

# SNOW Newsletter

## From the Desk of the President

### Special points of interest:

- Convention Schedule
- Bold Women Make POT PIES
- Leadership Training
- Triennial Gathering
- Note from the Editor
- Forms for First Timers and Convention Registration
- Women's Retreat



Greetings, Dear Sisters in Christ, Summer is upon us, as are the flies, ticks, mosquitos and severe weather! Stay safe! When my convention committee and I first met with the ladies at First Lutheran in Alexandria to set the wheels in motion for our annual convention it seemed eons away, and here it is nearly September! I hope you are planning to attend (September 19 & 20) and have already filled out and mailed your registration. We have an informative and educationally planned time with three break-out speakers and our key note speaker, Jennifer Hockenbery, who is the Interim Executive Director of the Women of the ELCA. If you have misplaced your registration form it is available on the NWMN Synod website.

Our board is requesting that each unit bring gift cards which will replace any sort of hands on project during the convention. Those cards will be divided equally between our three breakout speakers for them to distribute to their clients as they see fit. You are invited to bring one or more cards (maximum of \$25 per card) keeping in mind the scope of miles our synod covers when purchasing the cards as not all retailers are located in all of our communities. That being said, we are again asking you to consider donating one or more theme baskets to our silent auction to be held throughout the course of the convention. Monies from the auction proceeds are used to help offset costs for those attending the Triennial. We have had such a wonderful response to this part of the convention in the past. It seems there is a theme basket for every interest under the sun. Come prepared for the fun and let the bidding begin!

My communications chairperson, Julie Paulson, is working diligently with our synod contact, who is the individual actually responsible for posting items on the site, to improve this means of communicating with you. She is also working on re-establishing our Facebook page. I hope that most of you are regularly looking at the site, and opening emails that are sent to you. I know some of you were not part of the business world and not accustomed to checking emails daily, and daily is perhaps not necessary but I encourage you to do so regularly. It is financially unfeasible for us to use regular mail to distribute information, so electronically is the next best thing. Bear with us as we continually strive to make improvements.

We have our Leadership Training, which is open to all women, scheduled for November 1st at Concordia Lutheran Church in Fertile from 9:30 to 3:00 PM. Pastor Jill Steichen will be leading us in an informative day. Come meet the board members in a small setting and hear Pastor Jill! All are welcome regardless of your role in your local WELCA group.

And finally, my education piece. Our acronym, WELCA, is often misunderstood. I think most of us know that it stands for Women of the ELCA, but most often it is associated with that group of women who meet on a regular basis, have a Bible Study, conduct a business meeting, discuss possible projects, have lunch and go home. And yes it is, BUT it is "Women of the ELCA" Every single woman who is a member of an ELCA congregation is a part of WELCA. Throughout this year I have heard from several congregations "We don't have WELCA anymore". I submit, "Yes, you do!" Perhaps you

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## President's Letter Continued

operate under a different name. Maybe you are the Mission Quilters, maybe you are the church Care and Share Committee, maybe you don't even have an official name but I venture to say there is not a Lutheran congregation that doesn't have that faithful group of women who step up when needed. We need to recognize that the same old format is not necessarily attractive to younger women who we need to engage. Let's think and plan outside of the box. Know that you are invited, welcome, and a most important component of the greater WELCA organization. We need you, your ideas, and your participation.

Blessings to all,

Carol Balk  
SWO President



## OUR MISSION

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

## OUR PURPOSE

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.

**Saved to Love, Serve & Teach!**

EMBRACE YOUR MISSION,  
WOMEN OF FAITH!

**LEADERSHIP TRAINING DAY**

**SAT. NOV. 1, 2025 9:30-3:00**

CONCORDIA LUTHERAN CHURCH  
100 JEFFERSON AVE. SW  
FERTILE, MN 56540

**GUEST SPEAKER: PASTOR JILL STEICHEN**  
**CREATIVE ACTIVITY: LINDA STROMSTAD**

IF YOU ARE IN A LEADERSHIP POSITION IN YOUR UNIT,  
CONFERENCE OR SYNOD...THIS DAY IS FOR YOU!

JOB DESCRIPTIONS WILL BE REVIEWED SO THAT YOU  
WILL BE BETTER INFORMED ABOUT YOUR  
RESPONSIBILITIES.

**FREE OF CHARGE!**  
**LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED**

RSVP BY OCT. 15TH TO:  
MARLENE BLOCK (SWO BOARD MEMBER)  
marleneb@gvtel.com or 218-289-4046

## Silent Auction



Once again we will offer a silent auction at the NW MN SWO Convention on September 19 and 20.

All WELCA units are encouraged to create baskets to contribute to this auction. The baskets need not be large. Better to have more small baskets that are less expensive than one extra-large one. Popular themes for this auction have been: baby, gardening, spa, popcorn/movie night, chocolates, homemade items, fresh vegetables. Proceeds from the auction will help to defray costs for women to attend the upcoming Triennial Convention in Des Moines, Iowa in 2026. Auction items may be brought to the convention on Friday, September 19, or Saturday morning.



## SIGN UP FOR DAILY GRACE

Daily Grace is an on-the-go companion for your journey, offering a faith reflection every day. Encounter God's extravagant, boundless and often surprising grace by signing up for a daily email message. You can also download the newly updated app for your IOS and Android devices.



# BOLD WOMEN'S DAY—CHICKEN POT PIE!



**Cooks in the Kitchen:**  
Sharon Bugge, Deb Mostrom  
and Virginia Anderson

Bold Women's Day—observed the first Sunday of March— celebrates all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Some women are bold in their unceasing prayers. Other women are bold in their service to those in need. Still other women are bold in their advocacy or through their hospitality. Whether we live out our bold story of faith in the workplace, family home or community, our faith compels us to make a difference in the lives of others. It's all about living out our baptismal call, about being a disciple of Christ.

For the past three years, in recognition of hospitality on Bold Women Sunday, the WELCA ladies of St. Pauli Lutheran Church in rural Thief River Falls have made a supper for people in the neighborhood around Valentine's Day – those who live alone or have experienced a health issue. The first two years we made chicken dumpling soup. This year,

for a change of pace, we opted for chicken pot pie.

The ladies began cutting up precooked chicken, chopping, shredding, dicing and stirring vegetables at 10:00 am. We had three batches going – and discovered that the large burner on one of the stoves had burned out. (This has subsequently been repaired – whew!) After lunch, it was time to fill the individual containers, roll out the puff pastry, fit a piece on each top, and pop them into the ovens. We also made fresh garlic toast and rounded out the meals with homemade cookies, candy and a Valentine's Day card made by our Sunday School children.

We began boxing at 3:00 and then divided ourselves into four teams who drove around the country delivering boxes to 18 households. Eleven of these were single packages and eight were for two persons, a total of 27 pot pies. We also made pies for each of the cooks to bring home for their own suppers.



**St. Pauli's Bold Women**

Kathy Alberg, Deb Mostrom, Faye Auchenpaugh, Jan Strandlie, Sharon Bugge, Virginia Anderson and Cindy Cedergren



## In-Kind Gifts



**GIFT CARD**

Please bring gift cards for area charities. The gift cards can be in any amount from major stores like Target, Walmart, gas companies, major grocery stores, etc.



## Convention Schedule

Date	Time	Event
Friday	12:00 - 1:00 PM	Registration
	1:00 - 4:30 PM	Business Meeting
	4:45 - 5:00 PM	Devotions by First Lutheran Church
	5:00 - 6:00 PM	Banquet Catered by Pioneer Grill

Saturday	8:00 - 9:00 AM	Registration & Coffee
	9:00 - 9:30 AM	Welcome and Opening Devotions
	9:30 - 10:30 AM	Bible Study with Pastor Rebel Hurd
	10:30 - 10:45 AM	Break
	10:45 - 12:00 Noon	Keynote Speaker - Jennifer Hockenbery
	Noon - 1:00 PM	Lunch Catered by Luther Crest
	1:00 - 1:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
	1:45 - 2:00 PM	Break
	2:00 - 2:45 PM	Breakout Sessions
	2:45 PM	Mary Magdalene Awards Presentation
	3:00 PM	Closing Worship with Bishop Bill Tesch



**7th INNING STRETCH**  
**Sunday, October 5, 2025**  
**3:00 pm**  
**St. Pauli Church**  
**11015 - 170th Ave. NE**  
**Thief River Falls, MN**

Don't miss this fun-filled afternoon with Steve Larson, collector of baseball and other trading cards. Steve grew up in Thief River Falls and his energy and knowledge, not to mention his great singing voice.

This is a program you won't want to miss.  
**FREEWILL OFFERING**

With all proceeds going to local and national charities  
 Wear Your Favorite Baseball Cap

Refreshments after include all the baseball favorites:  
 hot dogs, peanuts and Crackerjacks!

## A Note from the Editor

When I was on the Executive Board, I had the opportunity to travel to many Synodical Conventions. One of them I attended was the Rocky Mountain Synod. During lunch, I asked the women at the table, "What can we do to bring in the younger generation, what appeals to them?" One of the women at the table, who was just elected to their synodical board shared what was working for her church group.

They meet once a month at 5:30 pm on their way home from work for 1 hour to have a short devotion, and work on a project, like collecting non perishable items for the food shelf, or collecting items for LWR Kits and putting them together. At 6:30, those who would like to continue with fellowship meet at a restaurant for supper.

The idea is to get women who can commit to 1 hour of their time each month to do a project of the group's choosing. No long meetings or programs, just fellowship while working on a project either for the community or beyond.

CHECK OUT THE  
 WEBSITE FOR FALL  
 GATHERING DATES  
 AND TIMES AT:  
[www.nwmnsynod.org/  
 pages/swo-events](http://www.nwmnsynod.org/pages/swo-events)



**Mark Your  
 Calendar**  
**SNOW Newsletter  
 Deadline**  
**Sept. 30, 2025**



## Registration for the Triennial Gathering Opens July 16



july 16-19, 2026 ✨ des moines, iowa

### Join us at the 2026 Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa!

July 16-19, 2026

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is “I Am Worthy,” based on Psalm 139:14: “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” This statement serves as a reminder of God’s promise to be with us, even in times of devastation and division. By repeating the phrase “I am worthy,” we can recognize the Holy Spirit’s ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation opens up opportunities for healing and restoration within ourselves, our church, society, and the world. When we declare, “I am worthy,” we align ourselves with God’s promises. There is great power in our resolve.

Learn more about the 2026 Women of the ELCA Gathering at the website: <https://welcatg.org>.



Pastor Ahola Kelly will lead us in the morning, along with Pastor Salim who recently returned from visiting our sister Synod in India. We will have food, music, and activities to fill out the day. It is just a day to get together with other Christian women and give praise to God! We hope many of you will be able to join us.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

HOME CONGREGATION: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

COST: \$30. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WOMEN OF THE ELCA.  
PLEASE MAIL REGISTRATION FORM AND CHECK BY 8/5/ 2025

TO: TERRY PIPHO, 323 - 49 AVE SW, MOORHEAD, MN 56560

**Trinity Point on Maple Lake**  
**15577 N TRINITY POINT RD SE**  
**MENTOR, MN 56736**

**August 19, 2025**  
**8:30 AM—3:00 PM**

Women of the **ELCA** 



**First Timer's Grant Application  
NW MN SWO Annual Convention**

Convention registration and lodging will be paid by the NW MN SWO with the local congregational unit responsible for transportation.

**Selection Criteria:**

- The woman has never attended a SWO Convention.
- Complete the question below of why you would like to attend the convention.
- Each congregational unit can have only one applicant.  
More can apply, but we are limited to only 10 scholarships.
- The woman may or may not serve as a voting delegate, but is encouraged to attend the business meeting, as a learning experience.

**Selection Procedure:**

- All applications should be sent to the address below and a committee, appointed by the SWO President, comprised of board members, will review each application.
- All applications are due one month prior to the convention.
- The applicants who are chosen, based on the above criteria, will receive a phone call and letter informing her of the scholarship.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Congregational Unit and Town \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Interests \_\_\_\_\_

Why you would like to attend the Gathering \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

(Use the back of page if necessary.)

**Deadline is August 1, 2025**

Return to: Pamela Bowman, SWO Secretary  
1817 Aspen Lane  
Fergus Falls MN 56537  
[49pnelson@gmail.com](mailto:49pnelson@gmail.com)  
701-789-0380

Updated 02/2025



**Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization Convention  
September 19 & 20, 2025 @ FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1655 – 18<sup>TH</sup> AVE EAST, ALEXANDRIA, MN 56308**

**Convention Registration – ALL ATTENDEES MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM**

**EARLY .. Registration due by August 15, 2025**

**All registrations must be received by September 1st**

**NO CASH... CHECKS ONLY.... PAYABLE TO: NW MN SWO**

All registrations MUST be postmarked on or before due dates. **Full payment** is required with registration form. No refunds after September 1<sup>st</sup>, however registrations are transferable.

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM ... WITH CHECK TO:

NWMN SWO CONVENTION

Attn: Luella Thom

PO Box 103

Carlos, MN 56319

Phone: 320-815-7701

Email: Thom17@wisper-wireless.com

**\*\*\* Please make your own hotel reservations. See attached list**

**PLEASE PRINT:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Conference # \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Congregation \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

Are you the contact for your Congregation Unit? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Voting Member (1 per Congregation) \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Voting \_\_\_\_\_ Conference Officer

***Please register early to save money and facility Convention Planning!!***

***If postmarked before August 15***

***If postmarked after August 15***

\_\_\_\_ Friday & Saturday \$100.00 \$ 125.00

I will be attending banquet: Friday: \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

**Please indicate any special dietary needs:** \_\_\_\_\_

**For Office use only: Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check #** \_\_\_\_\_ **Amt:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Northwestern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization of the ELCA

NW MN SNOW Newsletter

Lois Bylund, Editor

1911 19th Street S

Moorhead, MN 56560

Cell: 701-261-3481

E-mail: [snoweditor@gmail.com](mailto:snoweditor@gmail.com)



Northwestern Minnesota Synod  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Women of the  
**ELCA**

| **37th Annual Convention**



**September  
19-20**

### GUEST SPEAKERS



**Jennifer Hockenbery**  
*Interim Executive Director of  
Women of the ELCA*



**First Lutheran Church  
Alexandria, MN**

**How to be an  
Authentic  
Woman of  
God Today**



More information: Luella Thom  
**320-815-7701**