



Women of the ELCA

Board

Ms. Angela Bell, Bellville, Texas (2020)⁴
 Ms. Tina Bigelow, Poulsbo, Wash. (2020)⁴
 Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Augusta, Maine (2020)^{1, 3}
 Ms. Lois Bylund, Moorhead, Minn. (2020)³
 Ms. Lydia Davila, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2020)⁴
 Pr. Dinah Dutta, Lawrence, Kan. (2020)²
 Ms. Sandra Grier, Williamsport, Pa. (2020)³
 Ms. Freddie Jordan, *secretary*, Columbus, Ohio (2020)^{1, 4}
 Ms. Laura Krueger, Avondale, Ariz. (2020)²
 Ms. Sara Larson, Balaton, Minn. (2020)²
 Ms. Joy Michalicek, Duluth, Minn. (2020)^{1, 4}
 Ms. Kandy Pflaster, Cozad, Neb. (2020)⁴
 Ms. Lisa Plorin, *president*, Upham, N.D. (2020)¹
 Ms. Raeann Purcell, Wilbur by the Sea, Fla. (2020)³
 Ms. Anna Sarver, *treasurer*, Greensburg, Pa. (2020)^{1, 2}
 Ms. Becky Shurson, *vice president*, Eugene, Ore. (2020)^{1, 3}
 Bp. Viviane Thomas-Breitfeld, Brookfield, Wis. (2020)³
 Ms. Lynette Todd, Baltimore, Md. (2020)²
 Ms. Barbara Tormondsen, Greenwich, Conn. (2020)²
 Ms. Karen Voris, Eagle River, Alaska (2017)^{1, 4}
 Ms. Dawn Wicklund, Superior, Wis. (2020)³

¹Executive Committee
²Standing committee on Budget and Finance
³Standing committee on Constitution
⁴Standing committee on Programs and Communication

Advisers

Pr. Wyvetta Bullock, *executive for administration, Office of the Presiding Bishop*
 Pr. Wilma Kucharek, *bishop of the ELCA Slovak Zion Synod and representative of the Conference of Bishops*
 Mr. Bernard Bresson, *Lutheran Men in Mission*

Leadership team

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, *executive director*
 Ms. Terri Lackey, *director for communication*
 Ms. Valora K. Starr, *director for discipleship*
 Ms. Elizabeth McBride, *director for intergenerational programs and editor for Café*
 Ms. Jennifer DeLeon, *director for justice*
 Ms. Eva James Yeo, *director for membership*
 Ms. Audrey Novak Riley, *director for stewardship*
 Ms. Elizabeth Hunter, *editor for Gather*
 Ms. Sarah Carson, *associate editor for Gather*

Constitutional responsibilities

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a separately incorporated, self-supporting ministry that operates within the framework of the constitution and policies of this church (see the ELCA's constitution provision 17.50, related bylaws and continuing resolution 17.50.A11). The program and structure of Women of the ELCA are defined in the constitutions and bylaws of both Women of the ELCA and the ELCA. In fulfilling its mandates, Women of the ELCA is committed to working interdependently with all ELCA churchwide units and all Lutheran, ecumenical and interchurch agencies and organizations. Women of the ELCA observes ELCA financial and personnel policies but is responsible for establishing and maintaining its own finances.

The constitution of Women of the ELCA defines the organization's purpose, principles of organization, governance processes and responsibilities. The triennial convention is the highest legislative authority of the organization; between conventions, a 21-member elected churchwide executive board makes decisions on the organization's behalf. Women of the ELCA consults annually with the synodical organizations through the Conference of Synodical Presidents. The president of Women of the ELCA either attends or sends a representative to each synodical convention.

Report of work for 2016–2019

Women of the ELCA is not a “one size fits all” organization. Its ministries in congregations and communities across the United States and the Caribbean are as diverse as the women and girls who participate, and its work is best explained through their lives, which are transformed through the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ. Here are a few snapshots showing how women and girls are living out Women of the ELCA's mission by acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

- Women across the organization are working to [combat human trafficking](#), primarily through education, awareness and advocacy. Activities have included training hotel and convenience store workers to spot trafficking, placing in motels and public rest areas bars of soap whose wrappers bear the toll-free anti-trafficking hotline number, purchasing billboards on busy highways to display anti-trafficking messages and supporting agencies that provide after-care to those who have been trafficked. Women in Pennsylvania and Wisconsin have worked with ELCA state public policy offices, advocating for legislation that protects victims of trafficking from criminal charges.
- At the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston, Women of the ELCA built on its success at the 2015 gathering in raising awareness about human trafficking. The Women of the ELCA exhibit shared statistics, focused on prevention and offered an interactive space for youth to assemble some 3,500 hygiene bags and other items for two local anti-trafficking organizations, the Landing and United Against Human Trafficking. (Some of the hygiene bags included personal messages of support such as “You are loved,” “You matter” and “I’m praying for you.”) Staff from United Against Human Trafficking stopped by the booth to explain the work they do and answer questions. Youth and adult leaders had the chance to speak with Women of the ELCA volunteers and staff about the organization and learn more about its anti-human trafficking campaign.
- Each year on [Bold Women's Day](#), women across the church communally or individually recognize, honor and support the boldness God has placed in them. Women of the ELCA produced a new worship resource for Bold Women's Day 2019 and, in honor of International Correspondence Writing Month, challenged people to write one letter or card to a bold woman for every day in February.
- Women and girls are fed by the word through regular Bible study. Many use the outstanding studies published in [Gather magazine](#). Others come together in *Café* groups to discuss the stories and theological reflections in [Café](#), Women of the ELCA's e-zine for young adults.

Triennial conventions

The Tenth Triennial Convention (2017) of Women of the ELCA was held July 11-13, 2017, in Minneapolis, Minnesota drawing voting members from across the organization to elect officers and a churchwide executive board for the 2017-2020 triennium and to approve a budget for fiscal year 2018. The Rev. Jodi Houge (Humble Walk Lutheran Church, St. Paul, Minnesota) preached and the Rev. Brenda Smith (of the ELCA churchwide staff) presided at opening worship, and the Rev. Meta Herrick Carlson (Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Twin Cities) led the Bible study. The triennial convention offering was shared equally between Women of the ELCA and PV for Phebe, [a Women of the ELCA-led effort to bring solar energy to Phebe Hospital in Liberia](#). A complete listing of actions taken at the convention is [available online](#).

The [Eleventh Triennial Convention \(2020\)](#) will be held July 14-16, 2020, in Phoenix, Ariz.

Triennial gatherings

Over 3,300 women—including about 1,300 first-time attendees—assembled for the Tenth Triennial Gathering July 13–16, 2017, in Minneapolis. Under the theme “All Anew,” women gathered for workshops, speakers, worship, servant events and more. Kelly Fryer (CEO, YWCA Southern Arizona) led a Bible study, urging attendees (whom she called “daughters of a troublemaker”) to follow Jesus' example of fighting for justice, regardless of the cost. Nobel laureate Leymah Gbowee, a featured speaker, reminded attendees that becoming anew is not an event but a process in which God calls the faithful to change the world. The Rev. Alexia Salvatierra (Hope Lutheran Church,

Los Angeles, California) called attendees to journey from mercy to justice, asking, “What unnecessary and unjust suffering breaks your heart?”

ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preached at the opening worship; Bishop Ann Svennungsen of the Minneapolis Area Synod presided. The triennial gathering Thankoffering, collected at opening worship on July 24, raised nearly \$50,000 for churchwide ministries of Women of the ELCA.

The Rev. Angela Khabeb (then of Ascension Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wisconsin) preached at closing worship, and the Rev. Barbara Lund (executive director of Wisdom Ways, St. Paul, Minnesota) presided. The offering of nearly \$64,000 benefited Women of the ELCA, PV for Phebe and Cherish All Children, a Minnesota-based Lutheran anti-trafficking effort.

Music and worship leadership for the gathering was coordinated by Mr. Kevin Anderson. Ms. Vonda Drees, co-executive director of the Grunewald Guild in Leavenworth, Washington, served as the gathering’s artist-in-residence.

The [5K Run, Walk, and Roll](#) raised nearly \$20,000 to support Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls. Through this health initiative, Women of the ELCA provides seed grants to congregational units to start health ministries in their communities.

[In-kind gifts](#) are always a huge part of the triennial experience, allowing attendees and all women in the organization an opportunity to thank the host city with gifts to local agencies. These included more than \$19,000 in gift cards and more than 27,000 gift items (hygiene products, clothing, quilt kits, Days for Girls kits). Over 5,800 handcrafted fiber art finger labyrinths were also collected.

The 2020 gathering will be held July 16-19 at the Phoenix (Arizona) Convention Center. Registration for the event opens Sept. 30, 2019. “Just Love” is the gathering theme, drawing on several biblical texts that command the people of God to live in love and carry out justice. Information about the gathering can be found at welcatg.org. The gathering is a Women of the ELCA event, but all women in the church are invited to attend.

Major directions for 2019–2022

Women of the ELCA will continue its mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ even as the organization faces a decline in revenue. An [exploratory committee](#), appointed by the president of Women of the ELCA, is leading a comprehensive review of programs, funding sources and governance structures to determine how the organization can best fulfill its mission and purpose into the future.

More information about Women of the ELCA can be found on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Pinterest](#), and at any of these locations:

- womenoftheelca.org, with more than 40 free downloadable resources and Bible studies.
- welcatg.org, where individuals can register for the 2020 gathering.
- boldcafe.org, an electronic publication and monthly podcast for young women.
- gathermagazine.org, an award-winning magazine available in both print and digital versions.

Women of the ELCA’s free smartphone app, [Daily Grace](#), is available at the iTunes store and Google Play. *Daily Grace* has been an on-the-go companion for women since 2011.

Ms. Lisa Plorin, *president, 2017-2020 triennium*

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, *executive director*