

Northern Highlights

May/June 2024 -- Volume 27, Number 2

Northern Illinois Synod WELCA

PRESIDENT REPORT

On Mothers' Day, I wrote in my sermon notes, WWJP not WWJD. What would Jesus Pray. We act like we must micromanage every task so God will know what's important. I'm certain the only time Jesus was even close to that was when He was praying aloud so his followers would understand what was happening. We pray aloud at multiple points during worship, including prayers of intercession, where we remember our members and friends who are suffering, our companion synods and churches, our Synod Council and NISWO board members, those celebrating special events, and ask blessings for Bishop Fidler and Bishop Eaton.

In May, we celebrated Pentecost and Holy Trinity, both days where the Holy Spirit has the spotlight. As per Romans 8:26 NLT, the Holy Spirit prays for us

with groanings that cannot be expressed in words. The Paraclete comes to us to cure our unbelief or half-belief and to intercede or advocate or help us. Our prayers are heard even when we cannot fully express our thoughts.

This is something in which we can rejoice. The prayers we lift for our families, church, and world are understood before they are fully formed upon our lips. Our lists of those in need and those we love don't have to feel like a to-do list. The Spirit is always with us and ready to intercede.

Grace & Peace,

Jeana

Jeana Fors, WELCA President

There are several positions up for re-election, along with one that was not filled at the last convention.

The following executive leader positions are open for a two-year term -
President and Secretary.

The following board positions are open for a two-year term -
Northwest, East, North, South.

The following board position is available for a one-year term -
Central.

If you attend a church in any of these regions, please prayerfully consider being a part of the great work of NIS WELCA. If you are interested, please contact Deb Quinn at debraquinn1@comcast.net or 630.334.0330, or complete the nomination form included in this newsletter.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kim Choin

	2023/24	2/1/23-1/31/24	2024/25	2/1/24-5/16/24
Beginning Balance	BUDGET	\$8,503.39	BUDGET	\$3,347.10
INCOME				
Regular-Conference Offerings	\$9,000.00	\$12,410.28	\$10,000.00	\$2,508.20
Convention Offerings	\$1,500.00	\$2,361.00	\$2,000.00	
Convention Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$1,600.00	\$2,000.00	
CW Thankoffering		\$368.76		\$110.75
Conference Offering-100% to CW		\$431.50		\$575.50
Board Expense Reimbursement		\$330.60		
Katies Fund Grant		\$1,000.00		
Retreat Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$2,400.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,016.00
Retreat Offering-50% to CW/50% to Missions at Year	\$800.00	\$563.00		
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC			\$500.00	\$195.00
Northern Highlights subscriptions	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$50.00	\$10.00
LSSI Story BookPrison Ministry	\$500.00	\$395.00	\$500.00	\$220.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$645.00	\$500.00	\$365.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$3,995.62	\$500.00	\$240.00
TG23 Servant Events & Just Love Labs		\$100.00		
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00	\$570.00	\$500.00	\$135.00
Grace Place (Formerly-NIU Campus Ministry)	\$500.00	\$95.00	\$500.00	\$75.00
Dollars For Our Daughters	\$500.00	\$680.00	\$500.00	\$135.00
Triennial Voting Member			\$750.00	
Triennial Offering	\$100.00		\$100.00	
Triennial International Guest	\$1,000.00		\$1,250.00	
ELCA Federal Credit Union Dividend Interest				\$0.23
Where Needed Most		\$50.00		\$100.00
Total Income	\$19,450.00	\$28,055.76	\$21,650.00	\$6,685.68

DISBURSEMENTS	2023/24	2/1/23-1/31/24	2024/25	2/1/24-5/16/24
	BUDGET		BUDGET	
Regular Offerings to CWO	\$7,020.00	\$9,991.82	\$7,800.00	
SWO Convention Offerings to CWO (50%)	\$500.00	\$1,180.50	\$1,000.00	
Conference Offering to CWO (100%)		\$431.50		
2023 Retreat Offering to CWO (50%)	\$400.00	\$281.50	\$400.00	
Thankofferings Received from Conferences (100%-CW)		\$369.00		
2122 Growing Katie's Fund For the Next 100 Years		\$760.00		
Stop Payment Fee on Ck4012		\$32.00		
Convention Expenses	\$1,750.00	\$1,355.39	\$2,000.00	
Convention Scholarships	\$500.00		\$500.00	
Retreat Expenses	\$1,500.00	\$1,866.46	\$1,500.00	\$1,610.39
Retreat Scholarships	\$100.00		\$100.00	
Nominating Committee	\$100.00		\$100.00	
Board Expenses	\$700.00	\$1,426.53	\$800.00	
Financial Records	\$100.00		\$100.00	
ELCA Insurance	\$100.00		\$100.00	
Communications	\$100.00	\$122.95	\$100.00	
Northern Highlights	\$180.00		\$100.00	
TG23 Servant Events & Just Love Labs		\$300.00		
Triennial Scholarships	\$800.00	\$1,200.00	\$800.00	

Triennial Offerings	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	
Triennial Promoter	\$50.00	\$32.50	\$50.00	
Triennial International Guest	\$1,000.00	\$3,837.90	\$1,250.00	
Triennial NIS Voting Member	\$500.00	\$1,750.00	\$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	\$500.00	
LSSI Rehabilitation (20% of Convention Offering)		\$475.00		
CASA-DeKalb County(15% of Convention Offering)		\$355.00		
CASA-LaSalle County(15% of Convention Offering)		\$355.00		
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$650.00	\$500.00	
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$4,039.00	\$500.00	
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	\$500.00	
Dollars For Our Daughters Scholarship-Trinity, Mt Morris		\$200.00		
Dollars For Our Daughters Scholarship-Trinity, Elizabeth				\$200.00
Grace Place	\$500.00	\$500.00	\$500.00	
LOMC Gift	\$100.00	\$100.00	\$100.00	
WELCA Presidents' Meeting Offering	\$100.00			
NIS Assembly Expenses	\$400.00		\$400.00	
NIS Assembly Offering	\$100.00		\$100.00	
Total Disbursements	\$19,450.00	\$33,212.05	\$21,650.00	\$1,810.39
Total Income less Disbursements		\$3,347.10		\$8,222.39
Balnce in ELCA Federal Credit Union Checking Acct		\$1,322.10		\$6,197.16
Balnce in ELCA Federal Credit Union Savings Acct*		\$2,025.00		\$2,025.23
Total Bank Balance		\$3,347.10		\$8,222.39
	Designated	Funds	Disbursed	Designated
	Funds 1/31/24	Received	Funds	Funds Balance
Computer Fund*	\$1,000.00			\$1,000.00
LSSI Story Book-Prison Ministry		\$220.00		\$220.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy		\$365.00		\$365.00
Grace Place		\$75.00		\$75.00
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC		\$195.00		\$195.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept		\$240.00		\$240.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk		\$135.00		\$135.00
Dollars 4 Daughters-50% already sent to CW	\$560.00		\$200.00	\$360.00
Dollars 4 Daughters-50% to be sent to CW WELCA	\$0.00	\$135.00		\$135.00
Triennial Conference Scholarships*	\$250.00			\$250.00
Triennial Guest (2022 Budget-\$3,000.00)*	\$500.00			\$500.00
Triennial Voting Member (2022 Budget \$1,700.00)*	\$250.00			\$250.00
	<u>\$2,560.00</u>			<u>\$3,725.00</u>
Outstanding Due Churchwide:	<u>(\$0.00)</u>			<u>\$2,635.15</u>
Undesignated Funds Total:	\$787.10			\$1,862.24

Lost & Found:

A scarf was left at LOMC after the Retreat. Please call or text Sheila Keene at 815-297-3044 to describe it and claim it, if it's yours.

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Sheila Keene, Secretary

The NISWO Board met Saturday, May 18, 2024, at St. Paul Lutheran, Dixon. Devotions were led by Ann Terry.

Minutes of the regular board meeting held January 21, 2024, were approved.

Kim Choin explained the treasurer's report which can be found in this newsletter.

Debra Quinn, Ann Terry and Joan Soltwisch spoke on discipleship, stewardship and justice respectively. Their articles are included in this newsletter.

The Spring Retreat at LOMC received mostly positive feedback. There was discussion that there were morning snacks rather than breakfast food. Audry at LOMC was very helpful. The 2025 date was discussed and will be announced in the future after it is confirmed.

Pastor Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop, spoke of the Parament Project and other synod happenings.

Connie Seavey continues to act as a liaison for the Central Conference until a Board representative is appointed.

The Dollars for Daughters grant recipients were announced at the Spring Retreat. More information is found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Nominating Committee is preparing for the 2024 NIS WELCA Convention.

Debra Quinn provided handouts and training for board members.

The board voted to give an honorarium to Katie's Fund as recognition of Linda Post Bushkofsky's service.

Plans are moving along for the 35th Annual Convention which will be held September 21, 2024, at Zion Lutheran, Kewanee in the Southwest Conference.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next board meeting will be held via Zoom on Saturday, August 10, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

DISCIPLESHIP

Debra Quinn, Discipleship Advocate

This is my fourth year as Discipleship Chair and I am planning to expand on the original project idea. We will continue with our pen pal/prayer partner model, adding women from India to that project. Based on Bishop Stacie's charge of promoting companion churches, we will also extend other opportunities for women to be involved.

Our new focus for Discipleship will be a three-part focus:

- Prayer Partners with women in Tanzania and India.
 - Promote companion churches - either by increasing the number of churches with a companion church in Tanzania or India; or strengthening the bond with churches that already have a companion church.
 - Book Studies & Guest Speakers - to lead groups of women in online book studies or provide opportunities to hear speakers to expand our spiritual growth and discipleship.
- My role as Discipleship Chair blends nicely with the work being done on the Synod's Global Missions Committee that I have been appointed to. This fall, there will be four opportunities of sharing with our Tanzanian partners. Three of those activities will bring representatives here from Tanzania. Look for future advertising about when and where these guests will be speaking!
 - Kiutu Parish visiting Bethany in Crystal Lake in August/September
 - Msseemmaa family visiting the Midwest in August
 - Pastor Seth Sululu visiting Northern Illinois in September
 - Grace Loves Park church visiting their companion church in Tanzania for a building dedication

STEWARDSHIP

Honoring Our Faith Mothers

When we celebrated Mother's Day recently, I thought about the faith connection I had with my mother and my grandmother. I also was thinking about the comments a grandmother on our church council made about her daughter's decision to attend the church where her grandmother still attends and bring her young children to Sunday School. She considered going to other churches, but the connection she had with her grandmother made her choose to bring her children to the church that is dear to their great grandmother.

At our recent NISWO Retreat, we recognized two recipients of our Dollars for Daughters grants. I am so impressed with these two young women, Melissa Rojas and Brooke Venhuizen. Melissa helps organize a camp for 4th-6th grade girls at Trinity, Mount Morris, called Strong Girls 2 Women. I am planning on at-

Ann Terry, Stewardship Advocate

tending the camp for one day this summer and bring my daughter and granddaughter, who is going into 5th grade. Brooke talked about a connection she had with her great grandmother, and her efforts at involving young people in her Scenic Hills Parish in the Elizabeth area. These young women definitely see the importance of getting our young women involved at an early age, and connecting with young adults who have a love and passion for the Church. As we head into summer, please consider the possibility of applying for a Dollars for Daughters grant to use for an activity/program geared toward younger women. These are the future of our church and our women's organization, and we can keep the connections going if we keep them involved in our churches. God bless you as you enjoy the summer months and ponder ways to keep our WELCA organization surviving and thriving!

EAST CONFERENCE

We ladies are happy and grateful for Pastor Julie Monard's friendship. Her presence is so welcome at our board meetings. I recently attended Pastor Julie's breakout session at CRE, where she explained the quilt banner that is being sewn by our quilting groups, and how it will connect us with the NISynod when it is displayed at Synod Assembly later this year. Last month, I met with the women from the East Conference at Faith Joliet, with Pastor Jana Hobsen. Women quilters from Peace, New Lenox, and Bethlehem Joliet were also there. Many other quilt groups in our conference were busy with their own quilt groups on the same day, but we got the job done together. This day felt special to me, as it brought back memories of women of the East Conference being together in the past. I introduced myself as your East Conference Representative and Justice Chair and shared some copies of our latest newsletter and

Joan Soltwisch, East Representative

Gather magazines, too. Many of the women had never heard of the *Gather* study. Our newsletter received a similar response.

I recently sent emails to the ladies that had come out to our retreats and conventions with me in days past and was sad to hear that they had passed away, as well as the friends that I had carpooled with from our local churches. It is more important than ever that we change from, "How can we get new members?" but now realize WE are The Women of the ELCA?" We model and present quiet reminders that we are in community together, reminding each other of the gifts we can bring as Lay women in the church, along with our Pastors. We have a lot to offer and shout out about!! We Are Bold Women!! Thank you, Pastor Julie, for clearly showing us a way to do this!!

Sometimes you forget that *You are Amazing* so this is your reminder!

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

Deb Quinn, Northeast Representative

Light of Christ, Algonquin wrapped up the year with Girl's Night In: Tacos and Testimonies. Women are needed for the LOC Softball, Women Needed; it's not too late to join!

Visit churchcenter.com/events for more information about Vacation Bible School, LOC Theater Camp, Adult Mission Trip (ASP), Preschool Registration for fall term, tutoring, and kids ministries for all ages.

Grace, Woodstock Grace Sewing Circle meets in Grace Center on Tuesdays. All are welcome. Many tasks are available, especially for those who do not sew. If you cannot make it on Tuesdays, they have projects you can complete at home.

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

Christine Beyer, Northwest Representative

Scenic Hill Parish St. John's and Trinity Our two country churches are aptly named. This is a beautiful time of year -- birds are chirping, flowers are blooming, and farmers are returning to the fields. Our strongest bond is the fellowship we share with each other. On the last Sunday of each month, the two churches meet together to worship, listen to No Worries Band, eat a potluck meal

and most importantly, we share our concerns, our news and our fellowship. During the week, we scatter to work, to visit nursing homes, to quilt, to do Bible Study and keep our buildings and cemetery in order, but on Sundays we gather together to receive the blessing of our Lord and each other. Peace be with you.

SOUTH CONFERENCE

Sherry Morris, South Representative

Hello Fellow Lutheran Women!

Happy Spring! I hope you are able to enjoy this gorgeous weather! I've been planting flowers in pots and marveling at God's gift of beauty and renewal. He sure is good to us!

If the women in your congregation have a ministry or projects they do, please let me know. I would love to share your ideas with other women.

When I opened the WELCA site on Facebook today, this quote was at the top:

"We can lift each other up; we can challenge and encourage one another as we confront our fears and live out our lives in peace and love." The Rev. Emily Carson, *"Fear: Opportunity or Challenge?"* I love this quote... it reminded me of our Retreat at LOMC last month. There were approximately eighty women attending. Our speaker, Pastor Jennifer Ohman-Rodriguez, talked about chaos in our lives and some ways to help us cope. As a group of women listening and sometimes sharing, we really were holding each other up, encouraging and comforting each other, sharing feelings and feeling less alone. And... we got

to sing!! I love singing with a group of Lutheran women who sing from their hearts. The Retreat is always joyful and uplifting. I wish more women could attend and feel the power of the Holy Spirit with us. You don't have to be in a WELCA unit to attend, just send in registration and come.

This is my last year as South Conference Representative. I have finished two terms and regretfully, that is all one person is allowed. The election will be at our September Convention, so I am hoping one of you in the South Conference will prayerfully consider giving the position a try. The Lord gave me a big nudge to take this venture, and as always, He was right. I have loved my time on this board, as well as the women I have met and worked with. I have learned so much and experienced so many wonderful things in my time as a conference representative. There are only a few meetings a year and sometimes they are on Zoom. The work is not difficult and is so rewarding. I would be happy to talk to anyone considering the position and giving any help I can. My relationship with the Lord has been strengthened and I love being a BOLD woman for Him! Share your boldness, too!

2024 NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNODICAL BOARD MEMBERS

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SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

Sandy Swanson,
Southwest Representative

Southwest Conference held their Spring Assembly on April 20, at Bethany Lutheran Church in Woodhull. Breakfast casseroles and sweets were served, along with refreshments. 30 plus ladies from 6 churches were in attendance. Jeana Fors, introduced the program for the morning. Diane Crock from Hope House in Galesburg and Casey Greig with Safe Harbor, also in Galesburg, each spoke on what their businesses do for the people of Knox County. An offering was taken and \$551 was divided in half and given to our program speakers and NIS Women Organization. A short business meeting was conducted by Kathy Jenssen, Convenor. Mary Shull was elected to serve as secretary for the rest of 2024 and 2025. Kathy Jenssen and JoAnn Nelson were elected for another term. Kathy announced the area World Relief collections from the Southwest conference consisted of 583 quilts, 292 personal care kits, 386 school kits, 10 baby layettes, 23 fabric kits and \$1,068 in donations!

It is the Southwest's turn to host the NIS Women Convention, and it was announced that the Convention will be held September 21, 2024, at Zion Lutheran Church in Kewanee. More details will follow at a later date. I have sent letters to all the churches in the Southwest Conference introducing myself.

I would like to have contact information from each church, whether you have a WELCA unit or not. All women of the Lutheran Church are members of WELCA! Please contact me at sandykayswanson@yahoo.com. I look forward to hearing from you!

WEST CONFERENCE

Cindy Wildermuth
West Representative

Trinity, Moline hosted the Church Women United's May Friendship Day on Friday, May 3. There are four Circles that meet during the year, and they invite any women of Trinity to join them.

St. John's, Rock Island hosted the 2024 Spring Assembly in April. The program presented therapy dogs and the important role they can play in our lives.

St. James, Rock Island was excited to host a Palestinian program for CWU Rock Island-Milan. They use the Bible Study from *Gather Magazine* at their monthly gatherings.

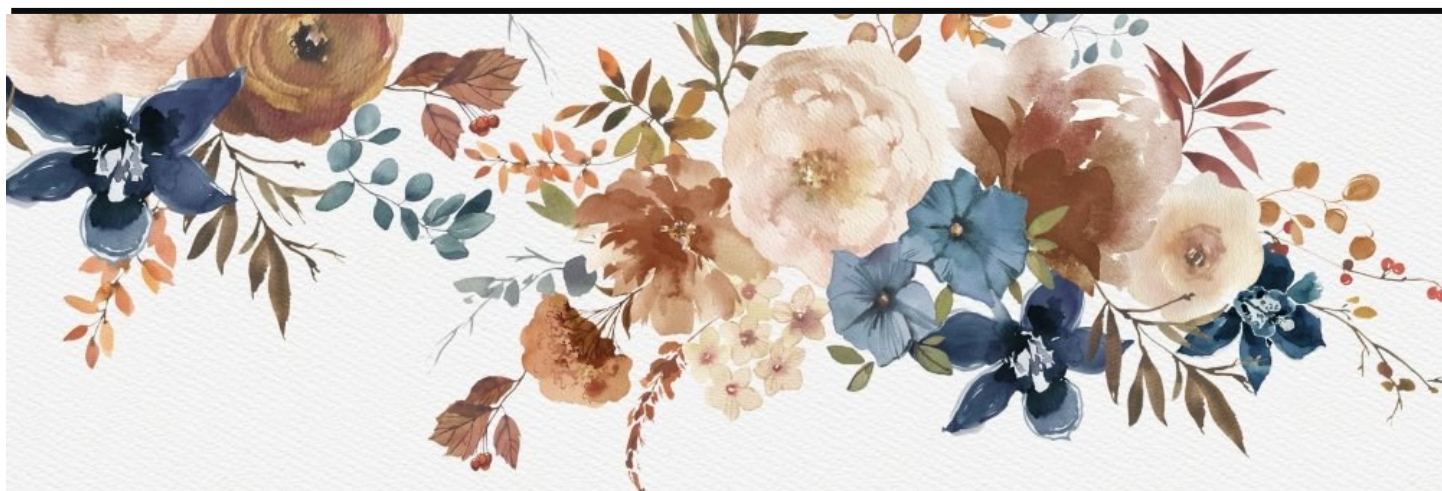
Cambridge is planning an outing for lunch and then a tour of the Geneseo Historical Museum this summer.

Northern Highlights

c/o Kell Impens, Editor
175 Jupiter St.
Holts Summit, MO 65043



Women
of the
**EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN
CHURCH
IN AMERICA**



NIS Women's Convention

September 21, 2024

Zion Lutheran Church — Kewanee