

Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA
Board Meeting
Wednesday, September 17, 2025
via Zoom

The meeting was called order by our president, Louise Ahrens, at 7:00 p.m.

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

Greetings were briefly exchanged.

Opening Prayer: Rhonda Templing opened the meeting with prayer.

The Reading of the Purpose Statement: The Purpose Statement of the Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA was read in unison, led by Louise.

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

Announcements: Vickie attended the 2025 Churchwide Assembly, while in attendance she learned that the Women of the ELCA organization is in debt to Churchwide in the amount of approximately \$1M. The indebtedness is largely due to the expenses of the 2023 Women of the ELCA Convention/Gathering in Phoenix, AZ.

There is an appeal from Churchwide named “Share Abundance, Love and Thanks (S.A.L.T.) to make up the deficit in the 2024 and projected 2025 budget due to decreased offerings. Churchwide made cuts to the 2025 and 2026 budget and \$250,000 to make up the deficit.

In a statement by the Women of the ELCA Churchwide, apologies were made for the racial bias incident which occurred during the convention proceedings. Vickie encouraged us to check the Women of the ELCA website for the 2024 Impact Report.

Approval of the Minutes: Three sets of minutes were reviewed and corrected: Convention minutes, post-convention minutes, and the minutes of the July 9 Board meeting. Following the review of the convention meeting, Janice made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The post-convention minutes were reviewed and corrected. Rhonda made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, Gay seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The minutes of the board meeting were reviewed and corrected. Gaye made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected, Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: Janice reported that with deposits and disbursements, our General Fund has a present balance of \$24,730.57. The Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund has a current balance of \$17,220.00, with the Education Scholarship fund having a balance of \$3,795.31. Following questions and explanations, Vickie moved to accept the report as presented. Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Old Business:

Papua New Guinea Trip: Louise updated the board on the status of the PNG trip, in particular the trip finances. Pastor Teske has indicated that approximately \$20,000 is needed for the trip. The Holy Trinity Church (St. Louis) having closed their doors in March, graciously donated \$10,000 for the PNG trip and \$6,000 for the pastors of the Russian Companion Synod.

With this gift, the airline tickets have been purchased, leaving approximately \$6,000. This amount is to be used for the reimbursement of purchase of travel insurance for each individual, vaccinations, the boat expense to the Kotte district, food, and the guest house (while in the district). Additional donations will be needed for use by the travelers for any unforeseen expenses and to cover the above.

The Central States Women of the ELCA donated \$1,800 in July, and the unit of Hosanna! Lutheran has also made a donation. An appeal for donations was extended to our units in the recent Walking in the Word.

Following discussion, Vickie made a motion to contribute \$1,200 to be used for this trip. Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Louise informed the board that the pastor of Hosanna! Lutheran has made 11 crosses (4" made of cherry) as gifts for the ladies of Papua New Guinea. The expense of the crosses has been covered by a Thrivent Action Grant by Hosanna!

Invitation to PNG Ladies: There has been discussion to invite two ladies from Papua New Guinea to attend the 2026 Women of the ELCA Triennial. The cost for traveling for the ladies would be about \$10,000. Pastor Teske has indicated he would facilitate the fundraising. If the invitation is extended, we will need to encourage our units/individuals to assist in the fundraising (perhaps a 'catchy' challenge). With our clusters meeting in 2026, a portion of the offerings could be directed to the fundraising efforts.

New Business:

2026 Cluster Meetings: Gaye reported on the discussion of the cluster coordinators at their meeting held during the 2025 CCS Women of the ELCA Convention. A listing of the congregation and contacts per each cluster has been sent. The following vacancies were noted:

- Eastern Cluster (1) Kathy Steinke to recruit
- Central Kansas (2) Rita, Gaye and Louise to recruit
- Western Kansas (2) Rhonda to recruit
- Osage (1) Vickie to recruit

Following discussion, it was the general consensus of the board that the theme of the 2026 cluster meetings would be "Vessels of Grace". It was also discussed to ask the travelers to PNG to speak at each cluster meeting.

Rhonda made a motion that the Papua New Guinea travelers speak at each cluster meeting, with the Central States Women of the ELCA paying their mileage. Vickie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Revised Cluster Coordinator Job Description: The board reviewed the Cluster Coordinator Job Description and the addition of Item #8, which reads as follow:

"Each Coordinator volunteers for a minimum of two years, starting at the end of the convention until the next convention. At that time, notify the current Cluster Coordinator Liaison of the coordinator's willingness to serve." Janice made a motion to approve the Revised Cluster Coordinator Job Description. Vickie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

President's Meeting: Louise will send out the materials reflecting that meeting following our board meeting.

Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund: It was discussed that the use of the fund for the 2026 Triennial needs to be strongly encouraged in light of the increase in registration after January 6, 2026 to \$525. Currently, registration is \$475. Application forms for candidates will be placed on the website with applications due to Rita Nelson by November 30, 2025. Criteria for funding available will require determining the interest accrued during the past three fiscal years, plus funds donated over the three-year period of time.

Other Items:

Vacant Board Position: Still pursuing possibilities

Walking in the word Editor: One person may be interested.

Facebook Administrator: Louise is looking (six have declined). Units can submit pictures for the Facebook to Louise. She will send them to Tim Anderson (Central States Synod office), who will post them on our Facebook page.

Walking in the Word: To be determined, perhaps in November.

Next Zoom Meeting: Members discussed the possibility of Wednesday, November 19.

Adjournment:

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

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer led by Rita.