

The Montana Synodical Women's Organization is every woman who belongs to an ELCA church in Montana and Northern Wyoming. We are part of the Women of the ELCA.

OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT

"As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world."

As a community of women created in the image of God,

The community of women is the very heart and soul of Women of the ELCA as sisters in Christ come together in our congregational units, the twelve clusters and the Montana Synodical Women's Organization to live out the Purpose Statement of Women of the ELCA. Within the units, women establish close bonds of friendship and sisterhood as we conduct business, learn, study, plan, work, laugh and serve.

Cluster events and retreats provide a widening of the close bonds of love and friendship and the opportunities to serve as we gather with other women of faith from communities in Montana and northern Wyoming. These bonds are further widened when we come together with other women of Region 1 from the states of Wyoming, Idaho, Washington, Oregon and Alaska. Every three years, comes the grand opportunity of the churchwide Gathering and Convention where Women of the ELCA from every state gather, learn, and worship. The Montana Synodical Women's Organization's purpose is to assist the units within its territory to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA. We are led by a board of nine women who carry out the business and plan the biennial convention and gathering and the fall gathering on the year of no convention.

called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit,

There are so many ways the women of our organization serve as Spirit-empowered disciples of Christ and his church. Some are pastors, AIM's, LPA's, lectors, parament designers and makers, altar preparers, communion servers, lectors, lay leaders, and many more.

we commit ourselves to grow in faith,

Our women have been coming together for years to study the Bible and learn about our Christian faith and how we can live it and share it. Many of us use the monthly Bible studies that appear in *Gather*, the award-winning magazine of Women of the ELCA.

affirm our gifts,

On the fourth Sunday in February, many units recognize special women in their church on Bold Women's Day. A service can be downloaded from WELCA's website and women take on the major roles of conducting the service.

support one another in our callings,

engage in ministry and action,

Lutheran women are known for their quilt making. One of the ministries that women in many of our units have done for many years is sewing quilts for Lutheran World Relief, local shelters for the homeless and victims of domestic abuse, and other causes. Thousands of quilts have been made and given to people all over the world and in our communities who are in need. Another popular service activity of our women is to buy school supplies, sew the bags and stuff them with the supplies, and send the assembled bags to Lutheran World Relief to help educate children. Assembling health kits are another action ministry that we do.

and promote healing and wholeness in the church,

Many women pray daily for the church, and sick, grieving and suffering people by being part of prayer chains. Our knitters are busy making prayer shawls that are given to people who are hurting and need a physical reminder of God's love.

the society,

MTSWO has actively participated in racial justice advocacy work of Women of the ELCA. Two members were trained by WELCA as racial justice advocates, and have made educational presentations at Cluster and SWO events. Another social blight that the women have long worked to raise awareness of and eliminate is human trafficking.

and the world.

Six of our members joined with other Montana Synod Women in August 2015, to visit and establish connections with the people, particularly the women and children, of our companion synod, the IELB, in Bolivia. They visited churches in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, and La Paz and shared their experiences at unit and SWO events. Two members spent a week in Tijuana, Mexico in 2010 at a facility for undocumented migrants who were returned to Mexico from the U.S., meeting with them and learning about their lives. Our women have also been on mission trips to Rocky Boy Reservation to the indigenous people and on Rise Up and Build to restore homes after Hurricane Katrina.

In addition to all of these ways the women share their time and talents, we also give our offerings of money when we meet. The units give a percent (usually 50%) of their offerings to MTSWO that in turn gives half of the offerings it receives to churchwide WELCA to fund ministries. Recent recipients of MTSWO offerings are Mental Health and Women of the ELCA Scholarships. The Montana Synodical Women's Organization encourages all women to join us in the joy of living out our Purpose Statement and working together with Spirit-empowered sisters in Christ.