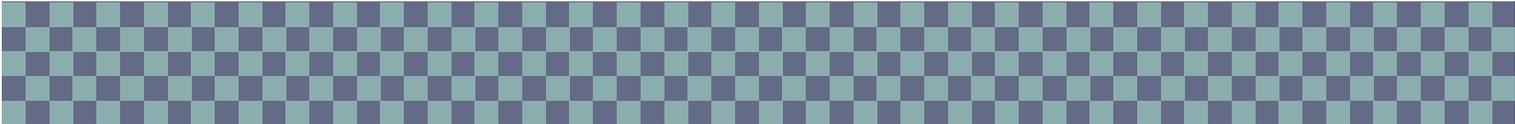


The Bulletin October 2019

The Bulletin is issued monthly, except the summer months; and is the major method of communication with the congregational units. Receive it either by email or regular mail. You automatically receive it if you are a unit president, a conference leader, a board member, or serve on a committee. The deadline for articles to be entered into The Bulletin is the first of the month, for the next month's issue. You are welcome to print as many copies as you'd like. Anyone not currently receiving The Bulletin can be added to the list by contacting Joyce Ohlson, secretary, at karmagma@gmail.com or calling 406-852-3649.



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From the Desk of our President—October 2019



Can you believe October is already here? This is a time to enjoy the beauty of our Earth with the beautiful colors of the leaves, the fall flowers, and cooler temperatures. Even though we like October, let's not forget those who are still trying to recover from hurricane Dorian who did major damage to our North Carolina coast. Yes, it is true, no news is dwelling on the devastation but many are still without vital necessities and need our help. As we think about justice, what can you do to help bring hope and a feeling that lifts the hearts and life of our fellowman.

During this month we will look at Immigration Reform/ Care. This may be something you know little about but read the articles from the Justice Committee, go to your local library and do some research, or use your computer to locate information. Since our theme for 2019-2020 is “Why Not- Use Your Voice to Make Change Happen” this can be the perfect time to use your voice in the community and the state. Voice your opinions about this important issue.

Conference Fall Gatherings are beginning. It is my hope that all Women of the ELCA units will be represented at these important meetings. The regular offering will go to Catawba County Carolina Caring. This is the new name for Hospice. Thru this organization all can learn how to better plan for health issues and care during this difficult time. A Service of Remembrance and a Bible Study will be presented. Don't forget the In-Kind Gifts that your conference is collecting. Yes, we are still collecting pennies for our Pennies Project, Vigilante Truth, until January 31, 2020 when our fiscal year ends.

Keep saving the can tabs to be sent to the Ronald McDonald Houses in North Carolina. Also collect the Box Tops for Education that will be sent to the Crossnore School.

The North Carolina Women of the ELCA will be offering scholarships to help with expenses at the 2020 Triennial in Phoenix, Arizona. More information will be announced soon. Plan now to attend.

With all your hard work we can grow our WELCA organization. Ladies, as we enjoy October, let's put our actions in full force and raise our voices to make change happen.

May Love, Joy, and Peace be with you.

Jane Cadwallader

NC Women of the ELCA President



**Gathering Planning Committee—Joyce Ohlson, Linda Davis,
Cindy Whisenant**



“Why Not? ... Make Change Happen”

In June 2019, at the NC SWO Annual Gathering at LRU in Hickory, NC, our theme of “Why Not? ... stand up for Justice” explored what is justice and to pray for justice. The overnight Gathering attendees participated in Saturday Evening Dorm Devotions (thank you Sue Meisenheimer) to study to define justice, determine what it means to act justly, to do good, and to seek justice, however, many ended the study asking what they can actually DO to stand up for justice to make change happen besides prayers.

The NC SWO 2020 Annual Gathering will be held at LRU on June 12-14, 2020, with our theme “Why Not? ... Make Change Happen”. The NC SWO Board met in July with an agenda item to answer the question “What can I do to make change happen?” as we set the 2020 Gathering theme goals. Discussion began to assist everyone to discover their passion. Passion. What is passion?

Julie K. Ageson in the December 2016 issue of *Gather magazine* describes passion as “we acknowledge the overwhelming love of God when we share that same love and generosity of spirit for all that God has created. Passion and zeal are responses to the grace and love of God. It requires zeal to act for justice, to make peace. It takes passion to give ourselves to the common good, to do our small bit for others...nothing is accomplished without passion or zeal.”

With that in mind, the Board began listing injustices many feel passionate about (see list below), which quickly overwhelmed everyone since so many exist in our neighborhoods, churches, schools, local communities, local governments, and state/national governments. The discussion evolved further with a recommendation to break the theme goals down into several steps to everyone to start:

1. DISCOVER – define your passion – what issue(s) are most passionate:

Read WELCA resource *Bold Café Bible study “Faith Reflections: Discovering your passion” by Pastor Lee Ann M. Pomrenke 01/04/2018*

list of injustices: immigration, domestic violence, racial issues, voter privilege, affordable housing, homelessness, economic inequality, recycling, elder abuse, elder card, opioid abuse, LGBTQ, suicide, veteran care, animal cruelty, minimum wage, bullying, social media abuse

2. EDUCATE – learn and acquire knowledge about your passion:

Consult your pastor; NC Synod office; city council office; county government office, State of NC government, office of your state representative; local library; online research (more than Facebook, social media, and the news – get the facts) websites/resources from NC Synod, ELCA, WELCA; local/state/national advocacy groups

3. ACT – take action towards your passion –

Prayers to seek the Holy Spirit as act on your passion – determine how your passion affect others. Prayers; donate time/talents/possessions; read NC SWO monthly bulletins; attend NC SWO conference Gatherings, retreats, committee day meetings, annual Gatherings; read WELCA bulletins/Café/Bold/Interchange subscriptions; join an organization/advocacy group; contact county commissioner/city council members/legislature, etc.; attend town hall meetings; organize a peaceful awareness prayer vigils

I definitely felt the zeal of the Holy Spirit at our June Gathering as attendees worshiped and sang and prayed and gathered so now it's time for passion!

Pastor Lee Ann M. Pomrenke blogs in the online magazine *Café* "we know when we have it (passion), and we know when we don't. We all go through times when we are stuck in a rut, merely going along with the status quo, possibly wanting to make a difference but with no idea where to start or motivation to think about it. Other times we're not looking for anything in particular but somehow "something" (aka Holy Spirit) chooses us (**DISCOVER**). Stumbling into passion that way feels like "eureka!" Suddenly we find the spark that was inside us all along, now freed to change the world. Ester (Esther 4:13-14) changed from a docile follower of everybody's advice to a passionate advocate for her people. The question "What if (or why not) ...for such a time as this?" is so powerful because it is a question. We don't know until we act what our effect might be, but we do know that **ACTION** is urgent!"

Dear Lord, I pray that your Holy Spirit moves this reader to be encouraged with zeal to **DISCOVER** their passion, **EDUCATE** themselves about your passion, and to **ACT** on their passion now, and going forward, to **MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN!**

by Cindy Whisenant



Justice Committee—Anita Miller and Tonie Neal



Immigration

We have every day seen articles, heard TV reports and special commentators give information on the goings on with immigration. Where it is happening, who it is happening to, why it is happening and how it is not going well. Some of the points I have heard over the last year are below.

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement maintains fifteen detention centers around the country
- On any given day there are 35,000 people in custody.
- 19 States sued the federal gov't to keep in force the 1997 Flores agreement to keep immigrant children in the least restrictive setting and not spend more than 20 days in detention
- Custom Enforcement detained over 400,000 undocumented workers and deported about the same numbers at a cost of over \$20,000 per deportee. Cost \$ 2 billion a year
-

- Federal Gov't contracts with hundreds of county jails, juvenile detention centers and state prisons to house detainees at a cost of \$150.00 a day person, \$350.00 for a family.
- The Immigration court system is backlogged with 900,000 cases that have been pending for an average of 2 years.
- Drastic increase in families crossing the border – about 475,000 so far this budget year, nearly three times the previous full-year record for families.
- A Border Patrol station in Clint, Texas, has a capacity for 105 children, June 1st found 674 there.
- Mumps has swept through 57 immigration detention facilities in 19 states since September 2018
- Undocumented immigrants are ineligible for welfare benefits, SNAP, Medicaid, SSI
- One-third of the recently unauthorized immigration population got into the U.S. by sneaking across the southern border. That is interpreted to mean a wall would not have prevented two-thirds of the country's recently undocumented immigrants from illegally entering the U.S.
- Fewer than 1,000 children have been separated from families out of 450,000 family groups that have crossed the border since October. Health and safety concerns were the reasons.
- Salvation Army, Catholic Charities, United Way, Love INC., local churches offer free financial, gas, clothing, food help to immigrants, both legal and illegal. Head Start provides educational support and free meals to undocumented children under the age of 5. It's noted this is regional, and there are no guarantees. Some states are more accommodating than others. Some services are offered in many languages
- Catholic Relief Services helping families in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua. International Rescue Committee also support vulnerable families separated at the U.S. – Mexico border. National Immigration Law Center, Black Alliance for Just Immigration, United We Dream, Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, Kids in Need of Defense, Immigration Advocates Network, and many individual state agencies were listed under Organizations that help Immigrants in the US

This is a lot to take into consideration. What and who do we believe? The Holy Spirit must guide us when we read, hear or see any of the presentations by different medias, political parties or organizations. We must go to our Bible. The last word must be by Jesus. He is where our trust must be placed.

Statements were quoted from The Fayetteville Observer (from July to August 2019), Legal and illegal immigrant assistance programs, by Jon McNamara, CBS New facts on Immigration, Immigration Data on Demand by George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research. Tonie Neal, Board NC WELCA Justice

What's Going On in North Carolina?

This is a new section of our Bulletin. Our readers are wanting to know more about you and your congregations. Everyone is welcome to participate. Write a paragraph about what is going on in your church or church group. For example, a new pastor, your gracious gift-giving, your church anniversaries, your Outreach Ministries, etc. You can send a picture, if you'd like; also send your Conference, the name of your church and your town. Please send your short article to Joyce Ohlson at karmagma@gmail.com

2019 Women of the ELCA Fall Gatherings

Check the Calendar Page to see where your Conference has scheduled your Fall Gathering .

The Fall Conference Gathering Bible Study is about Immigration and AMMPARO. (Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities). It is written and compiled by Ginny Hultquist with information provided by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services (LIRS). Ginny attends First Lutheran in Greensboro and is an active advocate for LIRS.

Your Conference Leaders were given the information at Committee Day I in Mooresville on August 24, and they will be distributing it to the Presenters. If you have any questions contact your Conference Coordinators, Lorri Monterose or Tamarah Hefner.

Discovering your passion 01/04/2018 | Faith Reflections *by Pastor Lee Ann M. Pomrenke*

Passion: We know when we have it, and we know when we don't. And we know it's not something we can muster up when it just isn't there.

During the cold, long nights of winter, after the excitement of Christmas and Epiphany has passed, our lack of passion can be all too obvious. We all go through times when we are stuck in a rut, merely going along with the status quo, possibly wanting to make a difference but with no idea where to start or motivation to think about it. Other times we're not looking for anything in particular, but somehow something chooses us. Stumbling into passion that way feels like "eureka!" Suddenly we find the spark that was inside us all along, now freed to change the world.

Have your gifts chosen you?

Maybe the moment and your gifts have come together to stir up your passion. Or you and those you love have been seeking out new passions, new ways to make a difference or movements that truly move you. In any event, consider the biblical story of Esther, a Jewish woman who lived in Persia long ago.

The first queen angered the king by refusing to show up when he called her. The king's advisers suggested he have the most beautiful virgins from the entire kingdom brought to him so he could choose another, more biddable queen.

Esther was among the young women called to the palace, and her cousin and foster father, Mordecai, instructed her to keep her Jewish identity secret. She was taken into the harem and we are told she blended in well, always taking the advice of those in charge. She pleased the king and he made her the new queen.

Then there came a threat to the Jews in the empire. Was Esther starting to feel restless, maybe ready for a change, perhaps looking for a cause to champion? Probably not – but her identity and the moment came together to spark her passion.

The king's closest adviser, Haman, resented Mordecai and began to plot against all the Jews of Persia. Mordecai told Queen Esther of the threat, but she refused his plea. No one could approach the king without being summoned, she told him, not even the queen. Even to try could mean her death. But Mordecai told her, "Do not think that in the king's palace you will escape any more than all the other Jews. For if you keep silence at such a time as this, relief and deliverance will rise for the Jews from another quarter, but you and your father's family will perish. Who knows? Perhaps you have come to royal dignity for just such a time as this" (Esther 4:13-14).

The Jewish people were facing a mortal threat, and as Mordecai pointed out, Esther was in a unique position to persuade the king to have mercy on her people. And so she did – putting her own clever twist into the tale.

It's personal

Esther changed from a docile follower of everybody's advice to a passionate advocate for her people. In the story, the change came from one conversation with her foster father Mordecai. But we don't often become instantly passionate about something. First, we have to give ourselves some space to see how it goes, whom it connects us to, and how we feel about it. We have to trust our instincts and recognize our natural strengths and weaknesses. But the voices of people we trust – as Esther trusted Mordecai – can also play a major role.

Self-interest or selfishness?

When a community organizer first talked to me about self-interest, it sounded selfish. But it is actually the opposite: Knowing how I am affected by and therefore personally invested in something is not just about me. When we can identify how an issue affects us directly, it is easier to stay committed to the cause if that becomes inconvenient or worse. Also, telling our stories is the most genuine, non-threatening way to share our passion.

Would Esther have stood up to the king if Mordecai had not reminded her that Haman's plan to murder the Jews of Persia meant that her own life was in danger anyway? His words reminded her that although she was not the only one who could act for God's justice, there was a lot hanging on her actions. Plus, Esther was in a unique position. No one else had the access to the king that she had. When we consider the causes we are going to pour ourselves into, taking inventory of our own situation first adds to our effectiveness. Just as Esther considered what she, and only she, could do to save her people, we can consider our own power and access as well.

Our self-interest may begin with people and places we can name, but the passions that are most worth pursuing have a larger impact as well. Esther gathered her courage and spoke up for the sake of the Jewish people scattered across all the provinces her king ruled, and thus she became an instrument of God's action. Then she discovered that she was not alone; all the Jewish people throughout the kingdom rose up to defend themselves against Haman's evil plan.

Timing is everything

The question "What if . . . for such a time as this?" is so powerful precisely because it is a question.

We don't know until we act what our effect might be, but we do know that action is urgent.

Timing is definitely the domain of the Holy Spirit, who blows where she will, spinning us around like a spiral of leaves on a windy day. When the spirit of change in its disguise as restlessness starts blowing through us and then through entire groups of people until we can hear each other being moved, the Holy Spirit has arrived. The time has come to act – and we'll find we are not alone. We were made for such a time as this.

Discussion questions:

1. About what issues are you most passionate?
2. Where is your self-interest in this issue?
3. Can you point to the Holy Spirit moving you to act on this passion through either self-interest, relationships or timing?
4. How does your passion affect others?
5. Sometimes what we are most passionate about just doesn't pay the bills. Yet there are always ways to act on that passion, even at unrelated work, school, or time at home. How might you work your passion into everyday life?

Closing prayer:

Almighty and ever-living God, you revealed the incarnation of your Son by the brilliant shining of a star. Shine the light of your justice always in our hearts and over all lands, and accept our lives as the treasure we offer in your praise and for your service, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

By Cindy Whisenant

NC WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Calendar

October 2019 – July 2020

October 2019 Immigration Awareness

5 Fall Gathering (Sandhills) - St. Mark's, Lumberton
5 Fall Gathering (Smoky Mountain) Nativity, Arden
5 Fall Gathering (Southwestern) Cedar Grove, Vale
12 Fall Gathering (Alex/Iredell) - St. Paul's, Statesville
12 Fall Gathering (Cab/Stanly) - Calvary, Concord
12 Fall Gathering (Northern) - Macedonia, Burlington
12 Fall Gathering (Rowan) St Peters, Salisbury
14 Columbus Day Holiday
19 Fall Gathering (Catawba) - St. Mark's, Claremont
26 Fall Gathering (Triangle) Grace, Raleigh
20 Board Reports Due

November 2019 Veterans Affairs

5 All Saints Sunday
9 **Fall Gathering (Blue Ridge)** St John's, Hudson
11 Veterans Day Holiday
15-16 **SWO Board Meeting** – High Rock Lake
TBA Lutheran World Relief Fall Collections – Drop off Dates
28 Thanksgiving

December 2019 Affordable Housing/Homelessness

1 World AIDS Day
25 Christmas
29 Board Reports Due

January 2020 Human Trafficking Prevention

18 Committee Day 2
20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday
TBA Committee Day 2 (snow day)

February 2020 Racial Justice Month¹

15 One-Day Retreat
23 Bold Women's Sunday
26 Ash Wednesday

March 2020 Domestic Violence

2 World Day of Prayer – *"All God's Creation is Very Good"*
2 Board Reports Due
13-15 ***Spring Retreat*** – *Kure Beach*
27-28 ***SWO Board Meeting*** – *High Rock Lake*

April 2020 Child/Animal Advocacy Month

5 Palm Sunday
8 Passover
12 Easter

May 2020 Suicide Awareness/Substance Abuse Month

1 Christine Bohr Anderson Seminary Scholarship Applications Due
3 Rachel's Day
10 Mother's Day
25 Memorial Day Holiday
31 Pentecost

June 2020 LGBTQ/Pride

1-2 Synod Assembly
12-14 ***NC Women of the ELCA 33rd Annual Gathering*** – *LRU, Hickory*
20 World Refugee Day
21 Father's Day
25 Patterson Memorial Scholarship Applications Due
31 Committee Evaluations Due

July 2020 Voter Privilege



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Date of Change.....

Church Name/Town.....

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