



Women of the NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH Good News

Chair's Corner



Mary Lea Pfenniger

As with the changing of the seasons, we have experienced a change of the leadership of the WNALC. We are excited that we have three new people on board with fresh ideas and outlooks. That combined with the experience and leadership of the four existing members, the Women's Council will flourish.

Thank you to all who came to the Annual Gathering in Pittsburgh. It was an exciting meeting. I will give you a bit of the highlights of the meeting.

All Council members were present except for Marti Baggs who was in the hospital and could not be with us. President Amy Werner introduced and thanked the following people for their support and guidance throughout the year: Robin Harris, Ariel Wicker, the Rev. Deacon Shannon Ames Fuller and



What's Inside

Chair's Corner	1-4
Stewardship	5
Editor's Message	6
Spiritual Growth	7
Council Contact Information	8
Disaster Response	9
Women at Work	10-11
Fellowship Ideas	12
The Great Commission in Action	12-13
Meet Our New Members	14
All About Us	15



the Rev. Mark Werner. The Rev. Dr. Amy Little, General Secretary, gave an opening prayer and encouraged us to focus on the four Core Values of the NALC. She stated that the congregation is particularly important to a church, as the congregation shares and lives out Christ's Word. She also said that the NALC is "Rock Solid." We are growing close to six hundred churches.

Next, Carolyn Rastrelli prayed for the potential nominees to the Women's Council. Amy Werner called for nominations.

Mary Lea then introduced Mary Bates, NALC Disaster Response Coordinator. Mary Bates said that of all the Disaster Care kits, the Bibles and quilts are the most loved. In 2024 over two million kits were given to those in need. Mary is known for her Christian care, and she told us that the NALC is allowed to hand out bibles. The church has influence.

Amy Werner gave an update on health kits as they now need a regular sized bleach and only N95 masks. She reminded us to tape shampoo bottle lids closed and to check for a seal on the toothpaste. For the Kitchen kit please add the smaller NALC cookbook.

Mary Lea then introduced the Rev. Carol Fryer. She is celebrating the 40th anniversary of her ordination! Rev. Fryer is the NALC Director of Missions. Her message was that this is all about relationships. The WNALC is a great contributor to NALC Missions which in turn supports

grants for Global Workers. There are twenty-one Global Workers who are dedicated to teaching and making disciples. Amy prayed for the NALC missions. Disaster Response and The Great Commission Society were suggested to be recipients of our Mission Bank funds. Motion carried.

Amy began our business meeting. Amy's annual report was in the women's folder. Sandra Liska gave the Credentials Report. Seventy-four ladies were present from twenty-one states and Canada. Fifty-three were delegates, six were former Council members, and twenty-one were visitors.

Minutes from the 2024 Virtual meeting were also in the women's folder.

Sandra then began the discussion on changes to the Operational Guidelines. First was changing the wording from Annual to Biennial. This motion carried. Next to vote on was the terms of the Council members. The Council members proposed to serve two terms with three years each term. This motion carried. The Advisory Role proposed for the immediate former chair was discussed. This motion did not pass. The proposed Budget was presented. The motion carried. The Financial report was again presented by Council members and discussed. The Council members presented the 2026-2027 budget. Motion carried. We paused for lunch. Seminarian Billie Jo Fisch gave a lunch prayer.

Our Annual Gathering Pittsburgh 2025



After lunch, Peggy Jording and Marcella Nelson memorialized former Council member Kim Isminger who passed away in April. We sang "Beautiful Savior" in memory of Kim.

Amy began Ministry Team reports including the website, newsletter, Facebook, and spiritual. Amy gave information about donating to the General Fund or to the Mission Bank.

Nominees for Council were introduced. Each said something about themselves. We prayed for them. Ballots were given to delegates to vote for the new Women's Council. We then had a Mission District Breakout and a break while votes were tabulated.

Our special guest speaker, the Rev. Patti Morlock, was introduced by Amy. Pastor Patti introduced herself as a "Cathren" raised Catholic but now Lutheran. Her message focused on our theme "perseverance to the finish line."

Amy presented election results. Re-elected were Marti Baggs and Carolyn Rastrelli. Elected were Amy Bell of Trinity, Landis, NC, Wendy Cook of Miller's, Hickory, NC, and Beth Lee of Holy Trinity Evangelical, Abington, PA.

Amy Werner was recognized for service to the Council with a bouquet of flowers and a cross gift. Ten names were drawn for door prizes which were table centerpieces of bowls with candy.

Amy went over the forms in the folder for ladies to fill out before leaving.

Our bishop, the Rev. Dr. Dan Selbo, was introduced and installed the Council for the next year. He shared a message and prayed for us. We sang our closing hymn, "I, the Lord of Sea and Sky," and the meeting was adjourned.

My hope is that every woman gets to attend one Gathering. It is filled with inspiration and fellowship.

To Donate online General Fund

or

Mission Bank

NALC

2113 Harwood Rd. Suite 309

PMB 409

Bedford, TX 76021-4703



For General Fund



for Great Commission Fund



Join WNALC

As we are trying to make improvements to the WNALC, we are requesting your help! Although you are already a member of the WNALC (by being a member of a NALC congregation), we are requesting that each congregation with a women's ministry update and submit their information using the "Join the WNALC" button on the Contact Us page of the website. <https://www.wnalc.org/aboutus/contactus/> This helps us maintain contact with our congregations and districts.



Stewardship
Marti Baggs

A few months back, I was reading and reflecting on several articles about stewardship that resulted in my request to change this article banner from "Giving" to "Stewardship." Stewardship is so much more than giving. It is an honor with authority to be entrusted with the responsibility of managing and caring for another person's belongings or property. This is more than being a servant or an employee because the steward is also awarded these responsibilities with autonomy and trust. This is what was given to Adam and Eve in God's Creation - naming all in Creation, caring for the Garden, and being in relationship

with the Creator. Everything belongs to God. So, being Lutheran, the idea of faithful stewardship should be familiar as we hear weekly and recite the offering prayer, "Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us - ourselves, our time, and our possessions."

As I further reflected on stewardship, I realized it cannot be separated by discipleship. Discipleship is a commitment to live in a way that pleases God. Discipleship is the lifelong process of becoming a person who not only lives that way but shows others how to do it also. In the fellowship hall at my church, there are three banners: To Know Christ, To Share Christ, To Show Christ. A disciple should strive to learn about Christ, and in that knowing, share Him, and in all our actions, show Him. That person must learn it, do it, and show it. When we celebrate a success, we give thanks to the glory of God for guiding us. When we see a person struggling, we lift them up requesting help. When we see opportunity, we provide insight with love. In discipleship, there is no room for hurtful arguing or demeaning actions.

In our discipleship, stewardship in the giving of self, reflects the heart of our faith, trusting in our Creator, God the Father, in love, forgiveness, and selflessness. I pray for this for us all.



Editor's Message



Mary Lea Pfenninger

I live in historic Goliad, Texas and oak trees abound. I have three in my yard that two people cannot encircle with their arms. We even have streets that go around these magnificent trees. With this in mind it is truly astonishing to think that a magnificent 60-foot oak tree starts its life as a small seed that can fit in the palm of your hand. The transformation from acorn to oak serves as a powerful metaphor for various aspects of life, emphasizing the capacity of living beings to change and evolve into something greater.

The acorn symbolizes potential, growth, strength, and good fortune. It encapsulates the idea that significant achievements can arise from humble beginnings, reflecting the oak tree's impressive stature and longevity originating from a tiny seed. Moreover, acorns are often linked to themes of protection, wisdom, and even fertility.

The acorn is a prominent representation of potential and growth. Just as a small acorn contains the blueprint for a grand oak tree, it signifies the inherent potential within each person to evolve, flourish, and accomplish remarkable things.

Known for its durability and lifespan, the oak tree is directly associated with the acorn. Consequently, the acorn also embodies strength, resilience, and the capacity to withstand challenges, much like the oak that remains steadfast against storms.

The saying "Mighty oaks from little acorns grow" emphasizes the acorn's connection to good fortune and prosperity. It implies that with patience, perseverance, and a touch of God's grace, one can attain abundance and success.



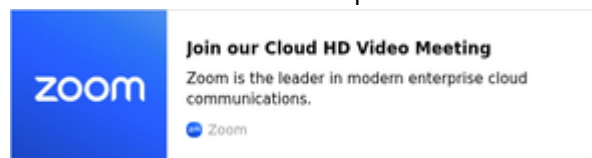
WNALC

Community Zoom

OCTOBER 23, 2025 AT 7:00PM EST
[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83210846405?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83210846405?pwd=ITxHOtEEuVVmqjC0K18VjauNP)

[pwd=ITxHOtEEuVVmqjC0K18VjauNP](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83210846405?pwd=ITxHOtEEuVVmqjC0K18VjauNP)
[SahBr.l](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83210846405?pwd=ITxHOtEEuVVmqjC0K18VjauNP)

or click belpw





Women of the Reformation: Courage, Conviction, and Change

As women of the NALC, it is important to reflect on the profound impact of the Reformation on our faith and community. The Reformation was initiated by Martin Luther, a German monk and theologian, who sought to address the corruption and doctrinal errors within the Catholic Church. On October 31, 1517, Luther famously nailed his Ninety-Five Theses to the door of the Wittenberg Castle Church, challenging the church's practices and calling for a return to the teachings of the Bible. This act of courage and conviction sparked a movement that spread across Europe, leading to the establishment of Protestant churches and a renewed emphasis on the authority of Scripture.

For us, as women of faith, the Reformation holds particular significance. It reminds us of the importance of standing firm in our beliefs and advocating for truth and justice within our families and communities. The Reformation also highlights the role of women in the church, as many women played crucial roles in supporting and advancing the movement. Women like Katharina von Bora, Luther's wife, who managed their household and provided a model of Christian family life, and Argula von Grumbach, who wrote letters and pamphlets defending the Reformation, are inspiring examples of faith and dedication.

As we commemorate the Reformation, let us draw inspiration from these courageous women and strive to embody the principles of faith, grace, and renewal in our own lives. In our gatherings and activities, let us remember the legacy of the Reformation and the enduring power of God's Word. May we be encouraged to deepen our faith, to support one another in our spiritual journeys, to challenge injustice, to work together to bring about positive change in our world, and to live out our faith with conviction and compassion. As we embrace the spirit of Reformation, let us do so with hearts full of gratitude, hope, and a commitment to living out our faith in meaningful ways.

Together, let us celebrate the Reformation and the transformative power of God's grace in our lives. May we continue to be inspired by the courage and faith of those who came before us and strive to be faithful witnesses to the love and truth of Christ in our own time.

Council Members



MaryLea Pfenninger, Chair
marylea.pfenninger.wnalc@gmail.com



Sandra Liska, Vice Chair
sliska.wnalc@gmail.com



Marti Baggs
mbaggs.wnalc@gmail.com



Carolyn Rastrelli, Financial secretary
mcrastrelli.wnalc@gmail.com



Amy Bell
amybell.wnalc@gmail.com



Wendy Cook
wcook.wnalc@gmail.com



Beth Lee, Secretary
bethlee.wnalc@gmail.com



NORTH AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH *DISASTER RESPONSE*



Marti Baggs

As of the beginning of September, there have been 92 FEMA declared disasters in 2025, and NALC Disaster Response has responded to most of them. Our goal continues to be, "NALC Disaster Response lifts and supports our congregations to respond when disasters strike."

The most devastating disaster in 2025 is the Kerrville, Texas floods in which 137 little girls and adults were killed in flash flooding of the Guadalupe River. The memorials in Kerrville are heartbreaking, and our spiritual Christian care is essential for the many families impacted. One of our pastors and his wife narrowly escaped the flash flooding while in their RV on the Guadalupe River – thank you Jesus that they escaped.

Disaster Response volunteers are responding and assisting in the rebuilding and recovery. NALC Disaster Response continues to rebuild homes in North Carolina due to Hurricane Helene. We have rebuilt over forty-five homes and are assisting in the new construction of six homes. Since January 2025, Disaster Response has coordinated over twenty mission trips and nearly 1,000 youth and adult volunteers, sharing the love of Jesus. Please help us extend our thanks to all the amazing volunteers!

To schedule a Stuff the Truck or a mission trip, please contact Mary Bates at 740-509-1132 or disasterresponse@thenalc.org.

Financial donations should be sent to:

The NALC Disaster Response
2113 Harwood Road, Suite 309
PMB 409
Bedford, Texas 76021-4703

Gift Cards should be sent to:

NALC Disaster Response
16500 Noble Ave.
Caldwell, Ohio 43724

*Three ways to access
Disaster Relief Kits List*

*click
here!*



Scan this QR code with
your camera app on your
smart phone.

**Enter this URL into your
browser.**

bit.ly/417uLpt



Women at WORK



The ladies of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Yorktown, Texas began their year with a Bible study of the Twelve Extraordinary Women of the Bible. They also meet monthly to make quilts for Disaster Response.



Marti Baggs

Ministry in Action

Does your congregation have a quilting ministry? Mine does!! Oh goodness, we are busy. We meet every Wednesday afternoon. A table to assemble sewn tops with batting and bottoms, a table where ladies cut squares of assorted sizes (Disaster Response size, prayer quilt size, and pocket prayer quilts.) We also have a table of ladies crocheting and knitting baby blankets. The first fifty went to a local hospital's NICU. This next batch will be added to infant care kits for NALC Disaster Response.

But I would like to back up and share about the pocket prayer quilts. Starting back in 2019, the quilting group was approached with the opportunity to put together a small handheld quilt that would fit in a pocket with a prayer card. We made a prototype and began making them with all the scraps from the larger quilts. They have become a wonderful gift to those in need of prayer, a small gift to one who grieves, an outreach to begin a faith sharing opportunity with a visitor, friend, or neighbor. Here is how to make a pocket prayer quilt.

Materials needed for one quilt:

Materials needed for one quilt:

Select cotton fabrics suitable for quilting such as cotton, cotton blends, twill, corduroy, etc. Avoid stretchy, sheer, heavy, or fiberglass materials. Scrap materials from making larger quilts works very well.

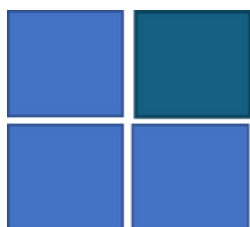
Four each: three-inch material squares for the top

One each: 5-1/2" square quilt batting (or cut to fit top after sewn)

One each: seven-inch square cotton material for the backing

Five-inch piece embroidery floss (all six strands together) or a piece of yarn

Thread, large eye needle, pins, scissors, sewing machine.



- 1) Sew the four three-inch squares together to create a 2x2 square top using a 1/4-inch seam allowance.
- 2) Press all seams open. I sew two squares together to create one half of the top and then the second half. I iron the seams on each half then sew the two halves together and press open that seam.
- 3) Place the top on the batting and trim the batting to the top size.
- 4) Place the seven-inch back material face down on a table. Center the quilt top and batting face up on the back material.
- 5) Fold the back material up to the edge of the top and then fold again over the top to create a finished edge on all four sides and pin in place. Then mix, fold each corner, and pin.
- 6) Tie the three layers together in the center with the embroidery floss.
- 7) Machine-sew around the four sides of the quilt.
- 8) Attach a laminated prayer card to the quilt. You may also like to add a charm or small cross.
- 9) Package each quilt in a sandwich size zip-lock bag.

May your quilting ministry be blessed by this small quilt.





Fellowship Ideas

Sandra Liska

Reformation in Daily Life

When I begin thinking of Luther's Reformation, I also think about reforming myself to improve my relationship with God and just be a better Christian. Have you ever watched the movie "War Room"? I am now watching it for a third time only this time, it is shown in segments of lessons. It is being used with our Luther League group. The 'war room' in the movie is a place for a quiet time with God in a secluded space as in a closet. Where you can place a posterboard or dry erase board to write your prayer concerns. A notebook can be used too if you find a quiet place. You will be praying to God for any person or situation. When you pray to God, greet God with a thankful heart. God provides so many blessings. Ask God for the forgiveness of sins; pray for the needs of others and oneself. Make praying for others, including your spouse, a priority. Pray for your family and oneself too. Remember to give thanks for your parents and grandparents and all who shaped your Christian faith. Our guest speaker at the 2025 Women's Gathering in Pittsburgh, the Rev. Patti Morlock, encouraged us to

share our life experiences with our faith by writing letters to our grandchildren and great grandchildren. "Pass on your faith," she said. We plan to share faith stories with our Luther League group.

The Great Commission In Action



Beth Lee

Introducing NALC's Global Workers:
Didi and Seraphina Panzo



Didi and Seraphina Panzo serve with the World Mission Prayer League in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Their journey is one of resilience, faith, and dedication to ministry.

Didi was born in Cabinda, Angola, and spent many years as a refugee in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Seraphina also lived in refugee camps, though in separate locations. They met at a Christian Missionary Alliance Bible school—Seraphina was training for ministry, and Didi was studying nursing.

Their relationship began when Didi paid Seraphina's hospital bills without her knowledge. Later, he sent her a letter proposing marriage. She accepted, and they eventually met face-to-face. Their shared Angolan heritage and faith brought them together. Despite objections from Seraphina's father, their church supported their union.

After arriving in the United States as refugees, Didi met a Lutheran pastor while working at a gas station. Encouraged to pursue pastoral ministry, he was accepted by the North Carolina ELCA synod and attended seminary in Philadelphia from 2001 to 2005.

Seraphina leads two groups of women: one within the church and another composed of women facing abuse, referred by church members. She begins with counseling, and Didi continues with spiritual guidance, often leading them to join the church.

Their vision includes supporting women affected by violence and caring for orphans by providing uniforms, tuition, meals, and spiritual guidance. They hope to build a shelter offering 2-3 months of safe refuge for those in crisis.

Children need clothing, food, and education. Women need empowerment and independence. The Panzos envision microloans to help women start businesses and repay as they grow.

The economic situation remains difficult, and ongoing support is

needed for theological students, children, and water infrastructure.

They welcome prayers, correspondence (dpanzo@wmpl.org), and visits to witness and report on their work in Congo.





New @UNCIL MEMBERS



Beth Lee is from Abington, Pennsylvania. She is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church where she is very active. Besides being the pastor's wife, she is secretary of the Women's Circles, sings in the choir, and is a member of the handbell choir. She has a daughter studying voice at Cairn University.



Amy Bell is from Landis, North Carolina. She is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church. She is a nurse who is currently working as a nursing instructor for students obtaining their master's degree in nursing from Wake Forest University. She is the vice president of her church council and is very active in various church activities. She is married to her high school sweetheart for 28 years and has two adult sons.



Wendy is from Conover, North Carolina. She is a member of Miller's Lutheran church where her husband is the pastor. She is a Scouting leader and works hard to promote the scouting religious program. She has two sons .

*"Let us run with perseverance
the race that is set before us,
looking to Jesus the pioneer and
perfecter of our faith..."
Hebrews 1b-2a*



Our Purpose



The purpose of the WNALC shall be to support the women's ministry within the congregations of the North American Lutheran Church with the goal of mutual support and encouragement as a community in faith, hope and love.

The WNALC shall assist congregational women's ministries in mission, study of God's Word, fellowship and service in Christ's name.

The WNALC shall provide guidance to congregations of the NALC who are forming new women's ministries.

Our Mission

As sisters in Christ, we dedicate ourselves to guide and direct the Women of the North American Lutheran Church in their efforts to move forward in faith and mission, through prayer and evangelism, with the Holy Scriptures as the final authority in all matters.

Our Motto

Connecting with our Sisters in Christ by Sharing God's Love.

*Connect with
us on
Facebook*

