

In-Gatherings benefit Lutheran World Relief

Kathy Steinke – vice-president
Pat Dunavan – board member

When you get determined, service-minded women together, anything is possible.

In past decades, women in ELCA congregations in the Central States Synod have made and donated hundreds of quilts, health, and school kits to Lutheran World Relief (LWR). Earlier this year, there was not a scheduled collection site anywhere in Missouri. However, the Holy Spirit used friendly conversations to facilitate ministry in action.

The **St. Louis area In-Gathering** was hosted by partners of Shepard of the Hills church in Saint Ann, MO and St. Mark's church in Clayton, MO. Rev. Kristen Koch,



St. Louis LWR In-gathering loading crew from St. Mark's-Clayton and Shepard of the Hills churches in St. Ann, MO.

On the Inside

We are called to make disciples

Rev. Dinah Dutta Page 2

Triennial dates..... Page 2

On-line Christmas service Page 3

Plans for 2023 convention Page 3

Photos of Quilt project Page 3

Express your thanks

Janice Gerken Page 4

Mid-Missouri cluster photos Page 4

Christmas gifts that will not break

Jill Duis..... Page 5

Message from WITW editor Page 5

Cluster restructuring

Vickie Donnell Page 7

Education Scholarship..... Page 8

Board members..... Page 9

Subscription form..... Page 10

minister at Shepard of the Hills, offered the church grounds with a circular drive and convenient access to I-70 as the collection site. Eunice Halverson with St. Mark's coordinated the event with LWR organizers and recruited volunteers.

The **Mid-Missouri In-Gathering** was hosted by Our Savior's Church, Jefferson City, MO under the leadership of Gloria Sharp. Two weeks later Sharp and her husband drove a U-Haul vehicle to St. Louis, MO which was loaded with boxes from 11 churches. Donations also were collected to help cover shipping costs. The boxes were added to the semi-diesel truck bound for St. Paul, MN.

The Missouri In-Gatherings collected 1,335 quilts; 670 health kits; 634 school kits; 167 baby kits; and 45 sewing kits.

The Wichita In-Gathering was hosted by and held at Christ Lutheran in Wichita, KS. This was the first time an ELCA church in that area had participated.

(Continued on page 2)

Benefit LWR

(Continued from page 1)

Stops were made in Hays, KS and Salina, KS before arriving in Wichita. Ten churches participated at the Wichita site. In Salina, 25 churches from North Central and Northeastern Kansas sent quilts, personal care, baby, sewing, and school kits. In total 11,619 pounds of items were sent on to LWR in Minneapolis. Another ingathering is planned for 2023 in Salina and they are encouraging other churches to join them in becoming ingathering sites.

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12th Triennial W/ELCA Convention/Gathering

Vickie Donnell - president

Information is limited at the time of this writing regarding the 2023 Triennial. This is what we do know. The **Twelfth Triennial Convention** is currently scheduled for September 19-21, 2023.

Voting members from our synodical organization were elected at our convention in August. They are: Rev Dinah Dutta, Louise Ahrens, Jill Duis and Rhonda Schlesselman.

Alternates will be Susie Borgstrom, Rhonda Templing, Rev Ann Lundquist, Jean Bardy, and Carolyn Olson.

The **Triennial Gathering** is September 21-24. Applications for the Barbara Nelson Triennial Gathering Memorial Scholarship must be postmarked by December 31, 2022. The application form was published in the September 2022 issue of *Walking in the Word*.

[ed9008_7bd15c57dc4d4edab19c73058561542e.pdf](https://www.womenoftheelca.org/ed9008_7bd15c57dc4d4edab19c73058561542e.pdf) ([css-elca.org](https://www.womenoftheelca.org)).

Both events will be held at Sheraton Phoenix Downtown in Phoenix, Arizona. Be watching for more information at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org>.

vickiedonnell@yahoo.com

We are called to make disciples

Rev. Dinah Dutta – board member

During our CSS WELCA convention, we learned about discipleship making. I quoted author Justin Gravitt whose blogs and writings I regularly follow. I continue to understand how I can be a true disciple of Christ and how I can make disciples of Christ. Justin says, **“A skilled disciple maker is called to build into the life of each person.”** This caught my attention.

Who is a skilled disciple? Do we need skills to be a disciple or make disciples? We know the disciples Jesus called were not skilled to make disciples. They were normal folks like you and me. In answer to the question, “Are we called to make disciples?” I think the answer is a big **YES**. The great commission the Lord gave us affirms our call. **“Go and make disciples.” (Matthew 28: 19-20)**

I gave many excuses when the Lord called me to pastoral ministry. I said: “I am not called to do that or this. I am called to be a scientist, trained, and achieved higher education to do that.” Excuses and excuses. However, in the end, I heard and followed. **“Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19).**

The offer is to be made into something (a disciple) and Jesus is the maker. I obeyed and submitted to His call. Immediately, the transformation began, and I change and grow every day. Jesus’ method of making me his disciple began with transformation and teaching, not just theological education. He is teaching me to love like he loved, forgive like he forgives and build relationships by building into the life of people whom I encounter in daily life.

A call to make disciples is costly, emphasized Justin. I experienced that in my life as a leader in the church. I experienced humiliation and rejection. However, I learned, a true disciple or disciple making demands genuine growth toward maturity, a perseverance to overcome obstacles, and a belief that God wants to use you.

My dear sisters in Christ, as we enter another year, I want to challenge you and remind you of the CALL we are given. Our purpose statement of WELCA **calls us to discipleship.**

How are we fulfilling that CALL? How are we investing our time and talents to build strong relationships with each other as well as in the community we live in? How are we spreading love, forgiveness, and compassion towards those whom we cannot agree with? The Apostle Paul taught the Romans, **“Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light” (Romans 13:12).**

Are we ready to put on the armor of light? To be light of the world as the Lord called us to be?

“If you are a disciple, not only are you called to make disciples, you have been given everything you need to succeed” (Justin Gravitt).

Blessings for Christmas and the New year!

pastordutta@gmail.com

On-line Christmas service offers hope

Churchwide Women of the ELCA has posted on-line a Blue Christmas Service that will offer a safe place to bring your grief, fear, and loss. It will include brief readings, quiet and reflective music, and prayer. The service takes place at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 21, 2022. Go to <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/events> to register. After registering you will receive a confirmation e-mail containing information about joining the webinar. All are welcome!

Planning underway for 2023 W/ELCA convention

The board is immersed in planning for the **35th Annual Central States Synodical Organization Convention**. It will be held **June 23-25, 2023** at Stoney Creek Hotel Kansas City-Independence, 18011 Bass Pro Drive, Independence, MO 64055. The theme of the convention will be *The Lord is My Light*.

Put this on your calendar now—we are planning to see you there.
vickiedonnell@yahoo.com

*The Lord is my light and my
salvation; whom shall I fear?
Psalm 27:1a*



Last September, these quilts were displayed at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Emporia, KS. Nadine James was the coordinator of the quilting sessions. The quilters met from September 2021 through May 2022 and made 48 quilts. They were donated to the following organizations:

14, Lutheran World Relief; 14, Kansas Department. for Children and Families; 5, Shiloh Home of Hope for young women with children, Salina, KS; 5, Rescue Mission for Men; and the remaining 10 were displayed and sold at the church's annual rummage and bake sale. God's work with our quilters' hands! (Article and photos submitted by Jackie Scott, St. Mark's Lutheran Church)

Editor's Note: Some of the photographs printed in this issue were submitted several months ago and space was not available in previous issues. However, the activity and fellowship represented are important and should be noted regardless when the event occurred. Therefore, those photos are included in the December 2022 issue of *Walking in the Word*.

Express your thanks throughout the year

Janice Gerken, treasurer

The day of Thanksgiving has come and gone, although as I am writing this, the aromas of the Thanksgiving meal continue to prevail throughout the house, along with the laughter and joy of my family members just being together. It is time when we pause to reflect on our many blessings that God showered upon us. However, our reflections should not be isolated to just Thanksgiving Day, but ongoing throughout the year.

A tradition which has long been observed by the ladies in my congregation is to express our thanks in a monetary manner throughout the year. This is a tradition which dates back for more than 100 years not only in my congregation, but throughout the Lutheran church and beyond. Throughout the year, our ladies fill their offering boxes with dimes, nickels, quarters, and dollars; as they give thanks for the birth of a child, a positive report from a doctor, a beautiful rainbow, and more. These offering boxes are collected at our Thanksgiving service and into the season of Advent.

Following Advent, our offerings (100 per cent) are sent to the Women of the ELCA (church-wide), to support varied ministries of the Women of the ELCA. Such ministries may include assisting families in need around the globe, addressing domestic violence and human trafficking, provide anti-racism training, and more. This is a tangible expression that is grounded in our celebration to joyfully give thanks for all God has always given us.

janicegerken@aol.com

A reminder... Send all offerings to:

**Janice Gerken, Treasurer
36282 Renken Road
Mora, MO 65345**



The Mid-Missouri Cluster met last spring at Trinity Lutheran (Pymont), Stover, MO. All ten units were represented, with 43 ladies attending. Time was spent in renewing old friendships, Bible study, business meeting, and a delicious lunch. (Article and photos submitted by Janice Gerken.)



The former God's Sunflower cluster met last September for fellowship and refreshments at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Washington, KS. (Article and photos submitted by Board Member Jill Duis).

Christmas gifts that will not break

Jill Duis, board member

Several years ago, while searching for an innovative Advent series I found myself in conversation with a fellow pastoral leader. I was lamenting, oh who am I kidding, I was complaining that I felt like I was just saying the same thing about Advent that I always had. I was looking for something that people could relate to in a world that some felt had lost its direction.

In his book "Christmas Gifts that Won't Break" author James Moore tells the story of giving his son a red firetruck only to have him play with it for a short period of time before it broke. Devastated and crying his son desperately wanted him to fix the truck, make it whole and useful and fun again.

And so, it is with our lives. We go happily along, enjoying things only to have something break in the middle of it all. A friendship, a relationship, a marriage, a family, a trust, and sometimes even our relationship with God. Romans 8 assures us that there is nothing that can separate us from the love of our God. But how, in the midst, of all this business, this madness we call the Christmas season can we

dare to hope that something, including us, will not break?

Advent brings a time of patient waiting for the most wonderful gift of all. The Christ Child. We wait expectantly, longingly with our hearts full of love and joy and hope and peace. We do all the things of Christmas. We bake, we shop, we wrap and exchange gifts, we sing Christmas carols and attend church services, Christmas musicals and programs. And with us placed in the center of it all, as we sit quietly and contemplatively in our pew at church and gaze at the lovely decorations, the nativity, the Chrismos on the tree and we ponder. Let us finally let our eyes fall to the Advent wreath itself. Let us remember what each candle symbolizes. And then let us each know that it is these things that are the gifts that will not break!

The gifts of the **love** of Christ.

The **joy** of the season.

The **hope** of the world to come.

And the **peace** that passes all understanding. These will not break!

Go forward into this season resting assuredly in the promise given to us of these gifts that will never break until we proclaim on that Christmas morning: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

WITW editor resigns post after five years



Due to recent health concerns, I have decided to resign immediately as editor of *Walking in the Word* newsletter. I volunteered to take on the task in September 2017 at the 30th CSS W/ELCA convention. It has been both a challenging and fulfilling job as I enjoyed using my past skills as a newspaper editor/photographer to produce an inviting and informative newsletter. I will continue to attend conventions as I have made many new friends and cherished memories.

Because my decision has been shared with the board only recently, no information is available regarding future publication of the newsletter. I will forward articles, photos, and subscription requests to President Vickie Donnell.

Thank you for your support and encouragement over the years. I am truly blessed by the friendships I have made with my sisters in Christ.

Mary Liby

Cluster restructuring project is underway

Vickie Donnell - president

In the September issue of *Walking in the Word* you read about the adoption of the resolution at our 2022 convention calling for restructuring of our organization into five clusters (from the prior 19), using the same geographic boundaries as the Central States Synod conference areas. Board members are now in the process of recruiting and meeting with cluster coordinators for each of the 'new' clusters.

Board members, Pat Dunavan and Vickie Donnell, recently held a call via Zoom to answer questions and discuss how the opportunities and challenges might affect the Western Kansas cluster. We are grateful that Rhonda Templing, Sue Schonhaler, and Carolyn Mott have agreed to be coordinators for that cluster.

Zoom calls with Central Kansas and Osage cluster women are in the process of being scheduled.

In the Eastern and Border clusters, where there are fewer active units, we will be inviting representatives from congregations to join board members to determine how the board can assist in expanding the number of active congregational and inter-congregational units

CSS W/ELCA SYNOD CLUSTERS

Eastern Missouri

Osage

Border

Central Kansas

Western Kansas

in their clusters. We are looking forward to these meetings as we are already having conversations with women in the St. Louis and Kansas City areas who are interested in learning more about what it means to be an active unit.

Board members are feeling positive about the restructuring and are committed to having cluster coordinators identified that will be introduced at the 2023 convention. As we transition to bi-annual conventions, these coordinators, working with a member of the board, will then begin planning for their cluster events to be held in 2024.

It will take some time for all of us to adjust to this new structure, but it is exciting as we move into the future. If there are any questions, please reach out at any time to Pat Dunavan at prairies@aol.com or Vickie Donnell at vickiedonnell@yahoo.com.

Make Plans to Attend

12th Triennial Convention

September 19-21, 2023

2023 Triennial Gathering

September 21-24, 2023

**Sheraton Phoenix Downtown
Phoenix, Arizona**



Central States Synod Women of the ELCA
Education Scholarship Application
2023 Award

Please write legibly

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Home Phone _____ **Cell Phone** _____

Email Address _____

Home Church _____ **City** _____ **State** _____

College Attending (if known) _____

Signature of Applicant _____

Recommended by _____ **Title** _____

Guidelines:

1. Scholarships are awarded to female members of an ELCA congregation seeking post high school education.
2. Priority is given to female members of Central States Synod congregations.
3. Award is a 1-year non-renewable scholarship.
4. Scholarship monies are written to and sent directly to the educational institution you are attending.
5. Must include with this application a written recommendation and signature from your Pastor, mentor, unit president or unit representative. Recommendation cannot come from a current or previous board member (within last four years).
6. Must include an essay of approximately 500 words describing your participation in church, school, and community activities.
7. Award recipients will be notified in April 2023.
8. Award recipients will be asked to forward a photo electronically that will be used in synodical organization publications.
9. Award recipients will be strongly encouraged to attend dinner on Saturday evening of the annual convention of the Central States Women of the ELCA—June 24, 2023 at Stoney Creek Hotel Kansas City-Independence.
10. Individual awards will not exceed \$1,000. Multiple awards may be given in a year.
11. In the event that your college is undecided at the time the award is announced, it will be your responsibility to keep the CSS Board Treasurer, Janice Gerken, informed of your selection at janicegerken@aol.com.
12. **Application must be postmarked by March 1, 2023.**

Send application to:

Gaye Mizell, 11870 Spruce Haven Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146

314-606-9567 Lovetoknit50@gmail.com

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Central States Women NEW website
www.css-elca.org/welca
 Central States Women Facebook:
www.facebook.com/CSSwomenofeca
 (this is not a typo—it is eca)
All are secure websites



***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

Official Newsletter of
The Central States
Women of the ELCA

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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