

Special Guests to join the VSWO Convention

Exciting news! We just learned that Beth Wrenn, our Women of the ELCA President, will be our church-wide women's organization representative at convention!

Beth Wrenn was elected president of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in July 2008. She served as an executive board member of Women of the ELCA for the 2005–2008 triennium and previously served as president of the North Carolina Synodical Women's Organization.

Beth has served on the board of trustees for Lutheran Family Services in the Carolinas and serves on the capital campaign leadership team for Agape+Kure Beach Outdoor Ministries in the North Carolina synod.

As a member of Kure Memorial Lutheran Church in Kure Beach, North Carolina, Beth has served as congregation council president, chair of the 50th Anniversary of the church, led retreats, and provided leadership training and programs for Women of the ELCA through the years.

Beth has been married to Lee for 34 years and they have two adult children. Philip is a computer programmer and Anna is a dental hygienist and newly married. Beth is a former elementary school teacher and has been a real estate broker for 20 years. She has worked with her husband in their company, which acquires right of way for federal projects and municipalities, but she is not currently working. Lee and Beth live in the Outer Banks of North Carolina.

She loves to read all types of books and never goes anywhere without a book in hand. She loves to dance and cook, and enjoys aerobics.

Beth sees serving on the churchwide executive board as an opportunity to serve Women of the ELCA by sharing her enthusiasm for our organization and by encouraging women of all ages to act boldly on their faith by engaging in ministry and action that makes a difference in the church, the community, and the world.

Appearing as our Saturday night entertainment

"Fred the Fantastique!"

Have you heard of Fred the Fantastique and his amazing, magical powers? Perhaps you've heard of Dr. Frederick Reisz, Jr., former president of Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary? They're one in the same! Dr. Reisz is a magician, but he's also a published theologian who served for fourteen years as president of LTSS. He has appeared throughout the United States both as a magician and as a keynote speaker. You won't want to miss the show, it's magic and story telling wrapped into one. It's Fred the Fantastique in...

MYSTORIES

My Stories - Mysteries

MAGICAL STORIES - SPIRITUAL MEANINGS

Young Women Guests

Don't forget about the Young Women Guests program. Each conference can choose a young woman, 40 years old or younger, to be the guest of the VSWO at our 2010 convention at Roanoke College. All her convention expenses will be covered by the VSWO. She will be a participant and can not serve as a delegate. This was a great success last year so please begin thinking about a young woman in your conference to take part in this year's convention. The choice will be up to each conference. If you have any questions or comments please contact Jody Smiley, jdsmiley@comcast.net or (540)961-2472.

A Word from the President

Jody Smiley

Many Ways to Do the Same Job

As I was watching the snow last weekend, like I am sure all of you were too, it reminded of the snow we got the week before Christmas. My husband had a knee replacement and was home only a day before the winter weather came. This made it very important that we get the snow removed from our long drive so the in-home nurse and physical therapist could come on Monday morning. We have a snow blower so it didn't seem too hard a job to get done. Well the flaw in my plan was that the snow blower didn't work so that left the old fashion dreaded snow shovel. Luckily my son was home from college and my neighbors have 5 kids in their teens and twenties. I started at one end of the drive and they started at the other. I got a ways down the drive and expected to see the boys making their way to me. I finally stopped on my end and went to find them. They had made pretty good progress. I found the boys and the other members my neighbor's family at the end of the drive. They looked very disorganized and even though I would have been much more organized, I was very thankful for all their hard work. After all they were getting the job done in their own way. I convinced a couple of them to come and help me finish my end. I know you don't think there is more than one way to shovel, but trust me there is.

As Bill Cosby would say, I told you that story to get to this one. In April, you will be getting your 2010 VSWO "Call to Convention". Convention Planning and the Mission areas are working hard on this year's convention. For all of you that have attended in the past you know that it is much more than just the business of the VSWO. It is full of wonderful fellowship, a place for renewal of old friendships and an opportunity to make new ones. The workshops are informative and meaningful and the worship services are spiritually uplifting. It is just a lot of fun and on top of that the food at Roanoke College is great!

Last year we had more than 90 women attend. I hope I see all of you again this year but I know there are many more women in our Virginia Synod that would enjoy and benefit from coming to convention. How can we increase our numbers? If

cost is a problem the VSWO has a couple of ways to help. Last year we had a new program called "Young Women Guests" for women between the ages of 18-40. Their convention expenses were covered by the VSWO. Some churches sent additional young women and paid for their way. We have the Sophie Wilson Grant for first women attending as a participant. This grant can cover some or all of the convention costs.

Now this is where my story of different ways to get the same job done comes in. I know a lot of units pay for their delegates to attend but have you thought of helping other women who are interested in coming? Have you thought of asking your church to help pay for your delegate and your unit could pay for another woman attend or help several women with some of the costs. Your unit could have a bake sale one Sunday morning during your coffee or fellowship hour. You could ask for sponsors to send a young woman from your congregation. You might be surprised at the willingness of your congregation to show their support for your unit. It is could be their way of saying thanks for all that you do. These are only a ways to get the job done. As I have gotten to you know the women of the VSWO I know you have lots of ways to get things done. You know what will be successful for you.

I love our conventions so much that I wish all the women of the Virginia Synod could attend. I want to share this wonderful time with everyone and I know you do too. Let's work together to get as many women to come to Roanoke College on July 16-18. You are our best promoters. Spread the word, work together to help with the costs, and encourage the women of your congregation to join in the fun and fellowship.

I have discovered another thing this winter: I do love the snow, but I love it a lot more when my husband can help with the digging out. Well, I am off to try and remove the snow from **this weekend's** winter event. I am crossing my fingers that the snow blower will work. I would love to try that way to get the job done.

Who's that? What's a parliamentarian?

Introducing Erin Bain!

Ever wonder who that person is sitting next to the president at VSWO Conventions? That's the parliamentarian. The parliamentarian's job is to advise the president on the rules of procedure (we typically use Robert's Rules) so that business is conducted in an orderly fashion. Gerry Smith, Artis Morton, and Frances Hammond have served ably as the VSWO parliamentarians in the past...and now we welcome the next generation of rule keepers: Erin Bain!

If you've been to convention in the past 10 years, no doubt, you've seen Erin around. She's a life long active member of Trinity Lutheran in Pulaski, VA. Erin was a founding member of the Circle of Ruth at Trinity. She's a youth group leader and a lay assistant. You name it, Erin's probably done it!

In her "other life," Erin is a 5th grade teacher at Spiller Elementary in Wytheville. She's been known to make handouts and worksheets for her circle friends to use as they visit historical sites on vacation. In other words, Erin is always teaching!

Be sure and welcome Erin as our new parliamentarian when you see her at the 2010 convention. Whether you're lost in business session or lost on campus (Erin's a graduate of Roanoke College), Erin welcomes your questions!



Erin Bain led The Circle of Ruth (Trinity, Pulaski) on a historical field trip to Hatteras Lighthouse on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. From left to right: Karen, Wohlford, Linda Hawks, Karen Martin, Ellen Bain (Erin's sister and our TGP), and Judy Castelee.

Send photos of your unit at work or play to Castelee@rockbridge.net for inclusion in our convention media presentation. Include name of unit and/or congregation.

Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

Ellen Bain, Triennial Gathering Promoter

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice." Philippians 4:4.

Come together with Women of the ELCA for the 8th Triennial Gathering in Spokane, Washington, July 14-17, 2011 for a time to renew, respond, and rejoice!

The early registration fee of \$299 is available September 15, 2010 through December 31, 2010. Beginning January 1, 2011, registration will be \$325. Registration information will be mailed to those on the Women of the ELCA mailing list. This information will also be available on the internet at www.womenoftheelca.org.

The Triennial Gathering is an opportunity to experience life-changing worship, workshops, and fellowship. The upcoming 2011 Triennial Gathering will be held in the beautiful city of Spokane, WA.

Watch for additional information on the 2011 Triennial Gathering in upcoming Visions! Please contact Ellen Bain, your Triennial Gathering Promoter, at futrdrb@yahoo.com or (540)980-5049 with any questions or concerns.

2010 VSWO Convention

Co-Chairs : Ellie Hirsh & Imogene Ryman

What a blessed winter! Snow and cold—just what it's supposed to be this time of the year and a wonderful time to be planning for our upcoming convention. Convention Planning is hoping for the best convention ever at Roanoke College and we hope you all plan to attend. Remember our challenge - bring someone with you who has not been before or who has not been for a long time. We have exciting sessions and activities planned for the entire weekend! Mark your calendar now for the VSWO Convention July 16-18, 2010 at Roanoke College. You won't want to miss it!

The theme of our 2010 convention is "*Washed and Forgiven: Called to Serve*" based on John 13:15, "*And Jesus said, I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*"

The Rev. Katie Gosswein of Edinburg Parish will serve as our convention chaplain. Business highlights include the election of a vice-president, secretary, 4 board members and delegates for the Women of the ELCA 2011 Triennial Convention in Spokane, Washington.

Planning ahead...

- ⇒ Instead of grab bags, please show your talents and bring something homemade. Price your items in even dollar amounts. We'll set up a special table to sell these items. The money we receive will go to our Love Offering. Let's see who can come up with the best homemade items...food, canned items, jewelry, artwork, baskets...whatever your skill may be!
- ⇒ Bring pictures of your unit at work so we can see what's happening in units around the synod. If you'd like to your photos to be a part of a video display at convention, send them by June 1 to Judy Castele at Castele@rockbridge.net
- ⇒ We do read your evaluation forms & some of you had suggestions for future participants. A few of your ideas include: Roanoke College provides bed pillows, but you might want to bring your own, if you have special needs. Also, the college provides one wash cloth and towel per person, so if you anticipate needing more, please plan accordingly. There are no mirrors in the rooms (but there are mirrors in the bathrooms.) The shower floors are cold, you might want to bring shoes for the shower. Finally, remember that room temperatures can never suit everyone. You know your own needs! If you tend to be cold, bring a sweater or perhaps an extra blanket for your room. But, most of all, bring a friend!

Convention Love Offering Challenge

Our convention love offering will go to support our Papua New Guinea Woman to Woman project. Our plan is to bring 2 women from our companion synod of PNG to join us for the Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention and the 2011 VSWO Convention. We're well on our way to reaching our goal. If each unit that is represented at convention donates at least \$100 to our love offering, we will reach the goal and see our sisters from PNG in 2011!

News from the Synodical Conference Coordinator

Sherrill Miller

It promises to be yet another busy year for our congregations and conferences. In this report I would like to seek support for a very worthy cause. The earthquake in Haiti has certainly awed and brought us to reflect on the mercies of our Lord. His work is spreading through many hands within many organizations to aid this devastated country.

I have sent out to the conference coordinators information on Shenandoah Valley Lutheran Ministries, a new non-profit outreach evolving in the Shenandoah Valley Area. They are coordinating the creation and distribution of Lutheran World Relief Kits (health kits). This project has been implemented and will last from February into the first week of March, (the project was extended one week due to the necessity of scheduling the gathering date for kits to the 7th of March). On that Sunday those participating in this project will gather with their finished kits at Mt Zion Lutheran Church at 3 pm for celebration and hymn sing. More information will follow as details are settled. Any conference wishing to participate in this project may contact me at JBHFarm@shentel.net or call 540-459-7010.

The Health Kit list is available on the link below. It is important to follow the instructions completely as this will affect the ability to send the kits.

<http://www.lwr.org/beinvolved/healthkit.asp>

If your conference has a different kit specialty such as layette and school kits we welcome your contributions also.

In the coming issues I will be reporting on gatherings and news updates. If you have special projects on going would love to hear how they are progressing. Our mission fields are active. Go in Peace and Serve the Lord.

VSWO Offering Reminders

Effective **February 1, 2010** – send regular offering and convention travel funds to:

Anna A Barb
5501 Alum Springs Rd
Edinburg VA 22824
540.856.2976
abarb@shentel.net

Save the Date!

| Date | Event |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| April 3 | VSWO Board meeting, Lexington |
| April 17 | Germannia Conference Gathering, Our Saviour, Warrenton |
| April 18 | Central Valley Conference Gathering St. Paul, Jerome |
| TBA | Highlands Conference Gathering, Ebenezer, Marion |
| July 16 - 18 | VSWO Convention |

Mission: Action

Co-chairs: Janice Brown & Lisa Somerville

Members: Barbara Atkinson & Lavelva Stevens

The Mission Action Committee is excited about the preparation for our Awareness Session for the VSWO Convention, July 2010.

“What Does it Mean to Go Green?” If each unit brings along an example of how their unit/congregation has helped the environment, imagine what an impact we will have on our areas, our congregations, our Commonwealth and our world.

We are also looking for contributions of photos that highlight all the unit projects. Photos will be included in a scrapbook that has been started with the photos from last year convention. So please take photos of your quilts, kits, health kits, label gathering so we can include the photos in the scrapbook. Please refer to the Nov 2009 Visions for all the details on what labels to save and how to clip the labels.

The Committee is looking forward to seeing old friends and meeting new friends in July. Please look for our display table. We hope that our theme “Washed and Forgiven, Called to Serve” will be a great beginning for all of us.

Please let us know if you would like to work with us on the Committee.

Janice Brown chrispe@embarqmail.com

Lisa Somerville ljsomerville0823@aol.com

In-Kind Gifts for Convention

As an in-kind gift to the next convention, Mission Community is calling on all women to start collecting NEW children’s books for the Rescue Mission in Roanoke. **They will not accept used or slightly used books.** The women and children at this mission have very little and appreciate so much the generosity of our women.

If you have *used* or *slightly used* books, check out local charities, i.e. YMCA, Lutheran Family and Children Services, and homeless shelters. Also, Books First collects used books and distributes them to under-resourced classrooms, enabling students to become lifelong readers. More information about this organization can be found at www.booksfirst.org.



Mission: Growth

Chair: Connie Saunders

If you attended the VSWO 2009 convention, then you probably saw the Mission: Growth display featuring our Growth of a Woman devotional booklet. We compared our devotional booklet to gardening and planting seeds of faith.

We are so excited about how our Spiritual Growth of a Woman project is growing! When you come to convention this summer you will receive a packet of seeds (devotional booklet) and a complete instruction packet so you will plant them as needed for optimum growth. You will be able to reorder seeds as needed, so plant with vigor.

You will learn how to sow the seeds and get some ideas on locations according to the sun that is needed. We are not sure about how many days it takes to germinate or how deep to plant. Bring your gloves and trowel, we might plant some spiritual seeds in Roanoke. We will have to see where the spirit leads us. They say you have to thin plantings sometimes. There will be garden hints just for novice or experienced gardeners. These seeds are seeds like you have never seen before!

We will have to figure the zones and the best time to plant. I know the fruit is going to be so beautiful. We will grow and grow and learn as we share. Thank you for your contribution to our experimental seed packet. We are so tech savvy you might even get it the "seed packet" on a CD. Are you impressed?

When you leave convention, you will be armed with planting instructions for all the gardeners in your congregation. Be in prayer for good soil, sunshine, not too much rain, and tender loving weed pulling. You know there will be some weeds. Bring your straw hat and your favorite gloves and comfortable knee pads. True gardeners stay on their knees a lot. Looking forward to sharing, and watching our garden start to sprout. **HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?**



How to Plant Your Garden : A Spring Devotional for your Unit

First, come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses. For the garden of your daily living,

PLANT THREE ROWS OF PEAS: Peace of mind, peace of heart, peace of soul.

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF SQUASH: Squash gossip, squash indifference, squash grumbling, squash selfishness.

PLANT FOUR ROWS OF LETTUCE: Lettuce be faithful, lettuce be kind, lettuce be patient, lettuce love one another

NO GARDEN IS COMPLETE WITHOUT TURNIPS: Turnip for meetings, turnip for service, turnip to help one another

NURTURE YOUR GARDEN WITH THYME: Thyme for prayer, thyme for family and friends, thyme for God.

Water freely with patience and cultivate with love. There will be much fruit in your garden, you reap what you sow.

Mission: Community

Co-chairs: Christel Williams & Sherry Frye

Member: Nancy Tyler

DIVERSITY ? GOD'S DREAM ?

That We Might Connect

O God who spoke creation into being and whose Word became flesh to live amongst us, fill us with words of trust and hope and truth that we might share your gifts to us with one another. Connect us with your Spirit of truth. **That we might connect with others.**

O God who hears the cries of your people in every time and place, who responds with mercy and love, open our ears to the voices of those around us. Open our hearts that we might listen and respond. Connect us with your Spirit of love. **That we might connect with others.**

O God who has known us from the womb, who blesses us with gifts that differ, be with us as we discover and rejoice in the diversity of creation and the many ways your love is known among us. Connect us with your Spirit of joy. **That we might connect with others.**

O God who gathers many nations into one holy body of Christ, teach us to speak and listen and celebrate with one another the gifts of diversity that you have bestowed upon us. Connect us, Lord Jesus, by your Spirit that we might truly make the connection with others through your love. **Amen.**

Our greatest weapon tool is the Word of God. Our greatest ability is the love of God. These two can greatly assist and support us all as we seek to dismantle racism. There are no quick fixes. Racism has been with us for hundreds of years; it will not now bow and leave the stage. It will take some time to dismantle the structures that support and propagate racism.

We hope you agree that racism continues to be a problem that we **all** must work to address. We will continue our presentation and ask the question *Diversity? God's Dream?*

Come to convention and experience our discussion about race, mixed race and America's blended nation.

This workshop will be led by Christel Williams, Sherry Frye, and Nancy Tyler.

Need ideas for your group?
Want to explore the topic of diversity in your unit?

Contact Mission: Community
Christel Williams
christl234@aol.com
804.748.3298



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.



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