

CSS W/ELCA board focuses on education, ministry

-- Vickie Donnell, president

As I write this, I find myself in the afterglow of our first in-person board meeting held March 18-19 in Overland Park, KS. Since being elected last September, we met monthly via Zoom and were thankful for the opportunity afforded us by technology. However, it was a blessing to finally be together! We had a most productive meeting and what a joy it was to be with this group of gifted women.

Our meeting began Friday evening as members shared their experiences participating in activities offered by the Churchwide Organization (CWO). Several members had taken part in the virtual leadership activity held in February, *“For Such a Time as This: Spirit Fed—Spirit Led.”* The three-day activity, provided opportunities for worship, Bible study, updates on the CWO, and numerous break-out sessions with hundreds of other synodical organization leaders.

In April and May, all members of the board and cluster coordinators will attend virtual training sessions that will address specific roles and responsibilities.

The CWO recently provided other quality learning opportunities, *“The Living History of Faith-Filled Women”*, *“Now Is the Time”*, and *“ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent”*. We encourage everyone to check out the CWO offerings at <https://www.youtube.com/user/WomenELCA/videos> or the webpage <https://www.womenoftheelca.org>.

Our work continues to discover the status of congregational W/ELCA units across the synod. Many units have not returned to pre-COVID activities as meetings and other activities are still on hold. We rejoice with our nearly 70 active units and will support them in every way possible so they may return to at least a “new normal”.

It is challenging to connect with women in congregations where there are not active units. However, our constitution now defines and recognizes an active unit which has just one or two women. Much information and numerous learning opportunities are available to ELCA women, regardless of the size or involvement of the units.



CSS W/ELCA Board: (Back row) Rev. Dinah Dutta, Janice Gerken, Kathy Regehr, Rev. Jill Duis, Loretta Holmes. (Middle row) Pat Dunavan. (Front row) Loretta Holmes, Kathy Steinke, Beth Rockelman

The board contacted our W/ELCA clusters and learned only five of our 19 clusters plan to schedule meetings.

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However, many do not have any firm plans; a few are without leadership; and, some are not active or have disbanded.

We believe clusters are important for joint ministry and action opportunities; learning and leadership development; and, networking, and building community. Apparently, what has worked in the past is not meeting the needs or stimulating the interest of today's women. This is one of the topics that will be discussed at our convention.

On Saturday, through the gifts of many and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, plans for the 34th annual convention began to come together.

Information about the convention is listed below. Complete details and forms will be included in registration packets that will be sent to each congregation April 15. We ask unit leaders and congregation secretaries to share the information with their W/ELCA ladies.

Convention Information will be available also on Facebook and [Women of the ELCA | Central States Synod \(css-elca.org\)](https://www.womenoftheelca.org)

vickiedonnell@yahoo.com

Theme chosen for convention -- Beth Rockelman, vice-president

Rejoice in Hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Romans 12:12

The 34th CSS W/ELCA Convention will be July 22-24 in Overland Park, KS. A walking nature trail is located behind the hotel and available to use. This year's theme is "Instill Hope and Share It" and the Bible verse is Romans 12:12: "*Rejoice in Hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer*"

The convention and lodging will be at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 10100 College Avenue (highway 69 exit). Lodging cost each night is \$149.00 + tax = \$175.97 (up to 4 in a room). This includes a "Grab-n-Go" breakfast Saturday and Sunday mornings. The costs for the meals will be: Friday night, taco buffet with dessert, \$18; Saturday lunch, salad bar with dessert, \$25; and Saturday dinner, chicken entrée, vegetables, salad, rolls, dessert. We have budgeted for about 100 women.

Call 1-800-222-8733 or 913-451-6100 to make reservations by June 17. State that **you are with the Central States Synod Women of the ELCA**, (not welkah).

The 2022 convention registration information packets will be mailed April 15. Full Registration cost is \$90. Cluster coordinators will pay \$80 (a \$10 discount). The registration cost for Saturday only is \$50.

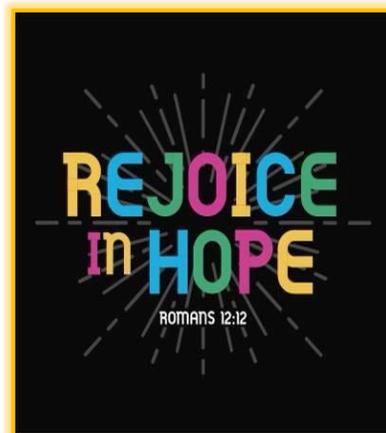
ALL Members need to register by June 1. Registration forms for other participants as well as T-shirt orders must be submitted by June 15. Everyone, including officers and board members, must complete a registration form. The registrar must have an accurate number of attendees for churchwide report;

meal count; choir music folders; and, quantity of literature needed for various activities.

We will have Friday afternoon activities and will collect in-kind items for an organization. Carolyn Olson kindly donated a quilt for the raffle. Proceeds

will go to the CSS Education Scholarship Fund. We encourage W/ELCA units to donate a basket(s) or other items for the silent auction. Proceeds will go to the Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund. Clusters will be contacted to assist with convention activities.

The registrar is Gloria Sharp, gjsharp@aol.com. Send registrations to her at the address listed on the form. She may be contacted via e-mail or at 573-636-8843 with any questions. Bethr@midamerica.net



~SAVE THE DATE~

**WHAT: Central States Synod W/ELCA
34th Annual Convention**
WHEN: July 22-24, 2022
**WHERE: Doubletree by Hilton Hotel
Overland Park, KS**

Hope has been our constant

-- Pat Dunavan, board member

The past two years have provided many challenges and opportunities for all of us. We have learned new skills: meeting on Zoom, live streaming worship services and Bible studies, and connecting with family and friends in new ways. Hope has been a constant throughout. *Hope that we and our families will stay healthy. Hope that WELCA ladies may once again meet in person. Hope that younger women will join us in our work.* But, sometimes, hope is hard to grasp.

Recently, I was able to meet with a Kanas cluster which had not been able to meet in-person for two years. Together, we listened to words of hope in the devotions and Bible study; sang and heard inspirational music; listened to each other's stories, and shared fellowship and hope for the future. I left that meeting full of joy and a feeling that we will continue to live out our mission:

"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."

Just as spring comes about slowly, our clusters and congregational units also are starting to emerge from the past two years of the pandemic. Several clusters are planning in-person meetings for this spring and fall. Congregational units are returning to Bible study and meeting to tie quilts for Lutheran World Relief. But there are still challenges ahead. Some clusters are no longer active. Other clusters are in need of new leadership. Some congregational units have not returned to activities at pre-pandemic levels.

At the synod level, plans are well underway for an in-person convention, July 22-24 in Overland Park, KS. It is our hope that women from Missouri and Kansas will be able to reconnect at the convention and draw hope and joy from the speakers, activities, and fellowship with their sisters in Christ. We hope you will join us.

Until then, stay safe and healthy. May you be blessed and embraced with hope in every situation.

prairies@aol.com

Bible study--Discipleship that fits

-- Rev. Dinah Dutta, board member

What comes to your mind when you hear the word discipleship? For most of us, we think of the command Jesus gave before ascension.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20, NRSV

However, this command often is not easy to fulfill in our contexts. We get confused when asked to differentiate between evangelism and discipleship.

Dear sisters in Christ, I am very excited to share that we are going to study and learn together about, Discipleship that fits; Discipleship during the pandemic; and, how we survived in between times.

It is a pre-convention five-week ZOOM Bible study at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays. The dates are: May 10, 24, June 14, 28 and July 12.

The study will use the book, *Discipleship That Fits: The Five Kinds of Relationships God Uses to Help Us Grow*, by Bobby Harrington and Alex Absalom.

The book is available in paperback, Kindle, and used books at amazon.com.

"Discipleship That Fits..." shows the five key ways discipleship occurs. It addresses how Jesus turned men

into disciples and how disciples were shaped in the early church. Each context is necessary at different times and ways as a person grows toward maturity in Christ.

Public Relationships: The church gathering corporately for worship.

Social Relationships: Networks of smaller relationships where we engage in mission and live out our faith in community.

Personal Relationships: Small groups of 6-16 people where we challenge and encourage one another on a regular basis.

Transparent Relationships: Close relationships of three to four persons through which we share intimate details of our lives for accountability.

The Divine Relationship: Our relationship with Jesus Christ where we grow through the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

I invite you to join to learn together how to live and witness to be true disciples of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Let us **REJOICE** in the **HOPE** believing in God's promise. ***"I am with you always, to the end of the age."***

pastordutta@gmail.com

Working together for social justice

-- Rev. Jill Duis, board member

Over the past two years, the Racial Justice Committee of the Central States Synod has worked to bring information and resources for conversations in our congregations and ministry that connects faith and racial justice work. After reviewing the history, systemic realities, and harmful and destructive impacts of racism, this committee drafted a social justice statement. The purpose statement is listed on the CSS website.

We challenge every faith community to begin discussions, and to be radically welcoming and inclusive places of worship. We should be thinking of how we can advocate for justice for those who encounter racial inequalities through many social constructs. We must consider that even our silence speaks loudly of racism.

Racism has cost this country much. I ask you to consider watching a short "Ted Talk" at the link below that discusses the economic impact of racism, and what happens when we work together to do the work of Christ in our communities.

https://www.google.com/search?q=heather+mcghee+ted+talk&rlz=1CANTKV_enUS965US965&og=Heather+McGhee+&aqs=chrome.2.69i57j46i512j0i512i5j69i60.9889j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

Share events on W/ELCA website and Facebook

-- Kathy Regehr, board member

I am so excited to be on the CSS W/ELCA board again. We are working hard on the upcoming convention to help you experience and share "Rejoice in Hope".

Now that COVID is backing off, I know churches and W/ELCA units are coming back together and slowly bringing back fun activities.

You may help others to also rejoice by sharing articles and photos your get-togethers and events on the W/ELCA website and on Facebook. It is so amazing to see the different ways W/ELCA ladies contribute to the community.

We are fortunate and blessed to have Linda Lockhart as our social media and website coordinator.

Please send your submission to : Kathyrregehr@hotmail.com or Linda Lockhart, lockhartls92@gmail.com.

Your women's group may also be interested in the study "Now is the Time: A Declaration to People of African Descent" available to download at this link <https://elca.org/Resources/Racial-Justiceactive/silence> racism. jduisrn@yahoo.com

Contributions are needed for scholarship program

--Janice Gerken, treasurer

The CSS W/ELCA sponsors an education scholarship for women who are members of an ELCA congregation. This scholarship became part of our ministry September 2014, when it was approved at the women's annual convention.

It was Rhonda Templing, former treasurer, and president of the CSS W/ELCA, and strong advocate of the scholarship, who encouraged the passage of the scholarship program.

The scholarship is available to high school graduates; women seeking a career change; or women wanting to further their education.

The one-year scholarship is non-renewable and does not exceed \$1,000 per recipient. Multiple scholarships may be given each year, depending on the monies available.

Applicants obtain a written recommendation and signature from their pastor, mentor, unit president or unit representative. They also submit an essay that describes their participation in church, school, and the community.

This scholarship program needs your assistance. Due to the two-year pandemic, many units and clusters did not meet. Nor were we able to hold our annual women's convention. Much of our scholarship funds come from those events.

The CSS W/ELCA board encourages units, clusters, and individuals to make contributions to support this valuable ministry.

This year's recipients are: **Emma Atcheson**, Resurrection Lutheran Church Haysville, KS; **Sapphire Davis**, Zion Lutheran Church Beloit, KS; and **Kelly Parr**, Trinity Lutheran Church, Hays, KS.

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***No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
 no mind has conceived what
 God has prepared for those who love him.***

1 Corinthians 2:9



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

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