

Words for Women



April 2025

Newsletter of the NWPA Synodical Women's Organization

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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"Come to the Light" at Olmsted Manor, May 30th-31st

"Come to the Light" is the theme for the **2025 Synodical Women's Convention (SWO) on May 30th - 31st**. It is for **all** women of the NWPA ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America). The committee is trying to keep the costs to a minimum so more women can participate. **They have changed the date to get away from Mother's day weekend**. There are many options for attendance. Check the registration form at the end this newsletter. The SWO board and convention committee hope those attending will experience a time of **rest and renewal**, a time to recharge your battery. We will have news from churchwide and we will learn about Katie's Fund, an initiative of churchwide. A craft is planned for those interested and other mindfulness activities will be sprinkled throughout our time together. Our goal is to conduct the business meeting in a concise manner.

In **John 8:12** Jesus says, **"...I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"**. We will focus on this scripture and 3 other references of light from scripture. It is easy to feel alone in the darkness, but we are never alone. God's Holy Spirit is within us to guide us to the **"Light"**.

Come to rest and renew. Come to praise God. Come to enjoy time wandering the beautiful setting of Olmsted Manor. Come to share meals with old and new friends. Come to find out what other women's groups are doing in their churches. Come to walk the labyrinth and experience prayer stations.

Come to look for the light and return home to share your light.

~ Jean Knapp, co-leader of SWO

Delegates to Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) Convention

Delegates are sent from individual churches of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church of America) to the SWO convention in each synod. Ours is NWPA, 8A. Our Convention is May 30-31st at Olmsted Manor in Ludlow, PA.

At the convention the delegates have the responsibility of representing the women from their unit. There is a training for delegates at the very beginning of convention proceedings.

They are expected to vote on issues which are brought to vote by the SWO board and also any resolutions which are presented to the convention. Resolution forms are provided at convention and in packet delegates download and print before attending convention. Resolutions are suggestions of things brought to the attention of the board and convention to accept or reject.

There may be more than one women's groups who get together for projects or study in an individual ELCA church, they comprise a Women of the ELCA (WELCA) **unit**. There may also be intercongregational and special units. The first being women from 2 or more churches who work together on projects or study. The second being women who may be in a nursing home, college, or other facility who gather for study and/or projects.

These Women of ELCA groups often take a regular offering when they meet. It was originally planned that units provide for the costs of their delegate to attend the SWO convention. We realize some units may not have enough in their treasury to pay for their delegate's cost for attending convention. (The cost is down this year to encourage participation.) It is up to each unit how they handle sending delegates. They may offer financial incentives toward anyone from their unit attending convention or only the delegate. They can offer to pay for half or any amount they choose. Women may participate and pay their own way. Attendance is encouraged for anyone interested in the mission and work of Women of ELCA in their church, our NWPA synod, and/or Churchwide (the national expression of Women of ELCA).

Our National Mission 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.

OUR 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.”

There are four ways to be a recognized active WELCA unit

Below is from womenoftheelca.org/ministry-action/membership site: There are 4 ways a group can be a part of Women of the ELCA. This should help when calling churches or lay leaders about their group.

ONE - Meet together for study, support and mission. Subscribe to Gather magazine and meet for Bible study. Read or meet to discuss articles in our monthly online magazine, Boldcafe.org, for and with young adult women and their friends.

TWO - Participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond your congregation Learn more about local WELCA conventions in your synod. Attend a triennial gathering.

THREE - Support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA Your regular offerings support ministries and resources that inspire and mobilize women around the world.

FOUR - Designate leadership to communicate with synodical and churchwide women's organization. When you are an active recognized unit you will be connected to news and other happenings throughout the organization. You will be the first to know of what's happening near you and across the ELCA. You will have access to our on-line resources to share with your group. We'll also be able to know who you are and your contribution to the overall mission of the organization.

In addition, you will be connected to your local synodical president and learn how you can complete a constitution and bylaws form.

Who's who on the NWPA WELCA Board

Hi! I'm Kelly.

I live in Punxsutawney. I am mother, to two young adult sons Sean and Jay, and a grammy to James. Sean lives in Pittsburgh and Jay is still at home. I also live with three mini dwarf rabbits, Chip, Dale and Smidge, and a lab/golden retriever, Oscar.

I am a member of Mt Zion Lutheran Church in Punxsutawney. Mt Zion is one of the two churches which make up the Punxsutawney Lutheran Parish. At First Lutheran Church, which is our sister church, I am in the handbell choir.

I represent Jefferson and Indiana counties on the synod board. I am an authorized lay worship leader in our synod. I lead services in the southeastern corner of our synod, mainly Jefferson and Indiana counties.

This year, I am a co chair for NW/SW WELCA women's retreat being held at Camp Lutherlyn in September.

In my spare time, I like to spend time with family, read, crochet, and do cross stitch for hobbies. I also play saxophone in the Citizen's Band of Punxsutawney.

My name is Sarah Shaffer.

I was raised in a country setting near Homer City PA. I born and raised Lutheran. I'm a member at Luther Chapel in Coral. I am very active in my community. I'm an active Firefighter with Aultman VFD where I hold many rolls such as engineer for the trucks, treasurer, work bingo help with fund raiser such as bingo and gun bashes. I am on church council at Luther Chapel as Treasurer.

I have 3 grown children and 5 grandchildren. Hannah 22, Cody 20, Jett 12, Locke 10 and Arya 5.

You can usually find me attending an activity or going on an adventure with my family they are very important to me. I love being with people and being busy. One of my favorite things to do is swim in my son's pool and be with my family.

God Bless

Social Justice



**EVERYDAY
HEROES
NEEDED!**

With so many topics available, it's hard to pick just one. But today's information comes from TAT – *Truckers Against Trafficking*. They have wonderful resources for parents, youth, and in particular, School Transportation. School bus drivers see the kiddos every day. They know who picks the children up and drops them off. They may hear conversations about the weekend's quota. Drivers see the children who are exhausted and/or hurt Monday morning. The bus driver may notice that all of a sudden a student has some brand new Ugg boots or an expensive manicure when you know that's not in their family's budget.

Check out TAT's new resources:

School Transportation - <https://tatnonprofit.org/school-transportation/>

Youth on Transportation (YoT) - <https://tatnonprofit.org/youth-on-transportation/>

Share this with your school district personnel.

It only takes a few minutes to save a child from this dreadful situation.

Karen Hollinsworth, friends, and I have resumed our *SOAP Project* visits to hotels in Erie County. So far we have visited 12 hotels with information for the properties on how they can keep their properties, staff, and guests safe.

Need any more information?

We're only an email or call away!

Peace, through Christ,

Pat Bellingham

Social Justice



**MAKE
THE CALL,
SAVE LIVES!**

(CAN)
1-833-900-1010

(US)
1-888-3737-888

(TEXT-US)
233733



**End Human
Trafficking!**

Greetings from your treasurer

Our fiscal year ended January 31. The unit giving income was \$1737.00. The following is a breakdown of each conference: Erie - \$286.00; Crawford Mercer - \$642.50

Warren, Venango, Forest, Clarion - \$605.50; Elk, McKean, Cameron, Potter - \$0.00; Indiana, Jefferson - \$200.00

Designated gifts received: Social Justice - \$250.00; Traveling Prayer Room - \$200.00

Designated gifts sent: Lutherlyn Campership Fund - \$63.50 (fall retreat)

Donation to Women of the ELCA \$1037.62

Please remember when you send your *FORM A* to me, to put your county on the form. Before, we used conference numbers. It is easier for me if the county name is used instead.

I will be sending out reports to the unit treasurers, by the end of the month, verifying your unit's giving. Please verify the information and return it to me. I can be reached at 814-249-1051 or by email: klspja71@outlook.com.

Be Blessed!

Kelly

Please remember to include your Prayer Pal from the retreat in your prayers. It can be taken one step further (or more) and send your Prayer Pal cards for their birthday, holidays and just to let them know you are thinking about them.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR for 2025 EVENTS

- 🌸 NW Convention at Olmstead - Manor May 30 & 31
- 🌸 Synod Assembly - June 5,6,7
- 🌸 NW/SW Retreat at Lutherlyn - September 26, 27, 28
- 🌸 Lutherlyn Quilt Show - October 18 & 19

Prayer for Leadership

Give us, O God, leaders whose hearts are large enough to match the breadth of our own souls and give us souls strong enough to follow leaders of vision and wisdom.

In seeking a leader, let us seek more than development for ourselves— though development we hope for—more than security for our own land—though security we need—more than satisfaction for our wants—though many things we desire.

Give us the hearts to choose the leader who will work with other leaders to bring safety to the whole world.

Give us leaders who lead this nation to virtue without seeking to impose our kind of virtue on the virtue of others.

Give us a government that provides for the advancement of this country without taking resources from others to achieve it.

Give us insight enough ourselves to choose as leaders those who can tell strength from power, growth from greed, leadership from dominance, and real greatness from the trappings of grandiosity.

We trust you, Great God, to open our hearts to learn from those to whom you speak in different tongues and to respect the life and words of those to whom you entrusted the good of other parts of this globe.

We beg you, Great God, give us the vision as a people to know where global leadership truly lies, to pursue it diligently, to require it to protect human rights for everyone everywhere.

We ask these things, Great God, with minds open to your word and hearts that trust in your eternal care.

Amen.

Joan Chittister

In-Kind offering is for Bethesda Lutheran Services at convention

- Art & Craft supplies (markers, Modge Podge, glue sticks, popsicle sticks)
- Recreation supplies (frisbees, basketballs, wiffle balls and bats)
- Diapers any size
- Books for their library (encouraging books for young readers)

Bethesda is the only youth residential facility in the state of Pennsylvania which offers rooms for teen mothers with their babies. It is called Right Start, Young Mothers Program. They are expanding from 8 rooms to 16 rooms. It is a safe environment where young mothers can learn how to raise their baby in a loving environment. There are staff 24/7 to model caring behavior, teach skills, and provide encouragement.

Women Empowering Women Grant Monies Update

We've joined the 21st century! The application for the Service Grant is available through a Google Doc email. It will be simple and easy to answer the questions and hit send. If you are unable to access email please contact:

Joyce Frenz 835 Liberty Street Franklin, PA 16323 Email: jefrenz@hotmail.com Phone: 724-699-0861

Upon receipt, the request will be reviewed and processed by the NWPA SWO W/ELCA Grant Committee; Joyce Frenz, Tracy Heutsche, and Pat Bellingham. You will receive confirmation of your application immediately via email or within 5 days of Joyce Frenz receiving the paper copy. If you did not receive confirmation, please contact one of the committee members listed above.

- 🌸 The award may be used for community outreach activities and events sponsored by your NWPA ELCA church or NWPA Women of the ELCA unit. Monies are not for church utilities, maintenance or building upkeep.
- 🌸 Any women's unit, regardless of membership status, active or inactive, is eligible to apply.
- 🌸 If there is more than one applicant in a region what will be the deciding criteria? Priority will be given to new applicants and community outreach should be a priority.
- 🌸 If there is more than 1 applicant in a region but zero in another, the committee will consider giving out grants to eligible projects. However, there will be a maximum of five \$300.00 grants given out per year.
- 🌸 Produce applicable receipts or copies of receipts by December 31, 2025, before the next grant cycle to Joyce Frenz.
- 🌸 An Impact Report, outlining the number of people served, the impact on your community, volunteers involved and their hours, in kind donations, etc. will be required by December 31, 2025. The Impact Report form will be sent September 2025 through a Google Doc email or paper if required.
- 🌸 Applications will be accepted thru *March 31, 2025*. Applications will be reviewed by the Grant Committee and a decision will be made by *April 30, 2025*. Grant monies will be awarded at the 2025 Synodical Women's Convention in Ludlow.

NEWSLETTER CHANGES for 2025

The committee has decided to publish the newsletter three times a year instead of four. From here on our newsletter will be published in the Spring, July and November. Articles will be due the 17th of the previous month. In addition we are looking for a newsletter editor. We are looking for someone who enjoys working with a team of caring and supportive women. The goal of the newsletter is to keep women informed of board actions and aware of upcoming events and opportunities in our synod via emailing and snail mailing the newsletter. Using Facebook to share information is a bonus. Most board meetings are on zoom. **Help us let our LIGHT SHINE.** Contact Amy Huffman at pghgirlamy@yahoo.com for more information.

**Northwest Pennsylvania Synodical Women's Organization
34rd Annual Convention May 30-31, 2025**

Olmsted Manor, PO Box 8, Ludlow, PA 16333 814-945-6512

Please complete and return to:

Pat Bellingham 128 Hathaway St. W. Girard, PA 16417

Pat.bellingham@hotmail.com 814-602-5983 c

COME TO THE LIGHT – JOHN 8:12

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

Name: _____ County/Region: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip _____

Cell _____ Email _____ Home Church _____

Registration both days, all meals and accommodations (double occupancy) _____ \$102.00 _____

Single Occupancy *if available* is an additional \$10. \$112.00 _____

Please - check with Pat before paying additional.

Friday dinner @ PM, Saturday breakfast & lunch (no overnight) \$ 47.00 _____

Commuter Friday only dinner and registration \$ 23.00 _____

Commuter Friday dinner, Saturday lunch, registration \$ 36.00 _____

Commuter Saturday only lunch and registration \$ 18.00 _____

Total Enclosed payable to NWPA/SWO due by May 16, 2025 \$ _____

(note: Prices do not include tip for room or meals)

Are you serving as a delegate ____ yes Are you a first time attendee ____ yes

Would you prefer to room with someone in particular? _____

Do you need special accommodations? For room ____ yes For diet/meals ____ yes

Describe your need _____

Thank you for joining us! | You are AWESOME !!

