

Northern Highlights

January 2024 -- Volume 27, Number 1

Northern Illinois Synod WELCA

PRESIDENT REPORT

How far is our realm of influence? Have you ever heard of the butterfly effect? It's the idea that our world is so deeply interconnected that one small occurrence can influence a much larger complex system; it evokes the idea that a small butterfly flapping its wings could, hypothetically, cause a typhoon in another part of the world. How about the scientific study of water being exposed to positive words and intentions that formed beautiful, symmetrical crystalline structures when the water was frozen, while water exposed to negative words and intentions formed disorganized, asymmetrical structures. Both examples are encouraging to us. As Women of the ELCA, we work to enrich lives beyond our own. In January, I had the opportunity to honor Bishop Godson Abel on his installation as Bishop of the North Central Diocese, our companion synod, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) via letter. Handwritten letters still hold weight and dignity. Now just imagine we as the NIS and NISWO all praying for Bishop Abel and the North Central Diocese. That's a

reach of over 8,000 miles. This is why we remember our Siblings in Christ in prayer both within our synod and beyond. If our actions and kind words, prayers, can influence water, it follows that our prayers can influence our synod companions and the whole world. Knowing that all of you and my own church family are praying for me makes a difference in my life. Please join me in praying for both of our companion synods, the North Central Diocese of ELCT and the Arcot Lutheran Church of Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry, India.

Grace & Peace.

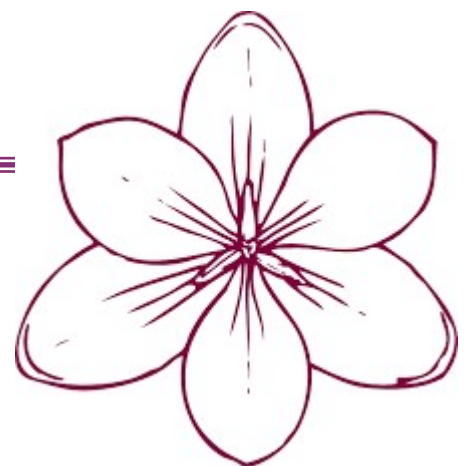
Jeana

Jeana Fors, WELCA President

Spring Retreat

April 27

LOMC in Oregon, Illinois



TREASURER'S REPORT

Kim Choin

	2023/24	2/1/23-1/20/24
Beginning Balance	APPROVED BUDGET	\$8,503.39
INCOME		
Regular-Conference Offerings	\$9,000.00	\$12,110.28
Convention Offerings	\$1,500.00	\$2,361.00
Convention Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$1,600.00
CW Thankoffering		\$368.76
Conference Offering-100% to CW		\$431.50
Board Expense Reimbursement		\$330.60
Katies Fund Grant		\$1,000.00
Retreat Registrations	\$2,000.00	\$2,400.00
Retreat Offering-50% to CW/50% to Missions at YE 2023	\$800.00	\$563.00
`	\$50.00	\$60.00
LSSI Story BookPrison Ministry	\$500.00	\$395.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$645.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$3,995.62
TG23 Servant Events & Just Love Labs		\$100.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk	\$500.00	\$570.00
Grace Place (Formerly-NIU Campus Ministry)	\$500.00	\$95.00
Dollars For Our Daughters	\$500.00	\$630.00
Triennial Offering	\$100.00	
Triennial International Guest	\$1,000.00	
Total Income	\$19,450.00	\$27,655.76
DISBURSEMENTS		
Regular Offerings to CWO	\$7,020.00	\$7,072.82
SWO Convention Offerings to CWO (50%)	\$500.00	\$1,180.50
Conference Offering to CWO (100%)		\$431.50
2023 Retreat Offering to CWO (50%)	\$400.00	\$281.50
Thankofferings Received from Conferences (100%-CW)		\$253.00
2122 Growing Katie's Fund For the Next 100 Years		\$685.00
Stop Payment Fee on Ck4012		\$32.00
Convention Expenses	\$1,750.00	\$1,355.39
Convention Scholarships	\$500.00	
Retreat Expenses	\$1,500.00	\$1,866.46
Retreat Scholarships	\$100.00	
Nominating Committee	\$100.00	
Board Expenses	\$700.00	\$1,426.53
Financial Records	\$100.00	
ELCA Insurance	\$100.00	

	2023/24	2/1/23-1/20/24
Communications	\$100.00	\$122.95
<i>Northern Highlights</i>	\$180.00	
TG23 Servant Events & Just Love Labs		\$300.00
Triennial Scholarships	\$800.00	\$1,200.00
Triennial Offerings	\$100.00	\$100.00
Triennial Promoter	\$50.00	\$32.50
Triennial International Guest	\$1,000.00	\$3,837.90
Triennial NIS Voting Member	\$500.00	\$1,750.00
Discipleship	\$250.00	
Justice	\$250.00	
Stewardship	\$250.00	
LSSI Story Book-Prison Ministry	\$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 Conention Offering)		\$355.00
OSLC, Rocky Boy	\$500.00	\$600.00
Tanzania North Central Diocese Woman's Dept	\$500.00	\$3,100.00
India-Arcot Women's Desk**	\$500.00	\$600.00
Grace Place (Formerly NIU Campus Ministry)	\$500.00	
LOMC Gift	\$100.00	\$100.00
WELCA Presidents' Meeting Offering	\$100.00	
NIS Assembly Expenses	\$400.00	
NIS Assembly Offering	\$100.00	
Total Disbursements	\$19,450.00	\$28,013.05
Total Income less Disbursements		\$8,146.10
Balnce in ELCA Federal Credit Union Checking Acct		\$8,121.10
Balnce in ELCA Federal Credit Union Savings Acct		\$25.00
Total Bank Balance		\$8,146.10
		Balance
Arcot Lutheran Church		\$400.00
Computer Fund		\$1,000.00
Do It For Our Daughters-50% already sent to CW		\$685.00
Do It For Our Daughters-50% due to CW		\$100.00
Grace Place (Formerly-NIU Campus Ministry)		\$500.00
TZ Women's Desk		\$939.00
Our Saviour's, Rocky Boy		\$50.00
		\$3,674.00
Oustanding Due Churchwide:		\$2,848.17
Undesignated Funds Total:		\$1,623.93

BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

Sheila Keene, Secretary

The NISWO board met Saturday, January 20, 2024, via Zoom. Devotions were led by Jeana Fors.

Minutes of the regular board meeting held November 4, 2023, were approved.

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

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

Continue to pray that the Central Conference Board Representative role will soon be filled.

Northern Highlights can be accessed via the synod's website.

The Congregational Resourcing Event will be held Saturday, March 16, 2024, at Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon.

The NISWO Retreat will be Saturday, April 27, 2024, at LOMC, Oregon.

The NISWO Convention is September 21, 2024, and will be hosted by the Southwest Conference.

The meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

The next board meeting will be held at St. Paul, Dixon on Saturday, May 18, 2024, at 9:30 a.m.

DISCIPLESHIP

Debra Quinn, Discipleship Advocate

What does discipleship mean to you? Women of the ELCA participants are active disciples in many ways.

dis-ci-ple-ship noun [di-'sī-pəl'ship]

a: discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

b: disciples are followers of Jesus who are intent on carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) and the Great Command (Acts 1:8).

At WELCA, participants practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Whether it be making quilts and health and school kits for Lutheran World Relief or studying the Bible together, or assisting in worship, they grow in faith and share what they've learned with friends and neighbors.

The above is from the Women of the ELCA website. How many of the seven marks of discipleship are you involved with? Probably more than you think! As we mark the beginning of a new year, take a moment to set an intention to recognize your efforts and then listen to see where God sends you next! May God bless you and encourage you as you carry out His Great Commission!

JUSTICE

Joan Soltwisch, Justice Advocate

Are you still experiencing your Wintering season? I still feel like moving at a slower pace, requiring more sleep, and warming the foot of my bed before getting in it. Our summer yard and garden upkeep has been curtailed and sidewalk snow and ice removal is challenging. It is great to walk outside with a partner, dog or human, and listen to the birds that still sing, while protecting their winter-feeding territories. Can you smell the wood smoke from someone's wood stove or fireplace? If it is a still night and the moon is full, we might catch the rare sight of the snow owl. After that walk, it feels great to curl up with a cup of warm cider and a book, where it's warm, or in my case in a warm car listening to one on Audible, during that long drive to and from. That being said, let's get together and share with each other for another Zoom book read!

I found this book when we stopped at the Freedom Rides Museum in Montgomery, Alabama, on the Civil Rights trip with Eliminate Racism 815 and Zion Lutheran-Rockford in summer 2022. I keep coming back to recommend this book because I am repeatedly reminded of its story. It impacts so many of the customers we encounter at our plumbing company. I answer one phone call after another with stories of storm or sanitary sewer systems gone bad, many times, calling after-hours to get emergency service. I know that it might happen to many others tomorrow or the next day. Our company works frequently with the Flag Creek and La Grange Highlands Sanitary Districts and their thousands of customers, many of whom we have secured permits for. We know which community's infrastructures are old and which areas need major updates. The individu-

Justice — *continued from page 4*

al homeowners do not see or concern themselves with these issues because they are usually underground and the problem doesn't show itself until it becomes a costly and, many times, dangerous mess to fix during flooding or sub-zero weather.

Yes, the book that is necessary for us all to read is, "*Waste, One Woman's Fight Against America's Dirty Secret*," by Catherine Coleman Flowers. Broken sewer and septic systems become environmental, public health, and justice red flags. This book describes how the poor among us get trapped in this dirty underground secret. Together, we will discuss how economic gain threatens human rights, while social and racial justice gets pushed aside. Many of us dread the bill but we can usually afford to pay it. However, many others in this country are so heavily fined that their economic means make it impossible to get out of. Every-

one should have the right to clean water and safe sanitary conditions! Please watch for the Zoom Invite for this book soon.

Dr. Jennifer Harvey has written again! We worked with her book in the Fall of 2021, "*Raising White Kids, In A Racially Unjust America*." Her new book, "*Anti-Racism as Daily Practice, Refuse Shame, Change White Communities, and Help Create a Just World*," will come out this summer and can be pre-ordered. Dr. Harvey also recommends, "*The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person*," by Frederick Joseph, and also the book, "*Doing Nothing Is No Longer an Option: One Woman's Journey into Everyday Anti-racism*," by Jenny Booth Potter. We can keep on reading and catch up with one another, one-on-one, through sharing these books. Let's do this!!

STEWARDSHIP

As I thought about what I would write for my stewardship article for this issue of Northern Highlights, I kept thinking about the question, "**What would you miss?**" If there were suddenly no organization called Women of- the ELCA, what is it that I would most notice not having in my life? This organization has been part of my life, in one way or another, since I was a little girl and went to meetings with my mom at my home church in Carthage, IL. As a young mother, I was invited to join the women's organization at Immanuel in Marseilles, and stayed involved through the changeover of Immanuel as an American Lutheran Church to the present day ELCA. So, after all this, what would I miss? Honestly at this point in my life, I would most probably say the *Gather* magazine and the monthly Bible study I lead with the "Gather Girls" at my church. Thinking about

Ann Terry, Stewardship Advocate

that, as I order my new gift subscription for Immanuel, I plan to send an additional donation to help ensure that the publication keeps going.

As this new year begins, I am sending my personal general offering to the NISWO and hope to do this on a quarterly basis. My small part in no way will ensure that the organization keeps going. All of our prayers, which cost nothing but have a huge impact, can most certainly help to strengthen the Lutheran women's organization. **So, what is it that you would miss?** Please consider making a donation if you can, but most importantly, pray for all the avenues of ministry both on the Synodical and Churchwide level. Let's do whatever we can to ensure the future of Women of the ELCA!

EAST CONFERENCE

Joan Soltwisch, East Representative

Alleluia, Naperville Perfectly Imperfect Mom's meet for outings and fun. They hosted host a Joy-Filled Women's event with Becky Baudouin, Author/Speaker, on Saturday February 10. Topics included anxiety, worry, overworking, self-sufficiency, control, and comparison.

Immanuel, Yorkville sewed 100 quilts and packed 35 layettes, for Lutheran World Relief. The women served a salad buffet this past summer as a time to focus on gathering fabric for their quilting project. They also had a Thrivent member help secure funds.

Plattville, Minooka sent out 120 quilts, 99 school kits, 40 layettes, 4 sewed outfits, and 35 health kits to LWR. They made 30 dozen Kringles, with proceeds going to their Sun-

day School program. They subscribe to *Gather Magazine*, and enjoy a monthly Bible study with breakfast at restaurants or homes.

Resurrection, Channahon These ladies hold Sip and Paint parties, host Girl and Boy Scout Troops, and organized a community cookie bake sale for the holiday. They subscribe to *Gather Magazine* and study a once a week on Wednesdays at the church, or sometimes meeting out for lunch. The Fall Festival is their biggest fund-raiser and the whole community comes together in early October. They provide music, food, auction items, and fun. Women, men, and children of the congregation are all involved.

NORTH CONFERENCE

Our Savior's, Rockford held their Board Installation and Thankoffering Service as part of Sunday worship for the first time! We have 5 circles that meet monthly for Bible Study and fellowship. Some of our special circle December projects were filling and delivering gift bags to church shut-ins. We collected an offering for a few local charities and enjoyed lunch together at Thunder Bay Grill. In February, our WELCA will be hosting Sharon Nesbitt-Davis, author and speaker: *A Marriage in Black and White*- a 60 year journey in an interracial marriage. In April, our guest will be Shiraz Tara, a clinical psychologist. She will lead us in a wellness workshop. Visitors are welcome. The DoDay ladies have been steadily working for Lutheran World Relief.

Carolyn Ciaccio, North Representative

An extra special quilt top has been turned into a beautiful quilt for the Lutherdale Auction Festival. Many health kits have also been assembled. Joyful work and fellowship!

First, Rockford continues to have our monthly Naomi Circle Bible Study using *Gather* magazine. We meet on the first Wednesday at Katie's Cup in Rockford. Our Miriam Circle meets monthly on the third Wednesday at Stockholm Inn. We enjoy lunch, fellowship followed by a short devotion. An offering is collected each month for Carpenter's Place and Lane Elementary School. We donated money to purchase young women's pajamas for KFACT in December.

NORTHEAST CONFERENCE

Deb Quinn, Northeast Representative

Trinity, Harvard The women of Trinity have two women's groups called Hannah and Elizabeth. One meets during the day and one meets at night. They follow the Bible Studies outlined in the WELCA *Gather* Magazine. In the past they have offered a rummage sale to raise money, but now are considering a raffle for an afghan. They also hold an honorary tea. Pictured are our beautiful Sanctuary and Rose Doege, Rogene Kyle, Norma Lockwood, Carolyn Schuring, Pat Jones, Eileen Rohrer, and Beverly Burkart after one of our events.



Nativity, Wonder Lake The ladies of Nativity are a small but mighty group that meet once a month on Zoom following the Bible Studies outlined in the WELCA *Gather* Magazine. They raised money through a Thank Offering and held a Christmas Bizarre to support Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. The biggest activity, however, is operating a food pantry two days a week.

Light of Christ, Algonquin The Women of LOC meet once a month on a Thursday. The church has two big events coming up. The first event is in support of Human Trafficking Awareness month by sharing resources and information. They also are offering a free panel discussion on Wednesday, January 24 entitled "[The Truth about Trafficking](#)" from 7-9pm at Cosman Theater (Huntley Park District). There will be representatives from McHenry County State's Attorney, McHenry County Sheriff's Office, FBI Chicago, outreach ministry New Name, Advocate Sherman Hospital, survivor leaders, and Refuge for Women Chicago. Come to learn more.

Another event is a churchwide retreat called E3 – Explore, Engage, Experience. Anyone is welcome to attend, see the attached flyer below for contact information.

First, DeKalb The women of First call themselves Prelude Bible Study and meet the 2nd and 4th Thursday of every month. They are led in Bible Study by Pastor Janet Hunt using the articles outlined in the WELCA *Gather* Magazine. Donations are taken each month.

SOUTHWEST CONFERENCE

Sandy Swanson, Southwest Representative

It is the Southwest turn to host the NISynd Women Convention in September 2024. I will be contacting churches to host the event. Letters were sent to all churches in the Southwest Conference introducing myself. I would like to have contact information e-mailed to me from each church whether you have a WELCA unit or not. All women of the Lutheran Church are members. My info: Sandy Swanson e-mail sandykayswanson@yahoo.com.

2024 NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNODICAL BOARD MEMBERS

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SOUTH CONFERENCE

Sherry Morris
South Representative

Hello to all my fellow Lutheran women! I hope you are all staying safe and warm. It is now zero degrees outside with a wind chill factor of -17! I thought it was a good time to stay home and read the *Gather* bible study for January. This session is *"Scripture and Nature"* and the first bible reading is Psalm 147, and verse one begins *"Praise the Lord. How good it is to sing praises to our God..."*

I have been singing His praises more than ever this week. Last weekend, my daughter's car was hit head on by a pickup truck. She was on her way home from work, about an hour from her home. She is fine (although her body is many shades of purple!), thanks to God, four air bags and the assistance of many strangers and work mates. The weather was very, very cold and she was amazed at the kindness of everyone she encountered. God not only protected her, but He showed her *his 'love thy neighbor'* commandment in action. He is now teaching her about patience as she deals with insurance companies and car shopping. I'm glad God has patience... He's gonna need it!

As mentioned in the last newsletter, Ann Terry and I are hoping to visit the churches in our conference in the next few months and talk to some of the women. We want to hear about your congregation and projects and ministries that your church is doing. We want to share ideas with other congregations in our synod, and also keep you connected with details for events the NIS has to offer. Two things coming up are the Congregational Resourcing Event (CRE) in March (In Dixon this year) and the NIS Women's Spring Retreat in April. Our retreat is always wonderful, as we shake off the end of winter and enjoy a day of singing and joy together. Everyone leaves with big smiles!! We look forward to seeing you!

As always, if there is anything I might be able to help you with, please email me or give me a call (address and number is in this newsletter) and I will be happy to help if I can. Warm winter prayers and wishes to each of you. Praise the Lord and stay warm!

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVES INFORMATION ON UPCOMING EVENTS OR NEWS ABOUT WHAT YOU UNIT HAS BEEN UP TO OR THAT YOU ARE PLANNING. SHARING THIS INFORMATION WITH THE REST OF THE LADIES OF OUR SYNOD HELPS THEM TAKE IDEAS BACK TO THEIR CONGREGATIONS AND HELPS KEEP WELCA STRONG! CONTACT INFO FOR YOUR CONFERENCE REP IS LISTED ON THE LEFT.

WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO VOLUNTEER AS THE CENTRAL CONFERENCE REP. REACH OUT TO SOMEONE ON THE BOARD FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS.

Northern Highlights

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

Exciting News!!

We are excited to invite you to the four-part *Gather Magazine* Bible study, centering on Creation and Environment! The study will run on Tuesday nights for four weeks beginning April 9, at 6:30 p.m. Synod Representative, Pastor Julie Monard, knows the author, Pastor Sara Olson-Smith, well. She will help setup the capability to have the author participate with us!!

This will be a Zoom Bible study with Northern Illinois Synod registration. You can find additional information in the coming weeks on the Northern Illinois Synod's website -- <https://nisynod.org/>.

Please pass this good news on!!

