

Women of the ELCA

NORTH CAROLINA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

WWW.NCWELCA.COM

THE BULLETIN

2025 JANUARY-FEBRUARY

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*The Bulletin* is the official publication of the NC Women of the ELCA, published bi-monthly. Articles and information relating to the Women of the ELCA are accepted for publication, following review by the Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) President and the SWO Secretary, who serves as the Editor. You may submit articles to Anita Miller, [anitamiller0919@gmail.com](mailto:anitamiller0919@gmail.com), or 150 New Sterling Road, Stony Point, NC 28678.

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One Day Retreat Flyer
Board Nomination Form
SOS Grant Form Application

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.

The North Carolina Synod Land Acknowledgement

The North Carolina Synod office is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Catawba and Keyauwee people, and we acknowledge their presence here since time immemorial. We also wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have called and continue to call this land their home.

We honor and name those who lived here before the synod came to be, who were the first stewards of the land, the first people who offered the first prayers and sang the first songs into the very soil under our feet. All land has a tribal story. We must remember it as the first and current home to many Indigenous people. We recognize and confess that our ability to be working and living here now comes as a direct benefit of policies of expulsion and assimilation of Native American peoples.

The whole of the NC Synod stretches from the mountains to the coast of this state. Before any Lutheran movement, this land was made up of diverse, culturally-organized, and productive communities. There were 27 known tribes that inhabited this land at its beginning. We say their names: Chawanoke, Croatoan, Hatteras, Moratoc, Secotan, Weapemeoc, Machapunga, Pamlico, Coree, Neuse River, Tuscarora, Meherrin, Cherokee,

Cape Fear, Catawba, Shakori, Sissipahaw, Sugeree, Waccamaw, Waxhaw, Woccon, Cheraw, Eno, Keyauwee, Occaneechi, Saponi, and Tutelo.

We know that Native American peoples are not historical subjects but part of our communities, churches, schools, and leadership, and we give thanks for the invaluable wisdom they offer for the ways we exist, today and into the future, in relationship with Mother Earth and our human and non-human neighbors.

Currently, North Carolina has the largest Native American population east of the Mississippi River and the eighth-largest Native American population in the United States. The current tribes living on this land are:

Eastern Band of Cherokee (Swain County and surrounding counties)

Coharie (Sampson and Harnett counties)

Lumbee (Robeson and surrounding counties)

Haliwa-Saponi (Halifax and Warren counties)

Sappony (Person County)

Meherrin (Hertford and surrounding counties)

Occaneechi Band of Saponi Nation (Alamance and surrounding counties)

Waccamaw-Siouan (Columbus and Bladen counties)

The long history in this state of treaty negotiations, land use conflict, immigrant

settlement, and federal administration continues to this day. It is fundamental to remember this history and confess the injustice in order for us to move to healing and a more just future together. We must learn more, do more and realize healing and justice for Native American peoples whose lands we now occupy.

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT:



Dear Sisters,

I pray you have had a wonderful Christmas, and that the Advent season has brought you joy, peace and a deep sense of God’s love as we enter the new year.

I want to share several updates and important details for our upcoming work and opportunities to serve in the coming months:

Committee Day II will be held on January 18th at St. Marks, Mooresville. This is a key event for our committees to continue planning for 2025.

Here’s a look at what some of the committees are working on:

▣ Gathering Planning committee is working on the Annual Gathering to be held at Lenior Rhyne University on June 20-22.

▣ Discipleship Committee is finalizing plans for the One Day Retreat scheduled for either February 8 or 22. (see the brochure in this Bulletin for details)

▣ Justice committee continues to provide critical information and advocacy.

▣ Stewardship Committee continues to promote the “Supporting our Sisters” (SOS) program.

▣ Media/Outreach is a new committee focusing on enhancing our presence on FaceBook and the website.

I have included committee descriptions at the end of this letter. If you are interested in serving or have questions, please contact me.

Conference Leaders are actively working on the nominations for Vice President, Secretary, Board and Triennial delegates. If you feel called to serve, please know that the positions involve co-chairing a committee and committing to several meetings, including:

▣ Committee Day I & II (with Board meetings following)

▣ A three-day training and planning session in July

▣ Board meetings in March and November involving overnight stays

▣ Board meeting before and after the Annual Gathering in June.

▣ Board members are also expected to attend Spring and Fall Conference Gatherings. Serving on the Board is an opportunity to build deep sisterhood and engage in meaningful work, and I encourage you to prayerfully consider these leadership roles. If you’re interested in nominating yourself or someone else, please reach out to Susan Harris, our Nominations Chair, or contact me directly.

I want to make you aware of one other item. I received information from Churchwide WELCA in October. I brought this information to our Board meeting in November. We discussed the information at the meeting and are working diligently to pass our concerns along to Churchwide.

I feel that the Churchwide Board and our Interim Director are working to solve this problem and are keeping us informed. So, the following is the email that came to all Presidents:

Dear SWO Leaders,

The 2023 Audit Report indicates that expenses for the Women of the ELCA 2023 Triennial Convention and Gathering exceeded revenue by close to \$1 million.

Why did this occur?

The budget for the 2023 Triennial Convention and Gathering was built in 2018 for events that were to be held in 2020. Due to Covid, the Convention was rescheduled for 2021 and held on-line. When the 2023 Convention and Gathering was planned, the budget was not updated for inflation. In addition, smaller than anticipated numbers of participants for the 2023 Gathering resulted in less than expected revenue from registrations and higher than expected fees from the hotel and convention center.

How will this issue be resolved?

The Executive Board is working with the Interim Executive Director, staff, and the Office of the Treasurer of the ELCA to determine a payment plan for this debt from our investment (or endowment) resources. Your executive board is also working with the Interim Executive Director and staff to prepare a budget for the next triennial that does not create deeper debt.

An immediate decision was made by the Women of the ELCA Churchwide Executive Board meeting on Saturday, October 19, 2024, to reduce expenses for the 2026 Triennial Convention and Gathering by holding the Convention portion online.

The board evaluated the projected expenses to hold the Convention in-person in Des Moines, as well as virtually in Chicago at the Lutheran Center or virtually in Des Moines. Our Constitution requires that the churchwide organization fund the Triennial Convention. Knowing that we have a debt to repay for the expense overruns for the 2023 Triennial Gathering and Convention, we cannot intentionally add to that debt. The board voted to hold a virtual Convention in Des Moines, during the dates reserved for the event (July 13-15). The full executive board, the staff, the parliamentarian, and the 2026 elections committee will be present in person in one room communicating virtually with the voting members. Voting members from the synodical organizations will virtually join the convention proceedings. There will be no travel funded for synodical voting members for the 2026 Convention.

The Churchwide executive board encourages SWOs to begin thinking now how they might join their members with other voting members within regions to create mini in-person communities during the virtual Convention. We anticipate a one-day interim

between the virtual Convention and the opening of the Triennial Gathering to allow for travel to Des Moines for all who will attend the Gathering, scheduled to begin on July 16, 2026. We anticipate there will be pre-Convention virtual practice sessions for voting members to become familiar with the virtual voting process.

We will share additional information with you about our plans to repay the owed debt as well as our operating budget for the next fiscal year before December 31, 2024. Your executive board understands this decision may be viewed as a disappointment to the 2026 voting members, most of whom are yet to be elected in 2025. We trust that you have elected us to be good stewards of the resources we do have. We also value transparency in being honest with you about what we can and cannot afford to do as we move into the future.

Trusting the Holy Spirit to continue to lead us in our work together as we serve you.

Myrna Wells-Ulland
President, Churchwide Executive Board
Women of the ELCA

I want you all to know that the North Carolina Board is prayerfully working on the issue as it affects any Triennial delegates from our synod. I also want to highlight that our keynote speaker for the Annual Gathering in June will be Jennifer Hockenbery, the interim director of churchwide. She has inherited many challenges, and I know she's working hard to bring solutions. I'm confident that her insight will be valuable, and we will have an opportunity to hear from her directly.

Each of our committees is doing important work, and I encourage you to learn more about how you can become involved. Here is a brief overview of the ministries we're supporting:

- ▣ **Justice:** Addressing issues such as human trafficking, racism, environmental stewardship, and advocating for those in need.
- ▣ **Discipleship:** Promoting lifelong spiritual growth, offering retreats, Bible studies, leadership training, and more.

- ▣ **Stewardship:** Encouraging faithful financial giving, offering life-planning resources, and managing the Synodical Constitution.
- ▣ **Conference Leaders:** Planning events and activities at the conference level and coordinating nominations for leadership positions.
- ▣ **Gathering Program Planning:** Organizing the Annual Gathering, including securing presenters, planning worship, coordinating meals, and gathering evaluations.

Each of these committees plays a vital role in furthering the mission of Women of the ELCA, and your participation can help us fulfill God's work in our communities and beyond. For a final thought, as we begin the year, I encourage you to reflect on how you can grow in your part of this organization. Whether through prayer, action, or service, your involvement strengthens our sisterhood and helps us live out the mission we are called to fulfill. I look forward to seeing many of you at Committee Day II and to all the exciting opportunities in the months ahead. If you have any questions or would like more information on any of these topics, please don't hesitate to reach out.

In Christ's love, Terri Brown, President, NC SWO
tmbrown366@gmail.com 704-213-4202

- 2025 Offering Designations:**
- 2025 Spring Gathering = Ebenezer Children's Home, North Wilkesboro, NC
 - 2025 Pennies Offering = Diaper Bank of NC
- 37th Annual Gathering:**
- 50% = Lutherans Restoring Creation
 - 30% = CWO
 - 20% = Supporting Our Sisters

Hope to see all you lovely ladies at our next Gathering **June 20 – 22, 2025** at Lenoir-Rhyne University!

OFFERING REMITTANCES SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO DEBRA WEINEL UNTIL JANUARY 31, 2025

Debra Weinel, SWO Treasurer
1612 Sherburg Court
Raleigh, NC 27606
dweinel@gmail.com
(919) 851-3093 Home
(919) 215-6624 Cel

On February 1, please forward remittances to

Nena Babb, SWO Treasurer
6130 Heavner Road
Vale, NC 28168
nhbabb@gmail.com
(704)238-5700

CU Treasurers should continue to use Form A



As we begin the New Year I want to personally thank everyone who participated and wrote articles for Justice in 2024 and before. By being in WELCA you are automatically enrolled in the Justice committee.

Every time you experience some slight, or injustice, or read an article that worries you, or makes you mad, and if you walk by a situation that you feel you can change, you are a member of Justice. If you are so inclined you may submit articles on any topic to me, Patty Schmid

schmidrus@aol.com and or call me at 704-516-4285 and leave a message so we can submit for publication in our Bulletins.

I am paraphrasing from the Rev. Heidi Haverkamp from an article found in our Gather magazine:
“Believing in Grace means we are worthy of God’s help and we are beautiful and special because we are created in God’s image.”
Remember this and keep your anger from becoming meanness and keep your anger turned towards Justice. Remember that all we do is for Love. Stay kind. Stay mindful and be with Justice.

Respectively submitted by
Patty Schmid, Co Chair Justic Committee



SUPPORTING OUR SISTERS

Supporting Our Sisters Update
In June of this year, we announced a new campaign designed to benefit the most valuable resource we have as the Women of the ELCA ... YOU. We are happy to announce the Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) fund has a total of \$1270.50. The application to apply for a grant is included in this newsletter. Are there leadership opportunities you are interested in? Do you need "seed" money to start a new ministry in your church or community? When writing a check to Supporting Our Sisters, please make the check out to NC WELCA.

Diaper Bank of NC

envisioning a state where dignity, health, and quality of life are viewed as rights, not privileges.

Our mission is to increase awareness of and access to essential hygiene items to promote dignity, health, and quality of life for the people of North Carolina.

Integrity

We treat everyone – our families served, partners, staff, volunteers, and stakeholders – with grace, dignity, and respect while working with integrity, transparency, consistency, and intention to build trust in the community.

Mindful decision making

We are grounded in research and data to guide decision-making while remaining agile and creative in our daily problem-solving.

Justice seeking

We have a responsibility to address systemic racism that harms communities of color in pursuit of social justice, health justice, and equity.

Ensuring that families with babies and children living with poverty have an adequate supply of diapers.

Improving access to personal hygiene products and other basic necessities to remove barriers to education, employment, or personal fulfillment.

Distributing basic needs through community partners in order to encourage access to their services and programs, thereby empowering

people to become self-sustaining and develop their full potential.

Enhancing community understanding that access to basic personal hygiene is integral to physical and mental health, education, employability, and quality of life and to raise awareness that these needs are not being met for families living with poverty.

Advocating for policy reform so that diapers and period products are included in the definition of and provision for the basic human needs of families.

Creating a diaper bank model that can be shared, replicated, and adopted by all counties in North Carolina.

Improving access to personal hygiene products and other basic necessities to remove barriers to education, employment, or personal fulfillment.



Today is Christmas Eve. It is a beautiful day. A little on the cool side with a slight breeze but the sun is shining brightly. I pray my light will shine as brilliantly as the sun above.

I wondered too about what the weather is like in Bethlehem, Israel and what it was like on this most holy night. Today it is much like our weather here. However, this is the cold and wet season there.

Thank God for the innkeeper who gave Mary and Joseph a warm and safe place to shelter. It wasn't much but it was all he had to offer to these two refugees so they could keep their child safe.

We have had some pretty chilly weather over the course of the past few weeks. I've heard many complaints from family, friends and strangers express their distaste for cold weather often ending with "I'm ready for some Beach weather."

Are you ready for some "Beach" weather? If so, mark your calendar for March 28-30 when the NC Women of the ELCA host the annual Beach Retreat at the Coastal Retreat Center in Isle of Palms, South Carolina. Deadline for registration is March 1, 2025. Come help us "Make a Joyful Noise through Worship, Music, Song and Dance" presented by Heidi, Deanna, Carolyn and Jess. You don't want to miss it.

A registration form with details and information will be forthcoming in the next few weeks. THIS FORM WILL BE SENT VIA EMAIL BLAST TO ALL WELCA MEMBERS WHO CURRENTLY RECEIVE THE MONTHLY BULLETIN ELECTRONICALLY.

Wishing you each the simple beauty of the season and a New Year of Peace and Promise.

Submitted by
Marguerite Taylor
Co-Chair, Discipleship Committee



GOD IS IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

During November and even into December our Gospel lessons have been about the end of times. Our circle likes the Gather Magazine for our Bible

study each month. We have been studying Ephesians for the last two months.

Fig trees are a very important symbol in the Bible for God's relationship with his people. In Luke 13:1-9 Jesus tells the story about a fig tree that just will not bear fruit. They need solid roots to do so. The gardener tended the tree for two years and it bore fruit. In John 1:43-51 we see Nathaniel under a fig tree when Philip says come and see.

During Advent we must be alert at all times, be prepared, flourish, and bear fruit. Our faith is fully realized when we put that faith into action in our broken world.

Discipleship Committee
Kathy Wallace Bailey



God Loves A Cheerful Giver

By Debra Weinel

2 Corinthians 9:7 says "Each of you must make up your own mind about how much to give. But don't feel sorry that you must give and don't feel you are forced to give. God loves people who love to give."

North Carolina Women, it has been a privilege to serve as your Treasurer. Your generosity and support for this organization and the people we serve is amazing. Many times I was overwhelmed by your commitment and your dedication is inspiring. I will always treasure my time in service to you.

But now it is time for me to pass the Treasurer duties to Nena Babb. After February 1, 2025 please send your offerings to Nena at 6130 Heavner Road, Vale, NC 28168.

COMMITTEE DAY II

Committee Day II will be hosted by St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Mooresville on Sat., January 18th 2025. Registration will open at 8:30am with light refreshments before our President, Terri Brown, will open our Business at 9:00am. Lunch will be provided for \$10.00 (make checks payable to St Mark's WELCA). The NC WELCA Board will hold a Board Meeting after Committee Meetings adjourn at 2:00pm.

Everyone is invited to Committee Day where we'll plan and prepare for the upcoming New Year! Even if you are not currently a member of a Committee, your voice and presence are welcomed! We no longer get any discount at a hotel, but an online search will provide a plethora of options if you will be traveling a long enough distance to need a hotel.

You'll be receiving a communication in early January from your Committee Chair(s) with additional details. Please RSVP to your Committee Chair(s) by January 13th.

Gathering Planning >> Rosie Schieber & Anita Miller

Discipleship >> Marguerite Taylor & Lori Schaefer

Justice >> Patty Schmid & Karen Overcash

Stewardship >> Debra Weinel & Nena Babb

Media Outreach >> Robin Stuart

Conference Leaders >> Karen Birkedal & Lorri Monterose

Please reach out to Lorri Monterose (LorriMonterose@gmail.com) with any questions. Looking forward to seeing all y'all on January 18th! Travel safely.

HAPPY NEW YEAR, CONFERENCE LEADERS!

I am writing this article while I sip hot cocoa (with whipped cream, not marshmallows) just a few days before Christmas. All the shopping is done and I'm relishing this quiet time, alone with my thoughts and a cup of cocoa, while I reflect on the past year. And what a year it's been, Ladies! Karen & I are so proud of all that you have accomplished! Give yourselves a pat on the back because there is a lot to celebrate

For the first time since Pre-Covid, we elected new Conference Leaders in three conferences – a new Presider in Rowan and new Directors of Communications in Mecklenburg and Sandhills. And with the help of our Vice President, Robin Stuart, last year and Karen's continued assistance this year, we reactivated a dormant Conference, Northern. These are both milestones that give me such a sense of Hope going into 2025.

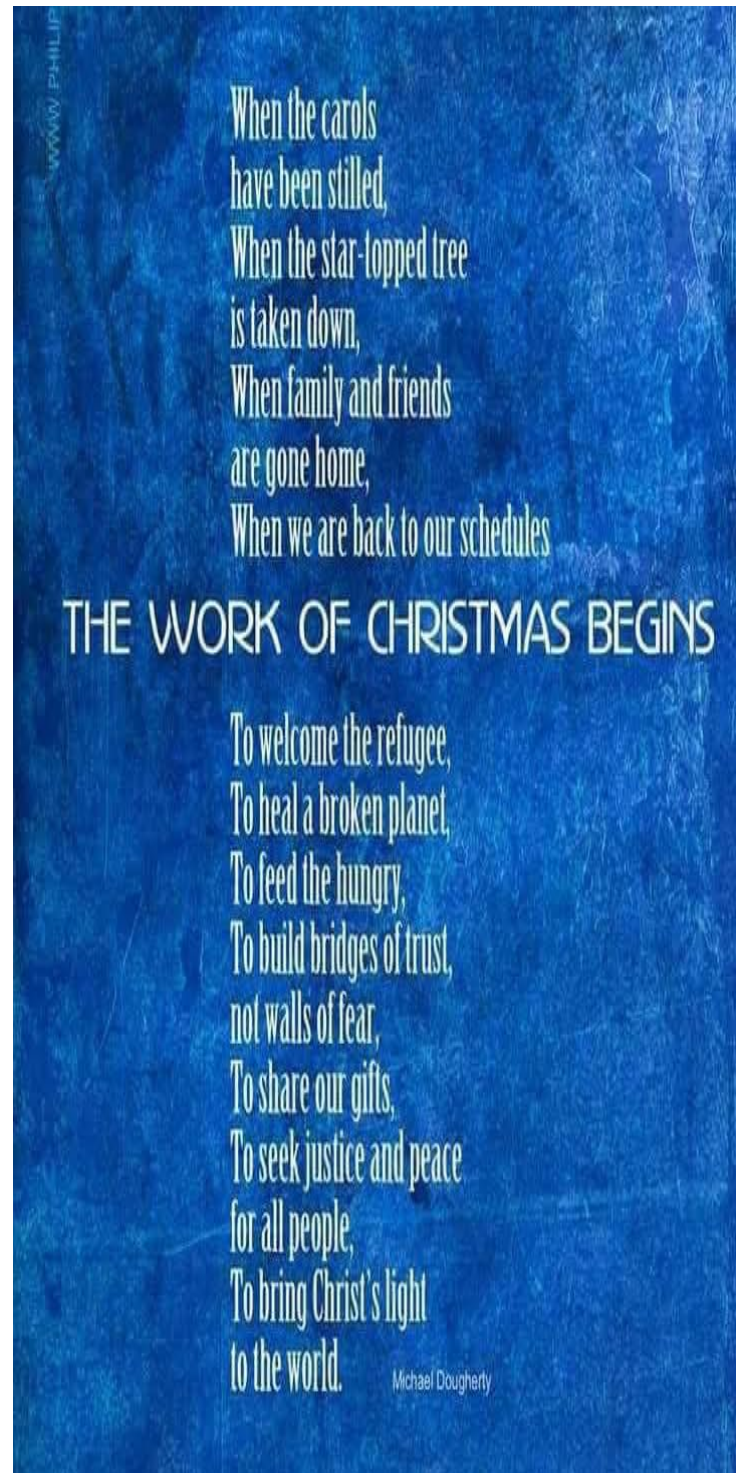
Next, it's time to determine what we're going to resolve to accomplish in the New Year. Now that we finally have some wind in our sails, where do we want to go? Committee Day II is our time to plot our course for 2025, and it's time to dream again. Dream about what we CAN do and about how we CAN continue to make an impact with our Spring and Fall Conference Gatherings and all the work that we do to make these events happen.

Bring your ideas for our Spring Program to Committee Day.

Directors of Communications will meet with Lorri and Karen to plan and prepare the Spring Gatherings. Presiders will meet with Susan Harris, Chair of Nominating Committee, to determine who will fill our openings for Secretary and six Board Members (two 1-yr term and four 2-yr term). Who do you know who would be willing to step forward and run in June? Is that person you? Please give serious thought as we plan to replace positions of leadership at our Annual Gathering.

Karen and I are looking forward to seeing all y'all on January 18th for Committee Day II at my home church, St. Mark's in Mooresville. Please make every effort to be there. This is a such a great opportunity to brain-storm and network in-person that is valuable time spent.

Happy New Year!
Lorri Monterose,
NC SWO Conference Coordinator



ROMANTICIZE THE WINTER SEASON

Make a winter playlist
Create a winter phone wall paper
Put together a self care basket
Create a winter pinterest board
Collect winter quotes
Perfect a stew recipe
Take hot baths or showers
Get outdoors
Read poetry
Listen to whole albums
Laugh
Wear cozy slippers, cute hats, tights,

sweaters

Make a winter bookmark
Choose a winter cocktail
Watch winter movies
Prepare for snow days
Change to winter scents
Watch winter ambience videos
Invest in a good pair of boots
Decorate for winter
Read winter books
Plan a garden
Prioritize your health
Buy good body lotion
Winter coloring book
Create a winter bucket list
Fresh flowers every week
Beeswax candles



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