Women of the ELCA

Board

Ms. Jennifer Armstrong-Schaefer, Latrobe, Penn. (2023)[2]
Ms. Angela Bell, *secretary*, Palos Heights, Ill. (2023)[1, 3]
Ms. Elizabeth Burgess, Augusta, Maine (2023)[4]
Ms. Lorie Garcia, Corpus Christi, Texas (2023)[1, 4]
Ms. Diane Henning, St. Paul, Minn. (2023)[2]
Ms. Freddie Jordan, *vice president*, Columbus, Ohio (2023)[1, 2]
Ms. Laura Krueger, Avondale, Ariz. (2023)[1, 4]
Ms. Joy Michalicek, *president*, Duluth, Minn. (2023)[1]
Ms. Yma Mulero, Carolina, Puerto Rico (2023)[4]
Ms. Jean Pishaw, Forest Grove, Ore. (2023)[3]
Ms. Raeann Purcell, *treasurer*, Deland, Fla. (2023)[1, 2]
Ms. Miranda Searcy, Lawton, Okla. (2023)[3]
Ms. Lynette Todd, Baltimore, Md. (2023)[1, 2]
Ms. Dawn Wicklund, Superior, Wis. (2023)[3]
The Rev. Tracy Williams, Long Beach, Calif. (2023)[3]

Advisors

Ms. Jodi Slattery, executive for governance, Office of the Secretary
The Rev. Wilma Kucharek, bishop of the ELCA Slovak Zion Synod and representative of the Conference of Bishops
Mr. James Schieble, Lutheran Men in Mission

Leadership team

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director
Ms. Elizabeth McBride, director for digital engagement
Ms. Valora K. Starr, director for programs
Ms. Eva James Yeo, director for membership
Ms. Elizabeth Hunter, editor for *Gather*

Constitutional responsibilities

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is a separately incorporated, self-supporting ministry that operates within the framework of the constitution and policies of this church (see churchwide constitution provision 17.50 and related bylaws, as well as continuing resolution 17.50.A11). The program and structure of Women of the ELCA are defined in the constitutions and bylaws of both Women of the ELCA and the ELCA. In fulfilling its mandates, Women of the ELCA is committed to working interdependently with all ELCA churchwide units and with other Lutheran, ecumenical, and interchurch agencies and organizations. The women's organization functions within ELCA financial and personnel policies and is responsible for establishing and maintaining its own finances.

The constitution of Women of the ELCA defines the organization's purpose, principles of organization, governance processes, and responsibilities. Its highest legislative authority is the triennial convention. Between triennial conventions, decisions fall to an elected, 15-member churchwide executive board. An annual consultation is held with the synod organizations. The Women of the ELCA churchwide president either attends or sends a representative to each synod convention.

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[1] Executive Committee.
[2] Standing committee on Budget and Finance.
[3] Standing committee on Constitution.
[4] Standing committee on Programs and Communication.

Report of work 2019–2022

Women of the ELCA is not a "one size fits all" organization. Its ministries, carried out in congregations and communities across the United States and Caribbean, are as diverse as the women and girls who participate. The story of Women of the ELCA is best told through the lives of women and girls who are transformed through the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ. When the global pandemic arrived in early 2020, Women of the ELCA's churchwide organization quickly pivoted to new ways of supporting women in ELCA congregations as they lived out the organization's mission in different, quickly changing settings. That work included planning and carrying out a wide array of programmatic offerings, which included:

- Tuesday prayers at noon.
- The "Dear Friend in Christ" letter-writing project.
- B.Y.O.D. (bring your own dinner) events sponsored monthly by *Café*.
- Videos from Bible study authors, offered through *Gather* magazine.
- The "Just Love: A Virtual Preview" webinar.
- The "Racial Solidarity in Times of a Pandemic" PowerPoint presentation.
- A Hispanic Heritage Month video.
- The "Called to be Political" resource, updated and revised. Women of the ELCA also co-sponsored a voting rights webinar.
- Facebook Live conversations on race and relationships (September 2020), Native American Heritage Month (November 2020), and Black History Month (February 2021).
- "Blue Christmas" worship services (2020 and 2021).
- Two leadership events—"Pivot, Don't Panic!" (February 2021) and "For Such a Time as This" (February 2022)—and five leadership training sessions, April–May 2022.
- A webinar and five-part blog series based on discussion questions from "Now Is the Time: A Study Guide for ELCA Declaration to People of African Descent."
- "The Living History of Faith-filled Women," a three-part series of online conversations for Women's History Month 2022. Recordings can be found on Women of the ELCA's YouTube channel.

Additionally, staff supported digital meetings of the Women of the ELCA executive board, switched to an online triennial convention, learned new accounting software, and continued the organization's day-to-day management as well as its communications, stewardship, and discipleship efforts.

In June 2022, Women of the ELCA launched a $1 million campaign called "2122: Growing Katie's Fund for the Next 100 Years." Katie's Fund (officially the Katharina von Bora Luther Endowment Fund) provides support for programs and resources in leadership development, global connections, and living theology. A 2021 feasibility study predated the launch, and the campaign is supported by a core team and leadership team. Women of all ages have received support from Katie's Fund and report transformational experiences. Gifts to the campaign can be made in honor or in memory of a particular woman or women.

Triennial conventions

The 11th Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA was originally scheduled for July 2020 but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and then held electronically Aug. 3–5, 2021. Voting members approved a budget for FY2022, conducted other business of the organization, and elected officers and a churchwide executive board for the abbreviated 2020–2023 triennium. Constitutional changes were approved that, among other things, reduced the size of the Women of the ELCA churchwide executive board, made the board more inclusive, and created more flexibility for leadership in the organization. The triennial convention offering was shared equally between Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest (in a nod to Phoenix, the intended site of the convention). Read a complete listing of actions taken at the convention and a news story summarizing the event.

The 12th Triennial Convention (2023) is currently scheduled for Sept. 19–21, 2023, in Phoenix, Ariz.

Triennial gatherings

The 2020 Triennial Gathering was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2023 Gathering will be held Sept. 21–24, 2023, at the Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Ariz. "Just Love" is the gathering theme, drawing on several biblical texts that instruct the people of God to live in love and carry out justice. Information about the gathering can be found at welcatg.org. The gathering is a Women of the ELCA event, yet all women in this church are invited to attend. Additional information about the event will become available this fall.

Major directions for 2022–2025

At the behest of the executive board, Women of the ELCA has established three strategic objectives focusing on anti-racism for all expressions of this organization: anti-racism awareness-raising, accompaniment, and advocacy. With awareness-raising, women will educate themselves to see everything through an antiracist lens. For accompaniment, European-descent women will walk in solidarity with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) women in the struggle for racial equity by developing authentic relationships. With the advocacy focus, women will live out the Lutheran belief that governments can help advance the common good, focusing specifically on anti-racism. Additional information can be found here.

Additional areas of focus for all expressions of the organization, coming from the voting members of the 11th Triennial Convention (2021), include efforts to end human trafficking, support for Thursdays in Black, provision of diapers and female hygiene products, and reform of immigration law. More detailed information is available online.

Additional information about Women of the ELCA can be found at:

- womenoftheelca.org, with more than 40 free downloadable resources and Bible studies.
- boldcafe.org, an electronic publication for young women, with a monthly podcast since 2006.
- gathermagazine.org, the organization's award-winning magazine, available in both print and digital versions.

Women of the ELCA's free smart phone app, Daily Grace, can be downloaded from the iTunes store and Google Play; the content is also available via email. Daily Grace has been an on-the-go companion since 2011. Women of the ELCA also exists in virtual communities created through social media, especially on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest.

Ms. Joy Michalicek, *president, 2020–2023 triennium*
Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, *executive director*