



The Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization Newsletter
Women Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

May 2020

Views from the Rockies

► **How to focus on the positive** **page 2**

Rocky Mountain Synodical President's Corner

"We may not know what the new year will bring, but whatever it brings, God's presence will be with you!"

Little did I know when I closed my February message with the above words, what a different meaning they would take on by now!

These days, more than ever, we have many more questions than answers about our everyday lives.

What I DO know:

The Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization Convention/Gathering **WILL NOT** take place in September of this year.

When it does happen (some time in 2021), it **WILL** still take place at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Greeley, Colorado.

AND – what we now know about the Triennial—at an online meeting April 25, the Churchwide board for the Women of the ELCA approved **postponing** the Triennial. The Eleventh Triennial Convention will take place August 3-5, 2021, with the Gathering taking place August 5-8, 2021 –STILL in Phoenix, AZ.

This means that those of us on the board will remain on the board until our own convention takes place. Likewise, the current officers and board members for Churchwide Women of the ELCA will remain until the

Triennial Convention in 2021 (see related article regarding the Constitution in this issue).

In the meantime, BE WELL, STAY HEALTHY! As you are able, continue to give of yourself and/or your finances to your congregation, your women's congregational unit, your local food bank and other charities. Continue to keep those in your prayers who are working the hardest during difficult times and those who mourn the loss of friends and loved ones.

"From the Darkness into the Light." IN CHRIST, "The LIGHT shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

Blessings - - "...God's presence will be with you!"

Julie

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How can you focus on the positive during the current storm?

By Janna Smith, guest blogger

A lot has happened to all of us since March 15, 2020. These last few weeks remind me of 29 years ago during Desert Storm. My husband and I were living in Nuremberg, Germany, and he had just joined the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR).

Right after President H.W. Bush spoke to the American people on TV, the alerts went off, and the regiment prepared to go to war.

Those were scary times. Military posts, housing areas, post exchanges, and commissaries were sealed off, and it was a major deal to gain access. Plus, we were in a foreign country, away from our families. Our military chaplains went to the desert with their squadrons. Reserve chaplains were activated in the states and sent to Germany.

Family support groups were organized, something I had not seen before in the military. This was before social media (1990). I remember getting excited hearing about something called electronic mail. The 2nd ACR Rear Detachment had one email account with the regiment in the desert, but it could only be used for military purposes.

Our regimental commander's wife would write out long messages to the other **Kaserne** (barracks).

Thankoffering boxes

In the late 1800s, Lutheran women had small boxes to place in a special location in their homes as a visible reminder of blessings received.

Women would add coins to those boxes almost daily as they noticed blessings. These boxes became the origin of the annual **Women of the ELCA Thankoffering Service** that we still hold in many of our churches today.

I inherited my mother's storm jar. I didn't even know what it was. She purchased it at Rowe Pottery in Cambridge years ago. It is a ceramic jar

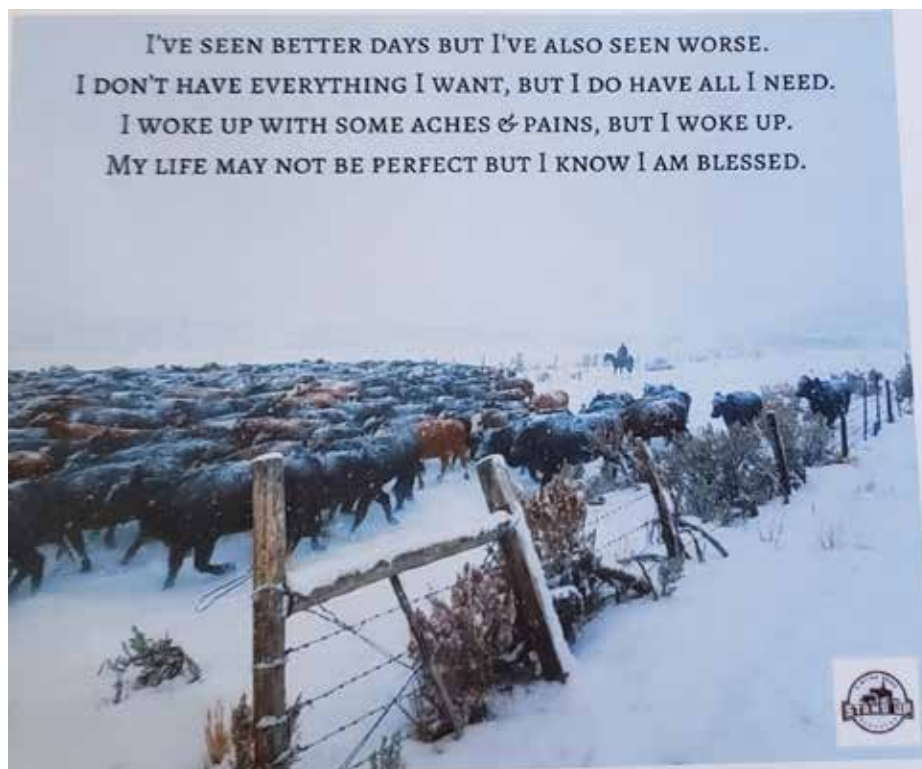
with a candle and matches inside. During a storm, if you lost your electricity, you knew to go to that jar for light.

During our current storm, why don't we find a box or an old jar from around the house (decorate it, if you wish) and then drop in coins whenever we feel

thankful or hopeful about something.

If you run out of coins, drop in buttons (later replacing them with money). It will help us focus on the good – on the positive. After this is all over, we can bring forward our offerings and offer them during our Thankoffering Services in the fall (or whenever we gather again).

Take pictures of your boxes or storm jars, and post them for someone to see. Tell them what a Thankoffering is.



Not all heroes wear capes. Some make face masks

Many people in developing countries don't have the option of social distancing or frequent hand-washing to slow the spread of COVID-19. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now says cloth face masks, along with hand washing and social distancing may help reduce transmission.

We need your help to sew cloth face masks to help us reach men, women and children in vulnerable communities.

After all, Lutheran World Relief was founded 75 years ago to help neighbors around the globe who were suffering during World War II. What will be our generation's legacy during this time of crisis?

If you would like to help, please visit lwr.org, then

click on the "MAKE FABRIC FACE MASKS" rectangle. There you can:

Make a pledge

Learn how to make your masks (with the aid of a video, if needed)

Learn how to make your bundles to send to Lutheran World Relief.

Find answers to any other questions you might have.

Almost half of the goal of 150,000 masks has been pledged.

Lutheran World Relief would like to receive the masks by October 1st, 2020, but will continue to accept masks after that date.

Thank you and God Bless!

Vulnerable people

Through stories from migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and those who care for them, we got a glimpse of the complex immigration issue.

As Christians – we must see Jesus in every person who crosses our border.

Children are being separated from their families, and sitting in a private prison with little concept of what is happening to them. Women are raped and abused while trying to flee to safety.

Anyone legally seeking asylum must enter at a U.S. port of entry. Asylum officers then conduct a credible-fear interview to determine if returning them to their country of origin would be dangerous. Almost 90 percent pass the U.S. credible fear test.

We must see Jesus in them. "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Written by Elizabeth McBride who is the director for Intergenerational programs and editor of Café, Women of the ELCA's online magazine for and with young adult women and their friends. (Source: interchange-Leadership News from WELCA, Spring 2020)

North New Mexico has cancelled their October 2020 Cluster Gathering. We will have our next Gathering in the Spring of 2021.

Date to be determined later. .

Note from Sharon Hamilton.

May 14, 2020

From the Executive Director of the Women of the ELCA

Greetings, presidents. I pray that you are well and safe and finding ways to adapt to this new reality of ours, this new normal. Included in this email are 1) news of the October 2020 board meeting; 2) words about churchwide representatives at any conventions that are held in 2020; and 3) some words about “normal” that I shared with the executive board last month.

October board meeting

The executive committee of the churchwide board has determined that the October 2020 meeting will be virtual. It will be held on Saturday, October 24.

For SWO conventions that occur in 2020

The executive committee of the churchwide board has determined that no representatives of the churchwide president will be sent to any SWO conventions that might occur in 2020. The executive committee reiterates its strong encouragement that all SWO events for the remainder of 2020 be postponed, cancelled or made virtual. If, for some reason, you choose to hold an event yet in 2020, you must comply with all federal, state and local requirements and take all precautions necessary. The question of whether your organization (or you and your board members) could be held liable should someone contract COVID-19 while at your convention is untested in the legal system so far. The executive committee and I prefer that you not become the test case.

If a SWO convention does proceed, you can contact the board member assigned to your convention to see if there’s a way she might join you virtually (phone call, FaceTime, Skype, Zoom, etc.). If there is, the committee hopes that you will consider ways to incorporate her into your event, including the pre-convention board meeting. Nonetheless, the virtual participation of a board member in your convention

does not constitute the churchwide organization condoning your choice to proceed with a convention.

Meanwhile, the executive committee and staff are looking at the possibility of creating a video that could be used in lieu of a churchwide presentation. Stay tuned for more information about that possibility.

Our new normal

“Normal” is always new, says Joshua Becker of [Becoming Minimalist](#). “The only constant in life is change. And ‘normal’ tomorrow was always going to be different than normal today.”

Included in our principles of organization are calls to be flexible and embrace change. “An openness to change and the ability to allow for diversity in functioning shall be among the desired results of the structure of this organization. Change shall be viewed as an ongoing process following regular review and evaluation. The process for changing procedures and policies shall be clearly stated and uncomplicated.” (Article III, Section 4, Churchwide Constitution) And, “The principle of good order shall be followed. Policies and procedures shall be held in healthy tension with the principle of flexibility.” (Article III, Section 5)

Becker observes, “Our world is constantly changing and our lives are constantly changing. Sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. Sometimes small and incremental, sometimes abrupt and significant. Sometimes because we desire change, sometimes because change is forced upon us.” Indeed.

The executive board has desired change, as seen in the proposed constitutional changes that will come before the Eleventh Triennial Convention (2021). And now change has been forced upon us in-

dividually and collectively as Women of the ELCA by the global pandemic. What remains to be seen is how this organization will shape the new normal in which we find ourselves.

You are welcome to forward this email on to the members of your synodical board.

May God's grace and love enfold you and those you hold dear.

Linda Post Bushkofsky

Executive Director, Women of the ELCA
773.380.2740 | linda.bushkofsky@elca.org

Twitter: @lpbwelca

8765 W. Higgins Road

Chicago IL 60631-4101

www.womenoftheelca.org



New post on Women of the ELCA – May 13, 2020 by the Women of the ELCA

If you've registered for the Gathering, follow these tips

The “Just Love” Gathering, initially scheduled for this July, has been postponed to **August 5-8, 2021**, due to the global coronavirus pandemic. Here we offer tips for those who had already registered for the gathering.

What do you need to do about your **event registration**? If you plan to join your Lutheran sisters at the “Just Love” Gathering at its rescheduled dates, August 5-8, 2012, you are not required to take any action. All tours and options will also be automatically transferred to the 2012 dates.

Action to take

To make one of the following actions, email info@frameworkmeetings.com or leave a detailed message at 208-502-1150, and our registration provider will assist you.

- If you can't make the 2021 event, you can transfer your registration to a friend.
- If you can't make the 2021 event, you can donate your registration fee and any purchases you made, providing a gift to Women of the ELCA.
- You can request a refund, less a \$20 processing for fixed costs. The deadline to ask for this refund is **June 30, 2020**.

What do you need to do about your **hotel reservations**? Our two gathering hotels, the Sheraton and Hyatt Regency, have canceled all 2020 room reservations and will be refunding deposits. The hotels will provide new online reservation links for the August 2021 dates before the end of May. We will send an email with the new links and the reservation phone numbers to registrants, as everyone **will need to make new hotel reservations**. We'll add these new links and contact numbers to our [Gathering 2021 website](http://Gathering2021.com).

What do you do about your **airline reservation**? Because of the coronavirus, most airlines are offering travel credits for future flights. If needed, contact your airline directly for assistance with flight changes or refunds.

While we've postponed the Gathering, our ministry continues. We're still mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. At welca.org, you'll find suggestions on how you can sustain community.

Visit welcatg.org for gathering updates. Stay tune for a virtual gathering experience this July; more details to follow.

Memo

To: Presidents of the synodical women's organizations
From: Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director
Date: 26 March 2020
Re: Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning of WELCA
CC: Churchwide executive board members, advisors and staff



Greetings in the name of the one who creates, redeems and sustains us all. This memo is lengthy, but I ask you to read it in its entirety. And I ask you to share it with all the members of your synodical board.

I send this to you in the midst of these challenging and disruptive times. Winston Churchill is quoted as saying, "Sometimes it is not enough to do our best; we must do what is required." Much will be required of us in the coming months as leaders of this organization, and with the information in this memo, I seek to equip you for that work.

This memo covers the following:

- work of the churchwide executive board,
- triennial convention and gathering,
- work of synodical organizations
- financial realities and
- day-to-day management of Women of the ELCA.

CHURCHWIDE EXECUTIVE BOARD TO MEET VIRTUALLY

The April meeting of the churchwide executive board will not occur in-person. Instead, the board will be meeting on Saturday, April 25, via a Zoom meeting.

TRIENNIAL CONVENTION AND GATHERING

You are likely fielding questions about the triennial convention and gathering, scheduled for July in Phoenix.

Allow me to offer some background information before describing the current thinking.

- As you know, our life together is controlled in a significant part by our constitutions. **There is no constitutional authority for a virtual convention.**
- The executive board has the constitutional authority to set the date and time of the convention and therefore has the presumed authority to postpone or reschedule a convention.
- Our constitution is silent on what would happen in the instance of postponement with regard to officers and board members whose terms would normally end in July.
 - When the constitution is silent, we revert to the law of the state of the organization's incorporation, and that is Minnesota.
 - The relevant statutory law of Minnesota provides that **the currently serving officers and board members would continue to serve until new officers and board members are elected and installed.**
- The board, which also sets the date and time of the gathering, would have the authority to postpone the gathering.

8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

800-638-3522, ext. 2730
773-380-2730

Fax: 773-380-2419
www.womenoftheelca.org

With that background in mind, the executive committee has determined that it will **bring to the board a recommendation regarding the convention and gathering no later than April 25th**, the date of the board meeting. I have begun conversations with our Phoenix-based and convention/gathering-related businesses regarding possible postponement. I will continue the conversations and research, reporting back to the executive committee. I will communicate a message about this to our voting members-elect this week.

SYNODICAL CONVENTIONS AND EVENTS

Some conventions and other synodical events (including conference and cluster events) have been postponed or cancelled already in response to the pandemic. It seems inevitable that more will have to be postponed or cancelled.

To help you all understand the situation for synodical organizations, here is some additional background:

- **The model constitution for synodical organizations has no provision for virtual conventions.**
- The model constitution for synodical organizations **does not permit voting via email or mail or other means for a convention.** Those types of alternate voting mechanisms are in place *only* for the synodical board.
- The model constitution for synodical organizations is silent on what would happen in the instance of postponement with regard to officers and board members whose terms would normally end at the synodical convention.
 - When the constitution is silent, we revert to the law of the state of the organization's incorporation, and that is Minnesota.
 - The relevant statutory law of Minnesota provides that the **currently serving officers and board members would continue to serve until new officers and board members are elected and installed.**

So, for those synodical organizations where elections would have occurred at 2020 conventions, the officers and board members currently serving will continue their service to the synodical organization until the next convention is held and elections occur. **This is true even if someone has tapped out the seven-year service rule in 2020.**

While the churchwide executive board does not have the constitutional authority to order or mandate the cancellation or postponement of synodical conventions or events, **the executive committee has asked that I convey to you its strong encouragement that you postpone or cancel all SWO-sponsored events through the end of 2020**, carefully monitoring current federal, state, and local governmental orders and recommendations. This would apply to conference and cluster events also.

As you and your synodical board consider postponement or cancellation, you must **carefully review any contracts for your events and work with those business partners to minimize any financial implications.** Because the pandemic is widespread and no portion of the hospitality industry has been untouched by it, many facilities and vendors are willing to work with groups to minimize financial implications.

FINANCIAL REALITIES

If women are not meeting in congregational units, at conference or cluster events or at synodical conventions, **in-person offerings are not being collected, and Regular Offerings and Thankofferings are not flowing to the churchwide organization.** Without those offerings, little revenue supports the budget of the churchwide organization, and **the churchwide organization has few reserves upon which to draw.** It is as simple as that.

The executive committee of the churchwide executive board and staff are looking at a wide range of issues raised by this new reality and will have more information to report by the time of the April 25th board meeting.

In the meantime, your continued and strengthened partnership with the churchwide organization with regard to financial support is critical. What can each synodical organization do?

- Encourage women to become **Faithful Friends** by joining our monthly giving program.
- Encourage congregational units to **take up offerings** even when meeting virtually.

- **Transmit Regular Offerings** in a timely manner, perhaps monthly or quarterly.
- **Review whatever assets are held by the synodical organization and consider gifts to the churchwide organization.** Recall that the recommendation has always been that synodical organizations spend down reserves at the end of each fiscal year *by transmitting to the churchwide organization* all but the small portion that is needed as seed money for the coming year's programming of the synodical organization.

I encourage you to contact our director for stewardship, Audrey Riley, to discuss these and other avenues needed in these extraordinary times. You can email Audrey at audrey.riley@elca.org.

Y-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION

Staff is continuing their work at home. The transition from working in the Lutheran Center and working at home has gone well. We have all the equipment we need to function fully. The governor of Illinois issued a stay-at-home order that became effective this past Saturday. **Only essential personnel are now permitted into the Lutheran Center.** For Women of the ELCA, that is Elizabeth Hunter and me. One of us will go to the Lutheran Center once each week to handle mail and any other matters requiring in-person attention. At this point (and this is always subject to change), staff at the Lutheran Center will be **working remotely through April 20.** Rest assured that the day-to-day work of the churchwide women's organization is functioning smoothly. Programmatic work continues, with a new emphasis on sustaining community, which is at our core, in this time of physical distancing.

The organization is following rules set in place by the Center for Disease Control and the federal and state governments, in addition to rules established by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton and her advisors. And, of course, individuals are following the restrictions issued by their state and local governments. The bishop had previously determined that all churchwide-meetings for April would not occur in-person.

IN CONCLUSION

I invite you to pray regarding all these matters as we live into this new reality.

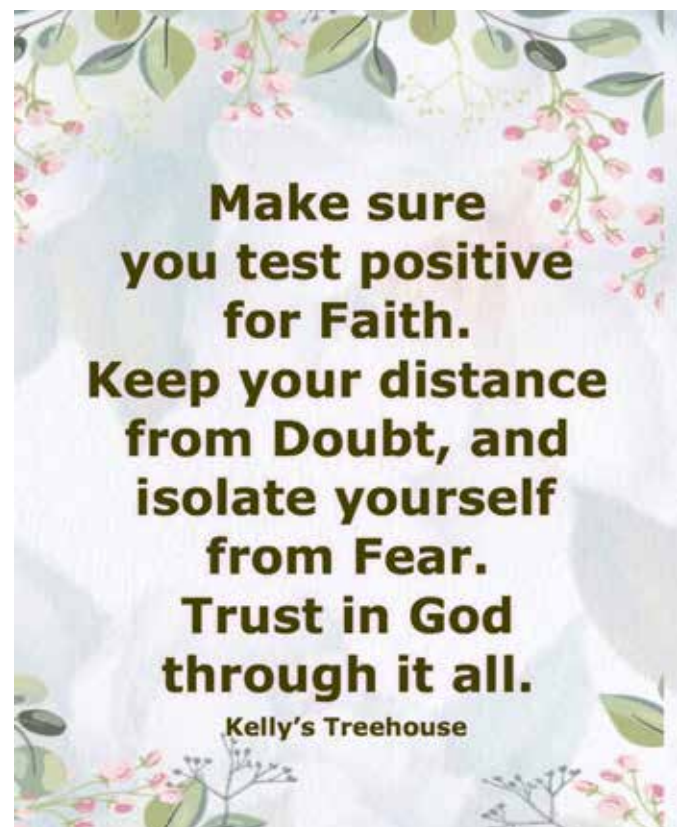
Again, please share this memo with all your synodical board members. A team effort is needed as we move forward, and everyone on the team needs to be equipped with the same information.

May the peace of God, that surpasses all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

When this is over,
may we never again
take for granted
A handshake with a stranger
Full shelves at the store
Conversations with neighbors
A crowded theatre
Friday night out
The taste of communion
A routine checkup
The school rush each morning
Coffee with a friend
The stadium roaring
Each deep breath
A boring Tuesday
Life itself.

When this ends,
may we find
that we have become
more like the people
we wanted to be
we were called to be
we hoped to be
and may we stay
that way—better
for each other
because of the worst.

LAURA KELLY FANUCCI



News briefs

Do you listen to Café's podcasts?

Café, our online magazine for and with young adult women, offers a podcast for each of its monthly issues. Listen now to one or more of Café's podcasts for young adult women who want to build Community, participate in Advocacy, strengthen **Faith**, and strive toward Enlightenment (boldcafe.org).

Gather's summer Bible study on 'Just Love'

The Revs. Gladys Moore and Christa Compton are authors of Gather's 2020 summer Bible study, "Just Love." This three-session Bible study invites readers to consider how justice and love intersect. What does "just love" look like? How is this kind of love more than a sentimental or sanitized emotion, but is instead a love-in-action that seeks to dismantle the various systems of sin that damage God's creation and harm God's people? The Rev. Dr. Christa M. Compton is pastor of Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in Chatham, N.J.; and the Rev. Gladys Moore is pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church, Summit, N.J.

Faithful Friends make a difference!

Have you heard about the Faithful Friends of the Women of the ELCA? These especially dedicated women make a difference in the life of our community of women created in the image of God by giving regularly, every month – automatically!

In fiscal year 2019, 132 Faithful Friends gave a total of \$28,234 to our churchwide organization – automatic withdrawal from either a checking account or a credit card. This is by far the easiest, most effective way to give generously to Women of the ELCA.

Will you join these Faithful Friends? It's easy to do. Sign up with a credit card online at welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline, or download the form at welca.org/faithfulfriends. You can choose to give any monthly amount from \$10 on up. Thank you!

Katie's Fund supports ministry

Women of the ELCA established the Katie's Fund Endowment in 1997 to honor the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther, raise up bold leaders for the women's organization and support bold and creative ministry for generations to come.

Your gifts to Katie's Fund, whether to the endowment or to the current fund, ensure the organization's continued commitment to community, growth, and action. The income earned by the Katie's Fund endowment, along with Katie's Fund current, supports ministry in three key areas: leadership development, global connections and living theology.

Give online at welca.org/katiesfund or by mail to: Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009.

Please make your check out to Katie's Fund Current or Katie's Fund endowment. And thank you!

(Source: interchange, Spring 2020)

Online treasurers' training is a big hit

by Audry Novak Riley

More than two dozen treasurers and presidents of synodical women's organizations – incumbent, outgoing, incoming, and prospective – joined together online for SWO treasurers' training in January.

Your churchwide organization used Zoom

For online video meetings, which is free for you to download and inexpensive for the churchwide organization to use. It works very much like Skype or FaceTime if you've ever used one of those to video chat with family or friends.

We've found that this is the most efficient and economical way to gather women from across the country for this training, which took up less than four hours of everyone's time.

In previous years, the churchwide organization offered one annual training event in Chicago for newly elected treasurers, but that was not only inconvenient, it was expensive – at least \$7,000 each year

(and sometimes much more). Our Zoom subscription is less than \$200 annually! So, offering the training via Zoom is much better stewardship for all of us, especially since we can offer it over and over again.

Would you be interested in online training?

As a congregational unit treasurer, would you be interested in an online video training session customized for your needs?

It would take only a little more than half an hour. If so, please email Audrey Riley, Audrey.riley@elca.org, and leave a note to say so. If there is enough interest, we'll put one together.

Audrey Novak Riley is director for stewardship for Women of the ELCA.



Rev. Theresa A. Schjang
7375 Samuel Drive, Denver, CO 80221
Pastorterry.nbwc@gmail.com
NewBeginningswc.org

February 5, 2020

Dear Women of the ELCA-RMS,

Thank you so much for your generosity to New Beginnings. **Your November, 2019 offering in the amount of \$500 is most generous and hugely important to the sustainability of this ministry.** Thank you!

We also thank you for your prayers. The ministry gives hope and inspiration to incarcerated women and their families who so appreciate knowing that people outside care for them and pray for them as well. Thank you.

Enclosed is a bookmark that women inside designed to commemorate our 20th anniversary last November. Enjoy!

Please put October 9 on your church calendar. That is the date of this year's Chow Hall Gala. I realize you are in Utah, but should you happen to be in the Denver area, we would love to have many of you at this, our annual fundraiser.

Thank you again.

In Christ,

Pastor Terry
New Beginnings Worshipping Community

2018-2020 Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organizations Board Members



President

Julie Elmquist

sjelmquist@msn.com

Immanuel Lutheran, Greeley, CO



Vice President

Sharon Hamilton

Sharonh0223@yahoo.com

St. Paul Lutheran, Albuquerque, NM



Secretary

Tammi Clawson

tbclawson58@msn.com

Grace Lutheran, Colorado Springs, CO



Treasurer

Jan Young

ajyoung@sisna.com

Ascension St. Matthew's, Price, Utah



Board Member

Debra Haar

haardap@hotmail.com

Prince of Peace, Colorado Springs, CO



Board Member

Lila Moore

oggram@KCI.net

Peace Lutheran, Sterling, CO



Board Member

Ginny Hallagin

ginhalla@gmail.com

First St. Paul's, Burlington, CO



Board Member

Ruth Von Mosch

sanvon@q.com

King of Kings, Pueblo, CO

Views Newsletter Coordinator,

Anna Thompson

anna498.at@gmail.com

St. Paul's, Cheyenne, WY

Newsletter design/layout by Mary Lauck



Your 2018-2020 RMSWO Board

How To Sign Up For The RMS e-Connection by e-mail

By Susan Mitchell

We encourage every woman in the Rocky Mountain Synod to sign up to receive the weekly Synod Newsletter called e-Connection. It is sent out every Wednesday to your e-mail address, and it contains articles and pictures about many things in our lives together as Lutherans living in the states that make up the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Once a quarter, e-Connection will have an article about the current issue of our “Views from the Rockies”—the newsletter of the RMS Women’s Organization. You will be directed to the Synod website, which is where “Views” issues will be available. You may read them online, and you may also print a copy for your personal use. Ask your church office to print the Views for you if you do not have access to the website.

Please sign up as follows:

1) On your computer, go to the Rocky Mountain

Synod website by putting this URL into your browser: www.rmselfca.org/faithformation/RockyMountainSynodicalWyomensOrganization.

2) On the home page, scroll down to the bottom, and in the middle of the page you will see: Subscribe to e-mail Newsletter. Below that line is a yellow rectangle that says e-mail List. Simply click on the yellow rectangle! This takes you to a page that asks for your e-mail Address, your first & last name, and to check a box stating if you are a Pastor, Associate in Ministry, Diaconal Minister, or Deaconess. Below this you should check the box that states: “I wish to receive e-Connection each week.”

3) Finally, click on the bottom bar that says “Sign Up.” That’s it! Remember, this is a free subscription to the synod e-mail weekly newsletter. You will receive notice of new issues of our Views from the Rockies newsletters from the synod’s e-Connection e-mail.

About Views from the Rockies



The “Views” is written/circulated by the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization, Women of the ELCA, and provides information about programs and projects.

NOTE: Articles for the Views are to be sent to anna498.at@gmail.com by the 12th of January, 12th of April, 12th of July, 12th of August and 12th of November.

There are no longer printed copies of “Views from the Rockies.” Each church and all individuals may now download and/or print FREE COPIES from the Rocky Mountain Synod website. To access the website and get the newsletter, go to www.rmselfca.org/faithformation/RockyMountainSynodicalWomensOrganization.

If you would like to receive the Views newsletter in your personal e-mail, please send an e-mail to anna498.at@gmail.com with the subject line “Add me.” You will be added to the e-mail list and receive all future newsletters and e-mail blasts from the RMSWO Board. Your e-mail address will not be shared

with any other organization.

The website of the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization has not only this newsletter but more information about what is going on now, what has happened in the past, and what to look to in the future. Erin Powers at the synod office has kindly kept the site updated. We will keep new, interesting information highlighted on the web.

RMSWO Website: www.rmselfca.org/faithformation/RockyMountainSynodicalWomensOrganization.

Mission:
To mobilize
women to act
boldly on
their faith in
Jesus Christ

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SYNOD
7375 Samuel Drive
Denver, CO 80221