Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA

Board Meeting
Wednesday, July 22, 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, Rita Nelson, and Karen MacDonald. Brenda Rodger was unable to attend.

Opening Prayer: Louise led the opening devotions, followed with prayer; providing each of us with hope.

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

Approval of Agenda: Rhonda made a motion to approve the agenda. Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of June 17, 2026 were discussed and reviewed. Gaye made a motion that the minutes be approved as corrected. Vickie seconded the motion.

Announcements: Louise announced the following:

- The unit assessment to determine the active units in our synod is due on February 1, 2027.
- There will be a Region 4 zoom meeting with the new Churchwide Board on September 10, 2026.
    - In 2028 – An in-person presidents' meeting will be held.
    - The national convention will, no doubt, be held on zoom once again.

Old Business:

Update of Papua New Guinea: Louise shared Pastor Teske's communication with Senator Moran's office (US Embassy, Port Moresby) and the response from his office. This communication was also shared with Bishop Simon. The summary of the communication is that it must be determined if the trip to the United States is feasible, particularly whether the trip "serves U.S. national interests".

It was decided to proceed with convention planning, as we can always make adjustments should the Papua New Guinea ladies be able to attend.

Updates on cluster meeting: Gaye reported the following:

- Eastern Cluster met in late April.
- Osage Cluster met in June.
- Border Cluster met in April. Plan to meet for a Fall Gathering on September 26.
- Central Kansas is meeting on August 1, 2026. All their offering has been designated for Papua New Guinea.
- Western Kansas will meet on August 29, 2026.

2026 Gathering in Des Moines: Many expressed a major concern with the registration process.

2026 Triennial Convention: Those attending the convention (Louise, Gaye, Rhonda, and Janice) noted the following: Voting members would appreciate a clearer and closer look at the board members and candidates and also noted there was too much down time.

The revised constitution is to be posted soon allowing synods to update their own constitution in order to be in compliance.

Rhonda explained the WELCA Churchwide budget regarding the shortage of $1M. They borrowed from restricted funds for a period of time, these funds have now been repaid.

It was also reported that the Gathering paid for itself – there is NO DEBT.

Early Registration ($295) is open until September 1, 2026. Registration may open up again November and again in January 2028.

Memorials have been designated for the future workings of Churchwide. The memorial "Faithful Friends" was discussed. All were encouraged to contribute. Louise noted the memorials that were approved.

Following the discussion of the memorials - "Indian Boarding Schools" and "Missing/Murdered Indigenous Women", Rhonda suggested reaching out to Kansas Indian Center and Haskell University for possible speakers regarding the subject. Vickie also suggested inviting Vance Blackfox to attend our convention as a speaker or for breakout sessions.

Old Business:

2027 Convention: Louise reported that Double Tree Hotel cannot accommodate our convention on the dates we requested. Louise sent a request for a possible dates in July. She continues to wait for a response.

New Business:

Walking in the Word: It was decided to hold with the publication of the newsletter until the Double Tree Hotel responds.

Next Meeting: As Rhonda and Brenda have a conflict for the in-person meeting scheduled for October 2-3, it was decided to reschedule for October 9-10 in Lawrence (if possible).

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

Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully,
Janice Gerken, Secretary