

Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

*"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!

Early registration is now open! The fee of \$299 is available from now 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 such as:

Triennial Speakers

- ◇ Nora Gallagher, author of *Things Seen and Unseen: A Year Lived in Faith* will be the Friday morning plenary speaker.
- ◇ Lymay Gbowee led the journey for peace in Liberia. This journey is chronicled in the documentary *"Pray the Devil Back to Hell."* Ms. Gbowee will lead the Saturday morning plenary.

Worship Leaders

- ◇ The Rev. Susan Breihl, co-founder of Holden Village
- ◇ Dr. Jane Redmont, author of *When in Doubt, Sing: Prayer in Daily Life*
- ◇ The Rev. Mary Louise Frenchman, member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe
- ◇ The Rev. Megan Torgerson, Associate Pastor of Augusta Lutheran Church, West St. Paul, MN.

Special Opportunities

- ◇ *Chocolate Lounge:* A Young Women's Gathering—Network, socialize, rest and have fun with women in their 20's and 30's.
- ◇ *Run, Walk, and Roll*—Reaffirm your commitment to our health initiative by joining hundreds of women in the Run, Walk, and Roll challenge on July 16

Workshops

- ◇ Understanding the Gospel of Mark: Introduction to the 2011-12 LWT Bible Study
- ◇ Renew, Respond, Rejoice: 2011 Summer Bible Study
- ◇ Prayer in Daily Life
- ◇ Luther's New Appreciation of Sexuality: Marriage and Family
- ◇ On Our Way: a Living Faith That's Good for the World
- ◇ Charitable Gift Planning: A Gift from the Church to the Church
- ◇ Intercultural Competence for Leadership in a Diverse World
- ◇ Chemical Craze: Detoxifying your Home
- ◇ The Power of Language
- ◇ Walking in Solidarity with your Global Sisters
- ◇ Spirituality of Racism
- ◇ Sacred Space as Metaphor

Please contact Ellen Bain, our Triennial Gathering Promoter, at futdrb@yahoo.com or (540) 980-5049 with any questions or concerns. Also, let Ellen know if you plan to attend the Triennial gathering. She's planning a get-together for folks from the Virginia Synod and will keep you updated on details.

A Word from the President

Jody Smiley

It is hard to believe that it is already October but there is a nip in the air and the leaves here in Blacksburg are turning maroon and orange.

Seems like only yesterday that we had our convention. If you weren't there you missed out on a wonderful weekend. Beth Wrenn, President of Women of the ELCA, inspired us with her keynote address and workshops, Pastor Katie Gosswein reminded us that we are "Washed and Forgiven: Called to Serve", and we were entertained by "Fred the Fantastique". To me the best part of the weekend is being with so many women of faith. The fun and the fellowship were well worth the trip to Roanoke College.

Last weekend, four board members and I attended a Region 9 retreat for the synodical boards. It was held at a retreat center in Norcross, GA. We explored our diversity and did leadership training. The leaders used resources from Women of the ELCA: "Called to Love as God Loves-Unconditionally" and "God, Leadership and a Woman's Touch". We got to know other women that share our devotion to our synodical women's organization and Women of the ELCA.

These are just two examples of the ways being part of this organization gives me opportunities to be with such faithful women. I worry that there are many Lutheran women, young and older, that will never experience the joy and support of this wonderful community we call Women of the ELCA. We need to reach out to the women in our congregations that are not part of our "units or circles".

From now till July you will hear me talk a lot about how to reach out to these women. I would begin by identifying other groups of women in your churches. These may be quilting and prayer shawl groups or women that get together for book discussions. Raise up the projects that they are doing. Mention them at your circle meetings, in the church newsletter, and support them anyway your "unit or circle" can. Make them feel part of the Women of the ELCA not by attending meetings but by doing "God's work with all our hands together". You will start building a true "Community of Women" with the women your congregation. When the community has had a chance to grow begin introducing them to resources available on the Women of ELCA website or tell them to visit the VSWO site or be bold and invite them to come to convention with you. Who knows you may even find that the invitation to your unit or circle meeting will get a "yes" or a "maybe" instead of a "no". I truly believe it is worth the effort to be part of this loving and caring community of women.

Please check www.vsw.org. We have some great pictures from convention and information on up coming events around the synod. We have an email address for you ask any questions, vsw@comcast.net. Also please note that my phone number has changed. We are using my cell phone as our home phone.

Connie's Column

Connie Saunders, Vice-President

This was my first Committee Day and it was a new experience. You might call it growth. One thing remains the same and that is the importance of meeting fresh new people who you have something in common with so that you might have more ability to fulfill your mission on this earth. That is my philosophy, go where God sends you. We need to get out and be among God's people.

When you get an opportunity to meet new people because God has put this in your path, always listen. I met new people, we talked about how we are going to stay on course and accomplish great things for the women in VSWO. If you were not there, think of the people you did not get to meet and share your ideas with. Next year think about what has been put in your path as opportunities to grow in Christ and what we are to concern ourselves with each day. We talked about what fun things we could do at Convention. Our Convention is going to be all about Renewing our Faith and mission.

Things change, and so must VSWO. We communicate differently today, not that we won't do it the old fashioned way, but we will bring in new ways; which just means we will communicate even better. Jesus was the best communicator and set a wonderful example for us.

Have you ever heard of Facebook? It's a fascinating tool. Well, I will just keep you in suspense while we learn this new toy for ourselves.

We had great reports from our different groups and they are working hard on new ways to reach our goals. The future of VSWO depends on our efforts to always be inviting new women that we meet in our day to day lives in church or in the workplace. Young mothers have to approach activities through Facebook and Twitter because they have children and busy lives. They are on their Blackberrys and their i-phones, because they just are.

Growth, Community, and Action are all part of the puzzle to keep us covering the different aspects of being a women of ELCA. They chattered all day about what they could be about as they grow in their community through action.

We are recruiting for a young woman who would like to design our Young Women's Group this summer at convention. I will give you a hint, internet, coffee, chocolate and relationships. If you are interested, please e-mail me, I am working on Twitter for now, and I will get right back to you. Pray about it. This may be your opportunity to fulfill your mission in Christ. God Bless You always. Work on your witness and your faith story each day as you get opportunities to share the Good News. See you soon.

From the Treasurer...

As the year is quickly going by, we are reminded of things finishing up. Autumn is here and harvest is almost done. I just finished canning pears for the winter store. We also must remember that as we store for winter, we need to remember that our faithful giving to promote Women of the ELCA and the concerns we support. Each year we are told that "times are hard" and we know they are. But, for that very reason, we need to remember that there are others who need our help and support. So, if that means giving up some extra luxury or desire to help others, then that is what we need to do. Stewardship is not a "dirty word" but an uplifting word by action and deed. Pray daily and remember that we are the Women of the ELCA.

~Anna Barb, Treasurer

2011 VSWO Convention

Chair : Imogene Ryman

The Convention Planning Committee met on October 2 to make plans for our 2011 VSWO Convention. The theme will be Renewal—For the Soul. Scripture reference is Isaiah 40: 30-31. The convention hymn is “On Eagles Wings.” Judy Castele will be our keynote speaker. The love offering will go to the Virginia Sexual & Domestic Violence Action Alliance. Genie Brown will serve as our Registrar. Erin Bain will be parliamentarian. Bishop Jim Mauney will lead our Sunday worship. There will be awareness sessions on networking, renewable resources, domestic violence, Bible Study. Workshops will also be led by all 3 mission committees: action, growth, and community.

The young women’s gathering will continue and will be led by Connie Saunders, Vice-President. We’re looking into side trips for Saturday afternoon. There are more exciting things to come. So mark your calendars for July 22-24, 2011 and we’ll see you at Roanoke College!

News from the Synodical Conference Coordinator

Janice Brown

The following convention assignments were made at Committee Day:

Central Valley:	Banner
Germana:	Ushers
Highlands:	Registration
New River:	Entertainment
Page:	Table Decorations
Richmond:	Flowers for Convention Floor
Southern:	Name Tags
Southern Valley:	Communion Elements
Tidewater:	Table Prayers

I attended the Southern Valley Conference Gathering Sunday, Oct.10, 2010, which was held at St. James, Fishersville. The program was on Haiti, presented by Gail Foley, of Blue Ridge Community College (BRCC). A special offering was taken for the BRCC Haiti Relief Fund. It was a very inspirational meeting.



Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

TRIENNIAL GATHERING FACT SHEET

Prayer Shawl Collection



Eighth Triennial Gathering • July 14–17, 2011 • Spokane, Wash. • www.womenoftheelca.org/triennial11 • 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2730

Get out your knitting needles and crochet hooks and create a prayer shawl.

This is a great opportunity for all women, whether attending the triennial gathering or not. The shawls will be given to ministries in our host synod, the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod. Work alone or in a group. For patterns, check out www.shawlministry.com or any of the many books on the topic available at your local library. Use the following prayers as you begin and finish a prayer shawl. Adapt the prayers for group use. Print out the label and add in the information. Laminate the completed label, punch a hole in the label, and attach the label to the completed shawl with a piece of ribbon or yarn.

Shawls can be brought to the exhibit hall, Camp Dianoigo, at the Spokane Convention Center. Shawls can also be mailed to the following address, for arrival between June 1 – July 1, 2011.

TG11 Prayer Shawls
Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod
314 S. Spruce Street, Suite A
Spokane, WA 99201-5823

A Prayer of Dedication upon Beginning a Prayer Shawl

Blessed are you, Creator God, for you wrap your creation in the warmth of your loving kindness. As I take up my yarn and my tools to begin this shawl, I ask you to bless my hands and my heart. Let my small skill and compassion be a hint of your own as I craft this yarn into a tangible prayer of healing, peace and comfort. I dedicate the work of my hands to your service, loving God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose mother has been depicted knitting with him by her side. Amen.

A Prayer of Blessing upon the Completion of a Shawl

Blessed are you, compassionate God, for you wrap your creation in the softness of your loving kindness. May the prayers for healing, peace and comfort I have worked into every stitch rise to you and come back to the shawl's recipient a hundredfold. I ask you to bless the recipient of this shawl and all your children with your peace, which passes all understanding. I make this prayer through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

This prayer shawl was made by

_____ of

(NAME)

_____ in

(NAME OF CONGREGATION)

(CITY, STATE)

This prayer shawl was made as part of the 8th Triennial Gathering of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, July 14-17, 2011.

Prayers were worked into every stitch of this shawl, so that healing, peace and comfort might come to you. www.womenoftheelca.org

Women of the **ELCA**



Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

TRIENNIAL GATHERING FACT SHEET

Quilt Challenge



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Quilters of all abilities are invited to create a quilt interpreting the gathering theme, **Renew, Respond, Rejoice!** The challenge comes not only in interpreting the gathering theme but also in working within certain rules.

1. The quilt must interpret the gathering theme, **Renew, Respond, Rejoice!**
2. Finished size of the quilt must be 40 inches square.
3. Traditional or original patterns may be used. Credit must be given when using the pattern or design of another.
4. Quilts may be pieced or appliquéd or a combination. They may include surface embellishment techniques (e.g., dyeing, trapunto, stenciling, whole cloth, embroidery, batik, painting, embossing, etc.).
5. Each quilt must be quilted, not tied. Both machine quilting and hand quilting are acceptable.
6. Each quilt must have a sleeve attached to the top back for hanging. The sleeve opening must be 4 inches wide after it is attached to the quilt and must be attached in a way that it will not show when the quilt is hanging.
7. A fabric identification label must be securely sewn to a bottom back corner of the quilt (a paper label pinned to the quilt is not acceptable) with the name, address and telephone number of the entrant.
8. The challenge is open to all women who are members of ELCA congregations. The quilt must be the work of a single individual; no group or two person quilts will be accepted. Quilt(s) must be constructed and quilted by the person named on the entry blank. The quilter need not be planning to attend the 2011 Triennial Gathering in order to participate in the quilt challenge.
9. Limit of 2 entries per person. Entry fee is \$5 which includes return shipping. Quilts may be picked up on site with proper identification at 6:30 pm on Saturday, July 16, 2011, in the exhibit hall. If you are unable to pick up your quilt(s), you must notify Women of the ELCA in writing with the name of the person picking it up; that person must also show identification. Those quilts not picked up will be shipped to the entrant following the gathering.
10. All quilts must be received in the churchwide office by May 1, 2011, along with a completed entry form. Mail quilts to Women of the ELCA Quilt Challenge, 8765 W Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631.
11. Entries will be judged by a committee of fiber artists and sewing and quilting professionals. Winners will be selected for originality, adherence to selected theme, workmanship, creative use of materials and overall design execution. All winners and qualifying entries will be on display at the 2011 Triennial Gathering, Spokane Convention Center, Spokane, Washington from July 14 – 16, 2011.



Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

Quilt challenge Entry Form



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One form per submitted quilt.

NAME OF QUILT

Describe how the quilt represents the gathering theme "Renew, Respond, Rejoice:"

Your Name

Your address

City

State

Zip

Email address

Phone number

I have read and agree to the rules of the Quilt Challenge. I understand that by entering this quilt into the challenge I agree that 1) this entry is original, it has not won previous prizes and it does not infringe on any third party rights and 2) my name, picture, likeness and city and state of residence may be used by Women of the ELCA in educational, informational and promotional materials in a variety of media, including electronic media.

Signature

DATE

Mail your quilt by May 1, 2011, along with this completed entry form and a \$5 check (entry fee) made payable to Women of the ELCA to:

Women of the ELCA Quilt Challenge
8765 W Higgins road
Chicago, IL 60631



Mission: Action

Co-chairs: Lisa Somerville & Ellen Greene

Members: Barbara Atkinson & Lavelva Stevens

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy...
(Philippians 1: 3-6)*

On behalf of the committee, we want to thank all of you that completed the sheets indicating all the projects and donations of time and talents. 16 congregations completed the forms. Following are a few examples : donations made to homeless shelters, Heifer international, Lutheran school Tanzania, free clinics, SPCA, agencies helping homeless and disabled , those in prison, YMCA, The Salvation Army, food pantries, and Emergency Needs Task Force. 300 plus health kits and household items donated to Lutheran World Relief. Over 1,100 box tops and over 4,000 labels for LFS and the Minnick school. Many quilts also were donated to Lutheran World Relief. Once again your generosity is overwhelming. I am so encouraged by all the work that is being done in the name of our Lord and Savior.

The committee is also excited about the planning for the convention next summer. Our focus will be on Healthy Women, Healthy Girls. We will hopefully have a workshop on healthy shopping, a trip to the Rescue Mission to once again donate new books and a time for shopping at their facility. We also will have our display table with examples of our outreach projects from the congregations. We are all looking forward to the Triennial in Spokane and the convention in Roanoke in July. More information will follow in the upcoming Visions.

Mission: Community

Co-Chairs: Carol Bailey and Sherry Frye

Members: Nancy Tyler, Christel Williams, Jane Lane, and Kaarina Modiri

We are looking for way to increase our sense of community and our ways of communication through technology. We wish to help women celebrate their “bold” and continue on the way to wellness in all areas of their lives.

Have you seen the Women of the ELCA’s Facebook home? Check it out and watch for the VSWO Facebook page coming soon.

A Final Thought...

Judy Castele, Contributing Editor

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month, a time set-aside nationally to address this pervasive problem. But, it will take more than one month out of the year to seek justice for victims of violence. Know the facts and become empowered to make a difference!

The statistics are devastating. One in four women (25%) has experienced some sort of household violence in her lifetime. 85% of the victims of intimate partner violence are women (15% are men), according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice. Three out of four women, 75% know someone who has been a victim of violence. 30% of women know another woman who has suffered violence at the hand of a physically abusive boyfriend or husband in the past year.

What can I do to be helpful if an abusive situation is revealed?

- Listen to the victim and believe her. Tell her that the abuse is not her fault, and is not God's will.
- Tell her she is not alone and that help is available.
- Let her know that without intervention, abuse often escalates in frequency and severity over time.
- Seek expert assistance. Refer her only to specialized domestic violence counseling programs, not to couples counseling. Help her find a shelter, a safe home or advocacy resources to offer her protection. Suggesting that she merely return home places her and her children in real danger.
- Hold the abuser accountable. Don't minimize his abusive behavior. Support him in seeking specialized batterers counseling to help change his behavior. Continue to hold him accountable and to support and protect the victim even after he has begun a counseling program. If reconciliation is to occur, it can be considered only after the above steps have taken place.

Our 2011 convention love offering will go to support the work of Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance (VSDVAA). VSDVAA is a state-wide coalition of people and programs who envision a world where relationships between people are respectful, healthy, and safe. Your support will make a difference in the lives of many.

**If you or someone you know is a victim of
domestic violence or sexual assault,
call the Virginia Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline,
toll-free, 24 hours a day at
1-800-838-8238**

VSWO Board | 2010-2011

Jody Smiley St. Michael, Blacksburg	President Convention Planning	901 Brattle Lane Blacksburg 24060	540.250.6149 (c)	esmiley@vt.edu
Connie Saunders Immanuel, Bluefield WV	Vice President Convention Planning	37 College Drive Bluefield, VA 24605	276.322.5753(h) 304.920.1051(c)	saundersem@earthlink.net
Judy Castele Good Shepherd, Lexington	Secretary Visions Editor	726 W. 4 th Street Buena Vista 24416	540.264.9998 540.463.7861 (w)	casteele@rockbridge.net
Anna Barb St. Jacob, Edinburg Parish	Treasurer	5501 Alum Springs Rd Edinburg, VA 22824	540.856.2976 540.333.5026	abarb@shentel.net
Carol Bailey Resurrection, Fredericksburg	Mission: Community	604 Gold Valley Rd. Locust Grove, VA 22508	540.972.0371	tcmtnest@comcast.net
Janice Brown Grace & Glory, Palmyra	Synodical Conference Coordinator	6 Horseback Lane Palmyra, VA 22963-2106	434.589.6358	chrispe@embarqmail.com
Sherry Frye Christ the King, Richmond	Mission: Community	5800 Harbour Bluff Ter- race Midlothian, VA 23112	804.739.4801 804.786.2035 (w)	sherryfrye@aol.com
Ellen Greene Rejoice, Chesapeake	Mission: Action	133 Lea View Ave #1 Norfolk, VA 23503	757.717.9524	clmgreene@aol.com
Ellie Hirsh Mt. Zion, New Market	Mission: Growth	191 Craig St. Mt. Jackson, VA 22842	540.477.9767 540.335.1160(c)	rehirsh@shentel.net
Sherrill Miller St. Paul, Jerome	Mission: Growth	4329 Alum Springs Road Edinburg 22824	540.856.8122 540.975.1840	jbfarm@shentel.net
Imogene Ryman St. Stephen, Mt. Olive Parish	Convention Planning	14785 Back Rd. Strasburg, VA 22657	540.465.8184	N/A
Lisa Somerville St. Timothy, Norfolk	Mission: Action	4197 Ware Neck Rd Virginia Beach 23456	757.471.4007 757.962.1083	ljsomerville0823@aol.com

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.



Virginia Synodical Women's Organization
Genie Brown
Visions Circulation Manager
5517 South Village Drive
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