



# CONNECTIONS



EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWSLETTER

Volume 28 No. 1

<https://eandwelca.net>

October 2024-February 2025

## EaND Synodical Women's Organization

### 2025 Spring Roundup "Rooted In Hope"

Saturday, April 26, 2025

9:00am-3:30pm

Stump Lake Village

Located 12 Miles South of Lakota, ND

Save  
The  
Date

**Speakers!**

**Vendors!**

**Fellowship!**

**No Registration Fee**

**Coffee & Refreshments**

**Noon Meal \$20**



*For there is hope  
even for a tree. If it is  
cut down, it will sprout  
again. Job 14:7*

#### Looking Ahead

2025 April 26  
September 27  
2026 July 13-14  
July 16-19

**Spring Roundup**  
**EaND SWO Convention**  
**13th Triennial Convention**  
**13th Triennial Gathering**

#### Here's some information about Our Venue

Come to the site that takes you to the early days of Nelson County in Northeastern North Dakota. Here's the website from ND Tourism to give you a taste of what's available.

<https://www.ndtourism.com/pekin/history/museums/stump-lake-village-pioneer-museum>

"The journey back in time begins as one enters the stone gates of Nelson County's Stump Lake Park. It is hard to miss Stump Lake Village as you enter the park.

"Many of the buildings at the village have been relocated from the Nelson County area and include two log cabins, church, school, railroad depot, house, barn, Quanbeck Shop, flour mill, blacksmith shop and township hall. In addition, there is a large machinery building, modern restrooms, paved walking paths and gazebo.

"An ongoing project is the "Old Main Street USA Building" which houses many beautiful exhibits as well as a stage, veterans room, library, gift shop, restrooms and kitchen. Visitors enjoy a walk down memory lane when they enter this building."

We will be meeting in the "Old Main Street USA Building" for the day. The building is on one level so is handicapped accessible.

A self-guided walking tour of the grounds will also be available.

Photos of Stump Lake Village can be found at:

[www.stumplakepark.com](http://www.stumplakepark.com)

**Stump Lake Village**  
**St. Olaf Lutheran**      **Devils Lake**  
**Via ZOOM**  
**Des Moines, Iowa**

## 2024-2025 EaND 3-B Synodical Women's Organization Board

Please keep this list for your future reference.  
(indicates the end of term & # of terms)

### PRESIDENT

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NOT FILLED

### FARGO CLUSTER REP.

NOT FILLED

### GRAND FORKS CLUSTER REP.

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NOT FILLED

### WAHPETON CLUSTER REP.

NOT FILLED

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## **SPONSORSHIPS**

In order to continue hosting spring gatherings & the fall EaND Synod WELCA Convention, we need your financial help. Sponsorships cover the expenses of both of these functions and individual registration fees are not needed.

Will your WELCA unit please continue to support the EaND Synodical Women's Organization with an annual gift of \$80 - \$100? This money will be used to host spring gatherings as well as fall convention expenses.

If you would like to continue Spring Round-Up, these funds would support that event. Sponsorships can be sent to:

**Jeanne Wobbema, Treasurer EaND SWO  
1053 E Main # 409  
Valley City, ND 58072**

## **President's Message**

Greetings and welcome back to **Connections!**

It seems like a long time since we've been in touch. This issue begins a new era in this newsletter. After 27 years of "paper" (hard copy), we are now going digital.

The Spring Roundup is being planned and finalized as you are reading this newsletter. We're looking forward to a day of inspiration and fellowship at "Old Main Street Building" located at Stump Lake Village on April 26 from 9 am to 3 pm. Be sure to look for the posters being sent to your churches. Share the information with your friends. We're hoping for a sunny, warm day so you will be able to do a walking tour of the grounds during break times. If the weather isn't cooperating, you will still be able to tour the main building with its many displays of historical significance.

As we plan for the fall SWO Convention, I want to make you aware that we will be electing the triennial voting members on September 27. We will be allowed 2 voting members plus the president this time. The persons wishing to be considered are being asked to submit a Vita form which will be sent out in July 2025. More information will be available at that time.

The 13th Triennial CONVENTION will be held via ZOOM July 13-14, 2026. The CONVENTION is for voting members only. The 13th Triennial GATHERING will be IN PERSON in Des Moines, Iowa, July 16-19, 2026. Registration for the gathering will open March 15, 2026.

In Christ's love,  
Karen Retzlaff SWO President

This is the logo for this upcoming triennium. It was released at the Conference of Presidents held via zoom on February 15. More information will be released in the coming months.



## In-Kind Donations “Blessing Bags”



Where's there a need...Women of the ELCA find a way! Personal care products, were brought to Sharon Lutheran Church by attendees on September 28 to assemble “Blessing Bags” for the Community Violence Intervention Center (CVIC) in Grand Forks. The CVIC serves clients who are fleeing abuse and need shelter. Many bags were completed with excess items also donated.

When time came to deliver the bags, it was discovered the center was being renovated and had no room to store the bags. The recommendation by the CVIC staff was to donate them to the Rape and Abuse Crisis Center in Fargo. The bags were delivered the following week.



### Prison Yarn Ministry is still a “Thing”



Boxes and bags of yarn were brought to the convention to be taken to the James River Region Correctional Center to support the Prison Yarn Ministry begun in the 1990s by Judith Williams who was involved with prison ministry run by Chaplain Mark Haines.

Chaplain Haines mentioned starting a group to knit scarves for people in need. The program grew to include other items for warmth and comfort. The men began to learn crochet as well. As the group became more skilled, hats, sweaters, and blankets for an orphanage in Ukraine were created.

Red, white, and blue yarn is used to create afghans for families of fallen military. Items for family members are also created as gifts.

The outreach and community service includes items for a maternity home for unwed mothers as well as donations to homeless shelters to provide comfort and warmth.

A new project is creating “heart” pillows. A number of these pillows were sent to the flood-ravaged areas of Tennessee. The pattern was developed by one of the men who asked for stuffing to make the pillow three dimensional. So now, besides yarn, there is a need for poly-fil or fiber-fil. Quilt batting scraps can also be used if it is pulled apart.

***So keep sending yarn and add “stuffing” material to your donation. Contact any SWO Board member for more information or call Karen Retzlaff 701-326-4235.***



## EaND SWO Convention held at Sharon Lutheran, Grand Forks September 28



Joan Huso, Grand Forks Cluster Representative welcomed everyone.



Heather Peters, Sharon WELCA co-chair, was "hostess with most-est".



**"Eating Twinkies with God"**



Deacon Jamie Travers, led a devotional Bible study based on Matthew 25:43, "I was a stranger..." The theme for the convention was based on refugee resettlement and welcoming the newcomer. He began by showing a video "Eating Twinkies with God" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9N8OXkN0Rk>

Following the video, he spoke about finding God in others and ourselves. He asked the women to reach out to others to share God's love. He challenged the group to take two packages of Twinkies™, find someone to share, and be "God" to the stranger. Being kind to one another, being "God incarnate", caring for the plight of others, working for justice are all part of our faith journey.

### **Cynthia Shabb Focused on Refugee Resettlement**



"Global Friends Coalition is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit group focused on helping New Americans integrate into life in the US," stated Ms. Shabb, as she began her address to the convention. She gave a brief history of the organization which began as a group of volunteers in the 1990s, organized to help resettle New Americans in the Grand Forks area. In 2008 the group non-profit status was assigned and GFC became integral to resettlement services in Grand Forks.

Arrivals in 2023 have come from, or are expected to come from, countries such as Colombia, Venezuela, Guatemala, El Salvador, Pakistan, and Syria. We have been approved to resettle up to 60 individuals in Grand Forks in FY 2023 (ending September 30, 2023). Global Friends Coalition has three primary goals:

#### **EDUCATE**

Global Friends Coalition aims to educate New Americans through English and citizenship classes. We provide classroom and in-home English instruction to New Americans.

#### **EMPOWER**

New Americans are empowered through mentorship, and leadership and community involvement opportunities. Youth Liaisons inform the Board about needs and interests in their cultural communities. The events that we put on, and the presentations that we give in the community, are better because of the leadership demonstrated by youth. New Americans who are empowered, thrive.

#### **EMBRACE**

Global Friends embraces New Americans by fostering a more welcoming, equitable, and accessible community through community outreach and advocacy.



**CYNTHIA SHABB**  
Executive Director  
DOJ Partially Accredited Representative

## Gwen Edwards CWO Report



Gwen Edwards, Churchwide Executive Board Secretary, shared information about actions taken by the Board since Triennial. She spoke of the resignation of long-time director Linda Post Bushkofsky and the appointment of interim director Jennifer Hockenberry. A strategic plan has been approved by the board and will reflect measures to reduce expenses of the organization and to maintain a more realistic budget.

She encouraged women to continue to subscribe to *Gather* magazine for Bible studies, inspirational articles, and information about Women of the ELCA. Subscriptions (free) to *Bold Café* and *Bold Connections* are online publications that give readers more information on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. *Daily Grace* is a devotional that comes to your inbox daily. All these can be found at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org>

She encouraged donating to Katie's Fund and Thankofferings to support the ministries of Women of the ELCA.

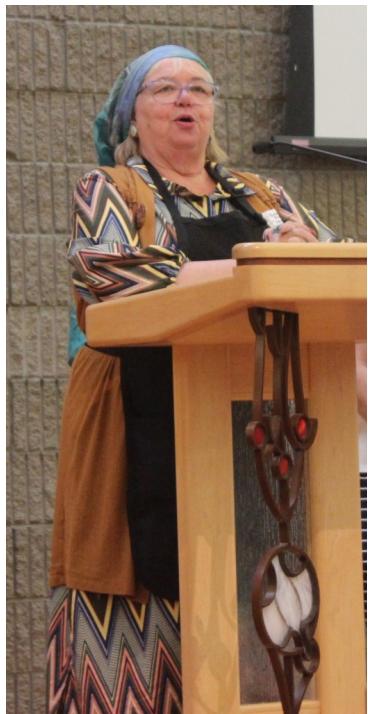
## "Katie Luther's Life" presented

A snapshot of the life and ministry of Katherine von Bora Luther's life was presented by Gwen Edwards and Susan Humphrey. Katie (Susan) shared the story of how she escaped the convent and met Martin Luther. It wasn't love at first sight, but rather the challenging ideas found in Luther's writings that led to her change of "habit".

She shared the story of managing the household in an old monastery that was a wedding gift from a friend. Cleaning the building to make it habitable was a challenge. Often Martin would bring home guests for meals and offer to house students in need of a place to stay. Katie ran the household, kept livestock, farmed acreage to raise crops, and brewed beer to sell for funds to keep the family going. The skit was informative and funny. It gave a new perspective to an old story. If your group would like to perform a skit about Katie, Jennifer Hockenberry has written one for your units to use.

<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Katie-Luther-Info-Skit.pdf>

## Katie's Fund explained



Susan Humphrey (as Katie Luther) shared information about the 2122 campaign to grow Katie's Fund into the next 100 years. The fund will be used to sustain WELCA programming and growth. The following information is taken from <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/blog/2122/making-the-case-for-katies-fund>

"Katie's Fund, an endowment created in 1997, honors the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther, seeking to raise up bold leaders and enable bold and creative ministry for generations to come.

"The annual budget of Women of the ELCA supports a no-frills operation and leaves little funding for special initiatives or unexpected ministry opportunities. That's where Katie's Fund steps in. It supports opportunities beyond the annual operating budget, offering funding for ministries and activities in leadership development, global connections, and living theology.

"By increasing Katie's Fund through 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years, the organization will be able to support special initiatives and unexpected ministry opportunities into the next century. Women of the ELCA can expand the footprint, reach, and impact of women's leadership and ministry in the church for the sake of the world.

"Women of all ages and abilities can support the vision of a *future* where women continue to lead the church in new and innovative ways. We all have the opportunity and the joy of leaving a legacy to equip future leaders.

### Key Assumptions:

- 2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years launched in June 2022
- Funds raised through the campaign will continue to be used to support ministry in three areas: leadership development, global connections, and living theology
- Estate gifts, appreciated assets, gifts of stock, and cash are all vehicles by which a gift can be made to the campaign
- The campaign begins by focusing on individual giving; at a future point, groups of women, such as congregational units or circles, will be encouraged to contribute."



**2122**  
Growing Katie's Fund for the next 100 years



## Plenary Business

President Karen Retzlaff conducted the business sessions during the convention. Items brought before the body included election of president, secretary, and cluster representatives (Fargo, Grafton, Jamestown, Mayville, Wahpeton); secretary's report, treasurer's report and budget proposal.

Two workshops were presented. A treasurer's workshop was conducted by SWO Treasurer Jeanne Wobemma who informed the group about the proper forms for sending donations, recording unit monetary business, and best practices.

A second workshop "Ask Us Anything" conducted by a panel with Gwen Edwards, Susan Humphrey, and Karen Retzlaff who were asked any number of questions regarding Churchwide policies and procedures as well as Synodical process.

Election report resulted in re-election of Karen Retzlaff (president), Marilee Eikom (secretary), and Renae Olson (Jamestown Cluster rep). Unfortunately, no one was elected to represent Fargo, Grafton, Mayville, Spirit Lake, or Wahpeton, so those clusters have no reps.

*Connections* will no longer be printed and mailed due to rising costs. It will only be available online at the website or by email. It can be accessed at <https://eandwelca.net>

The **13th Triennial Gathering** will be held in Des Moines, IA, July 16-19, 2026. The **Triennial Convention** will be held virtually July 13-14, 2026.



## Treasurer's Report

Jeanne Wobemma, SWO Treasurer presented the previous fiscal year's treasurer's report which was accepted for review and audit.

### BALANCE SHEETS FOR SWO

FEBRUARY 1 2024		BEGINNING BALANCE	\$ 5,804.56
	<b>INCOME</b>		
Offerings		\$ 4,395.11	
Offering-Riverbend		\$ 1,945.25	
Offering-Thank offering		\$ 315.06	
Sponsorships		\$ 1,860.00	
Connections		\$ 136.00	
Savings for Giving Hearts		\$ 5,575.80	
Savings for Riverbend		\$ 900.00	
	<b>Total Funds for Fiscal Period</b>		\$ 20,931.78
	<b>DEBITS</b>		
Offerings to Churchwide		\$ 3,526.83	
Savings Towards Triennial		\$ 159.75	
Connections		\$ 816.00	
Mileage		\$ 1,386.60	
Benevolent Gifts (*)		\$ 6,574.80	
Riverbend Event (**)		\$ 5,491.15	
Honorariums		\$ -	
Cluster Events		\$ -	
Thank offerings		\$ -	
CAR		\$ -	
Postage		\$ 115.82	
Office Supplies		\$ 986.34	
Meetings		\$ 96.51	
	<b>Total Funds Paid Out</b>		\$ 19,153.80
Check Book Balance	Balance as of 9-28-2024		\$ 1,777.98
Savings Acct Balance	Balance as of 9-28-2024		\$ 1,777.98
			\$ 159.75

\*Benevolent Gifts:\$225 each to: Rape & Abuse, LIRS, New Life Center, Crossroads, Red Willow, RRV Habitat, ND Veterans Cemetery, Northland Rescue, Oak Grove, Park River Bible, Project Ignite Light, Churches United, Hospice, God's Child, Youthworks, Community of Care, Camp Grassick, Ethos, Feed My Starving Children, Great Plains, Habitat for Humanity, Anne Carlson, Christus Rex, EaND Synod. (\$174.80 fees for DC), \$1000 to Red Willow after accident,

\*\*This was total cost of event to include, rental of Riverbend (\$1078.15), meal at event (\$2250), Ferry Car (\$150), Lodging (\$198.90) and all expenses towards decorations, postage, door gifts, and advertising and mileage. (\$1814.10)

EaND SWO Convention

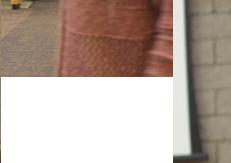
St. Olaf Lutheran Church Devils Lake  
Saturday, September 27, 2025

## Installation of the SWO Board



(Left to Right) Renae Olson (Jamestown), Corrina Olson (Prairie Rose), Joan Huso (Grand Forks), Gwen Edwards (Churchwide Secretary installer), Jeanne Wobemma (Treasurer), Karen Retzlaff (President), Marilee Eikom (Secretary), and Karen Tabor (Vice President)

**Door Prizes for the lucky winners!!! Drawn by Corinna Olson & Karen Tabor**



**Lots of prizes and happy winners!**

