



The Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization Newsletter  
 Women Of The Evangelical Lutheran Church In America

December 2018  
**Views from the Rockies**

2018 RMSWO Convention Highlights 2-13

Greetings from Rocky Mountain Synodical President

## President's Corner

Grace and Peace to you all! As your newly elected President, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Julie Elmquist and I am a member of Immanuel Lutheran In Greeley, Colorado. Shortly after I married (in '82 or '83), I joined an LCW Circle of other young women at church (in the former LCA). Then, following the merger and creation of the ELCA, in the new Women of the ELCA, I was sometimes our Congregational Unit's secretary and sometimes my Circle's chairperson. I enjoyed attending events held by the North Colorado Conference Cluster.

In 1998, the RMSWO Convention was held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Diane Frederick, our pastor's wife, told me, "You have to go to this!" So, I did. And then, I went to the 1999 RMSWO Gathering in Park City, Utah. As much as I enjoyed attending these events, having an organist husband and two young children made it difficult for me to be gone over a weekend. The next convention I attended was as a visitor in 2012 – again in Albuquerque.

Then, in September of 2016, I was the voting member from my Congregational Unit to the convention in Cheyenne, Wyoming. During the business meeting, President Anna Thompson asked all of us to please consider becoming a board member. Sunday morning, *after* the closing worship and before I headed for home, I walked up to Anna and said, "I can take a turn." Sharon Hamilton contacted me, and after being approved, I got in on my first conference call board meeting in January of 2017.

A year ago, at the 2017 Gathering, Anna announced to the board that a new president would need to be elected at the 2018 convention. Sharon Hamilton approached me and asked if I would please consider running for the office of president. My first question was, "Why me?" I found an answer in a hymn we sang at the Friday evening Vesper Service – "We Are Called." Somewhat reluctantly, I said yes. I thought to myself, "Well, that's a year from now. Maybe by then I'll have my act together?" But that question was answered by the closing hymn from that Friday Vesper Service – "Just As I Am."

We have such a wonderful board with both veteran members and the addition of two new faces. Please pray for us as we deliberate and plan for the upcoming events of the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization.

God's Blessings!  
 Julie

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## RMSWO Convention

# First Time Attendee's Reflections

Upon arriving on Friday afternoon in Colorado Springs at Grace Lutheran Church, the Rocky Mountain Synod women were warm and inviting. Everyone was welcoming. It was obvious that many people had worked hard to ensure a beautiful, comfortable, delicious, caring gathering. And everyone who attended was an active and loving participant.

We moved through the agenda that was led by the RMSWO Board. Seamlessly, from prayer to talk to song to meals and snacks, we participated as a group, sometimes splitting up to attend workshops. The many workshops were presented by God-loving women of action. Each woman had a personal story to tell of how her relationship with Christ intersected with where she felt called to action. Stories of sorrow, stories of triumph, stories of love, stories of agony. All the stories were full of hope. Each life lived in Christ was lived in action, pointing out what each of us can do as we follow Christ.

Several things moved me, besides the speakers and pastors.

There were two rooms set aside. One room was set aside as a prayer room. The days were very full and lively. The prayer room was a quiet retreat: to absorb the teachings, to further connect with Christ. The second room was set aside as a library: take what you want or need, leave what

you can. Many well-loved Bible studies were available for the taking, as well as novels and devotionals.

Other great features of this convention were the vendors and display tables. The vendors loved talking about the displays supporting their causes. The many vendors included: African Team Ministries, Women of the ELCA, Sarah's Home, Lutheran Family Services, Current for Curran, Equal Exchange, Thistle Farms and Women's Bean Project. At one of our meals, presenters spoke on their passions: Sarah's Home and Lutheran Family Services.

Meeting the women: the best part of the RMSWO Convention. Women of all ages, women from different states, women of different backgrounds, women with many interests. I got to sit with the most interesting women. I even visited with a few of the speakers, each of whom was truly special. Each woman I spoke with was interested in me, and what brought me to the RMSWO Convention. The gift of hospitality was definitely on display!

I feel blessed to have connected with these women of God. They are truly strengthening their relationships with Him. It is apparent that each one is following His calling on her life. Truly inspirational.

Thank you, Women of the ELCA, for welcoming me with open arms as a sister in Christ. I encourage all women to participate in this exciting event!

Ginny Hallagin  
First St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
Burlington, Colorado



*Keynote Speaker Diane Frederick*

# Maze of Grace Experiences Shared

Diane shared the maze of grace she had experienced throughout her life and asked each of us to think and share these questions. To get us started she asked: Have you ever worked on a maze? You look at it and think, I can do this! A Piece of Cake! A walk in the Park!

1. What if you look at your life and put it in a maze? Can you see joys? Sorrows? Faithfulness? Loneliness? Depression? Highs and Lows? Families and communities? It's plenty to think about, isn't it?
2. When has your faith been tested? Did "your course or direction" change? Did your family and friends support you in your decision?
3. How has God's GRACE been shown in your life?
4. Have you ever changed direction in your life? How did you feel? Lonely? Challenged? Satisfied? Was God present in your life or did you feel abandoned?
5. Describe a time in your life when you felt the indescribable joy of being a part of

the family of God or write a prayer of joy to remember this situation.

God was with Diane and his AMAZING GRACE gave her purpose and direction in her life and



the lives she touched. God's AMAZING GRACE is always there... His ABIDING STEADFAST LOVE AND GRACE...are with her and with each of us until the end. (Source: Diane's notes)



**God, by your presence,  
light up the past  
that we might learn from it  
with thankfulness.  
Light up the present  
That we might live in it  
With love.  
Light up the future  
That we might prepare for it  
In hope.**

*Prayers from the Iona Community*

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# A 'Maze' of Grace—

## *If God Loves Me, Why Bother? Or How Do I Find My Way through the Maze?*

Pastor Brenda Frelsi lead us through the Convention Bible study. Here are a few of the points:



The bad news – all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's where grace comes in – we get to do good works because of the grace already given to us. Ephesians 2:4-10 asks us to remember that we receive grace not because we deserve it but because it is God's gift – so we don't get to brag. How do we find our way through the maze of life and experience God's grace? Sometimes we can't even read the signs!

Bonhoeffer shared "Cheap Grace is the grace we bestow on ourselves. Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, communion without confession...Cheap grace is grace with-

out discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate." This ignores the price Jesus paid for our sinfulness. It might also infer that since God extends grace, why not just believe and do nothing? But we are encouraged to walk our talk – live what we believe.

Somehow, our faith guides us to be people who extend the grace of God given to us through Jesus, to others. This is done out of love—and it isn't cheap. It's risky and maybe costly. We are called to allow God's love and grace to move us to love our neighbors—do good works.

Maybe it is good to get lost in this maze of grace! Grace would then surround us and we might be able to do what we would not be able to do otherwise as we serve others. The greatest thing we can do is love God, love others and love ourselves enough to be sure that what we do for others might make a difference. Everyone wins when we all give love. Grace is amazing—because it is unexpected, unearned and life-giving. God's grace allows us to realize just how precious that grace is. Peace grows the longer we live and walk in the maze of God's grace. (Source: Brenda's notes)

## The story behind the plaque: A Maze of Grace

When you think of a maze, what comes to mind? Bumping into walls? Feeling lost? Running into dead ends? Losing your direction? Taking wrong turns? That's exactly what happens in this maze called life.....however, because of the grace of Jesus Christ, we do not remain lost in our maze. He guides us through—we only hit dead ends and make wrong turns when we think we can do it all by ourselves.

Let me tell you about a woman who lived her own maze of grace.

This woman was diagnosed with scoliosis—curvature of the spine—when she was a young child. To correct this, she had a new and experimental

surgery in which 6 bones from a cadaver were placed along her spine. This happened when she was 11 years old. She spent the next 2 years of her life in a hospital bed in a full body cast. Think about it. A girl at that age with a body trying to grow and hormones kicking in. At age 13 she was finally freed from her body cast. She then had a growth spurt. Because of that, she ended up with a large hump on the right side of her back. This was a "deformity" that she was embarrassed about for her whole life.

This young girl was denied her high school diploma because her physical limitations kept her from passing the physical requirements of Phys. Ed!

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Her maze included some happy things, too. She met a wonderful man and they married....at the Little White Chapel in Las Vegas. Yes, they eloped.

She and her husband became parents to two daughters.

Continuing in her maze, her insecurities caused her to become dependent on alcohol and prescription drugs, mainly Valium, to get her through her days. (The drug of the 60s.) She shared, later, that she needed to take a Valium just to answer a knock at the door.

She began her sobriety journey when her eldest daughter was 10 years old. Her cold turkey withdrawal at home caused seizures, shakes and other withdrawal symptoms. Her daughters ran across the street to get help from a neighbor who just happened to be a nurse and who just happened to be home. (Sounds like a God-thing to me!)

This woman began attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings where she found women who understood her, supported her, and loved her. She found and felt the grace of God in this environment.

She became a sponsor and lifelong friend to numerous women in her AA groups. They were drawn to her because she listened and did not judge.

She earned her GED about the same time as her eldest daughter graduated from high school.

She beat breast cancer!

This woman was known for having the gift of listening. She kept the confidences of those who shared their thoughts and feelings with her. She never gossiped or talked behind someone's back. She knew what it felt like to be ridiculed and talked about and never did it to anyone else.

This woman was my Mom.

Mom celebrated each of her sobriety anniversaries by making a special gift in multiples and giving them to the women in both of the AA groups she regularly attended (on Monday night and Wednesday afternoon) and to her family. She had wonderful thoughts that she turned into inspirational reminders. One of my favorites is a little plaque that says, "I will not SHOULD on myself today." My sister and I each have collections of many of these gifts.



As the years added up she still had one specific idea that she just couldn't think of how to put together. Over several years she asked me, my sister, my son, her friends, her sisters, and anyone that was creative, crafty or artistic to help make her idea into something she could give away on her next anniversary.

My cousin, Stephanie, who is an artist, took Mom's idea and created a design based

on Mom's maze of grace theme. Mom wanted to share that not only is God's grace amazing, it is truly a maze of grace.

On her 46th sobriety anniversary in October of 2013, she finally was able to give out those very special little plaques with her message and Steph's design. This was the gift she had wanted to share for so many years. About seven months later she passed away. So fitting that this special message was the last anniversary gift she gave.

All of the walls, wrong turns and dead ends of her maze led her to a place where she was able to help others through their own mazes. She taught me that our Lord leads us through this maze called life....we just have to hold His hand (it's always there) and let Him lead.

Each of us is going through our own maze of grace. I thank God for his guidance, his unconditional grace, and his never ending love.

Amen.

# Message From Bishop Gonia

Dear beloved sisters in the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organization,

Grace and peace be with you from our Lord Jesus. I am truly sorry that I am not able to be with you



part of Christ's Body know as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. We've been discovering the many ways we are uniquely blessed to be Church Better Together – in our congregations, synod and beyond – not for our own benefit or survival, but for the very life of the world. It's really that big!

To be church for the life of the world requires faithful leadership. At a time when our globe faces unprecedented challenges, our nation is mired in polarization and our church is seeking the way forward, I am convinced that the leadership of women matters more than ever. This past summer six of our 65 ELCA synods elected women to serve as bishops. While not diminishing the gifts of men, the selection of these women leaders speaks to the unique perspective and capacity that women bring to leadership in the church. I am deeply grateful for the gifts and passion of our

new colleagues and I look forward to their contribution to our life together.

At our recent Conference of Bishops meetings, the 17 women now serve as ELCA bishops enjoyed a dinner together. Afterwards, Bishop Kristen Kuempel (Eastern Washington – Idaho Synod), shared these reflections:



*I gave up a lot when I became bishop. I gave up time with my family. I gave up a congregation that I love. I gave up anonymity. In some ways, I gave up some of my autonomy.*

*But I got a lot in return. Chief among those is this sisterhood of women, who work alongside our brother bishops to effect lasting and important*

*continued on p. 7*

in person for your Annual Convention. I have appreciated the time I have spent with you in the past, and pray that your time of shared study, conversation and fellowship proves fruitful.

As you may know, our synod theme for this year has been **For the Life of the World**. In various ways, we have been exploring how the Spirit has gifted us for our life, ministry and witness as the

*change in our denomination. It is hard, slow work. There are a LOT of critics. But I challenge you to find people more dedicated to the future of the congregations under our care.*

*As bishops, we know change is coming. But as female bishops, I think we perceive it more as labor and birth, rather than death. It will be hard. There will be cries, and pain, and tearing, and tears. But at the end—a day full of grace! Something new and infinitely precious.*

*So these women will do what women have done for millenia when birthing something new. We will lean on one another. We will laugh and cry. We will hold hands. We will sing songs and pray prayers and tell stories about the women who have traveled this road ahead of us, and left signposts along the way. We will break bread together. We will invoke the mane of the Holy One.*

*Just as the women of God have always done.*

We in the church have not always recognized or honored the gifts of women. In fact, too many

of our Lutheran churches around the world still do not ordain women, including our companion church in Madagascar. At a time when the **#metoo** movement has created the opportunity for women to publicly share their experiences of abuse and harassment, it's my prayer that women will also be emboldened to continue saying, "Me, too!" when it comes offering their gifts of leadership within our church. Imagine our future as the ELCA if even more women shared their gifts as leaders, helping us live into the interdependence of our relationships, fostering true collaboration instead of competition and promoting the well-being and dignity of all God's beloved children rather than the privileged alone. I am grateful for the way in which the RMSWO continues to provide leadership in our synod and supports women in leadership throughout our church. My prayer is that the Spirit will continue to empower you and make you bold for the sake of the gospel and for the life of God's beloved world.

Yours in faith,  
Bishop Jim

## Writing Devotions

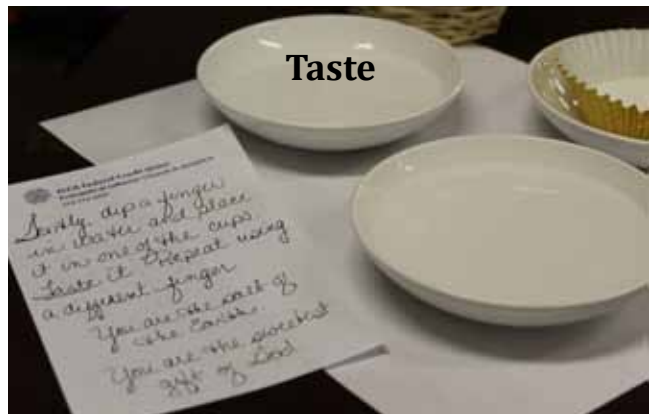
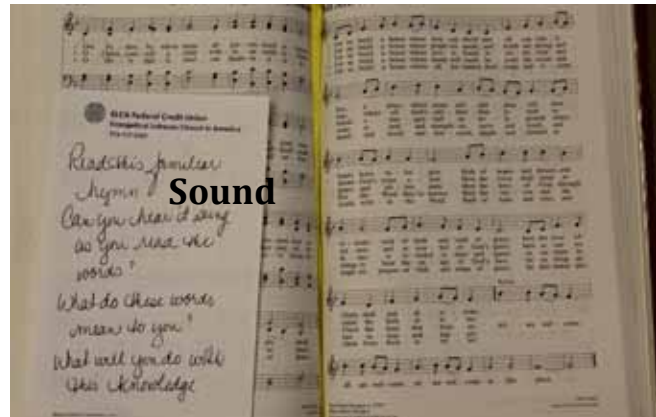
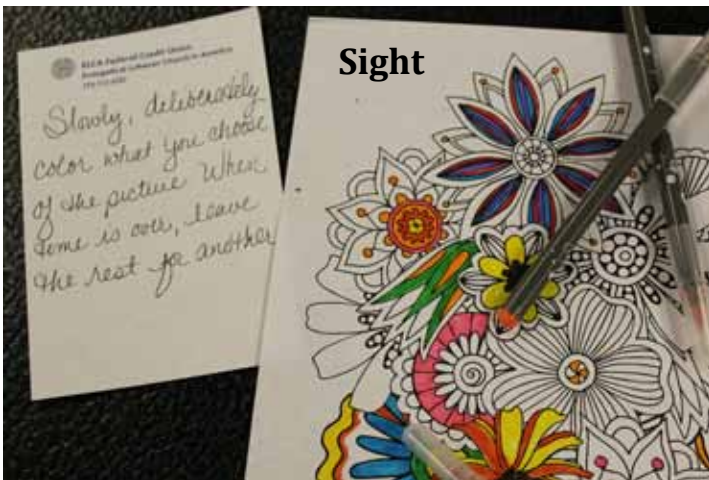
One of the workshops during the convention was about writing devotions. Deb Dew (from Christ the



King in Colorado Springs) taught us about where to get our ideas from (from many different life experiences) and how to go about putting our thoughts into words. She facilitated a discussion around our theme Bible verse, Ephesians 2:4-10.

This workshop was a great sharing session as many of the women opened up about their life experiences in which they felt God's grace. The materials Deb shared with us will be great resources as some of us write devotions in future days. The only disappointment was that the time was too short! We would have loved to have another hour to practice what we had learned. Thank you so much, Deb, for your wonderful workshop.

# Maren Felde Leads Walking the Labyrinth



Maren Felde led the workshop "Walking the Labyrinth." Through pictures and story, Maren gave us a history of the labyrinth and its use as an aid to prayer, reflection and meditation. Pictures of both ancient and modern labyrinths showed their different shapes and layouts. Maren also told us how we too could set up a simple, spiritual labyrinth-type arrangement in our homes and churches. Maren attends St. Paul Lutheran in Cheyenne, Wyoming. 8 Views from the Rockies, Volume 29 Issue 4

She loves learning and works as a health class provider, exercise class leader, personal trainer and Yoga instructor. ~Julie Elmquist



# Results from the RMSWO Convention

## Held at Grace Lutheran Church—October 5-6, 2018

We had 56 women in attendance, 6 Board members, 18 Voting members, 18 Churches represented, 4 vendors and 4 Leaders/Pastors helping.

Churches represented are: 1<sup>st</sup> Lutheran- 1, Holy Cross-3, Joy Lutheran-1, All Saints-3 King of Kings-2, t St Paul- 1, Prince of Peace- 9, St Paul-6, St Mark-4, Immanuel- 1, Our Saviors-2, Peace Lutheran- 3, Trinity-1, Grace Lutheran- 10, Christ the King- 3, Mt Calvary- 2, St Luke- 1, and Shepherd of the Hills- 1

### Offerings:

Total Undesignated Offerings: \$1,802

Designated Offerings: Kairos - \$ 82

Current for Curran - \$132

**Total Offerings: \$2,016.00**

**[Division= RMSWO- \$901**

**Kairos- \$532.50,**

**Curran-\$582.50]**

### From the Evaluations....

#### A Favorite part of the Convention?

{Sharing with one another. Singing impromptu.} {the evening service.} {everything.} {getting to know many women and seeing old friends.} {Worship, Bible Study, KAIROS presentation, tables of “gifts”, Fellowship with women. Good Experience!} {Holden Evening Prayer, visiting} {Workshop -Walking the Labyrinth.} {Food.} {The bible study was very inspiring. The whole theme was very relevant to who we are as women and Christians.} {The speakers, all of them. Meeting all the women from all over.}

#### What did you think of the meals and accommodations?

{The meals were very tasty and not too fattening. I thought all of the care and attention to those with special diets was very good.} {I like having homemade meals provided by the host churches. Always tasty and accommodating to those with special needs} {Excellent} {They were very good} {Meals were tasty and plentiful. The house on the

mountain was really cool but far away.} {Meals were good. Great soups} {The meals were excellent. The building was well suited to the needs of the event.}{Great} {The meals were very good. Lots of great soups}

#### Why did you attend? How can we encourage more to attend?

{It was my first time and wanted to see what it was all about.} {Fellowship, learning, fun, offer



Men of Grace Lutheran

scholarships} {This was my first convention. I attended because my friends asked me to attend with them.} {It was in our area- therefore affordable and no travel required.} {I was invited! I was

sponsored by my church as their delegate. Otherwise I could have paid the registration fee but not the accommodation costs.} {I was invited} {Felt that God wanted me to be here- Keep encouraging women to come.} {For Spiritual growth and an opportunity to gather as women to build each other up in Christ as well as reacquainting with women you only see at gatherings.} {I enjoy these gatherings and have been to several. Keep trying and inviting!}

#### Is there anything else you'd like to share?

{Great ! !} {Church women are so good natured and friendly. It was easy to be a stranger and to gradually “belong”} {Sitting in pews for long periods was very uncomfortable- especially for Bible Study. It would be nice to be able to write on a surface other than your lap.} {Thank you for a well planned weekend.} {The church was great. Lots of wonderful people from all over.}

***Thank you for taking the time to share your thoughts. The Board really does value your input.***

# Convention Report on Resolutions and Memorials

As is customary during the business meeting of the Convention, there is a report from the Reference and Counsel/Resolutions Committee. This year, Julie Elmquist, as Chair of that committee, presented the following Resolutions and Memorials for the consideration of the Voting Members.

## **Resolution 2017.01: Act to end Human Trafficking**

This resolution was adopted by the Women of the ELCA and is of great concern also to the women of the Rocky Mountain Synod. We have brought attention to this issue by the presence of information and/or a representative of Sarah's Home at our Synod events and have helped support them through offerings. Sarah's Home works to free young women from human trafficking in Colorado.

The resolution passed at the RMSWO 2018 Convention and a portion of it follows here:

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Women of the ELCA connect with others fighting human trafficking such as local and regional task forces and service groups including Lutheran Social Services, and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that synodical women's organization presidents report what they have done to fight human trafficking and support its victims at the 2019 Conference of Presidents."

## **Resolution 2017.03: Engage Women of the ELCA in supporting leadership needs in the ELCA**

Portions of this resolution that passed at the 2018 Convention are as follows:

"BE IT RESOLVED that we call upon Women of the ELCA to pray for God's guidance and direction in the spirit of All Anew, encouraging women to pursue attendance at seminary for leadership in support of congregations churchwide to fill the needs of our church; and

BE IT RESOLVED that the resolution be sent to

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton who has set an example for like-minded women to use their skills and faith to address the leadership needs of the ELCA."

## **Memorial 6: Regarding domestic abuse and violence and its prevention**

Portions of this memorial that passed at the 2018 Convention are as follows:

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Women of the ELCA be encouraged to act by choosing from the following options:

Posting information for local domestic violence hotlines...,

Financially supporting the local domestic abuse and violence shelters...,

Volunteering at a local domestic abuse and violence shelter, ...

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that synodical women's organization presidents report at the 2019 Conference of Presidents what they have done to raise awareness of domestic violence."

## **Memorial Region 3: Current for Curran**

As Women of the ELCA came out in strong support for "PV for Phebe," support is now requested on behalf of the Curran Hospital in Liberia, Africa. Located near Guinea and Sierra Leone, the Curran Hospital was founded and supported since 1924 by the Lutheran Church. The solar panels requested for the hospital will not only provide electricity for the hospital, but extra electricity can be sold, which will generate revenue for the hospital.

The memorial passed at the 2018 RMSWO Convention concludes as follows:

"Region 3 Presidents recommend that all 64 SWOs of the Women of the ELCA support Current for Curran through prayer and financial support. We would like to challenge each synod to give

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\$3000. This would enable the installation and completion of the Current for Curran Project.

The Women of the ELCA made PV for Phebe a reality and we believe that the Women of the ELCA can make Current for Curran a reality as well."



*Mary Jo Current for Curran*

## Anna Thompson's Thanks

Thank you to all the women of the Rocky Mountain Synod for the opportunity to serve you as the President for the last four years. I have served with some very special women whose talents and faith are immeasurable. I have met and made friends from one end of the Synod to the other.

I was born into a family with two sisters and a brother. I now have so many sisters of the heart I can't count them all. You have blessed me with your love and confidence. Please keep the new president and the Board in your prayers as you did while I served. May God's blessings be yours each day.

Anna Thompson

## Christian Book Exchange

During the convention a Christian book exchange was offered, and from what I saw it was definitely a success. Some books were left on the table with many taken. Our hope is that they were a blessing to all. There were a few leftover books, of which 8 were donated to Grace's library and the rest donated to the ARC. Thank you to all who brought books to share!

## Sarah's Home

SARAH'S HOME is a Christ-centered residential program for sex trafficked adolescent girls. Mande Mramor shared the excitement of the first graduate from Aspire Academy which is the school at Sarah's Home. The in-kind gifts brought to the Fall Convention were shared with the girls. To continue to assist the program, we can keep the staff and volunteers in our prayers that they listen to the voice of God on behalf of the precious girls; and for the current girls and the ones from the past, for every part of their being to be healed and restored to the person God created them to be.



*Mande Mramor for Sarah's Home*

## Starting a New Congregational Unit

A unit must commit to four items in order to be recognized as active.

1. Come together for study, support, and action.
2. Participate in the ministry of Women of the ELCA beyond the congregation.
3. Support financially the total program of Women of the ELCA
4. Designate leadership that shall be in communication with the synodical and churchwide women's organization

We hope that you will continue to encourage and support women to live out the mission and purpose of Women of the ELCA. Together we can make a difference!

If you have any questions, please be in touch with Julie Elmquist at [sjelmquist@msn.com](mailto:sjelmquist@msn.com), Eva James Yeo at [eva.yeo@elca.org](mailto:eva.yeo@elca.org) or visit [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

The RMSWO treasurer is Jan Young at 1567 Eastwood Dr., Price, Utah 84501 or [ajyoung@sisna.com](mailto:ajyoung@sisna.com).

# Kairos Prison Ministry Presents at Convention

Two wonderful women from Grace talked to us about Kairos Prison Ministry. Jean Magnuson and Penny Carr are very involved with this ministry and have been for many years. They shared their experiences of helping women inmates find Christ as they serve their sentences in prison. As part of the workshop, we had fun making placemats for these women. It seems like a small thing, but to them it is a gift just knowing that someone thought enough of them to make something!

Penny and Jean told us about the need for volunteers and then shared how to get involved. The most meaningful moment for me was at the end of their presentation when Pastor Paula said we should pray for them. We all laid hands on Jean and Penny, then Pastor Paula said a beautiful prayer, thanking God for these women and for the work they are doing. I'm pretty sure I saw a few tears!

## More Photos from the RMSWO Convention



***Clockwise from Top Left:*** Pastor Paula Chaplain; Closing Worship Service; Churchwide Women's Organization representative, Lois Bylund; Gwen White of Lutheran Family Services.

# More Photos from the RMSWO Convention



**Clockwise from Top Left:** Tina Kvitek, regional gift planner for the Rocky Mountain Synod; Tammi Clawson sharing the theme; Snacks and supplies for both LFS and Sarah's Home; and Sarah's Home Vendor table.

## Gather Offers

### December 2018: Fear not: An Advent/Christmas devotional

When God's people are afraid, it doesn't mean we are outside of faith. "Fear not" appears frequently in the Bible in a way that is comforting. Knowing God is with us, we can face our fears. As we enter the season of Advent, this devotional by the Rev. Katie Hines-Shah, pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Hinsdale, Illinois, will help us begin to see that the Christmas story is also the story of life in faith.

### Winter Bible study: Meeting Jesus in the Gospel of John

Get ready to reconnect with Jesus this winter in

*Gather's* four-session Bible study series, "The Gospel of John: Meetings with Jesus." Over the course of this study in the January/February, March and April issues, author Julie A. Kanarr invites us to meet Jesus through his interactions with people as he engages them in honest and sometimes difficult conversations that lead to faith, renewal and transformation.

**January/February: Session 1:** Come and See: Seeking and finding faith. **Session 2:** By night and day: Coming to faith in Jesus

**March: Session 3:** Friends for life in Christ

**April: Session 4:** Seeing the risen Christ

Learn more or subscribe at [gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org).

# North New Mexico Cluster Gathering

The North New Mexico Cluster held their Fall Gathering at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico Saturday, October 20, 2018. The theme “**Hospitality is our Spiritual Gift: Spice it up with a Harvest of Blessing**” was enhanced by beautiful decorations made by Joann Brawley.

Sharon Hamilton, Vice President, RMSWO and member of St. Paul Lutheran Church, welcomed the group and read a message from our new RMSWO president, Julie Elmquist. Pastor Bre Roberts, Campus Pastor at Luther House on the University of New Mexico campus, was the guest speaker. She reminded us that hospitality is much more than being a welcoming host. We spend more time preparing for our guests than we actually spend with our guests. We broke into groups and discussed who are we really preparing for and what keeps us too busy to sit and talk with Jesus.

Before the luncheon hour we visited **The Three Stations** a meditative approach for participants to clear their minds. We had the water station, rock station and letter station which were designed to help each individual to do what she needed to do to get the most out of the group experience. The baked potato bar lunch was catered by Jason’s Deli, with the Cluster Board members providing many fabulous desserts.

After lunch we adjourned to the sanctuary for our closing services and communion led by Pastor Bre. The new Cluster 2019 Planning Board members: Rhonda Bentz, Michelle Benton, Peggy Burnett, Joann Brawley, Patty Ferdig, Laurie Barr and Sharon Hamilton, liaison, were installed during the services.



**Photos From Top:** New Mexico Cluster Board; Cluster Attendees at a session; Registration; Centerpiece; Closing Worship Service.

## 2018-2020 Rocky Mountain Synodical Women's Organizations Board Members



**President**  
**Julie Elmquist**  
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Newsletter design/layout by Mary Lauck



**Your 2018-2020 RMSWO Board**  
*(Jan Young not pictured.)*

# How To Sign Up For The RMS e-Connection by e-mail

By Susan Mitchell

We encourage every woman in the Rocky Mountain Synod to sign up to receive the weekly Synod Newsletter called e-Connection. It is sent out every Wednesday to your e-mail address, and it contains articles and pictures about many things in our lives together as Lutherans living in the states that make up the Rocky Mountain Synod.

Once a quarter, e-Connection will have an article about the current issue of our “Views from the Rockies”—the newsletter of the RMS Women’s Organization. You will be directed to the Synod website, which is where “Views” issues will be available. You may read them online, and you may also print a copy for your personal use. Ask your church office to print the Views for you if you do not have access to the website.

Please sign up as follows:

1. On your computer, go to the Rocky Mountain

Synod website by putting this URL into your browser: [www.rmselca.org](http://www.rmselca.org)

2. On the home page, scroll down to the bottom, and in the middle of the page you will see: Subscribe to e-mail Newsletter. Below that line is a yellow rectangle that says e-mail List. Simply click on the yellow rectangle! This takes you to a page that asks for your e-mail Address, your first & last name, and to check a box stating if you are a Pastor, Associate in Ministry, Diaconal Minister, or Deaconess. Below this you should check the box that states: “I wish to receive e-Connection each week.”
3. Finally, click on the bottom bar that says “Sign Up.” That’s it! Remember, this is a free subscription to the synod e-mail weekly newsletter. You will receive notice of new issues of our Views from the Rockies newsletters from the synod’s e-Connection e-mail.

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## About Views from the Rockies



The “Views” is written/circulated by the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization, Women of the ELCA, and provides information about programs and projects.

**NOTE: Articles for the Views are to be sent to [anna498.at@gmail.com](mailto:anna498.at@gmail.com) by the 12th of January, 12th of April, 12th of July, 12th of August and 12th of November.**

There are no longer printed copies of “Views from the Rockies.” Each church and all individuals may now download and/or print FREE COPIES from the Rocky Mountain Synod website. To access the website and get the newsletter, go to [www.rmselca.org/Ministries/Women](http://www.rmselca.org/Ministries/Women).

If you would like to receive the Views newsletter in your personal e-mail, please send an e-mail to [anna498.at@gmail.com](mailto:anna498.at@gmail.com) with the subject line “Add me.” You will be added to the e-mail list and receive all future newsletters and e-mail blasts from the RMSWO Board. Your e-mail address will not be shared with any other organization.

The website of the Rocky Mountain Synodical Women’s Organization has not only this newsletter but more information about what is going on now, what has happened in the past, and what to look to in the future. Erin Powers at the synod office has kindly kept the site updated. We will keep new, interesting information highlighted on the web.

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

**RMSWO Website:** [www.rmselca.org/Ministries/Women](http://www.rmselca.org/Ministries/Women)

*Newsletter design/layout by Mary Lauck*

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