

“VISIONS”



A Closer Look at the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization

Winter/Spring 2025

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.

Thank You for Your Support in 2024



Your support for the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization (VSWO) in 2024 was amazing. We exceeded by more than \$200 our budget estimated offerings from Congregational Units. Because of your generosity we were able to support the All-Lutheran Women's Retreat in the Fall, make gifts to the Grace Inside Ministry, Encircle and Latisha's House (all three were represented at our convention), add to the VSWO Roanoke College Scholarship, and increase the amount in our Thrivent Fund Investment.

Our Love Offering collected during 2024 exceeded \$1400. This was given to Micah's Ecumenical Ministries in Fredericksburg. You also gave many, many in-kind gifts to them through their Amazon Wish List and items brought to convention. They were so appreciative of our support.

We were able to provide support to Women of the ELCA churchwide by our regular offerings. 55% of your congregational unit, conference, and regular convention offerings are shared with churchwide. Our offerings along with those of all the other synods support the many ministries and programs of Women of the ELCA. We made donations to Katie's Fund that will also support women's ministries.

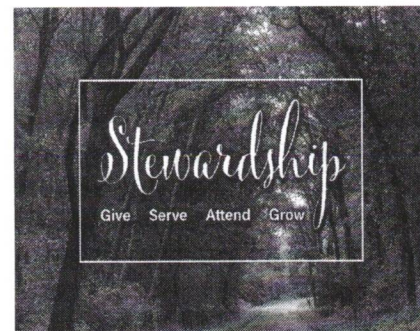
Your regular offerings also help offset the cost of the convention so that we can keep the registration fees as low as possible. We hope this help more women be able to attend. Another way we can assist women attending and encourage new attendees is through the Sophie Wilson Grant program. You also made gifts to this program in 2024.

Again, THANK YOU for your generous gifts of not just your treasure but also your time and talents!

How Can You Help in 2025

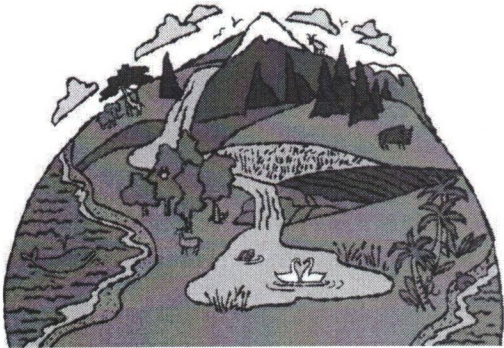
Continue your offerings to your units, convention and conference gatherings. This not only helps our synodical organization but also the wider ministries of WELCA. Support our 2025 Love Offering Project, Latisha's House. There is more information about later in this Visions. Make women aware of the VSWO scholarship that supports young women at Roanoke College. Send a little extra when you register for convention to support the Sophie Wilson Grant. Make sure your unit sends in a Fair Share Travel donation of \$35 to help offset a little of the cost for voting members to travel to convention.

Of course there is more to Stewardship than just our treasures, 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 your church to a unit meeting, bringing a friend to convention. There are lots of ways to share what God has first given us, our time, talents and treasures.

Guardians of Creation



The 2025 Annual VSWO Convention/Gathering will be at Christ Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, July 25-26, 2025. We will have Awareness Sessions, activities, lots of fun and fellowship and of course a little business.

Our theme is Guardians of Creation. We will have awareness sessions and a Bible Study related to our environment and how we can care for it. The convention scripture is Genesis 2:15 and our convention hymn is "Earth Was Given as a Garden".

Part of our business will be electing several board positions, president, treasurer, three board members, and voting members to

the Women of the ELCA 2026 Triennial Convention. The Triennial Convention will be virtual this cycle. The board positions are for two-year terms. See the nomination form for these positions at the end of this Visions. Please give prayerful thought to possibly serving or nominating someone.

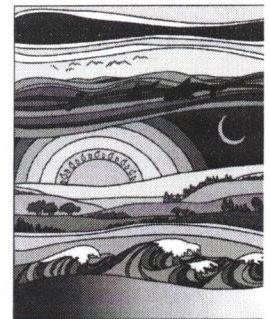
Another part of the business is reviewing and approving resolutions brought forth by individuals, congregational units, and the VSWO board. If you would like to submit a resolution, the submission form is attached.

We will be offering Sophie Wilson grants to first-time non-voting member attendees. If you are a first-timer or know of someone in your congregation that would like to attend, please share the nomination form that is attached.

Keep checking Facebook page and our website as more information becomes available. The Call to Convention will be coming out in mid-April.

Please make plans to join us at Christ in Fredericksburg, July 25th and 26th.

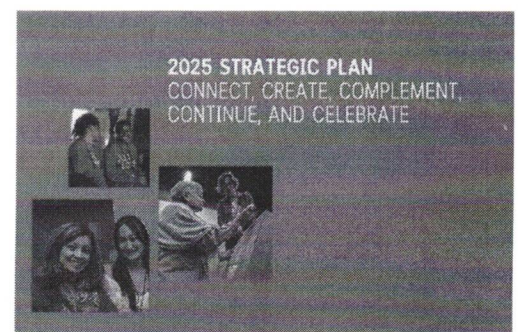
Our convention hotel is Hampton Inn at 1080 Hospitality Lane, Fredericksburg, 22401



Caring for God's Creation

WELCA Announces New Strategic Plan

In December, the executive board approved a new Strategic Plan for Women of the ELCA titled Connect, Create, Complement, Continue, and Celebrate. Presented by Interim Executive Director Jennifer Hockenbery in collaboration with churchwide staff, these five goals for 2024-2026 were taken from conversations with staff, executive board members, synodical women's organizations (SWO) presidents, and participants of Women of the ELCA. An online survey that drew more than 200 responses was also used in gathering information for the plan. Click [HERE](#) to download.



Contact Information for Your 2024-2025 Board

Officers – term expiring 2026	Officers – term expiring 2025
<p>Vice President – Pat Seelenbinder 1605 Pennywhistle Arch Virginia Beach, VA 23464 Phone: 757-479-2544 Email: pmseelen@cox.net Church: Emmanuel/VA Beach Conference: Tidewater</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 2026	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</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</p>
<p>Dona Jenkins 19283 Mercedes Dr. Abingdon, VA 24210 Phone: 276-477-3605 Email: mg.donajenkins@gmail.com Church: St. John, Abingdon Conference: Highlands Conference Coordinator</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>Ann Putnam 10 Jefferson Ct. Waynesboro, VA 22980 Phone: 434-465-0206 Email: anneputnam55@gmail.com Church: St. James, Fishersville Conference: Southern Valley</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, http://www.vswow.org for information and resources from the VSWO and WELCA.</p>	



2025 Service Project for the Virginia Synodical Women's Organization

COLLECTING ITEMS IN SUPPORT OF LATISHA'S HOUSE FOUNDATION

Latisha's House provides a long-term, transitional housing program for adult, female survivors of sex trafficking and offers individualized support to empower them to build a bridge from their traumatic past to a positive future.

In addition to donations through the Amazon Wish List, Latisha's House is also requesting lap blankets (approx. 36x48 inch).

Handmade or Storebought

Please reach out to Diane Priestley with questions and information regarding delivery: dmp625@aol.com or 757-561-5491

Click left QR code for more information about Latisha's House and
Click Right QR code for the Amazon Wish List



NOMINATION FORM OFFICER/BOARD MEMBER

Virginia Synodical Women's Organization ~ Women of the ELCA

SEND COMPLETED NOMINATION FORM

TO: JoAnn Fawley, 6409 W. Old Mountain Rd, Louisa, VA 23093 or

EMAIL: fawley6409@gmail.com BY June 20, 2025

Individual must consent to serve if elected. This nomination is for:

☐ **President** (2-year term)

☐ **Treasurer** (2-year term)

☐ **Board Member** (Three (3) board members to be elected each a 2-year term)

☐ **Triennial Voting Members** (Three (3) to be elected to the Zoom Convention July 13-14, 2026)

Name: _____ Pronouns _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

Email address: _____

Age range ☐ 34 and under ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ over 65

Ethnic/racial heritage ☐ Caucasian ☐ Black or African American ☐ Hispanic ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Middle Eastern or Arab ☐ Asian

Church/City _____ Conference _____

Occupation/Vocation _____

Women of the ELCA Experience (Check all that apply.)

Local unit: ☐ participant ☐ officer

Conference: ☐ participant ☐ conference team ☐ conference coordinator

Synodical: ☐ attended convention ☐ convention voting member ☐ VSWO board member ☐ VSWO officer

Churchwide: ☐ attended Triennial ☐ Triennial voting member ☐ Churchwide board member ☐ Churchwide officer

Hobbies: _____

Volunteer Work: _____

Form submitted by Name: _____ Phone _____

Congregational Unit and Conference _____

SOPHIE WILSON GRANT APPLICATION

Virginia Synodical Women's Organization ~ Women of the ELCA
Thirty-seventh Annual Convention ~ July 25-26, 2025

The Sophie Wilson Grant is available to encourage
FIRST-TIME, NON-VOTING MEMBER PARTICIPANTS
to attend the convention.

Applicants will be notified of the committee's decision no later than **July 10, 2025**

MAIL OR EMAIL COMPLETED GRANT APPLICATION FORM BY July 1, 2025, TO:

Jody Smiley
901 Brattle Lane
Blacksburg, VA 24060
[jdsmliley29@comcast.net](mailto:jdsmiley29@comcast.net)

Name: _____ Pronouns _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (home) _____ (work) _____

Email address _____

Church/City _____ Conference _____

Occupation/Vocation _____

To what extent are you currently involved in Women of the ELCA? _____

Why is attending this convention important to you? _____

How will you use this experience when you return home? _____

If chosen as a grant recipient, we ask that you attend the entire convention.

Signature of applicant: _____ Date _____

**VIRGINIA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
THIRTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION
Christ Lutheran Church, Fredericksburg, VA
July 25-26, 2025**

RESOLUTION FORM

The following resolution is related to _____
(indicate topic)

I submit the following resolution:

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT (Reasons to support the resolution)

WHEREAS.....

MOTION (Recommendations for action based on the reasons)

RESOLVED, That.....

(If more than one resolution is presented, use the form outlined above on another sheet of paper)

Submitted By:

Name _____

Congregation _____

Conference _____

Return form by July 15 to:

JoAnn Fawley
6409 W. Old Mountain Rd.
Louisa, VA 23093
Email: fawley6409@gmail.com