

EMBRACED BY GRACE



Women of the ELCA
Grand Canyon Synod

*Our geographic area covers the southwest corner of the
United States including all of
Arizona, Southern Nevada
and St. George, Utah*

Canyon Echoes

November, 2017

Women of the
ELCA

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“Learning From Other Interpretations” Gather Bible Study Event

Saturday, February 10, 2018
Spirit of Grace Lutheran, Surprise, AZ

Mark Allan Powell, author of the Gather winter bible study is coming to share a new way in reading and living the bible stories that we think we know so well. . . and what motivated him to select the following topics for Gather:

*Washing Hands with Distant Hearts”
“Preparing the Way of the Lord”
“The Good Samaritan”
“The Prodigal Son”

Having written more than 200 articles and 30 books on the Bible and religion, Mark comes equipped to share two popular approaches to the Bible derived from secular criticism of modern fiction. Mark is recognized globally (he taught in Estonia, Russia and Tanzania) as a leading figure in historical Jesus studies and in the study of the Gospel of Matthew, and as a pioneer in the development of narrative criticism and reader-response criticism.

“If you have a Bible study group that doesn’t like to talk to each other, this is the time we break through that.” Mark is preparing some small group discussion which will demonstrate how and why Bible stories mean different things to different people.

See page 10 to register today!

gather
FOR FAITH AND ACTION

**Advent/Christmas
Devotion**
“Joy to the World”

Winter 2018
“Multiple Meanings”
Mark Allan Powell

Published 10 times a year, *Gather*, the magazine of Women of the ELCA, offers articles, theological reflections and devotions to help readers grow in faith and engage in ministry and action. Each issue contains a thought-provoking Bible study written by one of a variety of pastors and authors from across the church.

Find more details at:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/bible-studies-pages-55.php>

Subscribe now: 844-409-0576

Yearly subscription cost is \$19.95. Digital access (computer, Ipad, smartphone) is free to print subscribers.

Message from President Myrna



Dear Sisters in Christ,

We are approaching the holiday season as this issue comes to your in-box! Before we know it, Thanksgiving, Advent and Christmas will be here. I am thankful beyond words for the wonderful ministries that you continue to be involved with: the ministries that build your own faith journey, including Bible and book studies and conversations around our Café online magazine; the ministries that support the men, women, children, youth and families in your own congregations; the ministries that connect with those in-need in your communities and across our synod, our church at large, and even globally; the ministries of justice-seeking and justice-making that promote healing and wholeness in the church, our society and in the world. We are the women of the church, and being created in the image of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we continue to be the hands and feet, and oftentimes, the voices of Christ. I ask you to pause today and give thanks for this opportunity to be women of the church together! You are awesome, and I am grateful for each of you.

Much is happening within our synod women's organization, and we celebrate that together! We've just experienced our biennial Retreat at the Franciscan Renewal Center, where more than 90 of you recognized our 500th anniversary of the Reformation and learned together. For this Retreat, we brought in an English to Spanish translator and 10 of our Hispanic sisters joined us

from La Sagrada Familia and Vida Nueva congregations. New friendships were formed and relationships are building. See pages 8-9 in this newsletter for photos. It was a fabulous week-end, and we give thanks to our Retreat Planning Team!

We've also secured Rev. Mark Allan Powell, author of our 2018 Gather winter bible study, for a day to dig into a new way to read and learn from Bible studies we think we know well. Join us on February 10th at Spirit of Grace in Surprise, AZ as we examine what bible stories mean to us (see page 10 for the registration form).

Many of our conferences are planning Spring events to bring women together from their neighboring churches. We'll be featuring each of these Spring Gatherings in our upcoming issue (Feb. 2018) so watch for details and plan to attend any of the events that look to inspire you!

Planning has begun for our biennial Convention/Gathering which will be held in November 2018. There will be more information to share with you early in 2018. And speaking of planning, several members of your board recently met with two of our churchwide staff to engage in discussion for the 2020 Triennial event which is coming to Phoenix in July, 2020.

Our 2017 Triennial theme, "All Anew," continues to reveal itself in exciting ways here in our Grand Canyon Synod. May the spirit of a new thing continue to call you and live in you and in your women's ministry in the coming months. Until next time.....

"Just Sayin.... Vice President, Suki



Tucson is considered to be a 'Dark City.' The area where I live is also a 'Dark City.' Well, we're not a city, but we are dark. After living in Las Vegas, NV for over 25 years, it was a real change to move to a desert of darkness. The perfect place to view gazillions of stars. Many people actually plan their vacation in this area just to see the night skies! Many of my evenings are spent on my patio swing gazing at the wonder of God's creation. First, the mountains turn pink followed by an impressive sunset. And then, it's dark. If you have seen photos taken by the Hubbell telescope, you will see the variety of sizes and colors that make up the beautiful night sky. This array of colors is beyond imagination. Every photo is incredible! It's worth a trip to the [Hubbell web site](#).

Remembering days on the farm when I would lay on my back for hours and look at the clouds. I could see all sorts of characters in the sky. Now that I live in the Sonoran desert I often find myself naming the saguaros (it's a game we play). At night the dark sky and stars surround me. I recognize the Big and Little Dipper; the rest are all strangers . . . until I call them by name. The names come from the personal stars in my life. Many of those stars have been mentors and offered guidance. They formed me. Some are rejection and disappointment stars. They formed me. Opportunities that I never could have imagined (serving the WELCA) have formed me. Psalm 139 tells me that God formed me. Together, as in the sky, every personal star has provided light on the path I have traveled, and I am thankful.

During this season of Thanksgiving, as I enjoy the awesome sight of the nightly cosmos, I name those personal stars and give thanks for their presence in my life. I also remember those who have left my life and give thanks for the time we had. And, the best part about living in the desert? The stars shine brightly almost every night of the year! That is a constant reminder to be thankful. Yes, I am truly blessed and duly grateful. . . Just sayin. . .

P.S. Take time to search youtube.com for Josh Groban's 'Thankful'. . . there's so much to be thankful for.

Meet Board Member, Pastor Maria

Maria del Rosario Valenzuela (Mary of the Rosary-translation) seems like a good name for a Lutheran pastor! I am a native of Arizona and was born in Winslow. Before I was ordained in 1989, my husband and I started doing ministry in Surprise at El Mirage Lutheran Center which is now Pan De Vida Lutheran Church.

After ordination, I served as Coordinator for Latino Ministry for the Grand Canyon Synod. In 1990, I received a call to start a ministry in El Paso, Texas. Cristo Rey was born where I served as pastor and my husband, Reinaldo, was responsible for reaching out into the community. During 1997-2002, I served as Director for Latino Ministry for the ELCA in Chicago.

When we returned from Chicago, I served on a part-time basis at Messiah Lutheran Church. As numbers in the congregation continued to diminish, the congregation decided to give up the building to a Spanish speaking Lutheran congregation was born, Vida Nueva. From 2003-2007 I served as Pastor of Care at American Lutheran Church in Sun City, AZ. In 2007 I again served on a part-time basis as coordinator for Latino Ministry for the Grand Canyon Synod working directly with Charles Newman and John Schaumburg.

Since then I have served on a part-time basis at Vida Nueva, Alleluia and American Lutheran Church during the summer. In November, 2016, I really retired and now serve on the board for the Women of the Grand Canyon Synod. My current calling is to welcome the Spanish speaking churches in the Grand Canyon Synod into the fold of Women's Ministries. God has opened doors and has given me opportunities that I never imagined! I am so blessed.



#VegasStrong



On Thursday, October 5 a Prayer Vigil was held at Community Lutheran Church in Las Vegas (Colorado River Conference) in memory of the 59 lives lost at the Mandalay shooting on October 1. Please continue to pray for the victims, their families and friends, and all of the people who have been affected by this terrible tragedy.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

DISCIPLESHIP

...go and make disciples of all nations

Digging Deeper – Part 1

We often search for a quick and easy fix for something that is wrong or not going right in our lives. In this issue we begin sharing some tips for helping us live out our calling as children of God. Following are two ways to help you dig deeper into your spiritual life as disciples. We'll continue the discussion in following issues:

1. **Daily Prayer.** Daily prayer is often neglected in our life because it requires us to find time in our busy schedules. This month, be intentional about setting aside a time and place for prayer. Then use this time to try out different types of prayer:

- **Scripture Prayer:** Read a passage of scripture several times, then ponder it in silent prayer.

- **Prayers of Intercession:** Pray for all the needs you observe in the world and in other people's lives.

- **Prayers of Thanksgiving:** Focus your prayer on all the blessings you are thankful for, in your life, in the life of others, and in the world.

- **Centering Prayer:** Sit with God in silence and be fully aware of the loving presence of God, letting the silence communicate your love for God.

- **Scripted Prayer:** Turn to your hymnal, the Psalms in the Bible, or other prayer books and pray with the words others have written for you.

2. **Worship Weekly.** Make a commitment to attend worship faithfully. When in town, be in church. When out of town, find a church there. Every weekend, commit to be part of the worshipping people of God so God can fill you with hope, strength, comfort, and peace. This month, strive to be especially open to the wonder, awesomeness, and mystery of God truly present in Word and Sacrament, in preaching and praising, in music and singing.

Committee Members: Wanda Frenchman-Takacs, Suki Kisling, Alice Natale, Pastor Jennifer Zahnow

JUSTICE

The Grand Canyon Synod WELCA is dedicated to educate and assist programs and services addressing (1) human trafficking, in Arizona, southern Nevada and southern Utah; (2) homelessness, particularly with women and children and (3) Native American Ministry needs in Rock Point and urban Phoenix. At our October Retreat held at the Franciscan Renewal Center, a presentation from StreetlightUSA (streetlightusa.org) highlighted their model of care for young girls who are at risk for, or victims of, child sex trafficking through trauma-informed crisis intervention and stabilization programs. The documentary, "I am Jane Doe," available for viewing on Netflix or from Amazon, focuses on victims' fight against online child sex trafficking. This is an international issue and the website, <http://globalstudysect.org/> offers more information.

On a global note, Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) outreach has been extremely busy in support of those impacted by the hurricanes and flooding in Texas, Florida and the Caribbean. Funds raised help make sure that each community receives the physical, mental and emotional care needed to recover from a disaster. LDR has a reputation of not only meeting immediate needs, but they are usually the last to leave in order to meet the long term goals of the communities in which they engage. For more information go to www.ELCA.org/disaster.

Committee Members: Judy Baker, Phyllis Borchardt, Heidi Gerrish, Lisa Sherry, Pastor Maria Valenzuela

STEWARDSHIP

...is what happens after you say 'yes' to Jesus.

THANKOFFERINGS AND COIN BOXES: Have you ever wondered how Thankoffering services got started? Beginning in the late 19th century, Lutheran women were given small Thankoffering 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 particular blessings were noted. From their use came the idea of an annual church service to celebrate their collection. Thus was born the everyday Thankofferings.

GIVING THANKS is a time to pause and give thanks for all the blessings in your life. Women of the ELCA have a tradition of giving Thankofferings. This is significant to many Lutheran women and it has been passed down to generations. Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community and of meeting together to joyfully give thanks.

For Christian disciples, giving thanks involves acknowledging our responsibility to give. The Thankoffering is one way that Christian women have encouraged the link between gratitude and giving. Many of us are fortunate to experience prosperity. Sometimes, however, our surplus can make us ambivalent about the struggle of those who are not so fortunate (think of all the recent stateside disasters and Tent cities in foreign lands). As you consider your giving this year, make this your Thanksgiving prayer: "God, I am thankful for this small bother. . . I am thankful for these minor nuisances that remind me I have a responsibility to support those who are in need. Amen"

Committee Members: Debbie Romboletti, Myrna Wells-Ulland, Randi VenHuizen

About the Money...

Grand Canyon Synod Women of the ELCA Treasurer's Report February 1, 2017 - October 15, 2017

Balance on Hand 2/1/17	\$ 23,508
Receipts	29,044
Disbursements	<u>(21,141)</u>
Balance on Hand 10/15/17	<u>\$ 31,410</u>
Conference Funds:	
Cactus Conference	\$ 494
Capital Conference	474
Colorado River Conference	777
High Country Conference	833
NE Valley Conference	429
Rio Salado Conference	593
Sunrise/Santa Cruz Conference	<u>1,481</u>
Total Conference Funds	5,081
General Funds:	
Checking	19,630
Mission Investment Fund	<u>6,699</u>
Total General Funds	<u>26,329</u>
Total Balance on Hand	<u>\$ 31,410</u>

Note: Retreat Expenses are not reflected in the Disbursements noted on this report.



Fall Retreat Offering:

A big THANK YOU to our "Transformed: A New Katie" retreat attendees on Oct. 20-21. We collected a total of \$1,604 in offerings disbursed to Lutheran Social Services-SW: \$401 (25%); StreetlightUSA: \$401 (25%); and Katie's Fund at Women of the ELCA: \$802 (50%). These gifts and your generosity are much appreciated and go far in assisting these groups with their respective mission.

Fall Retreat In-Kind Gifts:

Retreat attendees brought gift cards in increments of \$25 or more, plus cash or checks, to support holiday gifting for two agencies in our community: LSS-SW (Foster Teens and Refugees) and StreetLightUSA. The total in-kind gifts were \$1090 and will be split between the two organizations.

LOVE Offering

Love

The **LOVE** offering received at the retreat was \$870. If you were not able to attend our Retreat and have not sent in your unit's **LOVE** offering, Treasurer Debbie will be happy to receive it. This annual offering is used by the Synod to cover operational costs and to provide programming and support resources for the congregational units in the Grand Canyon Synod Women's Organization.

Make your check out to GCS-WELCA, remember to put your church number on your check, and mail it along with FORM A to Debbie at her new address:

Debbie Romboletti
1111 Heaton Ave
Henderson NV 89052





HELP!!!

In order to have another voice for the 2020 Triennial being held in Phoenix, the Grand Canyon Synod Women need to bring more Active Units into our fold. The number of voting members from each Synod are assigned based upon the number of Active Units within each Synod. We are currently entitled to 2 Voting Members, plus the President, for the 2020 Convention. We would LOVE to increase our delegation to a total of 4 women! For that we need your help. We know there are women's ministries groups out there who are active. If you qualify for the following four components we would love to hear from you. Misconceptions are often heard that we are a "club" with "dues." Not so.

An 'Active Unit' is defined by our constitution as having four required components:

- Women coming together for study, support, and action.
- Women participating in the ministry of WELCA beyond their congregation.
- Designating a contact person to be in communication with the Grand Canyon Synod Women and Churchwide.
- Financially supporting our Women of the ELCA through regular and special offerings.

If you can put a check mark after each of these requirements, we want to hear from you and designate you as an Active Unit. Again, one of the biggest misconceptions is the money. You can be assured that whatever your financial offering is, it is put to good use to further the Synod-wide educational/awareness programs and provide Scholarships for women. The financial offerings your Women's Ministries decide to make are totally flexible and can vary from season to season.

Time is running short. We need to update our current list by **February, 2018!!!** If your Unit would like help in organizing, re-organizing, or re-energizing your women's ministry, please contact us. President Myrna and Vice President Suki are willing to travel anywhere in our Synod to engage in meaningful discussion with you about your women's ministry. Our goal: To connect and support all of the active women's ministries in our congregations across our Grand Canyon Synod. Sharing ideas with each other will benefit everyone.



Photo of one happy woman who found out how exciting it is to be a part of Women's Ministries in the Lutheran church she is attending. Who knew church ladies could be so much fun and make such a difference in the lives of so many — including hers. Get on board sisters — opportunities are waiting for YOU.



Did you know that you can now direct a portion of eligible purchases from Amazon as a donation to our Grand Canyon Synodical Women's Organization by using Amazon Smile?

If you sign on to smile.amazon.com you can enter our full name in the charity search box and search for us that way. You must start at smile.amazon.com to select our GC SWO as your preferred charity. Once you've made that connection, you don't need to re-enter your chosen charity each time you shop at Amazon. Please note that you cannot deduct this donation personally; the donation is between AmazonSmile and our organization. We recommend you try it out. It's another way to support our ministries.



Triennial Gathering Update

The Facts Just the Plain Facts Minneapolis, July, 2017



- Nearly 3,400 participants—1,300 were first-timers
- Nearly 40 participants were from the Grand Canyon Synod
- \$49,094.60 = Thursday evening THANKoffering service
- 404 participated in the Run, Walk and Roll—raising \$19,116 for seed grants to support Raising up Healthy Women and Girls
- In Kind Gifts = \$19,000 in Gift Cards; 27,000 items of hygiene products, clothing, quilt kits, and Days for Girls kits
- 5,850 labyrinths were crafted (knit/crocheted/quilted)
- \$64,000 was given during Sunday's service
- 97 people gave blood = 81 units
- Speakers Included Nobel Laureate Leymah Gbowee, a Liberian peace activist; Alexia Salvatierra, a national leader on issues of immigration and poverty; and Angela Khabeb, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church, Waukesha, WI
 - *"Christianity is not comfortable. If you are comfortable in Jesus, you are doing it wrong."*

Pre-Register for 2020

A special pre-registration price of \$265.00 has been extended until **December 31, 2017**. Payment in full is required at the time of pre-registration and is not refundable. However, it is fully transferable and would make a lovely gift or scholarship if you find you are unable to attend. The Eleventh Triennial Gathering, will be held July 16-19, 2020 in our own back yard—Phoenix, AZ—Convention Center—Grand Canyon Synod! The Sheraton and Hyatt Hotels have been reserved for our convenience.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

After 12/31/17 you will not have another opportunity to register until late 2018 or early 2019. AND, the cost will be higher. Plan ahead!

<https://www.welcatg.org/pre-register-for-2020>

We've been asked to identify potential artists to create the 2020 communion ware. If you can recommend someone, please email us at grandcanyonwomen@gmail.com

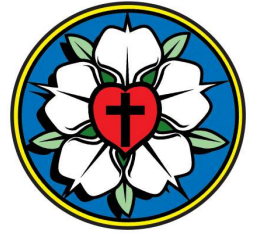


2020 Planning has begun! Several Grand Canyon Synod WELCA Board Members, Wanda Frenchman Takacs, Myrna Wells-Ulland, Phyllis Borchardt, Judy Baker, Pastor Maria Valenzuela, Randi VenHuizen and Suki Kisling meet with Linda Post Bushkofsky, WELCA Executive Director and Gabriela Contreras, Director for Meeting Planning in Phoenix to discuss plans for the 2020 Triennial Gathering . . . to be held in Phoenix!



We Were Transformed!

93 attendees from 25 churches across the Grand Canyon Synod attended our **WELCA Retreat** held at the Franciscan Renewal Center on Oct. 20-21. With Reformation as the theme, the week-end began on Friday evening with wonderful Renaissance music by guest vihuelist, Joshua Pierce, and a visit from Martin Luther (Pastor Ken Lenz).



Martin then joined us for German wine, cheeses and breads where the conversation and laughter picked up. Even our Hispanic sisters from La Sagrada Familia and Vida Nueva, attending their first WELCA function, fit right in and enjoyed the activities!

A very BIG thank you to the Retreat Committee: Mary Sue Hyatt and Kathy Swan (Christ the Lord/Carefree), Karen Olson (Ascension/Paradise Valley), Terry Nelson and Myrna Wells-Ulland (Living Water/Scottsdale) for all of their hard work and organization. A special thanks to Laura Cary (Shepherd of the Valley/Phoenix) for handling the registration tasks, Jane Chavers (Christ the Lord/Carefree) our keyboard player, and Susan Clancy (Christ the Lord/Carefree) who assisted with reception set up. It was truly an experience that will be hard to top.



A wonderful sampling of German wines—with the Luther seal embossed glasses!



From across the Synod, Lutheran sisters unite!



Former YAGMs, Heidi (Uruguay) and sister, Julie (Senegal), with Mom Cindy (middle)

Canyon Echoes November 2017



Song leader, Mary Sue



Joshua Pierce



A little German...a little Spanish.
No language barriers here.



Martin's receiving line



Sherry Koopot, Docent at the Phoenix Art Museum, gave us a wonderful (and complete) lesson on the Renaissance and Reformation, along with some pointers for art appreciation. Excellent presentation!



Nothing beats the smell of wassail, hot coffee and fresh baked apple strudel for break. What a treat!



Shari Jones, Lord of Life in Sun City West, shared the black/white/one color quilt she made for the 2017 Triennial Gathering Quilt Challenge.



Heidi wraps up her Visioning workshops sharing LOTS of ideas.



Team 2 shows off their prize winning Transformation bracelets from playing Lutheran Jeopardy



Our sisters from La Sagrada Familia along with Pastor Maria Valenzuela, Linda Herrera, and translator, Alma Garza.



Katie Luther (Pr. Marta Poling-Schmitt) shares a brief history of her life with Martin and how surprised they both are at all of the activities and celebrations that are happening this month—500 years after “Martin nailed those 95 Theses to the Castle Church door.”



Randi VenHuizen brought a record number of 14 women from Spirit of Joy in Gilbert! There should have been a prize for that.

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will”





**Grand Canyon Women's Ministries
 Gather Bible Study Event**

"Learning from Other Interpretations"

Saturday, February 10, 2018

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

Spirit of Grace Lutheran Church

15820 W. Clearview Blvd., Surprise, AZ

**\$35.00—Registration
 Continental Breakfast/Lunch**

Author of the Gather Bible Studies for winter 2018, Rev. Mark Allan Powell will be joining us from Columbus, OH where he serves as a Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. He has also taught at seminaries in Estonia, Russia and Tanzania. He edited the *HarperCollins Bible Dictionary* and has written more than 100 articles and 25 books on the Bible and religion. In his spare time he works as a professional music critic and has more than 1900 published reviews! We will be exploring the New Testament through the eyes of the characters in the stories we think we know so well. . . a new way of hearing the Word!

Please PRINT

NAME _____

Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Preferred Phone _____

Church name/city _____

Conference (if known) _____

Menu: Salad Bar, Soup, Garlic Bread sticks, Cookies

Mail Registration and Check for \$35.00 made payable to GCS-WELCA to:

Phyllis Borchardt, c/o Spirit of Grace
 15820 W. Clearview Blvd., Surprise, AZ 85374

**Registration Deadline: Wednesday, January 31, 2018
 (or until SOLD OUT)**

To register and pay online go to <http://grandcanyonwomen.org/events.html>

Spanish translation will be available

Reflect, Pray and Prepare for the Day



Daily Grace is an on-the-go companion for your journey, offering a faith reflection every day. Provided from our churchwide office, *Daily Grace's* brief writings will help you encounter God's extravagant, boundless and often surprising grace! You will be comforted, challenged, inspired, consoled and confronted. The daily reflection will stir you to live out your baptismal calling. *Daily Grace* is available from the I-Tunes App Store or the Google Play Store. You may also sign up to receive *Daily Grace* via email by visiting the Women of the ELCA Website.

Bold Connections is a free monthly e-newsletter of Women of the ELCA. Whether you participate a lot or a little in Women of the ELCA in your congregation, you'll find helpful news and information on our programs and activities, and stories of how together we live out our purpose and mission. It is delivered via e-mail toward the end of the month. To sign up for Bold Connections, go to www.womenoftheelca.org and look under Publications.

bold
connections

Interchange/Intercambio is published four times a year by Women of the ELCA, in spring, summer, fall and winter. It is sent without charge to each congregational unit of Women of the ELCA and to elected leadership in synodical women's organizations and conferences. You can download the English or Spanish version free anytime by clicking [Interchange/Intercambio](#).



Grand Canyon Women of the ELCA
Women of the ELCA



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Women of the ELCA

Helpful Websites and Contacts

www.elca.org

This will access the ELCA's national churchwide office

www.womenoftheelca.org

Churchwide website of Women of the ELCA; resources for your congregational unit as well as *Café*, an e-magazine for young women

www.grandcanyonwomen.org

Website for our Grand Canyon synod women

grandcanyonwomen@gmail.com

Email to reach our Grand Canyon synod women's leadership

www.gathermagazine.org

Website for *Gather* magazine, the magazine of Women of the ELCA

www.welcatg.org

Website for latest information about our 2017 Triennial Gathering

www.boldcafe.org

Online magazine for Lutheran women

www.lwr.org

Website for Lutheran World Relief

www.bread.org

Bread for the World—find out how to write congress, donate and order your copy of *bread*, find out what's happening, request email updates

www.elca.org/hunger

ELCA World Hunger—hunger facts, resources, stories, how to give

Happenings Around the Grand Canyon Synod



Hear Me ROAR!

Here is your new WELCA national Executive Board elected at the Triennial Convention in Minneapolis. Check out the last row. Second from right. That's our former Grand Canyon Synod Women's President, **Laura Krueger**! Congratulations and prayers as you serve in this new capacity. With Triennial 2020 coming to Phoenix, our voices from the Grand Canyon Synod are certain to be heard.



Several hundred pillowcase dresses that were stored in our synod women's storage unit were retrieved, washed, and made their way to Nicaragua this past summer.

Infant Diaper Challenge

Alleluia Lutheran Church has been providing diapers and wipes to families who are struggling financially, twice a month, since March, 2015. . . and they need your help. This year the anticipated need is 8,000 diapers and 16,000 wipes EACH month. All sizes of diapers are needed, from newborn to toddler pull-ups. An alternative option to providing diapers and wipes is to fund the cost of one month's diapers and wipes (estimated monthly costs are between \$2,000.00 and \$2,500.00) in order to continue this needed service. Alleluia would like to challenge your Congregation to donate a month's supply of diapers and wipes.



Alleluia also invites anyone who would like to help with the distribution. On the first and third Saturday of each month, from 10:00 am to noon, they meet at Alleluia, 8444 W. Encanto Blvd., Phoenix. You might even get an opportunity to hold a little one. This program provides financially struggling families much needed support and is in partnership with the Arizona Diaper Bank. For more information visit alleluiachurch.org or email diaper@alleluiachurch.org



Can you see me now?

Increase the visibility of your women's programs with beautiful signage, for example, this one from Build-A-Sign (buildasign.com). Signs can be designed by you, on-line customized to your own message. In this example, artwork for "Women of the ELCA" is already on file. The sign shown in the picture is a 78" x 33" retractable banner.

If you like this example, contact [Suki Kisling](mailto:Suki.Kisling@buildasign.com) for details.

There are other signage vendors and they often offer specials (free shipping, 20% off, etc.) Retractable banner signs are very well made, easy to assemble and come in easy to transport bags.

(This example does not constitute an endorsement.)

More Happenings Around the Grand Canyon Synod



Ninety two women from **American Lutheran Church** in Sun City, AZ kicked off their Fall Season luncheon by inviting Suki, VP Grand Canyon Synod, to speak on 'Empowering Women of the Church.' Capably assisted by President Myrna and her PowerPoint, the women were walked through happenings from last summer's Triennial Event held in Minneapolis, after which they enjoyed a wonderful lunch and lots of chatter. 2020 Triennial luggage tags were given to all attendees with a challenge to pass them on to friends from out of state inviting them to Phoenix in July, 2020. A generous Speaker Honorarium was donated by the American women to Lutheran Disaster Relief.

Berkeley Harris, YAGM, Reporting from Senegal



My first three weeks in Senegal were dedicated to an in-country orientation with my fellow Senegal Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) and our country coordinator, Kristin. We have been very busy with language classes (which are taught almost entirely in French!), meeting tons of people, and cultural lessons all day. It is special to share this experience with people who are becoming my close friends.

On our very first day here we were treated to our choice of fabric from the market to make two custom-made dresses. Learning to eat has been a bit of a challenge. The Senegalese people eat their meals 'around the bowl.' I love the communal feel, but I definitely have a lot more practice to do in terms of successfully eating with my hands. There is also a special way that Senegalese hand wash clothes. I tested it out with a whole week's worth of laundry. It took me over an hour but my clothes came out nice and clean!

Feel free to follow me on Instagram at [Berkley.hope](https://www.instagram.com/berkleyhope) or email me any questions at berkleyhope@email.com. I also have a blog at <https://berkleyhope.wordpress.com> that has not yet been used, but I plan to use for pictures and reflections of my experience.



Conference Planners—WAKE UP!

A great opportunity awaits you. The next issue of Canyon Echoes will be coming out mid February, 2018 and we would like to give each Conference 1/2 page to advertise your Spring Gathering Event. The article should include: Conference Name, Theme, Date, Location, Speaker, Cost, Contact Information and any other information that would be useful for others to know. Our mailing list is currently over 600 contacts and Canyon Echoes can provide you another way to reach out to women in your area and beyond. Send your information to Suki Kisling (sukikisling@gmail.com) or call her (702 493-7436) if you have any questions. **Deadline: January 15** (with all of the holidays in our future, remember to PLAN AHEAD)



We are THANKFUL

As Lutherans we have just completed over a month long recognition of 500 years of the Reformation; the occasion where Martin Luther nailed those 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany and gave birth to the Lutheran faith. We are THANKFUL!

Many of Luther's writings center around unity, inclusion and the fact (scriptural) that we are ALL saved by grace. Today that message rings strong and true. Joan Chittister writes in her book, *Uncommon Gratitude*, that "Unity is a commitment to becoming one people who speak in a thousand voices. Rather than one message shared by a thousand voices, unity is one message shaped by a thousand minds. Unity is not external control; it is internal commitment derived one person at a time until what they hear from one another touches the heart and drive the soul of them all." Bishop Elizabeth Eaton continues to repeat the mantra that "we are one church." We need to acknowledge our differences and listen. We are individuals created to be inclusive. As Christians we have so much to be THANKFUL for.

As an individual we cannot change the world alone. We can, however, change ourselves to recognize the gifts we have been given and become more grateful for what we have. Then, once we are comfortable with our own beings, we can move out of our comfort zone and help others find the peace and comfort of knowing a God who has never given up on us and offers us the best gift of all — GRACE.

Do not dwell on the negative happenings of the world. Count your blessings every day (starting a Gratitude Journal will definitely bolster your spirits) and share the unconditional LOVE which you have been given and be THANKFUL.

From our Treasurer, Debbie:

Here we are, nearing the end of another calendar year, and time has certainly flown by! As you approach the end of 2017, please make sure to send in your offerings by the end of December. This will allow me to properly count them for the current fiscal year. I will be making contacts with all of our units within the next few weeks to make necessary information available. In addition, year-end offering acknowledgement letters will be going out shortly after year-end. If you have any questions, or need updated Form A, please email me at treas@grandcanyonwomen.org

ALERT! In order to receive proper credit for your unit offering, your LOVE offering and your THANKOFFERING, remember to ALWAYS include your church number on your check and on Form A or B. If you don't know what your church number is, contact me at treas@grandcanyonwomen.org or call me at 702-874-2013.

What's happening with your women's ministry?

Has your church or conference had an interesting event or speaker? In what ministries are your women involved? Do you have photos? What you are doing may be the inspiration for another unit or congregation or group of women. Share your news with us by emailing content and photos to grandcanyonwomen@gmail.com.
THANK YOU!

Upcoming Events for Women in the GC Synod

Boot Camp with Suki

Monday, November 20, 2017 5 pm
Gloria de Cristo
Yuma, AZ

Gather Bible Study

Rev. Mark Allan Powell
Saturday, February 10, 2018
Spirit of Grace
Surprise, AZ

Sunrise/Santa Cruz Conference

"Fill My Cup, Lord"
Saturday, March 3, 2018
Mt. Zion, Tucson

Cactus Conference

"Feed My Lambs"
Saturday, March 3, 2018
Gloria de Cristo
Yuma, AZ

Colorado River Conference

Saturday, April 21, 2018
Christ the Servant
Henderson, NV

High Country Conference

Saturday, April 28, 2018
Spirit of Joy
Clarkdale, AZ

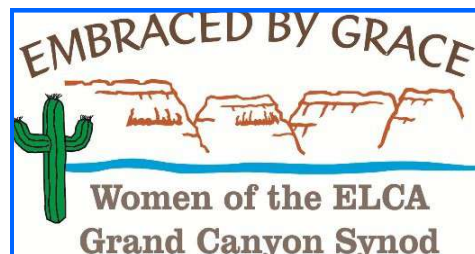
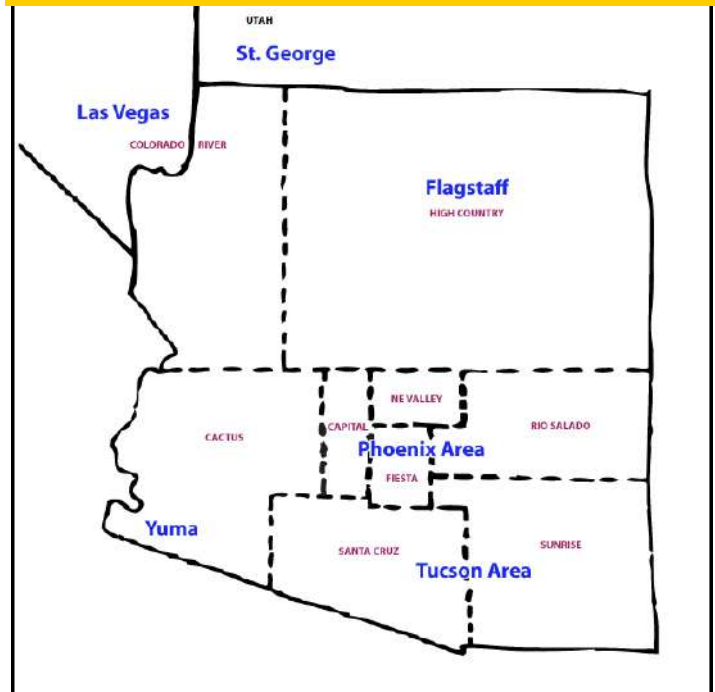
Grand Canyon Synod Assembly

June 14-16, 2018
Resurrection Lutheran
Tucson, AZ

ELCA National Youth Gathering

June 27-July 1, 2018
Houston Convention Center
Houston, TX

The 9 GC Synod Conferences



Save the Date

Grand Canyon Synod Convention

November, 2018

Phoenix area

Have an upcoming conference or synod-wide event you'd like to see listed? Send us an email at grandcanyonwomen@gmail.com



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.

El Proposito

Como comunidad de mujeres creadas a imagen de Dios, llamadas a convertirnos en discípulas de Jesucristo, y fortalecidas por el Espíritu Santo, nos comprometemos a crecer en la fe, afirmar nuestros dones, apoyarnos las unas a las otras en nuestras respectivas vocaciones, involucrarnos en el ejercicio del ministerio y la acción, y promover la sanación e integridad en la iglesia, la sociedad y el mundo.

What does our churchwide Women of the ELCA logo mean? Our churchwide logo, with the cross, water and a white lily, identifies women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It's a reminder of the growth, beauty, and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It's also a reminder of the mission of the church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)

2016-2018 Grand Canyon Synod Women of the ELCA

Our website: www.grandcanyonwomen.org

Our main email: grandcanyonwomen@gmail.com

Executive Committee

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Ministry U of A-Sunrise)
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Pastor Maria Valenzuela (Alleluia-Cactus)
623-640-8997 (cell)

Your board wants to hear from you! If you have concerns or ideas you would like us to consider, please send your thoughts to our officer's email or to the main email. Thank You!