



Fall 2015

Welcome to autumn, on behalf of your Synodical Board!

Autumn is my favorite season of the year. The days and nights get cooler, the air is crisp, and the harvest is plentiful. God gives us such a spectacular example of the brilliance of **Transformation and Renewal** during this particular season. Here in Southeastern PA, we have watched the pastels of Spring roll into the luscious greens of summer. Now we see those same greens morph into rich reds and yellows, before they fall to the ground and become nourishment for the next generation of growth.

All Anew will be the theme of the next Triennial Convention and Gathering when we meet in Minneapolis in 2017. In preparation for this incredible experience, our meetings and events over the next year will be centered on the related themes of Transformation and Renewal. Stay tuned for news and registration information in preparation for our 2016 Synodical Convention in particular. We're looking for help to plan the day – I'm talking to you, party planners! – which will focus on **Renewal through the Holy Spirit** as written in Titus 3: 4-5: “⁴when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, ⁵he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit”. We'll have updates available soon on our new SEPA webpage – look for it!

In the meantime, I hope you will attend one of the Fall Conference Events being held in October and November, as we meet to **Give Thanks**: Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18) When you are together, perhaps you will take a few minutes to Give Thanks for this amazing organization! Discuss what it is about Women of the ELCA that makes it important and relevant to you.

Finally, as you are thinking and praying on all things transformational and renewing, consider running for a seat on the board as either an at-large member or as an officer – we're looking for nominees to fill the positions of Secretary and Treasurer in 2016. Serving on the board can be a wonderfully enriching experience, so please think about joining us.

As you receive the grace of our Savior during this season of such tremendous change, I pray you use your gifts to do His will, to help others **Transform and Renew**, in His name.

Respectfully,

Joy Grace
WELCA Synodical Board President
Southeastern PA Synod

Women of the ELCA Southeastern PA Synod 2015 Gathering Report



The 2015 gathering of the Women of Southeast, PA was held June 27th at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lansdale. The theme of the gathering was Helping in Jesus' Name, and our theme verse was Matthew 25: 35-40

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was as a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me. Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'"

Reverend Dr. Jennifer Ollikainen led us in our devotions, then introduced us to the work Lutheran Congregational Ministries is doing with refugees and immigrants. They find housing, supply basic necessities, help with learning English as well as offer support and help in finding work and learning to navigate this new environment. She then introduced us to a new colleague, a former Iraqi refugee who shared his fascinating story. Now he is a United States citizen and his family, after a five year separation, is with him. He is now helping others who are facing the same situation. (I was a stranger and you welcomed me.)

We had a speaker from NAMI (the National Alliance on Mental Illness) who shared her experience as a mother of a college student who developed schizophrenia. One thing she said that really impressed me was when you tell someone it is cancer, they move in to hug you; when you tell them it is mental illness, they back off. Her son is responding to treatment and hoping to help others in his situation; but he is also considering not telling anyone what his illness is. (I was sick and you took care of me.)

Another speaker was from Dawn's Place-a residential program in Philadelphia for women trying to escape from a life of sex trafficking. They offer support, training, counseling, and a safe environment. The rules are strict, and it takes women time to adjust to them. She also said international women whom they are trying to help need money to send home as they are frequently supporting their families. (I was in prison and you visited me.)

We had a service project; we tied four quilts. Two were given to Lutheran Congregational Services, and two were given to Dawn's Place. Over 600 personal care items were donated to Dawn's Place as well.

Helen Dungan

WANTED

A Treasurer- The SEPA board needs a treasurer. If you are interested and have experience dealing with finances, please contact Joy Grace.

A Nominating Board- Our constitution requires the SEPA board to form a nominating committee to propose names of women willing to serve on the board. The goal would be to have representation from all the conferences. If you are interested in being on the committee or know someone who might want to be on the board, contact Joy Grace.

Diapers for Detroit

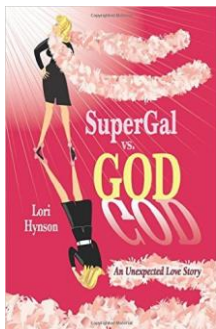


"We are celebrating the gift of one million diapers donated in Detroit," said Heidi Hagstrom, director for the ELCA Youth Gathering. "We want to thank you for all you did to make the donation possible." The youth and the Women of the ELCA created a successful partnership when they worked together to gather the diapers. The diapers were collected at the youth gathering this past summer.

Conference News

The theme for the fall 2015 gatherings is Giving Thanks. The Bible passage is 1Thessalonians 5:16-18 - Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

The events are open to all women, not just the women in that conference. Meet new people. Attend a conference outside your area! Conference coordinators- please let us know what happened at your conference.



Chester Conference

Sunday, November 8, 2015

Zion Lutheran, Spring City

1:00 (Program 1:30-4:30) cost \$10

The keynote speaker will be Lori Hynson, a speaker and the writer of Super Gal vs God. The presentation will be about overcoming the Super Girl Syndrome with gratitude.

Sign up deadline- October 25 Checks made out to Carol Starr Townsend

Please bring items for the Chester County Food Bank for their food for hungry kids on the weekend project. Offering will go to the Citizen Advocacy of Chester County.

Coordinator: Kim Tapscott. 10th Triennial Convention

Email: tapscots@verizon.net phone: 484-678-9255

Delaware Conference

October 3 2015

Faith Emanuel East Lansdowne

Speaker - Reverend Jennifer Ollikanen, Executive Director of Lutheran Congregational Services

Coordinator: Doris Krewson

Email: dkrewson5@verizon.net phone: 610-497-9026



Upper Bucks Conference

Saturday, November 14, 2015 1:30

Durham Lutheran Church

Coordinator: Paulette Gerhart

Email: PGerhart@harleysvillegroup.com

phone: 215-723-2044

Central Philadelphia

October 17, 2015

Registration at 10:00

Brunch, meeting, and speaker to follow

Speaker – Patricia Moore, a lay minister

Tabernacle Evangelical Church

Spruce St. Philadelphia

Contact person- Arlette Stansbury 215 727-8582

Upper Montgomery Conference

Saturday, October 24, 2015 Jerusalem Lutheran 311 2nd Street Schwenksville 610 287 7104

Registration 9:00 Program 9:30 Speaker: Mary Etta Mest She is an associate pastor, a director of music, a congregational visitor, and a volunteer at retirement communities.

Each church is asked to bring one treat. Canned goods will be collected for Daily Bread Community Food Pantry.

UPPER BUCKS SPRING GATHERING 2015

The Spring Gathering for Upper Bucks in 2015 was held on May 2nd at St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Riegelsville. Our program was titled "Mental Health and Congregational Life. (When people have a mental illness their garden is not well-watered. How can your congregation help?) Speakers were Kathleen Campbell from Bucks County Chapter of NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Illness) and Sylvia Havlish who spoke on Mental Health and Youth. Attendance was 25. A continental breakfast was provided upon arrival with a lunch served following the program. Canned goods and paper goods were brought by the women for the Lord's Pantry in Upper Bucks.

Helen Dungan

Active Units

Is your women's group considered to be an active unit according to the Women of the ELCA?

1. Active units have women who come together for support, study, and action.
2. Active units agree to participate beyond the congregation.
3. Active units designate a contact person.
4. Active units financially support Women of the ELCA programs.

While the fourth item is important to carrying out our ministries, the first three are the most critical in determining active units.

Please note- If the contact person in your unit changes, please inform your conference coordinator or Helen Dungan.

Faithful Friends

Looking for an easy way for yourself, your congregational unit, or a synodical organization to contribute financially to the Women of the ELCA? Now you can make automatic monthly payments from your checking account or credit card. Faithful Friends is the payment program that makes it possible for people to act quickly and flexibly in response to any mission work of the Women of the ELCA. For more information call 773-380-2730 or e-mail women.elca@elca.org. Forms can be found at www.women of the elca.org/Faithful Friends. Click in the blue box at the bottom of the page.



BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Upper Bucks

St. Matthew's Lutheran
3668 Ridge Road Perkasi, PA
Simply Relevant Chocolate Boutique
Strengthen your life-long relationship with Jesus
Wednesday evenings 7:00 PM beginning October 14
Six sessions
215 795- 2965
All are welcome!





**SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA WOMEN OF THE ELCA
UPPER MONTGOMERY CONFERENCE
First Tuesday BIBLE STUDIES 2015-2016
10 a.m. [Coffee and treats at 9:30 a.m.]**



'ALWAYS BEING MADE NEW'

Please note: - Save all summer issues of GATHER for use in the Fall

"NO CATCHY SLOGANS"

WRITTEN BY Emma Crossen

Tuesday, September 8, 2015 Pat Leberman, presenter Study from June issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"To Give in Secret"	St. James Lutheran Church High & Price Sts., Pottstown
Tuesday, October 6 Fran Ivarsen, presenter Study from July issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Be Like the Widow"	St. Peter's Lutheran Church Glasgow & Walnut Sts., Stowe
Tuesday, November 3 Barbara Lisi, presenter Study from August issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"God Loves A Cheerful Giver"	Emmanuel Lutheran Church Hanover & Walnut Sts., Pottstown
Tuesday, December 1 Sheila Specht, Devotional leader Study from December issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Special Advent Gathering"	The Pennsburg Diner 321 Pottstown Ave., Pennsburg

THERE WILL BE NO BIBLE STUDIES IN JANUARY & FEBRUARY 2016. **LET IT SNOW!**
▪ **SAVE JAN/FEB ISSUE OF 'GATHER' FOR MAR & APR 2016**

Christian Citizenship 101 A Study of Philippians		
Tuesday, March 1, 2016 Elaine Strimpel, presenter Study from Jan/Feb issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Confidence in God's Beginnings & Endings"	St. Mark's Lutheran Church 81 N. Main St., Pennsburg
Tuesday, April 5 Janet Luyben, presenter Study from Jan/Feb issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Servant-Shaped Soldiers"	St. James Lutheran Church Kugler Rd., & Swamp Pk., Limerick
Tuesday, May 3 Jean John, presenter Study from March issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Being of One Mind"	Augustus Lutheran Church 717 W. Main St., Trappe
Tuesday, June 7 Barbara Thornton, presenter Study from April issue of <i>GATHER</i>	"Keep On Keeping On"	Grace Lutheran Church 660 N. Charlotte St., Pottstown

ALL WOMEN ARE INVITED TO ATTEND AND BRING FRIENDS. Study materials are found in the *Gather* magazine. Subscriptions available at \$15.00 per year.

Please call [800] 328-4648. THANK YOU.



THANKOFFERING SERVICE



In the 1800's Christian women created "mite" or "cent" groups to support mission projects. Each woman collected the money at home. They would combine their collections and offer them with thanks to God. Lutheran women continue to show their thanks to God by making monetary donations. Thankofferings support life-changing ministries. "Giving Thanks and Praise Together" is a new Thankoffering service for Women of the ELCA. Check out website to get a copy of the service and tips for implementing it. "Together we do more than we could ever do apart."

Gather Fall/Winter 2015- 2016



Liv Larson Andrews presents a three-session study titled "Slow Faith" dealing with the slowness of God's Kingdom and the fast pace of our lives. See the September, October, and November issues of Gather to obtain the study guide.

A short devotional for advent/Christmas will appear in the December issue of Gather.

Christian Citizenship 101 is a four-session Bible study of the book of Philippians will be presented in the Gather Magazine this winter. Explore Paul's life as he encourages the early Christians even when he is imprisoned. The series is written by E. Louise Williams and the Rev. Phyllis N. Kersten.

If you have an idea for a Bible study, e-mail the magazine at gather@elca.org



SCHOLARSHIPS



The Women of the ELCA offers scholarships for Lutheran laywomen, administrative leadership, ordained ministry, and ELCA college seminary leadership. Applications will be accepted beginning December 15th. The deadline for applications is February 15th. Check the Women of the ELCA webpage for more information.

RECAP OF REGION 7 RETREAT IN APRIL 2015

Region 7 of the ELCA is comprised of Lutheran women from churches located in southeast and northeast PA starting at Philadelphia, New Jersey, Metro New York and eastern Upstate New York, plus all the New England states of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine.

After approximately a four hour drive to West Hartford, CT, we arrived at the beautiful Holy Family Passionist Retreat Center for our weekend retreat. We checked into our rooms and had time to explore the facility and enjoy the grounds outside until time for dinner. After dinner we gathered in the main meeting room where we heard from our keynote speaker, Sister Carol Perry, from Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan with a Bible study. Next we had a visit from Katie Luther who told us about her life with Martin and their ministry together. Evening Vespers were led by the women from the Northeast, PA Synod.

On Saturday, Morning Praise was led by the women from the New England Synod and we heard another Bible study from Sister Carol Perry. We also had greetings from Audrey Riley, our churchwide staff representative. In the afternoon special focus groups were offered. One dealt with the Seafarers and International House Ministry for ports in NYC and surrounding areas. Another topic was Healing, Loss, and Grief; while another offered the exercises of Tai Chi and QiGong. There was also an opportunity to be part of a Listening Event for the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice to let our voices be heard, and a chance to learn how to tune in and be part of the Women of the ELCA's E-Magazine "CAFÉ". Women had a chance to attend any three of these presentations or simply take time to enjoy the outdoors on a beautiful spring day or have quiet time on their own. A trip to the local 10,000 Villages store was organized for later in the afternoon for those who wanted to go. After dinner we were treated to a wonderful performance of drama and song by the Puppettude Gang. This was a group of 18 youth ranging in ages from 8 to 17 with their adult helpers who came to us from St. Paul's Lutheran Church in nearby Torrington, CT. Evening Vespers were led by the women of Southeast PA Synod.

On Sunday morning the Morning Praise was led by the Metro NY and NJ Synods. Their presentation was built around exercises found in the Bible and was lots of fun. Our closing worship service was led by our chaplain and pastor for the weekend, Rev. Amanda Warner, who currently serves at Emmanuel Lutheran in Norwood, CT. After a hearty lunch in the dining room, we packed our cars, said good-bye to our new friends, and departed for home.

This spiritual retreat for the women of Region 7 is held every three years in the year following the Triennial. The next one will be in April of 2018 at the same facility in Connecticut (watch for exact dates and more details to come). You don't want to miss it.

Phyllis Boyer

1. Member of the Planning Committee
2. Representing the Churches of SE PA





IMPORTANT FUTURE EVENTS

10th Triennial Convention

It will be here before you know it!

The 10th Triennial Convention is scheduled for July 11-13, 2017 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The theme, **All Anew**, will be in harmony with the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation. Bible verses will be:

Psalm 104:30 - Lord, send forth your spirit...renew the face of the earth

Romans 12:2 - Be transformed by the renewing of your minds

2 Corinthians 4:16 - Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day

Titus 3:4-5 - But when the kindness and love of God, our Savior, appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Discover how reformation and transformation occur in our community of women today.

SEPA Convention

The Women of Southeast Pennsylvania will hold its convention at Silver Springs – Martin Luther School in June of 2016 (exact date not yet finalized). The theme will be Renewal through the Holy Spirit. The Bible verse will be Titus 3:4-5. Board members and delegates to the Triennial Convention will be elected. We plan to have an auction at the event, and need your help as we are looking for contributions. Baskets of items or single item donation would be appreciated. Contact Joy if you can donate.

Engaging Faith Communities: Ending Human Trafficking



Join Anti-Trafficking Advocates, stakeholders, and faith leaders for an engaging discussion on Human Trafficking!

Participants will:

- Understand what human trafficking is
- Realize the national and local implications
- Know how to identify a potential trafficking victim
- Learn about available resources
- Hear from a trafficking survivor/striver

*For more information or questions, contact:
Darlene Tart, Administration for Children and Families
Phone: 215-861-4060 Email: Darlene.Tart@acf.hhs.gov*

REGISTER HERE

Philadelphia, PA ★ Thursday October 15th, 2015

8:30 AM to 4:00 PM

The Salvation Army, 701 N. Broad St., Philadelphia, PA 19123

*This Forum is provided free of charge, but registration is required.
Be sure to register early since space is limited!*



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES



**Global Peace
FOUNDATION**

UNITED STATES

Presented by the Region 3 Anti-trafficking Federal Interagency Taskforce and the Global Peace Foundation.

In this issue of the Voice:

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- Engaging Faith Communities Forum

We welcome articles! Please tell us what your circle group or conference is doing. E-mail items articles for the spring issue of Voice by February 27 to Carol Herstine.

Officers & Board Members

Joy Grace, President C: 484-432-8087
Email: jgrace@partneresi.com

Lisa Brown, Vice President C: 267-258-6803
Email: brown.lisa.welca@gmail.com

Helen Dungan, Secretary H: 610-346-8829
Email: dunganh@lafayette.edu

Elaine Keller, Treasurer C: 215-262-5366
Email: elaineakeller@comcast.net

Carol Herstine H: 215-257-5811
Email: cahott@hotmail.com

Beatrice Parker C: 215-888-8675
Email: 54126105a@gmail.com

Joan Seader H: 215-884-1551

Phyllis Boyer C 215-679-6626
Email: frauphilly@verizon.net

CindyRyan* C:215-290-1891
Email: freecandlesrock@aim.com

*Non Voting Board Member

