



### *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.”*



## **The Bulletin**

### **October 2025**

*“Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ”*

*“May you live in interesting times...”*

**A reflection by Julie Arndt, Secretary, NC WELCA**

That’s an ancient Chinese curse. It came to me in a fortune cookie many years ago. I kept the fortune for years. But it seems that we are living out that ancient curse. The times we live in are, to put it mildly, interesting. Maybe interesting is a mild way to describe our present.

Words like “confusing,” “frightening,” “uncertain,” “turbulent,” among others, come to mind. And for many people, those things are accurate. Government actions run counter to what we believe to be the right thing to do. We watch as rights and freedoms vanish. We watch as our history is wiped away. And we wonder how we got here.

One of the WELCA board’s first actions together was to develop a new theme for the two years ahead. After some discussion, we settled on, “For such a time as this, God’s love breaks through.” The logo shows a cracked heart with beams of light about to break through. That image really speaks to my own heart.

When I feel troubled, afraid, confused, anguished, angered... by events in our world, by people who create those events... I am reminded that somehow, always, God is there. God’s love is at the center of everything, even when things are coming unglued. Even when everything contradicts everything else. Even when you don’t know what to trust. And into the cracks of our troubled heart, His light shines.

Because He promised. And God’s promises never fail.

Especially in interesting times.

**The Bulletin** is published monthly by the North Carolina Women of the ELCA. Submissions of photos, news stories, and other items of interest are welcome. Please limit stories to 500 words. Photos should be submitted with a brief caption that explains what is shown, date of the event, and who is shown.

Deadline for monthly submissions is the **6th of each month for publication on or about the 15th of each month.**

Send submissions to Julie Arndt, Secretary and Bulletin Editor, at the following email: **secretaryncwelca@gmail.com** as either word documents or Google documents.

## *From the President*

### **Dear Sisters in Christ,**

At the end of September, I attended the NC WELCA Fall Retreat in Blowing Rock, where Rev. Denise White presented “Threads of Faith.” One of our weekend activities was to create a timeline of our lives. At first, I thought I had too much paper, but as I began writing, I quickly realized how much there was to include! I even left spaces between events in case I needed to add more—and of course, I did.

As I reflected on my life, I was amazed by how deeply the NC WELCA has been woven throughout it. I first became involved at the congregational level when my daughters were very young. From there, I began participating at the conference level and soon after attended annual gatherings with women from my church. Before long, I found myself elected to the NC WELCA Board. These experiences have given me purpose and kept me active in both my congregation and our synod.

The greatest blessing in all of this has been the friendships I’ve made. Over the years, we have shared the births of children and grandchildren, mourned the deaths of loved ones, faced illness, and walked together through so many of life’s passages.

During the retreat, we shared our timelines with one another. I listened as friends revisited memories—some familiar, others new—and I learned more about the lives of women I was just getting to know. So many of our experiences overlapped; the threads of NC WELCA ran through all of our stories.

As women, we are strong individually—but when we come together, we are even stronger.

Throughout the weekend, we also shared scripture passages that have shaped our faith. These words of faith have been the threads woven through our lives. Many of us found inspiration in the same verses:

Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God...” — a promise that God is always with us.

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: “For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven...” — a reminder that God orders every stage of our lives.

Romans 14:8: “For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord...” — assurance that we always belong to God.

1 Corinthians 13: “...the greatest of these is love.”

Micah 6:8: “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” — one of my personal favorites.

Throughout the entire weekend,

we could see how God is in control of our lives. It was a deeply moving experience to share tears, laughter, and joy, and to grow closer together as sisters in Christ. We are survivors—shaped by both our joys and our struggles. God has been present through it all, weaving each of us into the beautiful tapestry of His plan.

Watch the Bulletin for information about the One Day Retreat coming in February and then the Spring Retreat at Isle of Palms. Both will be rewarding experiences.

Included in this edition of the Bulletin is a call for nominations for the office of President, Treasurer and Board Members. Elections will take place at the Annual Gathering in June. This is another rewarding experience serving on the Board of the NC WELCA. Lorri Monterose will serve as the chair of the nomination committee which will meet during Committee Day II in January. Please prayerfully consider placing your name in nomination for a position as a Board member.

Each of you are strong women but when we are together, we are even better!

**Your sister in Christ,**

***Terri Brown***

***President, NC WELCA***



## 22 attend Blowing Rock Retreat

**By Alecia Harrison, Discipleship Committee**

A group of 22 women gathered at the Blowing Rock Conference Center the last weekend in September to share, study, and reflect.

Blowing Rock was magical that weekend. The overwhelming beauty of the Smoky Mountains, the slight coolness in the evening, and the deer that peeked in the windows daily made this weekend conference extra special.

Denise Henry led the group in a discussion of the faith journey every Christian embarks upon. Empowered by God, we can do all things in Christ, make disciples of all nations, and spread the gospel.

Amid the lightning and rain, we gathered to sit in quiet reflection on good times and difficult times, and the emotions connected to each memory. This led to the

writing of theological reflections as poetry.

As the group gathered for bountiful meals, amazing sunrises and sunsets, great shopping, and incredible fellowship, and came together to worship our God, each participant plotted out a personal timeline to include important life events and considered their reaction to each event.

Everyone created a beautiful string art picture, threading yarn between the different life event points. The designs were as unique as the lives that created them. Some participants made erratic or jagged pictures, noting the ups and downs of life. Others made hearts, flowers and butterflies. One participant made a woven yarn bracelet with purple thread in the middle, representing Jesus, who is the center of our lives, which inspired others to make woven bracelets.

Then came the deep, introspective work of interpreting the picture for the group. The string art became beautiful, meaningful reminders of the weekend's les-

sons.

Some of those were that life is not a circular journey: it is called by God, open with hope and expectation. A person's past helps to form who we are. Everyone is a survivor of something. This may lead to doubt and anger, but God is not afraid of our feelings. She gave us those feelings. It is okay to express them. We know God's promises can be trusted. She is faithful!

We are called to love our neighbor as ourselves and walk humbly with God. Christ forgives and empowers us to work in the kingdom of God. We are strong women and even stronger when we work together.

The weekend concluded with worship and communion, including this prayer:

*Mothering God, you gathered us to your table and we drank deeply of your grace. Send us out by your Spirit to love our neighbors as ourselves and proclaim your love in Jesus' name. Amen and amen.*



String art, poetry, shopping, sunrises, and sisterhood led to a magical and powerful journey of self-discovery in the North Carolina Mountains for the women who gathered at Blowing Rock for the Fall Retreat.



## Local elections matter too!

November 4, 2025 is Municipal Election Day.

Many of us ignore local races because they don't seem important.

But if you have ever complained about

city tax increases, waste of city monies on one project or another, those "unimportant" local elections are where you can make you voiced heard

Don't forget: mayors and council persons are in charge of these things and many others, so local

elections will define our towns for the next four years.

This is just a friendly reminder to all of us as women of our communities to take time to vote. This is a freedom so many of our ancestors fought hard for, one we can't take for granted. See you at the polls.

## *Just in case this is the last time...*

**By Karen Birkedal, Conference leader Co-chair**

Recently I had the opportunity to visit with a friend of almost 20 years who is on hospice care and will be going to live with family in another state. It was a wonderfully bittersweet time as we shared memories of being together. We remembered beautiful times, hard times, and such hilariously fun times that we jelly laughed together for several minutes.

In August, I missed Committee Day 1 because my brother-in-law passed away in Iowa. Because of ALS and being a quadriplegic he was unable to talk at the very end but had planned with his wife to play some worship music that meant so much to him and to me as he took his final breaths. It was the same music that he had played during his daily care hoping that his caregivers would know God's love for them.

In June, I had a wonderful conversation with Maxine Amos. Little did I know that this would be the last time we would talk. Her spar-

ling eyes and encouragement that day, I hope to always remember.

Why am I writing this to all of you? Our new theme, "For such a time as this God's love breaks through," reminds me and perhaps you, that each of the women in the Women of the ELCA in our synod is precious. Only God knows what your smile, hug, listening ear, or kind word may mean to the next women you meet.

When we see each other in our gatherings, committee days, retreats and annual gathering may God help us cherish the time together as if it were our last time seeing each other. This is not meant to be a discouraging thought but rather a reminder to seize each of life's moments to thank God for the precious gifts of each other.



## “We the People:”

# Reflecting on constitutions and congregations

**By Lori Schaeffer, Discipleship Committee**

### **Constitution Day: A National Reminder**

Last month, our country observed Constitution Day on September 17th, commemorating the date in 1787 when the Constitution was adopted in Philadelphia. Over the years, our nation’s foundational document has undergone various changes, yet its significance as a guiding framework for our country remains strong. Most of us can agree that we are thankful for the Constitution’s role in shaping how we operate

as a nation.

### **The Role of Constitutions in WELCA Congregational Units**

This national celebration suggests another important constitution: the WELCA Constitution and Bylaws, which guide the operation of your Congregational Unit. These constitutions are living documents, setting forth how we will live together as a community of women created in the image of God. As circumstances evolve, so too do these constitutions, with amendments and revisions made through the established

processes outlined in the documents themselves

### **Referring to Your Constitution and Bylaws**

Consider whether you know where your constitution is and how often you refer to it. Are you relying on tradition, doing things as they have always been done, or are you actively consulting your constitution as a guide? Taking a moment to review this document may be beneficial. The synod website offers links to the latest versions of constitutions for reference.

## Indigenous People’s Day: Honoring the First Americans

The second Monday in October is Indigenous People’s Day. The annual observation honors the histories, cultures, and perspectives of Indigenous peoples and their ancestors who lived on the land now known as North America. They existed in these areas for thousands of years before the first European explorers arrived. This day promotes awareness of Indigenous peoples’ struggles, resilience, and unique traditions, fostering understanding and unity among diverse cultures.

Dr. Arthur Caswell Parker, a member of the Seneca Nation, was the director of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Science

(now the Rochester Museum & Science Center) from 1924 to 1945 and an early proponent of establishing a day to honor Indigenous peoples. He convinced the Boy Scouts of America to observe a day for “First Americans” from 1912 to 1915.

Native leaders sought the endorsements of US governors and President Woodrow Wilson, then in 1915, the president of the American Indian Association declared “American Indian Day” on the second Saturday of May each year.

New York was one of the first states to officially proclaim this observance on May 13, 1916.

Other states celebrate on the fourth Friday in September.

In 1977, during the United Nations International Conference on Discrimination Against Indigenous Populations in the Americas, an “International Day of Solidarity with the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas,” to be observed on October 12, was proposed as a national holiday.



## *Gifts*

Did you ever stop and wonder, how all the colors came?,  
How the leaves can turn from brown to gold,  
Then back to green again?  
Did you ever once, raise your head, just to see the sky,  
And wonder how that blue got there,  
And why those clouds drift by.  
Did you ever look, just for looking sake,  
At the beauty of the sea,  
With its ever flowing to and fro, God that amazes me.  
Few people see the beauty, that's right before their eyes.  
If they'd only look, just stop, and look,  
They may just realize.  
Beauty isn't something you have to search for to find,  
God put it all around you, to give peace of mind.  
Don't pass it by, and take it for granted,  
The way most people do,  
Just stop, and look, and you will see,  
The gifts God left for you.

***Jerry Genovese***



## *Nothing Gold Can Stay*

Nature's first green is gold,  
Her hardest hue to hold.  
Her early leaf's a flower;  
But only so an hour.  
Then leaf subsides to leaf.  
So Eden sank to grief,  
So dawn goes down to day.  
Nothing gold can stay.

***Robert Frost***



## *Theme in Yellow*

I spot the hills  
With yellow balls in autumn.  
I light the prairie cornfields  
Orange and tawny gold clusters  
And I am called pumpkins.  
On the last of October  
When dusk is fallen  
Children join hands  
And circle round me  
Singing ghost songs  
And love to the harvest moon;  
I am a jack-o'-lantern  
With terrible teeth  
And the children know  
I am fooling.

***Carl Sandburg***