

Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA

Board Meeting

April 20, 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 Brenda Rodger. Karen MacDonald was unable to attend due to no internet access. Louise thanked all members for their prayers following Boyd's health concerns.

Opening Prayer: Louise opened the meeting with devotions based on Acts 17:27b-28, followed by prayer.

Purpose Statement: The Women of the ELCA Purpose Statement was read in unison.

Approval of Agenda: Gaye made a motion to approve the agenda. Vickie seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The following minutes were reviewed with errors noted by the secretary: November 19, 2025; December 4, 2025; and December 14, 2025. Rhonda made a motion that the minutes be approved as corrected. Rita seconded the motion.

Treasurer's Report: Janice (previous treasurer) presented the financial report as of the end of the 2026 Fiscal Year. General Fund balance: \$26,787.47; Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund: \$12,078.78; and Lynn Starr Education Scholarship Fund: \$5,683.59. Vickie (present treasurer) presented the current status of balances: General Fund: \$29,015.22; Barbara Nelson Scholarship Fund: \$12,094.50; and Lynn Starr Scholarship Fund: \$5,683.59.

Announcements: Louise reviewed information gathered at the Council of Presidents Meeting (held February 21, 2026). As of the date of the meeting 783 ladies had registered for the 2026 Gathering: 305 are those who pre-registered and 206 are first-time attendees. Central States Synod has 40 ladies registered, placing our synod in the Top 5 of all synods registered! Louise requested that CSS Women submit their email addresses to her prior to the Gathering to allow for communication during our time at the Gathering.

The upcoming meetings were announced: Active Unit Assessment – April 21; Treasurer's Training – April 21; Synod Assembly – June 5. Louise is preparing a 500-word summary of the CSS Women of the ELCA past year's activities of the past and was invited to submit a 30-second video for the Assembly – Due on May 1.

Old Business:

Possible Invitation to the Papua New Guinea Ladies: Louise reached out to Pastor Gary Teske to discuss the possible travel costs and the funds currently available. Travel expense estimate is about \$5,000 per traveler (probably two ladies). There is \$6,000 designed by the Companion Synod Team. Pastor Teske indicated that fundraising would be needed for the remaining \$4,000. He further indicated that the ladies would be in our synod for two weeks. Pastor Teske would oversee the PNG ladies' travel

about the synod prior to attending the Central States Synod Women of the ELCA convention. The CSS Women of the ELCA would be responsible for the ladies during the convention: registration, lodging, and food.

It was reported that Pastor Jenny Jackson and Julie Carlson presented information regarding their travels at the Border Cluster meeting on Saturday, April 18. Pastor Janice Hawley will present at her experiences at the Eastern Cluster meeting on April 25.

Vickie made a motion to invite two ladies from Papua New Guinea to attend the CSS Women of the ELCA convention. Further to cover their expenses while at the convention and to assist Pastor Teske with the hospitality during the ladies' time in our Synod. Gaye seconded the motion. Motion carried. Rhonda pledged \$500 to the seed money for the ladies' travel expenses.

Update on Cluster Meetings: Gaye reported on the status of the cluster meetings being held throughout the synod:

Eastern Cluster – April 25, 2026 Pastor Janice Hawley – Guest Speaker
Osage Cluster – June 13, 2026 at Our Savior's Lutheran in Camdenton, MO
Border Cluster – April 18, 2026 Pastor Jenny Jackson – Guest Speaker
Theme "Vessels of Grace". 41 Attendees. Great Success!
Central Kansas – August 1, 2026 Hutchinson, KS Julie Carlson – Guest Speaker
To be held at Hutchinson, KS
Western Kansas – August 29, 2026 To be held at Hays, KS

2026 Gathering in Des Moines: Forty CSS ladies have registered for the Gathering. The requested donation of \$300 for the Servant Event Project was discussed. Following discussion, Rhonda made a motion that the CSS Women of the ELCA not make a donation to the Servant Event Project. Janice seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2026 Triennial Convention: The convention proceedings will be held by ZOOM. Louise reported that two voting members' meetings will be offered sometime in the month of June. Louise is the chairman of the Memorials Committee for the convention. Two of the memorials from the CSS Women of the ELCA convention were approved to be presented at the convention.

Churchwide News: The status of BeLoved (campus ambassadors) project was discussed. BeLoved provides an opportunity for ELCA college women to serve as mentors for young girls (starting at age 7) in their parishes within the synod. Following discussion, Vickie make to motion to contact Churchwide indicating that Central States Synod wishes to participate in the project. Rita seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Louise reported that the S.A.L.T. program has met the projected goal of \$250,000. These funds are to assist in resolving the debt incurred at previous Triennial Conventions and Gatherings.

Lynn Starr Education Scholarships: Rita reported on the status of Lynn Starr Education Scholarship applications received to date. Currently, she has two applications in-hand and two more are anticipated.

New Business:

Review of 2025 CSS Women of the ELCA Convention: After reviewing the 2025 evaluations, the overall consensus is that it was a good convention.

CSS Women on the ELCA Policy Document: The board discussed the timeline to make preparations for the 2027 Convention. It is vital to set a location and a date by June. Now that we have a tax exempt for Kansas, the board will consider possible sites in Kansas as it has been several years since a convention was held in Kansas. Sites discussed: Topeka, Lawrence, Pittsburg, or Fort Scott. Louise will check out the possibilities and report back to the board members.

Walking in the Word: The following article assignments were made for the upcoming edition. Date for submission to the editor to be determined.

- Invitation to ladies of Papua New Guinea - Louise
- 2026 Triennial – Convention and Gathering - Janice
- Cluster Meetings – Gaye Mizell
- Stewardship/S.A.L.T – Vickie Donnell
- Discipleship – Rhonda Templing

A Board Position remains open.

Next meeting will be held in mid-May. The board will review the Lynn Starr Scholarship Applications and make selections. Also, possible convention sites will be discussed.

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

The meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer led by Rhonda.

Respectfully submitted,
Janice Gerken, Secretary