

Northern Highlights

September 2024 -- Volume 27, Number 3

Northern Illinois Synod WELCA

PRESIDENT REPORT

I've been procrastinating my whole life. The subjects of my procrastination are usually going to bed and practicing my piano, clarinet or saxophone. As you can imagine, gathering my thoughts to share with all of you is also on that procrastination list. I depend on following the lectionary and daily devotions from *Daily Grace*, published by [Guideposts](#) to guide me when this time comes in hopes that the Holy Spirit will provide my inspiration. Fortunately, this does occur but then procrastination rears its ugly head.

August 9, my devotion verse was "*For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works...*" --- Ephesians 2:10 (NIV). The author, Debbie Macomber, tells of a time she saw a young man examining the menu board at a gas station restaurant but turned away with a sigh and no purchase. A few minutes later he was perusing the snacks in the convenience area and, also, turning away after seeing the pricing. She felt the Lord nudge her with a few options but before she could act, her husband hustled her to the car so they could continue their trip. She regretted this procrastination and the opportunity to follow God's lead. I, too, regret not acting on the inspiration Our Father placed before me. I was fortunate though that I had dog-eared that page in my book.

On August 12, the devotion was a different author, Carol Knapp, with the verse "I do believe; help my unbelief!" --- Mark 9:24 (NASB). This is the place where Peter is offered a second chance after denying Jesus. We remember that Peter had declared wholeheartedly, "Lord, I will lay down my life for You!" John 13:37 (NASB). Consider then, Jesus visiting his hometown where he "could do no miracle there," Mark 6:5 (NASB1996) because of the town's unbelief. Then there's the opposite with the belief of Roman Centurion's servant being healed, Luke 7:2-10. Ms. Knapp sums it up saying, "Unbelief blocks - and belief unlocks - what God is able to do.

I take my inspiration where I can as a gift from God, both the idea and blessing, and the second chance we are given, to be a blessing. May we all be blessings to each other.

Grace & Peace,

Jeana

Jeana Fors, WELCA President

NIS Women's Convention
Saturday, September 21
Zion Lutheran Church – Kewanee

TREASURER'S REPORT

Kim Choin

	2024/25	2/1/24-1/31/25	2025/26
Beginning Balance	APPROVED	\$3,347.10	PROPOSED
INCOME	BUDGET		BUDGET
Regular-Conference Offerings	\$10,000.00	\$6,240.00	\$11,000.00
Convention Offerings	\$2,000.00	\$50.00	\$2,000.00
Convention Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$120.00	\$2,000.00
CW Thankoffering		\$380.75	
Conference Offering-100% to CW		\$625.50	
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	\$10.00	\$50.00
LSSI Story Book Prison Ministry	\$500.00	\$220.00	\$500.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$365.00	\$500.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$240.00	\$500.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00	\$135.00	\$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	\$6,240.00	\$1,250.00
ELCA Federal Credit Union Dividend Interest		\$51.00	
Where Needed Most		\$120.00	
Total Income	\$21,650.00	\$17,268.25	\$22,650.00
DISBURSEMENTS			
Regular Offerings to CWO (78%)	\$7,800.00	\$3,477.40	\$8,580.00
SWO Convention Offerings to CWO (50%)	\$1,000.00		\$1,000.00
Conference Offering to CWO (100%)		\$575.50	
2024 Retreat Offering-to LOMC	\$400.00	\$500.00	\$400.00
Thankofferings Received from Conferences (100%-CW)		\$110.75	
2122 Growing Katie's Fund For the Next 100 Years		\$592.50	
Convention Expenses	\$2,000.00		\$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		\$1,000.00
Financial Records	\$100.00		\$100.00
ELCA Insurance	\$100.00		\$100.00
Communications	\$100.00		\$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
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
Dollars For Our Daughters Scholarship-Trinity, Elizabeth		\$200.00	
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	\$7,279.23	\$22,650.00
Total Income less Disbursements		\$13,336.12	
Balance in ELCA Federal Credit Union Checking Acct		\$11,309.19	
Balance in ELCA Federal Credit Union Savings Acct*		\$2,026.93	
Total Bank Balance		\$13,336.12	

	Disbursed Funds	Designated Funds Balance
Computer Fund*		\$1,000.00
LSSI Story Book-Prison Ministry		\$220.00
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		\$240.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk		\$135.00
Dollars 4 Daughters-50% already sent to CW	\$200.00	\$452.50
Triennial Conference Scholarships*		\$250.00
Triennial Guest (2022 Budget-\$3,000.00)*		\$500.00
Triennial Voting Member (2022 Budget \$1,700.00)*		\$250.00
		\$3,487.50
Outstanding Due Churchwide:		\$1,422.05
Undesignated Funds Total:		\$2,167.50

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Sheila Keene, Secretary

The NISWO Board met Saturday, August 10, 2024, on Zoom. Devotions were led by Sheila Keene.

Minutes of the regular Board meeting held May 18, 2024, were approved.

Kim Choin explained the Treasurer’s Report, which can be found in this newsletter. She also distributed the proposed budget, which will be presented at the convention in September.

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

Pastor Julie Monnard, Assistant to the Bishop, reported that the Parament Project banner will be hung at our Convention.

The Nominating Committee continues to prepare for Convention. We ask for prayers that all positions will be filled.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord’s Prayer.

The next Board meeting will be held Friday, September 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. at Zion Lutheran Church, Kewanee, Illinois.

DISCIPLESHIP

Debra Quinn, Discipleship Advocate

Did you ever wonder what it is like living, working, and worshiping in another country? Does your church have a companion church in Tanzania or India, or have you been considering being a companion church? Then you should know that there are several opportunities to hear from our neighbors from Tanzania!

- ◆ Sunday, September 15 – Pastor Seth Sululu at First in DeKalb for worship at 9:30 am and Adult Forum at 10:45 am
- ◆ Sunday, September 22 – Pastor Seth Sululu at Resurrection in Channahon for worship at 9:30 am

- ◆ Tuesday, September 24 – Pastor Seth Sululu at Our Savior’s in Rockford at 2:00 pm
- ◆ Saturday, September 28 – Pastor Seth Sululu at First in Geneseo at 5:30 pm
- ◆ Sunday, September 29 – Pastor Seth Sululu at Immanuel in Earlville at 9:00 am

See the link below for up-to-date information regarding speaking events in Northern Illinois:

<https://nisynod.org/news/2024-visits-from-north-central-diocese-of-tanzania>

“As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.”

Our Purpose Statement

JUSTICE

Joan Soltwisch, Justice Advocate

Zion Lutheran Church and Eliminate Racism 815 Rockford offered another Civil Rights trip this summer. I was one of 50 total who traveled by coach from June 20 – 25; first to Nashville Tennessee, then on to Atlanta, Georgia. Some adults were with their sons or daughters; there were 17 teens -- we were an inter-generational, interfaith, and mixed-race group, with pastors and interns.

Together, we learned a lot by immersing ourselves in anti-racism education through courageous conversation; first with films shown on the bus as we drove along, which described the history of racism through interviews and documentaries and then to the historical museum sites where this history happened.

Our first stop on Friday was at the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum in Atlanta, to see his Nobel Peace Prize and Presidential Medal of Freedom. Next stop, Atlanta's new Civil Rights Museum in the city where Martin Luther King Jr. called his home, was amazing! This is a 42,000 square-foot facility devoted to the movement itself. Here, are King's personal papers, handwritten notes, and 1,100 books from his personal library. This museum links the Civil Rights Movement along with the ongoing struggles for human rights around the world, some of which are immigration, women's rights, protection for those with disabilities, and gay, lesbian, and transgender issues. On Saturday, we toured Morehouse College, one of the four black colleges in Atlanta. Morehouse is the men's college, and Spelman is the women's. Ron Simmons had arranged this stop, as he had attended Clark College. Atlanta University is also there, and all the colleges are in cooperation with each other. Our tour guide, a junior student, led our group in speaking to the teens about college enrollment opportunities they might consider. I was impressed by our tour guide and asked if he would share his favorite class text from his last semester.

I ordered "Race, Law and American Society, 1607 to Present", by Gloria J. Browne-Marshall, on the spot, after his recommendation.

On Sunday, we attended service at Ebenezer Baptist, a massive new church. The message focused on the graduating students from the four colleges. Across the street is the original Ebenezer Baptist, where Dr. King Sr. and Dr. King Jr. preached. It was there that

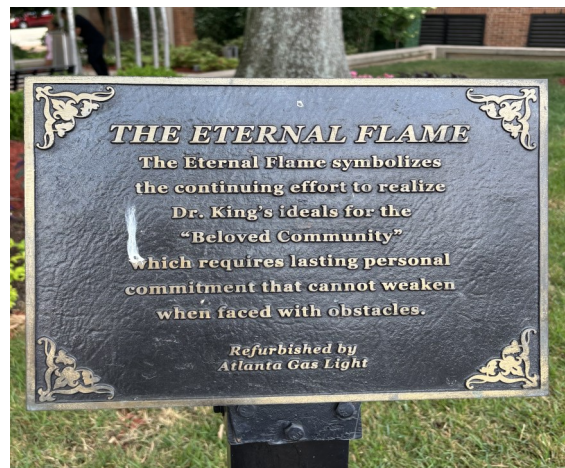
we saw the bullet hole in the pew from when gunfire killed Martin Luther King's mother as she was directing the choir, along with several choir members. We stopped and shopped at Black Wall Street, an all-Black entrepreneur shopping experience.

Back in Nashville, we had the pleasure of experiencing the National Museum of African American Music. Many of us were educated on how slave songs evolved into spirituals. Jim Crow/Blackface sung by white entertainers, degraded Black music in front of white only audiences. Then, after the Civil Rights Movement, black artists' pop songs climbed the charts only later to be covered by white artists, bringing in more money for record companies. And the cycle continues.

This was tough discussion material of dark history that our country experienced, and which continues today. We are grateful to our friends of color on

this trip who were able to explain to us how racism has impacted their lives historically and presently. We can learn this together, as the only way to move forward is by looking back. For when God's children suffer, we all suffer. I am so blessed to have churches, synagogues, temples, and museums continue to remind us. We can do this!!

A special thank you to the organizers of this trip! Pastor Mike Thomas, Ron Simmons, Janice Forest, Jane Lightcamp, Malika Williams, Bonnie Dahlberg, Intern Rachel Perkins, and her husband Nathi.



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ~ Eternal Flame ~ Atlanta, GA



STEWARDSHIP

Ann Terry, Stewardship Advocate

I Love Being Lutheran

I am always proud to be a Lutheran, but the day I decided to draft this article, several things happened that made me even prouder. As Stewardship advocate for our Northern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA, I like to promote the many ministries that our synod women support. On this particular day I was reminded of some of these important ministries and my attention was also drawn to two of the designations for our convention offering.

In the mail, I received a wonderful letter from ELCA World Hunger that highlighted a program in southern Los Angeles and how they are helping neighbors most vulnerable to hunger and poverty. I also received a letter from Global Refuge that spoke of a church in Pennsylvania that has ministered to refugees for 60 years. Also included in this letter was a personal note from Bishop Tim Smith from the North Carolina Synod, that had a moving personal story about a refugee from Afghanistan who was so inspired by the help he received from Global Refuge that he now works for this agency. How wonderful that ELCA World Hunger and Global Refuge are two of our offering designations for convention! Our third designation is AMMPARO (Accompanying Mi-

grant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities) and our two keynote speakers are both members of the ELCA AMMPARO executive committee.

After reading these two letters, I went to my stewardship folder and reread some of the NIS WELCA resolutions that outline giving to several worthy programs throughout the world. These included Women’s Fellowship Desk of the Arcot Lutheran Church in India, Women of the North Central Diocese in Tanzania, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church on the Rocky Boy Indian Reservation in Montana, NIU Grace Place Campus Ministry, and our most recent resolution for Dollars for Daughters (note the photos below from Strong Girls 2 Women Camp that received a Dollars for Daughters Grant). The same day an email came from our Discipleship Advocate, Deb Quinn, with a flyer advertising the visits of Kellen and Daudi Msseemaa and Pastor Seth Sululu from our companion synod in Tanzania. When I thought of all this in total, I just could not help but praise God for the work of the ELCA and Women of the ELCA. I pray that you will support these programs either in your congregation and/or individually and continue to pray for all the wonderful work that is done through our church.



STRONG
GIRLS 2
WOMEN
CAMP

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
East, North, Northwest, and 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 630.334.0330 or debraquinn1@comcast.net, or complete the nomination form included in this newsletter.

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

Deb Quinn, Northeast Representative

First, DeKalb On July 20th, our Lights For Life ministry donated 16 lamps to 5 families in our community. The lamps were inspected, tested, cleaned and packaged for delivery. The Love INC's Furniture ministry, coordinated by First Lutheran and made up of volunteers from various churches, delivered the lamps. We are helping families turn empty, dark apartments into homes! Thank you, First Family, for your prayers, time, money, space and items to support our brothers and sisters in Christ in our area. It is truly God's Work, Our Hands!



Grace, Woodstock Sewing Circle met on Tuesday, August 6, at Grace Center. Several sewing and non-sewing opportunities were available either at the church or to take home. The group made 72 large quilts for Lutheran World Relief and created multiple gifts for local communities!

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

Christine Beyer, Northwest Representative

Good Shepherd, Lena has not gathered for a Circle meeting and Bible study since before the pandemic. We did use the Rachel's Day litany during worship to honor mothers who grieve the loss of their children. Our Piece Corp quilts are busy at home and weekly at church. Since quilts were sent to Lutheran World Relief last fall, they have made over 560 more!!

2024 NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNODICAL BOARD MEMBERS

President — Jeana Fors
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Vice President — Ruth Anne Hartman
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Secretary — Sheila Keene
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Treasurer Kim Choin
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Discipleship — Debra Quinn
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Justice — Joan Soltwisch
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Stewardship — Ann Terry
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Central — Representative Needed

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North — Carolyn Ciaccio
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SOUTH CONFERENCE

Sherry Morris, South Representative

Warm Summer greetings to my fellow Lutheran women!

What a great summer this has been. Gorgeous weather with wonderful rain and to keep us entertained... Summer Olympics! These athletes are absolutely amazing. Such dedication, hard work, drive and team-work is awe inspiring. Even as competitors, they support each other, encourage teammates and fellow athletes and show respect and good sportsmanship in everything they do. In these times when the world is filled with hate and fear, how amazing that God is giving us a glimpse of young people who give us hope for the future.

I have hope for the future of our women's organization as well. Many congregations are getting smaller, and church members are growing older. COVID seemed to take a toll on so many aspects of our lives and in this conference, WELCA units were hit pretty hard. There are fifteen churches in the South Conference and not one active WELCA unit. I know times are changing, and we need to be flexible and creative to change and still keep this ministry alive. The groups don't have to have formal meetings with a hostess in a dress, the good dishes and home-baked goodies (yeah, I remember the *good old days!*!). We could try a Bible study in the church basement with coffee and Casey's donuts... or planning an activity at a picnic table in the park with bottles of water and Oreos! The women's ministry is so very important to the church and the world. We need to be seen and our voices heard and to show our dedication, hard-work, drive and teamwork to others. We are bold, powerful women! We need to set an example for other women showing them we are capable and willing to work together to continue our ministry. We are in need of a South Conference representative this year. I have served on the board as long as I can and, sadly, my time is up. Please prayerfully consider taking this position. The work is rewarding and not difficult and the women are awesome and inspiring. I have loved my time on this board and know you would, too. Help keep the women's ministry active and available for future generations. I will continue to pray for each of you as you consider this calling. Blessings!

"The deeds you do may be the only sermon some persons will

2024 Biographies

NISWO BOARD MEMBERS & EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

Name: _____ Conference: _____

Church: _____

Occupation: _____ Gender: _____

Age at Time of Election (circle one): 18-19 20-29 30-45 46-60 61-over

Race and Ethnic Origin: _____

Primary Language: _____

Please list areas of special leadership and interest in your congregation, both past and present:

Please list area of special leadership and interest in the community, both past and present:

Why do you wish to serve with this Women's ministry in the Synod? _____

What are your areas of priorities for this ministry? _____

If you were asked to give a statement of your faith, what would you say? _____

NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Office/Board Member Nomination Form

Officers / Board Members 2024-2026

Board President Board Secretary
 Board Member — Northwest Board Member — East
 Board Member — North Board Member — South

Officers/ Board Member 2024-2025

Board Member — Central

Name of Nominee _____

Address _____

Phone (daytime) _____

Email Address _____

Congregation / Unit _____

Age Category

Please check one: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50 –59 60 / Over

Ethnic / Racial Heritage

African American American Indian / Native Alaskan Asian
 Caucasian Hispanic Other

Primary Language (please fill in) _____

Name, address, and phone number of the person who is submitting this nomination:

What gifts does the candidate you are nominating have that you feel will be assets to the Women of the ELCA position for which you are nominating her for?

Why did you nominate this candidate for this position?

The Nominating Committee will review this application.

Please return this form by September 10, 2024, to the WELCA Board Liaison to the Nominating Committee:

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Northern Highlights

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

