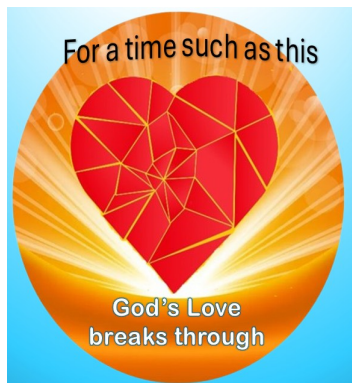


*“Mobilizing women
to act boldly on their
faith in Jesus Christ”*

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.”



Register by September 15 for Fall Retreat

Get ready for weekend in the beautiful North Caroli-
mountains!

Life pulls us many directions, often leaving little time to care for ourselves and reconnect with what truly matters.

This year's fall retreat is an invitation to step away from the noise, breathe deeply, and reconnect with your body, mind, and spirit. Through meaningful conversation, quiet reflection, and worship, explore what it means to care for yourself and reconnect as beloved children of God.

Learn and share practical wellness practices that foster peace in body, mind, and soul, while reconnecting with others through shared stories, laughter, and the gift of community. Whether you arrive feeling weary, curious, or simply in need of rest, this retreat offers space to reconnect with God, with others, and with yourself.



The weekend's presenter is Pastor Judy Drysdale, an ELCA pastor for 37 years who currently serves as pastor of Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Lincolnton. She is a certified wellness coach, earning this specialty through the Institute for Integrative Nutrition. She is passionate about nurturing the whole person—body, mind, and spirit.

Pastor Judy was the first female pastor invited to preach at First Baptist Church in downtown Charleston, the oldest Baptist church in the South.

Come be a part of this special weekend of nurturing, connection, and self-care.

Registration for the entire weekend is \$210 if you pay by check or \$216.30 if you pay through Tithely. Commuter registration is \$100.00 by check or \$103.00 through Tithely.

A brochure and registration form is attached in this mailing along with your BULLETIN.

For questions, contact registrar Alecia Harrison at alecia.a.harrison@gmail.com or 919-333-6734.

Come as you are.

Leave renewed.

And reconnected.

The Bulletin is published monthly by the North Carolina Women of the ELCA. Submissions for 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.

Greetings from the President: September

Dear Sisters,

As we endure the hot days at the end of summer, we find ourselves looking forward to those vibrant Fall colors. I have been reflecting and planning for the coming months, and there is certainly much to look forward to!

Since Committee Day I on August 15 at Sardis Lutheran in Hickory, many plans have been made for the coming year. The Gathering Planning Committee set the dates for our 2027 Annual Gathering, June 18-19. Our Conference Leaders met for training and planning for the coming year. The Justice Committee discussed topics of concern for women, while the Discipleship Committee began planning the spring retreats. The Stewardship Committee discussed the One-Day Retreat program that will be held in February.

There is so much planning taking place, and it is wonderful to be a part of it!

The interaction and energy I experienced on Committee Day made me think of the passage from 1 Thessalonians 5:11: "Therefore, encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."

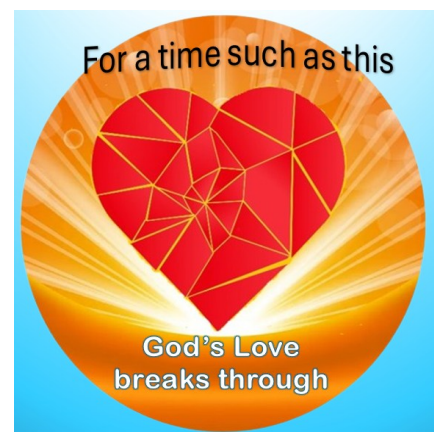
I enjoy going into the different committee spaces, observing and listening to the discussions. The exchange of ideas, the willingness to listen, and the excitement about what is possible make me feel so good about the process. I especially appreciate that we are not holding on to the old mantra of, "This is the way we have always done it." Instead, we are willing to look at new ideas, try new things, and find new ways to serve the women of North Carolina WELCA.

Ladies, life is moving and evolving quickly. We need to listen to new ideas and embrace change. That is how we will continue to grow—not only as an organization, but also in our faith and in our ministry together.

I know that right now it may be hard to believe that Fall is on its way. But as we navigate these busy days and prepare for all that is ahead, let us remember the words from 1 Thessalonians. We are called to encourage one another and build each other up. What a wonderful reminder that we do not have to do this work alone. Through our faith, our encouragement, and our willingness to work together, we can continue to make a difference.

Thank you once again for your unwavering support and enthusiasm. It is an honor to serve alongside such dedicated and loving sisters in Christ. May God continue to bless each of you, our North Carolina WELCA, and our shared mission.

*Your sister in Christ,
Terri Brown, President
NC Women of the ELCA*



Supporting Our Sisters

Does your women's group need a little seed money to start a new project? Or, do you have a project in the works and need a little extra support financially?

If you answered "Yes" to either of these questions, you need to apply for a Supporting Our Sisters (SOS) Grant. The application is on our website under the Scholarships and Grants tab. Once you complete the fillable form, send a copy of it to Debra Weinel. You will find all the information on the SOS site.

Several women's group applied this summer after hearing more about it at the annual Gathering. There is around \$2,500 available. Each Grant is \$250. After your project is completed, you will send a short report about who benefited and how the money was spent. Please send pictures to be used for publicity purposes.

The fall is also the time that we ask for donations to the fund. Could you send a yearly \$10

donation? Or maybe your women's group wants to send a lump sum.

Send your contributions to NC WELCA Treasurer at this address and help your sisters:

Nena Babb

6130 Heavner Rd.

Vale, NC 28168.



North Carolina Women of the ELCA Calendar of Events September–November 2026

September 2026

Suicide Prevention Month

Sept. 12 Fall Gathering, Rowan, Holy Cross, Mocksville

Sept. 13 God's Work Our Hands Sunday

Sept. 19 Fall Gathering, Catawba, St. Paul, Startown

Sept. 19 Fall Gathering, Triangle, Lord of Life, Garner

Sept. 26 Fall Gathering, Cab/Stanly, Mt Hermon, Concord

Sept. 26 Fall Gathering, Sandhills, St James, Fayetteville

October 2026

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Oct. 2–4 Fall Retreat at Blowing Rock

Oct. 10 Fall Gathering, Alexander/Iredell, Amity, Cleveland

Oct. 17 Fall Gathering, Central/Salem, Our Saviour, Welcome

Oct. 25 Reformation Sunday

Oct. 31 Halloween

November 2026

Native American Heritage Month

Nov. 1 All Saints Sunday

Nov. 6–7 Board Meeting at High Rock Lake

Nov. 7 Fall Gathering, Meck/Union, A Mighty Fortress, Charlotte

Nov. 22 Christ the King Sunday

Nov. 26 Thanksgiving

Remembering the ones who didn't make it home...

Wednesday, September 30 is Orange Shirt Day 2026. The National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, this day honors residential and boarding school survivors and remembers the children who never returned home, affirming that "Every Child Matters."

There were 140 federally run residential schools in Canada operating between 1867 and 1996. More than 520 government-funded and church-run American Indian boarding schools operated across the United States from 1819 through 1969.

Young children were removed from tribal homelands and taken to schools where they were, in theory, to be educated and trained in trades so that they might assimilate into mainstream white society. In many cases, what happened was less education than abuse and torture.

The Orange Shirt Movement was inspired by the story of residential school survivor Phyllis Webstad. As a 6-year-old girl arriving at a mission school in 1973, she was stripped of her clothes which included a new orange t-shirt her grandmother had gifted her, and was never given back.

The orange shirt/color now symbolizes how the church and the schools they administered stripped away the culture, freedom, and self-esteem of the indigenous children in their care.

Established to honor residential school survivors, their families, and those who never returned home, the day is a powerful reminder of the lasting impacts of the residential school system. What began as a grassroots initiative has since evolved into a nationally recognized movement, with individuals, organizations, and communities across the US and Canada participating in acts of remembrance, reflection, and reconciliation each year.

The orange shirt represents the stripping away of culture, freedom, and self-esteem experienced by Indigenous children. Wear an orange shirt on September 30.



Prayer for the Children Who Didn't Return Home

Almighty God, we remember before you all of the children – our dear relatives – who did not return home from the Residential Schools. May you remember their suffering and pain. May you grant them rest in the Land of Peace. May you surround them with beautiful and sacred love and joy. We pray to you also for ourselves and our children. At a time like this we remember we need your Spirit so very much.

We pray to you, your Spirit prays through us, in the Name of Jesus, who suffered with us but raised us and will raise us with our departed loved ones.

Amen.

Most Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, on September 30, 2019, at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation ceremony honoring children who did not return home from the Residential Schools



Four boarding schools operated in North Carolina

By Julie Arndt, Justice Committee CO-Chair

In 2022, the U.S. Department of the Interior revealed that from 1819 to 1969, the Federal Indian boarding school system operated 408 schools across 37 states, including four in North Carolina. These institutions may have been involved in the education of American Indian, Alaska Native, and Hawaiian Native children. These institutions were operated by religious institutions or organizations, designed to “civilize” Native children.

The report displays the federal government’s attempt to dispossess American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian people.

The Federal Indian boarding school system used “systematic militarized and identity-alteration methodologies” to forcibly assimilate Indigenous children. This included re-naming Indigenous children with English names, cutting their hair, discouraging and/or preventing the use of Indigenous languages, religions, and cultural practices, and classifying children into units to perform military drills.

Federal Indian boarding officials stripped Indigenous children of tribal identity including clothing, birth names, and native language. Conditions in boarding schools were rife with physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, disease, malnourishment, overcrowding, and a lack of health care – all well-documented. Rules were through corporal punishment, solitary confinement, withholding of food, and more.

Students were forced to do manual labor and be trained in other vocational skills, which were not beneficial to an industrial economy. Boarding schools used manual labor of Indigenous children to compensate for the lack of Federal funding and for the poor conditions of schools.

Investigations revealed marked or unmarked burial sites at 53 different schools. While the report states that hundreds of Indigenous

children died as a result of interaction with Federal Indian boarding schools, the department expects that further investigation will push this number to reach “thousands or tens of thousands.” Many of these students dies as a result of poorly treated or untreated disease or injury, or from suicide.

Of the 408 schools identified, about 90 schools may still operate as educational establishments. However, not all 90 institutions still board children or are federally supported.

North Carolina schools revealed in the investigation include:

- Cherokee Boarding School in Cherokee. Opened in 1881, the Society of Friends (Quakers) operated the Cherokee Boarding School for 12 years. The school was then subsequently operated by the U.S. Indian Service from 1880 until 1954. The boarding school closed in June of 1954.
- Judson College in Henderson County. Located in Vance County, Judson was identified as a training school for girls, operating until 1866.
- Trinity College Industrial Indian Boarding School. Located in Randolph County, it is estimated that as many as 20 Eastern Cherokee with ages ranging from 8 to 18 attended Trinity College. Duke University still operates the Trinity College of Liberal Arts and Sciences today in Durham.
- Valley Towns Baptist Mission School in Valley Towns was a boarding school that became an important center of Cherokee scholarship and resistance to Indian removal policies, rising in popularity after directors of the school began teaching and preaching in the Cherokee language.

THE BULLETIN believes that knowledge is power. Therefore, we will continue writing about Indigenous boarding schools in forthcoming issues in an effort to educate our readers about this important chapter of American history.

Get ready for mid-term elections! November 3 is coming!

As the mid-terms approach, we are hearing more about fraud votes. Consider the latest statistics for NC from the right-wing foundation Heritage Foundation.

In the last 38 years, counting 39 elections, with 81,677,000 ballots cast, five cases of fraud were reported. That is 0.00000710%.

It's time to start doing our homework to be prepared for 11/3 election.

- Check NCSBE voter search to check your registration. When sample ballots become available, you will be able to get them at this

site.

- Research who your state and federal representatives are and which are up for reelection. Study the voting record of each to see which agree with your needs and concerns.
- Study those newcomers in your district to determine what they plan to support.
- Roy Cooper and Michael Whatley are running for Senate.
- If you are able, financially support a candidate you feel strongly about.

But without doubt, the most important action any of us can take is just to get out and cast a vote.

We women need to be sure that our voices are heard.

Women matter at the polls

Women make up the outright majority of registered voters in North Carolina, accounting for approximately 54.8% of the state's total electorate. They consistently register and vote at higher absolute volumes and percentages than male voters.

The demographic breakdown, turnout habits, and political status of female voters in North Carolina reveal several distinct patterns:

- Women vastly outnumber men on North Carolina's voter rolls, with men making up roughly 44.1% of registered voters.
- Roughly 31% of registered female voters in the state are under the age of 37.
- Unaffiliated registration rises dramatically among younger women. Barely 20% of the youngest female voters choose to register as Republicans.
- Younger registered voters show significant diversity. Fewer than 60% of Gen Z registered female voters are white, while 32% identify as persons of color.
- Women historically outpace men during North Carolina's early voting window. During general election cycles, women have been tracked casting roughly 55% of early

and absentee ballots, often outpacing men by hundreds of thousands of total votes.

- Registration among women varies drastically by county. The highest female registration rates are traditionally found in northeastern and southern border counties like Hertford County and Robeson County (at 56%). Conversely, counties like Anson and Madison average lower concentrations.
- Despite making up 51% of the state's total population and the majority of active voters, a deep representation gap persists for North Carolina women in elected office.
 - Women hold roughly 25% of the total seats within the North Carolina General Assembly.
 - Women fill only about one-third of statewide elected executive office positions.
 - North Carolina has zero female representation in the U.S. Senate.



September is Suicide Awareness Month

September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a dedicated time to raise awareness, share vital mental health resources, and break the stigma surrounding suicide. During the month of September mental health advocates, survivors, and communities unite to promote education, coping tools, and open conversations.

In 2024 in the United States, there were 48,824 recorded deaths by suicide, resulting in an age-adjusted rate of 13.7 per 100,000 people according to data compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

A few statistics:

- 48,824 Americans died by suicide, representing a slight decrease from previous years.
- An estimated 2.2 million adults attempted suicide, with 14.3 million seriously thinking about it.
- Males accounted for about four times as many deaths (38,977) as females (9,847).
- Firearms were the most common method, were involved in roughly 57% of all suicide deaths.
- Non-Hispanic American Indian, Alaska Native, and non-Hispanic White people have the highest rates of suicide. Rates were highest among American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) individuals (22.5 per 100,000) and males (22.3 per 100,000).
- Suicide remains a leading cause of death for youth and young adults aged 10–34. Older adults, particularly those aged 85 and older, experience some of the highest fatal suicide rates per capita.
- A person dies by suicide every 11 minutes.
- Suicide ranks as the 10th or 11th leading cause of death overall in the U.S. It is the 2nd leading cause of death for ages 10 to 34.
- An estimated 14.3 million adults seriously thought about suicide, 4.6 million planned an attempt, and 2.2 million attempted suicide.
- Members of the LGBTQ+ community have an increased risk of suicidal thoughts and behaviors. According to a 2024 national survey, 39% of LGBTQ+ people age 13 to 24 years in the US seriously considered attempting suicide in the past year.⁵ This included 46% of those who identified as transgender or nonbinary.
- Based on 2021 data, the industry group with the highest suicide rate was Mining, with an estimated 72 fatal suicides per 100,000 males.
- The suicide risk among physicians and other health care professionals is higher than that of the general public. Each year, approximately 119 US physicians die by suicide.



It's better to be safe than sorry...

By Eleanor Ernst, Discipleship Committee Co-Chair

Weather is an important part of our daily lives, but sometimes severe weather can become dangerous. Storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, extreme heat, and winter storms can cause damage and put people's lives at risk. Being prepared before severe weather happens can help keep us, our families, and our communities safe.

One of the most important steps in weather preparedness is staying informed. People should pay attention to weather forecasts and warnings from reliable sources. It is also helpful to know which types of severe weather are common in the area where you live. When a warning is issued, people should follow safety instructions and take shelter if necessary.

Every family should have an emergency kit ready.

Emergency Items to Pack for Home

- Bottled water
- Non-perishable food and snacks
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Cell phone and portable charger/power bank
- First-aid kit
- Necessary medications
- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes
- Face masks
- Toilet paper and tissues
- Manual Can opener
- Extra clothes and a warm blanket
- Sturdy shoes
- Personal hygiene items
- Copies of important documents in a waterproof bag
- Cash
- Battery-powered or hand-crank emergency radio
- Basic tools and a multipurpose tool
- Emergency candles or glow sticks

- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Pet food and supplies, if needed
- Comfort items for children, if needed

Emergency Preparedness Kit for Your Car

Here's a practical list of items to keep in your car for breakdowns, severe weather, or unexpected delays:

- Flashlight + extra batteries
- Portable phone charger/power bank
- First-aid kit
- Bottled water
- Non-perishable snacks or energy bars
- Warm blanket or emergency blanket
- Gloves and extra clothing
- Sturdy shoes
- Reflective safety vest
- Warning triangles or road flares
- Basic tool kit
- Tire-pressure gauge
- Spare tire, jack, and lug wrench
- Jumper cables or a portable jump starter
- Small vehicle fire extinguisher
- Tow strap
- Tissues, paper towels, and wet wipes
- Hand sanitizer
- Paper map
- Small amount of emergency cash
- Copies of insurance and emergency contact information
- Extra windshield-washer fluid
- Ice scraper, if you drive in freezing conditions
- Pet food and supplies, if traveling with a pet

