
Tapestry

August, 2013

Lines from Linda

As the summer days pass, I always recall that George Gershwin tune, “Summertime” from Porgy and Bess, that I learned in fifth grade. As I sing the first line, “Summertime and the living is easy” each summer, I contemplate if the living is really easy for that particular year and just how am I living. Midway through the summer I surveyed the list of vacation plans, family visits, adventures, yard and housekeeping tasks, and church and FL-BA SWO projects that I’ve hope to accomplish. Where am I in the mix? What goals have I reached? Though this year I feel not quite on top of all that I’d hoped to do, these words from Romans 8:28 are helping me to reassess: “*We know that all things work together for good* for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.*” God does provide us each with a path and a purpose, doesn’t he? And I am on His path though not always the one that I’ve designed by my “to do” lists.

What about each of you? I know that our Lord is leading each of you too. We are an organization of strong, gifted, and faith-filled women. As we now approach the last half of summer, our thoughts and plans turn to fall, winter, and the months thereafter. We plan our meetings as congregational units, conferences, and, as a synodical group at our November Fall Gathering. We mark our calendars with the July 2014 Triennial Gathering in Charlotte and save our dollars to be a part of this event. We gather funds and goods for our many ministries and for our current Love Offering, Kimberly Home. We raise up in prayer and act boldly on issues that require justice in our communities. We have trust that because we have been called that our Lord is leading us as we work together for the good of those in need. Sharing in the many ministries of the Women of the ELCA truly is a blessing that I will always cherish. Thanks for all you do each summer, fall, winter, and spring!

I hope to see each of you at our Fall Gathering. Contact me, the board, and the Tapestry editor, Maureen Grodzinski, if you have questions or concerns. You may reach me at lindag65@verizon.net or at 727-595-9623.

Blessings to you,

Linda Freilick

FL-BA SWO President

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***Fall
Gathering***

Nov.8-10

At Lake Yale

Fall Gathering Focuses on God's Peace

You've probably heard the saying, 'No God - no peace. Know God - Know peace.' The theme for the Fall Gathering of Florida/Bahamas Synodical Women of the ELCA is 'God's Peace'. The Fall Gathering will be held at the Lake Yale Conference Center November 8, 9 & 10, 2013.

"And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7

This is the feeling that we want all women who attend to have as we learn to 'Know God - Know Peace'. The setting at Lake Yale is ideal for a weekend of learning and growing in God's Peace. Time for personal reflection and meditation will be available throughout the weekend whether it's at the Meditation/Reflection Stations, Prayer Lounge or in watching the sun rise or set over the lake.

Opportunities for exploring 'God's Peace' will include Gathering and Sending Worship Services, Bible Study, Worship with Holy Communion and many workshops to choose from.

Delegates will be conducting the business of our organization including election of officers and triennial delegates for Triennial 2014 that will take place in Charlotte, NC.

Registration forms are available on the www.flwelca.com web site. 'Share the Spirit Grants' are available to help defray costs for anyone wishing to attend. Additional information regarding these grants is also available on the web site.

A youth leader will guide the youth throughout the weekend. They also will join in many of the activities and workshops.

See you in November!

Tracy Moffatt tracymoffatt@aol.com
Diane Spicer dlsic@juno.com
Planning Committee Co-Chairs

Specials for Youth at Fall Gathering

Consider bringing your granddaughter, niece, daughter, or cousin to the Fall Gathering of Women of the ELCA at Lake Yale. There will be a Youth Shepherd for the Youth (5th grade - college).

The theme for the Ninth Triennial Gathering - 2014 is '**of many generations**'. It is always a joy to see the generations at Lake Yale. The time that is spent with our young people can be enriching for both young and young at heart.

The registration fee is waived for Youth so the cost will be \$149 which covers the room and meals. The Planning Committee will have forms and other information posted on the website (www.flwelca.com) the first of August. The Share the Spirit Grant, established to encourage attendance to all SWO sponsored events, is available to youth who may be unable to fund the total cost of such an event. We look forward to seeing you there!

Tracy Moffatt tracymoffatt@aol.com
Diane Spicer dlsic@juno.com
Planning Committee Co-Chairs

Share the Spirit

The peace of the Lord be with you. Our theme at this year's Florida Bahamas Synodical Women's Fall Gathering (November 8-10) truly invites all to explore opportunities to feel 'God's Peace.' Though we want all women to experience this event and to share God's presence with many sisters, we know that the \$189 cost can be prohibitive in some situations. That is why we have the Share the Spirit fund – to assist those who need a little help. Any woman can request funding. Our hope is that each will search out options within her congregation and community before pursuing the Share the Spirit fund for the balance of needed funds. Wouldn't it be wonderful for every woman who wants to attend the Fall Gathering to be able to request needed funds and to be able to share in this wonderful fellowship?

How can we do that? First, get out the word! The time is now! Post this article on your bulletin board or write an article for your church newsletter or Sunday bulletin informing all about the Share the Spirit fund. Provide copies of the Share the Spirit application (www.flwelca.com under Fall Gathering - Share the Spirit) to interested women. Lastly, donate to the Share the Spirit fund and encourage your congregation to share in this ministry. More donations mean that more women can attend the Fall Gathering. As each of you that have participated in Fall Gatherings recall how the Holy Spirit flows through you during these weekends, allow that Spirit to guide you in the days ahead.

Donations identified as Share the Spirit should be sent to:

SWO Treasurer Phyllis Wade
c/o Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
363 Miracle Strip Parkway, SW
Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Lucinda Pins: Changing the World, One Pin at a Time

At this year's Fall Gathering, the unique and colorful Lucinda pins will be sold with proceeds to benefit the "Share the Spirit" and the ELCA Fund for Leaders' scholarship programs.

In the 1980s, Lucinda Yates was having some financial difficulties, which found her and her daughter homeless and living in a van in Maine. One day as Lucinda was walking past a frame shop, she saw scraps of matte board in the trash. She experienced a Eureka moment, and she took pieces of board and cut them into elementary shapes, a rectangle and a square, which

looked like a house. Lucinda thought it would make a great fundraiser for the homeless. She designed a set of house pins and sold them to a local homeless shelter for \$6 each, which, in turn, sold them for \$10 each.

Within a year, her business, Designs by Lucinda, had sales of \$89,000. Over the years, her company has sold over 4 million pins and grossed over \$24 million. She has helped over 6,000 non-profit groups throughout the world raise funds. Lucinda Yates' motto is: "Changing the world, one pin at a time." Lucinda now employs over 50 people, and she is a sought after inspirational speaker. Her company has also been named one of the 25 best companies in the United States by *Working Mothers Magazine*.

At the Triennial Convention in San Antonio, the Women of the ELCA had Lucinda pins created that depicted a group of women with the blue and white cross and lily logo. These pins were very popular and were bought by members of the Florida delegation. Several years ago, the Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization ("SWO") Executive Board thought the cross, butterfly, and angel Lucinda pins would be an excellent fundraising tool.

Just like Designs by Lucinda and the SWO, you can do your part by buying one of these one-of-a-kind pins, that can also be worn as a necklace, to benefit the "Share the Spirit" scholarship fund to help more women attend the Fall Gathering and the ELCA Fund for Leaders' scholarship fund to assist Florida seminary students in becoming Lutheran ministers.

WE NEED YOU

God has given us many various gifts and talents. Sometimes we do not recognize our own gifts or talents but everyone has something they can give to others. We need you to accept the challenge and act boldly to work with this wonderful FL-BA Synodical Women of the ELCA. Prayerfully consider how you can be a part of this organization. **Share your gifts and talents with the Women of the ELCA.**

At our Fall Gathering on November 8 – 10, 2013, we will be electing a new president, a secretary, four executive board members and six delegates for the 2014 Triennial Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. The president will be elected by Ecclesiastical ballot. The secretary, board members, and delegates will be elected by written ballot.

Additional information and a description of the duties of each of these board positions are available on our website at www.flwelca.com. Check under the Fall Gathering Elections topic on the left side of the page and refer to the attachment entitled DUTIES OF OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS.

How do I apply to be a Triennial delegate? The answer is that the congregational, intercongregational, or special unit must nominate only one woman from a unit. More information about serving as a Triennial delegate is available at www.flwelca.com under Triennial Convention info.pdf.

To be considered for these positions, find the FL-BA SWO Executive Board and the FL-BA-SWO Triennial Delegate forms on our website. **Send completed forms no later than October 30, 2013 to:**

Loraine Van Haecke
805 Lindenwald Lane
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

Any questions may be directed to the Nominating Committee:

Loraine Van Haecke	lorarhodus@aol.com
Dee Fehlberg	dcapecoral@yahoo.com
Beverly Slaughterbeck	bjslaughterbeck@gmail.com

Of course, you may also contact our President Linda Greilick or any of the SWO Board. All will be happy to share their experiences with you.

July 2013 Tapestry Article on Resolutions

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

It is that time of year again to start preparing for the Florida-Bahamas Synod Women of the ELCA Fall Gathering in November! One part of the Business Meetings that will occur, is the submission and reading of resolutions, and it is not too late to get your submissions in!

By submitting a resolution at the Fall Gathering, you bring concerns and issues that are important to you, your congregational unit, and/or your faith community as a whole to the attention of the women in attendance. They in turn are made aware of these topics, discuss them, vote on them, and then bring them back to their faith communities. This is how one idea can have a ripple effect to improve our world.

Instructions for writing a resolution, a blank resolution form, and a short sample are available on the FL-BA SWO's website at www.flwelca.com. You still have time to draft a resolution, get your Congregational Unit's approval, and submit before the **October 15, 2013 deadline**. Resolutions may be e-mailed to mcccloudac@yahoo.com or through the postal service at Tina McCloud, 1746 63rd Terrace South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712.

I look forward to seeing you in November!

Tina

FL-BA SWO Summer Board & Fall Gathering Planning Committee Meeting Saturday, August 24

The summer Board meeting for the FL-BA SWO is scheduled for Saturday, August 24th, at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Largo from 10:00am – 4:00 pm. The Fall Gathering Planning Committee will meet at the same time. An agenda will be supplied prior to the meeting. Please contact me if you have any topics that need to be addressed or any questions.

Linda Greilick
FL-BA SWO President

Third FL-BA SWO ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarships Awarded

We, as the Board of the FL-BA Synodical Women's Organization, proudly announce that we have decided upon the recipients for our third annual FL-BA SWO ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarships. As usual, the choice was extremely difficult and all candidates were very deserving. We approached the decision with much review of applications, contemplation and prayer. For the 2013-2014 academic year, we have awarded Marilyn Beyer and Marissa Tweed each \$2,000 that will be forwarded to their seminaries to aid in covering tuition costs. Each of these two outstanding women has been invited to attend our 2013 Lake Yale Fall Gathering so that everyone will have the opportunity to greet them in person. Each also have shared a story about their faith journey so be sure to read their articles in this edition. We offer our congratulations to both Marilyn and Marissa!

Linda Greilick
FL-BA SWO President

Introducing Marilyn Beyer, Scholarship Recipient

My name is Marilyn Beyer. I am a rising senior seminarian at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC. I recently completed my internship year at St. Armands Key Lutheran Church in Sarasota. Internship was a truly rewarding experience and time of growth in faith and confidence. I was blessed with many opportunities to preach, minister to the hospitalized and homebound, teach and form many relationships within the community. What a blessing it was to serve in my home synod during internship! (My home congregation is Spirit of Life in Jacksonville)

I am enjoying time off and travel this summer prior to returning to South Carolina for my senior year. What a busy and exciting year it will be! I am especially looking forward to reuniting with my classmates as we return from our respective internships. Surely we will have many experiences to share. This fall I will be taking a full load of classes in addition to working part time, raising my son and completing the next steps of the candidacy process including approval by the seminary faculty and by the Florida-Bahamas Synod candidacy committee this November. Post approval, the process moves forward towards assignment and hopefully culminating in a call leading to ordination after seminary graduation next May.

As I continue to progress along this path towards ordination in Word and Sacrament, I deeply appreciate your prayers. Please know that you are in mine. I am looking forward to meeting everyone at the fall retreat. May God continue to bless you as you have blessed me with your thoughtfulness and generosity.

Introducing Marissa Tweed, Scholarship Recipient

It is my sincere honor, privilege, and blessing to be one of the recipients of the third annual FL-BA SWO award for the ELCA Fund for Leaders scholarship. THANK YOU! What a blessing to be supported and recognized in such a tangibly helpful way!

In May I completed my first year of seminary at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC). I am studying for my Masters of Divinity with a concentration in leadership. My hope

is to serve as an Ordained Minister of Word and Sacrament in the ELCA upon graduating. I have been *Entranced* by the Florida-Bahamas Synod Candidacy Committee and I will be approaching *Endorsement* in September of this year after successful completion of CPE (see below).

This year has been full of fulfilling, challenging, and affirming moments. It is a gift from God when you feel like you are where you are supposed to be, doing what you are called to do, and that has truly been the case for me this past year. I have thoroughly enjoyed my classes as well as building relationships with faculty, staff, and fellow seminarians. Serving on the LSTC Board of Directors as the student representative has opened my eyes to the bigger picture of what a seminary community can accomplish, how the lives of its students and surrounding community can be impacted, and how many people are dedicated to ensuring that happens in a successful, sustaining, and life-giving way.

Currently I am serving as an on-call chaplain at AnMed Hospital in Anderson, SC in order to fulfill my CPE requirement (CPE = Clinical Pastoral Education). This program consists of 300 hours working with patients/families and 100 hours of education, debriefing, and one-on-one meetings with our supervisor and peer group. The goal of CPE is to assist with further developing pastoral care skills as well as devoting focused time for reflecting on the type of pastors we intend/desire to be.

Very soon this July I am looking forward to attending the ELCA Mission Developer Training in Baltimore, MD to begin discerning if I have gifts or may be called to ministries in mission development. I ask for prayers that this be an enlightening and meaningful experience! I also will be taking the Mission Leadership course taught by Rev. Dr. Stephen Bouman, Executive Director of Congregational and Synodical Mission for the ELCA, this upcoming semester at LSTC and I'm looking forward to that very much.

Upon returning to Chicago for my second year of seminary this fall I have the exciting opportunity to serve as the Visit Coordinator for LSTC in the Office of Vocation, Admissions and Financial Aid. I will be coordinating the visits for prospective students, giving tours, and (hopefully) be a helpful resource for students discerning whether or not LSTC may be a good fit for their seminary education – it certainly has been for me!

Again, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I look forward to meeting you all face to face at the Fall Gathering in November.

With deep gratitude,

Marissa Tweed



Ninth Triennial Convention-Triennial Gathering- Two different events-held consecutively in Charlotte, NC.

The convention will be held July 22-24 and conducts the business of our organization including election the churchwide officers and board members and passing the budget. Delegates for the Triennial Convention will be elected at our Fall Gathering 11/8-10/2013.

Triennial Gathering will be held July 24-27, 2013 under the theme “of many generations.” This event will bring Lutheran women together from across the church for lift-changing workshops, worship, Bible Study, speakers and more. Registration for the Triennial Gathering opens September 16. Early Bird registration is just \$325 thru January 6, 2014. After that, registration is \$350. Consider experiencing this event with your sisters, your classmates or your daughters and granddaughters. This is wonderful way encourage the faith of your family and friends while enjoying their fellowship. The featured speakers; Susan Sparks and Becca Stephens will be sure to encourage, teach and entertain you. The workshops will educate you and the worship will inspire you.

Check out the new website expected to be available beginning September 4, 2013-welcatg.org. Feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns raeannpurcell@hotmail.com or 386-212-7933.

Your Triennial Promoter-Raeann Purcell

Triennial Convention Delegates Being Sought for Nomination

The triennial convention is made up of the delegates (or voting members) from our 64 WELCA synodical women’s organizations plus the members of the churchwide executive board. The triennial convention is the highest legislative authority in our organization. The 2014 convention will be led by our own Jennifer Michael (former Florida-Bahamas SWO President). The convention delegates will elect members to the churchwide executive board and vote on referendums and memorials that are important to the Women of the ELCA. This year, at our Fall Gathering, we will elect 6 voting members to attend the convention for the Florida-Bahamas synodical women’s organization. These women are nominated by their current congregational unit.

The convention precedes the triennial gathering and goes from Monday, July 22-24, 2014. The transportation of the triennial delegate to and from the convention is paid by the Women of the ELCA. The hotel accommodations (usually double occupancy) are paid during the convention. Delegates are encouraged to attend the triennial gathering so transportation (covered by churchwide) home can be delayed until the end of the gathering but the delegate is responsible for their own hotel accommodations during the gathering. A registration fee is required for attending the gathering (not the convention).

Consider sharing your gifts and enjoying the benefits of participating in this wonderful experience. For further information, check Triennial on our website www.flwelca.co or contact Raeann Purcell, Triennial Promoter, at raeannpurcell@hotmail.co.

How Do Triennial Delegates Get Elected and What Do They Do?

Are you wondering about being a Triennial delegate? How do they get elected? What are their duties?

The delegates are elected during the conventions of each of the 64 synodical women's organizations. The number of delegates elected is based on the number of active congregational units of Women of the ELCA within that synodical organization. In addition, the president of the synodical organization is always a delegate by virtue of her office.

At the Ninth Triennial, the smallest delegation will consist of two delegates plus the president while the largest delegation will consist of ten delegates plus their president. Alaska (15 active units), Grand Canyon (45 active units), and the Caribbean (21 active units) are among the ten delegations with two delegates plus their president. Southwestern Minnesota (247 active units) and Nebraska (241 active units) are the two delegations with ten delegates plus their president. More than 350 women serving as delegates will meet in Charlotte, NC on July 22-24, 2014 to conduct business at the Ninth Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA. As women in action, they will "deal with all matters that are necessary in the pursuit of the purpose and functions of this organization."

Article VI, Section 6, Item 6 of the Synodical Women's Organization Constitution provides that "a rank-order process established by the Churchwide Women's Organization Executive Board shall be used" when electing triennial delegates. At its April 2012 meeting, the churchwide executive board adopted a rank order process for use in electing delegates (voting members) to the Ninth Triennial Convention in 2014. This Rank Order Process will be provided to the FL-BA SWO Nominating and Elections committees and to delegates from each congregational unit who will be responsible for electing our Triennial delegate at the business meetings during our upcoming November Gathering. If you wish to review the criteria that need to be met in the election of delegates for the triennial convention, review the FL-BA SWO Constitution amended Dec 20 2011 at the bottom of the Leadership Resources page on www.flwelca.com. If you have questions, please contact Nominating Committee Chair Loraine Van Haecke at lorarhodus@aol.com or President Linda Greilick at lindag65@verizon.net.

Katie's Fund

Not many of us Lutheran Women knew who Katharina Van Bora Luther was until 16 years ago when Katie's Fund was established. This fund has grown over those years and now it has nearly \$763,000 in it.

Many of us have grown to love, admire and try to follow Luther's wife Katie who this fund was created to honor. The interest on the investment goes toward ministries and projects in three key areas: leadership, global sharing and living theology. The endowment principle continues to grow for future generations.

Born on January 29, 1499 in Hirschfeld (near Meissen, Saxony), the daughter of an impoverished noble. In 1504 she attended the convent school of Benedict order in Brehna (near Halle); and in 1508 she entered the convent in Nibschen (near Torgau). Katharina made her vows and became a nun in 1515.

After studying the teachings of Martin Luther, she and a number of other nuns became disillusioned with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and fled the convent on Easter Eve in 1523. Her life took a very different direction upon her arrival in Wittenberg. She worked for a local family as a receptionist and governess, and she continued to take classes at the university. The betrothal ring of Martin Luther with Catharine Von Bora, which is composed of an intricate device of gold work, set with a ruby, the emblem of exalted love. The gold devices represent all the symbols of the "Passion." In the center is the crucified Saviour; on one side the spear with which the side was pierced, and the rod of reeds; on the other is a branch of hyssop; beneath are the dice with which the soldiers cast lots for the garment without a seam, and below are the three nails. The whole is arranged so as to make a large cross, surmounted by the ruby. Inside the ring are the names of the betrothed pair and the wedding day in German: Der 13 Janij, 1525. This ring was presented to the intended wife at the betrothal and worn by her after marriage. Katherina von Bora was referred to as "die Lutherin".

Katie was quite the woman. In addition to bearing 6 children, Katharina also managed all their household affairs, brewed beer and managed the brewery, she raised and bred cattle on their property, took in students and professors in as boarders. Her garden fed her entire family as well as the boarders. She learned nursing skills and took care of the local ill.

Katie died in December, 1552, a month short of her 54th birthday in the town of Torgau. She and her family were escaping another outbreak of the plague in Wittenberg. The wagon or cart in which she was riding toppled. She was injured and developed a severe respiratory infection. Her family brought her to a little house on the Scharfenberg (which is now called Katharinenstrasse or Katherine Street), and this is where she breathed her last. She was buried in St. Mary's Church in the northern part of the choir aisle.

Her last words were a great testament to her powerful faith in God: *"I shall cling to Christ as a burr clings to a coat."*

2013 Domestic and International Grant Awards

Each year, Women of the ELCA accept proposals from not-for-profit organizations, both domestic and international, that support healing and wholeness for women of all ages. These proposals must meet a demonstrated health need of women in the community, request funding for one year for objectives achievable within that year, demonstrate the involvement of women in the decision-making and evaluation, and be consistent with the Women of the ELCA purpose statement. This year, the grant committee presented awards totaling \$68,800. Seven international organizations were awarded a total of \$15,000 while twenty domestic organizations were granted \$53,800. Countries that received grants totaling from \$1,500 to \$3,000 included Ghana, India, Kenya, Peru, the Philippines, Romania, and Uganda. Projects funded include healthcare to reduce maternal and infant death and to prevent and control TB, programs to address spousal abuse and human trafficking, and training to improve life skills and to provide clean water. Domestically, all nine regions were awarded one to four grants totaling from \$1,500 to \$5,000 each. In Region 9, four organizations were chosen. In Region 9B, funds were awarded to a ministry to empower single mothers toward independence and to providing playground equipment at a center. In Region 9D, health kits for women in Appalachia will be funded along with funds to help refugee women in Georgia to gain life skills. Thanks for all who support this wonderful ministry by sharing their treasures. What an example of a commitment to our purpose statement! In these actions, healing and wholeness in our church, society, and world are so promoted and shared with those in need.

Resources Available On-line

Would you like to learn and share using a variety ways with the internet. Listed below is just a few ways to do just that. Most of the web addresses are under links on our website (flwelca.com)

Women of ELCA Blogs Do you know about GLOCAL ? It is a new term to learn more about Global Mission, or Perhaps your conference has one like the First Coast Conference does = First Coast Buzz .

Café = Monthly on line , Readers include younger women, seminary and college students pastors and How About You also enjoyed by non Lutherans

Daily Grace = I greatly enjoy the brief reflections helping me to be challenged, inspired to start my day and assist me along the way with the Lord at my side.

Interchange monthly leadership news that should be mailed to every Conference Leader and Units to be shared because it includes New Ideas and much more.

Facebook= refer photos , get to know your Presidents= Jennifer Michael, Linda Greilick, First Coast Conference, other Conferences, about a Bee, and church women.

God's Blessings and Please do Share your Gifts to All
Barbara J. Henry
SWO Board Member

Panhandle Holds Weekend **Spring** Gathering

The Panhandle Conference Spring Gathering was held April 12-14 at Laguna Beach Christian Retreat Center in Panama City Beach. The Conference has been holding their Spring Gathering at Laguna since 1998. The retreat center offers cottages and meeting rooms within easy walking distance to the white sandy beaches to church groups and families for very reasonable rates. Where else can you spend two nights (including Saturday's lunch and dinner) on the Panhandle's beautiful white beaches for less than \$75.00? What a bargain! For those who can't stay for the entire weekend, other options are available and the cost is adjusted.

Some of the ladies began gathering Friday afternoon and while catching up with old friends and making new ones, shared a soup and salad dinner in one of the cottages. Following a joint effort to set up the meeting room for Saturday, they gathered to watch "Molokai" a movie about Father Damien, the Catholic priest who served the people suffering from Hanson's disease (leprosy) quarantined by the Hawaiian government to the island of Molokai.

The official Gathering began Saturday morning with 32 ladies representing all six churches in the Panhandle Conference. The theme of this year's Gathering was "Living Waters" and the color was turquoise (the ladies were encouraged to wear turquoise on Saturday). Conference Vice President Marcee Strickland led the Bible Study based on the Woman at the Well. Pastor Grace Torrance led the Communion Service. Prayer Partners were chosen and a hand blessing and washing was performed by each partner on her prayer partner. The program, organized by Messiah, was presented by the Bay County Extension Service on Rain Water Harvest and Water Conservation.

Six first time attendees, Frandy Baggett, Brigitte, Dzimitrowicz, Linda Nelson, Wilma Shively, Stacey Weeks, and Joanne Wintermute, were recognized and presented with a small gift.

During the business session, Regina Humphrey from St. Paul, Niceville, was elected as Conference President and Marcee Strickland from Messiah, Panama City, was elected as Conference Vice President. Marilyn Dial, Holy Trinity, Fort Walton Beach, serves as Conference Secretary. Sandy See, Holy Trinity, spoke about her visit to our Love Offering recipient, Kimberly Home in Clearwater which she had been able to visit. The craft, led by Shirley Bow from Holy Trinity, was a sand art bottle. The theme for next year's Spring Gathering was decided, "It's a Balancing Act" and responsibilities were assigned.

After dinner on Saturday, the ladies gathered on the beach for a candle light Prayer Vigil. Later, "sharing time" gave everyone the opportunity to share their favorite book(s) they'd read since the last Gathering. The ladies also shared what their Congregation Units have done or are planning to do in the coming year.

A storm was brewing Sunday morning so most of the ladies opted to start home and hopefully avoid the storm rather than attend worship at Messiah which is how the Conference traditionally ends their Gathering.

Phyllis Wade,
SWO Board Rep