

# The Western Whirlwind

Western North Dakota Women of the ELCA

March 2026

## From the President's Desk

by Michelle Lauckner

It's that time again...time to prepare for the biennial convention for western North Dakota Women of the ELCA. Many of us are also preparing to join women from all over the United States at this summer's WELCA Triennial Convention in Des Moines. IA.

We are trying something new this go-round in hopes of welcoming more women, by partnering with Camp of the Cross Ministries (CCM) near Garrison and coordinating our convention with CCM's women's fall retreat! Doesn't that sound great?! Our theme will be addressing **The Gift of Loving One Another**, rooted in theme verse John 14:34, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another." The convention retreat will be held on Saturday, October 24, with an optional evening of fellowship at the camp the evening before.

As we are also preparing for the WELCA Triennial Convention happening July 16-19, 2026, we are reviewing & appreciating the efforts our western ND WELCA women have made towards addressing the memorials and resolutions from the 2023 Triennial. Each of these requests for action that our sisters voted for express elements of our vision and mission, and I am struck daily by the elements of these statements that hold us to account in the turbulence currently happening in the US. For example, let me share the language of [Memorial 2- Calling for Peace and Unity](#):

*We, as Women of the ELCA, commit to strive for peace and unity in all that we do and say so that we may be a light filled with compassion and kindness for all in the midst of hatred, dissension, conflict, and violence that engulfs our world. That we, through our bond of sisterhood in Christ Jesus, encourage and promote harmony, unity, and peace within our homes, church, workplaces, schools, communities, and the country. That we, as Women of the ELCA, hold our local and national leaders in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts that they may become more open-minded, reaching across the aisles to work together for the good of the nation and all its citizens.*

You can read the details of all of the memorials and resolutions on the WELCA website: [2023-TG-WELCA-Memorial-and-ResolutionsF.pdf](#)

This memorial aligns perfectly with The Palm Sunday Path, a public witness of our Christian values as laid out for us by Jesus in Matthew 25. **I invite you all to join me** in this growing, ecumenical movement of Christians gathering for witness on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026, at 3pm in a procession to the ND State Capitol grounds for a time of communal worship and prayer. This day was chosen because Jesus entered into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover, on a donkey, as a just, humble leader reflecting the shared Biblical values of feeding the hungry, caring for the vulnerable and



welcoming the stranger. The goal of this movement is to stand up to violations of these values by our elected leaders and to call to every elected leader at every level – regardless of party – to work with us on policies that promote these values. More details can be found here: [wndpalmsundaypath.com](http://wndpalmsundaypath.com). If you have any questions, please reach out to the Western North Dakota Core Team at [wndpalmsundaypath@gmail.com](mailto:wndpalmsundaypath@gmail.com).

### Mission Statement of the Western North Dakota Synodical Women of the ELCA Newsletter "The Western Whirlwind"

*To inform Women of the ELCA in Western North Dakota about happenings within their Churchwide and Synodical organization and Clusters, and to provide readers with stories and articles that interest, inspire, and encourage them in their faith lives.*

*Adopted March 1999*

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**NOTE:** The unit President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer receive a free copy of the *Whirlwind* **IF** we have correct addresses. Please submit your Unit Update Form annually or whenever there is an officer change.

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## USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES:

WND SWO WELCA  
[www.wnd.org/synod-women-of-the-elca](http://www.wnd.org/synod-women-of-the-elca)

ELCA [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)

Gather Magazine  
[www.gathermagazine.org](http://www.gathermagazine.org)

Café (e-zine) [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org)  
 Lutheran World Relief  
[www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org)

WND SWO WELCA Facebook page  
[www.facebook.com/WELCAWND](http://www.facebook.com/WELCAWND)

## THE WESTERN WHIRLWIND NEWSLETTER

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To order a paper subscription to *The Western Whirlwind*, send \$5.00 to Linda Hanson, Synodical Treasurer. Please include: Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Congregation, Cluster, indicate new or renewal. Indicate mail or email delivery. *Email delivery is free.* Make checks payable to:

**Women of the ELCA**

# Views from the Vice President

By Shirley Teske



This is what I love to do when not serving on boards or shepherding my flock. I make all these quilts with love and enjoy seeing people faces when they light up with appreciation. It is my love for the Lord that gives me the ability to do this quilting. It is a special gift God has given me. SWO Vice President-Shirley Teske



- 1<sup>st</sup> Quilt-My niece Adora’s quilt. We were at a function at the nursing home in Grand Forks where they had silent auctions for quilts around the room. She and my nephew Travis were bidding on a Christmas Quilt so I told her to stop bidding, and I would make her a Christmas Quilt. She got it before Christmas this year and she loved it.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Quilt-Zeke my 9-year-old grandson made it at the lake this summer. He did all the sewing, and I just guided him and I think he did a pretty good job. He loved sewing it.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Quilt-Rich’s wall hanging for his classroom at Pierz, Minnesota. He loved that it had 701 on it.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This is the quilt I gave to Vi Siebold. She has it on her bed in Maddock at the Memorial Home.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This is Bev Larson’s quilt I made for the ladies that live in the nursing home in Harvey. She loves the flower lilac, so it has them on it.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This was for my brother Daune who was going through chemo at the time and extremely cold all the time. It is a lap quilt, and he uses it all the time when he gets cold.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Quilt-It was made for a friend who does a lot for everyone else.
- 8<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This is the quilt Andrew (11) my grandson made for his Grandpa who is a farmer. It is the Farmer’s Prayer quilt. Of course we had to put some John Deere material on it.
- 9<sup>th</sup> Quilt-A quilt made for my niece for her sobriety anniversary. She has been sober 15 year.
- 10<sup>th</sup>-quilt Church quilt I made for my bed. It has Minky on it, so I stay warm in the winter.
- 11<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This is a quilt I donated to the event at my brother’s nursing home to raise money for the chaplaincy.
- 12<sup>th</sup> Quilt- This was a quilt made for my great niece Saylor who got married to Amzi. It has the constellation and It has the words “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” The white blocks are all Bible passages from the Psalms.
- 13<sup>th</sup> Quilt-Horse theme which Andrew helped sew for his Grandma Tammy. She loves horses.
- 14<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This is made with about 16 different fall colors. It was given to my sister since she loves the season of fall and it colors. It was made for a king-size bed.
- 15<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This was given to one of the ladies in the nursing home in Harvey.
- 16<sup>th</sup> Quilt-This was given to Cindy since she is fighting cancer. Doing chemo so it was a nice cozy quilt.
- 17<sup>th</sup> Quilt- Muriel Delzer received this beauty. It is North Dakota Quilt. She loves it.

# Secretary's Notes

## “Worry...Smile...Believe”

By Helen Grant



### WORRY - SMILE - BELIEVE

**WORRY:** Is there ever a time we aren't worried or concerned about something – whether big or small. We also know worry doesn't get us anywhere except wearing us out and wasting our time. Worry is wasted energy – Prayer is a deposit in Heaven! Worry is like a rocking chair—keeps you busy but gets you nowhere!

*Let Go – Let God!* He knows every worry and problem we are stressing over, and He does have everything under control. Our problem is we think we can fix everything too! **WRONG!** We must remember to trust Him and give Him control and we can put our thoughts on something other than our problems. A refusal to worry is proof that we trust God!

**Psalm 55:22** *Cast your cares on the Lord and He will sustain you. He will never let the righteous fail!*

**SMILE:** Smiling makes us more productive, happy, and enjoyable. Smiling puts your life into a positive mode – so hopefully you can see a solution to your cares and problems in a better light — try it! It also makes everyone wonder what you're up to!

*\*\*\*Smiling first helps someone else do the same\*\*\**

**Proverbs 15:30** A cheerful look brings joy to the hear; good news makes for good health!  
*(FYI: I could not find a Bible verse with Smile in it!)*

**BELIEVE:** Saying the Apostle Creed each Sunday is a reminder to us of our belief in God. What a comfort and so easy to do --all we must do is believe. Jesus doesn't force us to believe but when we do, we find the peace and comfort we need to go through each day. Prayer! Even in a stressful situation, prayer changes things; Believe that when you pray, things will improve!

**Romans 15:13** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in Hope!*

**Mark 9:23** *Everything is possible for him who believes!*

Enjoy Every Day & Be Thankful! SMILE, PRAY & BELIEVE!

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### WND SWO BIENNIAL OFFICIAL CALL FOR 2026 WND SYNODICAL CONVENTION



**In accordance with Article VI, Section 3, Item 1 of the WND SWO Constitution, I hereby give notification to all units of the WND SWO that the 2026 Biennial Convention of the SWO will be held Friday and Saturday, October 23 & 24, 2026, at the Camp of the Cross, Garrison, ND.**

**All Units are entitled to register ONE (1) voting delegate. In addition, an unspecified number of non-delegates (participants) may also register.**

**HELEN GRANT, WND Synodical Secretary**

## Treasurer's Reflections

### "Like a Dove"

By Linda Hanson

What comes to mind when you hear the word "dove"? Does it remind you of a bird that is often used as a symbol of love? Does it suggest a bird that is often seen sitting on a grain bin that is often used as a target to shoot at? Does it remind you of a Bible verse or Bible story?

The dove is mentioned many places throughout the Bible. In some verses doves represent a symbol of peace or the Holy Spirit. In Genesis 8:8-12 Noah releases a dove to let him know that the flood waters had receded.

Several places in the Bible speak of using a dove, a pair of doves or turtle doves as sacrificial offerings to God. When Jesus destroys the temple where there are money changers, there is reference to doves being sold in the temple to be used as offerings.

A few weeks ago, the Gospel lesson was Matthew 3:13-17 where we heard of the baptism of Jesus. Verse 16 reads "After his baptism, as soon as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down in the form of a dove." Though the wording may differ slightly, this event is recorded in all four of the Gospels. Other references to doves can be found in the Psalms, Leviticus, Song of Solomon, Isaiah and Ezekiel.



I remember hearing the song "Wings of a Dove" as a child. This song has been recorded by several different artists over the years. The words remind us that God sends down his love "on the wings of a dove."

I was looking through the song titles in some of the hymnals that I have and saw the title, "Thy Holy Wings." While the song doesn't mention a dove specifically, I got the image of the wings of a dove surrounding me, the women of our organization, as well as all believers.

Every time you see, read about or hear about a dove in the future, may you be reminded of all the ways that a dove is pictured in the bible.



*A reminder for all who receive the Whirlwind by mail.*

If your mailing address changes, please notify Cheryl Lacey, the Whirlwind editor. (contact info on page 2). Once the time limit for forwarding to the new address has been reached the Post Office will send a notice of *Forwarding Expired* and charge us \$ .90 for each piece of mail.

You may also request to change to free email delivery of the Whirlwind (for all issues or only the winter months for our "snowbirds") by contacting Cheryl.

# From the Cluster Presidents/Reps

## Lonetree

By Marilyn Saueressig



*"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God."*

Jesus teachings during his time here on earth focused on loving and helping others. He made it very clear that one part of that was being a peaceful person.

Peacemakers will be called sons of God. What would the opposite of a peacemaker be? A pest, agitator, or troublemaker? People who criticize others, argue, like to pit people against each other and love stirring the pot to keep everyone agitated at each other.

Colossians 2:12-17

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> **Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

<sup>15</sup> Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

It is so important to clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience for all human beings in this world. We as Christians are supposed to be the ones that shine like a light in the darkness. Please be a light for everyone.

What does a peacemaker do? They will show love and kindness to others and try to have everyone get along with each other. Where do you fit in? Are you a peacemaker or troublemaker?

I sincerely pray all of us are peacemakers. We need more peacemakers in our neighboring state of Minnesota. Please keep all the people in Minneapolis in your prayers. May God show them love and may they extend an olive branch of peace to all people. I have been praying for all the unrest in the city of Minneapolis and may the Holy Spirit be there to guide the people.

Co-President Lonetree Cluster,  
Shirley Teske

## East Missouri

By Connie Isaak



A very well-known teaching of Jesus is found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke-where the Scribes ask Jesus, "Which is the first Commandment of All"? And He answers them "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. That is the first commandment."

This Spring the East Missouri Cluster is focusing on Jesus's second commandment. "Love your neighbor as yourself."

All East Missouri Cluster women are invited to Steele, ND on Saturday, April 11<sup>th</sup>. This will be our community Spring Cluster meeting. We'll meet at the Kidder County Senior Center at 11:30 am. After lunch, we can assist folks in three different locations: the local food pantry, singing and visiting at the Golden Manor facility or help with quilting at Trinity Lutheran.

Update your calendars and reserve this day for a fun community gathering.

*COME JOIN US!*

# From the Cluster Presidents/Reps

## Western Prairie

By Judy Jarmin



Happy New Year everyone! The New Year came in with some really nice, beautiful days, and I was able to take in all my outdoor Christmas décor as well as indoor décor. However, January is going out with some good old North Dakota wind chills. By the time this letter gets out, it should be much warmer in March, but with lots

and lots of snow due to all f the fog we're getting recently.

With the arrival of spring, I am once again looking forward to the Western Prairie Cluster Spring Gathering. Our board is already working hard on making that happen. The Gathering will be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> at Christ Lutheran Church in Minot, ND. The theme of the Spring Cluster Gathering will be "*Christ Be Our Light*". I bet most of you are already singing a song to go with that theme! We will use John 8:12 as our Bible verse. "Again, Jesus spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.'" We look forward to everyone attending, and I encourage you to bring a friend, a daughter, a sister, and if you're lucky enough to have a mom, absolutely bring her. If a female pastor or SAM is serving your church, don't forget to invite her too! She is also a Woman of the ELCA.

Spring is also when we hold elections for various board positions.

If you are interested in joining the board, have any questions, or know of someone who would be a good fit, please contact the WPC Board. My contact information is on page 2 of the Whirlwind. The position of Mission Stewardship currently held by Barb Cooper is open for nominations, so please consider taking on this role!

Whenever I have been asked to hold a position at church or the community I pray for guidance. Many times, those prayers are me trying to convince God I could not possibly do what is being asked of me, but I have found you cannot change His mind. Some people may think its silly, but it's what gets me through hardships. If there's a tiny voice whispering to you to serve, in any capacity, listen to that voice, pray about what it is asking, and set your mind at ease that you are doing the right thing.

See you in May.

Facebook users check out the Western Prairie Cluster Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/westernprairiecluster](http://www.facebook.com/westernprairiecluster)

**Did you know There's a Prayer called the "I Don't Know Prayer"?**

**I DON'T KNOW!**

**You just go somewhere quiet and you sit at the feet of God,**

**And you say, "I Don't Know".**

**I don't know where to go from here.**

**I don't know what is happening.**

**I don't know how to process this.**

**I don't know what to do with these emotions.**

**I don't know how to handle this situation.**

**And then with whatever little grain of faith you have,**

**you say: "But You Know"! And you leave it there.**

**God most certainly hears your prayers.**

**AMEN**

# From the Cluster Presidents/Reps

## Turtle Mountain

By Taryce Olson

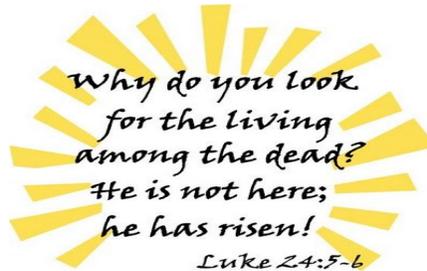


As we deal with the coldest days of winter, let us look forward to our Spring gatherings!! Turtle Mountain Cluster will be hosting their Gathering at Norwich Lutheran Church on April 18<sup>th</sup>. We have a theme “Tools for God”, and I am looking forward to learning more about this topic!

We are all looking forward to Easter and the story that can change our lives. It is the story of God's powerful love for each of us and the sacrifice He made. We celebrate Jesus resurrection from the tomb and there would be no resurrection without His suffering on the cross. Easter brings hope to our everyday lives. Can you imagine how Jesus followers must have felt waiting those hours and days between the cross and the empty tomb? Waiting is hard!

It is in the “blank space of waiting” that we have HOPE. It is in this “blank space” of waiting that things are quiet and nothing is happening. Have you ever lived in a “blank space” moment? It is in this space that the greatest miracle is taking place. May we never forget in our blank spaces, we have a mighty God still in the miracle business. He is still moving mountains on our behalf, breaking chains, resurrecting dreams, and saving lives! He is still there! He sees! He knows! He is working even if all we see is a blank space!

*He is risen; He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*



### The Western Whirlwind

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# From the Cluster Presidents/Reps

## Heart River

By Sharon Heilman



Heart River Cluster Spring Gathering will be Saturday April 25. It will be hosted by House of Prayer Lutheran Church in Bismarck. The guest speaker will be from Closet 701. Heaven Helpers Closet is a non-profit ministry that operates under the umbrella of Heaven Helpers Soup Cafe. They are dedicated to modeling the compassionate and selfless way that Jesus lived by serving individuals and families who are struggling to

meet their basic needs. They provide free clothing for those who need it most.

I am resigning as the coordinator for Heart River Cluster. We are moving to San Tan Valley, Arizona to be closer to family. The position is open, anyone who would be interested please contact me or someone on the cluster board. It has been an honor to serve as the coordinator for Heart River Cluster.

Sharon Heilman

***Thank you, Sharon! We will miss you!***



## The Palm Sunday Path An Ecumenical Processional & Worship

Jesus entered into Jerusalem at the beginning of Passover, on a donkey, a symbol of a just, humble leader that honors the dignity and needs of the children of God, one that heals the sick, feeds the hungry, welcomes the stranger. Christian communities from across the region are invited to gather at **3 pm on Palm Sunday, March 29, 2026**, in a procession to the ND State Capitol grounds for a time of communal worship and prayer reflecting these shared Biblical values of feeding the hungry, caring for the vulnerable and welcoming the stranger.

Please join us and share the invitation with others.



# From the Cluster Presidents/Reps



## Upper Missouri

By Brenda Ekness & Nina Williams

The sunshine is returning, and we cannot wait to see your faces again! Spring is the perfect time to reconnect, share, and encourage one another. From our upcoming Spring Cluster to our unit meetings and Bible studies, this season is packed with opportunities to grow closer to Jesus and to each other.

·HELLO·  
*spring*

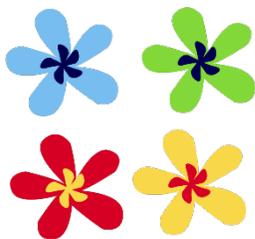
**Our Spring Cluster Gathering will be held on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Westby, Montana.** Thank you, Immanuel ladies, for agreeing to host us! Information for this event has been mailed to each unit president, with sure-to-be fun and uplifting activities on the itinerary for all of us. If you haven't seen a poster at your church, check with your unit's president for details. "When you're surrounded by people who share a passionate commitment around a common purpose, anything is possible!"

In this publication, there is information about our two WELCA events happening this summer/fall. First, the Churchwide Triennial Gathering is happening on July 16-19 in Des Moines, Iowa. Second, our Western ND Synodical Women's Organization's biennial convention is October 23-24 at Camp of the Cross by Garrison, with this convention having more of a "retreat" feel! Both gatherings will be powerful ways to bring women together for the glory of God...Sisterhood in Christ is powerful! Keep in mind that both SWO and UM Cluster scholarships will be available to apply for. More information will be shared at our Spring Cluster Gathering and will also be mailed to each unit president.

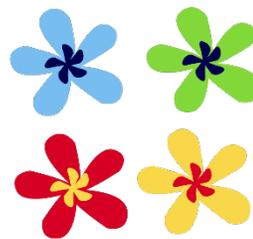
Upper Missouri, it is such a pleasure to serve as your presidents! We have strengthened our love for the Lord by witnessing your faith and friendship at our cluster events, and by working along sides the strong, bold women on our Cluster board and Cluster hosting units. We urge all to please consider taking an active role in our UM Cluster or your individual units by volunteering and saying "Yes!" when asked to help in any way. In a world where volunteering is becoming the exception rather than the norm, let's defy those trends and make every effort to keep our UM Cluster strong by stepping forward in both love and study of our Lord Jesus Christ, by supporting each other along our journeys, and by aiding our communities and society when we see needs arise. Many hands make light work. "If we all do a little, it will join together to make A LOT!"

**God's blessings to all.** Please make every effort to attend our Spring Cluster event in Westby, MT. Immanuel Lutheran WELCA is a new unit in our Cluster....let's show our Westby sisters in Christ that we support them, welcome them, and look forward to seeing their beautiful church and town. **See you there!**

Your sisters in Christ,  
Nina and Brenda



**BLOOM**  
=Where=  
**YOU ARE**  
♥Planted♥



# **Stewardship (Mission Action)**

*By Connie Isaak*

In a Bible study at my church, Faith Lutheran in Bismarck, we are beginning a series titled “Messy Spirituality” by Mike Yaconelli. So many times, we feel things need to be perfect – even our faith journey. I struggle with not having enough time to do all that we should – not reading and studying the Bible enough, not praying enough or saying the right words, etc. As we continue this series, I think we will find that there isn’t a perfect faith journey. I like the words --- Perfectly Imperfect. Each of us is one-of-a-kind – a rare jewel.

There is beauty in seeing that God is with us in the midst of our struggles and imperfections. As we soon enter our Lenten journey, let’s keep our eyes open to how we can help each other walk through those struggles and grow in this journey of faith. It helps me to remember that there aren’t “perfect” Christians-just MESSY folks with unique qualities.

\*\*\*\*\*

# **Justice (Mission Community)**

*By Taryce Olson*

**CFJ-** A new organization I discovered to assist women, during my search for Justice articles. The Clooney Foundation for Justice is Amal and George Clooney's organization that wages justice by providing free legal aid in defense of free speech and women's rights in forty countries. They monitor and report on unfair trials, challenge unjust laws in the courts, establish legal aid clinics for the most vulnerable and support the next generation.

CFJ continues to work on issues that have long faded from the headlines. This includes co-founder Amal Clooney’s representation of Yazidi women who were raped and enslaved by ISIS, supporting survivors of atrocities in Congo and Sudan, and battling the epidemic of discrimination and violence against women and girls worldwide. They are in the fight for justice for the long haul, no matter how difficult the journey.

Their “Trial Watch Program” provides free legal aid to journalists who are unfairly imprisoned to secure their release. It is the first initiative to monitor criminal trials globally.

Their “Waging Justice for Women” program provides free legal aid to women and girls to defend their rights, including their right to be free from discrimination, child-marriage and violence.

They have empowered thousands of women to assert their rights and their advocacy is helping overturn and reform anti-democratic laws that governments misuse against women, journalists and democracy defenders. They have had 100% success rate before international human rights bodies, 1250 hearings monitored, 6500 women and girls receiving free legal services and 10,000 hours of free legal aid in defense of women and speech. Visit their website at <https://cfj.org> for more information.

The Heart River Correctional Center is in need of baby items as pregnant women continue to be transferred to their care. What a gesture of love, to be able to send them off with starter items to help ease the burden of families making their pregnancy time feel special. Here are some current needs:

1. Newborn diapers (smaller packs are best)
2. Baby wipes
3. Baby hygiene items (lotion, baby wash, diaper cream, towels etc.)
4. Bibs/Burp cloths
5. Baby socks and onesies
6. Baby hats/glove sets
7. Footed snowsuits
8. Newborn or 0-3 month clothing (especially neutral or for girls).

# Discipleship (Mission Growth) by Marilyn Saueressig

When Jesus said, "Follow Me," He was not inviting people to admire Him from a distance or simply agree with His teachings. He was calling them into a completely new way of life - one of surrender, obedience, transformation, and mission. The call in Christ is not to be a spectator in the crowd but to be a disciple who treasures him above all else.

What we must ask ourselves is: "Am I following Jesus or am I participating in religion in the name of Jesus?" What do you truly treasure and trust in the world?

Jesus said in Matthew 18:20, *For where two or three gather together because they are mine, I will be right there among them.*

As Brenda reiterated in the last Whirlwind - the core aspects of discipleship are learning, living, and sharing. Whether it be through Bible Studies, Quilting, assembling School and Health Kits, serving at Funerals, visiting the lonely and ill, working with our young people and being a good example.

When Christ opens our eyes to see His worth, surrender doesn't feel like sacrifice - *It Feels Like Joy!*

"I am God's child, deserving of love and respect, and God will use me to change to change the world."

\*\*\*\*\*

**Registration for the  
Women of the ELCA - 13th  
Triennial Gathering**

We invite you to join with our ministry as we seek to nourish women's faith and love and to inspire women to proclaim their identity, intent, and actions.

**Registration Fees**

All registration categories include all gathering activities scheduled for July 16 - 19, 2026, except the optional activities shown here: <https://golinker.in/2026-elca-gathering>

REGISTRATION CATEGORIES	Early Bird Registration until Jan. 5, 2026	Registration after Jan. 6, 2026
Adult	\$475	\$525
Adult Friday	\$250	\$275
Adult Saturday	\$250	\$275
Girls 13-18	\$125	\$125
Child under 13	FREE	FREE

Please register no later June 21, 2026

If you have any questions, contact Gabriela Contreras 773-380-2747 or via email @ [Gabriela.Contreras@elca.org](mailto:Gabriela.Contreras@elca.org)

Scan code to register

Ottertail Minn-Dakota Coaches Inc. will come to you and bring you to Fargo where we will all get on one bus and head south to Des Moines.

We will have pick up stops in GRAND FORKS, DEVILS LAKE, HILLSBORO, JAMESTOWN, VALLEY CITY, and that point we all get on one bus in FARGO and head out, stopping in WAHPETON for our final pick up.

Once we have everybody on board, you just sit back and let the driver take over. We will have a sack lunch on the way down and if you want to bring treats to share you certainly can. I suggest you bring your coffee, water or drink. The bus will stop for comfort breaks, but not for meals.

This trip will only cost each person \$230 and that should be paid by July 1, 2026. Reserve your seat as early as possible, because the bus only holds 56 persons. You may hold your seat with a \$50 dollar non-refundable deposit.

Your name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your email address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your pick up location: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your deposit or payment: \_\_\_\_\_

Your funds must be paid by July 1, 2026. I will accept checks or venmo payments. Make checks out to SWO with the memo stating bus deposit.

Hello Ladies of SWO,

Three years have passed since we all gathered in Pheonix, and it is time to come together once again with 3000 of your sisters in Christ.

This year we will travel to Des Moines, Iowa which is so much closer, and we believe the weekend should start with our very own bus headed to Iowa. I can hear the chatter and the laughter already.

If you have never attended a Triennial Gathering you need to experience the joy of the weekend. Come join us to hear fabulous speakers, dynamic music, many displays of God's work done with our hands. We have so much planned and there is much you can do. Open our web site [eandwelca.net](http://eandwelca.net). Once you're on, click on the little boxes and find all the information or go the churchwide web site, [www.womenofthelca.org](http://www.womenofthelca.org). You will find all Des Moines has to offer as well as a preview of the speakers and happenings of the gathering. Picture yourself in a sea of women all in one place serving, singing, praying and enjoying this big world we live in to know that "we are worthy" of the love of God. As members of the board, we invite you to join us. There's all kinds of information in this little pamphlet to help you get ready. Call anyone of us, your board, and ask anything you're wondering about. As winter and spring come our way we will send little notes with more detail as to time and events, just stay tuned, but get ready to be on the bus in July 2026.

**TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED BY:**

**Contact information below**

SWO Jeanne Wobbema, Treasurer  
 1053 E Main St. #409  
 Valley City, ND 58072  
 Phone or Text: 701-230-8745  
 email [mrswwob@gmail.com](mailto:mrswwob@gmail.com)

**We are here to help**

Karen Retzlaff	270-0355	<a href="mailto:retzlaff@polarcomm.com">retzlaff@polarcomm.com</a>
Karen Tabor	490-5294	<a href="mailto:karenitabor@yahoo.com">karenitabor@yahoo.com</a>
Marilee Eikom	270-1909	<a href="mailto:marilee@gondtc.com">marilee@gondtc.com</a>
Jeanne Wobbema	230-8745	<a href="mailto:mrswwob@gmail.com">mrswwob@gmail.com</a>
Joan Huso	371-0303	<a href="mailto:jhuso@hotmail.com">jhuso@hotmail.com</a>
Renaee Olson	320-7567	<a href="mailto:sunshinerko@yahoo.com">sunshinerko@yahoo.com</a>
Corrina Olson	270-7288	<a href="mailto:Olsoncorrina21@gmail.com">Olsoncorrina21@gmail.com</a>

## For those planning to attend the Triennial Gathering!

President Michelle was contacted by the Eastern ND Women of the ELCA SWO. They are arranging transportation by bus to the Triennial Gathering in Des Moines through Ottertail Minn-Dakota Coaches Inc. The cost per person is \$230.

For more information contact END SWO Treasurer Jeanne Wobbema 701-230-8745 or [mrswwob@gmail.com](mailto:mrswwob@gmail.com).

Link to print the full brochure: [https://eandwelca.net/data/\\_uploaded/file/2026-swo-brochure-website.pdf](https://eandwelca.net/data/_uploaded/file/2026-swo-brochure-website.pdf)

<p><b>TRIENNIAL GATHERING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION FORM</b>  <b>WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN OF THE ELCA</b></p>
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**WHEN:** July 16 -19, 2026

**WHERE:** Des Moines, IA

**RESERVATIONS** This for \$500.00. You are responsible for making your own  
for **LODGING:** hotel reservation. \*Please request the WELCA  
Triennial Gathering Room Block when calling.\*

The WND Synodical Board will award up to seven (7) scholarships in the amount of \$500.00. Scholarships are open to ALL women, and first-time attendees are especially encouraged to apply. All applications must be received by **July 1, 2026**, with scholarships being awarded equally among the seven clusters, if possible.

Recipients are required to register for the gathering by **June 21, 2026**. You must send a copy of your name tag to show proof of attendance at the convention before the scholarship money is sent to you.

In the event a recipient cannot attend the gathering please contact the scholarship chairperson listed below so that the scholarship can be awarded to someone else.

**-PLEASE PRINT-**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **E-Mail** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cluster Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Congregation/Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Is this your first Triennial Gathering? YES NO**

**Your age group (circle one) Under 30 30-44 45-59 64-74 75+**

**Have you previously received a synodical scholarship for a Triennial Gathering? YES NO**

**Please tell why you would like to attend this Triennial Gathering:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

**Return to: Connie Isaak**

**5300 Plainsman Road  
Bismarck, ND 58503  
701-391-2825 (cell)**



In 2026, Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> with ashes and solemn services. Lent practices focus on prayer, fasting (giving something up like social media or sweets), and almsgiving (generosity) to prepare for Easter. Or individuals might focus more personally on Bible study, reflection, and spiritual discipline, emphasizing renewal over strict rules.

This year instead of giving up something try adding some daily practices that help you connect with others and strengthen your faith journey. Say a prayer for your neighbors as you pass their houses on your way home. Call a friend you haven't spoken to in a while. Light a candle and say a prayer for peace. Forgive someone who has upset you. Read a Psalm every morning when you wake up. Share a smile with someone you meet. Keep a journal of how you saw God at work that day. Donate to a food pantry. Practice patience.



### M&M Easter Poem

by Bethany Darwin

*These candies tell a story~  
the best news you'll ever hear.  
~It's about Jesus dying on the cross  
so that we could be brought near.*

*So hold them and turn them and you will see...  
the "M" becomes a "W", an "E", and then a "3".*

*The "E" stands for... Easter....  
God's everlasting love and His eternal plan.  
It reminds us of the cross  
and the way God rescued sinful man*

*The "3" represent the 3 days Jesus spent in the grave....  
By His death, His children He did save*

*The "M" reminds us of the mercy the Messiah  
showed as He died in our place.  
and the miracle of the resurrection  
so we can see Him face to face.*

*The "W" reminds us that He alone  
is worthy of our worship and praise  
and calls us to be His witnesses  
around the world for all of our days.*

A LOT CAN HAPPEN IN



JUST 3 DAYS



**WILLINGNESS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR NOMINATION**  
**WESTERN NORTH DAKOTA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION**

**THIS FORM IS NOT A NOMINATION FORM. It is a “WILLINGNESS TO BE CONSIDERED FOR NOMINATION” form.** By filling out this form, you are helping the SWO’s Nomination Committee create a list of **potential nominees** for future elections to the SWO board.

The WND SWO requests that you take a moment to consider your gifts and how those might be used within our women’s organization. Below are various positions in our SWO. You might be the perfect fit for one or more of them! **NOTE: if you are asked at a later date if your name may be put into nomination, you may decide at that time whether or not to do so.**

**So, what is God calling YOU to do** to make Women of the ELCA a vibrant organization in Western North Dakota? You will never know if you never make yourself known!

**Cluster Representative to the SWO Board**

The Cluster Representative is first nominated by her cluster at a cluster business meeting. Additional nominations for this position cannot be made from the floor during the SWO convention.

- SWO President**
- SWO Vice President**
- SWO Secretary**
- SWO Treasurer**
- 2029 Triennial Gathering Voting Member**

Return this completed form by  
**September 1, 2026**, to  
 your Cluster Coordinator  
 -or-  
**Judy Jarmin**-Nominations Chair  
 3010 46<sup>th</sup> Ave NW  
 Minot, ND 58703  
 701-263-5560  
[jjarmin@yahoo.com](mailto:jjarmin@yahoo.com)

***BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION – PLEASE PRINT***

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cluster Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Congregation/Unit:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Congregation/Unit Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Are you differently abled? (Y/N) If yes, please explain:** \_\_\_\_\_



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**March 2026 Issue**

Cheryl Lacey  
4111 85<sup>th</sup> Ave NW  
New Town, ND 58763

**Change Service  
Requested**

**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.**

Please pass along (or copy) to the leadership of the Women of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in your church.