

SOUTH DAKOTA SYNODICAL Women of the ELCA

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Fall 2019



President
Margene Thompson

As I begin this new role, President of the WELCA for South Dakota, I am embracing the role and responsibilities cloaked in servant leadership and lifted up by the prayers and support from all of you, my sisters in faith. As we move forward, I'll share my reflections from our meetings and will summarize our ideas and initiatives to strengthen our work and missions.

In this first message, I thought it might be helpful to share a bit about myself and invite each of you to share your story, so that we can further unite, woman to woman, community to community.

In much of my prayer life, I find myself lifted up by the promise and hope of the New Testament, however, this passage, from the Old Testament, Ruth 1:16, has always had a special place in my heart and is a reflective touch point in my spiritual evolution. But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God."

There are only two books in the Old Testament that bear the names of women, Ruth

and Esther. The books of Ruth and Esther show what it means to make difficult decisions during difficult times and how God can be working behind the scenes in many circumstances.

In 1968, I was a young widow with three daughters living in St. Paul, MN, who met and married a young widowed farmer; a father to three sons. Out of the sadness of this early part of our lives, we made our home in rural Letcher, a mile from the homestead where my husband Alvin was born. For 51 years, we lived and loved and grew in our faith. God's presence in our lives was a gift of grace.

Your people will be my people... Stalwart women of faith met me and welcomed me to this

But Ruth replied, "Don't ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God."

Ruth 1:16

new community—they were my teachers in tradition (lefs making), in growing my faith life through Bible study and Circle, and challenging and uplifting me to use my gifts and talents even while I was first filled with fear, anxiety, or concerns that I wasn't "enough." Today, I think of this beautiful phrase, your people will be my people, as the body of people, worldwide, who have accepted Christ in their lives. We may have

differences, we may be faced with challenges, but we are united in our faith.

...and your God will be my God. As sisters in faith, we are joined, we are one another's people. As we move forward in Christ, with the work of the women of the church, I ask that we

RUTH continued on p.2



Vice President

Hannah Fleming

The success of every organization often depends on the quality of those that lead them. As women of the South Dakota Synodical Women Organization, we depend on God for guidance as we lead His children. We are aware that God is not calling us to be perfect but rather live above reproach, be hospitable, self-controlled, and disciplined (1Timothy 3:2).

Our nominating committee has the responsibility to consciously exercise diligence in recruiting potential synodical board candidates. Most importantly we rely on prayer, discernment, and total dependence on the Holy Spirit. Our vision is to provide equal leadership opportunity for all as we nominate candidates to the board in a timely manner. As a fundamental committee of the board, members are committed to WELCA's mission, goals, and values.

We are willing to learn and understand the roles of each committee member because "Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other" (John F. Kennedy). Such understanding enables us to have meaningful conversation with potential candidates about their expectations if elected to a position.

Our goal is to identify the best candidate for each opened position, assisting them in making informed decisions as they hopefully say "Yes" to our request. Again, God is not seeking perfect leaders, but ones that listen and seek His face. Please look for communications and calls from the nominating committee as we approach our next convention.

Stay blessed,
Hannah



Incoming board members are Hannah Fleming, Vice President; Margie Neugebauer, Director for Justice; Kathy Heffernan, Director for Stewardship; Darla Toben, Treasurer; Vicki Persson, Director for Discipleship; Janet Lustig, Secretary; and Cheryl Lundeen, Member at Large.



National representative Laura Krueger (right) thanks outgoing board members for their service: Donna Vreugdenhil, Karen Jensen and Glenda Ofstehage.

RUTH continued from p.1

unite around faith, freedom, courage and commitment.

Faith in God that sees beyond present bitter setbacks.

Freedom from the securities and comforts of the world.

Courage to venture into the unknown and the strange.

Radical commitment in the relationships appointed by God.

Yours in purpose and faith,
Margene Thompson

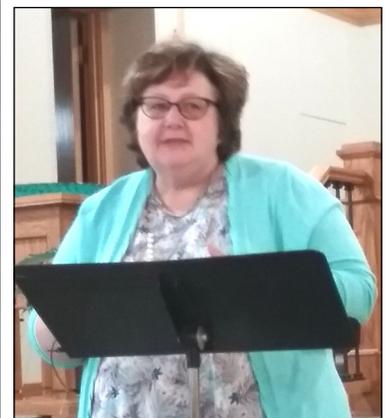
Highlights of the 32nd Convention, June 20-22, 2019



ABOVE: Churchwide Representative Laura Krueger displays the theme for the 2020 Churchwide convention in Phoenix, Ariz. **RIGHT:** Vivian Westgaard braves the lion water fountain at Storybook Land. **BELOW:** Many women rode the trolley to Storybook Land Thursday night for some pre-Convention fun.



ABOVE: Elected voting members for the Triennial are Kathy Heffernan, Hannah Fleming and Darla Toben. **BELOW:** Nicholas Breining speaks about programming at the retreat center at Pine Ridge. **BOTTOM:** Pastor Rhonda Wellsandt-Zell shares her experiences blending congregations.





Treasurer
Darla Toben

Fall greetings,

This position has opened my eyes again to the generosity of the Women of the ELCA. The women in our churches are so important, and a lot of work gets done because of each of you. There are so many gifts you have given to this organization. I thank the women who are treasurers in your units and conferences who send me your donations that help in so many ways and with so many charities.

When Joy Ranch was built, the SD Women of the ELCA pledged \$200,000 for the new kitchen, and we DID it! We can do it again for the LSS Campaign for Hope.

Directing Unit Gifts

At the Synodical meeting, the members voted to contribute \$1,500 to the Dina Johnson scholarship fund, which achieved full endowment status to the Fund of \$25,000. We also discussed how gifts should come to the synodical treasurer, Darla Toben.

If donating to a **Lutheran based organization** such as Lutherans Outdoors, Lutheran World Relief or LSS, please write the checks to WELCA, complete the Offering Form A designating the organization on the form on one of the blank lines.

The purpose for sending the donations to the Synodical treasurer is to show the impact W/ELCA has at all levels (unit, conference, state, and churchwide). I will forward these donation gifts to the appropriate entity.

For other charities your unit or conference would like to give to, we ask that you send directly to that organization. **Please remember to include those non-Lutheran donations on your annual form** that you send to the Director of Stewardship at the end of the year.

Campaign For Hope Pledges Short

In 2018 the SD Women of the ELCA pledged \$75,000 to the LSS-Campaign for Hope with naming rights to the entryway for the Center for New Americans. One and a half years have passed, and our donations are **very short** of our annual pledges of \$25,000. We ask that each of your units and conferences prayerfully consider increasing your gifts to LSS Campaign for Hope so we can complete our goal.

I have noticed an increase in the donations since our Synodical and leadership training meetings. When Joy Ranch was built, the SD Women of the ELCA pledged \$200,000 for the new kitchen, and we DID it! We can do it again for the LSS's Campaign for Hope with the Center for New Americans.

I ask the treasurers of your units and conferences to write LSS Campaign for Hope on your Form A on one of the blank lines as a reminder to give generously to help fulfill our commitment. Let's make this a reality! The treasurers have been doing a wonderful job! Please continue, and if you have questions, please call or email me. Enjoy the fall! God is Great!

Darla Toben

SD WELCA 33rd Synodical Women's Convention

June 25-27, 2020, hosted by Crossroads Conference at First Lutheran Church, Sioux Falls

Guided tours of Downtown Sioux Falls ~ Honoring Women Clergy on the 50th Anniversary of Women's Ordination ~ Time with our new SD Bishop - Rev. Constanze Hagmaier ~ many breakout sessions ~ much more to be planned...



Director for Discipleship

Vicki Persson

Discipleship Journey

I am newly elected to the office of Discipleship. I am excited to begin my journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ over the next two years.

As Women of the ELCA, we practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. I have many things to learn and share with

all of our women. I have found information online at welca.org/resources for lessons in discipleship. There are many opportunities available to all of us to study God's word in community and fellowship. Join Women of the ELCA on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest. Daily Grace on Facebook, email, or your phone is also enjoyable.

My home church is St. Paul Lutheran in Stickney, SD. My husband and I are retired and live on our farm. We are active in church and the community. We have four children and three grandsons. I love to read, garden, and bake. Discipleship is an important aspect of every Christian's life, and I want to receive God's truth for balance, hope, and transformation.



Director for Stewardship

Kathy Heffernan

Greetings!

I'd like to introduce myself as the new Syndical Director of Stewardship.

Kathy Heffernan is my name; and local, state, national, and global stewardship is my passion (among other things)! I would like to thank Jan Anderson for making sure I was comfortable going into this position. You're a doll!

I'm from the Northern Plains Conference; my family and I have lived in Wecota (north of Faulkton) for 27 years. I've been a teacher for 37 years, and entered a new career path as the 7-12 Resource Room teacher at Selby Area School providing services and guidance to 10 students, under the direction of the Oahe Special Education Cooperative.

Zion Lutheran Church in Aberdeen is where I worship and volunteer as a worship assistant, lector, and co-teach 6-8th grade Sunday classes.

I lost my husband Steve to complications

caused by MS 15 years ago. We have two children: Tom with a Master's in Multi-Cultural Ethnic Studies who is managing support and guidance services to people with disabilities who live independently; and Lisa, called as Pastor for Trinity Lutheran Church, Chamberlain for the last 5 1/2 years.

Stewardship is the backbone and driving force behind Lutheran women, from Katie von Bora to today's women. We love and follow Christ's mission to help and serve all through our works (quilts, school kits, infant layette kits), our time (serving funerals, visitations, teaching Sunday School, Bible studies, listening/supporting issues such as human trafficking), and our financial contributions.

Conference Fall retreats are finishing up; the LWR trucks are getting loaded with our gifts. Please keep in contact with your Conference Stewardship directors as they have information concerning all the projects at our disposal.

The 11th Triennial Convention in Phoenix is July 16 – 19, 2020. I'm looking forward to going and encourage women of all ages to go, see, and participate in this wonderful event.

Blessings,

Kathy Heffernan



Director for Justice

Margie Neugebauer

Justice or Charity?

In the Bible, Jesus is most harsh with people who show no concern for those who are hungry, thirsty, without clothes, in prison, and sick. "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me". Matthew 25:45 Charity and justice are two sides of the same coin—they go together, but they are distinct from each other.

**Charity typically includes personal interaction that results in relief. Parable of the Good Samaritan.*

**Justice usually relates to acts that address unfair social, economic, or political systems.*

Moses did not ask Pharaoh for food or supplies for his people. Instead Moses challenged the oppressive system that imposed suffering and slave labor upon his people.

**Apply a distinction of emphasis.* Moses focused on the long-term need. The Good Samaritan's emphasis was on the immediate relief of suffering. Moses emphasis on justice was directed at the root cause of social injustice. Charity addresses the *symptoms* that are the result of poverty; justice addresses the *systems* that lead to poverty.

**Focus on charity in your daily and weekly life.* Working at a food bank or women's shelter.

**Connect your experiences of charity with a wider perspective.* Consider becoming involved in legislative advocacy or congregation-based community organizing as a way to address the systems that lead to hunger, poverty or injustice.

Be Aware

Lutherans tend toward excellence in charity but sometimes slow down a bit when it comes to justice, perhaps because they're uncomfortable being people who rock the boat. This is neither historically nor theologically necessary, as justice is a rudiment to the Lutheran heritage.

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Bread for the World

Cathy Brechtelsbauer
Volunteer SD
Coordinator

Thanks to everyone who contacted Congress about global nutrition. As I write this, Rep. Dusty Johnson has signed onto House Resolution 189. (Let's thank him.) I hope people are asking Senators to cosponsor the Senate version, bipartisan Senate Resolution 260. It recognizes the importance of continued US leadership to accelerate global progress against maternal and child malnutrition. You could call to ask if they have signed on, and encourage them (toll free numbers).

Senator John Thune: 866-850-3855

Senator Mike Rounds: 844-875-5268

On the state level, good news: there is a simple way to start phasing down the food tax, but we have to ask!

Current law says the next tax cut will be a tenth of a percent off the general sales tax rate. But a bill in the legislature in Pierre (Jan/Feb) will seek to change it into a whole percent off groceries. Legislators will choose.

Background: In 2003, tax rule changes to allow for taxing online sales caused a food tax increase: only food. Some legislators said then they would cut the food tax when the state finally receives the new revenue. So now the legislature should respect that we've paid higher tax on our groceries for 15 years now and make the next tax cut a food tax cut.

If and when a sales tax cut is coming, which would you prefer? 1/10% off the general tax rate, or 1% off food? Let our state legislators know your preference.

"Blessed be God, who is our Bread.

May all the world be clothed and fed."

Let me know if you want my email advocacy alerts during the legislature.

Cathy Brechtelsbauer, volunteer, 605-335-6222, ryebread@breadrising.org, www.bread.org