

Central States Synod Women of the ELCA
36th Convention, June 20-22, 2025
Hilton Garden Inn, Independence, MO

Convention Theme: "Vessels of God's Grace"

Convention Scripture: Ephesians 2:8 "For by Grace you have been saved through Faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God."

Convention Song: "Amazing Grace"

Convention Goal: Share God's Grace with Everyone!

Friday, June 20, 2025

Registration began at 1:00 PM.

Contributions were received for the in-kind offering to Della Lamb.

All Silent Auction and Raffle proceeds were to benefit the Lynn Starr Educational Fund.

The Hospitality Room, supplied with homemade breads, treats, and drinks, opened.

Shopping at the Bridge was available.

There was a Prayer Labyrinth to walk and pray.

Vendors were set up to visit.

Angela Johnson had a demonstration of making pottery and some of her pieces were on display and for sale. Voting members and participates orientation began at 4:00.

Evening Dinner began at 5:00 PM. President Gloria Sharp opened convention with introductions.

We received a welcome to Independence by Mayor ProTem John Perkins;

The Rev. Janice Hawley, Convention Chaplain; Bishop Susan Candea, finishing her term as Bishop of the Central States Synod; Marty Berggren, Convention Registrar; and Rhonda Templing, Parliamentarian; were introduced and recognized.

A greeting and report was given by Bishop Susan Candea.

A greeting and report was given by Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer, CWO Executive Board Treasurer. She invited us to the Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19, 2026.

The keynote speaker, Rev. Kendra Nolde gave us her thoughts about the story of the "Woman at the Well" who came with an empty "vessel" to where Jesus was.

Opening Worship was a celebration of "Women, Light, and Grace", with St. Paul's Lutheran (Cole Camp, MO) Praise Band directed by Rev. Sandy Schlesselman.

The 'Love' offering was divided 50% to Churchwide, 25% to ReHope, and 25% to Della Lamb.

Worship was concluded. Everyone was reminded to get their resolution forms in by 8:30 and that devotions will start at 8:00 AM in the morning.

Saturday, June 21, 2025

Devotions were led by Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer. Rhonda Templing gave a presentation about Katie's Fund.

Rev. Janice Hawley led the session for "Prayer Sisters".

At 9:30 AM, Evelyn Clark led a session about "Women of the Reformation" for participants. There was a grace inspired craft activity and quilt tying by Karen Brockmeyer and Jennifer Darmsted.

The business session for voting members began.

The Credentials Committee Report:

The Registrar, Marty Berggren, reported 20 voting members, 8 officers and board members for a total voting strength of 28. There were 44 participants and 7 guests registered for a total attendance of 79 in all. A motion to accept the Credentials Committee report was approved.

Call to Order Gloria called the 36th Central States Synod Women of the ELCA Convention to order.

Convention Committees: Gloria introduced the convention committees. The committee members were approved.

Standing Rules: Susie Borgstrom, Secretary, moved for the adoption of the standing rules printed in the Convention Program Booklet and presented at the voting member orientation meeting. The motion was adopted.

Corrections to the Convention Program Booklet: Jill Duis, Board Member, gathered all the edits for the convention program booklet and made several copies to pass around. Jill moved for the adoption of the corrected convention program booklet. It was approved.

Adoption of the Agenda: Gloria moved for the adoption of the Agenda. It was adopted.

Report of the President: Gloria presented her report. Kathy Steinke, Vice President, moved that her report be accepted. It was approved.

Offering Committee Report: The offering committee was Carol Bunge, Kay Poropat, and Janice Gerken, Board Liaison. The offering total for Friday evening worship service was: \$1,757.00.

Report of the Treasurer Janice Gerken gave the Treasurer's report as of January 31, 2025, with \$29,167.09 in the operating account, \$3,037.00 in the Lynn Starr Educational Fund and \$17,200.08 in the Barbara Nelson Fund. She moved for the report to be accepted. It was approved.

Janice presented the budget for the year ending 1/31/2026. She moved that the proposed budget be accepted. It was approved.

Report of Nominating Committee for office of President

The Nominating Committee was Karen MacDonald, Kathy Regehr, and Kathy Steinke, Board Liaison. The Nominating Committee reported one nomination for the office of president, Louise Ahrens. Gloria asked for nominations from the floor. There being none, the nominations were closed. The elections committee was asked to distribute the ballots to voting members. The Elections Committee was Rhonda Schlesselman, Rev. Kim Frederking, and Susie Borgstrom, Board Liaison. The ballots were distributed and voting members were instructed to mark their ballot and hand it in. They were collected and counted.

Gloria called the Elections Committee for the results. The elections committee reported a vote of more than 15 was needed to elect. Louise Ahrens received 26 votes.

Gloria declared the newly elected president to be Louise Ahrens.

A Reference and Council Committee member was called upon to present Resolution #1. Reference and Council Committee moved the adoption of Resolution #1. Resolution #1 reads as follows:

RESOLUTION-Recognition of the Departed, Dedicated Women of the Central States Women of the ELCA

WHEREAS: The Women of the ELCA has been fortunate to have many departed, dedicated women who have committed themselves to the mission and work of the Central States Women of the ELCA;

WHEREAS: All women of the Central States Women of the ELCA have benefitted from the dedication and commitment and knowledge of these faithful servant women; and

WHEREAS: The Central States Women of the ELCA wish to extend our utmost appreciation and gratitude to all the faithfully departed women.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: To offer a moment of silence and prayer for those women who have faithfully served.

Resolution #1 was adopted and a moment of silence was observed.

The Report of the Nominating Committee for office of Vice-President

The nominating committee reported no nominations for Vice President.

Gloria asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There was one nomination from the floor, Karen MacDonald. As there were no more nominations, Gloria declared the nominations closed. Gloria asked the Elections committee to distribute the ballots. The voting members were instructed to write down the name and mark their ballot. Ballots were collected and counted. The elections committee was called to report the results. More than 15 votes were needed to elect. Karen MacDonald received 27 votes. Gloria declared Karen MacDonald the newly elected Vice President.

Gloria called a member of the Reference and Council Committee to present Resolution #2.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: moved that Resolution #2 be adopted.

Resolution #2 reads as follows:

RESOLUTION: A resolution calling for Hope, Justice, and Freedom of individuals from Human Trafficking.

WHEREAS: In the Purpose Statement of the Women of the ELCA, we are called to "engage in ministry and action"; and

WHEREAS: we, the Women of the ELCA are bold women empowered by the Holy Spirit; and

WHEREAS: we, the Women of the ELCA, as Christians are called to remember the importance of justice, compassion, and the love for all people, especially those who are suffering in the midst of exploitation and trafficking circumstances, which are beyond their control.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, work to bring about the awareness of the seriousness of this issue of Human Trafficking, which is not only a worldwide issue, but is also found within our own Central States Synod

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, recognize how precious each person is in God's eyes, and in so doing, we stand up against the evils of human trafficking and affirm the worth of each person we encounter.

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, and followers of Christ, advocate for the victims of Human Trafficking to ensure that those who suffer are heard. We can be the voice for these voiceless by raising awareness, volunteering, and working with other agencies to create a safe haven for all.

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, and believers in Christ, can pray for restoration in the lives of those affected by Human Trafficking, and, thereby, facilitate their healing journey and remind them that they are God's children and that God does not abandon his children.

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, must remember that with God there is always hope. Embracing the promise of hope, we can bring God's hope in the darkest places, thereby, uplifting those who feel trapped and imprisoned, guiding them toward the light of Christ.

Resolution #2 was adopted.

The Report of the Nominating Committee for the office of Secretary.

The Nominating Committee received one nomination for the office of Secretary, Janice Gerken.

Gloria asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, she declared the nominations closed. Gloria asked the elections committee to distribute the ballots. She instructed voting members to mark their ballot and hand it in. Ballots were collected and counted. The elections committee was called to report the results. More than 15 votes were needed to elect. Janice Gerken received 28 votes.

Gloria declared Janice Gerken the newly elected Secretary.

Gloria called a member of the Reference and Council Committee to present Resolution #3.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: moved that Resolution #3 be adopted. It reads as follows:

RESOLUTION: Raising up Healthy Women and Girls

WHEREAS: Women make healthcare decisions for themselves and for their families, and

WHEREAS: We are committed to God's command to make disciples of all nations and to serve others by caring for ourselves, our families, our churches, our communities, and to develop healthy, just societies,

and WHEREAS: Educating our women and children to be balanced physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, and

WHEREAS: Some women face barriers to being in control of their own healthcare or serving as healthy role models to the girls and families we are raising.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Women of the Central States ELCA are committed to supporting women in raising healthy women and girls by educating themselves physically, spiritually, emotionally, and sharing their knowledge and experience with other women to prevent women and girls from continuing unhealthy risk behaviors.

Resolution #3 was adopted.

The Nominating Committee Report for the office of Treasurer,

The Nominating Committee received one nomination for the office of Treasurer, Vickie Donnell. Gloria asked if there were any nominations from the floor. There being none, the nominations were closed. Gloria asked the Elections Committee to hand out the ballots. She instructed the voting members to mark their ballots and hand them in. Ballots were collected and counted. The Elections Committee was called to report the results. 15 votes were needed to elect, Vickie Donnell received 28 votes. Gloria declared Vickie Donnell the newly elected Treasurer.

Gloria called a member of the Reference and Council Committee to present Resolution #4.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE moved that resolution #4 be adopted.

Resolution #4 reads as follows:

RESOLUTION: Unification of Women around the Intent of the Gospel

WHEREAS: Scripture calls women to obey Christ's Great Commission and demonstrates women are crucial and indispensable to His mission

WHEREAS: Women have protected the children of God, proclaimed the glory of God, prayed for children, saved their families from certain death, prophesied God's judgement, followed Jesus and financially supported His earthly ministry, provided meeting places for followers of the early church, remained with Christ through His crucifixion, and were the original witnesses to and proclaimers of His resurrection, and exemplified his loyalty to God, and God commanded women to pass their faith through the generations.

WHEREAS: ELCA women have been the earliest missionaries, spent their lives teaching and living the gospel, have followed the call, duty and privilege of making disciples of all nations by verbal witness; and

WHEREAS: The Women of the ELCA Central States Synodical Convention affirms the gifts, ministries, and value of women who courageously selflessly and sacrificially serve the church at large.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That we, as Women of the ELCA, see and honor the works that women today are doing in homes, churches, communities, workplaces, and on the global mission field to further the kingdom of God and be it further

RESOLVED: That we empower all Women of the ELCA to work together to commission, train, and support women to go and make disciples while serving courageously, giving sacrificially, praying

continuously, and loving one another as Christ loved us in order to effectively impart the faith to the next generation

Resolution #4 was adopted.

Nominating Committee Report for the Office of Board Member:

The nominating Committee received 3 nominations for the office of board member: Gaye Mizell, Brenda Rodger, and Rita Nelson. Gloria asked if there were any nominations from the floor, There was one, Rhonda Templing. As there were no more nominations, the nominations were closed. The election committee was called to hand out ballots. The voting members were instructed and voted. The ballots were collected and counted. The Elections Committee was called to report the results. 15 votes were needed to elect. Gaye Mizell received 28 votes, Brenda Rodger-27, Rita Nelson-27, Rhonda Templing-28. Gloria declared the newly elected board members to be: Gaye Mizell, Brenda Rodger, Rita Nelson, and Rhonda Templing.

The Reference and Council Committee was called up to present Resolution #5.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: moved that Resolution #5 be adopted. Resolution #5 reads as follows:

RESOLUTION: Be it resolved that we thank those who have made this convention meaningful and memorable.

WHEREAS: the Board of Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA has worked tirelessly at planning and carrying out the mission of being "Vessels of God's Grace"

WHEREAS: The Praise Bands, Worship leaders and presenters added much to the convention experience.

THEREFORE, BE IT: RESOLVED; That we stand and offer our thanks to the Board, Praise Band, worship leaders and presenters, as well as the Hotel staff.

Resolution #5 was adopted. The assembly stood and applauded in appreciation.

Nominating Committee Report for the Voting Members for Triennial

The Nominating Committee received 7 nominations for the voting member position. They were: Janice Gerken, Eunice Halverson, Gaye Mizell, Rhonda Templing, Carolyn Bauer, Madeline Friberg and Jean Bardy. The first vote was for the first time attending a Triennial slot. Two nominees qualified for this: Gaye Mizell and Eunice Halverson. Gloria called the Elections committee to distribute the ballots. The vote was held and ballots were collected and counted. The Elections Committee was called to report the result. 15 votes were needed to elect. Gaye Mizell received 16 votes, Eunice Halverson-12. Gloria declared Gaye the Voting Member, and Eunice the alternate for that spot.

Three spots remained to be filled for the Triennial Voting Member election. The Elections Committee handed out the ballots, Voting members marked ballots as instructed and handed them in. The Elections Committee collected the ballots and counted the votes. The results were as follows: Jean Bardy received 8 votes, Carolyn Bauer-16 votes, Mick Friberg-6 votes, Janice Gerken-21 votes, Rhonda Templing-16 votes, and Eunice Halverson-14 votes.

Gloria declared the following elected: Carolyn Bauer, Janice Gerken, and Rhonda Templing.

As elections were concluded, Susie moved that the ballots be destroyed. Holly Unruh seconded the motion. It was voted on and passed.

Gloria announced the business session of the convention was concluded.

The luncheon was held with music from the Praise Band from Our Savior's Lutheran, (Camdenton, MO).

Breakout Sessions were:

- ReHope by Heidi Olson and Roxie Loyd
- Della Lamb Community Services by Ryan Hudnall
- Bible Study by Rev. Kim Frederking
- "Women of the Reformation" by Evelyn Clark

Other afternoon activities and gatherings:

- Hospitality Room
- Sing Along
- Bingo
- Cluster Coordinator Gathering

The Banquet started with special recognition of guests. The students who were given Lynn Starr Educational scholarships within the last 2 years were recognized and given time to speak to the group.

The Banquet was a plated meal and at the end, all the officers and board put on white aprons with Women of the ELCA embroidered on them to serve everyone a cookie or brownie for dessert. After the meal, Janice introduced "The Potter's Wheel" for our entertainment. The last part of the evening was the Raffle and Silent Auction. It was very successful and fun.

Sunday, June 22, Convention Summary

The day started off with a summary of all the business that occurred at the convention business meeting. Newly elected officers were announced. Voting Members and alternates for Triennial were announced. There were five resolutions adopted. Gloria made sure to let everyone know that the Triennial was in July, 2026 and we would hear more about it soon. The year 2026 would also be when the Cluster Meetings would be taking place.

We were asked to pray for the Papua New Guinea visit as it is coming up this year. Be sure to keep your covenant with your prayer sister. Please take time to fill out an evaluation and turn it in.

Gloria gave everyone thanks for all the offerings, time, and service to make the convention a success. She thanked Bishop Candea for her help. She thanked Churchwide Representative, Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer for her support and help. She thanked the speakers, presenters, the praise bands, the quilters and crafters, and "The Potter's Wheel". Gloria thanked everyone for coming together and having fun, relaxing, and "Sharing God's Grace".

Closing Worship

Closing Worship was presided by Pastor Anna Borders, Synodically Authorized Minister (SAM). Reflection and Communion was led by Bishop Candea. Jeannette VonHolten accompanied on keyboard.

The offering was split 50% to Central States Women of the ELCA and 50% to Katie's Fund.

The newly elected officers and board were installed by Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer.

The Commissioning of the Triennial Voting Members was officiated by Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer.

Respectfully Submitted, Susie Borgstrom, Secretary