

## *I am Worthy – join us at the Gathering!*

### *President’s Message*



I hope that you had a blessed Easter! It has been a while since our last Newsletter and I apologize for that. As I was preparing to write this article, many thoughts came to mind on what to write about.

I could write about the “usual” things – upcoming Triennial Convention, Gathering, Cluster meetings and recent board action. All those topics, plus so much more will be covered in this issue. I decided to write about 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.***

We are a group of women, a community who are tied together by faith. We are here to support, uphold and pray for each other during the good times and bad times. Either with our prayer sisters, our units, congregations, clusters and on a synodical level. We are there for each other.

Not just any group of women, but the Women of the ELCA. We march if we feel we must, we speak



*Border Cluster ingathering for Sleep in Heavenly Peace*

up for those who don’t believe they have a voice, we defend those who can’t defend themselves. We pray for our fellow man throughout the world.

This was brought to my attention clearly through my work on the Memorial Committee for the upcoming Triennial Convention. I am very proud of the Central States Women of the ELCA. Two of our resolutions will be considered at the convention. The voting members will keep you posted on the outcome.

If you are a voting member at the Synod Assembly, you will read the recap of our activities. We look forward to many more – including a convention in 2027. The information will be published in the Walking in the Word.

When I think of my sisters in Christ, Women of the ELCA, many Bible verses come to mind, in particular Matthew 25:35-40:

<sup>35</sup> for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup> And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup> And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.

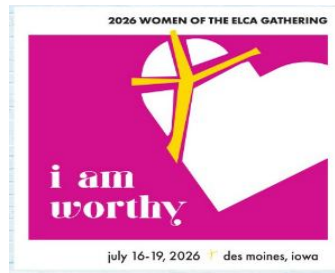
We are the Women of the ELCA!

*Submitted by Louise Ahrens, president*

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## 13<sup>th</sup> Triennial Convention and Gathering



The 13<sup>th</sup> Triennial Convention and Gathering is **rapidly approaching!!** This event occurs every three years and gathers 1500-3000 women leaders, participants, and newcomers for four days of worship, inspiring speakers, workshops, service projects and more. The purpose of these events is designed to nourish our faith and love and to inspire women to claim their identity, intent, and actions.

The **13<sup>th</sup> Triennial Gathering** will be held at the Iowa Event Center in Des Moines, IA. Registration opens at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, July 16. Opening worship will be held at 4:00 p.m. that afternoon. Events continue throughout Friday and Saturday include Bible Studies, speakers, workshops and more. Closing worship will be held on Sunday, July 19 at 9:00 a.m., followed by a sending and celebration.

The cost of registration for the Gathering is \$525.00, and all participants must register by June 21. Accommodations for the Gathering can be found at the Hilton Des Moines Downtown and the Des Moines Marriott Downtown.

The theme of the Convention/Gathering is ***I am Worthy*** based on Psalm 139:14  
***"I am fearfully and wonderfully made".***

These words remind us of God's promise to always be with us through both the "highs" and the "lows" of our life. We can also recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives.

At this time, Central States Synod Women of the ELCA can boast that we have 40 ladies registered for the Gathering. This number places our synod ladies in the Top 5 of all the ELCA synods! The close proximity of the Gathering certainly makes a big difference in our attendance.

We are excited to announce that eight first-time attendees took advantage of the Barbara Nelson Scholarship to cover their registration and some of their travel expense. The following ladies received the scholarship: Carol Bunge, Pat Dunavan, Carol Flanders, Karen Foote, Pastor Brenda Rodger, Jenene Gragg, Rita Nelson, and Joyce Uber.

The **Triennial Convention** will be held via Zoom on July 13-14. At the 2025 Central States Women of the ELCA Convention held on June 21, 2025, the following ladies were elected to serve as our Central States Synod voting members: Louise Ahrens, Rhonda Templing, Gaye Mizell, Jean Bardy, and Janice Gerken. We lift prayers for these ladies as they provide input and their vote pertaining to the operation of the Women of the ELCA – Churchwide.

**See you in Des Moines in July!!**

*Submitted by Janice Gerkens, board secretary*



## Invitation to our sisters in Papua New Guinea

The Central States Synod has two companion synods. One of those is the Kotte District of Papua New Guinea. The country of Papua New Guinea is a sovereign country located in the southwestern Pacific, north of Australia, and includes the eastern half of the island of New Guinea and its surrounding islands.

In January 2025, we received an invitation from the ELC-Kotte District to attend their 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Women's Ministry. Four individuals represented the Central States Women of the ELCA at this celebration. The four included Julie Carlson, Pastor Janice Hawley, Pastor Jenny Jackson and Pastor Gary Teske were there in November 2025.

During the planning of the Papua New Guinea trip with our Companion Synod, the board discussed many times extending an invitation to PNG ladies to attend our 2027 Synodical Women's Convention. Before making that type of commitment, we wanted to hear about our travelers' experiences. Our travelers, Pastor Jenny Jackson, Pastor Janice Hawley and Julie Carlson are telling their stories at our cluster meetings. Their enthusiasm is catching!

At our April 20<sup>th</sup> zoom meeting, the board officially voted to extend an invitation to two ladies from Papua New Guinea, to attend our convention. We will be working with Pastor Gary Teske and the Central States Synod Companion Synod to plan the trip.

What will the Synodical Women's Organization be responsible for? We will be responsible for contributing to the fund for the airfare, lodging if needed and meals from Papua New Guinea to our region. This will require some fund raising. The companion synod already has secured some "seed" money toward this trip. We will also be responsible for the expenses of the guests at the convention, such as hotel, registration and meals.

This is a great opportunity to meet fellow sisters in Christ, to extend a hand of friendship and love. Please look for more information to come.

*Submitted by Louise Ahrens, President*



Pastor Jenny Jackson  
Julie Carlson



Julie Carlson, Pastor Janice Hawley  
Pastor Gary Teske, Pastor Jenny Jackson

## Discipleship

What does discipleship mean to you as a participant in Women of the ELCA? As participants in Women of the ELCA we are active disciples in many ways.

If you look up discipleship, we find out it is a noun, that a: says discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus; and b: disciples are followers of Jesus who are intent on carrying out the Great Commission and the Great Command. \*

As a participant in Women of the ELCA, we are called to practice the seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshipping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving.

Many of you are already practicing these seven marks of discipleship. We pray, we study our monthly Gather Bible Study, we worship on a regular basis, and we give. Three of the marks of discipleship might be a little harder to accomplish. We need to invite, invite someone to your meeting, invite someone to church with you, pick them up. Encourage someone, everyone feels discouraged sometimes, so you never know what a word of encouragement can do for someone. Give, we give to our churches, we give at our meetings, we give at our cluster gatherings, but this is monetary giving. And that is wonderful and is needed, but I encourage you to give of your time, which many times is more precious. Practice discipleship, the more we practice something the more it becomes part of our lives. I encourage you to practice discipleship daily.

\*Women of the ELCA website

*Submitted by Rhonda Templing, board member*

## Stewardship

As I write this, we are approaching Mother's Day. This week an e-mail from Churchwide Organization (CWO) sparked my curiosity to look up the original Mother's Day Proclamation from which today's celebratory day evolved. Written in 1870 by Julia Ward Howe, it was an urgent appeal for women to unite for world peace following the carnage of the Civil War. It called mothers to band together to promote peace and justice. CWO is hoping to raise \$10,000 this Mother's Day as a sign of our gratitude to our foremothers and our promise to the next generations. You are welcome to send your contributions to me (address in this issue) with a short note of who you are honoring and why—we will get the contribution to CWO and find a way to share your message!!

Now on to the numbers. First, just an update of budget information. It is good news that CWO finished 2025 (ending January 31, 2025) with a positive balance. This was described as a necessity to pay back the deficit from 2024 and to continue to pay back for past year deficits. We know what this took—less spending and emphasis on fund-raising. Increased giving by Synodical Organizations (SWO) greatly contributed to this positive outcome. However, 2025 budget goals in general offerings were not met. You heard about the SALT fund raising effort in the prior issue—the work continues as we continue to SALT our unit offerings.

One of the reports published by CWO summarized 2025 giving by the SWO (these are funds sent through our treasury) and by units and individuals, which are sent directly to the CWO. Let's rejoice in the amazing generosity of the women of the Central States who contributed \$151,715.93.

Finally, to report on the financial standing of our SWO. The general operating fund balance is \$29,015.22. After recently awarding 8 scholarships to the upcoming Triennial Gathering the Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund balance is \$12,094.50. From which we will soon be awarding scholarships, the Lynn Starr Education Scholarship Fund balance is \$5,683.59.

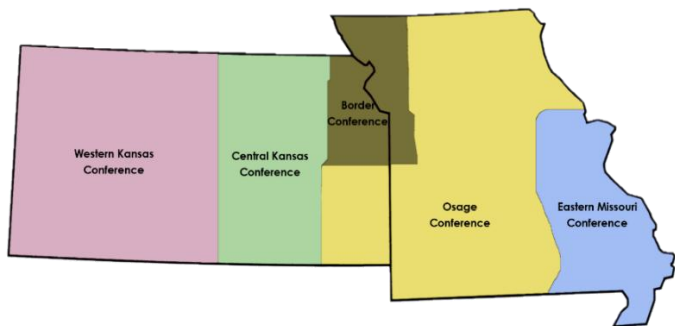
In conclusion, I'm reminded of this Old Testament verse where we are reminded that the attitude with which we give is as important as the gift itself.

*"Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake."*

Deuteronomy 15:10

*Submitted by Vickie Donnell, Treasurer*

# Thanks to Our Cluster Coordinators



**OSAGE CLUSTER COORDINATORS**  
 Mick Friberg  
 Ilene Kendall  
 Becky Verslues

**BORDER CLUSTER COORDINATORS**  
 Carol Bunge  
 Pat Dunavan  
 Sarah Dunning

**WESTERN KANSAS CLUSTER COORDINATORS**  
 Kara Jecha  
 Cindy Steinert

**CENTRAL KANSAS CLUSTER COORDINATORS**  
 Tasha Hickert  
 Kathy Regehr

**EASTERN MISSOURI CLUSTER COORDINATORS**  
 Nancy Berry  
 Eunice Halverson  
 Julie Weber

## Cluster Gatherings

The Cluster Coordinators have been very busy either having Gatherings or planning them.

The Border Cluster met in Topeka on April 18 for a successful gathering with 41 in attendance and is planning another gathering sometime in the fall.

The Eastern Cluster met in St. Louis on April 25 for another successful event with 31 in attendance

## Future Gatherings

Osage Cluster on June 13 in Camdenton, MO,  
 Central Kansas Cluster on August 1 in Hutchinson, KS,  
 Western Kansas on August 29 in Hays, KS.

*Submitted by Gaye Mizell, board member*



Welcome Joyce Uber as the new Walking in the Word editor. Joyce is a lifelong Lutheran born in Nebraska and met her husband Dave 36 years ago. She has two daughters, and three grandchildren who live in Liberty. Her interests include crocheting, painting, quilting and reading. Joyce is a retired church secretary. Joyce and Dave belong to Hosanna! Lutheran in Liberty. She participates in various social ministry and WELCA activities at church and is currently the council and WELCA secretaries.

*Thank You*

Vickie Donnell for all the years of service and the love that you poured into each issue.  
*From the board*

**Border Cluster Event**



Sarah Dunning, Carol Bunge, Pat Dunavan  
Border Cluster Coordinators



Karen Orill, Nancy Burial,  
Joyce Uber, Sally Holder



Julie Carlson, Pam Johnson, Rev. Brenda Ulrich  
Janice Fager, Mary Liby

Eastern Cluster Event



Julie Weber, Eunice Halverson, Nancy Berry  
Eastern Cluster Coordinators



Pastor Janice Hawley  
Pastor Kendra Nolde



Eastern Cluster Ladies

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**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.*

**Keep up to date with news from Central States Synodical Organization of Women of the ELCA**  
 Subscriptions to this newsletter, *Walking in the Word*, are free of charge and available via USPS or e-mail. Please notify Joyce Uber at the contacts above.

Reminder – to look at the Central State Synod Women of the ELCA Facebook page. Debbie Curtis is our administrator. You can see the latest pictures from the two recent Cluster events!

Interested in Board Minutes? They are posted on the Central States Synod website ([css-elca.org/WELCA](http://css-elca.org/WELCA)).