

WHAT'S NEWS



Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization • Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2021



We all need to feel connected. Study after study shows that humans need each other. We need to feel supported, valued, and loved. Those who have good relationships are happier, healthier, and live longer than those who report feeling lonely.

Joining a team is a great way to connect with others. It fosters strength of mind, body and soul. "The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."

Your connection to a group effort is what makes a team work. Every role, no matter how seemingly insignificant, is valuable to the team's success overall.

This year, your SoCal SWO is looking for several new team members: president, vice president, treasurer and two new board members. Is it time for you to step up to the plate? Is it time for you to clothe yourself in the team jersey of God's love?* Is it time for you to bind your time, your talent, your strengths to our group effort?

Sign up for nomination by connecting with Beth Bunnell today. bethbunnell@yahoo.com



The theme verse from our upcoming SoCal SWO Convention (see page 4) includes: *Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*
—Colossians 3:14

2021 SWO BOARD TEAM MEMBERS

OFFICERS

President: Dixie Hanson
11806 Bergamo Ct.
Moorpark, CA 93021
(h) 805-529-3716
(c) 805-368-5709
dixhanson@gmail.com

Vice-President:
Rosemary Lawson
2832 N. Brighton St.
Burbank, CA 91504
(h) 818-767-2879
(w) 818-767-7260
LAWSON5323@sbcglobal.net

Secretary: Beth Bunnell
20118 Marilla St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(h) (818) 718-2086
(c) (818) 903-6608
bethbunnell@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Karil Drake
3046 N. Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91504
(c) 818-395-2353
KarilDrake@yahoo.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Lillian Simons
3757 York Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(h) 323-254-6632
homenow96@gmail.com

Mary Ridenour-French
145 N. 4th St., #329
Santa Paula, CA 93060
(c) 805-746-7751
mkridenour@gmail.com

Janet Simmons
1906 Wheaton Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711
(h) 909-399-4049
jbjs41@hotmail.com

Mary Stewart
1000 Figueroa St., #42
Wilmington, CA 90744
(h) 310-835-8126
(c) 310-339-4836
Elasaidwms@Earthlink.net

Dianne Tillman
19443 Cypress Point Dr.
Northridge, CA 91326
(h) 818-363-5951
(c) 818-429-0474
Dianne.tillman08@gmail.com

Pr. Tracy Williams
14515 Blaine Ave.
Bellflower, CA 90706
(h) 323-702-7278
twilliams_teacher@yahoo.com

FACILITIES LIAISON

Julie Jensen
What's News Database Manager
921 Gill Ave.
Port Hueneme, CA 93041
(h) 805-486-5762
(c) 805-218-8416
juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Karil Drake
karildrake@yahoo.com

Maxine Cameron Stenstrom
Graphic design/editor
21617 Quail Springs Rd.,
Tehachapi, CA 93561
maxinestenstrom1@gmail.com



My husband is a Lakers sports fan, so I watch basketball with him and have learned how important the pivot foot (which must not move as the player looks to make a play), is in basketball to prevent a turnover called traveling. Thus, when the term “pivot” was defined using the basketball analogy at our Conference of Presidents this past February, the conference theme “Pivot Don’t Panic,” took on more meaning and I understood how important that anchor was in the process of pivoting. In addition to the basketball analogy, our Bible study leader, Pastor Wyetta Bullock, used the Exodus 1:15-21 scripture story of Shiphrah and Puah, the Hebrew midwives who saved the Hebrew babies who were ordered killed by Pharaoh’s decree, to illustrate a biblical example of pivoting. The midwives pivoted away from death to life, grounded in their Hebrew faith, through their clever explanation to the king that Hebrew women were stronger than Egyptian women and had the babies before the midwives arrived to help. Pastor Bullock emphasized our pivot foot is grounded in faith and then we strive to fulfill our highest calling by seeking opportunities to love and serve the neighbor. That is who we are as a women’s organization.

Since we had a virtual Presidents’ event this year, we were asked to invite five board members to join in

the Conference of Presidents event (another financial blessing of virtual over in person gatherings which involve travel expenses). Three of our board members were able to take part in the whole weekend: Dianne Tillman, Pastor Tracy Williams and Janet Simmons with Rosemary Lawson joining us for one day.

One of the discussions we had was entitled “What is leadership?” Margaret Wheatley’s definition: leadership is anyone who sees a need for change and is compelled and willing to step forward to help it happen. Another way of defining leadership using our collective ideas: leaders motivate, encourage and empower others to use gifts with empathy and sensitivity to work together setting the agenda and bringing creativity and openness to accomplish a common goal.

The bedrock of the Women of the ELCA organization which was founded in 1987, is the congregational units where our task of serving and loving our neighbor is powered by a **pivot toolbox** that includes:

Purpose: To grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, promote healing and wholeness in the Church, Society and the world. This shared purpose is to activate each of us so people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love through a gospel of grace.

Prayer: Our individual and group prayers allows God to make us more like Jesus. WELCA encourages us to pray every Tuesday at noon.

Praise: Offer praises continually, specially during weekly worship, daily thank offerings and Bible studies.

Plan: Consider your options, stay focused and balanced as efficient planners.

As Women of the ELCA we indeed are equipped with a great toolbox!

Linda Post Bushkofsky, our executive director, gave us the churchwide perspective of the organization and their role in it. Our churchwide organization manages the day to day workings of 4,000 local units and 64 SWOs (Synodical Women's Organizations) giving us resources and events to inspire and educate. Additionally during the pandemic, they have **pivoted to**: remote staff management; managed mailings to keep communication ongoing; updated technology; renegotiated many contracts twice; maintained the publications *Gather* and *Bold Cafe*; found new and interesting ways to come together; analyzed finances and reduced staff to correspond with the projected revenue decrease of \$500,000. Even as they are exhausted and stressed, this stalwart team carries on doing their best with the resources they are given, forgiving each other's missteps and leading with grace. Linda also lifted up Article III of our constitution which lists the principles that we are governed by. See those principles at the end of this article as a reminder to us all.

The current focus in serving and loving the neighbor is promoting racial justice and fair immigration reform along with stopping human trafficking and domestic violence. In the past we have worked on banning landmines, getting rid of Styrofoam, promoting fair trade coffee and making and donating prayer shawls.

I came away from the weekend with the following ideas for change knowing that together we can accomplish much:

- Emphasize the goals and work of our organization. Use purpose statement for each meeting.
- Hold a SWO thankoffering worship service, possibly virtually.
- Improve regular communication with units by board members sharing the stories, programs and activities of both clusters and units.
- Connect with Cal Lutheran University by inviting students to participate in presentations, workshops and social ministry projects.

- Be intentional about creating diversity through invitation and using and celebrating gifts, talents and creative ideas of all.
- Promoting cluster events especially for those geographically challenged by our widespread synod.
- Give support to unit leaders by promoting connections with each other.

DIXIE SAYS:

Send me an email: dixhanson@gmail.com
We welcome your thoughts and ideas for our Synodical Women's Organization/ Women of the ELCA.
Thank you for your partnership!

Article III

PRINCIPLES OF ORGANIZATION

(as found in our Constitution)

1. Unity of Purpose - see our purpose statement
2. Affirmation of individual worth
3. Inclusiveness
4. Flexibility - Change shall be viewed as an ongoing process following regular review and evaluation.
5. Stability - Principle of good order.
6. Interdependence - units, synod and churchwide together share responsibility
7. Decision making - Foster mutuality and interdependence.
8. Leadership - interdependence and teamwork and supports and empowers leaders
9. Stewardship and Mutual support
10. Wholeness of the Church
11. Governing Documents
12. Governing Authority
13. Anti-Racist Identity - actively seek full participation and shared power in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices.

Loving Connections

Plan to connect with the Southwest California Synod Women's Organization for a
VIRTUAL CONVENTION • OCTOBER 15 and 16, 2021



Save the Date

After our successful virtual Winter Gathering, we look forward to a new and exciting convention where geographic location is not an issue. Please plan to join in for our virtual convention beginning Friday evening, October 15 and ending Saturday, October 16, 2021.



Theme Bible Verse

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
—Colossians 3:12-14



Offering

There is no charge for this event. However, offerings checks made payable to Women of the ELCA) are encouraged and can be sent to SWO Treasurer, Karil Drake, 3046 N. Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91504



Program

- Nominating and electing a president, vice president, treasurer and two new board members
- Worship with Pastor Tracy Williams on Friday evening
- Three workshops with breakout rooms on Saturday afternoon
- Bible study with Pastor Julie Morris from Mt. Cross in Camarillo (both sessions)
- Music throughout with Donna Kintzi



How to Register

- Let Julie know you plan to attend via an email to her at juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com
- Give her your name, names of others in your group, and the name of your church.
- Closer to the convention date, you will receive, via email, instructions on how to join the virtual event.



Questions

Contact Karil Drake by phone 818-395-2353 or email at KarilDrake@yahoo.com



**Are you without an informal group to discuss/study the Women of the ELCA's Gather Bible Study?
Well here's your opportunity to zoom in and connect to Bethlehem Lutheran Women's Group Gather Bible Study:**

All you need to do to join us on Zoom is to click on this link [Join Zoom Meeting](#), use the ID and passcode on the dates and times shown below.

YOU ARE INVITED

Who:..... ALL SoCal Synod women
Host: Bethlehem's Women of the ELCA
What:..... *Gather Bible Study*
When:..... Monthly: 3rd Tuesday at 4:00pm
Where:..... On Zoom
Meeting..... ID:839 8551 3717
Passcode:.... 940736

Further information: contact Dianne Tillman at
Dianne.tillman08@gmail.com



CHURCHWIDE WOMEN OF THE ELCA TRIENNIAL GATHERING

The Just Love Churchwide Gathering, currently scheduled for August 5-8, 2021 has been postponed. In its place will be the Twelfth Triennial Convention and Gathering in Phoenix, AZ during the week of September 18, 2023.

The Eleventh Triennial Convention consisting of delegates and visitors is being held this August 3-5, 2021 virtually (or digitally) if the 2017 voting members change the constitution to allow for virtual meetings.

The Women of the ELCA's executive board has recommended the 2022 budget of \$1,636,250 to be approved (compared to 2020 anticipated budget of \$2,366,000). As you know the 2020 budget fell short causing the reduction of staff from nine women to two full-time and one part-time. The executive board asked President Lisa Plorin to appoint an ad hoc task force to investigate measures the organization can take to continue operation. "We have to change tactics," Plorin said. "We can't continue to operate in the way we have been."

Even with the reduction in staff and budget shortfall, Executive Director Linda Post Bushkofsky remains hopeful. She considers the Women in our organization flexible, adaptable, and creative.

—Dianne Tillman, SWO board member

FROM YOUR SWO TREASURER

Have you sent your Regular Offering to your SoCal Synodical Women's Organization treasurer?

If you don't have her address or name
here it is:

**Karil Drake Starleaf
3046 N Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91504**

Traditionally, regular offerings are collected at Circle meetings, Bible study sessions, and other general meetings. It is recommended that a portion (50% or more) of those offerings be sent to the SoCal SWO treasurer who then remits 55% to the Churchwide Women's Organization. The remaining 45% is disbursed to other areas of need and helps cover costs of programs and events.

This past year has been difficult for us all but as we do Zoom and gradually meet in person – do not forget about supporting your SWO.

Thank you to those of you that have remitted your regular offerings. If you have not sent offerings this year, we hope to hear from you soon.

If you have any questions, please call Karil at (818) 395-2353.

Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization's

2021 WINTER GATHERING

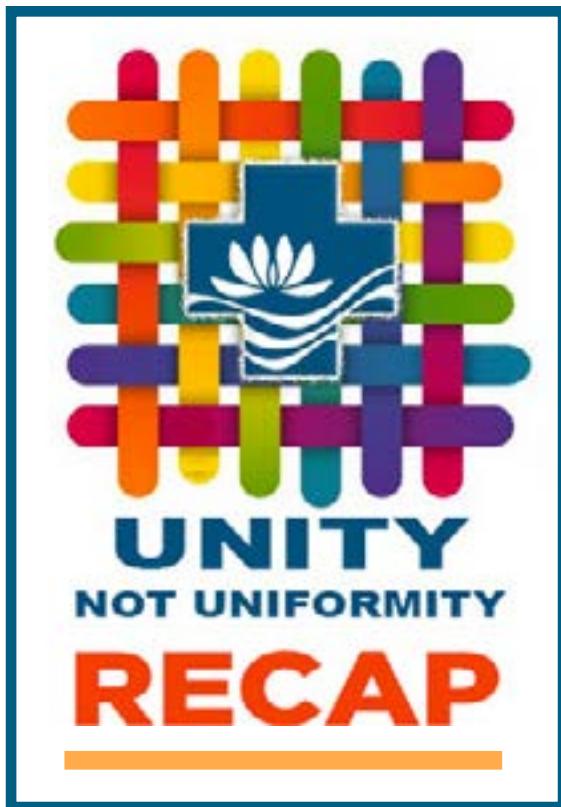
**Theme:
Unity Not Uniformity**

**Theme Verse:
Galatians 3:26-28**

The Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization held the Winter Gathering via Zoom on Saturday, March 20th. The board felt this Winter Gathering was very well received and one of our best gatherings we presented.

At this Winter gathering we continued our efforts to create community among women in our synod through education and dialogue. According to our Women of the ELCA mission statement we hoped to strengthen our community of women.

Board Member Diane Tillman led us in hymn singing and we also had a solo from Matthew Kessell



of Bethlehem, Granada Hills and Corrine DeVries, Salem, Glendale.

Devotions were presented by Pastor Tracy Williams, board member and Pastor of Holy Redeemer, Bellflower.

Our Keynote Speaker/Facilitator was Jennifer DeLeon, director for Justice for Women of the ELCA. She is president of the ELCA'S Latino ministries Association.

Since there wasn't a registration fee for this Winter Gathering we encouraged offerings to be mailed to SWO Treasurer, Karil Drake. We are

grateful to say that, to date, we have received \$1,796 which will be divided between covering expenses, Churchwide Women of the ELCA, and Lutheran Social Services of Southern California's food programs.

The Board thanks all of you who zoomed in to attend our Winter Gathering and for supporting our organization through your offerings.

Blessings to all,
—Rosemary Lawson, SWO
Vice-President

[Link to the Gathering](#)

If you missed this event,
or want to see it again
[clicking here.](#)



Pictured at left: Singers from the beautiful Irish Blessing video enjoyed by all at the end of our virtual Winter Gathering presentation.



by Sharon Heck

Lutheran World Relief (LWR) shows God's love around the world through all of us. A recent newsletter tells of a woman in Honduras with three young daughters whose village was hit by back-to-back hurricanes last Fall. As a young girl, 30 years ago, her whole village had to move to higher ground following a hurricane. She had provided for her family as a cook, but employment went away with Covid 19. Her daughters are 9, 3, and 6 months, and she told LWR her biggest needs right now are food, diapers, milk, medicine and vitamins for her children. Monetary gifts to LWR would help her and so many others. We can give through our congregations or send personal checks to Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21298-9832.

Today and every day, LWR Quilts and Kits of Care are a reminder to families that even in the midst of crisis, they are not alone. As the COVID-19

outbreak continues to globally evolve, LWR will keep us updated to reflect any changes to the Quilt and Kit Ministry. Please contact Janel Johnson-Momanyi, LWR Quilt and Kit Ministry Manager, at quiltsandkits@lwr.org or call (800) 597-5972 with any questions or concerns. LWR tells us we are in this together, and they are praying for our health, our provision and our peace as well. They thank us for being the kind of community that reminds one another that, much like the people we serve, we are not alone.

Let your love shine with the Quilt & Kit Affinity Pin

LWR tells us that for three generations, we've extended God's mercy through the warmth of nearly 27 million Mission Quilts and countless kits of care. Each quilt sewn and each kit packed is a statement of faith, hope and love.

Inspired by the love we share with our neighbors in need around the world, LWR has created the Quilt &

Kit Affinity Pin to say THANK YOU for your love and generosity.



Visit lwr.org/congregations to order your pin or you can order by phone at 800.597.5972. They cannot do any group orders. All orders must be by and for individuals. I have ordered mine and I will proudly wear it. It will be a good discussion starter, so we can promote the work of LWR in our congregations and elsewhere. Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, our Church-wide Bishop, declared that our work for social justice must be based in our Christianity, and our telling and living the Gospel story. ■

WHAT'S NEWS

of the **Women ELCA** 

Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue
Port Hueneme, CA 93041
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MISSION STATEMENT

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

PURPOSE STATEMENT

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.

YOUR COFFEE CONNECTION



Coffee, Tea & Chocolate

The Women of the ELCA works with Equal Exchange to bring you high-quality coffee, tea and cocoa products — always paying farmers fairly. You can order over the phone, or by making an account for your congregation or unit on our web store.

There are many ways to share these delicious products at church and in your community.

- Give your church access to fairly traded products at table sales after services, Christmas bazaars, fundraisers
- Start a buying club to save money by sharing full cases of coffee, tea and chocolate.
- Sell Equal Exchange products at your local Farmer's Market.

[Click here to connect to good coffee and more.](#)

**Searching for our websites?
Here's a few that might help
you connect:**

- **SoCal SWO Facebook**
Southwest CA Women of the ELCA
<https://www.facebook.com/swca-womenoftheelca>
- **Our Synod website connections**
Southwest California Synod
<https://www.socalsynod.org/ministries/swca-synod-women-of-the-elca>
WELCA | Southwest California Synod
<https://www.socalsynod.org/category/welca>
- **WELCA Churchwide website**
<https://www.womenoftheelca.org>
- **WELCA Churchwide Facebook**
Women of the ELCA
<https://www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA>