

Women ^{of the} ELCA

NORTH CAROLINA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

www.ncwelca.org

THE BULLETIN

January/February 2023

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*The Bulletin* is the official publication of the NC Women of the ELCA, published bi-monthly. Articles and information relating to the Women of the ELCA are accepted for publication, following review by the Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) President and the SWO Secretary, who serves as the Editor. You may submit articles to Susan P. Harris, [sepharris@bellsouth.net](mailto:sepharris@bellsouth.net) or 4369 Herter Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092.

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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.

OUR MISSION

**MOBILIZING WOMEN TO ACT
BOLDLY ON THEIR FAITH IN JESUS**

OFFERING REMITTANCES SHOULD BE FORWARDED TO:

DEBRA WEINEL, SWO TREASURER
1612 Sherburg Court
Raleigh, NC 27606

CU Treasurers should continue to use Form A.

deweinel@gmail.com

(919)851-3093 Home (919)215-6624 Cell

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT:

Happy New Year!

Or, maybe not...Did You Plan Accordingly?

Before I begin, let me remind you that we've made it one more trip around the sun; persevered during hardships and heartbreaks; and completed a successful IN-PERSON Committee Day 2!! Just in case you didn't know!

I begin with "Happy" New Year because every December 31st and January 1st millions upon millions wait to embrace a new day; a new perspective; a new diet; a new job; a new beginning, and/or a new calendar/planner!! Yes! The thrill of getting a new, completely pristine calendar. The wonder of what you will fill the squares with; where you'll go; what colors will you use; and are you sure you have enough of the right stickers? For many of us, these are fun, exciting times and we enjoy all the newness. However, sadly, not all of these are "happy" changes for everyone. Sometimes we are not given what we planned. Sometimes a new direction in life is forced upon us. And, we know that they are definitely not part of our plans.

It is at times like this that we are challenged.
Our resilience is tested.
Our faith is questioned.

Will this delay break you? Will the different direction make you stronger? How do you continue when nothing is happening that you had planned for years? Where change occurs, we have decisions to make. Not the "what do you want for dinner" type of decisions but life decisions. Family decisions.

It is invigorating for some and a total nightmare for others. I agree, it is scary to step out of your comfort zone. Especially when we have always done things in a certain way. We become timid. Not so eager to

test the waters. But sometimes we are working through those changes and don't really realize it.

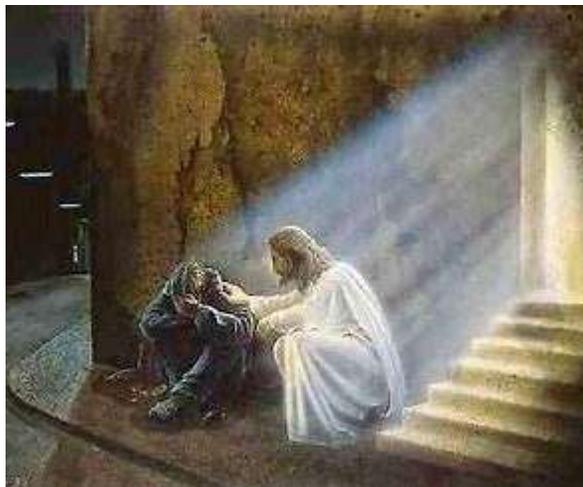
Ladies, we just lived through one of the biggest life changes we will ever have to make! As we look back upon our decisions and challenges through this pandemic, are you pleased? Are you where you planned to be?

Did the Housing Authority write you a notice saying you needed to move because you had to paint your shutters dark red instead of the vibrant red in the contract? How many times did your toilet clog because you had to change from being a Charmin home, to an Angel Soft family because that was all that was available. Did you get the pleasure of finding out that Hydrox Cookies really DO taste like Oreos, and they are half the price?

We are planners. We are set in our ways. We do not accept change well when it is not on our terms. We are human. We have faults. We are children of God. We are loved beyond compare. Maybe things are not where you wanted them to be this time last year, or the year before that, or 7 years ago. Sometimes this place we are in is a daily struggle just to survive. And, sometimes it is just full of lazy peaceful days.

No matter how much you want to fight the inevitable, YOU are right where you are supposed to be. This has been something that I have HAD to grow into and learn to accept. How can this be my destiny? All in all, love it or hate it, this is where I am. This is where you are. Let's make the best of it together.

*"For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope"
Jeremiah 29:11.*



A Prayer to Share



As part of the monthly *Bulletin* published by the NC Women of the ELCA, we will be including this new section, “A Prayer to Share.”

The following prayer was written by Marguerite Taylor, Co-Chair of the Discipleship Committee.

Oh, Lord, hear my prayer.
Oh, Lord, hear my prayer.
When I call, answer me.
Oh, Lord, hear my prayer.
Oh, Lord, hear my prayer.
Come and listen to me.
Thank you, Lord, for always listening
and answering our prayers.
In you, we place our trust.
Amen.

February is for Lovers!

Virginia, as a state, thinks they have cornered this saying, but I say that it is always a good time to think about loving your neighbor. It is what we are called to do by God.

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself. ‘All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:36-40, NIV

From cover to cover, in the Bible, God teaches us about his unending, lavish, great love for His people. That is us! I call you to act like a child of God and show His love to everyone that you come in contact with. Not over the top love, but respectful love for every human being. Listen carefully and speak when necessary. Everyone wants to be heard.

Our current world is filled with division, distrust, and suspicion. A popular song from the 60s stated “Love is all that you need.” I believe if problems were approached with love instead of being micro-divided

by politics that we would be in a much better place in our country. So, what can you do? Instead of complaining about a situation, pray for everyone involved first. Look to see what you can do to help diffuse the issue and pray some more. I am not asking you to do something that you do not believe in, but there is probably something that you could do to improve the situation instead of fanning the flames.

Love your neighbor as yourself is a tall order. This is not easy. There are people in our lives that are tough to love. This is why you need to pray for those who are difficult to love as often as you can. We all need to pray frequently and often. We are so blessed. Give yourself time each day to think of your blessings. It will give you a fresh perspective and decrease some of your underlying worry.

I had a friend suggest that I put 10 pennies in my left pocket each morning. When something happens that you are grateful for, take one of the pennies from the left pocket and put it in your right pocket. By the end of the day, you will have all your pennies in the right pocket. And the “game” is to see how fast you can get your pennies into your right pocket. This practice allows you to see the blessings all around you. We - me included - need to take time to acknowledge the good in our lives. This helps us not to be bogged down with the difficult things in our life. Just like “a spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down”, lingering with the good in your life will help you tolerate the hard things.

“I love to do your will, O my God; your law is deep within me. You are the LORD; do not withhold your compassion from me; may your steadfast love and your truth continually keep me safe.” Psalms 40:8,11, NIV.

Submitted by Alecia Harrison,
Discipleship Committee



BOX TOPS FOR CROSSNORE SCHOOL!

Do you remember when we clipped the “Box Tops for Education” from our various grocery items in our pantry and cabinets? I have some news for you!

Box Tops have gone digital! Don't say you can't do it. Once you have the app, the process is easy peasy! Just scan your receipt!

To get started:

1. Download the “Box Tops for Education” App on your phone.
2. Create a free account using your email address and creating a password.
3. Find Crossnore School. Search by their name “Williams Academy” or by the zip code 28616. (They are not listed as Crossnore.)
4. Complete your profile with your name, birthdate and zip code.
5. Press the scan button to take a picture of your receipt.
6. Earn money for Crossnore School!

I just sent 70 cents to Crossnore! My first receipt! It was so easy!

So, you do your shopping online and pick up your groceries? No problem! Follow the app to learn how to email your electronic receipt.

1. Forward to receipts@boxtops4education.com.
2. You will receive an email notification almost immediately.
3. Shortly thereafter BTFE will advise the amount of your donation!

Earning money for Crossnore!

If you mail your box tops directly to Crossnore, as in the past, please continue to do so. And remember, you can use your grocery receipts wherever you shop for groceries, Food Lion, Target, Walmart, etc., wherever you buy Box Top products!

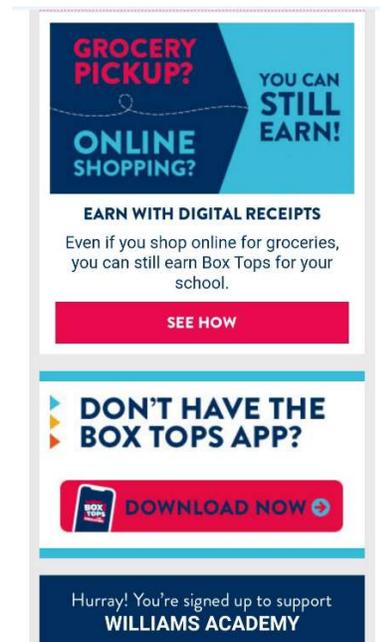
For more information on this program, contact:

Elizabeth O'Hagan, Crossnore School

Community Outreach Coordinator

828 733 4305

ehagan@crossnore.org



Christine Bohr Anderson Seminary Scholarship

In case you did not know, the NC Women of the ELCA have a scholarship known as the Christine Bohr Anderson Seminary Scholarship. The application deadline for the scholarship is May 1, 2023. The purpose for this scholarship is to financially assist women from North Carolina ELCA congregations who are pursuing a seminary education and who are attending a Lutheran Seminary (ELCA) fulltime.

The amount of the scholarship is one thousand (\$1,000) dollars. The committee will review applications and the notification will be made to the recipient prior to the North Carolina Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) Gathering in June. The Women of the ELCA request that the recipient attends the gathering to inform them of her plans and how she plans to serve the women of the Church once she has completed seminary. Please share this information with any woman you know who meets the above criteria.

You can use the following link to access the Christine Bohr Anderson Qualifications and application forms.

[CBA Scholarship qualifications.pdf \(ncwelca.org\)](#)

[Christine B Anderson Scholarship Application2022.docx \(live.com\)](#)

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

We recently celebrated the official Martin Luther King Jr., Day, commemorating the life and legacy of a man who brought hope and healing to America through greater equality for all people, regardless of race.

As a man who stood by truth, justice, compassion, and courage, his character and leadership inspire our daily lives. We celebrate the timeless virtues he taught by looking to his ground-breaking words that are just as relevant today as they were over fifty years ago.

Some of his well-known words follow:

- “I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: ‘We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.’”
- “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
- “I have decided to stick with love. . . . Hate is too great a burden to bear.”
- “Faith is taking the first step even when you can’t see the whole staircase.”
- “A right delayed is a right denied.”
- “No person has the right to rain on your dreams.”

His quotes continue to encourage us to promote standing up for equality.



Greetings from Your NC Treasurer

Ladies, thank you for all you do for the NC Women of the ELCA. As we come together again in our circles, Committee Days, Retreats, Conferences Gathering and Annual Gatherings, you are faithfully sharing your time, talents and offerings. We, on the Stewardship Committee, are encouraged by the increase in giving to the NC Women of the ELCA.

We are happy to announce to those of you who are Amazon customers that we have added the North Carolina Synodical Women’s Organization to Amazon Smile. Amazon Smile will give us a percent of your Amazon Smile total that you spend. You can click the change tab if you already have Amazon Smile setup or here is the direct link: <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/56-1734757>. Unfortunately, this feature ends February 20, 2023 so take advantage of it while you can.

We are also excited to share that we have **Tithe.ly**, a very successful online giving platform for the North Carolina Synodical Women of the ELCA. Tithe.ly is a safe and secure giving platform that allows you to give one-time or recurring gifts. Click on this link: www.ncwelca.org to give through our website. Then click the *Giving* button. It’s a safe and easy way to give anytime.

It is a privilege to serve as your NC Synod Treasurer,
Debra Weinel

One-Day Retreat Becoming a Butterfly

Several years ago, I spent some time with my then five-year-old grandson, sitting on their front lawn, watching the butterflies around a butterfly bush. He was so excited when a butterfly landed on his arm. I will never forget his excitement. Butterflies are magical creatures!

In our One-Day Retreat, scheduled for Saturday, March 18 (snow date March 25), we will “transform and Become a Butterfly.” Join us at any one of the four locations being offered in the Synod. A registration form is attached.

**One of Our Former NC Board
Members has been
Called by God and the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in
America**

Holley Denise Henry

will be ordained to the
Ministry of Word and Sacrament
on Saturday, February 11
at 2:00 p.m.
at Lutheran Church of the Epiphany
5220 Silas Creek Parkway
Winston-Salem.

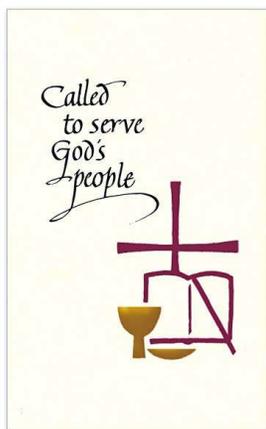
Join online via Epiphany's
[YouTube channel](#) or [Facebook page](#).

The Reverend Dr. Timothy Smith,
bishop of the NC Synod, presiding;
the Reverend Judy Drysdale, preaching.

All rostered ministers are invited to vest and
process;
the color of the day is red.

*A reception will follow the service. Be sure to
sign Denise's stole.*

Pastor Denise has been called through the
synod council to be the chaplain at two
Lutheran Services Carolinas facilities:
Trinity Elms, Clemmons and Trinity Glen,
Winston-Salem.



Human Trafficking

January is the month when there is a national emphasis on the problem of human trafficking around the whole world. North Carolina ranks high with the number of people being trafficked here. Since 2001 the North Carolina Women of the ELCA have been involved in education, prayer, and support of agencies that are working to help combat human trafficking.

Adults Saving Kids has been a part of helping the NC Women of the ELCA in this fight. This ministry was started in 1990 by parents and family members of a support group seeking

to give aid to those who had young women in their families who were victims of trafficking.

Over the years what has become obvious is that many young people are vulnerable for a variety of reasons and many adults have found ways to take advantage of that vulnerability.

At this point the work of Adult Saving Kids is to prevent harm being done to young people by preparing their parents and grandparents to equip them with faith stories, support their identity in Christ through baptism and share with them wise skills by which they can avoid the traps set for them. This includes child molesters, bullies, Internet pornographers, seducers, scammers, drug dealers, traffickers and domestic violators.

Adults Saving Kids believes parents and grandparents have three assignments from God which makes them irreplaceable in the lives of those growing up.

1. Pass on the faith (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 20-25; Psalm 78:1-8; Ephesians 6:4)
 2. Teach wisdom and shrewdness (Proverbs 1-8; Matthew 10:16)
 3. Pray for each other (Ephesians 6:18, James 5:16)
- What part do congregations play in this? Ephesians 4:11-16 says pastors and teachers are to equip the lay people for their ministries and by so doing, build up the body of Christ and not let the cunning to gain control. (Verse 14)

Is there a need to protect and prepare young people for the world they face? See the following statistics:

- 68 % of young men in America visit a pornographic site at least once a week.
- One out of three girls will be molested or raped by time they are 18, one out of six boys

- One out of four women will be abused by their husbands or mate
- Two out of five children are born to unmarried moms in the US.
- 33% of U.S. children live in a home without their birth father.
- 71 % of high school dropouts are from fatherless homes.
- Nearly 17 million adults in the U.S. suffer from alcoholism
- An estimated 41 % of first marriages end in divorce

For more information **Adults Saving Kids** has these Resources:

Book 1 - *Parents Arise, Grandparents Arise, Ten Challenges to Overcome to Safeguard Our Children*

Book II - *Parents Arise, Grandparents Arise, Ten Actions to Take to Safeguard Our Children*

Loving Others By Praying for Them (26 weeks of daily intercessory prayers)

Wise As Serpents, A Six Lesson Course for Churches Teaching Youth to be Street Smart

Websites: adultssavingkids.org Includes articles, podcasts, videos

parentsarise.org Includes curriculum, cartoons

elca.org Under Resources, write in Commercial Sexual Exploitation for this Message.

Submitted by Karen Birkedal, Justice Committee

Conference Leaders Committee Update

The Conference Leaders Committee met on Jan. 14th at Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church in China Grove. We finalized all plans and preparations for the **Spring Conference Gatherings**. The theme is *“Renewed Day By Day”*. The Offering Designation is to “Girls On The Run” and our 2023 Pennies Offering is to the Bishop’s Challenge to “Welcome the Stranger” which will assist with the resettlement of Afghan and Ukrainian refugees. The Spring Program will be *“Hospitality: More Than Warm & Friendly”*, which will relate nicely to our Pennies Offering and the Bishop’s Challenge.

Elections will be held at the Spring Gatherings. Presiders will be elected for a 1-year term and Directors of Communication for a 2-year term. Anyone who is willing to run for election or re-election is eligible. Please see the Spring Gathering Calendar in this Bulletin for dates and locations scheduled. **If you have additional locations for Spring Gatherings, please contact Lorri Monterose or Heidi Gibson, Conference Coordinators, immediately.**

Provide Instant Hope Today For Crossnore School

It’s a new year with fresh perspectives, renewed optimism, and excitement for what’s to come. Have you ever thought, “If I win the lottery, I will...?” So many of us have had that thought. Studies show that almost every one would include some type of charitable giving to their list of what they would do if they won the lottery. But you don’t need to win the lottery to become a philanthropist. You don’t have to win it big to make a big difference.

The **Circle of Friends Society** at Crossnore School invites you into the world of giving. This is the perfect time to think about how you can impact and improve the lives of children. When you join **Circle of Friends**, decide a monthly gift amount that is right for you, and pick the time of month that is best.

In a few clicks, you are able to impact children at Crossnore School today, the following month, and for the rest of the year. Best of all, you can trust that your gift goes directly to providing trauma-informed services to children at Crossnore. You can become a **Circle of Friends** member today! Go to www.crossnore.org/donate-now. Under Donor Donation, choose monthly.

World Day of Prayer

World Day of Prayer is a worldwide ecumenical movement of Christian women of many traditions who come together to observe a common day of prayer each year on the **first Friday of March** every year. In 2023, that date will be March 3rd. (Although that is the official date, if your community or congregation would prefer, you may choose an alternate date.)

Each year a different country's committee serves as the writers of the World Day of Prayer worship service. This year the writers are from Taiwan. The theme of the WDP 2023 program is entitled, "I Have Heard About Your Faith," based on Ephesians 1:15-19, the letter sent to a faith community to express gratitude. Paul gave thanks to God for the Ephesians living out their love and faith, and prayed that they could see these three truths: the hope to which God has called the disciples, the riches of God's glorious inheritance among the saints, and the immeasurable greatness of God's power.

Each of the 170 countries celebrating World Day of Prayer has an ecumenical committee of women representing many cultures, races, and faith traditions. World Day of Prayer is supported by offerings given by individuals through these annual services.

World Day of Prayer USA promotes justice and equality for women through prayer, partnerships, service and celebration. For more information, visit www.wdp-usa.org. World Day of Prayer USA 475 Riverside Drive, 15th Floor, New York, NY 10115 Free material is available from World Day of Prayer-USA: 888.937.8720 info@wdp-usa.org | www.wdp-usa.org Facebook.com/WorldDayOfPrayerUSA.



Annual Gathering 2023

Plans are in the preliminary stages for the 2023 Annual Gathering to be held in-person at Lenoir-Rhyne University in Hickory. The dates are **Friday, June 23 through Sunday, June 25**. During Committee Day II held in mid-January, the Gathering Planning Committee members met to set in motion the process.

We are looking forward to a return to the pre-pandemic Annual Gathering we all remember. Beginning with our theme, **RENEWED DAY BY DAY**, we anticipate a renewal of old friendships and perhaps forging new friendships among the NC Women.

As the time gets closer, we will have registration forms and information about awareness sessions to share. As of this time, I am pleased to announce that **Amanda Held Opelt**, author, speaker, and songwriter, will join us as our keynote speaker on Saturday morning.

As an author, Amanda writes about faith, grief, and creativity, and believes in the power of community, ritual, shared worship, and storytelling to heal even our deepest wounds. Her book is entitled "*A Hole in the World: Lessons Found in Rediscovering Rituals of Grief and Healing*."

As a songwriter and singer, Amanda will also be our Saturday evening entertainment. You can find more information about Amanda Held Opelt at her website amandaheldopelt.com.

Amanda said, she was "happy to be asked" to speak to the NC Women of the ELCA.

Stay tuned to the website and future editions of *The Bulletin* for more details about the Annual Gathering.