



"FOOTSTEPS



TO LEADERSHIP"

CONGREGATIONAL UNIT

The Congregational Unit

At the heart or center of Women of the ELCA is the Congregational Unit (CU), sometimes called Congregational Expression (CE). The participants within the Congregational Unit are challenged and supported to share the gospel in action both locally and globally. Participation ranges from ongoing to time-specific involvement in circles, general meetings, events and financial support for ministries of the organization.

DUTIES OF OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS AND GROUP/CIRCLE CHAIRS

Whatever your model, the following tasks will be performed in most organizations. NOTE: In the interest of keeping this as simple as possible, the terms President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Board Members and Group/Circle Chairperson have been used, with the understanding that structures will vary.

DUTIES OF PRESIDENT

This officer shall:

- A. Guide the total work of the Congregational Unit.
 1. Preside at meetings.
 2. Coordinate and counsel committees and help with their functioning.
- B. Serve as contact person and communicator for Women of the ELCA Conference, SWO and CWO.
 1. Relate the program and work of the unit with Women of the ELCA.
 2. Keep up-to-date on Conference, SWO and CWO activities.
 3. Participate in Women of the ELCA training sessions and events.

POINTERS FOR PRESIDENT

- Be the “spark plug” for the whole organization.
- Involve as many people as possible/delegate responsibilities.
- Circulate...to be more aware of the spirit of your organization.
- Be enthusiastic!
- As all materials and information will be sent directly to you or to your congregation, it will be your responsibility to **distribute** them to the proper persons as soon as possible. Communicate!
- **VERY IMPORTANT:** Establish a file of all materials to be passed on to the next president.

DUTIES OF VICE-PRESIDENT

This officer shall:

- A. Assume duties of the President when necessary.
- B. Accept and carry out assignments from the President and the CU Board.

POINTERS FOR VICE PRESIDENT

- Be more than just a “fill-in.
- Read and study to become more familiar with the program of Women of the ELCA.
- Work closely with the President.
- Be the second most active woman in your CU.

DUTIES OF SECRETARY

This officer shall:

- A. Keep records/minutes of all meetings.
- B. Provide written announcements of meetings and activities.
- C. Handle all correspondence.
- D. Provide name and address of your current President to the SWO Secretary.

POINTERS FOR SECRETARY

- Only official actions are recorded and read for approval.
- Briefly summarize any reports of officers or committee chairs.
- Minutes may be copied for distribution.
- Send copy to the President for reference.
- Good record keeping is set forth in *ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER REVISED* as follows:
 - Kind of meeting (executive, committee, general)
 - Name of organization
 - Date and place
 - Full name of presiding officer
 - Whether the minutes of the previous meeting were approved after additions and corrections
 - All the main motions and name of person making the motion should be recorded
 - Name of seconder is not necessary
 - The Secretary signs her name to her report followed by the title “Secretary”
 - DO NOT write “respectfully submitted”
 - When a program is presented at a meeting, the names of the participants and a brief summary should be included in the minutes
 - Preside in the absence of the President and Vice President
 - Pass on an efficient record to your successor and help her if needed

DUTIES OF TREASURER

This officer shall:

- A. Receive and disburse funds of the Congregational Unit.
- B. Keep financial records.
- C. Make regular reports to the CU board including a written annual report.
- D. Interpret avenues of giving to and through Women of the ELCA.
- E. Advocate regular offerings at Congregational Unit events.
- F. Transmit the offerings promptly and regularly.
 1. Congregational Remittance Form “A” is for regular offerings and should be sent to the Treasurer’s Assistant in your Conference.
 2. Congregational Remittance Form “B” is for Thankoffering donations and is sent directly to:

Women of the ELCA
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631-4189
- G. Help prepare a budget for your Congregational Unit’s approval.

POINTERS FOR TREASURER

- Know the finance and offering policies of Women of the ELCA.
- Post and keep records up-to-date at all times.
- Stress monthly offerings rather than quarterly.
- Reports should be simple, accurate and complete.
- Copies of reports should be distributed.

DUTIES OF CONGREGATIONAL UNIT BOARD

The Congregational Unit Board is generally composed of the Officers, Committee Chairs, and Group/Circle Leaders. There are other formats available from the Women of the ELCA Website or from the members of the Leadership Committee.

This Unit Board shall:

- A. Provide for the general program for women of the congregation in fulfilling the purpose of Women of the ELCA
 1. Plan the annual program for the Congregational Unit.
 2. Identify needs and interests of women in your congregation.
 3. Develop goals for growth, community and action program areas.
 4. Assign goals to committees for implementation.
 5. Provide for regular worship and offering opportunities.
 6. Evaluate the program regularly.

- B. Provide for participation in Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation
 1. Promote and encourage attendance at events of the Conference, SWO and CWO.
 2. Designate a **GATHER** magazine subscription coordinator. Promote the SWO monthly *Bulletin*, *Carolina Vine* quarterly online newsletter and website.
 3. Provide for regular interpretation and financial support to Women of the ELCA.
 4. Participate in leadership development opportunities.
 5. Provide for selection of a delegate to the annual SWO Convention and for nominations for Conference, SWO and CWO leadership positions.

- C. Additional Duties:
 1. Discuss all items of business to be presented at general meetings.
 2. Fill vacancies occurring in offices and committees.
 3. Appoint participants of the organization to serve on various committees.
 4. Appoint or elect members for the Nominating Committee.
 5. Prepare budget for presentation and adoption by your Congregational Unit.

DUTIES OF GROUP/CIRCLE CHAIRS

1. Most of what applies to the President will also be very helpful to you. Study the page on Duties of Officers carefully.
2. It is your responsibility to pass on letters, materials, information, etc. to your group/circle.
3. Notify the church office of meeting times, places, hostesses, and program leaders in order to get this information on the church website, bulletin and/or newsletter.
4. Assist each committee chairperson in carrying out her assigned duties.
5. A card, e-mail or telephone call to each member every month can be helpful, especially newer members and slightly inactive members.
6. If the President has not notified you of any business, you should contact her before the group meets just to check.
7. It is imperative that you attend all executive and conference meetings.

PLANNING YOUR CONGREGATIONAL UNIT BUDGET

Your Executive Board may choose to appoint/elect a Budget Planning Committee.

A budget is a statement of financial intent for any organization. It serves as a guide. It undergirds and energizes the activities and actions of an organization. It serves as an evaluative tool that helps determine “how we are doing.”

Being the main source of financial information, the congregational treasurer plays a key role in the development of the budget. But even more important is the part the organization plays in setting its goals. The budget reflects planning of mission and ministries. How can a budget committee plan the budget before first learning what the organization plans to do?

Meanwhile, the Treasurer should prepare historical information for the budget planning committee such as:

1. What have been the increases or decreases in giving during the last three years? What percent of increase or decrease has the organization experienced? Usually three years is enough history to see what is happening in an organization.
2. Does the organization have a history of meeting its budget?
3. Are there trends that can be noted in congregational giving?
4. What are trends in giving by other Congregational Units and the Synodical Organization?

Along with the information provided by the Treasurer and the goals of the organization, the Budget Committee should examine the annual Stewardship Guide either received by mail at your CU or available on the Women of the ELCA website.

The committee is then ready to build a statement of potential offerings/income/receipt.

These questions should be answered:

- Has a variety of opportunities for giving been offered? It should include: Regular Offerings, Thankofferings, Specific Ministries, and Special Gifts opportunities.
- What opportunities for growth in giving will challenge participants in their life of financial stewardship?
- How much income does the organization need to meet its goals?
- Are the participants willing to make extra effort to increase their giving?
- What are the constitutional guides for budgeting? .

When the above questions have been answered by projecting specific dollar figures and the figures are totaled, the income/receipts portion of the budget is complete.

Expenditures for the Congregational Unit shall fall into **three categories**:

1. Gifts for Congregational Unit program budget
2. Gifts for the Synodical Unit for its on-going ministries
3. Thankofferings, Designated Gifts, and Special Gifts for the Churchwide Unit

Each of the categories is part of the mission and ministries of participants in the Congregational Unit. Next determine the percent of dollar amount from regular general offerings to be retained for the ministries of the Congregational Unit and the amount to be sent to the SWO for synodical and churchwide ministries.

Receipts for Thanksgiving, Designated Gifts, and Special Gifts will bear the same amount in disbursements as those offerings are sent, without deduction, to the churchwide organization.

In developing the expenditure portion for the Congregational Unit ministries, the goals of the unit translated into dollars should be recorded. Among categories to include for most organizations will be: expenditures for each Mission Area: Growth, Community, and Action; administrative expenses such as postage, travel, synodical convention delegate expenses; leadership development; and, ecumenical activity. Committees will closely study the parts of the budget related to their responsibility and the budget must reflect their concerns and needs.

Add the needed expenditures and compare with anticipated income. Adjust the figures to the same amount.

During the year, the budget will serve as the guide and show “how we are doing.” Key problems and opportunities will be uncovered. If income is greater than expected, the organization can expand planned activities or initiate additional ones. If income is less, the organization must examine areas for possible reductions of expenditures. Monitoring the budget will do more than help the organization “just live with the budget”...but succeed with it.

ABC'S OF CONDUCTING MEETINGS

AGENDA is a tool groups sometime avoid because it sounds too impersonal for their organization. In simplest terms, an agenda is a list of items to cover in a meeting. Just as we have learned to go to the store with a shopping list, we should go to meetings with a plan. Studies show that one-third of any group needs to see an agenda in advance in order to participate effectively during a meeting.

PREPARING AN AGENDA

1. Set up a simple routine to follow.
2. Identify persons and tentative time limits for each item.
3. Remember that an agenda must be flexible and can be altered for the well-being of the participants.
4. Allow the most time for the most important items.

STRUCTURING THE MEETING

1. Arrive early and set up the meeting area.
2. Begin on time even if all members have not arrived. (Leave chairs in back empty.)
3. Observe time limits for reports.
4. Get personal agendas or concerns out early.
5. Introduce new members or resource persons.
6. Be willing to adjust the agenda as needed.

CONDUCTING THE MEETING

1. Ask members to speak to the whole group.
2. Summarize what others say so that all understand.
3. Restate items that require a decision or action; ask for the motion; discussion, vote.
4. Be impartial. Be sure both sides of a question are heard before a decision is made.
5. Suggest further study for concerns that cannot be resolved in a reasonable time.

AGENDA ORDER FOR A REGULAR BOARD MEETING

1. Meeting is called to order by president or chair.
2. Begin meeting with the Women of the ELCA Purpose Statement.
3. Devotions
4. Minutes approved as read or corrected
5. Correspondence as reported by Secretary
(Motions arising from correspondence may be considered at this time or as new business)
6. Report of the Treasurer (or any officer)
7. Committee reports:
 - a. Reports of standing committees
 - b. Special committee reports (organized for a specific task)
8. Unfinished business
9. New Business
10. Announcements
11. Program (if there is one); program chair or President may preside
12. Adjourn with prayer.

Each organization has the right to determine the appropriate order of business for their meetings.

PARLIAMENTARY HELPS AND TIME SAVERS

1. Ask for corrections or additions to the minutes; if none, “adopt, as read.”
2. Receive Financial and Mission Areas (or committee reports) with a “thank you.” No vote is required.
3. Committee recommendations (motions) **do not require** a second. (Committee member endorsement serves as the second.)
4. Before discussing an item, make the motion: “It has been moved that we...Is there any discussion?”
5. Not every item requires a vote. Minor details or an issue that is not likely to be opposed may be settled by general consent
 - a. “If there is no objection, we will adopt the motion as read.” (If there is an objection, then the vote must be taken.)
 - b. “Hearing no objection, the meeting is adjourned.”

PARLIAMENTARY BASICS

QUORUM

Usually stated in the bylaws. This is the number of persons who must be present at a meeting for business to be conducted legally.

MOTIONS

Items of business are placed before the group through a motion, which is seconded before discussion. When discussion is complete (and no one has called the “question” or asked for a vote”), the President or Chair asks if the group is ready to vote or announces that if there is no objection; the vote will be taken on the motion; and she then restates the motion. After the vote, the President or Chair announces if the motion passes or fails.

AMENDMENTS

An amendment may be proposed to modify a motion. The President or Chair states the motion and its amendment (to add, insert, or strike...). The first vote will be on the amendment; if it carries, the vote will then be on the main motion, as amended.

NOMINATIONS

The President or Chair asks for a report from the Nominating Committee Chair who presents all positions and names each nominee. If all nominations are from the floor, the President or Chair announces that nominations “are in order.” If a report has been presented, the President or Chair then asks for other nominees and names each position, pauses, and then moves to the next position. If a nomination is made, she repeats the name “Jane Owens is nominated.” A second is not required, but may be offered as support. When there are no other nominations, the President or Chair may declare the “nominations closed.” After the voting, the President or Chair declares who is elected. If a “slate” is presented without additions, the chair may ask for a motion to close nominations and instruct the Secretary to cast a ballot for the “slate” of nominees. A vote is taken and if it passes, the Secretary casts the ballot.

GUIDELINES FOR “E”-FFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

ENTHUSE: Maintain a high level of energy, spiritual commitment and optimism

- Share plans, expectations, possibilities and success stories.
- Create a vision and keep it alive through frequent articulation.

ENERGIZE: Support the powerful dimension of joint effort

- Provide the necessary resources or guidance.
- Encourage involvement and innovation by waiting while others discover or select alternatives and work through the process.
- Affirm and recognize deserving members.
- Speak your faith story to others.

EMPOWER: Make things happen with good preparation

- Develop calendars, schedules, timelines and deadlines. (It is often easier to work back from a specific date to decide what needs to be done and when.)
- Assign tasks; expect follow-through, but check on progress.

EVALUATE: Review the experience

- Ask: Did we get there? What did we learn? How can we improve?
- Keep notes to guide and help future leaders.
- Ask members how they feel about meetings, tasks, agendas, timelines: on-going evaluation quickly reflects the climate of the organization.

TWENTY-FOUR STEPS TO PLANNING AN EVENT

In the course of planning and setting goals, a specific planned event may be the way to accomplish a certain goal. Here are several steps to help you plan and implement an event.

1. Identify your audience – who, from where, and how many.
2. Identify the needs of the audience – clarify the needs that can be met by this event. Why would people want to participate?
3. Decide on the type of event that will meet their needs: leadership training, inspirational event, weekend retreat, one-day workshop, recreational event, seminar or work camp.
4. State a purpose for the event. It should say why you are having the event. This could become part of your publicity.
5. Develop suggestions for ways to carry out your purpose. How long will the event last? What do you want to cover? What experiences do you want to be part of the event? What facilities do you need? What resources can help you shape the event?
6. Select date or dates for the event – keep in mind other church or community activities that might cause a conflict.
7. Report and make recommendations to the Board and secure their approval.
8. Select the key leadership. Who will see that the event is implemented – one person, a task group, or a team?
9. Consider finances – income could come from registration fee, budget or donations. Expenses could include facility rental (Will an advanced deposit be required/when?), travel, meals, lodging, postage, telephone calls, supplies and materials, honorariums, etc.
10. Determine a site. Visit it to see if it meets your needs; ask for list of rules for the site; see what equipment will be available; check about meal times, snacks, facilities, linens and towels, and recreational facilities. See how many persons can be accommodated and if there is adequate space for the meetings and access for handicapped persons. Always secure this in writing – cost, dates, facilities and supplies to be provided.
11. Plan for initial publicity – state date, place, purpose and what participants can expect. Should it be advertised beyond the local congregation?
12. Key leaders meet to make final design and plans – review the purpose and write objectives. Make a basic outline for the event using time blocks to determine what will happen when – registration, orientation, get acquainted, inspirational time, total group experience, free time, small group experiences, sharing time, evaluation and closing.
13. Plan additional publicity giving more details and a registration form.
14. Allow time for detailed planning and preparation by individuals.
15. Review, critique and check your progress.
16. Begin registration.
17. Meet with site personnel.
18. Order or arrange for resources – printed materials and audio-visual, etc.
19. Keep the staff informed and have final training.
20. Make a list of last-minute preparation – room assignments, locate emergency numbers and gather supplies and resources.
21. Arrive at the site early. Welcome all as they arrive – give room assignments, distribute materials and use name tags.
22. Keep event running smoothly – reflect and be able to adapt as necessary.
23. Evaluate the event.
24. Develop a report and recommendations as a follow-up for your Board. This will help planners of similar events in the future.

WHAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR PERMANENT FILES

It is very important for the leaders of a congregational unit to keep good records and information that can be passed on to new officers and board members. Below is a list of suggested items to keep:

1. A copy of your Women of the ELCA Constitution and Bylaws (permanent)
2. Minutes of your board meetings and your general meetings (permanent)
3. Reports from your Treasurer and copy of your CU's budget along with other financial records (5 years)
4. Reports from Committees (5 years)
5. Leadership Manual (*FOOTSTEPS TO LEADERSHIP*) – as it is updated, you need only keep the most recent version. (permanent)
6. Information regarding offering interpretation sent from the CWO (1 year)
7. SWO Bulletins and *CAROLINA VINE* from the SWO (1 YEAR)
8. INTERCHANGE that is sent three times a year from the CWO (1 year) to the Congregational Unit (CU)—the member organization. Conference Leaders, SWO Officers and Board Members, also receive INTERCHANGE three times from CWO.