

River Channels

Newsletter of the Southeast Minnesota Synodical Women's
Organization

May 15, 2026

Issue 148



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DATES TO REMEMBER

- August 31, 2026 - end date for 2029 Triennial Early Registration
- September 30, 2026: Wear Orange :- National Day of Remembrance for Indian Boarding Schools
- October 10, 2026, 11:00 a.m., Tour of Tables at Trinity Lutheran Church, Blue Earth
- November 3, 2026 General Election
- March 16, 2027: Councils as Leade
- Spring 2027: Women of the ELCA Advocacy Days in Washington, D.C. – Responding in Faith
- April 17, 2027, Root River Spring Event at Henrytown Lutheran Church
- April 24, 2027, Cannon River Spring Event at 1st Lutheran, Red Wing
- Spring Events: Dates known
- September 18, 2027, 8 a.m.—2 p.m., Convention of the SE MN Synodical Women's Organization , Mount Olive Lutheran, Rochester, MN
- July 12-15, 2029, Triennial in Louisville KY.

The 14th Triennial Gathering

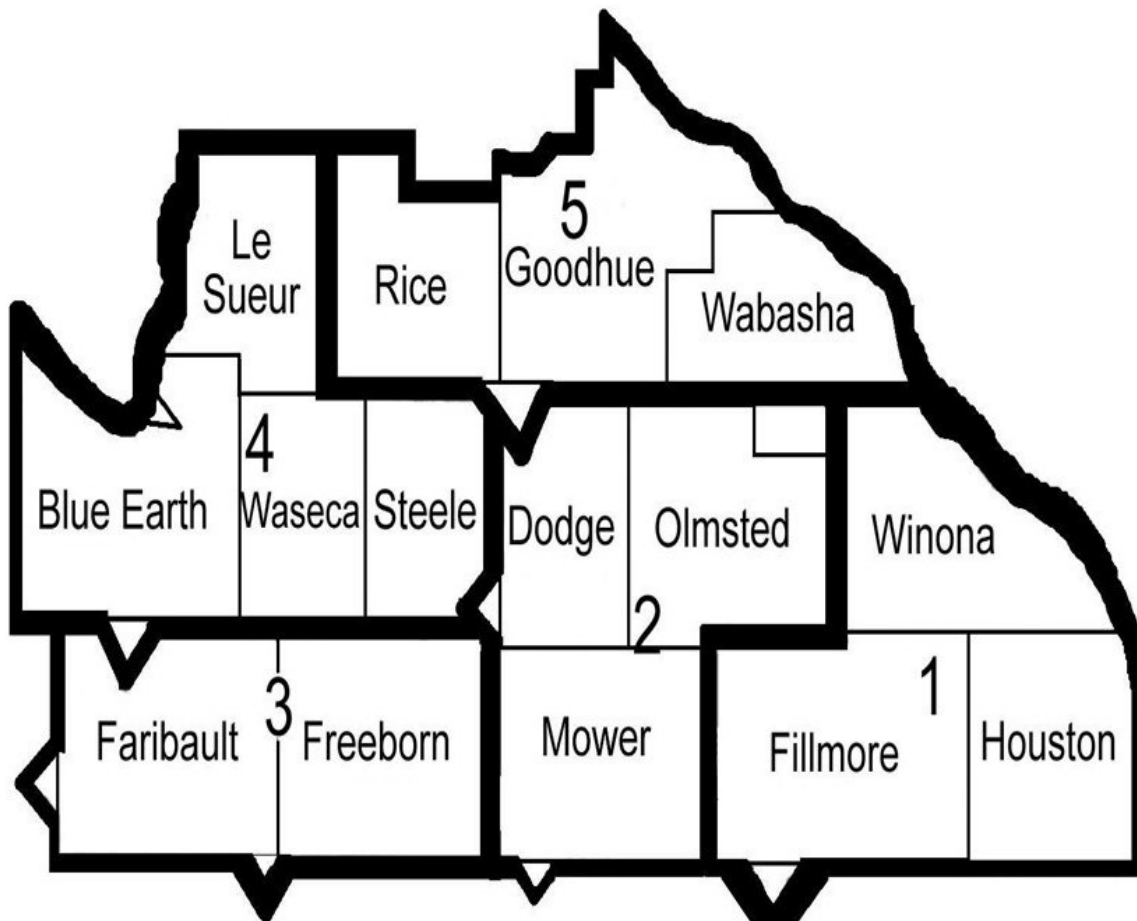
The next Triennial Gathering will be July 12 - 15, 2029 in Louisville Kentucky. We plan to have a bus to this Triennial. There will be more information in the next River Channels. Early registration at \$295 closes on August 31 this year. Registrations can be transferred if you can't make the Gathering in 2029. There is a link to early registration on the womenoftheelca.org website.

**SE MN Conferences
ELCA Region: 3I
Partner Synod: New England Synod
Companion Churches:**

- **Central Diocese Tanzania Lutheran Church;**
- **Colombia Lutheran Church;**
- **South Sudan Lutheran Church in Africa**

Map of SE MN Conferences

1. Root River Conference
2. Zumbro River Conference
3. Blue Earth River Conference
4. Minnesota River Conference
5. Cannon River Conference



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CONFERENCE LIAISONS

BLUE EARTH RIVER
Terri Hanson

CANNON RIVER
Jane Rinehart

MINNESOTA RIVER
Cherie Haas/Diane
Linbo

ZUMBRO RIVER
Pat Eichhorst

ROOT RIVER
Kathy Bolin

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River Channels is a publication of the Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. River Channels is distributed free to the congregational unit presidents, the conference committee members, the synodical and church-wide leadership of Women of the ELCA, and the Southeastern Minnesota Synod staff. Individual subscriptions are \$5.00 for four issues a year or free by email. Send articles, photos and other materials to Editor, River Channels, at the address in the listing on this page. The pages in this newsletter may be photocopied for educational and promotional use by Women of the ELCA members in the congregational units of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

Notes from Your President

By Kathy Bolin

Summary of 13th Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention July 13th and 14th, 2026.

The 13th Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention (Business Meeting) was held by Zoom. President Myrna Wells-Ulland presided over the convention which opened with the land acknowledgement, worship and Bible Study on Psalm 139 led by Pastor LeAnn Stubbs, Assistant to the Bishop/Director for Evangelical Mission for the Southeastern Iowa Synod. Pastor Stubbs focused on verse 14, "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made..." from which the Triennial Gathering's theme "I Am Worthy" was taken. The Gathering was held July 16 - 19 in Des Moines, Iowa. Among Pastor Stubbs' study many deeply meaningful and enriching messages was that the Hebrew word for "fearfully" means reverence, respect, honor, wonderfully, extraordinary, set apart, distinguished, remarkable and to remember that the value or worth of something or someone comes from the appraiser – and God, in whose image we are made, has appraised each of us to be worthy. Say it – "I Am Worthy!"

ELCA Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry brought a message to the meeting stating that he had much to learn

about the Women of the ELCA himself. He shared his vision for the ELCA as being a relational, sustainable, and connected church. Business conducted include hearing and voting on recommendations to constitutional changes, proposed budget for next Triennium and the election of a new Board of the Women of the ELCA. Changes were made for more inclusive language and what constitutes a "unit" and membership within the organization. Several Memorials were adopted including to Raise the Awareness of Indian Boarding Schools and the harm they have caused and the Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.

Sheena Foster was elected the new President of the Women of the ELCA. Other positions elected Gwendolyn Edwards, Vice-president; Miranda Searcy, Secretary; Linda Clarke, Treasurer; and 11 board members. Representing Region 3 is Maria Lokensgard.

The SEMN SWO Board will be reviewing the Triennial Convention business and discussing ways to implement the Memorials and bring the details of the constitutional changes to each congregation and conference leaders. You can find also find information at the

Continue on page 5

Notes from Your President

By Kathy Bolin

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www.womenoftheelca.org.

In preparation for the July 13 – 14 meeting, delegates participated in at least one or two practice sessions also held on Zoom, to learn the process for carrying out discussions and voting. There were over 240 voting delegates participating from across the United States throughout the two days.

Seven delegates from the SEMN Synodical Women's Organization attended these meetings. Holding the convention on Zoom saved the Women of the ELCA budget well over \$800,000! I had not thought I would enjoy the Zoom process for two days but it worked well and would recommend this format be used in the future to save money.

Lutheran Social Services Quilt and Kit Projects

Many of our churches have donated quilts and kits to Lutheran World Relief (lwr.org/kits) and Global Health Ministries (ghm.org/service-projects). Now another Lutheran nonprofit, Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, is seeking similar kits to distribute to local people in need. This includes families and teens moving from homelessness to stable housing; foster care providers; adults with disabilities; and children in crisis care. LSS has offices in St. Paul, Rochester and Mankato. The LSS Service Projects include hygiene kits, toddler supplies kits, welcome home kits, self-care kits, and menstruation kits. Project details are given in the LSS Service Project Guide.

To find out more about the LSS Service Projects and to get a copy of the guide booklet, contact the LSS Community Engagement Team at 651-236-8612 (you can leave your contact information and they will call you back), or email them at CommunityEngagement@lssmn.org. LSS says, "We want to make sure your time and donations are put to good use and that your service project experience is seamless from start to finish. Coordinating with LSS ahead of your project ensures success."

13th Triennial Gathering - Fearfully and Wonderfully Made - "I Am Worthy"

By Kathy Bolin

Twenty-four women from Southeastern Minnesota Synod congregations attended the 13th Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA July 16 - 19. Based on Psalm 139:14 the Gathering theme was "I Am Worthy." Worship services and the Bible Study were rooted in this passage which often brought the over 1,100 women (and a few men) at the Gathering to their feet, dancing in the aisles, to tears and laughter and praise. ELCA Presiding Bishop Curry attended a portion of the Gathering and said that he had a lot to learn about the Women of the ELCA. He said "this is where the church is at!" Whenever I saw someone from the SEMN Synod they would share their enthusiasm for the workshops, the displays, the worship services and the Bible Studies, as well as the fun of meeting women from across the coun-

try. Plenary speakers, workshops and displays also focused on being worthy, that all are worthy.

Key message: The value of something or someone is determined by the creator. We are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139). God created you and God says you are worthy.

The 2029 Triennial will be held July 12 - 15, 2029 in Louisville KY. We plan to have a bus going to that Triennial. Early Registration is \$295 through August 31 of this year. Registration can be found at: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/event/14th-triennial-convention>

(apologies for the banner - someone else took the photo and I didn't check it out until we had all dispersed. Also 2 of the women for SEMN Synod could not be in this photo.)



Note from the Secretary

By Terri Hanson

A Fun Fundraiser

Trinity Lutheran Church Women (TLCW) has held a Tour of Tables fundraiser for the past three years, raising money for a “Children’s Library” and conversation corner in the Gathering Place of the church. With the library now well stocked, event chair Terri Hanson proposed to the church missions committee, Trinity Lutheran Cares (TLC), that the event this year become a fundraiser for the Faribault County Food Shelf, with a community-based committee instead of a Trinity event. “Every person I’ve spoken to, whether from Trinity or other churches and community groups, has loved this idea,” Hanson said.

The fundraiser has netted around \$2400 a year, since all 120 seats are filled, all tables are sponsored, and most of the luncheon is donated. Luncheons have either been egg bakes or salads, and this year it will be salads again. When catered, the event brings in only half the profit, so the group quickly moved to menu items that can be donated.

People come a half hour ahead of the luncheon to mingle and view tables. Past themes have been: Books, with an author presenter and tables featuring books and book-related figurines; Birds, with a bird-enthusiast presenter and bird-related decorations on some tables; and Mothers and Daughters, with an author who wrote with her mother and every table featuring family dishes or other representations of the theme. Door prize drawings follow the luncheon speaker, and everyone packs up their tableware to clear the church hall for Sunday fellowship.

If you are interested in hosting a Tour of Tables, feel free to contact Terri with questions. 701-527-0611.

Pictures of Tour of Tables on page 8.



Tour of Tables Pictures



Room Photo



Another table photo



Photo array and mom's cookies



Another table photo

Social Justice

By Cherie Haas

Justice ministries continued into the summer. Showing up where the people are is important. My social justice committee showed up at a resources expo in the spring and were able to interact with many people there, invite children to Vacation Bible School, and hand out personal care products.

Pride in the Park in July gave us an opportunity to interact with even more people. It was an extremely hot day and we had cups of Kool-Aid and bottles of water to offer as well as fans and stickers. It was a great opportunity to have conversations with those who stopped by and be a welcoming presence in this inclusive environment. One person who stopped by was a Somali woman who asked what I knew about Allah and stayed for a conversation with me and then with one of our pastors. We all agreed that we worship the same God and that we need to learn from each other. We will be making plans with the Somali community to invite them into our church for further conversations. Who knew that a Pride event would lead to conversations with our Muslim brothers and sisters as well?

Weeks later, I showed up with a few friends at a Somali Independence Day event in that same park where

we heard, not only Somali music, but also the Star-Spangled Banner played as an American flag was displayed. They acknowledged independence within their country of origin as well as the life they have in the United States. The women we met there welcomed us and physically pulled us in to dance with them as the kids played around the fountain nearby. One of these women talked about wanting us to be mentors to her. She wanted to learn more English and was excited to hear that I teach English as a second language. By the end of our time in the park that evening, I had exchanged information with her and scheduled a date to meet her at the local mosque the following week.

The connection I made with this Somali woman as we met at the mosque led to an opportunity to be of service to her family a couple of weeks later. As rains and subsequent flash flooding affected our area on the day of our English lesson, my new student texted frantically about the water flowing into their carpeted basement, completely soaking the whole floor. Fortunately, my family had a working carpet cleaner and lots of fans we were able to lend to them. It felt good to help, and my relationship with the family is stronger for it. And, as a friend

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Social Justice

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By Cherie Haas

who is involved with the Somali community pointed out to me, there are other women who will want English lessons and this could be only a beginning for this service to them.

Several groups in the community are currently gathering school supplies to help families as kids prepare for the new school year to start. Those are also opportunities we have to show up for people. Here are two lists of recent needs in my community that I suspect are similar across all of our communities. One list is for food shelf items. The other list is for the school supplies most needed.

Food shelf: Spices, dressings, sauces, oil, proteins, flour/masa/sugar, whole grain pasta, gluten free items, formula/baby food, microwaveable

meals (Cash donations also accepted)

School supply list: 3 ring binder, backpacks, colored pencils, crayons, erasers, facial tissues, folders, glue sticks, highlighters, kids' scissors, washable markers, notebooks, pencils, pencil boxes, pencil erasers, sanitizer wipes, water color paints and pens (blue, black and red)

So, as we continue to hear about injustices in our country, our state, and our communities, let us remember that showing up is the most important thing we can do.

Romans 12:13: "Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality."

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.

Discipleship and Stewardship

By Jane Rinehart

The church-wide Women of the ELCA have a long-standing resolution calling for us to work for the safety of our children, specifically to protect them from abuse, exploitation, and discrimination. We are encouraged to work with community agencies to assist in the prevention of all aspects of child abuse and to restore hope to our youth.

To this end, our synodical women's board chose to support three programs of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota that focus on the safety of our youth. The three programs are:

1. **Safe Harbor:** a network of state funded services supporting youth up to age 24 who have been exploited and/or trafficked. The goal is to help them rebuild their lives by providing services tailored to meet their needs. This includes a 24/7 information line providing connections to housing, emergency shelter and ongoing case management. There are offices in Mankato and Rochester which serve all the counties in the SE MN Synod.

2. **Basic Center:** supports youth ages 16-17 who are homeless, run-aways or unaccompanied. Services provided include

case management, hosting homes for up to 21 days, and therapy services with a licensed mental health therapist, on-site (Rochester) or virtually.

3. **Stay in Community:** serves ages 16-22 who have been in and out of foster care or aged out of foster care. Services include assistance with housing, employment and independent living skills. Programs include a 3 day workshop or 10 weeks of sessions in independent living skills.

Our synod has set a **goal to raise \$9,000** to be divided equally between the three programs. The target date is our next Southeastern Women's Synodical Convention on September 18, 2027, at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Rochester.

How did the board decide on this ambitious goal? You, the women of the SE MN Synod, raised twice the \$4000 goal set for the last synodical convention in 2025, raising over \$8000! You showed us that a \$9000 goal is possible. The 2027 convention theme is "**Anticipating God's Abundance.**" With this theme in mind, we know this is a challenge we can meet, or once again surpass.

Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry



Dear Partners in Ministry,

On July 7, 2026, the Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry Board of Directors voted to enter a process of Holy Closure, with plans for the ministry to close in December 2026.

Since the spring of 2024, Crossroads has been prayerfully discerning the future of our ministry in Mankato. We recognize that our work of feeding neighbors through the Campus Cupboard continues to meet a real need and make a meaningful difference. At the same time, students are no longer regularly participating in worship, fellowship, and other aspects of campus ministry as they once did. After careful reflection on these realities and the long-term sustainability of the ministry, the board determined that it is time to begin bringing this chapter of ministry to a faithful conclusion.

Holy Closure is more than the ending of an organization. It is an intentional process of giving thanks

for all God has done through Crossroads, grieving what is ending, tending responsibly to the ministry's remaining commitments and resources, and listening for how its legacy may continue to serve the community.

In the coming months, the board will work carefully through the many decisions involved in this process, including the future of the Campus Cupboard. We will share additional information as plans become clearer. We also hope to provide opportunities for our partners, alumni, supporters, and community members to remember and celebrate the ministry of Crossroads before its anticipated closure in December.

We are deeply grateful for the partnership of congregations like yours. Your prayers, financial support, volunteer service, and care for students have sustained Crossroads and made its ministry possible. Together, we have accompanied generations of students and served countless neighbors throughout the Mankato community.

We ask for your prayers for the board, staff, students, volunteers, guests, and all who hold Crossroads close to

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Crossroads Lutheran Campus Ministry

Continued from page 12

their hearts as we move through this season. May God grant us wisdom, tenderness, and courage as we honor the ministry that has been and faithfully prepare for what comes next.

In Peace,



Deacon Ian Heseltine, Board President

Crossroads Board of Directors

Contact Us

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www.crossroadsatmnsu.org | 331 Dillon Ave

Mankato, MN 56001





LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

Ingathering Location and Dates for LWR Quilts

Other locations can be found at <https://ingathering.lwr.org/>

- Albert Lea area LWR Quilt Ingathering
First Lutheran Church
301 W Clark Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007
Fall Ingathering will be Oct. 10, 7 a.m. - 11 a.m.
Contact: Julie Gilbertson, 507-402-9061 (cell)
email: grandmajulie40@gmail.com
- St. Paul LWR Warehouse
398 # Richmond Street, South St. Paul, MN 55075
Monday - Thursday 7:30 a.m. - 4 pm. Call to verify hours before coming.
Closed Friday - Sunday, but may drop off donations in a shed.
Office phone: 651-457-9009
- Good Shepherd Evangelical Church
4141 Mormon Coulee Road, La Crosse, WE 54601
date for fall is Oct 10, 2026, from 7am to 11am

YOU ARE AN
AWESOME
Volunteer!

November 2025

UNIT OFFICER UPDATE FORM 2025-2026

CONFERENCE NAME: _____ (Choose one below)
Blue Earth River; Cannon River; Minnesota River; Root River; or Zumbro River

UNIT (Congregational) NAME: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Church email: _____

Date of Installation: _____

Fill in all information below-DO NOT WRITE "SAME AS LAST YEAR"

Complete this form yearly within two weeks of election and whenever officers change. Thank you.

CURRENT UNIT OFFICERS:	FORMER OFFICER'S NAME
President Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Vice President Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Secretary Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Treasurer Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Stewardship (Mission Action) Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Justice (Mission Community) Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	
Discipleship (Mission Growth) Address City, State Zip Phone _____ Email _____	

SEND A COPY OF THE COMPLETED FORM TO THE FOLLOWING:

Diane Linbo, Treasurer SE MN Women of the ELCA

402 15th Ave NW, Kasson, MN 55944

semntreas@gmail.com 507-634-6602 – Home 507-261-4141—Cell

2027 SWO CONVENTION

"Anticipating God's Abundance"

The Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Organization has chosen the following Lutheran Social Service in Minnesota Programs for 2026 - 2027. Project goal \$9,000 or more!

SAFE HARBOR - focuses on Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking

BASIC CENTER - supports 16 - 17 year old youth who are homeless and at risk of homelessness

STAY IN COMMUNITY - serves 18 years aging out of the Foster Care Network and provides support and guidance so they may remain in healthy communities

These programs all serve the SEMN Synod areas and support the WELCA's Memorial "Calling for the Safety and Protection of Our Children."

All funds will be equally distributed to these programs at the 2027 Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women's Convention (September 18, 2027 Mount Olive Lutheran Church Rochester).

Please make checks out to SEMN SWO with "Abundance Project" in memo line.
Send to: Diane Linbo, 402 15th Ave NW; Kasson MN 55944

**"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10:10**

Women ^{of the} **ELCA** 



Thrivent Action Grants Update:

You don't need to be a Thrivent member to apply for a \$250 action grant. There is another category, Associate member. It costs \$19.95 per year, and allows you to apply for one grant a year. Apply online at:

<https://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership#apply-1>

River Channels Newsletter Subscription Form

River Channels is published by the Southeastern Minnesota Synodical Women of the ELCA. One copy is sent to each unit president. If your unit has co-presidents, only one will receive a copy. Conference officers also receive a copy. Individuals may subscribe for \$5.00 per year. Please use this form to order, and type or print clearly.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____ Phone Number _____

New Subscription _____ Renewal _____

Enclose check for \$5.00 per subscription (\$10 for two years).

Email Subscriptions are free

Make payable to: SE MN Synodical WELCA (In memo of check, put in Newsletter Subscription.)

Mail to:

Diane Linbo
402 15th Ave NW
Kasson, MN 55944

2nd Quarters Treasurer's Report



Quarterly Report May 1, 2026 - July 31, 2026

REGULAR CHECKING ACCOUNT

Income:

Unit Offerings:

Blue Earth River	\$ 161.00
Cannon River	\$ 490.68
Minnesota River	\$ 460.80
Root River	\$ 150.00
Zumbro River	\$ 195.00
Total	\$ 1,457.48

Interest	\$ 0.18
River Channels Subscription	\$ 30.00
SWO Convention Expense	\$ 10.00
Christ Luth. Preston LSS	\$ 150.00
2027 Fall Convention Off.	\$ 30.00
K. Mittlesteadt - Money Ord.	\$ 110.00
Transferred Money Market	\$ 610.61
Total	\$ 940.79

Conference Income

2026 Cannon Mailed In	\$ 100.00
2027 BE Mailed In	\$ 150.00
Total Conf. Income	\$ 250.00

Total Income **\$ 2,648.27**

Balance April 30, 2026	\$ 19,503.76
Total 2nd Qtr. Income	\$ 2,648.27
Total Income	\$ 22,152.03
Total 2nd QTR. Disbursements	\$ 8,130.33
Balance July 31, 2026	\$ 14,021.70

Disbursements:

CWO 50% May, June, July

\$ 728.74

Board Expense:

Mileage	
River Channels - Print	\$ 470.98
Postage	\$ 78.00
Office Supplies	\$ 109.98
Corporate Recognition	\$ 500.08
(Triennial CC Sleeves)	
Kelly Mittlesteadt-Ref.	\$ 110.00
(Money Order-Trie Bus)	
Total	\$ 1,997.78

Conference Gifts

Blue Earth Conf.	\$ 758.80
Cannon Conf.	\$ 1,242.00
Minnesota Conf.	\$ 942.48
Root River Conf.	\$ 1,035.27
Zumbro Conf.	\$ 2,154.00
Total Conf. Gifts	\$ 6,132.55

Total Disbursement **\$ 8,130.33**

Money Market Account

Balance April 30, 2026	\$ 685.48
Interest	\$ 0.02
Total 2nd Qtr. Income	\$ 685.50
Maintenance Fee	\$ 10.00
Diane-Power Surge Plug In Comp	\$ 64.89
Balance May 31, 2026	\$610.61
Transferred to Checking	\$ 610.61
Closed Money Market Acct. June 30, 2026	

“Little Deeds”

Little deeds of kindness, little acts of love,
Show that we're acquainted with the Lord above.
Little deeds of kindness cheer us on our way,
And help ourselves and others have a Happy Day.
Acts of loving kindness prompt a happy smile,
And add a joy to living and make life worthwhile.
Author Unknown

Hoping everyone is having a great summer so far.
Good to have a little cooler weather without the humidity!
But, by the time you read this, we could be hot and humid again!!!
Enjoy whatever the Lord passes onto us for weather!

Enclosed in this issue is the 2nd Quarter Report.
Received a note from Kathy Bolin that the Presiding Bishop Curry at the
Triennial Gathering is asking for all Units and SWO's to increase their giving
to churchwide by 1%.

Thank you in advance for your Unit Offerings. As I have mentioned before
this is a great source of income for us at the Synod level and also Church-
wide.

50% of all Unit Offering that we receive goes to churchwide.
We have also raised our Convention Expense Fund from \$10.00 a year to
\$20.00 a year to help cover cost of our fall convention.

Thank You.
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Southeastern Minnesota Women of the ELCA

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minniedunbar@gmail.com

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Websites of interest to Women of the ELCA

Augsburg Fortress Publishers
www.augsburgfortress.org

ELCA Churchwide Offices
www.elca.org

Good Earth Village
www.goodearthvillage.org

Lutheran World Relief
ww.lwr.org

Southeastern Minnesota Synod
www.semnsynod.org

Women of the ELCA
www.womenoftheelca.org