

Theme Chosen for 35th Annual Convention

“The LORD is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear?”

Psalm 27:1a

The Board extends a personal invitation to attend the 35th Annual Convention to be held June 23rd- 25th in Independence, MO at Stoney Creek Hotel Kansas City—Independence. The theme for the 2023 convention, based on the first verse of Psalm 27, is **The Lord is my Light**.

Can you imagine the word ‘light’ appearing 236 times in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible? God created natural light and is responsible for spiritual light. God is the pure light—the source of constant and unwavering light. Therefore,



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there is no need for us to grope about in darkness and despair. We look forward to seeing you at the convention where we will be reminded what it means to ‘walk in the light’, ‘share the light’, and ‘sustain the light’.

The convention and lodging will be at Stoney Creek at 18011 Bass Prod Drive in Independence, MO. Lodging cost each night is \$135.00 + tax = \$156.40 per night (up to 4 per room). This includes a hot complimentary breakfast Saturday and Sunday mornings with a room reservation. **Room reservations must be made no later than May 22nd to receive this convention rate.** Make reservations by calling phone number (816) 908-9600 and state that you are with WELCA or go to www.stoneycreekhoteles.com and use the unique group code WELCA.

The cost for meals will be \$18 for Friday dinner that will include salad, baked potato bar, and dessert; \$20 for Saturday lunch that will be salad, soup, and sandwich bar; and \$30 for Saturday dinner which will be a smoked grilled chicken entrée with oven roasted vegetables and parmesan potatoes with cheesecake dessert.

Convention registration packets will be mailed to all congregations prior to April 1st. Full registration cost is \$90 with Saturday only registration at \$50. Registrations will be taken up to the date of the convention. However, registrations must be made no later than June 12th if meals are to be included. **No meals can be requested after June 12th.**

T-shirts, navy blue with the above logo, will be available. The order form will be in the registration packet and must be returned by June 1st. See other articles in this issue that give information about activities available throughout the convention, the silent auction

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Convention

(continued from page 1)

and 'mini raffle', and our in-kind donation opportunity

Careful consideration was given to the evaluations submitted after last year's convention. Thus, the hospitality room has returned, there will be more activities available, and we will do more singing!!

The registrar for the upcoming convention is Marilyn Dial. She can be reached at mrdial114@gmail.com or (850) 642-0148.

12th Annual Triennial Convention and Gathering

More information is becoming available regarding the 2023 Triennial. This is what we know at this time. The **Twelfth Triennial Convention** is currently scheduled for September 19th – 21st, 2023.

Voting members from our synodical organization were elected at the 2022 convention. They are: Rev Dinah Dutta, Louise Ahrens, Jill Duis and Rhonda Schlesselman. Alternates are Susie Borgstrom, Rhonda Templing, Rev Ann Lundquist, Jean Bardy, and Carolyn Olson.

We are expecting information from churchwide regarding arrangements for voting members soon.

The **Triennial Gathering** is September 21st – 24th. The deadline for application for the Barbara Nelson Triennial Gathering Memorial Scholarship has been extended to April 30. The application form is available in this issue of *Walking in the Word*.

Both events will be held at Sheraton Phoenix Downtown in Phoenix, Arizona. Registration information is available at [New Triennial Event Page - Women of the ELCA](#).

Share the Light— Once We Were Refugees



The recipient of the in-kind donations for our upcoming convention will be Once We Were Refugees (OWWR). This not-for-profit organization, incorporated in June 2017, was founded by Rev William and

Ann Say. Their mission is to help refugees located in the Kansas City area learn skills that will help them find suitable employment. The only restriction imposed on students is that they must have come to the United States as refugees. Students are not charged tuition. Nearly all of the materials needed to provide this training are donated by generous people who want to help refugees.

Sewing is the primary interest of most students. OWWR uses volunteers to teach sewing, sort fabrics and notions, provide sewing machine maintenance and repair, pick up donated items, maintain records, and serve on the board of directors. They offer a nine-week beginning sewing course that meets twice weekly. Students learn to create pillow cases, skirts with inset pockets and elastic waistbands, reusable grocery bags, aprons, and each student creates a tied quilt that is donated to Lutheran World Relief. When they graduate each student is gifted with the machine they learned to operate, a new iron and ironing board, a new pair of scissors, notions, and approximately ten yards of fabric—enough to get started on a project for their family.

Students who show an aptitude for sewing and have an interest in making that a vocational pursuit are encouraged to continue in an advanced setting to learn to operate industrial equipment.

OWWR has graduated more than 140 students from the beginning sewing class. Most have gone on to create sewn items for their households with many adding projects for friends with some able to contribute to their family financial resources. Several have found full-time employment in a garment shop creating uniforms for sporting teams.

In addition to sewing, OWWR provides computer skills training, job search tactics, and helps with home business start-ups. OWWR has assisted students in launching careers in nursing and medical language interpretation among others.



Photo of recent OWWR sewing course graduates

A list of items requested for donation will be included in the convention registration packet. They include sewing machines, fabric, thread, notions, tools, and yarn. Cash donations are surely welcome.

Be the Light—Discipleship

“You are the light of the world. ...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5: 14a, 16 (NRSVUE)

Since last year’s convention we have been learning what discipleship entitles us to do. Our gospel writer, Matthew, shows us in Jesus’ words that we are the light of the world. YOU ARE, not ‘you may be’ or you ‘will try to be’, but YOU ARE—an affirmation that we are the light of the world.

What do you think? Are we as chosen disciples of Jesus shining our light so that others may see our good deeds and glorify our Father in heaven? There is another catch for us in this verse: see our good works and glorify God not ourselves. It’s very hard, isn’t it? We live in a world that teaches us to glorify ourselves, we get upset if we do not get recognition, we stop providing leadership, stop attending meetings, activities, or conventions because someone knowingly or unknowingly ‘stepped on our toes’.

My dear sisters in Christ, this is the truth we all must face, if we want to be His disciples, we must be that light Jesus is naming us to be. **“You are the light of the world.”** To be that light, we need each other, we need to support, uplift, forgive, praise, and pray together. Therefore, I want to invite you to join our convention, June 23rd-25th and ‘be the light’. If you qualify there is still time to apply for a scholarship to cover registration (application is in this issue). If you are a Thrivent member, you can apply for a Thrivent Action Team grant to attend the convention (I actually did that once). I also encourage you to bring a sister with you, carpool, and reach out to me personally if you need financial help.

I feel blessed to be part of Women of the ELCA. I’ve met so many wonderful sisters over the years who became light in my life. I look forward to seeing you, beloved sisters in Christ. Remember: **“We are the light of the World.”**

Pastor Dinah Dutta
785-979-8362

Silent Auction And ‘Mini’ Raffle

For convention goers, there are always two events that heighten the fun and excitement of our time together. One, being the Barbara Nelson Silent Auction and the other, the ‘Mini Raffle’ with proceeds for the Central States Women of the ELCA Education Scholarship Fund.

A bit of background information is perhaps helpful. As the merger of three Lutheran church bodies was being discussed to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Barbara Nelson was busy campaigning for the establishment of a women’s organization. Working tirelessly, she was successful! The Women of the ELCA was officially constituted on January 1, 1988. Barbara Nelson did not hold an office in the newly organized body. However, in honoring her hard work, in 1994 the **Barbara Nelson Triennial Convention Memorial Scholarship Fund** was established to provide scholarships (to pay the registration) for qualifying applicants to attend the Triennial Gathering.

The Silent Auction is a means to raise money for the Barbara Nelson Fund. While the items in this auction have historically been themed baskets, in recent years other quality items have been included. Attendees are encouraged (either by congregational units or individuals) to bring items for the auction.

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Convention Offerings

Friday Evening Worship

(LOVE offering)

50% to Churchwide

25% to Child Safe of Central MO, Inc.

25% to Once We Were Refugees

Sunday Morning Worship

50% to Central States Synodical

Organization to support Convention

50% to Education Scholarship Fund

Convention Grants

Grants are being awarded to pay the convention registration fee.

The application form is available in the convention registration packet.

For questions contact:

Gaye Mizell

Lovetoknit50@gmail.com

Auction and Raffle

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Bidding is by silent auction. Use your imagination or Pinterest to assemble an attractive basket. It is always fun to see the quality items that are donated. The items will be awarded to the highest bidders following the dinner on Saturday evening.

The 'Mini Raffle' for the **Education Scholarship Fund** is a bit more 'low key', but just as fun! Women are encouraged to bring smaller packages with less expensive treasures for the raffle. Over two days of the convention, tickets can be purchased that are placed in bags beside their items of interest. Following the Saturday night dinner, a ticket is drawn from each bag and the item goes to the lucky winner! It could be YOU!

Lots of fun for great causes....you will want to be a part of this!!

Saturday Evening—fun and inspiration

“...the mascot all other mascots look up to!”

That is Dan Meers, aka KC Wolf, who has been the mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs for the past 30 years. In addition to being a mascot, Dan is a family man, an author and motivational speaker; sharing his life of faith with others. He has been fortunate to lead the Chiefs Kingdom through three Super Bowls, bringing home the trophy (and the ring) twice.

Dan began his career as a mascot in 1986, as Truman Tiger at the University of Missouri. Upon graduation, he traded his stripes for feathers, when he became Fredbird, the mascot for the St. Louis Cardinals. His time with the Cardinals was short-lived, as he was offered the job of mascot for the Kansas City Chiefs; trading his bird suit for the beloved KC Wolf. And (as we say) the rest is history!

Dan's message, which is mixed with a good share of humor, is filled with enthusiasm, optimism, and love for life. He shares stories of his family, his time with the Chiefs, and his abiding faith in God. He is truly an inspiration for all privileged to meet him.

The Board is pleased to be able to host Dan Meers as our guest speaker Saturday evening. His words of inspiration will be a great conclusion for the evening. Expect to laugh and maybe even cry, but for sure motivated and filled with hope. You will not want to miss this!



Dan Meers, aka KC Wolf



You are Invited to Relax, Refuel, and Have Fun

One of the best ways to connect is sharing laughter with other women of faith. In addition to inspirational speakers and Bible study, the upcoming convention is filled with opportunities for relaxation, refueling, and having fun.

On Friday upon arrival, pick up a scavenger hunt sheet at the registration table and become a sleuth as you follow the clues to locations throughout the Stoney Creek Hotel. It will be a unique way to acquaint yourself with the facility—the meeting rooms, breakfast café, hospitality room, and outside spaces.

The hospitality room is back this year and offers a comfortable destination to relax and chat. All are encouraged to bring your in-process handiwork. If you knit or crochet and would like to create prayer squares, bring #6 needles or a size F-H crochet hook and spare yarn. We will have patterns available. There will be snacks on Saturday afternoon.

On Saturday afternoon, join in on some lighthearted rounds of BINGO and a sing-along. You can enjoy strolling the 1.2-mile loop in Waterfall Park, which is easily accessible from the hotel lobby, and there will be shopping at *The Bridge* fair trade shop located next to the hospitality room.

*~Join us for a wonderful weekend in June~
We're better together*

2023 Election of Board Officers and Members

Transition to a bi-annual convention and the constitutionally required 2-year terms in board positions have required special consideration be given to maintaining continuity in the board until elections are next held in 2025. In consultation with Linda Post Bushkofsky, Executive Director—Women of the ELCA, members of the current board who were elected in 2022 (having served only 1 year of their 2-year term) have agreed to serve an additional year until the 2025 election. Gratitude is extended to vice president, Kathy Steinke; secretary, Susie Borgstrom; and board members, Gaye Mizell, and Jill Duis. At the upcoming convention, elections will be held for president, treasurer, and three board members. Nomination forms will be available in the convention registration packet. For questions contact Rev Dinah Dutta, board member liaison to the Nominating Committee, pastor-dutta@gmail.com.

Education Scholarship Recipients 2023

Lauren Bailey

Clinton, MO
St. Paul Lutheran—Cole Camp, MO

Dani Kerns

Osage City, KS
Grace Lutheran—Osage City, KS

You can look forward to meeting these young women at convention

Shine, Jesus, Shine 2023 Convention Hymn

Shine, Jesus, shine,
fill this land with the Father's glory;
blaze, Spirit, blaze,
set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river, flow,
flood the nations with love and mercy;
send forth your Word,
Lord, and let there be light!

Lord, the light of your love is shining,
in the midst of the darkness, shining;
Jesus, light of the world, shine upon us,
set us free by the truth you now bring us.
Shine on me, shine on me.

REFRAIN

As we gaze on your kingly brightness,
so our faces display your likeness,
ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here, may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me, shine on me.

REFRAIN

Text: Graham Kendrick
Music: Graham Kendrick
1987

Cluster Restructuring Progresses

In the past two issues of *Walking in the Word* there have been reports on the progress made in the restructuring of our organization into five clusters from the prior 19. The Board's goal in the interim since last year's convention was to identify coordinators for each cluster. That work is well underway and it is good to report that significant progress has been made in each of the clusters.

First, the **Western Kansas** cluster will be in good hands moving forward. We are grateful that [Carolyn Mott](#), [Sue Schonhaler](#), and [Rhonda Templing](#) have agreed to serve as coordinators for Western Kansas.

Thanks go out to [Anna Prockish](#) and [Ruth Ann Zenger](#) who have stepped up to lead the **Central Kansas** cluster. There is ongoing conversation as a third coordinator is sought to assist in leading the activities of Central Kansas.

[Mick Friberg](#), [Becky Verslues](#), and [Diane Washburn](#) have ably taken responsibility to lead the **Osage** cluster into 2024. Thanks to each of them.

In the **Border** and **Eastern Missouri** clusters, where there are fewer active units, energy is building with Gatherings planned this spring in both clusters. Under the leadership of [Louise Ahrens](#), coordinator for the **Border** cluster, the women of Hosanna! Lutheran in Liberty are graciously hosting an event on April 15th. Invitations have been extended to the women of each congregation in the **Border** cluster and RSVPs are coming in.

Cluster coordinators, [Wilma Prifti](#) and [Bonnie Rieffer](#), from the St. Louis area are planning an **Eastern** cluster event for May 6th. Again, invitations to come together will be extended to women from all congregations in the cluster.

The goal for the **Border** and **Eastern Missouri** gatherings is to bring women together for Bible study, fellowship, and open discussion that will include information on what the Women of the ELCA, both the synodical organization and churchwide, offers women in ELCA congrega-

Synodical Organization Clusters

Western Kansas

Central Kansas

Osage

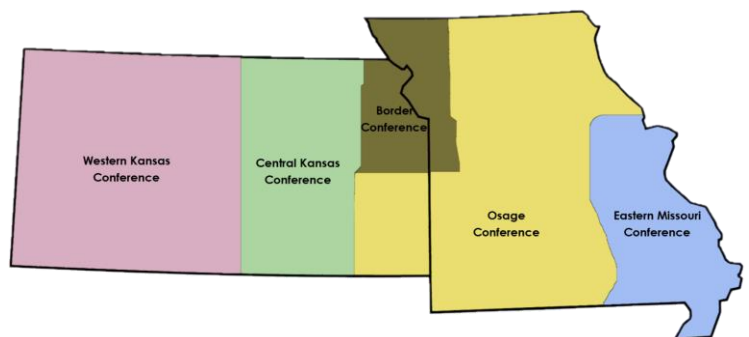
Border

Eastern Missouri

tions. Hopefully, there will be interest in what it means to be an active unit. Board members and cluster coordinators want to determine how they can assist in expanding the number of active congregational and inter-congregational units in those clusters.

Board members continue to feel optimistic about the restructuring, are encouraged by the many positive conversations, and are committed to walk alongside the coordinators as cluster events are planned for 2024.

We would be naive to not admit it will take some time for all of us to adjust to this new structure and bi-annual conventions, but all of this holds promise as we move into the future. If there are any questions, please reach out to Board members, Pat Dunavan at prairies@aol.com or Vickie Donnell at vickiedonnell@yahoo.com.



Map of Cluster Boundaries

BARBARA NELSON TRIENNIAL GATHERING MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- † Must be a member of an ELCA congregation in the Central States Synod
- † Must never have received a Barbara Nelson Scholarship

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Number _____ E-Mail Address _____

Congregation _____ City _____ State _____

On the back of this application write a paragraph of approximately 50 words stating why you would like to attend the 2023 Triennial Gathering planned for September 21-24, 2023.

This scholarship fund was established for scholarships for Central States Synodical Women to attend a Triennial Gathering. Distribution is made in years there is a Triennial Gathering. The amount of funds available for distribution is calculated as follows:

- † The interest accrued during the 3 fiscal years prior to a Gathering
- † 50% of the monies contributed during the 3 fiscal years prior to a Gathering
- † Scholarships will be awarded according to monies available

Recipients will be selected by the Executive Committee of the Central States Synodical Women's Organization Women of the ELCA. Notification will be done in a timely manner following the application deadline.

Applications must be postmarked by April 30, 2023

Send completed application to: Gaye Mizell
Board Member, Synodical Women's Organization
11870 Spruce Haven Drive
St. Louis, MO 63146

CENTRAL STATE SYNODICAL ORGANIZATION WOMEN OF THE ELCA
OFFICERS/BOARD MEMEBERS 2022-2023

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Board Member: Vacant

Historian: Rhonda Templing
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 Hoisington, KS 67544
 620-935-4213
rtemp@russellks.net

Our Mission

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.



**Official Newsletter of
The Central States
Women of the ELCA**

WALKING IN THE WORD

The newsletter written and published by the
Central States Synod Women of the ELCA

Keep up-to-date with events, news, etc. concerning the CSS W/ELCA

Subscriptions are **FREE** and available by email alert or USPS mail. Please send your subscription requests to Vickie Donnell, 4672 E Hidden Oak Place, Springfield, MO 65802

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ **PHONE** _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____

ZIP _____ **EMAIL** _____ **DATE** _____

I prefer to receive *Walking in the Word* by: **EMAIL** _____ **USPS** _____

Thank-You to Mary Liby & Kathy Regehr

In the December 2022 issue of Walking in the Word, we read that Mary Liby was resigning as editor of this newsletter. What wonderful work she has done for our organization over the past five years. We will always be in debt to her for setting the standard high, as we have a newsletter that we can surely be proud of.

As of this writing we have not been successful in finding someone to take on the editorship. If anyone is interested in sharing their gifts in this way, we would love to speak with you. Please contact any member of the board. Our contact information is listed elsewhere in this issue.

There is one other piece of news that we need to share. Several months ago the board received a message from member, Kathy Regehr, letting us know that, due to health reasons, she would be resigning from the board. We were disappointed to receive her message, as her prior service on the board brought valuable historical information. However, our concern for her personally was priority. We are thankful that her health has improved and continue to prayer for her recovery.

***Your Board
Vickie, Kathy, Susie, & Janice
Dinah, Gaye, Jill & Pat***