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Past Issues

EMBRACED BY GRACE



**Women of the ELCA
Grand Canyon Synod**

Our geographic area covers the southwest corner of the US, including all of Arizona, southern Nevada, and St. George, Utah

**Canyon
Echoes**

[View this email in your browser](#)

Women ^{of the} **ELCA** 

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.



Join us for Bible Study with Rev. Sara Olson-Smith
(author of the Winter/Spring 2024 Gather Bible Study)
“Scripture and nature: Teachers of faith”



Jesus regularly invokes nature in his teaching, drawing us into deeper relationship with the created world. But it’s not just Jesus inviting us to see creation as teacher and kin. The scriptures themselves help us see the important role of the created world in God’s story and saving work. This four-session Bible study explores how biblical stories of the natural world help us to grow our love for and commitment to God, other people and our beloved earth.

Rev. Sara Olson-Smith will lead us in exploring Weather, Creatures, Rivers, and Food and how these things impact our relationship with the created world.

Date: Saturday, February 3, 2024

Time: 9:00am Registration

9:30-noon Program

Noon to 1:30 Lunch and Closing Remarks/Prizes

Where: American Lutheran Church

17200 N. Del Webb Blvd

Sun City, AZ 85373

Cost: \$15/person, includes lunch

Registration now available at:
<http://grandcanyonwomen.org/events/>



Women of the ELCA, Grand Canyon Synod

Memories from 30th Convention/Gathering
“The Three W’s of JUST Love: Why, Where, When”
(and **WHO**)
November 10-12, 2023

Advent and Holyday Greetings,

Are you still breathless and overwhelmed from our recent Convention/Gathering at the Holiday Inn and Conference Center in Mesa, AZ? We may have been small, but we were mighty with all of the inspirational speakers who gave us knowledge and ideas of how we could be doing God’s work. Some of the highlights:

- ♥ Recognizing our native land with readings by Wanda Frenchman, Oglala Lakota and Lenape, and Patty Charley, Navajo.
- ♥ **Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Arizona (LAMA)** is doing great work to advocate for justice in areas of hunger, voting rights and water rights in the state of Arizona, and how we can be in touch with our elected officials and join in Lutheran Day at the Legislature at the Arizona Capitol on Thursday, January 18 @ 9:30-1:30.
- ♥ In partnership with Lutheran Social Service of the SW, the **Interfaith Homeless Lodging Program (I-HELP)** is providing a safe haven for people who find themselves homeless and helps them move from crisis to stability.
- ♥ **StreetlightUSA** is providing a faith based, holistic healing place for adolescent female survivors of child sexual exploitation and trafficking. This program gives survivors a place to dream, be empowered, and live a full and enriching life.
- ♥ Watching “**Kiss the Ground**” film opened our eyes to what we are doing to the earth. . .and how we must wake up and make a difference.
- ♥ How we can support the shelter for asylum seekers, **La Casa de la Misericordia y Todas la Naciones** in Nogales, Sonora, Mexico. A good start was the car load on **In Kind** gifts and financial donations provided during the Convention/Gathering.
- ♥ What’s all this about **JUSTICE**?
- ♥ How can we breathe (CPR) life into our **Women’s Ministries**?
- ♥ Calm **Brain Gym** exercise and meditation helped relax our minds and muscles.
- ♥ An overachieving Chef provided meals to help us forget about our **diets**.
- ♥ Music from **Faith/La Fe El Coro Choir** had us all singing in Spanish! And that amazing 8-year-old, Yzael, would make any grandma want to give him a hug! (which I did)
- ♥ Around the Grand Canyon Synod with Bishop Deborah with a film that introduced us to parts of Arizona, Southern Nevada, and Southern Utah where many of us have never traveled.
- ♥ Hands on blessing of Pastor Kim as she retires and enters a new phase of life.

- ♥ Relaxing **Taizé** service to end the day lead by Cyndy, our musical programming extraordinaire.
- ♥ A **LOVE** offering collection of \$2,200.00 to provide scholarships and more educational programming for Women of the Grand Canyon Synod!
- ♥ A Worship offering Of \$829.00 that will be shared with WELCA Churchwide, StreetlightUSA and I-HELP.
- ♥ Election of a new GCS-WELCA Board: Laura Krueger, Chair; Gail Turner, Co-Chair; Lisa Sherry, Secretary; Jenny Zweifel, Treasurer; Adriana Flores Cuadras, member (with a love for Technology!)

It was truly a full weekend of seeing old (figure of speech) friends, meeting new friends, eating too much, cramming our brains with new ideas with an enthusiasm to go out and do more. Some comments from your evaluations:

- ♥ Just **LOVE** and help more.
- ♥ I am energized to go back and help our ladies find and act on their own passion.
- ♥ Loved the CPR for our women's ministry.
- ♥ All I need to do is take time for Him (meditate) and ask Him for help. He is powerful and has a purpose for me.
- ♥ The speakers this weekend (including the organizers) were so professional and inspiring! Not one moment wasted. I'm sure you, like me, have attended meetings in which you wanted to figure out how to sneak out the back; not so here!
- ♥ Know your state senator – text, phone. . .
- ♥ Bring the hunger program to our church.
- ♥ So many resources I didn't know about!
- ♥ The depth of the informal conversations in the 'after hours' gave HOPE!

- ♥ The napkin rose was a winner.
- ♥ So many ways to **LOVE** and how much women work together.

Here's an example of one success (which I am using without her permission; I'll be asking for forgiveness later):

"I came home so energized! At our Circle meeting on Monday, I asked the ladies to write down one thing they could do (that they aren't already doing) that could make a difference. We mixed them up and read one we picked from a basket. I hope to follow up at our next meeting."

With that said, check your Convention/Gathering booklet, **page 30**, and **mark your calendars** for upcoming events where you will meet more women, reignite your faith, discover new ideas and opportunities and broaden your knowledge with how YOU can make a difference around you and in this world.

Praying you all have a BLESSED Holyday season filled with **LOVE**. . .that which you receive and that which you give away – THE BEST present ever!

Looking forward to seeing you again in the New Year.

Just **LOVE**, Suki
Ambassador, GCS-WELCA

sukikisling@gmail.com
702 493-7436



October 2023

Greetings and the blessings of Christ to each of you!

I am your newly-elected President of the Churchwide Executive Board for the next Triennium, 2023-2026, and am honored to serve you in this role. A Minnesota native, I now reside in Phoenix, in our Grand Canyon Synod. Our newly elected churchwide executive board has already begun our work together. Please keep us in your prayers.

I'm hopeful many of you were recently present in Phoenix at our 12th Triennial Convention and the Just Love Triennial Gathering that followed. We were all inspired by the actions taken at the Convention and with the messages, and challenges, from our women pastors, large group presenters and workshop speakers. As women of faith, working together, our work in the coming months will coalesce around key areas:

- Becoming more deeply involved in the ELCA's Truth and Healing Movement as we seek to learn the true history and current realities of Indigenous people, and the healing we hope to experience
- Expanding hospitality to the margins, especially with those experiencing immigration and migrants seeking legal asylum
- Recommitting ourselves to the work of being anti-racist women

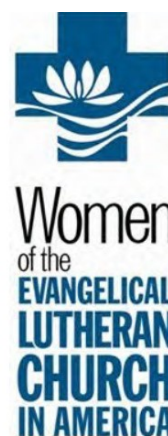
To add to that list, we also have the opportunity to commit to the "2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 Years" with our financial support. You may have already heard of the free educational series beginning on Saturday, October 7, "God's Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely." This is a five-week series brought to us through the 2122 Katie's Fund appeal. All sessions will be recorded and made available for subsequent viewing. Join me in learning about basic financial concepts, how we can make charitable gifts, retirement strategies and more, all framed around biblical foundations for giving.

There is much ahead and together, we will continue to breathe new life into the bones of our beloved Women of the ELCA. God has called us into this work. I pray you will feel the call, and the power of the Holy Spirit, as you gather together to be inspired and challenged.

With Just Love, I walk with you on this journey,

Myrna Wells-Ulland

Myrna Wells-Ulland
President, 2023-2026 Triennium
Women of the ELCA



2122

Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years

What is Katie's Fund?

Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. In the beginning, Lutherans knew Katie Luther as the wife of Martin Luther. When Women of the ELCA first established the Katharina von Bora Luther Fund Endowment in 1997, Katie was a mystery to many. But over the years, through resources, scholarships, articles, and skits, Women of the ELCA told the story of this bold and brave woman who brewed beer, raised cattle, managed a busy household, and kept a theologian in line. These days, Katie Luther is loved and admired by those who know her. Many women see a bit of themselves in this legend who wore many bonnets. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and faith formation. This endowment supports women's ministry in areas not funded through our annual operating budget.

Building a future

2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years is a one-million-dollar campaign for Katie's Fund initiated in 2021 and designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Gifts can be made through one-time gifts or pledges to be completed over three years. The campaign will continue until we reach the \$1,000,000 goal. To-date, we're nearly 1/3 of the way to reach this goal!!

For 25 years, women have given to Katie's Fund to support and sustain the ministries of Women of the ELCA. And the organization hopes giving will last far into the future. The Fund is used to raise bold leaders for the women's organization and support creative ministry for generations to come. Those ministries run the gamut from enabling women to attend advocacy and immersion events to educating young people about human trafficking at ELCA Youth Gatherings. The ministry funds include providing scholarships for young women to participate in Women of the ELCA triennial gatherings and supporting documentaries about vital women's issues. Grants from Katie's Fund have helped create documentaries about domestic violence and workshops about bullying. Visit <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/katiesfund> for more information, including ways you can give to the campaign and to download an intention form.

Myrna Wells-Ulland and Laura Krueger from our Grand Canyon Synod are on the leadership team for the **2122: Katie's Fund campaign**. They are available to answer your questions, visit with you or your women's unit or conference. Join us in becoming a supporter of **2122: Katie's Fund**.

**“God’s Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely” a free educational series for all women,
courtesy of Women of the ELCA, available on YouTube**

God’s Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely

Beginning October 7 and continuing for five weeks, Women of the ELCA offers a free, online educational series entitled God’s Gift of Money: Stewarding Money Wisely as a component of the 2122: Growing Katie’s Fund for the next 100 years campaign. In the 75-minute sessions, participants will explore basic financial concepts, methods of charitable giving, biblical foundations for giving, retirement strategies and much more. A team of experts guide the explorations and invite participants into discussion. *Advance registration is required.* All sessions will be recorded and made available for subsequent viewing.



As part of the 2122: Growing Katie’s Fund for the next 100 years campaign, a series of free educational videos is available. To access the free videos, go to <https://www.youtube.com/@WomenELCA/videos> - OR- go to YouTube.com, then search for Women of the ELCA and click on Videos. Select the video you want to view. We suggest you watch them in the sequence presented, as the topics build knowledge:

October 4, 2023, October 14, 2023, October 21, 2023, October 28, 2023, November 4, 2023

Faithful Friends



**Take your financial support of our churchwide
Women of the ELCA to a new level.**

Become a “*Faithful Friend*”

*“Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter; whoever finds one has found a treasure.
Faithful friends are beyond price; no amount can balance their worth.
Faithful friends are life-saving medicine; and those who fear the Lord will find them.”*
-Ecclesiastes 6:14-16

Those phrases describe the many steadfast supporters of Women of the ELCA. And that’s the name for a giving program: “Faithful Friends,” an easy way for you, your congregational unit, your conference and our synodical organization to give monthly to Women of the ELCA by automatic withdrawal from your checking account or by automatic charge to your credit card.

We are all being challenged to step up our giving to offset the decline in general offering revenues. Your synodical board and all leaders in our WELCA conferences and units have the opportunity to model faithful giving to support our churchwide organization. Individuals can also model such faithful financial support. Become a faithful friend!

Gifts through Faithful Friends support the Women of the ELCA General Fund, which makes it possible for our churchwide organization to act quickly and flexibly in response to any need that arises. The prophet Isaiah tells us that God says, “I am about to do a new thing” (43:19), and Faithful Friends is one way you can help Women of the ELCA be ready for whatever new thing God has in store.

You can start giving on-line right away, and you can stop any time with just a phone call to Women of the ELCA, 773-380-2730, or by email at women.elca@elca.org

It all starts with you! Looking for ideas about how to get involved in women's ministry in your church, in your community and beyond?

Here are just some examples of how to begin:

- ♥ Support the LWR Quilt and Kit shipping fund
- ♥ Challenge your congregation to support the alleluiabetterchancediapercloset.org
- ♥ Start a faith-based book discussion—over lunch, or maybe over a glass of wine
- ♥ Contact your local community college or university - support out of town students with a meal during exam week, or during holiday breaks
- ♥ Do you knit, crochet, quilt? Contact the Volunteer Services office at your nearby hospital; perhaps they need lap blankets, or baby caps or newborn layettes, etc. Begin knitting for the Knitted Knockers Program
- ♥ Start a ministry at a nearby Women's Prison, or a facility housing incarcerated immigrants. A Bible study, or magazines or books? Maybe subscriptions to our Gather magazine? A prayer group? Contact the facility's Chaplain
- ♥ Learn to speak Spanish and connect with the Latina women in your community
- ♥ Volunteer to accompany immigrants during court proceedings
- ♥ Donate clothing appropriate for work to the Native American Urban Ministry clothes closet, along with glasses, shoes, and feminine hygiene products, at Grace Lutheran in Phoenix
- ♥ Support the Navajo Mission in Rock Point, AZ <https://nelm.org>
- ♥ Support border ministries' needs in Tucson or Yuma area



2024 LENTEN CHALLENGE

**ATTN ELCA SYNOD REGION 2:
THE GAUNTLET IS THROWN, THE CHALLENGE ACCEPTED!**

Which synod will take the crown?

www.LentenChallenge.org



Upcoming Events

2024

January 21-22	"Children of the Heavenly Father" Lord of Life Retreat, Spirit in the Desert 7415 E. Elbow Bend Rd. Carefree, AZ
January 23-25	"Be-Attitudes", Adult Vacation Bible School, Gloria de Cristo Lutheran, 11273 E. 40 th Street, Yuma, AZ
February 3	Gather Bible Study with Author, American Lutheran, 17200 N. Del Webb Blvd, Sun City, AZ
February 14	Valentine's Day – ASH WEDNESDAY
February 16-17	2024 Women of the ELCA Leadership Event (pending)
February 23-24	New Promise Women's Retreat, Hampton Inn, 1127 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale, UT
March 1-3	"Holy Spirit Ignite My Faith", Community Lutheran Women's Retreat, Holiday Inn, 1215 Zion Park Blvd., Springdale, UT
March 2	"Hope for Our World", Kino Conference Spring Gathering, Mt. Zion Lutheran, 4520 W. Tucson-Ajo Hwy, Tucson, AZ
March 9	Grand Canyon Synod Council
March 10	DAYLIGHT SPRING TIME
March 24	PALM SUNDAY
March 31	EASTER
April 20	Churchwide Executive Board Meeting
May 11	Grand Canyon Synod Council
May 27	MEMORIAL DAY
June 13	Grand Canyon Synod Council
June 13-15	Grand Canyon Synod Assembly, Election of Bishop, Love of Christ, 1525 N. Power Road, Mesa, AZ
July/August	Home Visit Gathering with Pastor Meghan Aelabouni, TBA, Las Vegas, NV
September 2	LABOR DAY
September 20-21	Grand Canyon Synod Council and Dean Retreat
October 4-5	GCS-WELCA Retreat, Our Saviour's Lutheran, 1200 N. Campbell, Tucson, AZ (Home of UofA Campus Ministry) Hotel: Best Western Royal Sun, 1015 N. Stone Ave., Tucson, AZ 520 622-8871
November 3	DAYLIGHT FALL TIME

Check our website for details: www.grandcanyonwomen.org

[Click here to go to our Events Page for even more events!](#)



***“Sea of Galilee meets Silicon Valley
Artificial Intelligence, Faith Communities and Faith”***

Gathering Speaker:

Brian Flatgard, Director of Communications, Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA

But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

James 3:17

Lord of Life Lutheran Church
13724 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West, AZ 85375
623.584.2000 **lolaz.org/**

ALL Women Welcome!



Stay Tuned:

Registration Details to Follow

Coffee +, Program, Lunch, more Program & Closing Communion.





July 16-19, 2026

PLAN NOW TO JOIN US IN DES MOINES, IA

FOR THE 2026 TRIENNIAL GATHERING

Early-bird rate through December 31, 2023: \$315

Go to <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page>
and scroll down for information on the 2026 Triennial Gathering

Help us to share the Canyon Echoes newsletter!

If you would like to help us spread the word about WELCA events and service projects, just forward this newsletter to your church office, and request that a link be shared on your church website and any social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter! Or, you can post the link directly to your social media account as well, by launching the newsletter directly, and copying the web address from your browser.

Financial NOTICE

Effective February 1, 2024, Jennie Zweifel is the GCS-WELCA Treasurer. All Unit and LOVE offerings (with the exception of Thankofferings, which are sent with Form B, to: Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009)) should be sent with Form A included, and mailed to Jennie at 1101 N. Rainbow Blvd. #23, Las Vegas, NV 89108. If you

have questions regarding forms to be included, contact Jennie directly at Ladyrose1028@yahoo.com.

2023-2025 Board Executive Committee Members

- **Chair: Laura Krueger**, Peace/Peoria – Cactus Conference ([Email Laura](#))
- **Co-Chair: Gail Turner**, Faith/Le Fe/Phoenix – Capital Conference ([Email Gail](#))
- **Secretary: Lisa Sherry**, Sierra Vista/Sierra Vista – Kino Conference ([Email Lisa](#))
- **Treasurer-Elect (begins 2/1/24): Jenell Zweifel**, Holy Spirit/Las Vegas – Colorado River Conference ([Email Jenny](#))
- **Treasurer (through 1/31/24)-: Pat Shaw**, Love of Christ/Mesa – Rio Salado Conference ([Email Pat](#))

Board Members

- **Shari Moehling**: Community Lutheran/Las Vegas – Colorado River Conference
- **Adriana Flores Cuadras**: Faith/Le Fe/Phoenix – Capital Conference

Ambassador (non-board member)

- **Suki Kisling**: New Song Lutheran/Henderson – Colorado River Conference ([Email Suki](#))

Did you Know?

Women were first ordained in the Lutheran Church in the U.S. in 1970.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (**ELCA**) was officially formed in

1987. Herbert Chilstrom was elected the first Bishop.

The Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (**WELCA**) was separately incorporated in 1988. **ALL** monetary support comes **TOTALLY** from the women themselves!!!!

The Reverend Deborah Hutterer was the first woman to be elected Bishop of the Grand Canyon Synod!

SWO – Synodical Women’s Organizations are located in 64 of the ELCA’s 65 synods. The only synod without a synodical organization is the Slovak Zion Synod, the ELCA’s only non-geographical synod!

CWO – Churchwide Women’s Organization located in Chicago, IL
(womenoftheelca.org)

GCS (2D) – Grand Canyon Synod comprising of nine conferences located in Southern Utah, Southern Nevada, and all of Arizona. (gcsynod.org)

Remember to follow us on our Facebook page!

The logo for 'gather' features the word 'gather' in a large, lowercase, serif font. Below it, the words 'FOR FAITH AND ACTION' are written in a smaller, uppercase, sans-serif font, separated by a thin horizontal line.

gather
FOR FAITH AND ACTION

Give *Gather* for just \$9.95

Gather — the award-winning magazine of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — guides you as you live and experience your faith every day. What if you could share that with a friend or loved one?

With this special gift offer, you can **give new subscribers a whole year of *Gather* for just \$9.95** — that's \$10 (or more than half off) the regular subscription rate!

In addition to a regular Bible study, the magazine offers a mix of faith-filled articles, theological reflections, devotions and stories that speak to the hearts and souls of Christian women. And that's not all. *Gather* gives you tools to explore spiritual practices, helps you put faith into action and connects you to women of all ages who are committed to growing in faith and building God's beloved community — next door and across the globe.

This offer is good for new subscribers with U.S. mailing addresses only.



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