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CENTRAL STATES SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION  
WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
35th ANNUAL CONVENTION June 23-25,2023  
Stoney Creek Hotel, Kansas City- Independence, Mo

Convention Theme: "The Lord is my Light:

Convention Hymn: "Shine, Jesus, Shine"

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

Convention Goal: " Let Your Light Shine"

Friday, June 23, 2023

Registration began at 1:00 p.m.

Contributions were received for the in-kind offering "Once we were Refugees".

Baskets for the Barbara Nelson Scholarship silent auction and little raffle items for the education scholarship fund were delivered. Pre ordered convention t-shirts were out to be picked up, vendor booths were available to visit, and the "Bridge" was open for business. The scavenger hunt was a fun way to get familiar with the hotel and the loop walk around the hotel was a nice way to get out and exercise for many of our participants. The voting member orientation began at 4 p.m.

Evening Diner began at 5 p.m. President Vickie Donnell opened the convention with introductions.

We were welcomed to Independence by Pele Schuster, Promotion Services Representative. She invited us to spend time shopping and seeing points of interest in the city. The Rev. Linda Daniels-Block, Convention Chaplain; Bishop Susan Candea, Central States Synod Bishop; Marilyn Dial, Convention Registrar; and Rhonda Templing, parliamentarian, were introduced and recognized.

A greeting and report was received from Lorie Garcia, CWO Executive Board Member. She invited us all to come to the Triennial September 21-24, in Phoenix, Arizona. It will be an inspiring, uplifting, awesome experience.

A greeting and report was received from Bishop Candea. She highlighted how the church is changing and moving to meet the challenges of the future. She also noted that the women's synodical organization was leading the way by what has been done with cluster realigning and acting on our resolutions.

The keynote speaker, Kelsey Scism, was introduced by Jill Duis.

Opening worship was Holden Evening Prayer led by Bishop Candea. Hymns included: "Dearest Jesus at Your Word", "Lord Listen to Your Children Praying", and "Shine, Jesus, Shine". Bishop Candea's sermon gave us encouragement to be the light and share the light with others.

The Friday evening "Love" offering was received with 50% going to Churchwide Women's Organization, 25% to Child Safe of Central MO, Inc., and 25% to Once We were Refugees

Worship was concluded.

The Chaplin, Linda Daniels-Block, informed the participants that prayer is always an important part of our lives and in place of prayer partners there would be an area to lift up prayers and write prayer concerns down. She would take those prayers home, lift them up to the Lord, and would continue to pray about them for the following week.

Everyone was reminded that resolutions were to be turned in by 8:30 p.m.

### Saturday, June 24, 2023

Devotions/ Bible study was on Psalm 27: 1 at 8:00 a.m. led by Lori Garcia, CWO representative.

The following vendors addressed the attendees: Lutheran Planned Giving- Stephen Phelps; the Oaks Indian Mission-Dan Cooper; Kimberly Knowle-Zeller, The Bridge- Johanna Erdman; and Once We were Refugees- Ann Say.

At 9:30, the participants had a "make and take" Blessing Jar craft activity.

At 10:30, the participants attend a presentation, "living in the Divine Light" by Linda Daniels-Block

Central States Synod Officers and Board Members gathered for prayer prior to the start of business.

At 9:30, the BUSINESS SESSION started with all voting members

The CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE, Marilyn Dial, Registrar, reported the following:

23 voting members, 26 participants, 10 guests, 8 officers and board members for a total registration of 67 with a voting strength of 31.

A motion to accept the Credentials Committee Report was 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 CONVENTION PROGRAM BOOKLET: Jill Duis, board member, noted the following changes: page 5, July 23 should be June 23; page 6, July 24 should be June 24; page 26, career support group should be cancer support group; page 28, Marybest Durfrey-Pogue should be Marybeth Durfrey-Pogue; and on page 33, Gaye Mizell address changed to 11870 Spruce Haven Dr. instead of 11870 NW 210 Road.

Jill moved for the adoption of the corrected convention program booklet. It was approved.

Vickie introduced the convention committees as listed on page 27 of the convention booklet. The committee members were approved. It was noted that the ballots would be counted by non voting participants.

The Chaplin was called upon to give prayer preceding elections.

#### REPORT OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Gloria Sharp ,Chair, reported for the office of President there were no nominations. For the office of Treasurer there was one nomination : Janice Gerken. For Board Member nominations there were 3: Louise Ahrens, Pat Dunavan, and Rev, Dinah Dutta.

Election of President was held according to the constitution with the optional ecclesiastical ballot. The first vote was the nominating ballot. Lorie Garcia the CWO representative explained it to everyone. The elections committee handed out the ballot paper. Voting members were instructed to vote. Ballots were collected for counting.

COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTS REPORT: Vice President Kathy Steinke referred everyone to the President's Report on pages 15 and 16 of the convention booklet. Vickie notes in her report that many things were accomplished during her time as president. At the last convention resolutions passed that changed cluster areas and she was thankful for so many women who said "yes" and continue to say "yes" to lead the organization forward in such a positive and ever changing way.As the report had been reviewed and there were no questions, it was noted the president had fulfilled her obligations and the chair was returned to the President.

#### REPORT OF THE OFFERINGS COMMITTEE:

Loretta Holmes, Chair , reported the offering received Friday evening was: \$1,481. \$740.50 will go to Churchwide Women's organization, \$370.25 to Safe Child of Central MO, and \$660.25 to Once We Were Refugees.

#### ELECTIONS REPORT:

For President election 31 were eligible to vote, 30 ballots were cast, and 23 votes were needed to elect. In descending order, the ballots cast were:Kara Jecha-7; Jill Duis-4; Gloria Sharp-4; Kathy Steinke-3; Susie Borgstrom-3; Marilyn Dial-2; Carolyn Bauer-2; Julie Holmberg-1; Karen McDonald-1; Becky Verslues-1; Ruth Ann Zinger-1; Mary Liby-1; there was no election. Kara Jecha, Jill Duis, Kathy Steinke, Marilyn Dial, Ruth Ann Zenger, and Mary Liby removed their names from the ballot.

Lorie Garcia, our Churchwide Representative led us in prayer.

The voting members were instructed to vote for the president in the second ballot. Ballots were collected for counting,

NOMINATING COMMITTEE; Rhonda Templing reported that there was 1 nomination for Treasurer: Janice Gerken. As there were no other nominations, the President instructed the voting members to cast their ballot and ballots were collected for counting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Janice Gerken, Treasurer, presented the financial reports on pages 18-21 of the convention booklet and the proposed budget on pages 22-23. She reminded everyone that the fiscal year for this organization ends on January 31, not December 31. Total revenue for the year was \$36,525.83. Total Expenses were \$42,178.91. These numbers include what units send in, the convention, and both Barbara Nelson memorial fund and our Education fund. The Board had approved the financial review be done by a finance review committee. Janice noted that the proposed budget was a 2 year plan and everything balances out in our budget. Janice moved the proposed budget to be adopted, It was adopted.

ELECTIONS REPORT: The results for the second ballot for the position of President were: 31 voters were eligible, 31 votes were valid, 21 votes were needed to elect. The results were: Gloria Sharp-22; Susie Borgstrom-8; Karen McDonald-1; and Carolyn Bauer-1. There was an election and Gloria Sharp was declared elected to the President's position.

REFERENCE AND COUNSEL COMMITTEE: Kara Jecha, chair, moved for the adoption of Resolution #1. Resolution #1, "for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion", reads as follows:  
WHEREAS: human diversity can be defined as differences in race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical and/or mental capabilities, and religious beliefs, with all these vast diversities existing among humans everywhere; and  
WHEREAS; Women of the ELCA has a commitment to a welcoming environment centered in Christ-like love for one another, where all are welcomed and to find hope and joy in every day; and  
WHEREAS: human diversity is not always sufficiently represented in either broad or specific ways among the Women of the ELCA in the resources or products used for creating teaching, and leading worship; and  
WHEREAS: Women of the ELCA recognize diversity, inclusion, and equity as essential, positive, and healthy; and  
WHEREAS: Women of the ELCA recognize value in the vastness of human diversity within and among our communities and society-at-large as essential and enriching to learning, working, and the human experience in general, and living the ideals of a free and democratic society;  
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Women of the ELCA is committed to fostering attitudes, behaviors, practices, and knowledge that promote and habituate diversity, inclusion, and equity in our gatherings; and Women of the ELCA's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equity will be reflected in the organization at all levels: in the culture, in behavior and action of individuals; in the actions and perspectives of the board and individual board members.

Resolution #1 was adopted

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Becky Verslues moved that Resolution #2 be adopted. Resolution #2, "Calling for Peace and Unity", reads as follows:

WHEREAS: the purpose of the Women of the ELCA calls us to "promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world"; and

WHEREAS: we, the Women of the ELCA 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 are called through scripture to love our neighbor and show mercy to all; therefore be it:

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA commit to strive for peace and unity in all that we do and say, and be it:

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, be a light in the midst of the hatred, dissension, conflict, and violence that engulfs our world; may our light be filled with compassion and kindness for all, and be it

RESOLVED: that we, through our bond of sisterhood in Christ Jesus, encourage and promote harmony, unity, and peace within our homes, churches, workplaces, schools, communities, and the country, and be it further

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, hold our local and national leaders in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts, that they may become more open-minded, reaching across the aisles to work together for the good of the nation and all its citizens.

Resolution #2 was adopted.

ELECTION COMMITTEE: Mick Friberg reported that in the election for Treasurer, the number of votes received for Janice Gerken was 31. A majority of votes were needed to elect.. Janice Gerken was declared elected to the position of Treasurer.

ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS: The nominations for board members were: Louise Ahrens, Pat Dunavan, and Rev. Dinah Dutta. As there were no other nominations, the voting members were instructed to vote. The ballots were gathered to be counted.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Kara Jecha moved that Resolution #3 be adopted. Resolution #3, "Calling for the Safety and Protection of our Children", reads as follows:

WHEREAS: the purpose statement of the Women of the ELCA calls us to "promote healing and wholeness in the church, society, and the world"; and

WHEREAS: we, the Women of the ELCA 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: as Jesus called the little children to "come unto me" so we, too, are called by scripture to care and protect God's gift of children; therefore be it

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, work to protect our children from abuse, exploitation and discrimination, and be it

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, work to bring attention to our children's safety, and well being, in order that they may grow and develop in a safe, nurturing, and non-threatening environment and be it

RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, recognize signs of abuse and neglect and respond appropriately to bring such awareness to those in authority, and further be it  
RESOLVED: that we, as Women of the ELCA, partner with agencies to assist in the prevention of all aspects of child abuse and, even further, to help families heal, and to restore childhood hope.

Resolution #3 was adopted.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Becky Verslues moved that Resolution #4 be adopted. Resolution #4, " for Recognition and Appreciation", reads as follows:

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; and

WHEREAS: all women of the Central States Women of the ELCA have benefited 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 #4 was adopted.

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Kara Jecha moved that Resolution #5 be adopted. The resolution, " Caring for the Refugees in our Communities", reads as follows:

WHEREAS: We are commanded by God to show kindness and hospitality to strangers among us: You shall not oppress . You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. (Exodus 23:9) and You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and the native, for I am the Lord your God. (Leviticus 24:22) and

WHEREAS: The Women of the ELCA proclaim our mission to commit ourselves to support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world; and

WHEREAS: immigrants and refugees seek to be protected, embraced, and empowered in welcoming communities,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Central States Women of the ELCA will work to share hospitality and support the refugees in our communities through:

- Study using resources from the ELCA, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), and other reliable sources;
- Supporting organizations such as Once We were Refugees and other groups which provide needed services to new immigrants to our communities;
- Welcoming refugee women into our congregational units, church activities, our homes ,and other community activities as they become familiar with their new life;

- Praying for those coming into our towns that they may be protected and embraced as members of the community of faith;
- Advocating when possible for services and hospitality to support new members of the community.

Resolution #5 was adopted

REFERENCE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEE: Becky Verslues moved that Resolution #6 be adopted. The resolution, "Acknowledgement and Appreciation", reads as follows:

WHEREAS: the 35th Annual Convention of the Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA held in Independence Mo. gave an opportunity for women to gather and acclaim that the Lord is Light; and

WHEREAS: the Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA Officers and Board Members prepared, worked, and carried out all official and sometimes unofficial duties for their church, society, and world; and

WHEREAS: the breakout session presenters, the worship leaders, the committee members, and all those who gave of their time and talents brought substance, integrity, and enjoyment to the event;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that we stand and let everyone who has participated in the success of the convention be recognized and applauded, and may God bless the remainder of our time together and safe travel as we return to our homes.

Resolution #6 was adopted.

ELECTION COMMITTEE: Ruth Ann Zenger reported on the election of the board members. The results are as follows: Louise Ahrens, the number of votes received, 31, a majority of votes was needed to elect. Pat Dunavan, the number of votes received was 31, a majority of votes was needed to elect. Rev. Dinah Dutta, the number of votes received was 31, a majority of votes was needed to elect. Louise Ahrens, Pat Dunavan, and Rev. Dinah Dutta were declared elected to the positions of board members

Mick Friberg moved that the ballots be destroyed. Kathy Steinke seconded. The motion was adopted.

President Vickie announced the conclusion of the business session. Prayer and the buffet lunch followed.

PRESENTATIONS/Breakout sessions included: Living in the Divine Light by Rev. Linda Daniels-Block; Be the Light by Heather Lynn and Christal Tycksen; Sustaining the Light by Lorie Garcia; and Sharing the Light Sing-a-Long by Jeannette VonHolten.

Pat Dunaven brought Bingo game supplies and small prizes were bought and contributed. Many played, callers volunteered, and many had fun.

Cluster Coordinator Gathering was held to hear cluster leaders express goals, participants to meet coordinators and synodical women's board and officers to support and encourage the cluster meetings happening in the next year.

Evening meal was served at 6:00pm. One of our Education Scholarship winners, Danni Kerns, was in attendance and was recognized. Alice Burnette, past president, and Mary Liby, newly retired Walking in the Word newsletter editor, were recognized and given a gift. All Cluster Coordinator Leaders present were introduced and given a gift. Included were :Louise Ahrens, Anna Prockish, Ruth Ann Zenger, Wilma Prifti, Mick Friberg, Becky Verslues, and Rhonda Templing

Kathy Steinke presented Vickie Donnell with a gift as a small token of appreciation for her dedication and service to CSS WELCA as president.

Janice Gerken introduced our inspirational speaker for the evening, Dan Meers, aka KC Wolf. He presented a powerful message of his career, his spiritual life, his charities, and drew us all into his transformation into the man of God that he is today. We were motivated and filled with hope.

Little Raffle tickets were drawn and handed out. Silent Auction items were announced and bid sheets were given to winners. Afterwards, items were paid for and picked up.

### **Sunday, June 25, 2023**

At 8:15, Vickie gave a summary of the convention to everyone before Sunday Morning Service began, she introduced the newly elected officers, the adoption of 6 resolutions, and reminded everyone to attend their respective cluster meeting in 2024. She thanked everyone for their part in making the 2023 convention a success. Vickie then declared the 2023 convention of the ELCA Women of the ELCA closed.

At 9:00 am, A beautiful worship was held. Reverend Dinah Dutta officiated Holy Communion, Pastor Jill Duis gave the message. Jeannette VonHolten accompanied on keyboard. Board members and Lorie Garcia, CWO, assisted with worship as well. 50% of Sunday worship offerings went to Central States Women of the ELCA and 50% to the Education Scholarship Fund.

Lorie Garcia installed the newly elected officers and board members: Gloria Sharp, President, Kathy Stienke, Vice President, Susie Borgstrom, Secretary, Janice Gerken, Treasurer, Board Members: Louise Ahrens, Pastor Jill Duis, Patricia Dunavan, Rev. Dinah Dutta, and Gaye Mizell.

Everyone was reminded to turn in the evaluation sheets before leaving.  
Prayers for a safe journey home.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Susie Borgstrom, Secretary



