



Friends, Inc. (in Christ)

Newsletter of the Southwestern PA Synodical Women's Organization
Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
www.swpasynod.org

Volume XXXVI No. 2

Spring 2024

President's Report

Ahh – Spring!! Okay – we just changed the clocks ahead one hour – but the change in the seasons is a welcome one for most of us. Right now, I'm seeing spring flowers throughout the neighborhood – crocuses, daffodils, forsythia and the budding of the trees. By the time you read this, there may even be tulips and hyacinths in bloom. Plus, we seem to have more sunshine! Is that just me or do we all want/crave more light??

Jesus is our Light and it's never more evident to me than on Easter morning. The heaviness of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday have given way to a lightness on that Sunday morning. Maybe it's the Easter garden that surrounds the altar area, complete with lilies, tulips and an occasional hydrangea. Maybe it's the smiles on all the faces – especially those we haven't seen in a while. Maybe it's the sunshine streaming through the stained-glass windows. Maybe it's the uplifting music (putting away the minor key hymns of Lent) throughout the services. Whatever it is, it is truly a joyous day.

However, we are not to keep this light to ourselves. This light is like the candles we light on Christmas Eve – we share the light, but our light (candlelight) does not diminish. We can share our light with others. I am hesitant to talk about my faith with others but am more than willing to share time baking a cake and packaging those cake pieces for the local free dinners. I believe the light shines through that gift. Share your light. We don't know how a small gift may uplift someone else.

Blessings,

Barb Guenther
President

Nominating Ballot

Each year at convention, we have some women unfamiliar with the nominating ballot process. We use this means of selection for our president and vice-president. This eliminates "unintentional politics" and gives us a clear way for God to help us choose our next leader.

This is the way it works-on the first ballot you may write the name of anyone you feel is ready for the task of President or Vice-President. Every name on the first ballot is nominated for President or Vice-President. The second ballot is cast using only the names from the first ballot. Voting continues until someone emerges as the choice. No names can be added to the ballot after the first/nominating ballot. This year, we will be electing a Vice-President.

We Continue to Pray

We continue to pray each week for the ministries of the Women of the ELCA and those who lead them.

May 19-25: Jeannie Christensen, Synodical Board Member
May 26-June 1: Gwen Edwards, Churchwide Board Secretary
June 2-8: Linda Post-Bushkofsky, Churchwide Executive Director
June 9-15: SWPA Synod as we meet in Assembly
June 16-22: Women Members at Bethesda in Lower Burrell
June 23-29: Synodical Women's Organization of Northern Illinois
June 30-July 6: Helen Williams, Synodical Board Member
July 7-13: Merrily Burmeister, Churchwide Board Member
July 14-20: Eva Yeo, Churchwide Director for Membership
July 21-27: Women Members at Bethel in Latrobe (Stahlstown)
July 28-Aug. 3: Synodical Women's Organization of Virginia

Vice President's Report

Spring, well maybe and maybe not. But before we know it some of us (ME) will be complaining about the heat. Our last Zoom cluster event on March 2, 2024 was well attended. Thank you to all who logged on to "Go Fishing".

At this time, in person cluster meetings are scheduled for both Clusters 4 and 1&6. Cluster 4 is scheduled for April 13 at 8:45am at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, 501 Fairfield Drive, Greensburg. The theme is "International Day".

Cluster 1&6 is also scheduled for April 13 at 8:30am at Oak Grove Lutheran Church, 432 Harkins Mill Road, Zelienople. The theme is "Make a Joyful Noise".

Everyone is welcome to attend any cluster meeting that you want. You do not have to stay in your cluster. Donations for our Designated Outreach, St. Peter's Lutheran Church Afterschool Program, will be collected at both cluster meetings. Hope you can attend one.

Fall cluster meetings seem a long way off but the time for them will be here before we know it. Please consider becoming a part of the planning for cluster meetings. There is room for more planners for each cluster. If interested call me at 724-433-2034 and I'll connect you with other planners.

Our Convention is scheduled for May 18 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Greensburg. All forms needed to register and attend the convention were included in the Winter 2024 issue of Friends, Inc. Please check them and pay special attention to the deadlines for each form so final plans can be made for a successful convention. Prayerfully consider joining the board or running for board secretary. The nomination form for board members and secretary are due to me by May 1. Include a picture with the form. Mail or email them to me. NOTE if you want to email forms my email address has changed. My new email is: mamareed2000@gmail.com Sorry for any inconvenience this may cause. I hope to see you there.

In God's Service,
Linda Reed
Vice President

Stewardship and Finance Committee

Greetings to you from your new but returning Treasurer! Effective February 1st, I am once again the Treasurer for the Southwestern PA Women of the ELCA. Please send your contributions to me along with Form A at the following address:

Janet Fishovitz – Treasurer
136 Clearwater Dr.
Ellwood City, PA 16117

Remember that all Congregational, Cluster, and Designated Outreach Offerings are mailed to me. I look forward to serving you in this capacity for the next two years. Do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions, jfishovitz@gmail.com or 724-494-5472.

Blessings,
Janet Fishovitz
SWPA SWO Treasurer

Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years!

2122

The Women of the ELCA has kicked off a campaign to add \$1 million dollars to Katie's Fund over the next 3 years. Katie's Fund honors the life of Katharina von Bora Luther by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology. The 2122 campaign for Katie's Fund is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. If you would like to make a pledge to the campaign, please go to www.womenoftheelca.org/katiesfund to download a pledge sheet. You can also give to the campaign through an estate planning gift. See the website and pledge sheet for more information on this option.

Social and Racial Justice

Now that COVID seems to be settling down with vaccinations, etc., the "Sisters Celebrating Diversity Moving in Unity" are scheduling monthly neighborhood events.

An event was held January 18, 2024. A very enlightening discussion with "Embracing Our Neighbors" as the theme was presented. It was held at Essence, Carson Street, with an interesting West African cuisine. This discussion was regarding being more neighborly so that understanding each other can be better accomplished.

The event scheduled for February 29, 2024, was canceled due to scheduling problems with the speaker. It was rescheduled for March 17, 2024, at 1:00pm at 605 Morewood Avenue with the subject "Reparations: Pittsburgh Churches Talk About Repentance and Reconciliations", specially noting restitution for loss of land and wealth regarding the Bethel A.M.E. Church, Hill District.

The next event was March 23, 2024, from 10:00am to 12:30pm, at 234 Voegtly Street, Pittsburgh. This is the Light of Life homeless structure. Rev. Lloyd Massie spoke on the subject of "Debunking the Myths of Homelessness in Pittsburgh."

The following event is April 25, 2024, from 6:30-8:30pm at MACS Museum Lab, 6 Allegheny Square, Pittsburgh. Associate Professor Beverly Harris-Schenz will speak about "Our Neighbor's Experience With Everyday Racism."

Emails can be sent to: sisterscelebratingdiversity@gmail.com
Phones: Shelley Bynum 412-983-6637 or Sue Smith 412-977-4891

Lutheran Day in the Capital is scheduled for May 9, 2024. LAMPa (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania) will be celebrating its 45th anniversary. To carpool from SWPA on May 8, contact the Rev. Linda Theophilus, revtheophilus@live.com or 412-401-5742.

May 9, 2024, is also the 50th Anniversary of ELCA World Hunger. For more information, see www.lutheranadvocacy.org

God Bless,
Jeanne Christensen
Helen Williams
Bonnie Altman
Fran Mazur

Action/Outreach Committee

Our recipient for 2024 Designated Outreach, St. Peter's Afterschool Program will be attending the convention this year. Heidi Beahm is the director; she is energetic, positive, and very dedicated to this program at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Evan's City, PA. The "yellow" brochure was in the Winter 2024 *Friend's Inc.* We are very excited to introduce Heidi and remember to bring your donations. Thank you to all who donated at the Zoom cluster event and continue to support our outreach program ministry. We couldn't do it without you!

In God's Ministry,
Patty Newton
Angeline Schaefer

Mass Email Announcement

If you would like to receive announcements by email of any upcoming events, please send your email address to: swpawelca@yahoo.com. Once signed up, add the address to your email account so the emails do not end up in your spam email box.

Hope you are being safe, taking care & staying informed!
Your Mass Email Dispatcher
Karen Coates Gesalman

Prayer Pals

If you have attended any of our retreats in the last few years, you may have received a prayer pal. Please remember to reach out to your prayer pal(s) throughout the year. Praying for our Sisters in Christ is a special bond we share with each other and God.

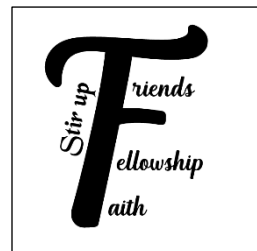
SAVE THE DATE! 2024 Joint Retreat Stir Up Friends, Fellowship, and Faith September 20-22, 2024

The NW – SW Joint Retreat, "Stir Up Friends, Fellowship, and Faith" is scheduled for September 20-22, 2024, at Lutherlyn. You may join us for all three days or just one day. More information and registration materials will be available in the Summer edition of *Friends, Inc.* Please plan to join us as we gather together to stir up good works, and encourage each other in fellowship and faith.

See you in September!

Barb Guenther
Diane Meehan
Helen Williams
Patricia Pluck

Pat Bellingham
Amy Huffman(registrar)
Nancy Ligus



SAVE THE DATE!
2026 Triennial Gathering
July 16-19, 2026
Des Moines, IA

The next triennial gathering will be held July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines, IA. Advance registration is open. Watch the Women of the ELCA website for discounted registration information. Registrations are transferable to other people if you decide not to go. If you have any questions, please contact Barb Guenther or Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer. We hope that you will consider attending the triennial gathering as they are a life changing event.

Save the Date!
2024 SWPA Women of the ELCA Convention
May 18, 2024 (one day)
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Greensburg, PA
All Creation Praises and Sings

Please note that the convention on May 18, 2024, is one day. We will start our Saturday morning with worship at 8:30am led by Bishop Kusserow and followed by a question-and-answer session. Our offering will be taken during the service.

We will follow with elections, and Fair Trade will be available during the breaks and after lunch. Please refer to the website at www.equalexchange.org and any questions or preordering should be emailed to the Reverend Linda Theophilus at revtheophilus@live.com

Lunch is being catered by Long's Catering, Inc. of Greensburg. Following lunch and fellowship, Joan Orr will lead our Bible study. We have four new designated outreach recipients for 2025 and will vote on them in the afternoon session. We are looking forward to seeing everyone on May 18th.

God Bless,
Patty Newton Roberta Herrington, Registrar
Patricia Pluck Linda Cunningham

Deadlines for the Convention Forms – Please Note!

This Convention Newsletter contains numerous forms for participating in the 2024 SWO Convention. Please duplicate forms, if necessary, as some forms are printed on the back of another form to save paper.

Delegate Form: To Barb Guenther by May 1, 2024

Board Members & Secretary Nomination Form: To Linda Reed by May 1, 2024

Registration Form: To Roberta Herrington by May 1, 2024

Resolution Form: To Barb Guenther no later than 8:30am Saturday May 18, 2024

Convention Information

Delegates – Each Congregational Unit and Intercongregational Unit should send a delegate to the convention. Please also name an alternate delegate and complete the necessary information on the form in the newsletter and return it to Barb Guenther by May 1, 2024. Delegates must be present at all sessions and be seated for the beginning of the first business session. Any delegates not seated at the first business session will not be able to serve as a delegate at the other sessions. Inform the Registrar, Roberta Herrington, of any delegate or alternate delegate changes prior to the start of the convention.

Convention Offerings – taken during opening worship service

Regular Offerings received at the convention are designated as follows:

½ to Churchwide Organization

½ to Synodical Women's Organization

The "Love Offering" will go to the Designated Outreach program, St. Peter's Lutheran Church After School Program – taken after their presentation on Saturday during the convention

Housing – Since the convention is again at a church this year, housing is at nearby hotels if you chose to stay over. You will need to contact the hotel yourself to book your room. If you need a roommate, please contact the registrar, Roberta Herrington, and she will be able to help you find someone to share a room with. Hotel contact information for two nearby hotels is listed on the registration form. You are welcome to look into other hotels in the Greensburg area too.



SWPA WOMEN of the ELCA CONVENTION



May 18, 2024

Good Shepherd

Lutheran Church

501 Fairfield Drive

Greensburg, PA 15601



ALL CREATION PRAISES and SINGS

*³Praise him, sun and moon: praise him, all you
shining stars! ⁴Praise him you highest
heavens, and you waters above the heavens!
⁵Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he
commanded and they were created.*

Psalm 148:3-5

Tentative 2024 Convention Schedule

Saturday, May 18, 2024

8:00 AM Registration
8:30 AM Opening worship – offering taken during service
9:30 – 10 AM Q&A with Bishop Kusserow
10 – 10:15 AM Break

10:15 AM Business Session I
Call to Order
Report of Credentials Committee
Adoption of Rules and Procedures & Agenda
Announcement of Convention Committee
Introduction of Synodical Board & Guests
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for Nominating Ballot for Vice President & Nominating Ballot
Report of President
Fair Trade – Rev. Linda Theophilus
Report of Vice President
Designated Outreach Representative – St. Peter's Afterschool Program
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee on Nominating Vice President Ballot & 2nd Ballot
Report of Proposed Budget for 2025
Report & Recommendations of the Board
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee on 2nd Ballot & 3rd Ballot
Report of Racial Justice Committee
Report of SW & NW Retreat Committee
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for 3rd Ballot
Report of Nominating Committee on Ballot for Secretary & Ballot

12:30 PM Lunch & Fellowship

1 – 1:30 PM Bible study

1:30 – 1:45 PM Break

1:45 PM Business Session II

Opening Prayer & Call to Order
Report of Credentials Committee
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for Secretary Ballot & 2nd Ballot(if needed)
Designated Outreach Presentations
Report of Archives Committee
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee on

2nd Ballot for Secretary
Report of Secretary
Report of Nominating Committee on Ballot for Board Members & Ballot
Report of Resolutions Committee
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for Board Members
Report of Treasurer
Report of Churchwide Rep
Report of Nominating Committee for 2025 Designated Outreach Ballot & Ballot
Report of Personal & Participation Growth Committee
Report of Action/Outreach Committee
Adoption of Budget for 2025
Report of Conduct of Elections for 2025 Designated Outreach on 1st Ballot & 2nd Ballot
Report of Finance Committee
Report of Communications/Mass Media Committee
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for 2025 Designated Outreach on 2nd Ballot & 3rd Ballot(if needed)
Unfinished Business
Report of Conduct of Elections Committee for 2025 Designated Outreach on 3rd Ballot(if needed)
Final Reports of Convention Committees
Closing worship – Installation of Officers & Board Members
Closing of Convention

RESOLUTION FORM

To be presented at the Synodical Convention in May. Can be submitted now by mail to SWO President, Barbara Guenther or email to: swpaswopres@gmail.com

A resolution is an expression of a view and/or proposal by a delegate and/or congregational unit and includes the reasons for the proposal and a suggested action to be implemented. The Resolution must be presented in writing and signed by the congregational unit delegate. A Resolution submitted now needs only the signature of the delegate. A Resolution presented at the convention requires the signature of three delegates and must be submitted by 8:30am on Saturday May 18, 2024.

Convention Resolution – 2024 Southwestern PA Synodical Women of the ELCA

Please type your resolution using the proper form in the space below. Keep a copy of the resolution for your files. Send your resolution by mail to Barbara Guenther; 375 Glenda Dr; Beaver Falls, PA 15010 or email to: swpaswopres@gmail.com or present to the Resolution Committee at the Convention.

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS:

WHEREAS:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

SUBMITTED BY: _____



NOTIFICATION OF CHANGE IN CONTACT PERSON

Please complete this form when there is a change in your contact person.

Cluster # _____ Effective Date of Change _____

Name of Church _____

Address of Church _____

Present Contact Person _____

Address _____

New Contact Person _____

Address _____

Phone #: Best _____ Alternate _____

Please return this form to: Rosemarie Henrickson, Secretary
5133 Lougean Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15207

A copy of this form should also be sent to:

- 1.) Your Cluster Planning Committee Coordinator (CPC) **-and -**
 - 2.) Newsletter Editor: Jennifer Schaefer, 1210 Beech Drive, Latrobe, PA 15650
- Please copy on colored paper (other than white) if possible*

**PA Synodical Women's Organization
2023-2024 Officers and Board Members**

Officers:

President: Barbara Guenther
375 Glenda Dr., Beaver Falls, PA 15010
412-671-9456 swpaswopres@gmail.com

V. President: Linda Reed
193 Pittsburgh St., Derry, PA 15627
724-433-2034

Secretary: Rosemarie Henrickson,
5133 Lougean Ave., Pgh, PA 15207
412-461-8619

Treasurer: Janet Fishovitz
136 Clearwater Dr., Ellwood City, PA 16117
724-494-5472 swpaswotreas@gmail.com

Board Members:

Jeanne Christensen, 3007 Glengary Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601
724-832-8588

Patricia Newton, 180 Newton Ln., Leechburg, PA 15656
724-845-2191

Joan Orr, 201 South 5th St., Youngwood, PA 15697
724-420-7864

Donna Petrell, 110 Bashford Dr., Moon Twp, PA 15108
724-457-9662

Patricia Pluck, 15 Overview Dr., Greensburg, PA 15601
724-493-1431

Angeline Schaefer, 1210 Beech Dr., Latrobe, PA 15650
724-787-5235

Helen Williams, 30 Boulder Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15239
724-393-2395

Calendar of Events

2024

May 18	2024 SWPA Annual Convention
June 6	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom
June 8	Re-Organizational Board Meeting at Zion's Luth Church in Greensburg
Sept. 5	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom
Sept. 7	Board Meeting
Sept. 20-22	NW/SW Joint Retreat at Camp Lutherlyn
Nov. 2	Executive Board Meeting via Zoom
Nov. 4	Board Meeting

2026

July 14-16	Triennial Convention in Des Moines, Iowa
July 16-19	Triennial Gathering in Des Moines, Iowa

Newsletter Information

The SWPA Synodical Women's Organization Newsletter is published four times a year following Board Meetings. Each Board Member, Officer, Cluster Planning Committee Member, and Congregational Unit receives a complimentary issue.

We welcome submissions to the Newsletter of activities or news items which you would like to share. We reserve the right to reject any material deemed unsuitable as submitted and we will edit as necessary. Due to space limitations some items may not be included.

Deadline for sending articles for the next issue is June 15, 2024.

Subscription Rate: \$5.00 per year – All subscriptions begin September 1 each year. Checks for subscriptions and/or donations for the newsletter are to be made payable to: SWPA Synod Women of the ELCA and are mailed to: Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer; 1210 Beech Dr.; Latrobe, PA 15650

Please use this form to sign up for a subscription or renew your subscription. Form may be duplicated.

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____ Phone No. _____

New _____ Renewal _____ Amount Enclosed _____

SWPA Synodical Women's Organization
c/o Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
1325 Mission Rd.
Latrobe, PA 15650

Non-Profit Organization
US Postage PAID
Latrobe, PA 15650
Permit #173

Return Service Requested



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.

Mission Statement

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