

Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA

Board Meeting Wednesday, June 17, 2026 Via Zoom

Greetings were exchanged as members logged into the Zoom session. The meeting was then called to order by our president, Louise Ahrens at 7:00 p.m.

Present: Louise Ahrens, Vickie Donnell, Janice Gerken, Gaye Mizell, Rhonda Templing, Brenda Rodger and Karen MacDonald. Rita Nelson was unable to attend.

Opening Prayer: Gaye led the opening devotions, followed with prayer.

Purpose Statement: The Women of the ELCA Purpose Statement was read, led by Louise with voices muted.

Approval of Agenda: Karen made a motion to approve the agenda. Vickie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of May 20, 2026 were discussed and reviewed. Rhonda made a motion that the minutes be approved as corrected. Gaye seconded the motion. Motion carried

Treasurer's Report: Vickie reported the following fund balances: General Operating Fund - \$30,147.82; Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund - \$12,104.59; and Lynn Starr Education Scholarship Fund - \$5,937.96. Vickie also noted that she has received scholarship (colleges with addresses) information from four of the recipients. She is waiting for the last one recipient to reply.

Announcements: Louise announced the following:

- Attended the Osage Cluster meeting held at Our Savior's Lutheran (Camdenton, MO). It was a wonderful experience for both she and Boyd.
- Although not official until the Triennial Convention, Jennifer Hockenbery has accepted the position of Executive Director of the Women of the ELCA Churchwide.
- Discussed the Churchwide Treasurer's Report. It was noted that many units submit their offerings to Churchwide rather than send them to the synod treasurer.
- It was shared that Elaine Harvey, St. Paul's Lutheran, Wichita, that she and a small group of ladies continue to meet as a Women of the ELCA unit even though their church has closed. It was asked if perhaps other ladies of closed congregations are doing the same. Perhaps an article in the *Walking in the Word* commending their efforts would be appropriate.
- Discussion of the first (of two) convention rehearsals for the voting members.
- Noted that three of the scholarship recipients have sent a word of thanks.

Ongoing Business:

Papua New Guinea: Louise shared information gained from the Companion Synod Committee meeting and Pastor Teske regarding the Bond Requirement for the PNG travelers coming to the United States for our convention in 2027.

Pastor Teske has been trying to secure a waiver for the two ladies. Noted that an invitation should be sent to the Companion Synod in PNG with additional details as to the dates of the convention, the location, and the theme. Companion Synod will then designate the two ladies who will be attending. Based on that information the bond amount will be determined when the ladies apply for their visas and passports. The trip to the capital will require two days of traveling for the two ladies. The bond is refundable with certain stipulations. The amount varies from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

Bishop Simon will investigate the possibility of Central States Synod lending the bond amount, if needed.

Cluster Meeting Updates: Gaye provided an update on the status of the cluster meeting. The following clusters have met: Eastern, Border, and Osage. The Central Kansas Cluster will meet on Saturday, August 1, 2026, at Immanuel Lutheran in Hutchinson, KS. The Western Kansas Cluster will meet on Saturday, August 26, in Hays, KS.

Active Unit Assessment: Gaye will request the status of our units to begin the assessment process.

2026 Gathering in Des Moines: The quilt made by Cyndy Dixon (Our Savior's Lutheran, Camdenton, MO) has been selected to be displayed at the Triennial Gathering.

2026 Triennial Convention: Louise noted the upcoming convention rehearsal dates and the dates of the Budget and Memorials Hearings.

2027 Convention: Louise reported on information gathered regarding the Hilton Garden in Topeka, KS. Hotel Rooms - \$174 nightly. Must spend \$10,000 on food. There was no return call to her request for a site visit.

The results of the opinion Email sent by Louise earlier indicated the choice of the convention site was the Double Tree (Lawrence, KS). Choice of dates – June 25-27, 2027.

Vickie made a motion to secure a contract with the Double Tree Hotel in Lawrence, KS for the dates of June 25-27, 2027. Karen seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The members discussed the possible theme possibilities provided. After discussion, Janice made a motion that our theme for the convention be from Mark 12:30 "... Love your neighbor as yourself." Karen seconded the motion. Discussion followed to proceed with a vote. Motion carried.

Following a brief review of the Convention Planning and Execution Document, it was decided to reach out to the Lawrence congregations to assist the board in worship planning. Also to assist in the area of local programming. To contact either the Topeka or Lawrence congregations to be responsible for the set up of the Hospitality Room.

Further discussion of the Planning and Execution document will continue at the upcoming in-person meeting.

New Business:

Walking in the Word: An edition of the newsletter will be sent out in late June. Articles should be submitted to Joyce Uber by Monday, June 22.

Article assignments:

- Louise - Papua New Guinea: Invitation to the ladies of our companion synod
Lynn Starr Education Scholarship Recipients
- Karen – Announcement of the 2027 convention

- Janice – Osage Cluster Recap
Highlight of Kim Knowle-Zeller's new book
- Cyndy Dixon – Quilt for display at the Gathering
- Rhonda – Discipleship
- Vickie – Status of Finances
Gather Magazine Awards
- Pastor Janice Hawley – Trip to Papua New Guinea
- Lutheran World Relief Ingathering Dates and Locations

Next Meeting Date – In-person meeting to be held at the Double Tree, Lawrence, KS on October 2-3.

Adjournment: Vickie made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Gaye seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer

**Respectfully submitted,
Janice Gerken, Secretary**