

Please share Visions with women in your congregations that may not receive it. We no longer are mailing hard copies so we need your help sharing the news about the VSWO.

Greetings from Your New Treasurer, Jody Smiley

I officially took over the responsibilities as your treasurer on February 1st. A big thank you to Judy Castelee for serving from February 1, 2023 to January 31, 2024. We appreciate all that you do.



Here is some important information for all our congregational unit treasurers. Please send your offerings to:

Jody Smiley, VSWO Treasurer
901 Brattle Lane
Blacksburg, VA 24060

I am in the process of sending information to our contact list of unit treasurers. I know there may be changes to the list with the new year, so

I appreciate any help in revising/confirming this list. Women of the ELCA’s website has the Unit Treasurer Guidelines available for download. This is great resource whether you are a new or experienced unit treasurer. It can be found at: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GUIDE-FOR-UNIT-TREASURERS-updated-7.2021.2.pdf>. While you are there take the opportunity to explore the full website, <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/>. Share it with the women in your congregation so they can get to more about WELCA!

A reminder about Fair Share Travel: Each unit sending a delegate to convention should send to the treasurer the Fair Share Travel fee of \$35.00. This will enable your delegate to be reimbursed for her mileage.

Another hat that I wear as your treasurer is to talk about Stewardship and ways you can help ministries of the VSWO, WELCA and our greater community.

Your regular, convention and conference gathering offerings that are sent to the VSWO are shared with the churchwide organization. This not only helps our synodical organization but also wider ministries of WELCA. Later in this edition of Visions you are reminded of our 2023-24 service project, Micah Ecumenical Ministries, Fredericksburg. Are you aware that the VSWO supports a scholarship for young women at Roanoke College? If you would like to make a donation to this, just make a note on your check. Also, we have a Thrivent Investment Fund that helps support things like our conventions and other ministries we would like to provide assistance. Again, if you would like to help this fund grow just make a note on your check.



An exciting event you can help support is the All Lutheran Women's Retreat in November. There is an article in this edition with more information and a website you can visit to make a donation.

On a churchwide level, you can make gifts directly to WELCA for where most needed, support Katie's Fund, Raising Healthy Women and Girls, and many more. Just go to the website and click on donate.

Of course there is more to Stewardship than just our treasurers, we also have our time and talents to share. Please consider volunteering for leadership positions in our congregational units or the in the VSWO. Or maybe start with leading a program, inviting women in you church to a unit meeting, bringing a friend to convention or to the All Lutheran Women's Retreat.

There are lots of ways to share what God has first given us, our time, talents and treasures.

VSWO CONVENTION

Join your sisters in Christ and
Stir up the gift of God which is in you
through worship, celebration,
fun, fellowship, and some business.

2 Timothy 1:6-7

July 26 - 27, 2024

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church
7479 Richmond Road
Williamsburg, VA 23188

Stay tuned for more details!

Important Hotel Information

Our convention hotel is the Holiday Inn Express, Williamsburg North. The address is 720 Light foot Road, Williamsburg, 23188. To make your reservation call 757-220-0062.

When you call you need to say you are with the **Virginia Synod Lutheran Women's Organization**. This is how we are listed on our contract. The cost for Friday night is \$145 plus taxes. The breakfast buffet and internet access in your room are included in this fee.

To get this rate you MUST make your reservation by June 25, 2024. There is a significant increase if you miss this date! After all it is summer in Williamsburg.



Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization 2024 Service Project: a note from Teresa Bowers

Thank you so much to the Virginia Synodical Women’s Organization for choosing **Micah Ecumenical Ministries** as your **2024 Service Project**! This project will allow the Health Ministry at Micah to provide needed basic health supplies to our neighbors over the course of the next year.

Most of the items you donate will be distributed at our Health Screening Program which is held every Tuesday in our Hospitality Center. Basic health screenings are provided to our neighbors in conjunction with local nursing students. This includes an assessment of vitals, gathering of general health information and screening tools for health concerns that may need further follow up. The items you donate will improve the health and wellness of our neighbors.

The larger first aid kits that are donated will be distributed to our newly housed neighbors in their “Welcome Home” baskets. They will provide access to basic home first aid supplies that they are not receiving now.

If you or your women’s organization would like to donate items for this project, you can find a Micah Ministry Wish List on Amazon at the following link or use the QR code at the end of this article:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/161FRE53NH45?ref=wl_share

You may purchase the item(s) you want to donate to Micah directly from Amazon or any other outlet where you can get a comparable item and good price. Amazon items can be sent directly to me at: 11 Caroway Drive, Fredericksburg, Va. 22405.

Items purchased at other locations can be sent to my address, or you can arrange a drop off/delivery with someone coming through Fredericksburg. My phone number is: 540-373-4769. Or you can bring your items to the 2024 VSWO Convention next July in Norge, Virginia.

The quilts that your quilter’s groups make for Micah will provide warmth and comfort for our newly housed neighbors. They will surely feel loved by your group when wrapped in a warm homemade quilt!

Lastly, if you prefer to donate money to this project, the funds that you donate will enable our neighbors to continue to have health and wellness supplies.



For questions please contact:
Teresa Bowers
Health Ministry Coordinator
Micah Ecumenical Ministries, Fredericksburg
11 Caroway Drive, Fredericksburg, Va. 22405
ctbowers@cox.net
540-373-4769



2024 All Lutheran Women's Retreat

November 7- 9, 2024

Hilton Garden Inn Richmond Innsbrook
4050 Cox Road
Glenn Allen, VA

Jacqueline Bussie, author of “*Love Without Limits*”, will be with us as our retreat leader.

Full Registration Fee for Thursday – Saturday - \$175

Friday only Registration Fee - \$75

Please consider in addition to your registration fee a donation to ALWR scholarships and/or our retreat leader's travel expenses.

Mail checks made out to All Lutheran Women's Retreat to:

ALWR, c/o Treasurer, Carol Troxell, P.O.Box 503, Stuarts Draft, VA 24477

Retreat attendees are responsible for making their own hotel reservations. A block of rooms has been reserved at a rate of \$129 per night plus tax for a King room and \$139 plus tax for a Queen room.

Call Jeffrey Ward at the Hilton Garden Inn at 804-521-3002. Be sure to mention the All Lutheran Women's Retreat to receive the retreat rate. More information can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/alwretreat> .

VSWO Website is being Updated

It has been a while since we launched our website hosted on Weebly.com. Well, a new and improved site is in the process of development. The preliminary design is wonderful. Hopefully in the next few weeks we can unveil the final product. Be on the lookout for the announce. For now, you can still go to [Virginia Synodical Women's Organization - Home \(weebly.com\)](http://Virginia Synodical Women's Organization - Home (weebly.com)) for information and resources.



A Weekly Email from VSWO

Beginning this month we have started a weekly “Happy Monday” email. It is a short blur with helpful information and maybe some fun facts. If you would like to receive this or other email updates from the VSWO and don't already we would love to add you to our list. Just email Jody Smiley at jdsmiley29@comcast.net or vswo2023@gmail.com.

If you have some topic ideas for “Happy Monday” please let Jody know.

From the Mission Justice

The VA Synod Tapestry Team Justice for Women hosted a forum via Zoom on December 11, 2023, to bring awareness, promote and advocate action for Pregnancy and Infant Loss. Virginia Lutherans were invited to advocate with their elected legislators about this matter and Bill HB 32.



Bill HB32 relates to implicit bias and cultural competency in health care. Board of Medicine; continuing education; implicit bias and cultural competency in health care. Requires the Board of Medicine to adopt and implement policies that require each practitioner licensed by the Board who has direct contact with persons who are or may become pregnant to complete two hours of continuing education related to implicit bias, defined in the bill, and cultural competency in health care at least once every other license renewal cycle.

Kathryn Haines of the Virginia Interfaith Center for Public Policy was the guest speaker. Kathryn is heading up the VICPP Health Equity PUSH for a bill in the General Assembly.

Did you know, Black women in Virginia are dying two and a half times more frequently than White women. Preventive measures are needed to eradicate these disparities, demands addressing cultural competency and implicit bias in health care settings. The Tapestry Team Justice for Women used our platform to share the importance of engagement from a faith perspective. We are committed to responding to the innate causes of health disparities among underserved and susceptible communities as well as being committed to working with policy makers and partners who share these convictions to implement change and eliminate the racial bias in the disparaged communities.

The VICPP, Day for All People 2024 flagship advocacy day was January 17, 2024. This was an opportunity to meet in Richmond to make a difference at the state capital by joining VICPP at the General Assembly to advocate social justice. First, there was a meeting to review the priority issues, then there was an opportunity to meet with State Senators and Delegates. Bill HB32, unanimously passed out of the Senate Subcommittee on January 25, 2024, and on January 30, 2024, the House voted the Bill to be Incorporated by Health and Human Services (HB1130). HB 1130 Unconscious bias and cultural competency; Board of Medicine shall require continuing education etc.

The following links provide additional information about Bill HB32 and the efforts to bring awareness to this issue.

<https://virginiainterfaithcenter.org/health-equity/implicit-bias/>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nyFUOfg35kvkD70TX2w4pzcIkHpI9F0o/view?pli=1>

<https://virginiainterfaithcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/2023-Fact-Sheet.Bias-Training-Mandate.pdf>

<https://virginiainterfaithcenter.ourpowerbase.net/civicrm/petition/sign?sid=291>



Congregational Unit News

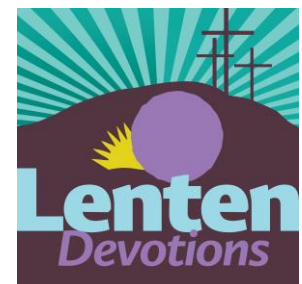
2000 and Counting!

The women of Resurrection Lutheran in Fredericksburg have been helping Santa for a number of years. This year their contribution of 200 stockings means they have completed 2429 stockings for needy children of Spotsylvania County. Doris Howe who has a loving heart and a gift for organization started the project. Doris works for hours labeling (young boy, older girl, etc.) plastic grocery bags so every stocking goes in a bag and is tightly knotted so nothing will be lost on their way to happy children. Each stocking contains a candy cane, a bag of candy, a brand-new book, a coloring book, crayons or colored pencils, 2 regular pencils, a card game, gloves or mittens, socks, a stuffed animal, and at least one other game or craft. WELCA meets the first Wednesday of December to set up tables covered with stocking fillers. The next day is the grand day of stuffing and delivery to Spotsylvania County Schools where guidance counselors and social workers will pick up their school's share. Most of our items come from Dollar Tree or the Green Valley Book Fair near Mt. Crawford. Thanks to Thrivent and a very generous group of women, God's love and our hands make Christmas magic in Spotsylvania.



Does your unit or conference have a story to share? We would love to hear about what your women are doing. Please send stories (and photos) to Jody Smiley, jdsmiley29@comcast.net.

Are you looking for a quick devotional for this month? Take a look at these from the Women of the ELCA's website. The first is the devotional for February, "Don't Neglect the Power of your Work", <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/devotions/dont-neglect-the-power-of-your-work> and the second is "Finding God in Desolate Places" from Caf e, <https://www.boldcafe.org/finding-god-in-desolate-places/>.



Contact Information for Your 2023-2024 Board

Officers – term expiring 2024	Officers – term expiring 2025
<p>Vice President – Sylvia Eley 417 Meadow Creek Drive Chesapeake, VA 23323 Phone: 757-582-0966 Email: seley2005@msn.com Church: St. Timothy/Norfolk Conference: Tidewater Mission Justice</p>	<p>President – Lavelva Stevens 1369 Beth Scott Dr. Pulaski, VA 24301 Phone: 540-320-3369 Email: lstevens01@verizon.net Church: Holy Trinity/Wytheville Conference: Highlands</p>
<p>Secretary – JoAnn Fawley 6409 W. Old Mountain Road Louisa, VA 23093 Phone: 703-727-7957 Email: fawley6409@gmail.com Church: All Places Together/online Conference: Germanna Social Media Manager/Long Range Planning</p>	<p>Treasurer – Jody Smiley (Ends 1/31/2026) 901 Brattle Lane Blacksburg, VA 24060 Phone: 540-250-6149 Email: jdsmliley29@comcast.net Church: St. Michael Conference: New River Visions: Circulation Manager</p>
Board Members – Term expiring 2024	Board Members – Term expiring 2025
<p>Nicole Ocheltree 63 Valley View Dr. Mt. Sidney, VA 24467 Phone: 540-292-2179 Email: wldptch@yahoo.com Church: Salem/Mt. Sidney Conference: Southern Valley Convention Planning</p>	<p>Carol Bailey 12706 Cavalryman Ct. Fredericksburg, VA 22407 Phone: 571-438-0273 Email: cobailey42@gmail.com Church: Resurrection/Fredericksburg Conference: Germanna VSWO Conf Coord/Long Range Planning</p>
<p>Diane Priestly 116 Norman Davis Dr. Toano, VA 23168 Phone: 757-561-5491 Email: DMP625@aol.com Church: Our Saviour's/Norge Conference: Peninsula Mission Discipleship/Convention Planning</p>	<p>Teresa Bowers 11 Caroway Drive Fredericksburg, VA 22405 Phone: 540-373-4769 Email: ctbowers@cox.net Church: Christ/Fredericksburg Conference: Germanna</p>
<p>Pat Seelenbinder 1605 Pennywhistle Arch Virginia Beach, VA 23464 Phone: 757-479-2544 Email: pmseelen@cox.net Church: Emmanuel/VA Beach Conference: Tidewater Mission Discipleship/Convention Planning</p>	<p>Ashley Saunders 420 Acme Company St. Broadway, VA 22815 Phone: 540-746-8102 Email: saunders@muhlenberglutheran.org Church: Muhlenberg/Harrisonburg Conference: Southern Valley</p>
<p>Visit our website, Virginia Synodical Women's Organization - Home (weebly.com) for information and resources from the VSWO and WELCA.</p>	

