

Board Members

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To Be Determined

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To Be Determined

Indiana-Jefferson

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Words for Women



Summer 2025

From our NEW Chair – Kelly Lemmon

It's been a several days since the close of our 2025 convention, where I was elected as the chair of our group. I got to thinking, this is my third year of being a part of NWPA SWO of the ELCA. I started out as the board representative to the Indiana/Jefferson County region; last year treasurer; this year chair. I have stepped outside the box-and comfort zone- more and more in the last five or six years, I thank the good Lord for guiding me!

Moving on! As you may have noticed, our newsletter has a different look and full of information! Please read over it and share with your communities. One thing I'd like to point out is our combined retreat with SW WELCA, at the end of September. Registration will be online. The deadline to register is August 29. Amy Huffman has stepped down as our newsletter guru. Pat Bellingham has stepped up to the newsletter position. If you have anything you'd like to share with our group, please contact Pat. A big THANK YOU to Amy for your years of dedication!

Sarah Shaffer has been elected as treasurer. There will be a transition period I'll be helping her take on the treasurer duties. Her contact information, along with the other board members, is listed on this page.

We do have two regions board representation is needed; Mercer/Crawford and Cameron/Elk/McKean/Potter regions. A representative does not need to be from either of these regions. However, it would be more convenient if they were. Please prayerfully consider becoming a board representative for these regions. Please contact me, or any of the board members, if you have questions or ideas. Peace, Kelly

Region News:

Erie: The Erie Conference recently hosted a conference-wide Ascension Service at Luther Memorial. It was a beautiful celebration with music, choirs, and assistants from Faith Lutheran, St. Peter's, and St. Paul's churches. Everyone enjoyed the fellowship afterwards in the parlor. Thank you to one and all who participated and came to this great worship event.

Crawford-Mercer: At the Convention, we heard some wonderful reporting on the *Start Right* program at Bethesda Lutheran Services in Meadville. *Start Right* is the only residential program in PA that supports teen mothers and their babies together in family units, giving the young mothers the opportunity and resources to become loving parents.

Warren-Venango-Forest-Clarion: First Lutheran in Warren continues their support of the Ukrainian families that they have helped settle in the area. Their ministry is shared with the Catholic church in Warren. It has been a concerning situation due to the changing immigration rules.

Elk-Cameron-McKean-Potter: Angela Cornelius from St. Matthew's Lutheran shared stories of her latest endeavor – restoring a former Catholic church in Mt. Jewett to be a home as well as an art studio. When her project is ready, I see a road trip to Mt. Jewett in our future!

Indiana-Jefferson: Congratulations to Kelly Lemmon from Mt. Zion in Punxsutawney. At the 35th Convention she was elected to be our new President! We are all grateful to Kelly for answering the call.

Have you read any good books lately? You might want to try:

Forgiving What You Can't Forget by Lysa Terkeurst – the title says it all!

The Women by Kristen Hannah – is a riveting story about 3 women who served as combat nurses in Vietnam and their struggles to be recognized; before, during, and after the war.



Let Pat know if you have a great book to share. There are a lot of them out there.

HARVESTING HOPE

The Women of the ELCA Joint Retreat at Lutherlyn will be held September 26-28th, 2025. It is always a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with one another and with our faith! Bring a friend and enjoy some time together.

\$90.00 - Retreat SAT ONLY (3 Saturday meals)

\$145.00 - Retreat SAT plus FRI NIGHT LODGING (3 Sat meals)

\$145.00 - Retreat SAT plus SAT NIGHT LODGING (3 Sat meals/Sun breakfast)

\$175.00 - Full Weekend includes FRI/SAT LODGING (3 Sat meals/Sun breakfast)

Our Bible verse is from Romans 15:13 –

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Offering will be collected after bible study on Saturday and during the worship service on Sunday and dispersed as follows:

o 50% will be sent to WELCA Churchwide for each synod.

o 25% will be split between NW and SW SWO's Treasuries

o 25% will be split between NW** and SW SWO Outreach Projects

**NWPA Outreach Project - Lutherlyn Campership: Financial Assistance provided for campers who cannot afford to pay the entire camp fee. Lutherlyn promises never to turn a child away from the opportunity to come to camp because of financial circumstances.

The In-Kind Collection (even if you don't attend, you can send along the following items)

NW PA – For Lutherlyn: masking tape or painters tape (any width), regular or postcard stamps, Sharpies (any color) or monetary donation to camperships.

This year, registration will be using an on-line form. You can access the form here:

<https://forms.gle/BHDyux48Ldy8M83h6>. Or scan the QR code on your phone.

If you or someone you know will have difficulty with the on-line registration, please reach out to Tracy Heutsche at 814-392-4608.

Registration deadline is August 29th.



Committees:

Communication: Pat Bellingham has taken over the daunting task of newsletter! Amy Huffman shared her expertise for many years but is now relinquishing that task – some pretty big shoes to fill! Please help me out by sending your photos and activities! Inquiring minds want to know! Send news to:

Pat Bellingham
128 Hathaway St. West
Girard, PA 16417
814-602-5983

nwpawelcaswo@gmail.com

Finance as of: **1-31-25** Checking Account = \$14,231.50 Savings Account = \$990.63

Thank you Thank you to these units for contributing their offerings for the work of the Women of the ELCA: Lamb of God (Erie) Luther Memorial (Erie), Trinity (Meadville), Holy Trinity (Hermitage), First Lutheran (Warren), Salem Lutheran (Lamartine), St. Paul's (Drakes Mills), Mt. Zion (Punxsutawney)

Prayer Room Ministry: Each Region is assigned a Prayer Room Container. It has 5-10 Stations of Prayer, complete with materials and instructions. **All 5 containers are to be returned to Tracy at the upcoming Lutherlyn Retreat.** She will refurbish and replenish them at Lutherlyn so they are ready to be returned, ready for use in September. The Containers are rotated from year to year so that ideas and stations are fresh and new. Contact your Prayer Room Regional coordinator to borrow it. Regions and contact information are in the chart below. Stations of Prayer can be used to enhance meetings, seminars, retreats, programs, services, it's just a matter of creativity on how you want to use it. And these days who doesn't need a little creative Prayer!

REGION	CONTACT PERSON/COORDINATOR
Erie Region	Tracy Heutsche – (814) 392-4608 doty.tracy@gmail.com
Crawford-Mercer Region	Tracy Heutsche – (814) 392-4608 doty.tracy@gmail.com
Warren-Venango-Forest-Clarion Region	Joyce Frenz – (724) 699-0861 jefrenz@hotmail.com
Elk-Cameron- McKean-Potter Region	Jean Knapp – (814) 558-1331 Jeanpknapp@gmail.com
Jefferson-Indiana Region	Kathy Keller – (724)422-5447 kathykeller929@yahoo.com

Social Justice:

SOAP PROJECT - Karen Hollinsworth and Pat Bellingham continue their work with the SOAP Project – Saving Our Adolescents from Prostitution. So far this year, they have visited 15 hotels in Erie County with bars of soap labeled with the Human Trafficking Hot Line number and a folder of information on how hotels can keep their properties safe from the \$150 billion dollar trafficking industry. If you are interested in learning more about what you can do to address Human Trafficking contact Pat – we’ll come to you with a community presentation.

[The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children](#) offers a helpful tool to anyone facing this overwhelming scenario. [Take It Down](#) is a free service through NCMEC that allows an individual to have a “hash value” – essentially a digital fingerprint – assigned to the photo being used against them. The “hash value” is then sent out to participating sites such as Instagram, Snapchat and even pornography sites that put a block on the image so it cannot be seen, shared or spread, rendering it useless for the blackmailer. A child never has to upload the photo to the service, nor does anyone ever view the image in the process.

LILY BAGS – Presently, the Lily Project is alive and well in Crawford & Venango Counties. Joyce Frenz has been taking girls’ undergarments and needed clothing to the girls at Bethesda who may have been immediately adjudicated to Meadville after legal proceedings. They often are transported without any other clothing and a fresh pair of undies is very much appreciated. She also faithfully supplies Lily Bags to 3 hospitals in her region.

Women Empowering Women Grant Recipients: \$300 checks were given to 5 church W/ELCA units at the May Convention. Contact the committee members: Joyce Frenz, Tracy Heutsche, or Pat Bellingham with questions.

Jefferson – Indiana	New Life Evangelical Lutheran – will expand their outreach with Advent Bags to more people and more items; mugs, tea, hot chocolate, snacks, tissue, devotional material.
Jefferson – Indiana	Hope Lutheran – supports Cathy’s Hope offering women a faith-based program for those on a recovery journey.
Erie	Abiding Hope Lutheran Church – is using their grant money to add food items and prayer requests to their Little Library. They also will continue their free public concerts from their parking lot.
Warren - Venango - Forest - Clarion	St. John’s Warren – provides books to families of babies born at Warren General Hospital through the Libraries for Littles initiative.
Erie	Luther Memorial – will provide lunches to children at Luther Memorial Academy. As a private school, children do not receive meals and need to bring their lunches. Many children each week do not have a lunch to bring.

News & Notes from our May Convention

Our 35th Annual Convention is wrapped up and setting sites for the 36th! (May 15-16, 2026) At various times during the two-day event, there were 22 women and 2 men at Olmsted Manor, enjoying the friendship, camaraderie, delicious food, workshops, and business that only Convention can bring. It was great to welcome 4 first time attendees. Thank you to all who organized and participated in this wonderful opportunity. A special round of thanks goes to Marni Brown who opened her home to our Church Wide representative, Anna Jetson, from Minnesota.



A few highlights:

- ✦ Note the new officers and board members listed on the front page of this newsletter. Their contact information will remain posted in each newsletter. Also note, we are looking for board representation from the Crawford-Mercer Region and the Elk-Cameron- McKean-Potter Region. As a representative, your job is to make sure that information is shared about Women’s news and to let the Women know what is happening in your area!
- ✦ Workshops –
 - Joyce Frenz reminded us of how important it is to take care of ourselves, identifying stress triggers, being proud of our accomplishments, and how to strive to be a better Christian and serve God.
 - Angela Cornelius shared her knowledge of labyrinths. The goal was to walk the labyrinth at Olmsted but the weather did not cooperate.
 - Ruby Wiles tested our literary knowledge to understand the importance of being able to read. Did you know that 85% of juvenile offenders have

problems reading? Or that 3 out of 5 people in American prisons can't read at a minimal level? To find out the predictor of a child's academic success, contact Ruby! Kidsbooks4free@gmail.com

- Several ladies crafted some beautiful votive candle holders.
- As always, the Prayer Stations lent itself to a meaningful time for reflection and prayer, thanks to Tracy Heutsche.
- In between activities, we had a rousing songfest led by Sue Anderson.
- ✦ The Financial Report and Budget for 2025-2026 were accepted and passed.
- ✦ Two resolutions were addressed: one regarding women's sports and the transgender community. However, due to recent legislation, there was no further discussion. The second resolution was in regard to underserved populations in our communities. The tremendous needs are compounded by so many intertwined factors – homelessness, food insecurity, personal safety, education. It was resolved and approved by the Board that:
 - We will continue the Women Empowering Women Grant for as long as our treasury can sustain the program.
 - We will continue to serve our neighborhoods with compassion, our gifts of time, materials, and funding.
 - We will utilize our local legislators to make sure that resources are available for the most vulnerable.
- ✦ Anna Jetson, Church Wide Rep, shared the Women of the ELCA's 2025 Strategic Plan and how to get to the goal of \$1,000,000 in Katie's Fund. The Plan strives to CONNECT, CREATE, COMPLEMENT, CONTINUE AND CELEBRATE Women of the ELCA using the interest generated. The funds are designed to be used to empower our women to do great things. Visit the Women's website to see how you can be empowered with Katie's Fund. Thank you, Ann, for your insights in leading NWPA.

Although we value the separation of Church and State, as Lutherans we are called to be political, to take action for sustaining our society, to make sure that all voices are heard, to be a beacon for those who need a light. Keep these references and internet resources handy for any future use. They will be added to every once in a while. If you find any resources that our Sisters would find helpful, please share.

Developing a self-care routine should not be a stressful activity. Even setting aside a few minutes a day can be incredibly effective. The best self-care is proactive, not reactive. Proactive self-care will help you avoid burnout, find balance in your day, and live a more fulfilling life.

One such type of self-care is FINANCIAL: Saving, budgeting, money management, paying bills. By staying on top of your financial obligations, you put less stress on yourself. It's ok to say 'no' to spending money -you'll feel less stressed long term.

(courtesy of Shaw Air Force Base Helpline)

REMEMBER WHEN? – A Blast From the Past



Somewhere during that journey, I believe there was a house of ill repute involved!

Have more photos of days gone by? Send to Pat with a brief description.

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!

Internet Resources to make that happen:

Find your legislator:

<https://www.palegis.us/find-my-legislator>

LAMPa – Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania. LAMPa serves the congregations, synods and Lutheran institutions in Pennsylvania, providing resources, training and information in the work of being a public church.

www.lutheranadvocacypa.org

ELCA website has a plethora of information from Advocacy starter kits to Scholarship information to Indigenous Studies. www.elca.org – [Resources](#)

Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod – ELCA. Learn about who, what, when, where of NWPA Lutherans. Call: 814-589-7660

<https://www.northwesternpasynodelca.org/>

Women of the ELCA – Lots of great information for local units, resources, tools for leaders.

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/>