

NORTHWESTER

NEWSLETTER

"Each time a woman stands up for herself, without knowing it possibly, without claiming it, she stands up for all women." — Maya Angelou



If you have ever attended our WELCA Summer Retreat at Luther Park, you have probably met Phyllis Grohn. She had been a member of the Chippewa Valley Conference committee and was an essential member of the retreat planning committee for many, many years; her enthusiasm was contagious. She eagerly gave tours of the camp to those attending for the first time and she loved to participate in all the various activities. Phyllis attended the 2026 retreat not too long after being discharged from the hospital following a fall, determined to participate as she always has. With a heavy heart, I must report to you that Phyllis died following heart surgery in July. She will be greatly missed.



I Am Worthy

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.
~ Psalm 139:14

Eighteen women from our Synod traveled to Des Moines, Iowa in July to attend the **WELCA Triennial Gathering**. It was a time filled with music and scripture, laughter and friendship. The speakers, worship and fellowship all built a remarkable and memorable experience and were well worth attending. These churchwide gatherings take place every three years and I encourage all who can to attend the next one, which will be in 2029 in Louisville, Kentucky. [Photos from the Gathering](#) may be found elsewhere in our Newsletter.

The annual WELCA retreat was held at Luther Park Bible Camp at the end of June and was very well attended. Although the weather was quite warm, the pool was open and we managed to stay hydrated and comfortable. Our special guest Pati Kachel provided several inspiring sessions for us, and we also worshipped and enjoyed activities together. Thanks to the committee for another successful retreat! Check out the [photo gallery](#) on page 4.

Our **Synod Biennial Convention** will be held this year on September 26 at Bethany Lutheran in Rice Lake. This will be a **one-day** event, unlike other years. Your Synod board has been busy planning the convention and Day of Awareness surrounding the story in Luke 10 of "The Good Samaritan" on the topic of **Who Is My Neighbor?** Guest speakers include Gwendolyn Edwards, a representative from our churchwide WELCA board, the Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones, Eau Claire, and Deacon Lidixe Montoya, Eleva. In addition to our business meeting, where we will elect new officers, we will worship together, led by the Rev. Melinda Halom, participate in several break-out sessions, and of course, enjoy a meal together. Click here for the event [flyer](#) and [registration](#) form. I look forward to seeing you there.

Please make plans to attend!

Faithfully yours,
Joan Moe, SWO President, NWSWI

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT NORTHWESTER NOVEMBER 20, 2026

WOW! What a Spring and Summer!

All I can say is what a spring and summer my family and friends have been through with me!

Finding out that I needed a valve put into my heart-- WOW! So many things I needed to do to prepare tests and appointments with my doctor, x-ray tech, labs, dentists, and who knows what all! But as the Bible verse I read today from Philippians 4:19 says, "My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus." Wow--what our God does for us! He was with me all the way with appointments, meeting the doctors, nurses, lab folks and many more people. The day my procedure was scheduled, my surgery began 3 1/2 hours late because of emergencies. God was with me all the way and I could feel his love, and my family and church family were praying for me, and it went wonderful.

Thank you to the ladies that helped nominate folks for the jobs that were open. Your help was much appreciated. I do hope I will see you on September 26, 2026 at Bethany Lutheran, Rice Lake, WI. It sounds like it will be wonderful.

Blessings to all,
In Christian Love,
Carol Medchill
Vice President



You're Never Too Old!

I kept telling my friends at the triennial gathering, I was too old to attend the 2029 Triennial Gathering to be held in Louisville, Kentucky. But I did it! Last night I completed my registration and took advantage of the discounted rate. I can always transfer my registration to someone else who would love to attend if at that time I truly am not able to go. Churchwide Women of the ELCA has only given us the location – no dates yet.

The theme for our 2026 Triennial Gathering was "I Am Worthy". I have been reviewing all the great photos of the Triennial gathering which reflect girls and women of ALL ages – I did not realize we had so many young girls in attendance! What a joy to see all their pictures! The photos brought memories of the wonderful, inspirational speakers addressing "I Am Worthy" as well as the Bible studies led by Sarah Olson Smith. She used the same themes as outlined in our Gather magazine but used different scripture passages to expand those themes. She surely brought some new insights into those scriptures.



Our women musicians were also so talented and truly inspiring. There were wonderful workshop offerings, but most were in rooms that were too small, which was very disappointing as rooms filled quickly and unless you were able to sit on the floor, many of us didn't get to attend the ones of interest to us.

You too can look at all the wonderful pictures by going to the August issue of Bold Connections, the monthly e-mail newsletter from Women of the ELCA at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/publications>. All the quilts submitted for the gathering, including one from Bethany Lutheran Quilters of Siren.

You can **subscribe to Bold Connections** and Bold Café and receive these monthly newsletters in your email with current and upcoming information about Women of the ELCA.

The [2026 Thankoffering Service](#) is available on the Women of the ELCA website. The 2026 Thankoffering Service will be live streamed from Concordia College, Moorhead, MN on October 15 from 9:50-10:50 a.m. Put this date on your calendar and stay tuned for more information.

Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery accepted the position of Director of Women of the ELCA in May. She says, "Everywhere I go, I see the impact Women of the ELCA has had on the lives of women and all those whom these women serve. And there are so many people these women serve. We are not worried about our egos or proving our worth, because God made us worthy," Hockenbery said. "We are glad to welcome the stranger and to nourish those who need nourishment. And we know that we already have everything we need from God, who calls us to be thankful and enjoy our lives of service with others. This message, which Martin Luther preached, is one we need to remember in this time of division, strife, and war. We are called to peace, and we must answer the call to love."

She also reminds us that Women of the ELCA will be 40 years old in 2027. Let's consider ways in which we can celebrate our 40th anniversary next year! Phyllis Beastrom, SWO Treasurer
beastrom@redwing.net

Phyllis Beastrom
SWO Treasurer
beastrom@redwing.net
715-821-5847 (cell)
715-273-5847 (home)



Northwest Synod of WI Synodical Women's Organization Biennial Convention

Our synodical WELCA biennial convention will be held Saturday, September 26, 2026 at Bethany Lutheran, Rice Lake. We will be electing new board members. The theme for the gathering, "Who is My Neighbor?" More details are available in the [flyer](#) and [registration form](#) included later in this newsletter.

CONFERENCES

Apple River Conference

Merry Yates

Our next fall event will be September 12, 2026 from 9 am to 2 pm at Bethany Lutheran Church in Siren. Our speaker will be Gaye Lindfors. Contact Roberta Bitler at edbert@sirentel.net.

Heart of the North Conference

Janice Ahneman

The Heart of the North Conference Day of Renewal, "JOY," will be held from 9 am to noon on October 10, 2026 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Rice Lake. Pastor Heather Kistner, from Trinity Lutheran in Spooner, will be our Bible study and worship leader. Our guest speaker, Ingri Tutu, a dedicated school-teacher and Christian counselor, will share her powerful story of serving families in Ghana and Liberia. Lunch will be catered by "Cookin' up a Storm!"

Registration is \$20. First time attendees are free!! Checks payable to HON WELCA can be mailed by Carol, Wallin, PO Box 243, Cumberland, WI 54829. For more information, contact Carol at caroljwallin@gmail.com or 715-822-0109. A [poster](#) and [brochure](#)

with more details are included later in this newsletter.

Dairyland Conference

Amelie Lindberg-Livingston

Pleasant Valley Lutheran

Pleasant Valley held their annual community picnic in July with 25 people in attendance. Games and a picnic lunch were enjoyed, followed by breaking of a piñata.

Their Fall Bazaar will be held on October 4 following worship. There will be a bake sale, craft table, table for 'lightly loved' items. A charcoal chicken dinner will be served.

NEIGHBOR TO NEIGHBOR

Community Health Fairs

The [Neighbor to Neighbor Ministry](#) coordinates health fairs in communities around the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. The fairs provide outreach to our Spanish-speaking neighbors, connecting them with community services. The schedule for this fall is below. You can support the fairs by volunteering the day of, or through donations. If you're interested, contact Kim Vlcek at vlcekkr@yahoo.com or 715-577-7198.

Health Fair Schedule

September 24 from 3-6 pm
St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran, Curtiss

October 3 from 10 am -1 pm
Our Savior's Lutheran, Chippewa Falls

October 29 from 3-6 pm
Trinity Lutheran, Eau Claire

November 7 from 10 am-1 pm
Pleasant Valley Lutheran, Eleva

Misa in Español

Monthly worship services in Spanish are held at Immanuel Lutheran, Eau Claire, on the first Sunday at 6 pm, followed by a meal, food pantry and fellowship. Everyone is welcome!



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Lay School of Ministry

2026-2027

The Northwest Synod of Wisconsin [Lay School of Ministry](#) is seeking housing for Lay School students for next year's session beginning in September of 2026 and running through May of 2027.

Lay School meets in person the second weekend of the month at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 1300 Mansfield St., Chippewa Falls, WI. Years 1 and 2 will meet in person each month when possible. Zoom remains an option where distance or severe weather travel is an issue for participants. Continuing Ed meets via Zoom in the months when winter weather potentially makes travel hazardous.

Our Lay School Board has decided that in September, October, November, April and May, we will meet in a hybrid model, both in person and via Zoom, for students who may not be able to attend in person. Classes dismiss at 10:00 p.m. on Friday night and resume at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday, so the student will not be spending a lot of time with you. They just need a place to sleep for the night.

A light breakfast (fruit, cheese, pastries) is available on Saturday morning at church. We would love to hear from anyone in the Bloomer/Chippewa Falls/Eau Claire area who may be willing to be a Lay School Host. If you are interested in this or have any questions, please contact Anne Janda at annejanda81@gmail.com or call 612-644-2648.



Women's Retreat 2026 Photo Gallery

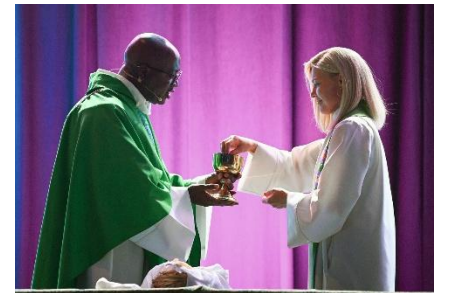




Triennial Gathering 2026 Photo Gallery



Amy Kopecky, Bethany Lutheran, Siren, submitted her quilt to the Triennial Gathering 2026 Quilt Challenge.



Leaders from Region 5 with Bishop Curry



Carol Anderson, Brenda Wheeler and Joan Moe



Joan Moe, former East Central WI president Deb Martin, Executive Director Jennifer Hockenbery



NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN

Synodical Board Members
(Officers and Conference Reps)
2024-2026

PRESIDENT

Joan Moe
1483 Truax Blvd.
Eau Claire, WI 54703-1471
C-715-533-3820
Hope Lutheran, Eau Claire
presidentnswiswo@gmail.com
moejoan@gmail.com



VICE PRESIDENT

Carol Medchill
2364 250th Ave
PO Box 772
Cushing, WI 54006
715-648-5817
First Lutheran, Cushing
carolmedchill2@gmail.com



SECRETARY

Deanna Lear McGinnis
2705 5½ Ave
New Auburn, WI 54757
C-715-642-3713, H-715-237-2592
Chetek Lutheran, Chetek
Deannamcginnis@gmail.com



TREASURER

Phyllis Beasstrom
W6244 – 410th Avenue
Ellsworth, WI 54011-3000
H-715-273-5847, C-715-821-5847
Eisvold Lutheran, Bay City
nswotreas@gmail.com
beasstrom@redwing.net



LAKE SUPERIOR Conf #1

Vacant

APPLE RIVER Conf #2

Merry Yates
2633 220th St #455
Cushing, WI 54006
C-715-222-2749

HEART OF THE NORTH Conf #3

Janice Ahneman
1070 11th Ave
Cumberland, WI 54829-9110
H-715-822-4475 C-715-671-8154
Augustana Lutheran, Cumberland
tjahneman@gmail.com



ST CROIX VALLEY Conf #4

Anne Janda
612 Oak Knoll Ave
River Falls, WI 54022
C-612-644-2648
Ezekiel Lutheran, River Falls
annejanda81@gmail.com



CHIPPEWA VALLEY Conf #5

Vacant

CHEQUAMEGON Conf #6

Barb Krug
883 Brucker St
Medford, WI 54451
C-715-965-5696
Our Saviour's & St. Paul's, Medford
barbkrug@charter.net



DAIRYLAND Conf #7

Amelie Lindberg-Livingston
W1980 50th Avenue
Stockholm, WI 54769-8707
C-218-340-1102
Sabylund Lutheran, Stockholm
ajl55810@msn.com



NORTHWESTER NEWSLETTER Editor

Kimberly Vlcek
715-577-7198
vlcekk@yahoo.com

WEBMASTER & FACEBOOK Editor

Dawn Wicklund
H-715-394-2507, C-218-348-8557
dawnwicklund@gmail.com



Website
<http://www.nswiswo.org>



Facebook
www.facebook.com/WomenoftheNorthwestSynod/



*Articles/photos
of your W/ELCA
activities are
welcome.*

**DEADLINE
FOR THE NEXT
NORTHWESTER
NOVEMBER 20, 2026**

The NORTHWESTER

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this edition of the NORTHWESTER. This digital publication continues to be a work in progress and your ideas and comments are welcome! Submit individual comments and ideas, as well as news and photos from your conference, congregation, or women's group to Kim Vlcek at vlcekk@yahoo.com.



Women of the ELCA

Our Mission – Mobilize 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.

Women of the ELCA -- Northwest Synod of Wisconsin -- Synodical Women's Organization
CONGREGATIONAL UNIT CONTACTS FOR YEAR _____

NAME OF CHURCH

Conference

Location, if different than mailing address

Mailing address of Church

Church Phone Number

Email address

CONTACT PERSON AND/OR PRESIDENT

Name

Address

Phone

Email Address

TREASURER

Name

Address

Phone

Email Address

PLEASE return with current information electronically at your earliest convenience:

- **Your CONFERENCE Representative**

Apple River- Merry Yates 2633 220th St #455, Cushing, WI 54006 C-715-222-2749

Chequamegon- Barb Krug, 883 Brucker St, Medford, WI 54451 barbkrug@charter.net

Chippewa Valley- Vacant

Dairyland- Amelie Lindberg-Livingston, W1980 50th Ave, Stockholm, WI 54769-8707

ajl55810@msn.com

Heart of the North- Janice Ahneman, 1070 11th Avenue, Cumberland, WI 54829-9110

tjahneman@gmail.com

Lake Superior- Vacant

St. Croix Valley- Anne Janda, 612 Oak Knoll Ave, River Falls, WI 54022

annejanda81@gmail.com

- **SWO Secretary:** Deanna Lear McGinnis, 2705 5½ Ave, New Auburn, WI 54757

Deannamcginnis@gmail.com

- **SWO President:** Joan Moe, 1438 Truax Blvd, Eau Claire, WI 54703-1471

presidentnswiswo@gmail.com

Thank you!



NORTHWEST SYNOD OF WISCONSIN WOMEN OF THE ELCA BIENNIAL CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH RICE LAKE, WI

Worship with Pastor Melinda Halom

Guest speakers:

Deacon Lidixe Montoya & Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones

Breakout Sessions:

Tracy Fischer from ADRC

(Protect our neighbors)

Michelle Pride from Feed My People

(Feed our neighbors)

Mary Trettin from Justice Seekers

(Help our neighbors)

Monica Dejno from Dejno Acres

(Employee our neighbors)

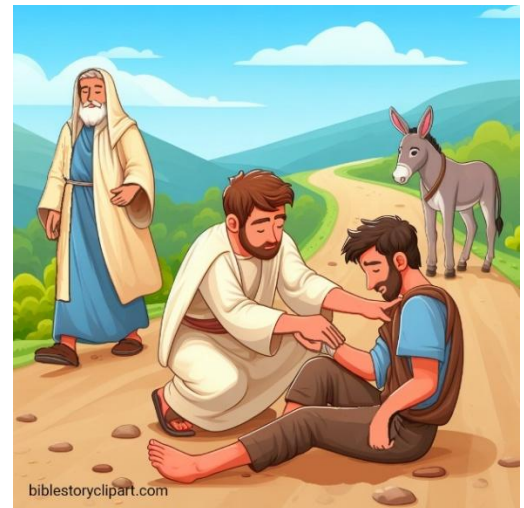
Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones from UW Eau Claire

(Educating our neighbors)

Deacon Lidixe Montoya from

Neighbor to Neighbor

(Including our neighbors)



\$20.00 per person
(Lunch included)

To register send a check made out to WELCA to Phyllis Beastrom

NW Synod of WI SWO Treasurer, W6244 410th Ave. Ellsworth, WI 54011

Questions: beastrom@redwing.net cell # 715-821-5847 | home # 715-273-5847

REGISTRATION FORM
Northwest Synod of WI Synodical Women's Organization
WOMEN OF THE ELCA BIENNIAL CONVENTION
WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?

SEPTEMBER 26, 2026 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

WHERE: BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
35 W MESSENGER ST RICE LAKE WI 54868

FEE: \$ 20.00 REGISTRATION IS DUE SEPTEMBER 15TH

**The lunch is catered and we must have accurate count
for the caterer.**

Please send registration fees (payable to Women of the ELCA) to:

Phyllis Beastrom
W6244 410th Ave
Ellsworth WI 54011
beastrom@redwing.net
715-821-5847

Offering will be received and will be designated: ¼ to Synodical Women's Organization,
¼ to NW Synod of WI Neighbor to Neighbor program, ¼ to Benjamin House in Rice Lake and
¼ to Feed My People Eau Claire. Congregation Unit Offering and personal offerings may also
be sent to above address.

**Each congregation's women's unit is entitled to have one voting member at the 9 a.m. Business meeting.
Please select your voting member and be represented at our meeting.**

(Make additional copies as needed)

Please detach and mail section below to Phyllis Beastrom (address above)

Name _____ voting member _____
Not a voting member _____

Address street and city _____

Telephone _____ e-mail address _____

Circle Conference you are in: Lake Superior Apple River Heart of the North
Chippewa Valley St. Croix Valley Chequamegon Dairyland

Congregation _____ Church city _____

_____ \$20 Registration _____ I request gluten free option.



WELCA
HEART OF THE NORTH CONFERENCE

Day of Renewal

OCT. 10, 2026
9am-noon



**LUTHERAN
WORLD RELIEF**

In-Gathering Collection Site
for quilts & kits
Oct 10 8 am - 11 am

Bethany Lutheran
35 W Messenger St
Rice Lake, WI 54868
bethanyricelake.org

**Bring a friend—
free registration!**

Invite someone who's
never attended
(or hasn't in five years)
and their registration
is on us.



OPEN to ALL Women
All Ages

Information & registration
See brochure



BRING A FRIEND— FREE REGISTRATION!

*Invite someone who's never
attended
(or hasn't in five years)
and their registration is on us.*

*"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."*

*In your presence there
is fullness of joy. ~
Psalm 16:11*

**Together we can
do more!**

**WELCA Heart of the
North Conference**

**Day of
Renewal**

Joy!

**October 10, 2026
9am - noon**

Bethany Lutheran
35 W Messenger St
Rice Lake, WI 54868



Bible Study



Welcome Pastor Heather Kistler as our Bible study and worship leader. As the lead pastor of Trinity Lutheran

Church in Spooner, WI, Pr Heather brings a vibrant spirit and deep faith to every gathering. Her ministry is marked by contagious joy, fresh energy, and a heartfelt commitment to helping others grow in grace.

Guest Speaker



Ingri Tutu, a dedicated school teacher and Christian counselor, shares her powerful story of serving families in Ghana and Liberia.

What began as simple acts of compassion—has grown into a God-sized vision: the building of a new school. Rooted in deep faith and unwavering trust in our Lord, Ingri's calling continues to expand, shaping a ministry that is transforming lives and opening doors of hope for generations to come.



Schedule

8:15–9:00 am Registration

9:00 am: We gather

9:10 am: We hear the Word

We share the meal

10:10 am: Break

10:30 am: Mission Impact Speaker

11:10 am: Mission Impact Offering

11:15 am: Time of Sharing (bring photos or event info)

11:45 am: We are sent

Noon: Catered lunch by

Cookin' Up a Storm

Mission Impact Offering

A monetary collection will be taken for True Vine Global Outreach serving communities in Ghana and Liberia.

Note: Special offerings and Day of Renewal regular offerings cannot be combined on one check, they must be separate.

Thank you!

Registration

Name:

Friend's Name (if applicable):

Email Address:

Phone Number:

Mailing Address:

Church Name:

Registration Fee: \$20.00

(Friend registration is free if they are a first-time attendee or have not attended in the past 5 years.)

Lunch is included.

Deadline: October 1, 2026

Please make checks payable to:
HON WELCA

Mail this form and payment to:

Carol Wallin

P.O. Box 243

Cumberland, WI 54829

Questions?

Email: caroljwallin@gmail.com

Phone/Text: 715-822-0109