

# WHAT'S NEWS

Women <sup>of the</sup> ELCA 

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

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2023

## *What's the Difference?*



Apples and oranges are oftentimes used metaphorically to represent the level of differences in various topics. But if we take a bite out of either one, we can find them both delicious, nutritious and even energizing. They are both fruit with many different qualities and sameness within their varietal spectrum. Apples are sorted into type by sweetness, peel, color, ripening season, and how to best use them. There are red apples, green apples, dry apples and juicy apples, apples best eaten fresh and apples that are best when baked into yummy desserts. There are both ancient varieties and brand new hybrids. There are hundreds of different kinds of apples.

Similarly, there are over 400 different types of oranges worldwide. Sweet oranges makeup about 70% of all citrus produced and are the most cultivated tree in the world! Traders carried the fruit from Asia to the Mediterranean around the year 1500. Up to that point, oranges were primarily used for medicinal purposes, but were soon recognized, just like the apple, for their sheer flavorful goodness..

People of God have countless differences and yet we are one in Christ. Our upcoming SWO Convention October 20-21 will shine a light on our differences, embrace our understanding of one another and cultivate growth and insight within our communities of faith. Paul writes in ICor.12:21, "The eye cannot say to the

hand, I have no need of you, nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you." We are equal in the eyes of God, our sameness and our differences both have a long list of varieties, nevertheless, we are one in Christ, equally called as His children. We are equally called to let the light of Christ

shine through us in good works, being bold women in our missions.

Think of a Frisbee that glows in the dark. If you hold it up to the light it absorbs that light, and then in dark it glows. It has no light in itself, and so it loses the light, and can only continue to glow by being brought near to the light again—just like daily sunlight allows all varieties of apples and oranges to flourish. Through honoring our differences and our sameness, we draw near to Christ and absorb His light which allows us to glow and grow in the community of His love and grace. We reflect His light as we love one another unconditionally, as equals in Christ, even though we are often very different.

Please find (either included with this newsletter or attached in the digital e-blast newsletter version) the convention flyer, registration form and nominating form for SWO officer/board member. Fill them out, using the interactive PDF, or using a pen, pencil, crayon, marker (what's the *difference* as long as you fill them out send them to the *same* person: Julie (our registration honcho), and then plan to join in the weekend of Cultivating Community and Embracing our Differences. ■



# FROM THE PRESIDENT



## CALIFORNIA LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY

*Together unique individuals form a community and share common traits. Appreciating both the similarities and differences between the people who make up a community allows for a common vision to be fulfilled without sacrificing the value of diversity. (Spirit is Calling p. 140)*



*Dixie writes...*

**M**y daily journal *Spirit is Calling* has spoken wisdom to me over the years as each year I begin to read it again and try to live its wisdom. It is so much easier to say than to do. The pandemic brought us new possibilities especially with technology, but also challenges of isolation and loss of community. Now is the time to discern how to accommodate the new patterns and recapture the blessings of the old. Cultivating community is the new challenge. Thus our theme for our convention in October “Cultivating Community: Embracing our Differences.”

At our convention I look forward to hearing the stories and experiences of the participants in the reflections and questions both in the large group and small groups following presentations of the Bible Study, keynote address and workshop. The events I have been a part of recently (the leadership event on Zoom in February put on by the Churchwide WELCA and the Winter Gathering and follow up event in my congregation

on Bold Women) illustrated to me the importance of allowing participants to share their stories and reflections. It is out of these stories that we can begin to understand and accommodate and, yes, celebrate our differences as we seek to fulfill our common vision of engaging in ministry and action and promoting healing and wholeness in the Church, the society and the world under the banner of Just Love as illustrated in the life of Jesus.

I, along with your elected delegates, Allison Johnson and Kristal Shipp, will be at the Triennial Convention in September to represent your voice. We look forward to sharing with you at our SWO Convention on October 20-21, what we learn and are inspired by from the Convention and the Gathering’s theme “Just Love.”

Finally I want to urge you to nominate women you think would be willing and able to lead our organization the next two years. It has been a blessing to lead the synodical women’s organization (SWO) these last five years (I had an extra year due to the pandemic). I have so appreciated the blessing of planning events with women who are willing to use their skills and ideas to cultivate community among women in our very diverse synod. Each new Board inspires new possibilities that reflect the gifts of the members. Help keep our organization strong and relevant! Register and nominate! ■



*<sup>8</sup>Above all, maintain constant love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup>Be hospitable to one another without complaining. <sup>10</sup>Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received. —1Peter 4:8-10*

**Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization  
2023 CONVENTION, OCTOBER 20 ~ 21  
California Lutheran University, Thousand Oaks**

Please join us as we strengthen and grow our community connections, honor and share our God given gifts and reach out to one another while listening, learning, and loving unconditionally.

### Convention Agenda

**Conduct business of the SoCal SWO/Elections**

**Music, Worship, Prayer • Bible Study • Speakers • Workshop**

Bible study leader: Rev. Emily Ebert, pastor at Holy Trinity, Thousand Oaks

Keynote speaker: Rev. Jade Ortiz, pastor at Redimidos, Oxnard

Workshop leader: Jenny Franken from Vibrant Faith Organization

### Offerings and In-Kind Gifts

Offerings to be equally divided and given to support Churchwide Women of the ELCA and Harbor House in Thousand Oaks, an organization that cares for the unhoused and low-income residents of Thousand Oaks as well as providing a house for young men who have “aged-out” of foster care.

Convention attendees are asked to bring diapers for in-kind gifts that support Pastor Jade's diaper ministry in Oxnard.

### To Register

Complete the info on the registration form (included in this e-blast) and mail along with your registration fees to registrar Julie Jensen who will send you registration confirmation and a detailed convention program and schedule.

# Peace *with* Justice



Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is a very important agency of our church. LWR distributed its first quilts in 1945 to families in war-torn Europe following the Second World War. Within a decade, the ministry was reaching around the globe to villages far removed from the world's attention. Today, an average of 300,000 quilts are lovingly given worldwide each year. LWR Mission Quilts are highly regarded throughout the world because of their quality and consistency. I want to thank all of our WELCA circles who make these quilts each year, and ship them in the Fall. Your work does not go unrecognized, and is very essential to our hope for all people of the world. We will be making LWR quilts at the WELCA Triennial in Phoenix, as a service project. If you are planning to attend or would like to send a quilt top with one of the attendees, check online at [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org) and scroll down to in-kind gifts.

The quilts and kits that are distributed by LWR help them do their work as they tackle global poverty by helping people adapt to the challenges that threaten their livelihoods and well-being. LWR works with people based on need, regardless of race, religion or nationality and they do not evangelize. They provide aid in emergencies and help families restore their lives. LWR partners with communities to build and grow rural economies. They break the cycle of poverty, so families and communities can thrive.

The LWR goal is to help people build self-sufficiency and create new community-owned approaches to problem-solving that will last long after their projects end. Their mission is to affirm God's love for all people, and to work with Lutherans and partners around the world to end poverty, injustice and human suffering.

LWR always needs monetary donations to do their work. You can put a memo on your donation if you would like it to go for shipping costs, emergency aid such as the firestorms in Hawaii, or for other aid. Send your check to: Lutheran World Relief, PO Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061. As Women of the ELCA we can help LWR do its work around the world. ■

*just love*  
[welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org)

**Women of the ELCA  
Triennial Gathering**  
Phoenix, Arizona at the Sheraton Phoenix  
Downtown Hotel  
September 21-24, 2023

You may still register for the WELCA Triennial Gathering with the theme "Just Love" from Thursday, September 21 to Sunday, September 24, 2023. You could even get a carload of women to drive to Phoenix and share the expense of gas. Any of the women I am aware of that have gone to one Gathering, have continued to go to subsequent Gatherings every three years because they so enjoyed the event. You can even bring back the inspiration of the Gathering and do an event in your congregation sharing what you learned and were excited about. Your Southwest Synod WELCA Board is offering a **\$400 scholarship** which could pay for one registration or be divided between two women to lower the cost of the registration. Go to [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org) to see the list of speakers, the schedule and to register. If you would like to make use of the \$400 scholarship, email me at [dixhanson@gmail.com](mailto:dixhanson@gmail.com). Just love blessings to you!

—Dixie



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING



**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES**

Visit [ada.gov/resources](https://ada.gov/resources)

**for information on the following topics and other information**

**D**id you know that the largest neglected minority group in the church is those with disabilities? Our Southwest California June 2023 Synod Assembly focused on how we can better care for these members. The keynote speaker was Bishop Craig Alan Satterlee from the North/West Lower Michigan Synod. He is the author/co-author of ten books and numerous articles on the topic. He has a passion for ministry with persons with disabilities and a unique perspective. He spoke of his personal experience of being legally blind from birth. His message was to not underestimate those with disabilities. *They are whole persons.* We have a tendency to look at disabled people as not whole and therefore not capable. He became bishop at the same time as Guy Irwin, yet sadly, his election (although also extraordinary) was overlooked.

The Bible Study leader was Rev. Zachary W. Johnson who, in October 2020, was diagnosed with CIDP, a neurological disorder that affects his limbs. He talked about the difference in how others treated him when he was in a wheelchair versus when he walked with a cane. He was the same person, but was treated as “less than” when in the wheelchair. He advocated a different approach to understanding the healing stories of Jesus. The healing in these stories is so much more than just physical healing. Healing can happen even without total physical healing. Rev. Johnson spoke of his *healing of spirit* as he adjusted to life with his disability.

An important part of caring for those with disabilities is to make sure the church is accessible for all: ramps, hearing devices, visible print, affirming their gifts, etc. are all ways of caring for the Body of Christ.

The resolutions that were adopted at the Assembly were:

- Urging advocacy for ending private Immigration Detention Centers and replacing them with case management community-based services. Giving a warm welcome and reception has proven to be more humane, efficient and cost effective.
- Advocating support for the Afghan Adjustment Act which gives Afghans extended time in the US.
- Memorialize Churchwide to change policies of ordination to provide for ordination of first call candidates who serve as interim pastors.
- Memorialize the 2025 Churchwide Assembly to affirm and support the transgender community.

Thanks to Bishop Bos, her team and the synod Council planning team for an education in awareness at the 2023 Synod Assembly! Blessings to all of us as we continue to take care of the Body of Christ. ■

- Polling place accessibility used on election day.
- Accessible car and van parking
- What hotels, motels, and other places of transient lodging can do to accommodate guests who are blind or have low vision.
- Technical assistance for individuals who take standardized exams and other high-stakes tests.
- Public swimming pool accessibility.
- Service Animals
- Nondiscrimination requirements for selling assigned seats at events such as concerts, plays, and sporting events.
- Rules for power driven mobility devices
- Which businesses and non-profits must ensure access to their goods, services, and facilities.
- Access for 9-1-1 and telephone emergency services
- Requirements in medical settings with respect to people with mobility disabilities.
- Ballot drop box accessibility
- Questions about the ADA and Law Enforcement
- Child care centers and rights of parents and prospective parents with disabilities



## Treasurer's Report

*Julie Jensen writes...*

**H**ave you heard of Katie's Fund before? I know many of you have, but I bet some of you have not; similar to me when I first started getting involved with Women of the ELCA.

Katharina (Katie) von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology. A \$1 million Katie's Fund campaign began in 2022 that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Last year to kick off the campaign each synodical women's organization received \$1,000 from Katie's Fund to use however we wanted. A lot of thought was given to that challenge.

Ultimately, our group decided to purchase a translation system for our gatherings. We used it for our Winter Gathering this year and it was a Success! It will also be used during our upcoming October convention. We are sharing the equipment with the Synod and it has proven to be very useful for them, especially at Synod Assembly. We

are grateful to Katie's Fund for their trust and confidence in us.

I know many of you have already contributed to Katie's Fund and have been for many years. I know many have contributed recently during the campaign. Earlier this year, our SWO board voted to donate \$100 to Katie's Fund in memory of long-time WELCA member, Lillian Simons. It was a wonderful way to remember Lillian and I know she would approve. We can contribute individually or as a unit. If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call.

"WELCA is the women's ministry organization of the ELCA. It is separately incorporated and is not an auxiliary of the church. It is financially independent and respon-

sible for its own financial affairs. Financial support comes from individual and group offerings and gifts." Your offerings that you send to your synodical treasurer is how your synodical and church-

wide WELCA organizations provide you with the resources and services that are available to you. Half of your offerings are used locally and the other half are sent to churchwide for their operation. Your SoCal SWO board has pledged a minimum of \$5,000 per year to churchwide. If our combined offerings don't total at least \$10,000 then we (your synodical board) make up the difference from our half of your

offerings. That's one of the reasons your offerings are so important and why we recommend taking an offering when there is a gathering of women for Bible study or WELCA meetings. We are grateful to all of you who are involved in mission and ministry in your congregations and communities. We are thankful for your generosity in supporting the Women of the ELCA. We'd love to hear from you to learn about what you and your organization is involved in.



I'm supposed to talk about the budget. But I'm getting tired and most people don't want to talk about budgets. If you do, give me a call and I will be happy to discuss this with you. Otherwise, come to Convention in October and we can talk about it and then approve it for the new year. ■



*We should be rich  
in good deeds,  
generous and  
willing to share.  
That's when we  
store up treasure in  
heaven and take  
hold of life that is  
truly life.*

*1 Timothy 6:18-19*



Bible Love Notes

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Rev. Marta Salazar
- San Gabriel: Janet Simmons
- South Bay: Mary Shipp
- Tehachapi: Dixie Hanson
- Twin Valleys: TBD



*Dianne Tillman writes....*  
**Why I love Women of the ELCA and have been involved for so many years.**

**I** love being a part of something bigger in our Women of the ELCA groups. Going from our congregational unit to

the cluster, synod and churchwide. And here's why:

- Meeting wonderful women on every expression
- Meaningful worship
- Reaching all around the world with God's love
- Attending Churchwide Triennials (ten to be exact) which were so rewarding – the singing, the speakers, the worship.
- Companionship with other Lutherans
- The opportunities offered by Churchwide to visit local area points of interest.

It's fun. It's rewarding. It's seeing Jesus all around us – growing, learning, sharing, acting, doing. It is rewarding and fulfilling, this feeling of doing something positive. This is my contribution to our church and our God. TRY IT!! Our synod women are looking for you. Step up! All these joys await. ■

PS. The work can be joy filled too!



*Mary Shipp writes...*

**A**s an active member of Olivet Lutheran Church since 1968, I have also been continuously an active member in the Synod Women's organization, both ALCW and WELCA. I have served as an officer on the local level, the conference level and the Synod Board.

I became excited about the ALC/ELCA Women when I first attended a Synod Retreat at Asilomar in Pacific Grove. It was so beautiful and rustic and I met so many fun people. After that I was hooked and I continued to attend every convention both Synod & National.

I find much joy in meeting new/diverse people from all over the states and realizing that we all share some of the same concerns. I also learned a lot from all the many activities we were exposed to at our meetings such as making jewelry, creating flowers, making blankets, working on quilts and so much more. I also admire our charitable attitude in always trying to take care of the less fortunate: we are either sending money or gifts to some benevolent cause. Kudos to all the women who have given so much of their time and effort to this organization. I sincerely hope that more will feel the need to join in the women's activities. ■



Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue  
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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

#### 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.



## Orange Juice Apple Pie

### Ingredients

- 1 box (14.1 oz) refrigerated pie crusts (2 count), softened as directed on box
- 5 medium Granny Smith apples, peeled and cut into small pieces
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 5 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/4 cup frozen orange juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cornstarch
- Pinch of salt

### Directions

1. Heat oven to 450°F. Place one pie crust in ungreased 9-inch glass pie plate. Press firmly against side and bottom. In large bowl, stir together remaining ingredients. Spoon into crust-lined pie plate. Top with second crust.
2. Crimp edges of the crusts together, removing any excess. Use a cookie cutter with serrated edges to cut holes in top crust to allow steam to escape.
3. Bake 10 minutes. Decrease oven temperature to 350°F.
4. Bake 45 minutes. Cool on cooling rack 30 minutes.
5. Refrigerate 2 hours before serving.

*To give dessert guests a hint of the surprise ingredient, serve this pie with a thin round slice of fresh orange on the side, slit half way and twisted as a pretty garnish.*

