



Bridges

Summer 2022

Volume 30
Number 4

A communications link between the Synodical Women's Organization & its women

Inside

Inspiration.....1
 Reflections2
 Churchwide WELCA.....3
 SPAS Women's Ministry.....3
 Discipleship in a Democracy.....4
 Unthinkable.....5
 Board Contacts.....6
 Help Wanted.....7
 Coming Events.....8

Inspiration



This spring I attended the memorial service for my friend, Judy Carney. I've known Judy for many years as we were members of Gloria Dei and a part of the WELCA Group there. At her funeral, our pastor, Brad, talked about the years of service Judy gave. She has been on our church council, she helped set up the

adult education program for many years, and she held many positions in our women's organization. The "Judy Carney Set Up" is a well-known table/chair set up plan in our Fellowship Hall that our custodians know how to do! Judy was an organized, self-described "concrete thinker", and our church would not be the same without her influence. We will dearly miss her.

Our Convention theme, Proverbs 31:25 "She is clothed with strength and dignity and laughs without fear of the future", fits Judy's life very well. She persevered through many struggles (early widowhood, blindness, cancer) and continued to give her time and leadership. She continued to inspire others.

At our upcoming Convention, we are looking for new leaders to join our Board. We also need volunteers to help keep our contact information current (Information Coordinator), help send email blasts (Communication Coordinator) and an Editor of our quarterly Bridges newsletter. These are not hard jobs but necessary to our Women's Synodical Organization to keep it running and providing direction for our Clusters and Women's groups. How can You help and give your time and talents? What will spur you on to volunteer and inspire others? The Future is here.

Missy Struve, Secretary



Our Mission

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ

Purpose Statement

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, We commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.



**“She is clothed in strength and dignity and laughs
without fear of the future.”**

Proverbs 31:25

Did You Know?

The mission groups we are used to calling Action, Community, and Growth have moved on! Justice, Discipleship, and Stewardship are the new names. Actually, we can call the groups whatever we want, but these new designations better reflect the focus driven missions of our organization. Saint Paul Area SWO has not completely figured out how to embrace these yet, but we are working on it. One of the first WELCA events that I attended many years ago focused on the roles of the Mission groups. Red, yellow, and green M&M's represented the groups. Each group had an identity of its own, but when the groups were intermingled it was easy to see that there was a shared identity as well, and the three Mission groups were in fact interdependent. We tried to assign various tasks under the three groups, and those were the committees with which we functioned for a number of years. That was how we divided up the tasks for the SWO board. The titles of Justice, Discipleship, and Stewardship lend themselves quite easily to our various activities and goals. This allows for educating, advocating, and walking alongside our sisters in Christ. Think about some of the recent topics that we have focused on through Churchwide. Racial Justice, LBGTQIA+ issues, and Human Trafficking. Don't be shocked or surprised when you hear these new titles being referred to. The names of the groups or committees are not defined in the constitution or by-laws. These are just the titles that make the most sense at this time.

Bridges is going digital! There will be no cost for an electronic version of the newsletter. It will be sent to all convention attendees automatically. It will also be posted on the SWO web page at the synod and sent to each congregation. If you request a printed version, the cost will still be \$6.00 per year as printing and mailing costs us. Our ultimate goal is to go completely digital. That doesn't mean that you can't have a hard copy. If you can't print it, ask a friend to print it for you, or maybe your church can print a few copies.

Another note on Bridges, we need a new editor. My role as president ends at Convention. I have been doing the newsletter by default, but my life is changing. My mom's health has been declining and I want to live closer to her. That will mean a move in the next few months and will most certainly take me out of Saint Paul Area Synod. The newsletter is quarterly. If everyone submits their articles, the newsletter lay-out can be done in a few hours. Once the lay-out is done and copy edited, it is saved as a PDF and can be sent to the synod office and the subscribers.

We have been very blessed by the work of Wanda Hurtgen, Lois Berg, and Barb Greaves, but they are needing to step down. I already have the Historian material in my home. Lois and Wanda are willing to help get someone new up to speed in handling the information coordinator and communication positions for the SWO, but we are desperately seeking new people to fill these roles. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to support your SWO.

Churchwide Women of the ELCA

Churchwide Women of the ELCA hosted a three day event from Thursday, February 17th through 19th where we studied the Book of Esther. The theme for the event was Esther 4:14 "...for just such a time as this." Unfortunately, the pandemic has put many women's programs, activities and gatherings on pause. This WELCA event focused on restarting our programs, activities and gatherings as "servant leaders"

who are fluid in flowing between leading and following,

who are fellowship-oriented engaging in building relationships,

who are flexible in following the Holy Spirit; and

who are fully open to God's plan and working with others to complete the mission.

They encouraged us not to just dust off old programming or activities but to work on modifying and enriching prior plans or creating new plans for mobilizing women to act boldly in their faith in Jesus Christ 'for such a time as this.'

The next Triennial will be held in Phoenix, AZ in September 2023. Registrations will be available in the next couple of months.

SPAS Women's Ministries

Have you ever wondered what other church's Women's Ministries are like in the Synod. I've often wondered. I have one that I participate in that is not very well known. It's the Diaper Ministry at Prince of Peace in Burnsville.

They have been meeting and making diapers since 2004. These diapers are distributed worldwide and they are at nearly 100,000 diapers distributed to places where disposable diapers are either not available or very expensive.

These diapers are made from t-shirts. From 1 size Large T-shirt, they make 1 diaper, 2 newborn caps (from the sleeves) and dog toys (from the lower t-shirt hem and neck hem). The dog toys are braided and knotted. From smaller t-shirts they make wash clothes. Nothing is wasted!

This ministry meets monthly (except July and August) on the second Wednesday morning of the month from 8:30 until noon at Prince of Peace in Burnsville. No sewing skills needed as there are cutting, counting and sorting tasks. Otherwise bring your zigzag sewing machine or serger. All are welcome!

Please take note of the display that will be up at the 2022 WELCA convention on July 16th.



Discipleship in a Democracy:

By Karen Seaver

At our 2022 St. Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization Convention, we will host a breakout session featuring an ELCA social message; Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy.

Have you ever considered that government is a gift from God? The opening statement is "Lutherans care about government because it is God's gift intended for the safety and flourishing of human life." Government is God's gift because it is intended to do what churches, families, individuals and businesses cannot do on their own, which is to protect and coordinate for the well-being of individuals, communities and creation.

To understand how important government is, consider life without safety and services that a fair, just and well-functioning government typically provide.

At the local level, consider:

Drinking water . . . without purification

Human sewage . . . without treatment

Childhood . . . without schools

At the state level, consider:

Travel . . . without highways and trains

Healthcare . . . without regulations

Fires . . . without firefighters

At the federal level, consider:

Food . . . without inspection

Flying . . . without air traffic control

National security . . . without armed forces or homeland security programs

The 2019 ELCA's Churchwide Assembly requested the development of this social message ("Government and Civic Engagement in the United States: Discipleship in a Democracy") with the purpose to give Lutherans guidance as to our responsibility in directing government through politics and voting. This statement was adopted by the ELCA Church Council on June 24, 2020. The twenty-four page social message can be downloaded along with a leader and study guide from [ELCA.org/socialmessages](https://elca.org/socialmessages).

We look forward to you joining us at the breakout session.

Unthinkable

by US Congressman Jamie Raskin A book review.

On December 31, 2020, Tommy Raskin, the only son of Maryland Congressman Jamie Raskin, tragically took his own life after a long struggle with depression. Seven days later Congressman Raskin returned to the House to help certify the 2020 presidential election. Congressman Raskin, a constitutional law professor was called upon to lead the impeachment effort against President Trump for inciting the violence that took place on January 6th 2021.

I found this to be a very moving book written by a man who loved his son and the democracy of our country. I am not a writer, so I want to share the quotes from this book:

“The world I live in is loathsome to me, but I feel one with the men who suffer in it.” Camus

“These are the times that try men and women’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will shrink at this moment from the service of their cause and their country. But everyone who stands with us now will win the love and affection of every man and woman for all time. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered. But we have this saving consolation: the more difficult the struggle, the more glorious in the end is our victory.” Thomas Paine.

“When everything looks hopeless, you are the hope.”

“It is only with the heart that one can see right; what is essential is invisible to the eye.”

“It is hard to be human.” Tommy Raskin

“Is this America, the land of the free and the home of the brave, where we have to sleep with our phones off because our lives are threatened daily, because we want to live as decent human beings, in America?” Activist Fannie Lou Hamer

“The purpose of democracy and its operating system, the law, was to control political violence,

state violence, criminal violence, racial violence, gender violence, mob violence, the deliberate and needless infliction of pain and suffering on others. The purpose of democracy is to dignify and uplift each person on his or her path in life, to address misfortune as best we can, to make life a gentler proposition.” Jamie Raskin

It is not nice to put the ending of the book out there in case someone wants to read it, but this touched me so that I feel I need to share it:

“The weekend before we lost Tommy I misplaced my glasses and Tommy helped me look for them, but they were not to be found. Tommy said, ‘I know you’ll find them, Dad.’

We lost Tommy on Wednesday, December 31st. On Sunday January 3, I was more miserable than I have ever been, just engulfed in grief, tragedy, and darkness. I went outside to our front porch in the early morning cold to see if there was food in our birdfeeder. There was not. I was about to go fill it up when, out of nowhere, a huge flock of birds landed in our front yard-but all kinds of birds: robins and orioles and blue jays and the most beautiful cardinals I had ever seen. They came and swooped en masse in our yard. It was just spectacular and breathtaking. I called for Sarah, and she ran out to the porch. I had never seen anything like it before and neither had she. And despite being a man of science and reason, one not easily given to mystical thinking, I was suddenly seized with the thought, flooded with the feeling, and immersed in the overwhelming physical sensation that *Everything is going to be all right. Tommy is going to take care of us.* I moved out into the yard; the birds took flight. For a split second, I was bereft again, but when I looked down at my feet, and I found my glasses.”

Submitted by Carol Bidwell



2021—2022 Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization

Executive Board Members

President

Tricia Niesche
612-281-7497
tricia.niesche@gmail.com
St. Mark, Circle Pines (NC)

Vice President

Dawn Sargent
651-455-1616
j_and_d_sargent@msn.com
Bethesda, Inver Grove (SE)

Secretary

Melissa Struve
651-492-8538 (c)
missystruve@gmail.com
Gloria Dei, St. Paul (SC)

Treasurer

Karen Seaver
651-213-3298
Seaver.karen@gmail.com
Trinity, Lindstrom (N)

Board Members

Carol Bidwell

651-455-3441
bidwellc846@gmail.com
Luther Memorial/S St Paul (SE)

Diane Keller

651-437-2849
rdkeller5@gmail.com
St. Phillip's, Hastings (S)

Pamela Larson

612-859-9616
pamelalarson135@gmail.com
Gloria Dei, St Paul (SC)

Esther Tatley

651-490-5850
hetatley@msn.com
Prince of Peace, Roseville (NC)

Becky Maier

651-271-3758
jbmaier@hotmail.com
Our Savior's, Stillwater (EC)
Guatemala

Lynette Zika

651-642-1691
jlz1122@prodigy.net
Immanuel, St. Paul (SC)
Racial Justice Advocate

Carolyn Sampson

651-470-3937
cafsampson@gmail.com
Shepherd of the Valley/Apple Valley(S)
Racial Justice Advocate

Barb Greaves

651-578-7916
greavesbarbara531@gmail.com
Grace, St. Paul (SC)
Historian

East Central Cluster

Jackie Boorman
651-436-5430
jjboorman@live.com
Christ, Lake Elmo (EC)

South Central Cluster

Joy Albrecht
651-644-8833
joy_a@juno.com
St Anthony Park/ St Paul

Sue Long

651-331-1015
rd.sa1720@gmail.com
Gloria Dei, St. Paul

South East Cluster

Linda Hanson
651-287-5997
lindalou.hanson@gmail.com
Luther Memorial/S St Paul

Naomi Dorau

651-451-8126
Bethesda/Inver Grove Hgts

Dannielle Coursolle
651-465-1616
dannielle_coursolle@hotmail.com
Bethesda, Inver Grove Hgts

South Cluster

Darla Kimmes
651-437-6018
dakimmes@embarqmail.com
St. Phillips, Hastings

Robin Kieffer
651-216-3611
rlkieffer60@gmail.com
Easter, Eagan

Non-Board

Lois Berg

651-275-3520
lois_berg@comcast.net
Christ the King, New Brighton
(NC)
Information Coordinator

Wanda Hurtgen

651-770-1905
wandahurtgen@gmail.com
St. Mark, No. St. Paul (EC)
Communication Coordinator

Cluster Leaders

North Cluster

Carol Johnson
651-257-5918
jlakehome1@frontiernet.net
Trinity/Lindstrom

North Central Cluster

Lu Zibell
651-697-2391
luellazibell@gmail.com
Church of the Resurrection/Roseville

Cluster Key:

(N) North (NC) North Central (S) South
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Help Wanted!

Communications Coordinator Email blasts, Bridges mailings and convention mailings. Wanda Hurtgen and Lois Berg have served faithfully in this ministry for years and are both looking to step down. Please consider serving in this way.

Bridges editor We have been without an editor for several years. It is published quarterly and the board plus various other contributors do the writing. It requires someone who likes the puzzle of lay-out and design. Please prayerfully consider this position for yourself or someone you know.

Women to serve on the board We are gearing up for convention and looking for people to run for the board.

Historian Barb Greaves has been our historian. She is no longer able to fulfill this role. This job involves keeping photographic and written history for the SWO





Saint Paul Area Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church
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Calendar of Events

Saturday, July 16th, 2022 CONVENTION

“She is clothed in strength and dignity and laughs without fear of the future.” Proverbs 31:25

Bridges is published four times a year.
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August 15, 2022.
Send Bridges articles via e-mail to:
For subscription information contact:
Lois Berg 5590 Norwich Parkway #108, Oak Park Heights, MN 55082
lois_berg@comcast.net

Bridges is emailed as a PDF file to all churches in the Saint Paul Area Synod.
Please encourage your church to post or link it to their website, and share with other women in your church.
If the email is not being received, or another address should be used, please contact **Tricia Niesche**
tricia.niesche@gmail.com

Thank you to the Saint Paul Area Synod Office for providing this service to us!