-half days of inspiration-filled guest speakers, bible study leaders, and workshops...so many that you had to make personal choices to fit your individual needs! One of my take-aways was writing your **Hope Recipe** and the possibility of rewriting it as you grew in your faith. I appreciated the following analogies that the speaker used:

“When you’re young, hope is like skittles—colorful, many choices and for many--fun to eat.”

“When you’re older, hope is like kale—good for you, very chewy and green.”

“Authentic hope shows the work.”

“Real hope makes us sweat...gets us dirty.”

“Hope is about holding hands through all the hurt.”

“Hope is wearing your life preserver until you feel safe.”

Know that you can rewrite your hope recipe...as you change, try a new recipe every now and then!

The **next triennial** is in Des Moines, IA in 2026.  
I hope to see more of you there with me!

I have appreciated working with “like-minded” women from our synod board these past two years;

I have learned that our NW WA Synod has an abundance of information to help any Lutheran church or organization within the church;

I have leaned on my own church and some of its people for help and inspiration; and I have been thankful for this opportunity that has allowed me to grow in my faith.

Please stay involved with your church, your local cluster of churches and with our synod WELCA group to help support you in your faith journey, wherever it may take you!

Blessings to each of you as you continue on your journey!

~*Twyla Lucas*, president of the NW WA Synod #1B



## “Just Love” 2023 Triennial Reflections



Attending the 12th Triennial Gathering for the first time, Karen Fuentes and Joy Jones, two of our three scholarship recipients, who reflected on their experiences. Due to an illness, our third recipient, Tina Georgeson, was unable to attend the triennial. Also included are reflections by Millie Fosberg and Janice Stepp.

### A Healing of My Soul

This gathering of all these amazing women who have survived the unthinkable. Who have shared from their inner being, their Truth. The deep connection to others, the earth and all its creations.

Their stories of pain and suffering and the forgiveness that sets you free. Forgiveness is Life changing, soul altering.

We bear good fruit when we share our hearts.



Joy Jones, Peace Lutheran Church, Silvana

### Just Love - Open Our Eyes, Lord

It is with gratitude for the scholarship that you all awarded to me that I take a few moments to write about my trip as a first timer to the Triennial gathering in Phoenix, Arizona. I had the wonderful opportunity to take my 14-year-old daughter, Phoebe. We went with a group of women from our church including my sister-in-law, Mary. The theme of the conference was Just Love. Take that as you will: love justly, just love alone, or just love, like “just do it”!

The weekend began and ended with large group worship which is always very moving. Sandwiched in between were some heavy topics delivered by a variety of women & young women in some exceptional ways. It is no secret to any of us that we live in a sinful world, but a look under the microscope opens our eyes. Human trafficking and racial tensions & misunderstandings & ignorance of those issues were addressed. Some of those racial tensions even happened at the conference, sadly.

We delved into God’s word and heard some amazing preaching. We are slow and running behind God’s “Grace-full” JUST love. It is so evident that we need to catch up to the Lord and the Lord’s vision. Open our eyes, Lord Jesus!

*Karen Fuentes, Peace Lutheran Church, Silvana*

**Triennial 2023 was a Spirit filled Gathering of Women**, with inspiring speakers, meaningful worship, bible studies, workshops and most especially conversations with friends. Messages spoke of HOPE and HEALING that comes from knowing and trusting Jesus Christ and God. Telling our stories to our children, families, and friends, while acknowledging the wrongs done to communities of people through systemic inequities based on race, ethnicity and sex was a call for action.

*Janice Stepp*



**I was blessed to attend the 2023 Twelfth Triennial Convention** in Phoenix Arizona as a first-time voting member. We spent 2 ½ days doing the business of WELCA, hearing reports, making business decisions, affirming the actions of the current Board, and voting for the new officers and board members that will serve WELCA for the next three years.

During our time together we worked through changes to the Constitution and Bylaws as recommended by the Executive Board. Five out of six Proposals passed and one failed. We also worked through eight memorials. A memorial is a request for action brought from one Synodical unit of WELCA for consideration by WELCA. I will encourage you to go to [WELCA.org](http://WELCA.org) to find more details on these actions.

Following the closing of the business meeting, it was off to join 1000 other women from all over the country and start the Gathering! What a Party! In some ways this was like a family reunion for women that had been to other gatherings. For me, as a first timer, I was so busy looking around at all the displays and representatives from places and agencies I had heard of all my Lutheran life. Oh, and a few I had never heard of! What a perfect name for this room of displays, "The Lab". One of my favorites was of course the Lutheran World Relief space. Women from all around the country were busy sewing and tying quilts that when completed would be sent to places of deep need. Most of you will be familiar with this from your own Congregation. I could see the hands of my mother and grandmother working the fabric into warm blankets, ready to wrap those in need with love.

Our Keynote speakers and session leaders had so much to share. Something for everyone. We learned about how we can do a better job loving without limits, how to take care of ourselves and how important it is to learn about our Indigenous brothers and sisters and the rich history and stewardship of this place we call home. There was never a boring moment, please consider this opportunity and add it to your bucket list!

*Millie Fosberg*

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR OCTOBER 2023 CONVENTION

Fifty women came together to listen, share, sing, worship and enjoy the fellowship of other Lutherans during the day's event held at Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Everett, on October 21, 2023.

Our convention was partially funded by a \$1000 grant from Katie's Fund from our churchwide office that each WELCA synod received this year.

We chose this area of Living Theology and asked Beth Lewis to speak on the topic "Got Faith?" She elaborated on our individual faith journeys, being called to serve, and sharing our faith with others. Our speaker and board selected Faith Family Village (pallet housing for families in transition in Everett) as our non-project for both physical products and offering donations. More than \$900 was donated to this facility with the same amount sent to our churchwide organization. And we elected the 2023-2025 SWO board (with four returning members for additional terms as well as five new members starting their first terms!) I will say that our 2023 convention was a SUCCESS!

As a first-time attendee at the conference, I felt welcomed from the get-go. Beth Lewis is an engaging, enthusiastic speaker and her topic "Got Faith?" was thought provoking and well-timed. It was enlightening to listen and share our faith journey in a small group setting as well as hearing Beth's talk on the many ways we may be called to serve and how we can share our time and talents within our local and global communities.

**Linda Rudy**, newly elected board member-at-large

Our NW WA Synodical Women's convention was great as expected. With the theme of "Got Faith?", I went away feeling very convicted about the sharing of my faith. One of the "side notes" of being together as a church body is seeing old friends and making new ones. The best part for me was seeing my choir director from the church I grew up in. She was the choir director there for 35 years. I was in her choir from first grade through high school. It was so great to see her and re-connect.

**Sandra Albertson**, board member-at-large for two terms

As the secretary of our NW WA Synodical Women's Board I am excited and thankful for the newest members of our board who agreed to be nominated and were elected: Linda Rudy, Roxana Boroujerdi, Millie Fosberg, Kelly Apling, and Janice Stepp. I'm grateful also for Twyla Lucas and Tina Georgeson who agreed to serve for another term. We had 54 women registered to attend. This gives me hope for the continued opportunity for us to serve the people in our synod and spread the good news. Our Speaker, Beth Lewis, helped us reflect on our Faith journey. Her suggestion that we consider asking the sales clerk or wait staff if we can pray for them was a novel thought for us to consider. The story of the Faith Family Village is a wonderful demonstration of how a few inspired individuals came together and accomplished this wonderful way to provide for their unhoused neighbors. The women who attended gave generously to this servant project.

**Jackie Bacus**, beginning her second term as secretary

And from the "Got Faith?" evaluation sheets:

"My faith journey caused reflection. I loved thinking about how I need to serve where I am."

"A highlight for me was meeting new friends around the table."

"Wonderful to see the Faith Family Village display."

"Always great to sing with other Lutherans."

"Visiting with sisters in Christ from other churches."

"Listening to other ladies talk about their faith journeys."

"The feeling of community...meeting new friends and reuniting with old friends."

"Sharing my hopes, faith journey and components with table mates."

"Seeing the many women of faith gathered together for fellowship and enlightenment."

**FYI** – Our next SWO convention will be in October 2025, with the actual date to be announced next year!



## NW WA #1B SWO 2023-2025 Board



SWO Board L to R: Millie Fosberg, Roxana Boroujerdi, Kelly Apling, Janice Stepp, Linda Rudy, Jackie Bacus, Twyla Lucas. Not pictured are Tina Georgeson, and Gaye Rodriguey.

### NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

#### **Kelly Apling**

I came to work at Trinity Lutheran Church & Schools in 2015 as the Ministry Assistant in the church office. I happily assist with worship volunteer scheduling, planning and various office tasks. Upon completion of the training, I am proud to now serve as a Stephen Minister with some of my fellow Trinity members.

Outside of work and church I enjoy crafting, cooking, and watching sports with my husband. I enjoy spending time with family and friends, watching movies and reading.

I am excited and honored to be a part of the NW WELCA group and am looking forward to getting to know the fabulous women that are a part of it also.

#### **Millie Fosberg**

I have been a Lutheran for as long as I can remember. I was raised at Faith Lutheran Church in Redmond Washington, and eventually found my way to Burlington Lutheran. My strongest memories of being a member of WELCA were during my time at Faith. I later took a job that required I travel, and so I was unable to devote much time to WELCA. As I get older and have more time at home, I find I really enjoy being involved. So much to learn and so many ways to grow!

I have been active in Church Leadership, both at the Congregational level and the Synod Level. I love church governance and really look forward to my time as a member of the SWO, NWWA board. We have much to do, and I look forward to working with all of you!

#### **Janice Stepp**

I am a Child of God, a retired widow, a busy volunteer living in Mount Vernon, and a mother of two wonderful daughters, Melissa, a Glass Artist/Instructor, and Courtney, an educator teaching Kindergarten in Renton. I have a heart and passion for W.E.L.C.A. and the E.L.C.A.. I enjoy bible studies, quilting, crocheting, traveling, sharing hospitality with family and friends as well as walking in my community.

By serving on the SWO board I hope that I may be an encourager to women of all ages to find their gifts while using them to the betterment of humanity around the world.

#### **Linda Rudy**

I was born and raised in Bellingham living there until 1979 when my husband, Andy, was transferred to Bellevue. We spent the next 17 years in Renton before moving to Woodinville then retiring in the Burlington/Mount Vernon area in 2000. We have 2 daughters, 5 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren. My background is in finance, retiring as a cost accounting manager for Boeing then as a small business owner and now as a volunteer. I have served as treasurer for 2 churches and 3 non-profits and am currently the financial secretary for my home church – Burlington Lutheran.



### **From the Bishop:**

We were in a car heading to the Sahara Desert. The weather was changing. I looked out the window and, seeing a dark mass in the distance, said to the driver, “Do you know what a tornado is?” He didn’t respond. But in a few short moments, we skidded to a stop on the side of the road. There was no visibility, wind was swirling around us. Rain and sand and rocks were pelting the car. And then the car windows broke from the pressure of the storm. We were suddenly being blown around and all of us in the car were showered with rain and sand and rocks and glass. We huddled in our seats, shocked by the ferociousness of the weather around us and fearful of what was happening.

When I look at our world right now, I confess I feel much the same as I did on that day - like I’m huddling in my seat, shocked by the ferociousness of the wind and fearful of what is happening.

In our world, the climate continues to change and people and the very earth are suffering. We continue to harm this planet that God created for us and for all creatures and plants.

In our Holy Land, as I write this in the middle of November, we hear of Palestinian Christian families fleeing, children crying, hunger and desperation, churches being bombed and hospitals being attacked. In our Holy Land, we hear of violence against the Jewish people, kidnapping of children and old people, and the threat of death.

In our country, there are those who are conflating Christianity with patriotism, those who are moving against Democracy and towards authoritarianism, gun violence continues unabated, legislators refuse to do their work and instead look after their own best interests. There is continued racism in our institutions, polarization, refusal to listen to each other, and more.

In the ELCA, we forget that we are gathering for the sake of Jesus and for those desperate to hear God’s Word of forgiveness, love, and grace. We try to prop up institutional ideas rather than living into the Spirit of Christ. We would rather live in the “what once was” rather than the advent of something beyond our imaginations (but not God’s).

Truly, the storms seem strong and fierce.  
And yet ... and yet ...

In this time, when we not only are living in these swirling squalls, we are called, as people of faith, to remember and trust how God has worked, and continues to work, in this world. We are called to tell the stories of God’s faithfulness again. For in the beginning, through God’s Word, chaos became the heavens and the earth. Later, Moses saw God in fire. In the story of Job, when Job questioned God’s faithfulness, God replied, referring to the stars, ‘Can you bind the chains of the Pleiades, or loose the cords of Orion?’ When Abraham fought the storm of sacrificing his son, God brought through the darkness a ram. When a country was occupied by Rome, power was held by a few, voices were silenced, and hope seemed fleeting, a young girl became pregnant and sang. A young couple sought shelter far from home.

In a night of storms, one star shone bright. In a world of desolation, a baby’s cry was heard.

In this stormy time, in this time of deep shadows and unknowns, in this time of memory and hope, in this Advent and Christmas time, together we lift our voices in and sing:

*O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!  
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by.  
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light;  
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.*

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray;  
cast out our sin and enter in; be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, our Lord Emmanuel!*

Dear Beloveds of God, I wish you Advent and Christmas blessings and hope.

+ Bishop Shelley Bryan Wee / [bishop@lutheransnw.org](mailto:bishop@lutheransnw.org)

## FAITHFUL FRIENDS

This is a new program for regular supporters and women who would like to give regularly by automatic withdrawal from their checking account or charge to their credit card. These gifts support the Women of ELCA General Fund and allow quick action and flexibility to respond where needed. Send a voided check with a note saying: *"I want to join FAITHFUL FRIENDS of the Women of the ELCA, please deduct my recurring gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$10 or above) from my checking account on the 15th of the month. My voided check is enclosed."*

OR: Rather than sending a voided check, state on paper the type of credit card (Visa/MC etc), credit card number, Exp. date, print name as it appears on the card, address, city, state and zip and your signature.

Mail to: Women of the ELCA Faithful Friends  
ELCA Gift Processing Center  
PO Box 1809  
Merrifield, VA 22116-8009

OR: join online at [welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline](http://welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline)



### Offering Form A

For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
for offerings to SYNODICAL TREASURER

Use Form A to submit **Regular Offerings** and **SWO Convention Offerings** to your Synodical Women's Organization. Make check payable to "Women of the ELCA." **Mail form with check to your synodical treasurer.** For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730.

DATE	
CONGREGATION	CONGREGATION NUMBER
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER NAME
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>REGULAR OFFERING</b>	\$
<b>SWO CONVENTION OFFERING</b>	\$
<b>CONFERENCE OR CLUSTER OFFERING*</b>	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$

\* It is recommended that at least 50% of any cluster or conference offering be sent to the synodical treasurer to be passed on in full to the churchwide women's organization. Use this line if you are handling the offering from a cluster or conference event.

ELCAWO1021



### Offering Form B

For use by CONGREGATIONAL UNITS  
for offerings to CHURCHWIDE

Use Form B for **Thankofferings**, **Where Needed Most**, **Katie's Fund**, **Special Offerings**, and other **Designated Gifts**, including gifts to other ELCA ministries. Make check payable to "Women of the ELCA." For more information, please call 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2730 or go online to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).

**Mail form with check to: Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.**

DATE	
CONGREGATION	CONGREGATION NUMBER
CONGREGATION CITY/STATE	ZIPCODE REG/SYNOD
UNIT TREASURER NAME	PHONE NUMBER
ADDRESS	EMAIL
CITY/STATE	ZIP

DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
WOG0420 <b>THANKOFFERING</b>	\$
DESIGNATED GIFTS & SPECIAL OFFERINGS (PLEASE SPECIFY)	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$



# NW Washington Synodical Women's Organization Board 2023–2024

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The **synodical women's organizations** (SWOs) establish a partnership with units in their geographic areas and with the churchwide women's organization. SWOs exist to support women of the ELCA. Each SWO has a board whose members are elected at an annual or biennial convention by voting members from units.

NW Washington  
Synodical Women's Organization  
c/o 8208 18th Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98115

**ECHO: This is your newsletter.**

Share the news so others can rejoice with you. The ECHO provides information and news about Women of the ELCA to the Congregational Units of the NW Washington Synod of the ELCA. News about upcoming events, celebrations, activities, meetings and unit officers (and photographs) may be submitted for consideration for use in the ECHO by sending to the editor's address listed below.

Copies are sent to each NW WA congregation by email. A PDF copy is also sent to every woman who has given us an email address. For those who receive a hard copy by posted mail, we request a yearly subscription fee of \$5 to cover the cost of printing and postage. Please send subscription renewal checks payable to NW WA SWO to: Gaye Rodriguey, PO Box 219, Coupeville, WA 98239

If you received a printed copy and would prefer to receive one by email, send your request to Misi.

ECHO Editor: Misi French  
Submit articles and photos at [elca.swo@gmail.com](mailto:elca.swo@gmail.com)



NW Washington Synodical Women's Organization