

Central/Southern Illinois Synod

Women of the ELCA

2020 Annual Report

Submitted April 2021

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

My name is Jean Scherer and I have been President of Central/Southern Illinois Synod's Women of the ELCA since October 2017. It has been an honor to serve with so many faithful women in our region and country. This fall at our Biennial Convention on Oct. 22-23, 2021, we will be electing a new president. Please join us in person at the Toddhall Retreat Center in Columbia this October to celebrate the "power of a woman's nurturing strength" and our risen Lord and Savior.

I would like to thank Bishop Roth and his staff for their support and especially Pastor Elise Rothfusz. Thanks also to Brett Gosteli for helping to maintain our website csis-welca.org where you can find our newsletters and events. The Bold women of our synod met the challenge of the pandemic and pivoted, not panicked. This was the theme of our leadership training from churchwide Women of the ELCA in February to over 200 women. I was grateful to be part of this planning team. Thanks to the women during the pandemic who supported each other with cards, emails, prayers, phone calls, Zoom's, Bible studies and finally we might get hugs! Alleluia! Our Bold women continue to serve by making Lutheran World Relief kits, educating others on anti-racism and sex trafficking and assisting where needed in their churches or circles.

Thanks to my board members for their dedication: Pat Casper, Vice-President; Penny Madlinger, Treasurer; Mike Schmidt, Mission Chair; Bonnie Hartke, West Central Conference Representative; Cindy Lierly, Northwest Conference Representative; Donna Schuler, Northeast Conference Representative; Beverly Gross, Northern Conference Representative; Margaret Ryan-Debonis, Marketing Committee Chair; and Kim Gietl, Newsletter editor. Also, my husband, Randy Heidorn, thanks for his assistance with our Virtual Fall Gathering October 2020 and our Spring Virtual Gathering 2021 available on YouTube Grace Lutheran Church Springfield IL.

We are grateful for financial support so that we have been able to make donations to Thistle Farms, Lutheran World Relief, Shared Hope, Churchwide Women of the ELCA, and many others. Toromaree Manannato's mission work for our Companion Synod, The Malagasy Lutheran Church in Madagascar, continues to be supported by the Women of the ELCA since 2003. She is Vice General Secretary for the Malagasy Church. Toromaree has used our money to help with wells for water, a literacy program for prisoners of Ambovombe, school supplies, benches for children, supplies for women's magazines and much more. She requests prayers for the people of Madagascar as they suffer from severe drought, hunger and Covid 19 and she prays for our health and safety. Toromaree hopes to be a pastor someday when women are allowed to do this in her church in Madagascar.

Please keep our Churchwide Women of the ELCA in your prayers and continue your financial support, as the pandemic has been hard on them. Linda Bushkofsky is their Executive Director and their staff have been cut to only 2 full time staff which includes Linda and 7 to 8 part time staff. They have provided the recent leadership training as well as our Triennial Conventions and Gatherings. Frankly it is a miracle they can do so much with so little. Their website is: womenoftheelca.org and they have many resources. I love their Daily Grace phone app for short devotionals and the "Gather" magazine with fantastic articles like "Journeys with Angels". They also have an electronic magazine for young women called Café found at boldcafe.org and the Café podcast.

The Women of the ELCA's Eleventh Triennial Convention and Gathering were postponed in 2020 because of the pandemic and moved to 2021. The Eleventh Convention will be virtual on August 3-5, 2021 and the Gathering cancelled. Our Twelfth Triennial Convention and Gathering is scheduled for September 2023, God willing, in Phoenix, Arizona.

Thank you again for your support and prayers and please let me know if I can be assistance. My email is j.d.scherer2@gmail.com. Jesus entrusted women with the news of the salvation, he taught them and they were his friends. Go kindred sisters and share the Good News!

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Scherer, President Central/Southern Illinois Synod Women of the ELCA