



## Central/Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA July 2023

### From Our President, Helen Flatau,

What an intense Spring it has been here in Middle Earth/ Illinois! As a gardener, I started too early and had to move tiny plants inside and then back out again. That seems a metaphor for my experience of ministry. I get BOLD and then start stepping back, only to realize I have to stand BOLD and STAY!

But that is exactly how Jesus has taught. I am forgiven... YES, and when I do something that sends me clawing back to my sinner status, Jesus calls me to STAND BOLDLY. Luther said, "Sin boldly!"

After almost three years without a resident pastor, my congregation, Zion, Mt. Olive has issued a joint call to a new pastor. We will be sharing Zach with Zion Gillespie. First, we have the orderly job of ordination and then installation. Then we will be sharing Pastor Zach and his wife, Ashleigh with Zion! She is a teacher and they have moved into the Mt. Olive parsonage already. They have made a BOLD stand!

I was not aware of how many of our Illinois parishes are without a resident pastor! And what a variety of ministries there are: multiple churches sharing a pastor, parishes doing the work and having a monthly visit from an ordained or certified minister to give communion and some with a few people sharing the ministries with pulpit supply. We are blessed to have Pastor Wayland Middendorf and his lovely wife, Janet for two Sundays and Deacon Pat Caley for the other Sundays. We will surely miss them when our Zions have their own pastor every Sunday!

And Phoenix is coming! While we, at the Zions, have not exactly been ashes, some of our ministries have faltered. COVID 19 hit hard for two churches of older adults. We lost our beloved choir director to cancer and just recently have re -begun a PRAISE choir that sings once a month. Our new pastor packed his trombone to become a part of the new choir!

**And, after September, will come OCTOBER 7! That is a new date for the CSIS fall gathering at Zion, Mt. Olive.** Mark your calendars! The gathering will begin with coffee/tea around 9am with official worship opening at 9:30. Pastor Janet Lepp will be presiding. The theme will continue what the East Peoria meeting began, WHAT Does WELCA Look Like? Zion is located at 500 OLD Rt. 66. If you travel almost anywhere, you will see signs that say Rt 66, 1937-42 or 1943-47. We, WELCA are an ever growing and changing road, just as we, as individual women, are constantly growing and changing in this world and time, as God's BOLD women, Being Our Lord's Disciples!

Each group is requested to bring items for the Mt. Olive Care Center, which we will visit. The Care Center is primarily food, but many of the items needed are those not covered by SNAP or Food Bank Suppliers, hygiene products, soap, deodorant, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc. and also cleaning products.

This is a one day gathering, ending by 3:30, leaving special time to visit local sites, specifically the Mother Jones Monument, and the Rt 66 Museum in nearby Litchfield. So, no hotel reservations are needed. Lunch and a "going home snack" will be provided.

So, we invite each congregation to bring a carload or two of women to experience the unity of BOLD women in 2023. Hear how others are BEING ONGOING LOVING DISCIPLES!

I look forward to this year at the Zions, and to the rich heritage becoming even richer from the work at Phoenix. MAY WE ALL RISE FROM THE ASHES and stand boldly!

## 2023 NORTHEAST CONFERENCE WELCA SPRING GATHERING RECAP

The Spring Gathering of the NE Conference Women of the ELCA was held on April 1, 2023 at Trinity Lutheran Church of Fairbury. Kay Hammer shared a devotion entitled "All the Bible Every Day" from a book, "Always Near" by Robert J. Morgan. 29 WELCA members, representing 9 of our 21 Conference churches attended. Our monetary offering totaled \$454.00 with half going to Lutheran World Relief and half to our Central/Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA. Our new NE Conference Representative, Bobbi Thomas, from Trinity of Chenoa, gave a report and will be attending the Twelfth Triennial Convention of WELCA on September 19-21, 2023 in Phoenix, AZ. Carol Lambert of St. Paul Lutheran, Gilman, graciously accepted Donna Schuler's leadership position, as the NE Conference President.



The program provided by the Fairbury WELCA included two terrific ladies who work in jobs that provide important services in Livingston County. We first heard from Kathy Kennel, RN BSN of the Livingston County Health Department, who gave us important advice concerning nutrition and immunizations. She was followed by Detective Emily Frobish of the Livingston County Sheriffs' Association. She instructed us how we can prevent fraudulent activities on the phone, internet, mail, and other online usage.



The meeting concluded with prayer, fellowship, lunch, and a cake in appreciation for Donna Schuler's many years of service to the Women of the ELCA for the Northeast Conference and for the Central/Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA Board.

## CENTRAL SOUTHERN IL SYNOD WELCA RECAP

As a member of the Women of the ELCA Board of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod, I had the opportunity to stand at the WELCA table at Synod Assembly in Peoria on June 2, 2023. I wasn't sure what I was going to say or do to welcome people. But thanks to Elaine Frerichs, Secretary of our WELCA Board, our table display included a large map of our Synod with pins and photos for every congregation! So, when I asked people about their congregation they could point to exactly where it was on the map. People seemed proud to identify and talk about their church communities.



Thirteen women signed up at the table for a drawing for the Women of the ELCA's "Gather" magazine. All thirteen will be receiving a copy of this wonderful magazine that has Bible studies, relevant short articles, and devotions. Many Women of the ELCA circles use the Bible studies in the magazines which have video's that accompany them to give more insight and help you lead the studies.

I enjoyed hearing the many ways women are involved in their churches. Providing food for gatherings and funerals was almost a given for ELCA churches. Women helping make Lutheran World Relief school and hygiene kits and quilting were also very common. The Circle at my church, Grace Lutheran, Champaign, and others have monthly bible studies using the lessons from Gather Magazine. I would love to attend the St Johns, Mt Pulaski's annual Chicken and Noodle dinner and St Peters, Coatsburg's ice cream social, where Debbie Gunther is responsible for making 120 gallons of vanilla ice cream! Many women reported serving as readers, lay ministers, choir members, ushers and greeters, council and committee members. Women with special skills and training are our SAMs, pastors, deacons, secretaries, organists and choir directors.

The message of our WELCA booth at Synod Assembly was: if you are a woman who serves and participates in the life of your ELCA church, you are WELCA. WELCA is an organization with a board, budget, and constitution, but our mission is to mobilize women to act boldly on their faith through Jesus Christ. I learned some church women's groups hesitate to be part of bigger organizations such as WELCA. But I hope people will feel welcome to explore and join in WELCA activities as our communities emerge from the pandemic. I was inspired to hear about all the contributions made by the women of our Synod to their churches and communities. They are truly living their faith through service.



Past WELCA Presidents

Pat Caley 2016-2017

Jean Scherer 2017-2022

Mary Plymire 2007-2009 and 2011-2015

## Want to Be a Faithful Friend?

By Pat Caley, Mission Chair



Last year I donated \$120 to the Women of the ELCA and hardly even noticed it. Through the Faithful Friends program, I had \$10/month automatically deducted from my bank account. I've been doing this for several years with no problems whatsoever so you can be sure it's safe and that WELCA will honor your privacy. At the end of the year I receive a statement of giving that I can use for tax purposes.

For more information, go to <https://community.elca.org/faithfulfriends> or call 800-638-3522, ext. 2730. It's easy to enroll and your gift helps to make all the ministries of the Women of the ELCA possible.

## Chair Report

***He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. --Micah 6:8***

As Mission chair, my job is to look for places where we, as the Women of the Central/Southern Illinois Synod can support the mission of our church. One way we have done this is through the support of Toromare Mananato and her efforts on behalf of the women of Madagascar (see article on page 3.) We recently sent \$120 from the silent auction at our 2022 convention last fall. But we can do more, so look for more information about Toromare at our Fall gathering in Mt. Olive in October.

Another way we have supported the missions of our church is through Fair Trade. We held a Fair Trade Fair at our fall convention and will have another at our fall gathering in October. Bring your Christmas list and do some early shopping for beautiful baskets, jewelry, scarves and much more.



Everything is handmade by artisans in developing countries and through Fair Trade, they are paid a living wage so they can support their families, send their kids to school, and build a better life for everyone in their community.

I'm always looking for new ways to live out our calling to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. So if you have any ideas, please contact me at [pattycaley7@gmail.com](mailto:pattycaley7@gmail.com).

## **Toromare Mananato: *Salt and Light to the Women of Madagascar***

The C/SIS Women of the ELCA have been supporting Toromare Mananato for several years as she ministers to the people of Madagascar. Through prayer and financial assistance, we have followed her struggles to find a place for women in her church. “Women are the backbone of our society,” she asserts, yet the Malagasy Lutheran Church still offers few opportunities for women.

When Toromare was a young woman, she asked her father, a pastor, if she could study theology but was rebuffed and told that the Apostle Paul stated that women are to keep silent in church. But Toromare continued to wonder.

After her father died in 1988, she sought to pursue theological study and, through her home church she received a scholarship from the ELCA International Leaders program. As a student at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, she examined many biblical passages in order to understand what God wanted from her. Some texts seemed to confirm her father’s arguments, leaving her disillusioned. However, she finally realized God’s true vision when she read in Paul’s letter to the Galatians: “There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”



Emboldened by these words, Toromare returned to Madagascar after graduation, prepared to contribute to her church and spread the message of Christ’s equal love for all. Upon her return, the church appointed her the Vice General Secretary of the Malagasy Lutheran Church.

Having recognized the importance of women’s rights in the church, Toromare is determined to improve the lives of women in her church and community, and better connect them to Christ’s love. Borrowing on the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., she says, “I have a dream that in the future my church will ordain women like the ELCA, and my church will be the light and salt of our country.” Following the Synod Assembly in June, the synod sent over \$13,000 from offerings to support our companion synods in Madagascar. Part of that money will go to support Toromare’s ministries. But when we send our offerings, all of it goes to Toromare. If you or your congregation would like to support the women’s ministry in Madagascar, you can send your contributions to our treasurer, Penny Madlinger at 124 N. 5<sup>th</sup> St., Dupon IL 62239.

**Balance from 1-31-2022 Treasurers Report****\$ 5,863.93****Income**

13-Fet	Salem Evangelical - Jonesboro	Regular Offerings	\$ 150.00
	St. Paul - Pontiac	Regular Offerings	\$ 111.50
	Immanuel - New Douglas	Regular Offerings	\$ 32.00
	Church of the Cross - Metropolis	Regular Offerings	\$ 50.00
	Trinity - Litchfield	Regular Offerings	\$ 60.00
27-Fet	St Peter - Glasford	Regular Offerings	\$ 76.50
7-Ma	ELCA	Katie's Fund Grant	\$ 1,000.00
16-Ma	St. John's - Sibley	Regular Offerings	\$ 60.00
	void line item not sent - dated 8-1-22		\$ 20.00
	void ck 1029 dated 10-2-21, never cashed		\$ 200.00
16-Ap	NE Conference - spring gathering	Regular Offerings	\$ 317.00
11 Ma)	First English - Peoria - North Conf	Regular Offerings	\$ 600.00
30 Ma)	Immanuel - Carthage	Regular Offerings	\$ 66.00
12-Jur	Grace Lutheran - Springfield	Regular Offerings	\$ 250.00
		<b>INCOME TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 3,193.00</b>

**Expenses**

13-Fet	Women of the ELCA	4th Qtr Nov-Jan \$3135.10/2	\$ 1,567.55
11 Ma)	Women of the ELCA	1st Qtr Feb-Apr \$957.00/2	\$ 478.50
	Elaine Frerichs	reimbursement for mirrors	\$ 303.80
15 Ma)	Helen Flatau	sheet protectors	\$ 26.09
		<b>EXPENSES TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,375.94</b>

**Balance as of June 30,  
2023****\$ 6,680.99**

## GATHER US IN.....

**C/S IL Synod Northern Conference  
Son-Flower Gathering  
"For Such a Time As This"**

**Saturday, September 9, 2023, from 9 a.m. to Noon**

First English Lutheran Church  
725 E. Forrest Hill Ave. Peoria, IL 61603

**Light Breakfast and Lunch**

**Special Guest Speaker:**  
Aimee Shinall,  
Victim Services Coordinator,  
Peoria County Sheriff's Office

**Suggested Cost:**  
\$8.00 per person

**In-Kind Donation to  
Center for the Prevention of  
Abuse Women's Shelter \***

**R.s.v.p. Bev Gross at  
b.gross2649@icloud.com  
or 309-256-6650**

**Doors open early at 8:30 a.m.  
for in-person registration on  
September 9**

**All ladies are invited!** It's our time to gather again in fellowship and faith. Program highlights: Share two meals and chat with sisters. Hear safety tips from Aimee Shinall. And, that's not all!

Find out the latest Conference happenings.  
Help celebrate long-time circle members from the Conference.

\*New/unopened socks and toiletries are requested.  
Register today or in person on September 9.

Theme Verse: "And who knows whether you have not come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14 ESV



  

## NORTHERN CONFERENCE GATHERING

We are looking forward to the Northern Conference Gathering on Saturday, September 9 at 9 AM. It will be held at First English Lutheran Church, 725 East Forrest Hill Avenue in Peoria. Our guest speaker will be Aimee Shinall who is with the Peoria County Sheriff's office. She is the Victim Services Coordinator. Her presentation will enlighten us on safety, hacking and human trafficking. More information to come soon!

From Beverly Gross, Northern Conference Representative

## NORTHEAST CONFERENCE FALL GATHERING

St Paul Lutheran Church, 210 N Deerfield Road Pontiac on Saturday, October 14, 2023 Registration 9 to 9:30 am with breakfast. Bible lesson by S.A.M. Marcia Buchs. There will be a short business meeting. Offering will be divided between Lutheran World Relief and Central / Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA.

## THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA TWELFTH TRIENNIAL CONVENTION WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 18 AND TWELFTH TRIENNIAL GATHERING SEPTEMBER 21-24, 2023

The Convention and Gathering are coming up soon and will be held in Phoenix, Arizona. We hope it may be cooling off by then a little. Our three voting members from the Central/Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA are the following: Mary Jo Erickson from Champaign, Janet Lepp from Champaign, and Bobbi Thomas from Chenoa. Voting members will elect officers and women to serve on the churchwide executive board for 2023-2026 triennium. They will also consider proposed constitutional changes, memorials, proposed budget, etc.



The Gathering is a wonderful time to make new friends and meet old friends. There is fellowship, Bible studies, worship services, information and resources for human trafficking, social justice, and leadership. Please let us know if you will be going so, we can try to get a group picture or meet up at some time. Visit the website [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org) for more information or to register for the Gathering. "Just Love" is the theme for the Triennial Gathering. Please join us to follow Christ's call to love with justice!

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD**

##### **Helen Flatau , President**

Zion Lutheran Church, Mt. Olive  
[hflatau@yahoo.com](mailto:hflatau@yahoo.com)  
618-888-2263

##### **Elaine Frerichs, Secretary**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Litchfield  
[sefrerichs@outlook.com](mailto:sefrerichs@outlook.com)  
217-556-2813

##### **Penny Madlinger, Treasurer**

Christ Community, Columbia  
[pmadlinger@gmail.com](mailto:pmadlinger@gmail.com)  
618-964-4969

##### **Deacon Pat Caley, Mission Chair**

St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield  
[pcaley@stjohns-springfield.org](mailto:pcaley@stjohns-springfield.org)  
217-638-1106

#### **CONFERENCE REPRESENTATIVES:**

##### **Roberta (Bobbi) Thomas, Northeast Conference**

Trinity Lutheran Church, Chenoa  
[rathomas@ilstu.edu](mailto:rathomas@ilstu.edu)  
309-319-0400

##### **Mary Jo Erickson, East Central Conference**

Grace Lutheran Church, Champaign  
[mjerrickson30@gmail.com](mailto:mjerrickson30@gmail.com)  
217-552-9345

##### **Beverly Gross, Northern Conference**

First English Lutheran Church, Peoria  
EMAIL: [pandaluvr1@comcast.net](mailto:pandaluvr1@comcast.net)  
309-256-6650

**Southern Conference Rep** .(open)

**West Central Conf Rep** (open)

##### **Mary Turner, Northwest Conference**

[mturner413@comcast.net](mailto:mturner413@comcast.net)  
217-433-1336