

Northern Highlights

November 2024 -- Volume 27, Number 4

Northern Illinois Synod WELCA

PRESIDENT REPORT

As I said in my President's Report at our 2024 Convention in Kewanee, Illinois, according to scripture, the eye is not the whole of the body, nor is the hand or feet. The same can be said for the NISWO President and any officers or board member. We each need the other to make the whole. We need each the other to make a plan come together. Each of us does not spring up from the earth whole and complete. We have Venerated elders who come before us, teaching and modeling our faith and how we are to take action.

I've been known to say that going to Convention is like going to a family reunion. I stand by that statement. I had the greatest pleasure this last September of being NISWO Board President and, therefore, running the business meeting while looking out on the sea of my WELCA family. Actually, it did start with my family. My mother, Barbara, was the person at Bethany, my home congregation, who nominated me for Board President. Not too far from her, was my Congregational Unit President, Barbara McNeil, who originally nominated me a year earlier for the one-year term of NISWO Board President. Barb also encouraged me to attend a Triennial the first time to St. Louis, MO, and then eventually as a voting delegate.

Amongst the congregation were women I worked with for years in our Southwest Conference when I was able to serve as Conference Convener, Sharon Courtwright and Myrna Sandburg and current Presiding Conveyor, Katherine Jansen. There was Jan Butterfield and Amy Laurin my first NISWO Board presidents when I worked as the board secretary. Esther Prabacher, an encourager and leader during the NIS visit to the Arcot Synod in India when we signed a pledge of Companion Synods in January 2008. Fellow board members Judy, Margaret, Kim Choin, Ann Terry, RuthAnn Hartman and Sharon Waddle. This cloud of witnesses supported me before being board president was a twinkled in my eyes. I thank you for being my encouragers and my backbone then and now.

Grace & Peace,

Jeana

Jeana Fors, WELCA President

THANKSGIVING PRAYER - O God, knowing that every good and perfect gift comes from You, our Father, today we pause to give you thanks - For air and water, which give us life - for food, which gives us strength - for light, which enables us to see - for family and friends, who give us love - for teachers, who guide us - for churches, which teach us of You - for work, which is meaningful - for music and nature, which gives us joy - for powers of recovery, when we are ill - for rest and relaxation, when we are tired - for books, which stimulate our minds - and for people who warm our hearts. Finally, our Father we thank You for Your Son, Jesus - who gives us your joy, love, peace and hope. Without Him and without You, our lives would be empty and meaningless, if we existed at all. Amen.

TREASURER'S REPORT*Kim Choin*

	2024/25	2/1/24-11/09/24	2025/26
Beginning Balance	APPROVED	\$3,347.10	APPROVED
INCOME	BUDGET		BUDGET
Regular-Conference Offerings	\$10,000.00	\$8,505.75	\$11,000.00
Convention Offerings	\$2,000.00	\$2,614.00	\$2,000.00
Convention Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$2,170.00	\$2,000.00
Conv Guest Expenses Donation		\$206.50	
CW Thankoffering		\$380.75	
Conference Offering-100% to CW		\$1,073.00	
Board Expense Reimbursement		\$307.00	
Retreat Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$2,016.00	\$2,000.00
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC	\$500.00	\$195.00	\$500.00
Northern Highlights subscriptions	\$50.00	\$20.00	\$50.00
LSSI Story BookPrison Ministry	\$500.00	\$260.00	\$500.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$365.00	\$500.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$414.00	\$500.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00	\$535.00	\$500.00
Grace Place (Formerly-NIU Campus Ministry)	\$500.00	\$75.00	\$500.00
Dollars For Our Daughters	\$500.00	\$185.00	\$500.00
Triennial Voting Member	\$750.00		\$750.00
Triennial Offering	\$100.00		\$100.00
Triennial International Guest	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00
ELCA Federal Credit Union Dividend Interest		\$2.36	
Where Needed Most		\$150.00	
Total Income	\$21,650.00	\$19,474.36	\$22,650.00
DISBURSEMENTS			
Regular Offerings to CWO (78%)	\$7,800.00	\$6,637.90	\$8,580.00
SWO Convention Offerings to CWO (50%)	\$1,000.00	\$1,307.00	\$1,000.00
Conference Offering to CWO (100%)		\$1,073.00	
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC	\$400.00	\$500.00	\$400.00
Thankofferings Received from Conferences (100%-CW)		\$380.75	
2122 Growing Katie's Fund For the Next 100 Years		\$592.50	
Convention Expenses	\$2,000.00	\$1,665.14	\$2,000.00
Convention Scholarships	\$500.00		\$500.00
Retreat Expenses	\$1,500.00	\$1,823.08	\$1,500.00
Retreat Scholarships	\$100.00		\$100.00
Nominating Committee	\$100.00		\$100.00
Board Expenses	\$800.00	\$1,723.92	\$1,000.00
Financial Records	\$100.00		\$100.00
ELCA Insurance	\$100.00		\$100.00
Communications	\$100.00	\$81.96	\$120.00

Financial Records	\$100.00		\$100.00
ELCA Insurance	\$100.00		\$100.00
Communications	\$100.00	\$81.96	\$120.00
Northern Highlights	\$100.00		\$100.00
Triennial Scholarships	\$800.00		\$800.00
Triennial Offerings	\$100.00		\$100.00
Triennial Promoter	\$50.00		\$50.00
Triennial International Guest	\$1,250.00		\$1,250.00
Triennial NIS Voting Member	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00
Discipleship	\$250.00		\$250.00
Justice	\$250.00		\$250.00
Stewardship	\$250.00		\$250.00
LSSI Story Book-Prison Ministry	\$500.00		\$500.00
Global Refuge (20% of Convention Offering)		\$525.00	
AMMPARO(15% of Convention Offering)		\$400.00	
ELCA World Hunge(15% of Conention Offering)		\$400.00	
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00		\$500.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00		\$500.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00		\$500.00
\$4Daughters Scholaship-Trinity, Elizabeth/First, DeKalb		\$309.85	
Grace Place	\$500.00		\$500.00
LOMC Gift	\$100.00		\$100.00
NIS Assembly Expenses	\$400.00		\$400.00
NIS Assembly Offering	\$100.00		\$100.00
Total Disbursements	\$21,650.00	\$17,420.10	\$22,650.00
Total Income less Disbursements		\$5,401.36	
Balance in ELCA Federal Credit Union Checking Acct		\$3,374.00	
Balance in ELCA Federal Credit Union Savings Acct*		\$2,027.36	
Total Bank Balance		\$5,401.36	

	Disbursed Funds	Designated Funds Balance
Computer Fund*		\$1,000.00
LSSI Story Book-Prison Ministry		\$260.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy		\$365.00
Grace Place		\$75.00
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC	\$195.00	\$0.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept		\$414.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk		\$535.00
Dollars 4 Daughters-50% already sent to CW	\$309.85	\$342.65
Dollars 4 Daughters-50% to be sent to CW WELCA		\$0.00
Triennial Conference Scholarships*		\$250.00
Triennial Guest (2022 Budget-\$3,000.00)*		\$500.00
Triennial Voting Member (2022 Budget \$1,700.00)*		\$250.00
		\$3,991.65
Outstanding Due Churchwide:		\$0.00
Undesignated Funds Total:		\$1,409.71

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Sheila Keene, Secretary

The NISWO Board met Saturday, November 9, 2024, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Dixon, Illinois. Devotions were led by Nancy Califf.

Minutes of the regular board meeting held September 20, 2024, were approved.

The Treasurer's Report will be filed for audit.

Debra Quinn, Ann Terry and Joan Soltwisch spoke on Discipleship, Stewardship and Justice respectively. Their articles are included in this newsletter.

Convention feedback was quite favorable with many attendees indicating that they left knowing more about Women of the ELCA and AMMPARO than they knew when they arrived.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next Board meeting will be held Saturday, January 18, 2025, at 9:30 a.m. on Zoom.

STEWARDSHIP

Ann Terry, Stewardship Advocate

At our recent NIS WELCA convention, we heard from Dr. Jennifer Hockenbery, the new interim Executive Director for Women of the ELCA. She wonderfully portrayed Katie Luther and talked about a variety of issues and ideas for keeping Women of the ELCA a vibrant and long-lasting organization. I recently filled out a survey on the Churchwide WELCA website asking for input on what is important and working well with our organization and what is missing. I listed "financial" and decreasing numbers as two of the "issues" and the need to reach out to younger women. It is these younger women who will keep our organization going into the future. Katie's Fund 2122, which we contribute to with our Dollars for Daughters donations, was launched to help keep our organization going for future generations. I am pleased that we have awarded three grants and hopefully more

requests will be coming in. I attended an event at my daughter's church recently on a weeknight that was attended by women of all ages. The evening included food, fun, fellowship, prayer, and a light program. I applaud the two women responsible for putting this event together, and I am hoping to attend future events at Alleluia in Naperville. I pray that more churches out there, even those with no active WELCA unit, will brainstorm and produce new ways to use some of our Dollars for Daughters funds to reach out to younger women. Please consider making a personal donation to one of our NIS WELCA programs- Tanzanian Women's Ministry, India-Arcot Women's Desk, NIS Campus Ministry/Grace Place Ministry, Rocky Boy, Prison Ministry LSSI Story Book, Dollars for Daughters-or to our general offering fund. Thanks for your support, prayers, and generosity.



Left: Reverend Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop
Center: Ann Terry and Deb Quinn with our Tanzanian visitor and seminary student
Right: Jennifer Hockenberry as Katie Luther

DISCIPLESHIP

Luke 24: 30-32 — When He [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"

The Emmaus road story helps to illuminate Accompaniment, a theology of mission. We see that mission is a journey, and that this journey, taken with many companions, shows us the unexpected and sometimes unrecognized Christ who walks with us. In this journey, as we break bread together, we move toward Christ's mission of reconciliation between us and God, between us and one another. (Taken from the ELCA Accompaniment Manual)

Bishop Stacie Fidlar of the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA entrusted a small committee with the task to coordinate and promote visits from our Tanzanian friends during 2024. We were given the direction to reach as many congregations as possible and share the joys of walking in accompaniment with our partners in the North Central Diocese of Tanzania and the Arcot Lutheran Church in India. It was our hope that these opportunities to hear from our guests would reinvigorate current companion church relations and spark interest in making new connections.

All the Tanzanian presenters talked about the benefits of walking in companionship with one another. They shared personal experiences of the number of blessings received by all involved. Meals were shared, gifts were given and received, and prayers were lifted! Churches that had a companion parish were inspired to rejuvenate their relationship. Other churches were so excited they said, "yes, sign me up for a companion church!"

Daudi & Kellen Msseemmaa along with their two children, Shaddai & Solomon were back in the states to



Msseemmaa Family

meet with congregants, attend conferences, and spend time with family. Daudi preached at Shepherd in the Prairie (Huntley), Trinity (Moline), and St. John's (Peru). Daudi spoke at Salem

(Sycamore) about his role as an ELCA Representative from East Africa and the purpose of companion relationships. Kellen promoted her Empowered Girls and Enlightened Boys programs.

Mary E. Laiser and Elizabeth Megiroo were here from Kuitu Parish in Tanzania visiting their companion church at Bethany, Crystal Lake. There were other members that wanted to visit but could not obtain visas. Mary E. and Elizabeth met with different women's groups, churches, attended the Northern Illinois Synod WELCA Convention in Kewanee, and participated in a luncheon with the Global Mission



Sharon Wadle-First, Dekalb, Mary E. Laiser, and Elizabeth Megiroo

Committee. They also had time to visit old friends, see sights, and visit with Bishop Stacie Fidlar.

Pastor Seth worked tirelessly to spread the benefits of walking in accompaniment with a companion church. He preached at First (DeKalb), Resurrection (Channahon), First (Geneseo), and Immanuel (Earlville). He met with Bishop Stacie Fidlar and attended the Northern Illinois Synod Council. He spoke to the youth at Bethany, Crystal Lake along with Elizabeth and Mary E. Pastor Seth talked to congregants at Our Savior in Rockford, attended the Northern Illinois Synod WELCA Convention in Kewanee, and participated in the Global Mission Committee meeting.



VP Ruth Ann Hartman, Pastor Seth Sululu

JUSTICE

Joan Soltwisch, Justice Advocate

I recently visited my daughter and her family at their home in Higuillar, Dorado, Puerto Rico, outside of San Juan, the capital. The majority of the people where they live are Taino, (indigenous Caribbean), Black, and Spanish. Their subdivision was built around the international school, Tasis, where my grandchildren now attend. They live in a bubble, as the neighborhood is a gated community and the people who live there are well off. There are few white people and few that speak only English. Puerto Rico does not have a defined middle class, just upper and lower. I went out of the "bubble" and attended San Pedro Evangelical Lutheran Church, Toa Baja, on All Saints Sunday. I had the feeling of being out of my comfort zone, being that I did not understand a word of their Spanish service, and the neighborhood around the church seemed sketchy to me. There were about 10 people attending, mostly Women. I quickly translated the Lessons and Gospel readings, from Spanish to English on Goggle Translate, but I was dead in the water when the woman pastor gave her sermon. I knew that they should not accommodate just for me, and I had the stark realization that this is what immigrants, some of them my close friends, experience in our country, even though I was embraced by the very friendly pastor and its members. I could drive a short distance back to the bubble, where my family now stayed, but it left an impression on me of feeling unsafe and lonely. What if the members of the congregation did not embrace me? How would I have felt then?

My grandfather was a German WW1 officer in 1923. In January of that year, my mother was born. Hitler's Beer Hall Putsch, in Munich, took place in the fall of year. The Putsch brought Hitler to the attention of the German nation for the first time and generated front page headlines in newspapers around the world.

My grandfather witnessed the event and testified, as a German officer, against the failed coup and then found himself on a hit list. He immigrated late in 1923, with Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa listed as his sponsor on his passport and the ship manifest that brought him to this country. He must have been scared out of his mind to leave, feeling lonely, unsafe, and overwhelmed, especially with my grandma and the four other children back in the country that he loved. He came to love this country as we do, but he taught his children and grandchildren to be very afraid of the rise of Fascism and Authoritarianism again.

After the Fall Convention, we can now reflect on our keynote speaker's focus on Immigration, as well as our guests from Tanzania. How thrilling it was to be among people that we have developed relationships with, who can talk to us about their cultures from the other side of the world! We love to experience the humanity and love of children of God together. As Women of the ELCA, we, too, can choose civility when we find ourselves in uncomfortable conversations with friends and relatives divided on the outcome of the recent election results; arguing over whether there should be a separation of church and state. We can ground ourselves in God's love first and together work to end Christian Nationalism, which puts God in a small box, teaches racism, and has destroyed countless lives over many years. This form of Christian superiority has torn families apart and has diminished the humanity of us all. Time after time its, conspiracy message turns out to be unsustainable because God's love and way in our world will not tolerate this. I am grateful and proud that we Women continue to step out of our comfort zone to learn and protect immigrants of other cultures, religious freedoms, and the least among us. We can continue to do this.



A lovely group of women at Convention last month.

NORTH CONFERENCE

Bethlehem, Rockford An annual late summer project was collecting school supplies to support Froberg Elementary, our neighbor across the street from the church. We filled 80 hometown bags which were delivered to Froberg. In November, we will be adorning the Mitten Tree with winter items of mittens, scarves and stocking caps, along with Christmas toys in support of the local LSSI. Our December activity includes a Christmas Bake Sale, in addition to gifting our homebound members with homemade bread and soup. We continue to support The Emmanuel Food Pantry with monetary and non-perishable donations.

Our Savior's, Rockford This summer the women of Our Savior's enjoyed a delicious luncheon at the home of one of our members and a garden walk in her neighborhood. Also, our whole church collected school supplies, some of which

Carolyn Ciaccio, North Representative

went to our Do-Day Ladies to put into school bags for LWR. On November 16, we enjoyed an afternoon at Inscope Collective, with time spent shopping, mingling and learning. There was a short presentation on the history of the shop which promotes women artists, artisans and entrepreneurs.

First Lutheran & Shepherd of the Valley, Rockford together with St. Bernadette Catholic, we hosted a benefit Ecumenical Brunch to help support NAMI Northern Illinois, an organization of families, friends and individuals whose lives have been affected by mental illness. Brunch was provided by Countryside Meats and a silent auction of baskets filled with lots of useful and lovely items was held. Proceeds from the sale of tickets along with the proceeds from the silent action we given to NAMI.

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

Shepherd of the Prairie, Huntley In November, we hosted a Friendsgiving Dinner Church. It's a Thanksgiving dinner for everyone that wants to join us. This was created to fill a need that was seen for those who are alone for the holidays and long for a holiday meal with friends and family. The weekend of September 21 & 22, our quilters had 107 quilts displayed in our sanctuary to be blessed during worship before being sent out to Lutheran World Relief.



First, DeKalb was blessed in interaction with the Tanzanian North Central Diocese visitors in September: Pastor Doctor Seth Ole Sululu, Elizabeth Megiuro, and Mary

E. Laiser. Pastor Seth and Mary E. are both of the Maasai tribe, raised in Ketumbeine Parish, which is First Lutheran's longtime companion. Mary E. Laiser is retired from leading the ministry of the Women and Children in the NCD for many years. Elizabeth also worked with Mary E. In that ministry for many years and then became the Project Coordinator for the Diocese office until her retirement two years ago. The women stayed with Mike and Sharon Wadle for four nights and Pr. Seth stayed with Wadles for three weeks while he worked with invigorating the NCD/NIS Church Companionships. The women stayed with Bethany Lutheran of Crystal Lake congregants while finally fulfilling their partnership and visitation plan of five years. They were the only 2 of 8 who were able to get a visa to come.



Deb Quinn, Northeast Representative

While visiting in DeKalb/Sycamore on Tuesday, September 10, the women attended the LAF (Laughter and Fun) luncheon with First Lutheran women at a Chinese Restaurant, enjoying conversation and laughter. On Wednesday the 11th, they observed First Lutheran's R-Mission LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF quilt and kit ministry followed by a program by Pastor Tim Krick, LWR Representative, who visited First Lutheran to thank the congregation for supporting the work of LWR. Later in the afternoon, Mary E. and Elizabeth put on *God's Work, Our Hands* t-shirts and filled 32 more LWR backpacks with school supplies and boxed them. On Sunday, when the congregation had filled backpacks, they were short of 32 items to complete the project of filling 652. Now that the items were purchased the women were able to add THEIR hands to God's Work.



September 12, First Lutheran's Prelude Bible study was shared with our TZ sisters, Mary E. Laiser and Elizabeth Megiuro. The study was followed by a tour of First Lutheran



and explanation of multiple ministries by Pastor Megan Vaughn. Mary and Elizabeth made Tanzanian chai tea to accompany our lunch gathering. All 50 people tried and loved the chai! Some even went back for seconds.

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

Christine Beyer, Northwest Representative

Good Shepherd, Lena: Over 650 quilts were made by our Piece Corp Quilters. Most were donated to Lutheran World Relief. Other quilts have gone to area veterans, the Salvation Army, Lutherdale, SSM Health Emergency Department and to displaced families. Several have been purchased and two were given out through a drawing during our local

Fall Festival. Hannah Circle has recently begun meeting monthly again with a devotional and fellowship. Invitations will be sent to neighboring ELCA churches. If they do not have an active unit or if they want to be in additional community with Women of the ELCA, they are welcome to join us.

SOUTH CONFERENCE

Sherry Morris, South Representative

Happy Autumn to all you lovely Lutheran women! I hope you are enjoying the glorious colors and brisk fall weather. I am still a little 'off' from the time change, but I sort of enjoy the early darkness. I feel safe and cozy snuggled in as we prepare for the cold winter days and nights to come. I love living in Illinois where the seasons are so defined. I see God's hand in every aspect of the changes and it reminds me to thank Him for everything.

This will be my last article for the *Northern Highlights* newsletter. I will miss everything about these years on the NIS-WO Board. Getting to know all the wonderful women and different congregations has been a true blessing! My replacement is Sandie Weckerly. I met her at the Convention in September and know she will be a great addition to the Board. She will bring fresh thoughts and ideas to the South Conference and I am excited to welcome her! I hope you will make a point of introducing yourself to her at the 2025 Spring Retreat or Convention in September. I am still hoping that some of you will resume your WELCA units in the

near future. We 'bold' women have so much to offer the world and WELCA is a great way to join together and make a difference. *Gather* magazine offers great bible studies and articles to use and our synod offers book studies, our retreat and convention as a way to stay connected to other Lutheran women. And, our newsletter has ideas from other conferences in our synod and information to keep everyone informed. Get creative and see if you can help your congregation to take advantage of the ways to keep your women involved in the church and the world.

I am wishing all of you a joyous Thanksgiving and a meaningful Advent and Christmas season. God is so faithful and patient with us as we try to "get things right"... I hope you feel His love and peace in the coming days. Blessings to you all!

~ Sherry

Warm greetings during this beautiful season of Fall. My name is Sandie Weckerly, and I am the new representative for the South region. I look forward to learning more about the churches and women that live in that area. As for myself, I live in the Northeast region and am a member of First Lutheran of Dekalb. There, I have previously been involved in Sunday School and am currently involved in the Social Ministry Team and the Kitchenware Ministry. I became involved with WELCA through Discipleship, our pen pal program, attending retreats and conventions. I was moved by the warmth, boldness and Holy Spirit that stirred in the women I met. The work that is being done in WELCA uplifts and encourages us all. As the season is changing now, so are the seasons in our churches and in our own lives. Once a busy school teacher, I am now retired, with three grown

children and four beautiful grandchildren. While my husband continues to work, I find I have time to help other women find the joy we have here in WELCA. Soon, another season will be upon us, the holidays will be here. There will be travel to see family and friends. As we go forward, let us enjoy the season we are in, whether the colors of fall or the cold stillness of a snowy night. The busy days of working or the involvement of volunteering. But in whatever we do keeping in mind... Psalm 95:2 "Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!"

~ Sandie

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SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

Sandy Swanson, Southwest Representative

Faith, Wataga hosted the Southwest Fall Assembly on Saturday, September 28, 2024. The morning started out with a breakfast of Egg Casseroles, fruit cup, baked goods, coffee and juice. Each lady received a mug rug made by Dorene Erickson with verse, paraphrased and attached from Romans 8:28, *"So we are convinced that every detail of our lives is continually, **WOVEN** together for good."*

Dianne Hiatt, President, welcomed the ladies and gave an opening prayer. Tim Holmes played the gathering hymn and Kathie Lincoln gave devotions. Informative programs were given by The ROWVA Food Pantry and Pam Bates and Paula Patty, area sisters, who wrote the book "The Most AMAZING HARVEST," published by Morgan James. It is the continued love story of how a town came together for one of their own, who battled cancer. It is the God-inspired humble life story of the farmer behind that day. Proceeds from the sale of this book is given to the Heller Center for Kids with Cancer at the OSF Children's Hospital of Illinois.

Following the program, a short business meeting was held and new officers were installed by Jeana Fors, NIS WELCA President. New officers elected were Katherine Janssen, Convenor; Mary Shull, Secretary; JoAnne Nelson, Treasurer; and, Sandy Swanson, Southwest Conference Representative. Ladies were asked to bring in-kind items for the ROWVA Food Pantry. Offering collected will be divided among the NIS Synod Women, Food Pantry and the Keller Kids Cancer program.

She is strong.
Isaiah 40:31

She is valiant.
2 Samuel 13:28

She is fearless.
Proverbs 31:25

She is enough.
Psalm 46:5

Northern Highlights

c/o Kell Impens, Editor
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Women
of the
**EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
IN AMERICA**

~ 2024 WELCA Convention Report ~

The Convention is hosted every year by one of the conferences within the Synod, and this year it was the Southwest Conference's turn to host. We look for a church that is fairly large and handicap accessible and, graciously, Zion Lutheran Church in Kewanee, offered their facility.

The Convention is held every year to do the business of the NIS Women, which all women of the ELCA are members. The Convention was attended by 72 women who voted on and approved the new budget of \$22,650 for 2025/26 year and elected new officers to the Board. The Board is made up of President, VP, Secretary, Treasure, and a representative from each of the conferences in the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA.

Rev. Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop, and Pastor Mara lead morning worship. Thank you to Lynette Lempke for playing the music for the worship. Anna Jetson, our Churchwide Rep, lead devotions and Jennifer Hockenbery, Interim Executive Director, gave the closing prayer and both brought greetings from the Churchwide board. Guest speakers for the day were Rev. Dr. Ruben Duran and Christine Moolo, Members of the ELCA **AMMPARO** Executive Committee. This committee helps legal migrants get settled into communities.

Morning coffee and treats were furnished by Zion Faith Circle and Southwest Conference churches.