

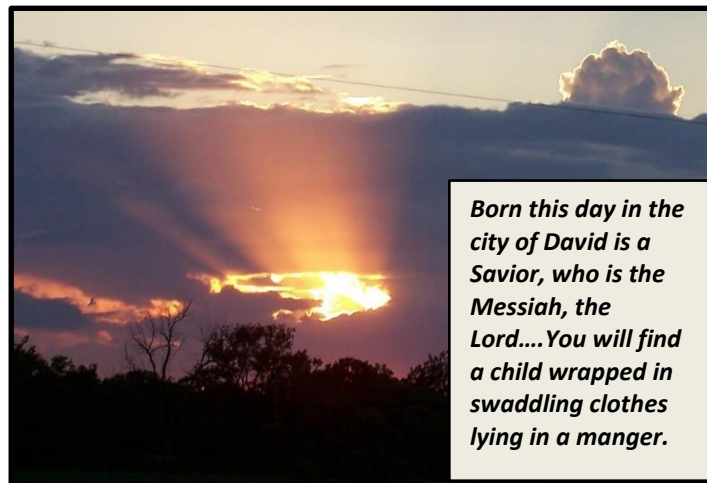
Prepare the way for the Lord

-- Rev. Dinah Dutta, board member

If you were to spend a moment daydreaming about your idea for a perfect Christmas, what images would you come up with?

Each year during the season of Advent, we hear the message of John the Baptist, "Prepare the way for the Lord; make straight paths for him." What does it mean to prepare the way of the Lord? The preparation John is talking about has two dimensions. The first is to prepare "our hearts" which God is constantly attempting to do through his Word and Spirit, for the second coming of the Lord. The next dimension is to prepare our hearts for his incarnation as he comes to us through Word and Spirit at Christmas and every day of our lives. We are to discover that each of us is called to prepare the way for God in our families, friendships, and communities. Our preparation opens up paths of healing, reconciliation, and blessing.

I want to encourage you not to get caught up with frantic shopping stress as we look forward to celebrating the birth of our Savior. Instead, take time to



Born this day in the city of David is a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.... You will find a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger.

look around and enjoy the many blessings we received the past year.

As I walk into a new year, I learn nothing lifts the desperate, weary heart like the promises of God. In a world full of despair, depression, anxiety, and instability, we do not need more opinions or hunches. We need the definitive declarations of our mighty and loving God.

(continued on page 4)

Plans are underway for 2022 W/ELCA convention

--- Beth Rockelman
vice-president

Making plans? Oh, yes, plans abound! While some are traditional, routine each day, others are being formulated carefully in great detail. We as Women of the ELCA and the Central States Synod are formulating plans for our (tentative) July 22-24, 2022 convention/gathering in Overland Park, KS. Hopefully, we may succeed in having our convention in-person as well as participation via computer.

There is much to do. So, get prepared, make plans and mark your calendars. Information will be forthcoming regarding hotel and meal costs and registration details.

Thank you for your generous financial in-kind donations, offerings and education scholarship support this year. When one grand traditional convention plan was stopped, another idea sprang up and succeeded to move forward. Thank you to Tim Anderson, CSS office, for his compute expertise to make our event possible via Zoom.

Special thanks to Vicki Hedger, Connie Ross and many others who shared their time, talents and gifts. God has plans for each of us. "In Him we live and move and have our being..." beth@midamerica.net

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Merry Christmas

Rejoice in the season of Advent

-- Vickie Donnell, president

Now may the God of peace...make you complete in everything good so that you may do His will, working among us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Hebrews 13: 20-21

After being elected as your president at our September convention, the above scripture has spoken to me and has become my prayer. I am thankful for the opportunity to serve and look forward with anticipation to the good things that lie ahead.

As the boards already has come together via Zoom on two separate occasions, I want to assure you that the work of your board is well underway. With the experience of Beth, Kathy S, Loretta, and Kathy R, and the eager willingness of Pat, Jill, and Janice to serve and bring new ideas, and the guidance of Rev. Dutta who has just finished time on the churchwide board, we are well prepared to serve the women of the Central States Synod.

On our first call I shared that I am a 'communicator' and 'connector'. I know this will be a driving force for me in our work as I already had asked them to come together monthly via Zoom! It was interesting as everyone shared their thoughts and feelings about the future. Communication and striving for connection across the synod are uppermost on our minds.

We will be seeking ways to make this happen. As part of this effort, we are currently seeking to discover ALL the good works of women across the synod.

We currently have about 70 congregational units with whom we have ongoing communication and can report them as active W/ ELCA congregational units. We are eager to learn about the good works of women in the remaining 90 congregations and have reached out with inquiries. Our thoughts are that we have many more who meet the active unit criteria. Knowing the status of work across the synod is important as we communicate with the churchwide organization.

As I close this initial message, I am humbled by the opportunities of the calling. With the support of each of you, the faithful women across the synod, and specifically those from my unit at Messiah Lutheran Church in Springfield, MO, I can only imagine what can be accomplished as we seek to become even better connected.

vickiedonnell@yahoo.com

Lord, in this season of Advent, help us to put our eyes on You. Help us to open our ears to Your voice. Help us to open our hearts to Your glorious presence. May we be attentive to You in every way that You desire to come to us. Amen.

W/ELCA constitution updates approved

-- Vickie Donnell, president

The 2021 churchwide convention approved updates to the Women of the ELCA constitution and bylaws.

Highlights include:

† Leadership in either the synodical or churchwide expressions of Women of the ELCA no longer requires participation in a congregational unit; however, voting membership in an ELCA congregation is required.

† The number of churchwide executive board members was reduced from 21 to 15.

† The number of synodical board members may number 'three or more' to create more flexibility for synodical women's organizations.

† Two members of the same congregational unit may serve as leaders of a synodical women's organization—one as an officer and the other as a board member.

† Synodical women's organization leader titles may be president and vice president, chairs or co-chairs, conveners or co-conveners, or coordinators.

These changes are reflected in the 2021 revision of the Central States Synodical Women's Organization Constitution and Bylaws. If you have questions about these changes or other actions that occurred at the churchwide convention, you may contact CSS W/ELCA board member Rev Dinah Dutta. pastordutta@gmail.com

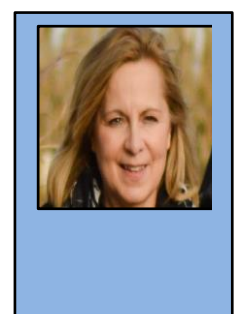
CSS W/ELCA 2022 CONVENTION

July 22-24, 2022

Overland Park, KS

(more information in future issues of WITW)

Meet members of the 2021-2022 CSS W/ELCA board



Vickie Donnell
President

Beth Rockelman
Vice-president

Kathy Steinke
Secretary

Janice Gerken
Treasurer

Jill Duis
Board member




**2021-2022
OFFICERS,
BOARD
MEMBERS**

Kathy Regehr
Board member

Pat Dunavan
Board member

Rev. Dinah Dutta
Board member

Loretta Holmes
Board Member

Vickie Donnell, Springfield, MO., was elected to a two-year term as president. She served two terms as treasurer and another year due to COVID.

She is a member of Messiah Lutheran Church in Springfield, MO. where she chairs the evangelism and (pastor) call committees. Donnell is a member of the congregational care committee and shepherding team. She participates in Lutheran World Relief and Piece-makers, and has served as a worship assistant and church council recording secretary. She retired as a registered nurse after serving 45 years in healthcare.

“I have an understanding of the responsibilities of all board members and the importance of a well-functioning board. . .We are at a critical place in the ‘life’ of CSS W/ELCA and churchwide. I am interested in bringing us out of that and into a better place.”

Beth Rockelman, Jefferson City, MO., was re-elected vice-president for one more year. She previously served two terms as synod secretary. She is retired from the Missouri Department of Social Services. Rockelman has attended several churchwide conventions as a voting

member. She works part-time and assists with the local food bank

As a W/ELCA synod officer, Rockelman shares her knowledge and experience which she hopes promotes a positive attitude and rejuvenates her spirit.

This is **Kathy Steinke’s** third non-consecutive term on the board. She served two terms as a board member. Steinke, St. Louis, MO., is a retired elementary school teacher and has attended St. Mark’s-Clayton Lutheran Church for over 60 years. She is passionate about worship, outreach, and connecting with other women. She is looking forward to her one-year term as secretary.

Steinke is a first-time grandmother of a three-month-old granddaughter and said she is blessed beyond measure.

Janice Gerken, Mora, MO., will serve a two-year term as treasurer. She is a life-long member of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Cole Camp, MO., and

(continued on page 4)

Meet members

(continued from page 3)

has served the church in various capacities—church council president and secretary and a churchwide assembly voting member. She is employed by the church as a Mission Facilitator.

Gerken served as W/ELCA unit chairman for 10 years, and attended three W/ELCA Triennial Conventions. She was a teacher and then a middle-school principal before retiring in 2006. She lives on a farm nearby her son and his family which includes four grandchildren.

She said she has survived tough and challenging times because her faith, family, friends, the farm, and her work have kept her strong to face any obstacle. “I rejoice every day in all the blessings that God gives all of us. Thanks be to God!”

Jill Duis, Odell, NE., is a new board member and will serve a one-year term. During her 43-year nursing career, she was a clinical and infection prevention manager. She is a former school board member and has held offices in her local W/ELCA unit and church council. Duis has attended synod assemblies as a voting member and as pastoral leader. She received her PMA (Parish Ministry Associate) certification in 2017.

Duis believes that due to her varied background she can bring a variety of experience to the group.

Kathy Regehr, Inman, KS., will serve two years as a board member. She previously served as CSS W/ELCA board vice-president. She also was a CSS delegate and Triennial voting member and is a member of her church council. She is employed by a non-profit organization that helps persons with disabilities. She believes God’s help and her faith will lead and guide her on a new journey to help renew W/ELCA.

Pat Dunavan, Topeka, KS., is a retired registered dietitian. She will serve two years as a board member.

Dunavan has been a Cluster Coordinator and served on numerous church committees and the church council. Her charity service includes working with local food banks and distributing school supplies for children of low-income families. Dunavan believes her history of extensive participation in W/ELCA will aid in the growth of future ministries. “Now, I have the opportunity to serve as the Cluster Liaison for the board. The past two years have been difficult as congregational units and clusters attempted to stay in touch and continue the mission of W/ELCA. I hope in the coming months to contact each Cluster leader and learn how the board may help them continue with this important work. Stay well, be strong,

and continue to tell your story to the church, your community and the world.”

Rev. Dinah Dutta, Lawrence, KS., was born into a Hindu-Christian family in India, where she was brought up in the Christian faith. After a 20-year career in cancer research as a scientist in Germany and the United States, Rev. Dutta accepted God’s call to the ministry and was ordained in 2010.

The Rev. Dutta served six years on the churchwide W/ELCA executive board. She formerly was a minister at St Mark’s Lutheran Church in Emporia, KS. Currently she serves as chaplain at the University of Kansas Medical Center. She is a cancer survivor and a *prayer warrior*.

She looks forward to encouraging women in leadership roles, strengthening women’s ministries, and learning more about the ways God is leading W/ELCA to make a difference in the lives of women around the world.

Loretta Holmes, Haysville, KS., was elected to serve a one-year term as a board member. She has taught Sunday School and been a member of the Youth Ministry and Pray and Care teams at her church. She has faithfully served as a board member for the last three years. **(Note: Contact information for board officers and members is listed on page 6)**

Prepare the way

(continued from page 1)

Max Lucado, a pastor and counselor, asks “What are you anchored to—the circumstances of life or the promises of God?” He states that for every problem in life, God has given you a promise. God has promised to reclaim his creation. He is a God of restoration, not destruction. He is a God of renewal, redemption, regeneration and resurrection. God loves to redo and restore. “I am making everything new!”, he announced in Revelations 21:5. Everything new. The old will be gone. He will reclaim every diseased body and afflicted mind. This is God’s promise. Because God’s promises are unbreakable, our hope is unshakable!

My dear sisters in Christ, as we gather to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ and then welcome another year in our lives, we remember Paul’s words.

“Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

pastordutta@gmail.com

Convention well attended

--Vickie Donnell, president

September 10-11, 2021 will be remembered as the week-end when a previously postponed CSS W/ELCA convention (from 2020 due to COVID-19) was held via Zoom with 106 registrants from 40 congregations attending.

The "My Story, Your Story, Our Story" convention theme and logo as well as the convention hymn provided a firm foundation for meaningful story telling. President Alice Burnett opened the convention Friday evening welcoming attendees and introducing special guests.

Elizabeth Burgess, churchwide representative, commended the CSS board for forging ahead with a virtual convention and encouraged attendees to visit the W/ELCA website for information about the 11th Triennial Convention held August 3-5 via Zoom. (See page 2 for a summary).

Bishop Susan Candea thanked the women for their faithfulness and resiliency in organizing a virtual convention. She encouraged all to visit the Central States Synod website <https://www.css-elca.org> and to specifically take notice of the new mission statement. Friday evening concluded with a sermon presented by Bishop Candea.

The Saturday morning session included a Bible study led by Rev. Dutta and a workshop, "Quilts in the Classroom", led by Patti Winkler. The morning session concluded with the presentation, "Our Blessed Stories", by Rev. Kim Frederking.

The convention offering was distributed with 50 percent to churchwide and 25 percent given to the Restoration House and The Gathering Table. Final distributions were: \$1,078.17 to Restoration House, \$1,578.17 to The Gathering Table and \$1,921.35 to the churchwide organization. An offering of \$1,081 was collected for the Educational Scholarship Fund.

The business meeting had a voting strength of 25 voting members and six officers and board members. The full slate of nominees was elected unanimously using the Zoom polling feature. (See pages 3-4 for Information about members of the 2021-2022 board.)

Treasurer Vickie Donnell gave the following report: checking account, (\$26,056.25); educational scholarship savings account, (\$985.69); and Barbara Nelson Mission Investment Fund account, (\$15,255.61). The proposed 2023 budget of \$29,300 was adopted.

An adopted resolution recognized everyone who had made the virtual convention possible. Tim Anderson, Central States Synod staff member, received special recognition for providing essential technological expertise.

vickiedonnell@yahoo.com

Through the eyes of a child -- Janice Gerken, treasurer

Recently my grandchildren (ages 9,12 and twins, 4) and I watched the movie, "The Star". The older children and I have watched the movie every year since its release in 2017. This year, however, was the first time the twins really understood the movie and asked these questions:

- *Is that really the Baby Jesus in Mary's tummy?*
- *Why does King Herod (the bad man) want to kill Mary and the Baby Jesus?*
- *Just where is Bethlehem?*
- *What is frankincense?*

The story is based on Luke 2, with added characters: Boaz, a donkey; Dave, a dove; a royal henchman and his hunting dogs, Thaddeus and Rufus. Although I have seen the movie many times, the twins' questions brought a new perspective of the movie.

Boaz was very loyal to Mary and desperate to save her from the henchman and his dogs. He continuously showed love and kindness to all he encountered. That even included saving his vengeful enemies, Thaddeus and Rufus.

During the manger scene, all were welcomed to come forward to see this wondrous baby. The Baby Jesus had come into the world for ALL!

The final perspective was noted in a brief conversation between Thaddeus and Rufus which truly exemplifies our lives as Christians. Previously, Thaddeus had said, "We are bad dogs." However, after being welcomed at the manger scene, Thaddeus said, "We are good dogs," and Rufus responds, "We just have to keep trying."

For as much as we strive to do good, the life of a Christian may be hard. But because we are loved and forgiven each day, "We just have to keep trying" to live our life as a child of God. janicegerken@aol.com

Effective immediately

Send all offerings to:

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

CENTRAL STATES SYNOD WOMEN OF THE ELCA**OFFICERS/BOARD MEMEBERS 2021-2022**

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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

Central States Synod Women of the ELCA
Education Scholarship Fund
2022 Award

Please write legibly and include photo

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

Email _____

Home Church _____ City _____ State _____

School Attending (if known) _____

Signature of Applicant _____

Recommended by _____

Guidelines:

1. Scholarships will be awarded to female members of an ELCA congregation seeking post high school education.
2. Priority will be given to female members of the Central States Synod.
3. Award is a 1-year non-renewable scholarship.
4. Scholarship monies will be written to and sent directly to the educational institution you will be attending.
5. Must include 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 the last four years).
6. Must include an essay of approximately 500 words describing your participation in church, school and the community.
7. Award recipients will be notified in April 2021.
8. Individual awards will not exceed \$1,000. Multiple awards may be given in a year.
9. In the event that your school is undecided at the time of award, it will be your responsibility to keep the CSS Board Treasurer, Janice Gerken, janicegerken@aol.com informed of your selection.
10. **Applications must be postmarked by February 15, 2022.**

Send to: Loretta Holmes Phone 316-260-0965 lholmes8@sbcglobal.net
568 Turtle, Haysville, KS 67060

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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NAME _____ ADDRESS _____

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