

WHAT'S NEWS

Women of the ELCA 

Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization • Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2022

YOUR POWER SOURCE



by Maxine Stenstrom, What's News editor

I live in Tehachapi, CA and the view from my kitchen window looks out at the spectacular wind farm on the east ridge leading into the Mojave Desert. In the evenings, the wind turbines are beautifully lit for aircraft safety and protection. Whenever I see these giants of energy, I can't help but reflect on the old hymn that starts out with...*On a hill far away...* My mind takes me back to standing in church beside my dad, hearing him sing that hymn with joy in his soul. He was a man with the power of God in his heart that was reflected in all his endeavors. His passion for hard work, proficiency and service to others stood as a beacon of safety and protection for our family. God blessed him in many ways.

Today's world is seeking new power sources and the future of energy is taking a turn toward ways that honor our mandate to be stewards of the earth. Coal, petroleum, and other sources that lead to poor air quality, cancer, and more are being phased out. Charging stations and strong rechargeable batteries will be taking the lead.

Clean, efficient, sustainable power is not new to Christianity. These elements are powered by the indwelling Holy Spirit who is the beacon of safety for us all. When we connect with the Holy Spirit, our inner batteries are jump-started and renewed giving us the power to do God's work. We are energized (like the pink bunny) to find and implement our talents, gifts and crusading passion. When we plug into the power source of the Holy Spirit, we receive the power tools that enable us to ignite our passions so we can work for the things we so deeply care about.

We pray that our upcoming **2022 Autumn Renewal, themed SHARE YOUR PASSION**, will be one of those times when we can plug in, connect, and recharge. God guides us in many ways, oftentimes through sharing. Learning from others can spark our power tools into action. Whether you attend the Renewal virtually by Zoom or in person at the lovely Episcopal Retreat Center at Echo Park/Los Angeles, it will be a time of togetherness and fellowship and a time for us to watch the sparks fly!!! Protected and grounded in Christ. ■

Who Cares?



FROM OUR PRESIDENT



by Dixie Hanson
SoCal SWO President

"In order to be healthy and stay happy, your soul needs to care for someone or some thing. . . Love and care are to the soul what food is to your body. It is a basic necessity for living... It means there must be

someone or something you care deeply about. It could be a pet, friend, your family or church. It could be a cause you feel passionate about." (Spirit is Calling by Chris Michaels and Edward Viljoen. P. 95)

Our Autumn Renewal this year asks us: What or who do you care about the most? For some of us answers easily come to mind knowing we have dived into a passion that feeds our soul. But for others of us, maybe it is not so clear what that passion is and the question makes us pause to think about our answer. I have been pondering that answer as I contemplate what I will write in this column. I like to organize, especially when I see disorganization. I like making order out of chaos! That comes in handy in many different situations. I just returned from a visit with my son's family and I created order out of the chaos of a basement playroom. My granddaughters do not yet see the need for organization even though I emphasize how handy it is when looking for something you need. I find I need to have my home in order before I can sit down to do a task for something outside the home.

I also like to solve problems, whether they are small logistical problems or behavioral problems children may have. I used to attempt to solve problems of my students before retiring as a teacher. Now it is often my grandchil-

dren who I problem solve for and with. This interest in solving problems brings me also to my church and the national and global spheres. How to solve the problem of hunger and poverty? It motivates me to join Bread for the World and contribute monthly to the ELCA Hunger Appeal where I can connect with others who also care about those issues.

At our 2022 Autumn Renewal on October 22nd we will explore this topic as we listen to others who have a passion they will share with the whole group, as well as opportunities to share in small groups about what stirs our souls. We hope you will join us either in person at the Episcopal Retreat Center in Echo Park or on Zoom. See the flier and registration form for more details in this issue.

As a member of the Women of the ELCA, I appreciate the friendships, opportunities for studying scripture, ideas shared and new themes explored. We can ensure the continuation of this organization that we value through our gifts to the \$1,000,000 campaign for Katie's Fund. See also the article about this campaign in this issue.

I am looking forward to attending the Triennial convention and Gathering in Phoenix in September, 2023. We are having a special Zoom business meeting on Oct. 1st to elect convention delegates from our Southwest California Synod W/ELCA. Please volunteer to be a unit delegate so your unit is represented in voting for our representatives at this convention. We would like a delegate from each congregation in our synod, as well as a contact person who can help inform women in their groups of Women of the ELCA events both at the synodical and churchwide expression. Could you be that woman from your congregation?

Thank you for your interest, effort, time and financial contributions and I look forward to you sharing your passion! ■



AUTUMN RENEWAL 2022 BIBLE STUDY LEADER

Pastor Libby Denton

St. Timothy in Lakewood

Pastor Libby was born and raised in California, went to undergrad at California Lutheran University and was a youth pastor in Duffield, England after college. Upon returning to the states, she discerned her calling as a pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and attended Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA where she received her Masters of Divinity. St Timothy's called her as pastor in November of 2021. She believes that God loves all of God's creation including all races, genders, and sexualities. In her free time, she loves reading, spending time with her dog, Granola, and soaking up the California sun. ■

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Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years

KATIE'S FUND \$1,000,000 CAMPAIGN!

The Churchwide W/ELCA Executive Board has launched a year-long million dollar campaign for Katie's Fund, beginning August 1, 2022 to July 31, 2023. Katie's Fund was begun as an endowment fund in 1997 with gifts given in thanks for the first ten years of Women of the ELCA ministries. Individuals, congregational units and synodical women's organizations have given to Katie's Fund.

The Fund supports Women of the ELCA ministries of global sharing, leadership development and living theology. To date, interest earned by the fund has provided leadership opportunities for young women at triennial gatherings and global networking on behalf of the organization. It has also supported our participation in ELCA National Youth Gatherings and human trafficking advocacy training.

Your gifts to Katie's Fund ensure the organization's continued commitment to community, growth, and action. Gifts to current fund needs and interest earned on gifts to the endowment are available for ministries in three key areas.

- **Leadership Development:** providing opportunities for current and future leaders to participate in and further the mission of Women of the ELCA.
- **Global Sharing:** building global partnerships that increase multi-cultural awareness and promote service projects.
- **Living Theology:** nurturing faith through Bible studies, worship experiences, and educational theological forums.

You may contribute to this campaign by cash, gifts of stocks and bonds, gifts of real estate, deferred gifts, bequests, insurance policies, gift annuities, or charitable trusts. Go to WELCA.org and click on *donate* or send a check to our synodical treasurer, Julie Jensen (921 Gill Ave., Port Hueneme, CA 93041) marked for Katie's Fund.

In addition to raising \$1,000,000, the Board also authorized giving \$1,000 to each synodical unit to be used for a project that speaks to one or more of the above three key areas. Our synodical board is in the process of determining the \$1,000 project for our synod. Send any ideas you might have for a project to Dixie Hanson at dixhanson@gmail.com. Thank you! ■

Jesus and Nature

Gather Bible Study
by the Rev. Sarah Olson-Smith

Gather Magazine is featuring A new three-part Bible study series starting this month entitled '*Jesus and Nature*. The monthly topics - trees, the soil and the creatures - will offer us new perspectives on the character of God and challenge us to deepen our stewardship of God's precious creation.

September 2022, Session 1: "Trees," will tap into Biblical images of trees and explore why planting and protecting trees is important, while rooting us in models of interdependence and mutuality.

October 2022, Session 2: "Soil," will dig deeply into the parable of the soil (otherwise known as the parable of the seed, Matthew 13) and other Biblical accounts that relate to care for this part of creation, while looking at models of growth that involve wholeness and wellness.

November 2022, Session 3: "Creatures," offers us an opportunity to observe and learn about God from birds, foxes, sheep, dogs and other animals, while considering habitat protection, food justice and the model of trust.

MONTHLY ZOOM BIBLE STUDY 4th Monday • 7:00 – 8:30pm

We are delighted to announce that Dianne Tillman is continuing our online/Zoom Bible study and will be sharing this new study series with those who do not have, or cannot attend, Bible Study groups at their church.

If you don't already receive email notifications for the study, contact Dianne at dianne.tillman08@gmail.com and add your name to the list. ■



AUTUMN RENEWAL 2022

One of the presentations at our upcoming Autumn Renewal will feature a talk by Carole Swayze who will be sharing her passion/advocacy for animals. Her topic: *Animals in the Bible; What They Tell Us About God* complements this season's Gather Bible Study and will surely resonate with all of us who care deeply about all of God's creatures. Just think of the joy we could experience if we all brought our pets - horses, dogs, cats, birds, fish, turtles, etc. to the Renewal. Joy indeed, but perhaps not so much peace and quiet. ■



2022 Autumn Renewal



Presented by SoCal Synod Women's Organization • Saturday, October 22 • 9am - 3:30pm



*Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord.
Good News, Colossians 3:23*

Women from across the Southwest California Synod are invited to join together and attend SoCal SWO's 2022 Autumn Renewal. Enjoy an inspiring program, music, fellowship and more—either online or at the beautiful Episcopal Retreat Center at St. Paul's Commons in the Echo Park District of Los Angeles. This year's theme, **Share Your Passion**, promises to expand your insights, enthusiasm and joy.

BIBLE STUDY LEADER: Pr. Libby Denton, newly ordained pastor at St. Timothy in Lakewood

MUSIC: Dona Kintzi, Barbara Serio and Sharon Heck

SHARED OFFERING: Churchwide Women of the ELCA and Fey Es Y Esperanza Lutheran Church's Food Distribution Program.

SHARING PASSION/SMALL GROUPS: Table Loom Creations with Beth Bunnell, Animals in the Bible; What They Tell Us About God with Carole Swayze • Stretch & Pray with Pr. Nancy Switzler • Fey Es Y Esperanza's Food Distribution Program with Pastor Marta Moscoso, The Lotus & The Lake, a History with Maxine Stenstrom

ACTIVITIES: Step into line dancing with Jackie English • Jewelry, soap, and dollar bill crafting projects • Stroll, stride or jog around Echo Park Lake and enjoy its natural beauty.

Chose between **THREE REGISTRATION OPTIONS** detailed on the registration form on the next page then print, complete and return the form before October 8.



REGISTRATION FORM

SoCal SWO's
2022
*Autumn
Renewal*

**Saturday
October 22
9am - 3:30pm**

**The Episcopal
Retreat Center at
St. Paul's
Commons**

**Echo Park, CA
90026**

*Whatever your task,
put yourselves into it,
as done for the Lord.*

*Good News,
Colossians 3:23*

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Church: _____

City: _____

In case of emergency, contact: _____

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Registration options:

- ☐ \$10 Attending via Zoom
- ☐ \$35 Attending in person on Saturday (includes lunch)
- ☐ Attending in person Friday night & Saturday
(includes room, dinner, breakfast & lunch)
 - ☐ \$185 single room
 - ☐ \$145/person double occupancy/private bath
 - ☐ \$135/person double occupancy/shared bath

Special dietary needs: _____

Roommate's name: _____

Total amount enclosed: _____

Please mail this completed form
(along with your check made payable to Women of the ELCA)
to Julie Jensen 921 Gill Avenue
Port Hueneme, CA 93041

Registration deadline: October 8, 2022
Registration confirmation will be sent via e-mail.
Registration is transferable, but NOT refundable.

Questions?

Contact Dixie Hanson at 805-529-3716 or dixhanson@gmail.com



PHOENIX IS CALLING

Dear WELCA,
Southwest California Synod,

The Churchwide Women of the ELCA will be conducting our 2023 Triennial Convention in Phoenix, Arizona, September 19-21, 2023. We at the Southwest California Synod of the Women of the ELCA did not elect our delegates for this Convention at our 2021 Zoom Convention. Therefore, we need to have a special meeting of unit delegates from each congregation to elect our two delegates and one alternate to this convention. Our Synod Board decided to have this special election at a Zoom meeting on Saturday, October 1, 2022 at 9am. We need each active unit to choose a delegate to attend this brief (no more than an hour) special meeting and send



their name and contact information along with your church and city to Julie Jensen, our registrar, at juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com or by mail to 921 Gill Ave. Port Hueneme, CA 93041 as soon as possible no later than September 10. The Zoom link will be sent out to those registered.

Below is a Triennial Delegate Application for anyone wanting to be a delegate. These applications are also due by September 10, 2022.

The Southwest California WELCA Synod is eligible to elect two delegates and an alternate. The president is also a delegate so we have a delegation of three. One of the delegates needs to be a woman of color or has English as a second language and the second delegate can be a woman who is a first timer at a Triennial Convention.

We look forward to your congregation's participation in this special zoom election meeting.

God's blessings to you!
Dixie Hanson, President

SPECIAL ELECTION MEETING 2022 NOMINATION FORM FOR SOUTHWEST CALIFORNIA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION DELEGATE TO TRIENNIAL CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 19-21, 2023 TRIENNIAL DELEGATE APPLICATION

I am interested in being a Triennial Delegate to Phoenix, Arizona, September 19-21, 2023.

I am a: (check all that apply)

A) ☐ Woman of color and/or primary language is other than English

B) ☐ First time attendee to a Triennial Convention

NAME (Please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & ZIP _____

HOME PHONE (____) _____ WORK PHONE (____) _____

HOME CONGREGATION _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

ETHNIC/RACIAL HERITAGE _____

PRIMARY LANGUAGE _____

HOW I PARTICIPATE IN MY CONGREGATIONAL UNIT _____

Send form to Julie Jensen by September 10, 2022 at juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com
or 921 Gill Ave., Port Hueneme, CA 93041 (Please include a photo if possible.)

2021-2023 SWO BOARD TEAM MEMBERS

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INTRODUCING SOCIAL SWO BOARD MEMBER REV. MARIA PAIVA

Rev. Maria Paiva has been the pastor at Saint John Lutheran Church in Gardena since August 2016. She grew up in Lima, Peru and immigrated to America in 1982. She has three adult children and three granddaughters. As a disciple of Jesus her passions are loving all people, seeking justice for all, especially advocating for immigration issues and serving God in all she does. Maria has been part of Women of the ELCA since she arrived to this country and has attended many local conventions, as well as national conventions. At the 2017 Women's Gathering in Minneapolis, she was one of the hosts of the International Visitors. We are honored to have Pr. Maria be part of our SWO team. ■



Peace with Justice

by Sharon Heck



Did you know that 270 million+ persons are facing extreme hunger – up from 135 million before the pandemic? Did you know that one in six kids are at risk of hunger in the U.S.? Did you know that 26% of Black and Latino families struggle feeding their children?

I found the above facts on the Bread for the World (BFW) website. BFW is a grassroots Christian organization dedicated to ending hunger in the U.S. and the world, through advocating with our elected officials. Here is another quotation from their website: “As Christians we are called to seek justice, care for those experiencing hunger and poverty, and embrace our Creator’s vision of hope, love, and peace. We are called to embody it in public as we commit to live in solidarity with those who are made vulnerable by the inequities that drive hunger and poverty in the United State and around the world.” *Speak out for the rights of all who are destitute. Defend the rights of the poor and needy.* (Proverbs 31:8-9)

An Offering of Letters is planned by BFW each year. Individuals and groups are encouraged to write letters to their elected officials on bills which will ease hunger. Over the years, these letters and emails from congregations,

campuses, and community groups have helped inspire our leaders in Washington, D.C., to pass legislative victories that reduce hunger in the U.S. and around the world.

Here are three reasons why churches should organize an Offering of Letters:

1. We believe that advocacy is part of our Christian witness and discipleship.
2. With your support, Bread for the World is committed to speaking truth to power. We have to be both pastoral and prophetic to end hunger.
3. Bread for the World is practical and effective. Years of persistent advocacy and voice has helped triple poverty focused development assistance to education, training, and sustainability measures that end hunger.

Your Circle or congregation can hold an Offering

of Letters at any time. Set up a table with needed items after church for several Sundays. You can find information and sample letters on the BFW website, Bread.org. Contact our California Regional Organizer, David Gist, for help with your Offering of Letters. His email is dgist@bread.org, and his phone is 240-767-4120.

We can make a difference, so let’s do an Offering of Letters! ■



WHAT'S NEWS

Women ^{of the} **ELCA** 

SWO • SoCal Synod

MISSION STATEMENT

To mobilize women to act boldly
on their faith in Jesus Christ.

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.

Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue
Port Hueneme, CA 93041

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

THE ECHO PARK LAKE



Echo Park lake was originally built in the 1860s as a reservoir for drinking water. Today Echo Park Lake is a Los Angeles icon that functions primarily as a basin in the City's storm drain system. Once maligned, neglected and wrought with pollution, efforts to restore and rehabilitate the Echo Park Lake have transformed the area from a community blight into one of most enjoyable destinations in the entire city, as well as a proud neighborhood landmark. Key features include fishing, pedal boats, a picnic area

and boat house. A one-mile walking path that loops around the lake is the perfect place to enjoy the natural haven that includes expansive lotus flower beds, wild geese and swans, and lush foliage. The lake's annual Lotus Festival Celebration stems from the original batch of lotus imported from China in the 1920s by Aimee Semple McPherson whose Angeles Temple still exists near the lake. Learn more about the lake's tumultuous history, intrigue and folklore at our upcoming Autumn Renewal. ■