



# Friends, Inc. *[in Christ]*

NEWSLETTER OF SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNODICAL  
WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION  
WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
[www.southwesternpasynod.org](http://www.southwesternpasynod.org)

VOLUME XXI NO 4

FALL 2009

## FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Blessings and peace I pray for you. Fall has arrived and the SW/NW Women of the ELCA fall retreat is now a fond memory. It is always good to come together as sisters in Christ.

This was a great summer for me but I did not have enough hours or days to do everything I wanted to accomplish.

In June one of my priorities was to read every article and bible study in our summer series of *Lutheran Women Today* magazine. I was so sure that I would study the three sessions on Mary: A Women for All Seasons. Well I did finish the first session and then came vacation time. My husband, Tom, and I traveled out west by motor coach. Our tour included 17 states, several national parks, museums, Native American Reservations, and many cities. We were really blessed to see so much of our wonderful "US of A."

After we returned home and back to work, my life has been constantly busy with fall retreat plans, Cluster Planner Training, a SWO board meeting, and the specials of life: grandchildren, visiting family and friends, celebrating birthdays, weddings, and fishing/boating. Life is best when it is full - I would not have it any other way.

Okay, getting back to reading priorities. I'm still going to read the articles in the *Lutheran Women Today* magazine, just a little later. Oh, by the way, did you see the September and October

issues? Even more bible studies. LWT has started a 9-month study: "To God's Beloved: Paul's Letter to the Romans" written by the Rev. Dr. Sarah Henrich. "This Bible study was created to enrich your faith and expand your understanding of God's word. Take care of your spiritual needs by subscribing to LWT. Order Information: call 1-800-328-4648 or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) to order *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine as well as your Bible Study companion materials including the leader Guide."

Another fine publication that I make sure I read is *Interchange*. Every month a free *Interchange* is mailed to our WELCA congregational leadership, cluster leaders, newsletter editors, resource centers and more. Individual subscriptions are available for only \$7 per year through Augsburg Fortress 1-800-328-4648.

When you plan your Thankoffering Service, remember to use the Stewardship Planning Guide "Faithful Living," and worship service which was mailed to your congregational unit in September from WELCA churchwide. The mailing also included an *Interchange*, and information about the Katharina von Bora Luther Fund or better known as Katie's Fund. If you did not receive this mailing, please contact 1-800-638-3522, ext 2740

I hope to see you this fall at a Cluster Event. May God bless and keep you safe.

Your Sister in Christ.  
Marilyn Foringer  
President - SWO

## A NOTE FROM OUR TREASURER

We encourage you to have a Thank Offering Service/event this Fall. Thank Offerings may be received any time of the year however Thank Offering Services are usually held in the Fall. Samples and information are included in the Stewardship booklet. Your Stewardship Booklet also lists new envelopes and coin boxes which can be distributed in advance and/or included in your service. Orders may be placed by phone or use the web site if you care to secure a Stewardship Booklet.

Please remember to forward your Thank Offerings on Form B (green) to Churchwide.

We encourage you to support the Fall Cluster events. If the date and location of your Cluster is not convenient for you, avail yourself of any other Cluster event as listed. Positions are always open as a Cluster Planner.

Our Congregation unit offerings are in arrears so remember to forward your offerings promptly.

If you are not a member of a Congregational Unit and care to contribute to the efforts of Women of the ELCA you may do so. You can honor or memorialize a special mentor with your gift to Women of the ELCA. If you are not sure how to do this, please contact me and I will help you with the paper work.

We have been notified that National City Bank, where our Synodical Women's Organization funds are kept, will become First Niagara Bank on September 5, 2009. If you should have a check from the Synodical Women's Organization be sure to cash it prior to Halloween for National City to recognize the transaction.

*"My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus." Philipians 4:19.*

Mary Durmis  
Treasurer until 1/31/2010

## A NOTE FROM OUR VICE PRESIENT

The CPC's met for training with the SWO Officers on August 8, 2009. We had an opportunity to share information and ideas, as well as provide leadership training. We appreciated the information from Virginia Strobeck, our Editor of "Friends, Inc.," and Barb Frey from the Archives Committee. The CPC's invite speakers, plan workshops and promote your Cluster Events. Please look for the arrival of your invitation to the Fall Cluster Events for all women and attend any of them. Act boldly; invite a friend to a Cluster Event!

The season is changing, with cool crisp mornings and warm sunny afternoons. Have you ever thought about how you change, just as the seasons change? We have many complex roles in life as bold women, including; daughters, mothers, homemakers, teachers, nurses, secretaries, chauffeurs, bookkeepers, nurturers, caretakers, and countless other occupations. The "to do" list is longer than we have hours in the day to accomplish the tasks. Sometimes we become so involved in our responsibilities for our families, children, aging parents, and projects, that we let important moments pass us by.

Make a decision to set aside a few minutes each day, to praise and thank God for what he has done for you. Think of yourself as the woman at the well. There was more than just water that Jesus was offering, and she received more than any human being could give her; an eternal spiritual refreshment of dignity, acceptance, forgiveness, and redemption. Allow yourself time for reflection, and listen to what God says to you this week. Look for opportunities to grow in your faith, and experience who God is and what God can do.

Your Sister in Christ,  
Alice Hilty

## READ OUR BLOG, BECOME A FAN ON FACEBOOK, FOLLOW US ON TWITTER

### **“What’s a blog? What does Women of the ELCA do on its blog?”**

A blog is an online journal. Lots of individuals maintain blogs, but so do a lot of companies and organizations. On ours, the churchwide staff comment on all the ways our mission and purpose relate to and shape our responses to issues, events and trends in our church, society and world. We also blog from events, like the ELCA Youth Gathering, and share stories of Lutheran women acting boldly on their faith.

We invite you to read our blog and comment on our posts. You can find it from a link on our home page at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org), or go directly to <http://blogs.elca.org/women>.

### **“You’re on Facebook? That’s for young people—I’m too old for that.”**

Not so: For the first six months of 2009, the fastest growing group on Facebook was adults over 55. And, there are more women than men on Facebook. Setting up a Facebook account is quick, free, and easy, and before you know it, you’ll be using it to keep in touch with, and reconnect with, lots of people.

We’re on Facebook as another way to connect and have conversations with women from all across the church, and to provide a way for you to be in conversation with us and with each other.

Not only is the churchwide organization on Facebook, so are some of you—the Western North Dakota SWO recently started a page, as did the Laurentian Conference of Northeastern Minnesota. We’ve also found a few congregational unit pages. Our Facebook page is: [www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA](http://www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA).

There are many benefits to your SWO or unit having a Facebook page. If you would like advice or assistance, feel free to contact Deb Bogaert, director for communication (800-638-3522, ext. 2729; [deb.bogaert@elca.org](mailto:deb.bogaert@elca.org)).

### **“You ‘tweet’ on Twitter? What does this mean?”**

Twitter is another free service that enables users to send and read short text messages, known as “tweets.” The tweets/posts of whoever you choose to follow are displayed on your Twitter page, and your tweets are delivered to the Twitter pages of people following you. Think of it as text messaging, but online and to everyone on your list at once. Find us on Twitter at: [www.twitter.com/WomenoftheELCA](http://www.twitter.com/WomenoftheELCA).

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## CONVENTION 2010

### **“Find your Bold”**

#### Convention Goals:

By participation in the 2010 Convention of the SWPA Women of the ELCA, the women of Synodical Women’s Organization will:

1. Effectively and fairly conduct the business of the Synodical Women’s Organization.
2. Find your Bold use it, and show others.

#### SCRIPTURE VERSE

##### **2 Corinthians 3:12**

*“Since, then we have such a hope, we act with great boldness.”*

#### SCRIPTURE TEXT

##### **1 Samuel 3: 1-18**

#### CONVENTION THEME SONG:

**I, THE LORD OF SEA AND SKY - WOV #752**

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## COMING IN MAY CONVENTION 2010

Watch for information on the workshop to be offered before the convention opening. "BRAINSTORMING OUR HITS AND MISSES". We hope you will join us for a sharing of ideas on anything from favors to service projects. The results will be compiled and printed.

BRING (if you can) your CU's program book/yearbook, themes, favors, centerpieces, handouts, workshops, field trips, service projects etc. WE WILL listen and record your hits and misses and add to last years program book.

YOU WILL listen and speak to share your ideas, suggestions and thoughts.

YOU WILL TAKE HOME inspiration and new ideas.

WHO NEEDS THIS? We all need help and sharing is the way to make a dent in the overwhelming task of creating programs of interest for all.

WATCH for more information in the next "Friends, Inc."

Growth Committee  
Betty Itterly  
Barb Frey

## FUNDS ARE RUNNING OUT

The scholarship/grant fund is very low on funds. There will be enough to supply the six grants for the 2010 convention and then it will be depleted. There are a lots of funds asking for help and we must add our plea. These grants have gone to women struggling to make ends meet. If you can spare some funds from your treasury for our fund, please do so by sending a donation marked "Grants" to our Treasurer, Mary Durmis, PO Box 311, 8691 Broadway, Westmoreland City, PA 15692

Thank you.  
The Growth Committee

## FROM THE ACTION COMMITTEE

Thank you for the wonderful outpouring of love for Lydia's Place. They were overwhelmed with your generosity. We met all their needs for many items. They send this message to all of you:

*"Your organization is such a treasure in the Western Pennsylvania community. Thank you for all your good works over the years."*

Fall Clusters will be held in October and we will be gathering the following articles:

- ⇒ Baby to toddler disposable diapers
- ⇒ New quality children's books
- ⇒ Batteries all sizes
- ⇒ Small bags of chips, pretzels, corn curls, etc.
- ⇒ Large size chocolate bars—Milky Way, Snickers or Hershey

Our 2009 convention delegates chose "Girls Hope", Baden, PA for our 2010 designated outreach. "Girls Hope" welcomes girls who need to be out of their homes due to parental abuse or neglect, illness or inability to protect the child from harmful neighborhood conditions. They provide meals, clothing, a comfortable environment and schooling as well as proper medical, dental and counseling care.

We look forward with joy to being a part of "Girls Hope" in 2010.

God Bless and fill us all with His Holy Spirit as we continue on in our service to others.

## 2011 TRIENNIAL GATHERING

Do you want to go to the 2011 Triennial at Spokane, Washington? Is money a deterrent? We can help.

The Board has approved to use \$1,000.00 for Grants to women who are going to the 2011 Triennial gathering. The amount of assistance for each person will be determined by the total number of attendees.

## 2009 WEEKEND RETREAT HIGHLIGHTS

One Hundred Ninety-one women from North and Southwestern Synods gathered on this past lovely fall weekend at Lutherlyn to refresh themselves at the "Well of Living Waters" as only our Savior can. Pastor Karen Parsh from Northwest started us on our journey at Friday night's session. She and seven other focus leaders guided us on our journey at Saturday's sessions. They showed us that Jesus meets us at the well too if we are open to the possibilities.

We did many things this weekend:

- ⇒ We built a well—Everyone received a "brick" [a wooden slat], wrote a prayer request on it, assembled the well, then took someone else's request home after Sunday's service at Chapel Rock.
- ⇒ There was a wine/cheese reception on Friday night.
- ⇒ We "built" our Mission Statement from puzzle pieces.
- ⇒ We were active—we made faith/scrape books or knitted preemie caps or drummed, danced, and sang to the Lord or exercised or took a walk around the camp.
- ⇒ We shopped at the Fair Trade Store that Gwen Steiner provided.
- ⇒ We gathered items for Lydia's Place that filled the back of a truck.
- ⇒ We were blessed at a Healing Service.
- ⇒ We laughed and enjoyed a Mystery Theater Group at dinnertime.
- ⇒ We relaxed at the Campfire that "those Girls" from Stewart Avenue organized.
- ⇒ We were generous in our giving—\$500 in loose offering went to Lutherlyn and our regular offering of over \$1600 was divided:
  - 1/2 Going to Churchwide and
  - 1/2 going to the "Water Project".

We had a very enjoyable and relaxing Weekend Retreat—hope to see you next year!!!

Linda Cunningham  
SW PA Chairperson

## COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Our newsletter, "Friends, Inc." is published four times a year. This is a great tool to let other Congregational Units in the Women of the ELCA know what your group is doing. But that won't happen if you don't contribute articles to the newsletter.

Only through communication can we grow in our faith walk. Maybe what your Congregational Unit is doing will inspire another Congregational Unit. Don't hide your light under a bushel. LET IT SHINE! Write an article for "Friends, Inc."

The deadlines for the four issues are:

Spring Issue—March 15

Summer Issue—May 15

Fall Issue—September 15

Winter Issue—December 15

Send your articles to:

Virginia Strobeck, Editor at

st.matthias.lutheran@verizon.net

or mail to her 128 Troy Circle, Greensburg, PA 15601

Judi Stoops

Communication Committee

### NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIPTIONS

All subscriptions to "Friends, Inc." renew each year on September 1st. If you did not renew your subscription by September 1, 2009, this is the last issue of "Friends, Inc." which you will receive. Anyone not subscribing by the next mailing will be dropped from the mailing list, however, if you renew before the next mailing (January 2010) you will continue to receive the newsletter. Use the form on the last page.

Newsletter Editor

## 2009 Grant Recipients Selected

By Emily Hansen

The Women of the ELCA grants committee met recently and awarded \$75,000 to 39 domestic and international organizations working toward the physical, spiritual, and emotional health of women and girls. We consider it a privilege to support projects and agencies dedicated to education, healthcare, and justice, emboldening women and girls to live healthier lives. Since 1988, our grants program has awarded nearly \$3 million.

One of the inspiring organizations receiving a grant this year is New Moms, Inc., which provides shelter and self-sufficiency services to pregnant and parenting homeless teens in Chicago. Hillary Zinn, of New Moms, Inc., writes that their agency fills a critical service gap by serving young women who are highly at risk. "Most often, participants arrive at New Moms with nothing more than a baby in their arms and a trash bag full of their belongings. ... The young women we serve are extremely grateful for your contribution, since this grant from Women of the ELCA means a better chance at a future for themselves and their children."

A gift to the Women of the ELCA grants program makes a difference in the lives of these new moms and so many others, and we are grateful for your financial support. A designated gift to our grants program goes *in total* to support domestic and international projects. Every year the requests for grant funding far exceed the resources available; a designated gift from you will ensure that we can increase our granting efforts here and around the world. To make a designated gift, make your check payable to Women of the ELCA, and write Grants Program on the memo line. Mail it to Women of the ELCA Designated Gifts, P.O. Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256.

*Emily Hansen is director for stewardship, Women of the ELCA.*

## 2009 Women of the ELCA International Grant Recipients

### Bangladesh

Development Society: Nutrition Project for Women  
\$1,000

Develops a comprehensive nutrition program to reduce malnutrition in women and children through food security, food intake, and infant feeding and growth monitoring.

### Dominican Republic

ODEMIHF: Reproductive and Sexual Health Education for Women  
\$1,000

Provides health education for female Haitian immigrants and their families.

### India

Arcot Lutheran Church Women's Fellowship Desk: Income Generating Project  
\$1,000

Offers three income-generating programs and skills training for marginalized women coping with alcoholism and domestic violence in their homes.

### Israel

Israel Family Planning Association: Bridge to Communication Project  
\$1,000

Teaches communication, counseling, and problem-solving skills that encourage women to make informed choices about their sexual reproductive health and rights.

### Ghana

Dekaworwor Community Group: Malaria Project  
\$1,000

Provides mosquito netting and medicine for pregnant women and children under the age of five to help minimize malaria-related sickness and death.

### Kenya

Community Initiatives for Rural Development in Kenya: Campaign against FGM  
\$1,000

Creates awareness on the dangers of female genital mutilation and promotes healthy, alternative rites of passage.

### Sudan

MADRE: Women Farmers Unite  
\$1,000

Works with a women's farming union to enable women farmers in eastern Sudan to grow more food for their families and improve their status within their communities.

### Uganda

Foundation for Uganda Women Development: Hope for Mothers and Babies  
\$1,000

Trains traditional local birth attendants and other medical workers in basic medical labor birth skills and basic home hygiene for mothers and newborns.

**PA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION  
2008-2009 OFFICERS AND BROAD MEMBERS**

**OFFICERS:**

President **Marilyn Foringer**, 1019 Kelly Lane, Wexford, PA 15090-7908  
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V. President **Alice Hilty**, 705 Cochran Mill RD, Ford City, PA 16226-3413  
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Secretary **Nancy Adams**, 158 15th Street, New Florence, PA 15944-9459  
724-235-9257  
Treasurer **Mary Durmis**, PO Box 311, 8891 Broadway, Westmoreland City  
PA 15692-0311 - 724-863-0197

**BOARD MEMBERS:**

**Pat Ankney**, 1816 Mt. Pleasant Road, Greensburg, PA 15601-6389  
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**Jeanne Christensen**, 3007 Glengery Drive, Greensburg, PA 15601-3708  
724-832-8588  
**Patsy Constanza**, 30 Mason Road, Baden PA 15005-9666  
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**Barb Frey**, 105 Sewickley Heights DR, Sewickley, PA 15143  
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**Rosemarie Henrickson**, 5133 Lougean Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15207  
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**Betty Itterly**, 1267 Bickerton Drive, Jefferson Hills, PA 15025  
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**Barbara L. Martz**, 417 Greenridge Road, New Kensington, PA 15068-5810  
724-335-3537  
**Jane Taylor**, 269 Cemetery Road, Greensburg, PA 15601  
724-836-9509  
**Newly Elected Treasurer: Anna K. Sarver**, 140 Sarver Farm Lane, Greensburg  
PA 724-834-3709

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS  
2009**

**FALL CLUSTER EVENTS**

Oct. 10 Cluster 3  
Spring Church, Apollo  
Oct 17 Clusters 1 & 6  
Rehoboth, Economv. Boro.  
Oct. 24 Cluster 2  
Nativity, Allison Park  
Oct. 24 Cluster 4  
Prince of Peace, Latrobe  
Oct. 24 Cluster 5 & 6  
Jacobs, Masontown  
Nov. 20-21 - Overnight Board  
Meeting, Luther House  
**2010**  
Feb. 18-21 - W/ELCA President's  
Conference, Chicago  
Mar. 5-6 - Overnight Board  
Meeting, Luther House  
Mar. 13-14 - Snow Dates for above  
Board Meeting  
April Treasurers' Training  
(date to be announced)  
May 7-8 - SWO 2010 Convention  
Bishop Connare Center  
June 4-5 - Re-Organization  
Board Meeting

**NEWSLETTER INFORMATION**

The SW PA Synodical Women's Organization NEWSLETTER is published four times a year following Board Meetings. Each Board Member, Officer, Cluster Planning Committee member, Congregational Unit Contact Person and congregations without a contact person receives a complimentary issue.

We welcome submissions to the NEWSLETTER of activities or news items which you would like to share. We reserve the right to reject any material deemed unsuitable as submitted and we will edit as necessary. Due to space limitations some items may not be included. **DEADLINE** for sending articles for the next issue is

**DECEMBER 15, 2009.**

**SUBSCRIPTION RATE: \$5.00 PER YEAR - ALL SUBSCRIPTIONS BEGIN SEPTEMBER 1**

**CHECKS ARE TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO: SW PA SYNOD WOMEN OF THE ELCA AND MAILED TO:  
Virginia Strobeck, 128 Troy Circle, Greensburg, PA 15601**

Please use this form to enter or renew your subscription. Form may be duplicated.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

NEW \_\_\_\_\_ RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_ AMOUNT ENCLOSED \_\_\_\_\_