

Women of the ELCA

NORTH CAROLINA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

WWW.NCWELCA.COM

THE BULLETIN

MAY-JUNE 2025

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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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CONTENTS

Contents:

Purpose and Mission	Pg1
Land Acknowledgement	Pg2
President's Letter	Pg2
A Man That Will Be Missed	Pg3
Wear A Paper Clip	Pg3
Offering Report	Pg4
Thank You from Alicia Harrison	Pg4
Proverbs 31 Woman	Pg 5
Making a Joyful Noise	Pg 5
Ronald McDonald House	Pg 6
Save the Date	Pg 7
Chair Yoga	Pg 7
Are You a Reader?	Pg 8
Women of the Word	Pg 9
Daily Grace	Pg11
Women of Wonder photos	Pg 12-13

Attachments:

Annual Gathering Registration Form
Young Women Guest Registration Form
Health Form
Fall Retreat Registration Form

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.

Mission Statement:

MOBILIZING WOMEN TO ACT BOLDLY ON THEIR FAITH IN JESUS

Purpose Prayer for the Women of the ELCA by Martha Oldland

Our heavenly Father, we ask you to continue to bless the Women of the ELCA as you empower us to seek justice, be disciples, and be good stewards of our time, talents, and money. May we serve and help those in our communities, our congregations, and the world. We are most grateful for all these blessings you bestow upon us every day. We thank you for encouraging the women to walk by faith, giving our offerings that provide for the less fortunate, and instilling us to be impartial, not judging, and strive for peace and justice for all God's people near and far.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen

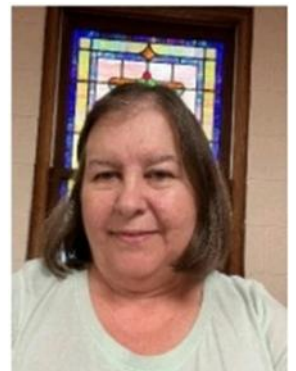
THE NC WOMEN OF THE ELCA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



The North Carolina Women of the ELCA acknowledge that the land where we gather is the ancestral homeland of several First Nation tribes, who were stewards of this land for many generations. God has entrusted us with the continued stewardship of this land as we honor them, their ancestors and descendants, respectfully acknowledging their traditions and teachings.

**Dear Sisters in Christ,
Happy Easter! Alleluia!**

I pray this season of resurrection has filled your hearts with joy and renewed hope. As we witness the new growth and warmth of spring, our Wonder Watchers programs have reminded us to seek God's miracles in the world around us—a beautiful reflection of Easter's promise.



I'm thrilled to share that our Annual Gathering is just around the corner—June 20-22! This year holds special meaning for me as I step into the role of leading the meetings for the first time. While I'm excited, I'd be lying if I didn't admit to some nervousness! Many of you have seen me give reports or participate in the welcome skit, but this is new territory. Even as I write this, my hands feel a little shaky. If you've ever stood where I am now, you'll understand—and if your first thought is, "I'm glad that's not me up there," I won't blame you! But I do ask for your prayers as I prepare. Your support means the world to me.

This Gathering will be a time of reconnection, and I can't wait to greet each of you and welcome new faces too. Highlights include:

□ Elections - where we'll welcome seven sisters to the Board (five of whom will be new or returning after a hiatus). Voting members for the 2026 Triennial

Gathering will be elected, also.

□ Singing together—one of my favorite moments! Though I may not hit every note, I'll make a joyful noise alongside your voices. There's nothing like a roomful of women lifting hymns to God; it often moves me to tears.

□ Keynote Speaker - we will have the privilege of welcoming Dr. Jennifer Hockenberry, Interim Director of Women of the ELCA (Churchwide).

□ 2026 Triennial Gathering - in Des Moines, Iowa with the Theme: "I Am Worthy".

I pray you'll join me for this time of fellowship, discernment, and celebration. Let's gather in June to share laughter, stories, and the love of Christ.
With gratitude and anticipation,
Terri Brown
President, NC WELCA

A Man That Will Be Missed

Pope Francis, died April 21, 2025, and left the Roman Catholic Church without a leader. If not for Martin Luther, we would be more grief stricken that some of us find ourselves. He was a man of peace. He wanted folks to love each other, and serve each other. He will be missed.
Tonie Neal, Social Justice Ministry



WEAR A PAPERCLIP



The Fayetteville Observer, Tues, April 22, 2025 had an article, that gave me an idea that I feel I would be comfortable using in protest of our political climate today. Normally I wouldn't be down at the local protest, with signs, meg a phones, marching up the street to demonstrate my consternation of newly published information, that takes from the underserved. Today I read ofKisap County residents gathered at a park in Poulsbo, Washington on Saturday with signs that say "WEAR A PAPERCLIP".

Catchy don't you think? What could that be about? It seems during the war, you might have caught a sign being boldly waved about resistance to WW 11 with encouragement to "wear a paperclip" in the country of Norway."We want to give people something they can rally around that unifies us and shows solidarity, and yet, is a silent, peaceful way of protesting."is written by Marissa Conter from USA TODAY Network. She is quoting Ollie and Janice Pedersen, who were handing out paperclips to the folks in the park, as they carried their signs.This action was a movement carried out by Norwegians during the WW11 German Nazis occupation of Norway, and by subtly protesting without retribution. Folks wore the paperclips asa "symbol of their resistance". They did not like the authoritarian government. Janice Pedersen, stated today "did not feel like a democracy". As she and her husband travel they are taking

paperclips and hats with paperclip symbol along with them hoping to attract attention from locals and spread their story. Did I hear something about "good trouble?" By the waywhere this little protest started in Kitsap County, Washington is called "Little Norway".

Submitted by Tonie Neal, Justice Ministry, NC



OFFERING REPORT FROM FEBRUARY 1, 2025 UNTIL APRIL 25, 2025

REGULAR OFFERINGS \$2,502.35

PENNIES - NC DIAPER BANK \$ 553.88

SUPPORTING OUR SISTERS \$ 647.00

EBENEZER HOME \$ 897.00

(THREE CONFERENCES HAVE HELD SPRING GATHERINGS SO FAR)

OFFERINGS SENT TO CHURCHWIDE FOR JAN, FEB, MAR \$1,346.63

2024-25 PENNIES PROJECT - SLEEP IN HEAVENLY PEACE \$5,555.74

Respectfully submitted,
Nena Babb, NC SWO Treasurer

Dear NC Women of the ELCA,

Thank you SO much for your prayers, cards and hugs!! I have never doubted your love for me. I FEEL it!



Even though I knew the day would come when Tom would leave this earthly life and join His Heavenly Father, I was unprepared for how quickly it came. I thought I would have more time. I was optimistic that he would rally and walk again. God had a different plan. I am comforted by the thought of Tom running again and kissing his Mama. Mrs. Harrison died when Tom was 19 years old. He missed her greatly.

We all are less than six degrees away from Maxine Amos, a legendary Woman of the ELCA that lives in Lumberton, NC. She told me long ago that the NC Women of the ELCA helped her significantly when she lost several members of her family at one time. I agree, the strength I get from my Christian Sisters is so powerful and helpful. I recently went to a Conference Gathering and was asked "Why are you here?" I said that I needed to be with my Sisters! I get so much love and strength from all of you. I just can't explain it. I am weaved into the fabric of the Women of the ELCA. I need everyone to make me whole.

"Be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord." Psalm 31:24, NIV

You all give me such hope and joy in my present life! Yes, I miss Tom and the life that we had together. But I have such great memories. All of you help me to remember the good times. I look forward to seeing you all again and making new memories.

Blessings,
Alecia Harrison
NC Women of the ELCA
Discipleship Committee

Proverbs 31 Woman:

While shopping in Winston Salem I happened upon a Forsyth Woman magazine and grabbed it for the ride home to Mooresville. An article caught my eye: written by Sheridan C. Watkins who explains how being a Proverbs 31 Woman can provide business lessons to add wealth to your family and life. An odd assumption, but well written and supported by the scripture. As I delved into the article and read it twice I found that Proverbs 31 is also an excellent example for Justice



. Proverbs 31 is advice from a mother to her son (who happens to be a king.) As all mothers expect good behaviors and deeds from their children the mother advises her son to remain faithful by staying away from bad women and drink. She advises her son to speak up for the people who cannot speak for themselves, protect the rights of all who are helpless, be a righteous judge and protect the rights of the poor and needy. She also gives her son advice on picking out a good wife. One who will be worth more than rubies. The woman is expected to work hard, stay busy with all household endeavors and make wise purchases. She should be able to discern the value of everything she makes and cares for. She is kind to the poor, she is strong, respected and not afraid of the future. She speaks with wisdom. She will be respected by her family and friends.

The Justice angle of this article is that all women should be a Proverbs 31 Woman and work diligently to be respected for their works and deeds. Care for the poor and be wise in everything they do. Be a Proverbs 31 Woman.

Respectfully submitted, Patricia Schmid

Making a Joyful Noise

Psalm 100 - A psalm for giving grateful praise. Verses 1-2 - Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing.

What a glorious weekend we had at the 2025 Spring Retreat at Isle of Palms, SC. The weekend started with great enthusiasm from all guests. The weather was perfect and many enjoyed a walk on the beach during our Saturday free time. Lorrie and Patty provided wonderful and tasty meals for our group. Saturday night we were on our own for dinner and many went out in search of good seafood meals that can always be found along the coast.

Friday night the retreat started with singing fun songs, secular and sacred hymns in a very relaxed and casual setting. It was evident right away there was a community of spirit, participation and camaraderie as everyone joined in singing, discussion, activities and crafts.

Our Bible Study for the weekend was based on Sunday's Gospel Lesson - the story of the Prodigal Son. We looked at this passage through the eyes of the Father, the faithful son, the servants and the main character, the Prodigal Son. Using our imagination we "stepped into their shoes" and pondered our personal thoughts and feelings. We spent time writing prayers, learning different ways of praying and sharing personal experiences of struggles and burdens we carried. Our Bible Study was divided into 4 different topics: Honesty, Confession, Forgiveness and Love. We closed our Friday night session with worship and prayer.

Saturday morning our worship service included lots of joyful singing, creative activities, making crafts, and a beautiful time of worship using scripture and chair yoga to relax and bring total peace to our inner most self. We also had a fun time doing a little dancing (You put your left foot in you put your left foot out & shake it all about) and doing a little of what our younger generation does today as they express themselves.

Sunday came to a close with a traditional worship service and Holy Communion. Thank you, Pastor Ann for your help with our Sunday service.

We went home with spirits lifted, songs in our hearts and mind and bountiful blessings. We praise you and thank you Lord.

A big shout out to our presenters, Heidi Gibson, Deanna Deaton and Jes Sloan.

Marguerite Taylor

Discipleship Committee Co-Chair



Ronald McDonald House Charities

When a child's health is at stake, no parent or caregiver should have to choose between staying by their side or traveling hours to and from the hospital each day. They shouldn't have to worry about how to pay for expensive hotel stays and food while facing mounting medical bills.

That's where RMHC® comes in — with support from generous friends like you. Will you make a gift today to help families when they need it most?

Give Now

Together, we can continue removing barriers that interfere with families' access to critical medical care. By offering housing near the hospital, nourishing meals, and other important resources, we take some of the weight off their shoulders.

Last year, we served 2.3 million families across all our programs worldwide, and we're incredibly proud! But, the need for our services is growing. Hundreds of families are on waiting lists for Ronald McDonald House® programs alone. In fact, we estimate that we're only able to meet 35% of the global demand for our House and Ronald McDonald Family Room® programs.

That's why we're asking you to please give today. We have an ambitious goal to double the number of families we serve by 2030 by expanding and increasing our programs, and we can't do it without you!

Thank you for helping us care for families.

With appreciation,

Your friends at RMHC

P.S. Please make the most generous gift you can today. Every dollar brings us closer to ensuring that no family is left waiting for the support and comfort they need in their toughest moments.



[This Photo](#) by Unknown



Save the Date

Spring Retreat 2026

April 10, 11 & 12, 2026

SC Coastal Retreat Center

More information to follow from the Discipleship committee

Chair Yoga for Seniors

Begin by standing or sitting comfortably. Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Take a deep breath in... and slowly exhale. Again, breathe in deeply, filling your lungs with fresh morning air... and breathe out, releasing any tension. One more time... breathe in... and breathe out.

As you move and stretch, let your heart settle into God's presence and release your stress to God. God has given you this day, and God walks with you in it.

Neck Rolls & Shoulder Stretches

"Be still, and know that I am God." - Psalm 46:10**

Lord, in the stillness of this morning I acknowledge You. You are my refuge and strength. As I stretch, I surrender my worries and plans to You.

Grinder pose (rotational move from the waist)

"Truly my soul finds rest in God, my salvation comes from him." Psalm 62:1



God, as I step away from my work today, help me find rest in you. Release me from the burdens of my earthly tasks and let me rejoice in the freedom Of your salvation.

Washing (sprinkle, twist, breathe the dirty water out)

After explaining the breathing out:

"Create in me a clean heart, oh God. And renew a right spirit within me."

Lord, as I reflect on your grace, wash me and make me new. Cleanse me from unrighteousness and make me one with you.

Side Stretches & Arm Movements

Start during the overhead arm stretch

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." - Philippians 4:13

God, thank You for the strength You provide. As I move my body, help me remember that true strength comes from You.

Torso Twists

"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning." - Lamentations 3:22-23**

Lord, I receive Your new mercies today. Whatever happened yesterday is behind me. Today is a fresh start in Your love. Thank you.

Leg Stretches

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

God, guide my steps today. May I walk in Your light, moving forward in faith, peace, and purpose.

Shake it out

"This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." - Psalm 118:24

Lord, thank You for this day, this body, and this breath. May I glorify You in all I do.

Closing

Please slowly Stand, planting your feet firmly, shoulder length apart. Stand still for a moment. Take one more deep breath in... and exhale slowly.

"Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you." 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Stay in this peace, carrying God's presence with you as you move through the day.

Amen.



Are You a Reader?

Do you have a library in your town? Do you check out books? I seldom buy books, lack of space in my downsized home. I check out books from my local library on my iPad, read them, turn them back in, without leaving the house. Library folks will order me books, we don't have in our libraries from throughout the state, anytime they find one elsewhere. I had a large library in my home at one time, now I'm down to a few shelves with a few books, I couldn't give up to others, organizations, selling. I did find a use for my Bibles. One year, we had about 7 high school grads, and I gave each of



them one of my Bibles. Telling how long I had had it, what it meant to me. One day my children will decide what to do with those few shelves.

In a March 23, 2025, Fayetteville Observer article, by Sarah D. Wire, with USA Today, writes that the Federal Employees who work at a tiny agency (fewer than 100 workers) that fund the nation's libraries and museums expect job loss, for the effectively shuttered agency. The American Federation of Government Employees Local 3403 released information the (IMLS) Institute of Museum and Library Services distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in congressionally approved funds to state libraries in all 50 states and D.C. through grants, serving 35K museums and 123K libraries. Under new leadership, Keith Sonderling, Deputy Secretary of Labor, brought a team of security and staff, from DOGE to meet with IMLS leaders and while stressing enhancing efficiency was the goal, later sent an email, "emphasizing the importance of libraries and museums in cultivating the next generation's perception of American exceptionalism and patriotism." This was on Thursday, March 13, 2025.

The March 14th executive order from President Trump's Fact Sheet from the White House "order states that the Institute must be reduced to its statutory functions. Non-statutory components and functions...shall be eliminated. Department of Government Efficiency identified the agency and six other as worth slashing"

The bulk of the IMLS budget supports high-speed internet access, Braille and talking books for visual impairments, workforce development training, summer reading programs for children, small business support for entrepreneurs, books for deaf or blind and maintaining archives. 1,252 Grants were issued in 2024. For 2024 budget was \$294 million, awarding \$266.7 million to museums, libraries, archives. Federal budget outlay is 0.0046%. My local library has many of those options and they are well used and appreciated by our community. The list in the article was a column long from many states, having had the opportunity to enhance local programs.

What I'm reading, says our children and grandchildren's opportunities are being slashed. What are you reading, ladies? Continue to pray, please.

Tonie Neal, Justice Ministry, March, 2025

WOW - Women of the Word! WOW - Women of Wonder!



WOW... When I stepped out in faith in 2018 to run for the NC WELCA Board, who could have predicted that I would still be here seven years later? Would I have accepted the Call to the Board if I had known in advance that a maximum four-year term would morph into a seven-year run? I would like to think my answer still would have been a resounding "Yes, Lord", but my faith wasn't quite as strong back then as it is now, seven years later.

And what a seven years it has been! Who could have predicted a life-changing, global pandemic that interrupted

every aspect of our lives? Like so many others, NC WELCA had a bit of a bumpy road for a while, but all of us remained steadfast in our faith, forging ahead doing previously unimaginable things. Like teaching our ladies how to Zoom! Do you remember learning how to Vote by Zoom when we held our first (and hopefully only) Virtual Annual Gathering?

Personally, my faith suffered terribly during Covid. I am an HR Specialist and I processed Death Claims during Covid – day in and day out. My faith was tested daily at work, and I have to admit there were times I lost sight of God. It was my volunteer work with NC Women of the ELCA that saved me in my darkest hours, of which there were many. Someone from the Board or a Conference Leader would reach out to check on me. Sometimes it was a simple question from a Conference Leader that would bring me back to focus and remind me that God was still here. Reminding me that He had surrounded me with Sisters in Faith who never failed to lift me up whenever I stumbled. I am forever in your debt, lovely ladies, for restoring and renewing my faith when I needed it most.

And that's what is making it so damn hard to write this last article. Although I know it's time to say Farewell and pass the Torch, I'm a bit reluctant. Not because I don't want to Pass the Torch. I do and it's time to do just that. And I am so confident that I'm leaving you in the hands of someone who is just as capable and just as passionate as I am – Conference Coordinator Karen Birkedal! Karen B has grown into her role as Conference Coordinator this past year, and she has excelled beyond expectations! She is capable and confident, compassionate and caring. She has a Servant's Heart which is evident in how she approaches everything she does. Karen B's voice may be different from mine – quieter and softer than my Yankee voice... but it's just as passionate and determined as mine. I know she will successfully lead and guide the Conference Leaders next year.

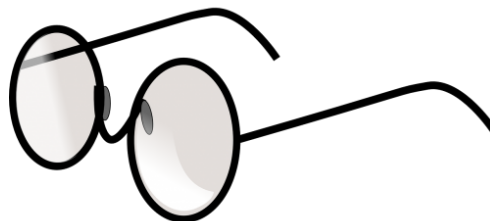
No, my reluctance stems from having to give up the best job in the world. Technically, the role of Conference Coordinator is to train, track and manage thirty women who have been elected to positions of leadership, and to assist the Conference Leaders in facilitating Conference events. But the best way I can describe the role is that I'm a Cheerleader for God! It's a simple way to approach the role, but it made my job so much fun. For seven years, I have had the privilege of nurturing and encouraging so many of you along the way. My joy came from seeing you succeed in your leadership roles! And many of you have been serving as a Presider or Director of Communication since Pre-Covid, like myself. Your dedication and graciousness have amazed me time and time again.

Dear Conference Leaders, past and present... Because of you, I survived Covid with my faith not only intact, but strengthened. Because of you, I have gained more from my role than I have given. Because of you, I am a better person, but more importantly, I am a better Sister in Faith. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

God's Peace and Joy,

Lorri Monterose

NC WELCA Conference Coordinator 2018-2025





THE DIGNITY OF JUSTICE

MAY 25, 2025

May 5 is a day of remembering missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. It is also the beginning of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Awareness Month.

In the ELCA, we are called to live out our faith in relationship – with God, with one another and with creation. To be in relationship is to be accountable. It is to see, to hear and to act when injustice is present. The crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) is not just an Indigenous issue, it is a human issue, a faith issue and a moral crisis that calls all of us into deeper discipleship and action.

For non-Native women, being an ally in this work means acknowledging the ways that colonialism, racism and gendered violence continue to shape our world today. It means recognizing that the systems meant to protect women often fail Indigenous women and that silence and inaction allow this violence to continue. It means seeing the disparities in whose stories are heard, whose cases are solved and who is given the dignity of justice.

This message is excerpted from "We Stand for Her, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women" by Prairie Rose Seminole, a 2025 resource of the Women of the ELCA. Today is Cinco de Mayo. Today is the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW).

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The post The dignity of justice appeared first on Women of the ELCA.



