



**NORTH CAROLINA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION**

[www.ncwelca.org](http://www.ncwelca.org)

**THE BULLETIN**

**May/June 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

**FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT:**

Here we are at the beginning of May. May holds many memories for me; and, I'm sure it does for you as well. May, to many, is a time of rebirth, graduations, weddings, babies, flowers, Mother's Day, Memorial Day, fireworks, lake trips, friends, backyard BBQs, and so much more. But, did you also know that May also has awareness days? Some of the observed awareness days bring good memories and some bring sad. One of the memories that always pops up in my mind is a rhyme I learned in kindergarten:

*"April showers, bring May flowers!"*

The second memory that May brings with it is Peonies. A large fragrant flower that originated in Asia. It is classified in the rose family, but it's so very different. Peonies have no thorns, and are a long-stemmed flowering plant; while roses are flowering shrubbery with thorns.

The third type of memories that May brings with it are graduations. Young people getting ready to step out into that large, busy, cruel, world. So young! Of course, when I was that age, I thought that I was an ADULT. I can do as I please. Blah, blah, blah, LOL!! Boy, was I ever wrong! But that's a story for another day.

This got me thinking, have you ever taken time to look at and maybe research the awareness for each day of each month? Crazy as it is, there could be several "awarenesses" observed on that one day. I came across no days in our calendar that had only 1 observance or none. As a teacher; I do this all the time! Plus, you never know when a game of Trivial Pursuit may start!

May 1 <sup>st</sup>	May Day Melanoma Monday Nat. Choc. Parfait Day Nat. Loyalty Day Nat. College Decision Day Nat. Mother Goose Day School Principal's Day
May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Intern'l Harry Potter Day Nat. Brothers & Sisters Day Nat. Teacher Appreciation Day Nat. Truffle Day World Asthma Day World Tuna Day

May 3 <sup>rd</sup>	AAPI Women's Equal Pay Day Nat. Anxiety Disorders Screening Day Nat. Paranormal Day World Press Freedom Day
ETC.....	So many more.....

Reading through the things observed on each day in May I find that the days are mostly joyful and spent with family/friends. Clear skies, great food, and fun to share with friends/family. However, some of those days are nowhere close to the "Sunshine, Lollipops, and Rainbows. Everything that's wonderful." No, some of the days are filled with dread and emotional storms. These days bring sadness to those that it affects. Sometimes so strong are those feelings that help may be needed. May is also National Mental Health Awareness Month for Women and Children; Missing Children's Day; Women's Health Care Month; Ovarian Cancer Day; and Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives During WWII. Therefore, sometimes we need to take a step back and remind ourselves that not all new days bring fond memories and new beginnings.

That is the time when we need to step out of our comfort zone and seek/search for help. Be it talking with a friend, family member, spouse, your Pastor, and/or reading the Bible. I'm reminded of the parable of *The Old Farmer and Old Mule in the Well*. It goes like this...

One day an old farmer was out tending to his fields and preparing to cut the hay so it could dry and be ready to bale in the morning. As he gathered the things that he needed, he noticed that his good ole faithful mule was nowhere to be found. The farmer heard the mule 'braying' (whatever mules do when they fall into wells). After carefully assessing the situation, the farmer sympathized with the mule, but decided that neither the mule nor the well was worth the trouble of saving. So, instead, he called his neighbors together and told them what had happened. He enlisted them to help haul dirt to just bury the old mule in the well to put him out of his misery.

Initially, the old mule was hysterical! You could hear it braying the next town over! But, as the farmer and his neighbors continued shoveling, and the dirt

would hit his back, a thought struck him. The mule decided that every time a shovel load of dirt landed on his back, he was going to shake it off and step up on the fallen dirt! There they were: the old man and neighbors shoveling dirt. They began to think that the old mule must have given up since they did not hear its brays any longer.

But down in the well, shovel after shovel of dirt, the old mule thought. "Dirt, shake it off, and step up; dirt, shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up...shake it off and step up!" He repeated this mantra to encourage himself. No matter how heavy the load of dirt, or how distressing the situation seemed - the old mule fought its "panic" and just kept right on "dirt, shake, step.....dirt, shake, step...."

It wasn't very long before the old mule, filthy, battered and exhausted, stepped triumphantly over the wall of the well! Something that could have and felt like it would end him, actually blessed that old mule. How? It all boils down to the manner in which the old mule handled his situation. You know, we could learn a lot from that old mule.

If we face our problems; respond to them positively or without harshness; and refuse to give in to panic, bitterness, or self-pity – all those adversities that come along to *bury* us, will not succeed. We have within us the power and faith to transform that situation into a benefit and blessing.

Ladies, may God bless us this new month and many more as we "shake off the shackles and step up out of the wells" in which we find ourselves!

***"I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me." - Phil. 4:13***

***Lisa Philbeck***

President, NC Women of the ELCA

**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



**Sign Up for Daily Grace**

Daily Grace is an on-the-go companion for your spiritual journey, offering a faith reflection every day. Encounter God's extravagant, boundless, and often surprising grace by signing up for a daily email message. The app will soon be retired but signing up for an e-mail is easy! Learn more at [welca.org/dailygrace](http://welca.org/dailygrace).

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**A Prayer to Share**



In this column each month, the NC Women of the ELCA highlights a prayer or shared

This month we are sharing a prayer written by Martha Oldland. We are fortunate that Martha oversees distribution of our weekly prayer concerns that is published by e-mail on Mondays. Martha has such a gift for addressing topical issues as a prayer each week.

**"Jesus weeps with us. With the pandemic, everything changed three years ago: life, death, and resurrection. What does it mean to have a new life, new ways? Near normal has not been rectified, as Covid still is with us. Jesus does cry out to us in our circumstances. I wait for you, O Lord; in your word is hope. Walk in the light of Jesus as he is our hope and resurrection. Our heavenly Father, we pray for those who need your healing, love, wholeness, support, comfort, strength, hope, assurance, and guidance. "**

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## Latest News Regarding the Triennial Gathering



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING  
SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023 | PHOENIX  
WELCATG.ORG

Registration for the Triennial Gathering Just Love scheduled for September 21-24, 2023, in Phoenix, Ariz. opened **March 1**.

This special in-person gathering is an opportunity to live out the message that the Rev. Angela Khabeb left us with in Minneapolis in 2017 and virtually in 2021, "Christianity is not comfortable. If you are comfortable in Jesus, you are doing it wrong."

We are different from the people we were in 2017 and 2021. Yet we know that, as people of faith, we are still called to justice and love. It is up to us to carry this work forward.

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### Calling All Quilters!!!

Quilters of all abilities are invited to create a quilt interpreting the Just Love Gathering theme. The challenge comes not only in interpreting the gathering theme but also in working within certain rules. A new twist this year is that the quilt can be rendered in any shape, as long as the finished perimeter is within 60 to 100 inches. Round, rectangular, triangular? You decide. To learn more and download the fact sheet, go to <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page> and scroll down the page a bit.

## FROM THE DESK OF THE SECRETARY

This is the last issue of the newsletter, the *Bulletin*, that I will be editing as secretary of the NC Women of the ELCA. I accepted the challenge of serving as Secretary about two years ago with high aspirations and perhaps some new ideas. As I reflect back, I feel like I had some successes as well as some failures.

In a way, I failed because I found mailing out copies of the *Bulletin* every month was a daunting task. In order to take advantage of the USPS bulk rate, there had to be at least 200 printed copies of each issue placed in the mail. That also meant printing that many copies, using our leased copier, another daunting task.

We already had a list of women who received the *Bulletin* by e-mail so, during the time I have served as Secretary and editor, I have continued to increase the list of electronic mailings. Part of my failure though is that some of you may not have received a copy in your inbox. I ultimately found that some copies were going to "spam" or "junk" mailboxes, probably because I send it by "blind copy." The success related to this is we are attempting to end the lease for our copier, which should result in significant cost savings for the NC Women of the ELCA.

Another change with the *Bulletin* is the frequency of the distribution. Previously, we were sending it monthly but the Board made the decision to move to a bi-monthly distribution. That means you will only receive the newsletter every other month. That is a change that continues to require adjustment. What that means is the Board, as well as any of you who would like to contribute articles (which are welcomed!) need to think ahead. I admit sometimes that is hard for us to do! We find ourselves thinking in the moment. By thinking ahead, we need to have dates and information available at least two months before they happen. We are still working to improve on that front!

In June, during the Annual Gathering, we will be electing a new Secretary. Whoever is elected will become the new editor and she will be learning everything I had to learn two years ago (and still learning really). Please be as patient with her as you have been with me as she learns the process. Remember we are all volunteers. None of us are

perfect and we all have lots of obligations so please give us the grace you would expect if the roles were reversed.

It has been an honor to serve the NC Women of the ELCA but it is time for me to focus on what God is calling me to do next.

Peace be with you!

*Susan P. Harris*, SWO Secretary

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## Peace and Hope

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[a] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>2</sup> through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we boast in the hope of the glory of God.

<sup>3</sup> Not only so, but we[c] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; <sup>4</sup> perseverance, character; and character, hope. <sup>5</sup> And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

<sup>6</sup>You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup> Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. <sup>8</sup> But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

<sup>9</sup>Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! <sup>10</sup> For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! <sup>11</sup>Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation. **(Romans 5:1-11, NIV)**

We have been going through Lent for the last several weeks. It can be a dark time where we reflect on our relationship with God and intentionally try to take it to a deeper level. This passage in Romans gives me GREAT hope. And in fact, Romans was one of Martin Luther's favorite books of the bible, especially chapter 8. Romans 5 tells us that SINCE we are justified by faith, WE have PEACE with God through

our Savior, Jesus Christ. Justification is when God moves a willing person from the state of SIN into a state of GRACE. We GET this grace from God who in His mercy, gives us grace as a FREE gift. Wow! I know that I disappoint God daily and He still has the mercy to give me grace! Mercy is not getting the punishment that I deserve and grace is the underserved gift of divine favor.

Because of God's mercy and grace, we can boast in the HOPE we receive in the Glory of God. I am grateful every day for the hope that God showers on me, even in my darkest days, He is there to show me how big and powerful He is. I take for granted that God is always working in my life. I usually remember this when the "problem" overwhelms me and I can't figure a way out. God in His infinite mercy, sees my little issue, waits for me to ask for help and then solves my annoyance in a way that I could not have considered on my own. God does not always answer our prayers the way that we think would be a perfect solution. But trust me, God's way is ALWAYS better! Another thing that I struggle with is being patient. Again, God's timing is nothing like our timing. God has a different set of rules for time. And I look forward to being in Heaven with Him and not worrying about time anymore. I feel very tied to a clock currently.

The next part of this scripture is a little more difficult. God wants me to glory in my suffering? The human part of me tries to avoid suffering. But suffering is inevitable. We are human. We will disappoint ourselves and those around us. We even disappoint people that we don't actually know. A misunderstanding and misinterpreted action can leave another person feeling obscure or unseen. Suffering leads to perseverance which leads to character which leads to HOPE! Wow! Such a convoluted path to get to Hope. But we ALL need HOPE! And we can only get satisfying hope from God. If you are having trouble feeling this hope, pray that God will reveal to you how He is working in your life right now. We don't call Him the God of Hope for nothing! And HOPE does not disappoint!

God's love has been poured into us through the Holy Spirit. God sent the Advocate, the Holy Spirit to live within us and guide us. The Holy Spirit is working overtime on me. Sorry that I keep Him so busy, but fortunately there is enough of Him to go around. Because He IS God! God can be in all places at all times. Unlike Satan, that can only be in one place at

a time. Satan relies on using others around us to create doubt or tempt us to do something that isn't exactly right or block our path.

Where we are weak, God is strong. Hallelujah! And another blessing, Christ died for the ungodly! I do not deserve a Savior but yet I have one. And so do you! Christ died for everyone's sins. You just have to believe that He did this for you too! The weight of my sin is very heavy, more than I can bear. I cannot imagine the agony of carrying the sin of every human of all times at once when Jesus was on the cross. He had already sweat drops of blood while thinking about carrying the sin of the world in the Garden of Gethsemane. And that was just thinking about it! And Jesus knew before He was born to Mary what the outcome would be, and He came anyway. That is a level of LOVE that I struggle to understand. God proved His love for us that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Therefore friends, we are saved from the wrath of God. This is the punishment that we deserve. It is our sin. The punishment is death. But Jesus bore the weight of our sins so that when God looks at us, He sees the righteous Jesus Christ. Wow! And finally, we can have a relationship with God because Jesus removed all the barriers. We can pray to God at any moment and He will hear our prayers. Do not be discouraged when your prayers are not answered quickly or how you thought they should be answered. God is ever present. He hears the prayers of His children. And He is standing right beside you right NOW!

What an awesome God we have!

Blessings, Alecia Harrison, Discipleship Committee

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**Tabs for Ronald McDonald House  
Wanted by NC WELCA**

In March 2020 we paused collection of the aluminum can tabs for the Ronald McDonald Houses. In 2023 we find ourselves on the hunt again for all the tabs in the state. Gather and deliver, please.

North Carolina has five locations (Charlotte, Chapel Hill, Durham, Greenville, and Winston Salem) plus rooms in hospitals and mobile carts and vehicles.

In 1974 the first RMH was established by Philadelphia Eagles football player Fred Hill and his wife. Their daughter was diagnosed with leukemia. As they traveled to Philadelphia for her treatments, they saw many other families driving long distances, sleeping in waiting rooms and eating from vending machines. The Hills, the Philadelphia Eagles, local doctors and many businesses purchased a house close to the hospital and restored it. At the end of 2022 there were more than 350 houses in 64 countries that accommodate families with hospitalized children. The goal for all is to "Provide a Home Away from Home". Sites vary in how they accomplish that goal.

The Winston Salem RMH opened in 1984 near NC Baptist Hospital. Initially it was 10 rooms and baths and is now 36. Volunteer groups provide dinners, bag lunches, brunches, and baking events. Ronald McDonald of the Triad also provide hospital services( family rooms in hospitals like Novant, Brenner, and Cone) and mobile health carts/vehicles. For example, one of these carts goes to the Downtown Health Plaza. Spanish speaking volunteers provide information, food and drink to patients many of whom Spanish is their first language.

We can help by saving the can tabs from soda, soup, cat and dog food, fruits and vegetables, tuna, etc. No one has to test if the pop top is aluminum. The few that aren't aluminum are removed with a magnet. Consider finding a business, school, or church where you could place a large mouth jar or box with a sign which indicates what is being collected and the name of the charity. The Ronald McDonald House gets money for the tabs and we raise awareness for the charity.

Tabs may be delivered to the June meeting in LR, to committee meetings, and to the Justice committee members.

Thank you for your help.

Submitted by Camille Jones, Justice Ministry  
704-662-4293

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## **Alcoholics Anonymous**

For many years, alcoholism has been recognized as a highly prevalent and disabling health problem, one that affects far more than just the alcoholic alone. Family, friends, and others are hurt by its effects—in the home, on the job, on our highways and roads. Alcoholism costs lives, as well as costing communities millions of dollars. So, whether or not you ever become an alcoholic yourself, alcoholism can still have a devastating impact on your life.

Members of Alcoholics Anonymous have learned a great deal about alcoholism—how to identify and arrest it, and how to live a life in recovery. But so far, no one has discovered a way to prevent it; it is still unknown just why some drinkers turn into alcoholics and others do not. For that reason, A.A. concentrates on helping those who are already alcoholics, those who may have a desire to stop drinking, so they can begin to recover and to learn how to live a normal, happy life without alcohol.

The American Medical Association sees alcoholism as an illness. Alcoholics cannot control their drinking, because they are ill in their bodies and in their minds (or emotions). There are many symptoms and consequences of alcoholic drinking. The test is based on choice and control. If an individual is unable to choose when to drink, and once starting is unable to control the drinking, there is a probability that person is alcoholic.

A.A. also adds that they are spiritually ill as well. In the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, people who seriously want to learn to live without alcohol work a program than results in forming a relationship with God as they understand God. Most failures at stopping drinking can be attributed to removing alcohol from one's life without replacing it with anything that works. A.A. has found that a right relationship with God is a most suitable substitute.

There are no easy methods to quitting drinking. And, quitting isn't really the problem. To not pick up that first drink is the problem. Recovery programs employ a variety of ways to remain sober: attending meetings, working with other alcoholics, maintaining conscious contact with God, taking a moral inventory of one's self, sharing with other alcoholics. These are but a few of the spiritual tools used to maintain physical and emotional sobriety.

The good news is there is help. Help that works. The website AA.org offers information and solutions for individuals interested in learning more. While Alcoholics Anonymous is not the only resource for recovery, it is a proven method of restoring alcoholics to normal and productive lives.

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## **Our Children and Our Planet**

Ladies of the Women of the ELCA, not much change in our world as I read over the news reports daily. So again, I'm led to put pen to paper – well, keyboard to paper -- to make sure you are reading about the injustices and feeling the Holy Spirit move you to give your energy to help those unable to help themselves. Lord, have mercy.

An opinion piece by Cella Rivenbark on book banning was eye-catching. A summation of the article was books won't make our children trans or woke. My children were always more curious if denied a chance to see for themselves. Fayetteville Observer, Sunday, March 5, 2023, page 3G

My concern for missing children still ranks high and especially the lack of resources to find them, put forth by our normal authorities. If white you can expect more concern, but Amber Alerts are seldom used, and unclear how much they help, if used. The first crucial hours are left useless because of strict requirements that must be met to issue one. Children have been missing for years, with no results found, from toddlers to teenagers. What can we urge our elected to do?

“ In 2021, there were 254 Amber Alerts compared with the more than 337,000 missing-child reports...” That is less than one alert for every 1,000 children.” “...Black children made up 37% Missing” Fayetteville Observer, March 8, 2023, page 1A

I will leave you with the air and water pollution we are still being exposed to daily. From the chloride release from the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, to dozens of exposures in NC counties written about in the Fayetteville Observer, February 26, 2023, page 1D. Listed are 10 landfills the NC Department of Environmental Quality's air quality division reviewed. The low income, predominantly communities of color were most prevalent for land fields with emissions.

“Sampson, Cleveland, High Point, Caldwell, Haywood, Wayne, Davidson, New Hanover, Onslow and Catawba Counties were top 10”

“10 emitters not landfills: Columbus, Catawba, Haywood, Union, Sampson, Washington, Guildford, Cabarrus, Jones, Southport Counties”

Are these in your back yard? We certainly have had our fair share in Cumberland, with the Gen X contamination. Cumberland County has recently been awarded \$15M to help replace the water system. Cumberland County has to use the grant to build a water system in the Gray’s Creek area. A new water system will not replace the ground, wells, gardens, health issues, and years of non-awareness for these homeowners. Do you think their home values went up? These folks have relied on bottled water and/or new filtration systems in their homes and two local schools since 2017. Chemours Chemical plant has been putting GenX and PFAS into the Cape Fear River and air for years. These are forever chemicals, known for cancer, poor children development and the list goes on. Do we have recourse? What can we urge our elected to do?

We are the stewards, of both our children and our ground. Pray. sisters, pray.

Submitted by Tonie Neal, Co-Chair Justice

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Ascension, Shelby, members along with others in the Foothills Quilting Guild made news recently when they contributed 16 quilts in their friend's memory to a local Hospice house.

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## RENEWED DAY BY DAY

As we continue to focus on our theme this year “**Renewed Day by Day**,” what better way than to focus on our personal prayer time. When we draw close to God, He draws closer to us.

The following *Renew Prayer* is Adapted from The People’s Prayer Book, @ *RENEW International*

Gracious God and Father,  
We are your people embraced by your love.  
We thank you for your presence with us throughout all time.  
Create us anew through Jesus Christ your Son.  
Liberate us from all that keeps us from you.  
Send your Holy Spirit, enabling us  
To share in your work of recreating our world  
And restoring justice.  
Heal us from every form of sin and violence.  
Transform us to live your Word more profoundly.  
Reconcile us so enemies become friends.  
Awaken us to the sacred;  
Nurture our relationships.  
Enliven our parishes; reunite our families.  
Fill us with joy to celebrate the fullness of life.  
Empower us to be a community of love  
Growing in your likeness  
By the grace of Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Submitted by Marguerite Taylor, co-chair Discipleship Committee

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Our keynote speaker for the Annual Gathering in June will be Amanda Held Opelt, author, speaker, and songwriter, from Boone, NC.

## **PATTERSON MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

The Patterson Memorial Scholarship was established in 1949, by the six children of Ibsen Frank and Maria Lou Patterson of Albemarle, NC.

When it was established, they asked that it be managed by the North Carolina Church Women's Organization, the predecessor to the NC Women of the ELCA. As designed by the donors of the fund, a committee of three members are appointed by the president of the women's organization who administer the fund. The current members of the committee are Jean Beaver, Chair; Susan Harris, Treasurer; and Barbara Pitts.

The guidelines to receive the scholarship state that the applicant is a member of a NC Synod, ELCA, congregation. The applicant plans to attend (or is attending) an accredited four-year college or university in pursuit of a bachelor's degree; or they plan to attend (or is attending) one of the accredited seminaries. The applicant must show evidence of financial need.

If a student is applying for the first time, they must supply two letters of recommendation, an academic record, and a financial award letter from the college, university, or seminary they will be attending.

In keeping with the wishes of the Patterson family, a larger portion of the scholarship money is awarded to seminarians and Lenoir-Rhyne University students, with smaller amounts given to students attending other colleges and universities.

The application and all supporting documents must be received by the June 25 deadline each year.

The Patterson Memorial Fund is administered by Wells Fargo Company; and the money for the scholarships comes from the income received from the investments of the Karl B. Patterson and Family Estate.

Through the Patterson Memorial Scholarship Committee, the NC Women of the ELCA have an investment in the academic growth of young people in our synod. Over the years, since the establishment of this scholarship, countless young

people have received scholarship provided by this fund.

A copy of the application is included with this issue of the newsletter and it can also be found on the NC Women of the ELCA website. Please share this application with eligible members of your congregations who plan to attend college in the fall.

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**MARK YOUR  
CALENDAR!**

**Get your registration in for the Annual Gathering to be held Friday, June 23 through Sunday, June 25 at Lenoir-Rhyne University. Registration deadline is May 30! Registration form is included with this newsletter.**

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