InTouch

Alaska Synodical Women's Organization

InTouch

August 2026

ASWO Fall Retreat September 18-19, 2026, at Christ Our Savior Lutheran, Anchorage

Women's Retreat: Ladies from Alaskan ELCA congregations and friends are invited to come together to learn, share meals, worship, sing, craft, & study on the topic of Creation Care.

Friday evening and Saturday, September 18-19, 2026, at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Anchorage. *Find the schedule on page 6.*

We'll ask just $20 to assist in covering expenses.

Please register using the form enclosed, or RSVP by Sunday 9/6 to AlaskaSynodicalWomensOrg@gmail.com

We do plan to live-stream the worship, Bible study, and presentation portions of the event–send us a note if you'll want to participate from home or your travels and we can share the zoom link.

Friends from outside Anchorage, let us know if we can make a recommendation to you for a hotel or put you in contact with a local who might have a guest bedroom available.

Our theme verses are Genesis 1:27-31

27 So God created humans in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.
28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."
29 God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the air and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

ASWO Mission Statement

We, as diverse women of God, respond to God's love by sharing the gospel, cherishing creation, and encouraging each other's growth in faith.

ASWO Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Synodical Women's Organization shall be to assist congregational units within its territory to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA.

Offerings to and through ASWO

Offerings given to the ASWO support ASWO activities including:

- conferences and retreats
- Local & National charitable organizations such as food closets and resources for those in need
- The National Women of the ELCA organization (50% of regular offerings & 100% of thank offerings)

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CREATION Care

An ELCA

Alaskan women's retreat

organized by the ELCA Alaska Synodical Women's Organization (ASWO).

Learn, worship, sing, eat & visit with friends

$20. RSVP to AlaskaSynodicalWomensOrg@gmail.com

Friday evening and Saturday September 18-19, 2026, @ Christ Our Savior Lutheran in Anchorage

Pastor Anna Silco, of Christ Our Savior Lutheran and (soon) St Mark Lutheran Churches will lead our study and worship on Genesis

Deb Nyquist, of Christ Our Lutheran Soldotna (pictured here at Synod Assembly 2026) will lead a workshop on Creation Care and Justice

Additional workshops will be led by folks from **Anchor Gardens** and **Glenn Hart from National Parks Service.**

ALASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION OF WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Fall 2026 Retreat Registration Form

September 18-19, 2026

What is an ASWO Retreat? Retreats are a time for women at ELCA churches in the Alaska Synod and friends to gather together for worship, study, singing, workshops, meals and activities around a theme — this fall focusing on Creation Care. This year's Alaska Synodical Women's Organization (ASWO) retreat will be hosted by Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in Anchorage, AK. You are invited to worship with our host congregation on Sunday morning, as well.

To participate in this fall's Retreat, please complete the registration details below. Submit your completed registration form by email (can be a photo or scan of this completed form, or simply respond to all the below questions in writing in your email message) to AlaskaSynodicalWomensOrg@gmail.com, or you can mail your form to ASWO, in care of Central Lutheran Church, at 1420 Cordova Street, Anchorage, AK 99501. For any questions, call or text Carol Bras at 907-378-8981.

Make sure we know you're coming so that we can plan for meals and materials for all attendees. Please email or mail your registration details no later than September 6, 2026.

Name: _____

I will attend Friday evening □ I will attend Saturday daytime □ I will be on Zoom only □

Phone number(s): _____ Email address: _____

Emergency Contact Name & Number: _____

Allergies / Health Info / Dietary Needs: _____

Name of your church: _____

Would baby-sitting on site be helpful to allow you to attend? _____

Registration cost is $20 per participant. This helps to cover costs for the event. Meals for Friday night, and all-day Saturday are included in your registration costs. We will take an offering during the event that will support the important work done by the Women of the ELCA (50%) and the Alaska Synod for Western Alaska Disaster Relief (50%).

☐ I will bring a cash or check payment for my $20 registration fee with me to the Retreat at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church (1612 Oceanview Dr., Anchorage AK) when I arrive.

☐ I would like to request assistance in paying for my registration fee and / or transportation to the event. [T*he committee will review your request and contact you for follow up.*]

☐ I'm coming from outside the Anchorage area and I could really use a guest bedroom invitation.

How do your ASWO Board Members practice Creation Care?

Karen Johnson

Usually we don't eat the entire salmon SO I make salmon chowder with the leftover.

Here is the recipe:

Salmon Chowder

Sauté 1/2 cup each of bell pepper, onion, and celery in 3 tablespoons of butter and 1teaspoon garlic. Then add 1cup sliced carrots, 1 cup of diced potatoes, 1/2 teaspoon dill, 14 ounces chicken broth, 1 1/2 teaspoon pepper and 1/2 teaspoon salt. Simmer 40 minutes 'til veggies are tender. Add 2 cups half & half, 1 can of cream style corn and salmon. Simmer 15 minutes until heated through.

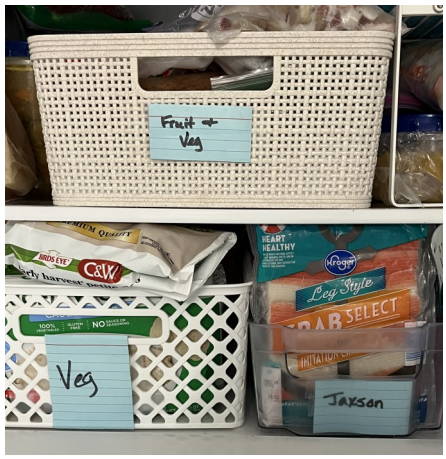
I also keep cottage cheese or yogurt containers to send leftovers home with guests. I also give my larger yogurt containers to a friend who uses them for her baby tomato plants to grow. My small yogurt containers are perfect when I make freezer jam.

Finally, I cut up brown paper bags to use instead of parchment paper when baking a round 2 layer cake. My mom did this when I was growing up.

Carol Bras

In order to reduce plastic, I bring reusable bags and boxes when shopping. When the boxes start to show signs of too much wear, I use them to organize my kitchen pantry or hallway closet.

If plastic bins no longer serve their original purpose, I try to find another use for them, such as organizing my freezer, pantry, sewing notions or all kinds of other things.



I use my smallish toaster oven a lot rather than heating up my large range, especially if I'm making a small batch. It heats up so much faster and has a wonderful 'reheat' feature that is quick and keeps foods crispy, instead of making them soggy.

Lastly, I use leftover bits of cotton yarn to make dishrags. Depending on how much yarn is left, the dish-rags may be a variety of shapes and sizes but that doesn't seem to bother anyone.

~ *continues on page 5* ~

How do your ASWO Board Members practice Creation Care?

~ *continued from page 4* ~

Bonnie Kragt

I have long been a composter and a recycler. I actually pay to have my #1, #2 and #5 plastics made into building materials at Grizzly Wood.

I donate blood every 8 weeks.

As a knitter MANY friends have brought me bags of yard they realized they would never use, and I make hats which I bring to the Helping Hands Clothes Closet at Central Lutheran.

I bring books I and my grand-daughters are finished with to the Little Free Library for others to enjoy.

I have become a member of the Buy Nothing Facebook site for my neighborhood and have passed on numerous household items as well as things my granddaughters have outgrown, such as car seats, clothes and toys.

Kathy Freeman

I love to take my half-used rotisserie chicken, boil it for a while, let it cool enough to remove the bones and yucky bits leaving chicken and broth, and then turn it into a new soup. Here are some of my favorites:

Fiesta Chicken Soup
- 1 tbsp olive or avocado oil
- 2 jalapeños, seeded & minced
- 1 cup green onions, minced, or a chopped red onion
- 3 cups cooked chicken, shredded or pulled apart
- 4 cups chicken broth (add more water and chicken bouillon to taste to ensure flavor and needed quantity)
- 2 tomatoes, seeded and diced, or a can of chopped or stewed tomatoes
- optional add kidney or black beans (precooked from dry or canned rinsed)
- 1/3 cup cilantro, chopped (oh, you have THAT gene and cilantro is bad? Leave out or substitute 1 teaspoon dried oregano)
- 3 tbsp lime juice
- 2 tbsp garlic, minced
- 1 tsp each ground cumin, chili powder, and salt
- 2 avocados, diced

Directions:
1. In a large pot heat oil over medium heat. Add onion and jalapeños (add a few seeds if you want it spicy), sauté for 2 minutes.
2. Add garlic and sauté for another minute.
3. Add chicken, broth, tomatoes, optional beans, cilantro, lime juice, cumin, chili powder and salt.
4. Simmer soup for 15 minutes. Taste and add seasonings or additional chicken bouillon as needed.
5. Serve with diced avocado in each bowl.

Lemon Rice Chicken Soup
like https://www.joyousapron.com/lemon-chicken-and-rice-soup/

Chicken Curry
I've started with this recipe, but changed out ingredients and rarely make it the same way twice:

https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/261457/whole30-coconut-chicken-curry/

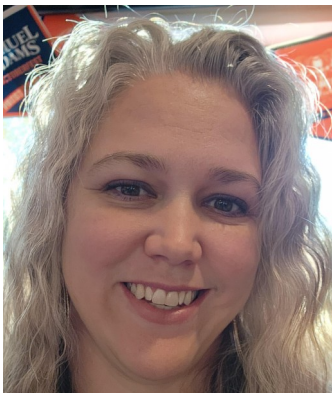
Because I'm starting with already prepared chicken and stock in the fridge, I tend to sauté the garlic and ginger and diced jalapeño briefly, pour in the chicken and broth, and add the vegetables and cook until they soften. The veggies change every time, based on what I have on hand. Carrot, potato or sweet potato, bell peppers of various colors, broccoli or cauliflower pieces, and wedges of onion. I have used coconut milk or cream. I almost never add kale; I once added spinach. And I often use a large dollop of yellow curry paste in addition to the curry powder, for excellent flavor. I often top with a teaspoon of peanuts for crunch.

~ *continues on page 6* ~

How do your ASWO Board Members practice Creation Care?

~ continued from page 5 ~

Samantha Aleshire



How I reuse what people often call "kitchen scraps". I save all of the veggie scraps when I am making different dishes, putting them into a bag into the freezer to use later. When I have enough of these "scraps" I make broth from them. I pull all of my scraps from the freezer and toss them into a pot and make, chicken stock, beef stock and veggie stock. After I have made the stocks I try and find a friend with chickens to give the cooked scraps to, so they do not go to waste.

I am currently working on different ideas for using the rhubarb scraps from after I make rhubarb juice. I am thinking about rhubarb fruit leather, but if there are any ideas out there, please feel free to let me know.

ASWO Retreat 2026 Schedule

Friday, September 18
5 - 7 pm: Registration, and healthy snacks provided by Christ Our Savior
Hymn sing, Movement to the Lord's Prayer, and Ice Breakers

Saturday, September 19
9 am Registration and breakfast, followed by announcements & singing
10 - 10:45 am Bible study by Pastor Anna Silco, followed by free time
11:30 am Lunch, then Triennial Gathering Sharing from attendees
12:30 pm Deb Nyquist workshop on Caring for Creation
1:30 pm Anchor Gardens rep with a tour of the gardens at Christ Our Savior
2:30ish snacks & then songs in the Sanctuary
3:00 pm Glenn Hart from National Parks Service speaks with us
4:15 pm Free time / Crafts - microwave bowl led by Pastor Anna and bookmark led by Karen Johnson
5:30 pm Dinner – and then discuss North Star Bible Camp idea for fall 2027
7:00 pm Worship service with communion
The offering will go to WELCA (50%) &
AK Synod – Western AK Disaster Response (50%).

Sunday, September 20
9:30am Worship at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church

Note, this schedule may be edited lightly
in the coming weeks or on the days of the events, if needed.
This schedule is as of August 13 publication date.

Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering
July 16-19, 2026

This article reprinted from Central Lutheran Church of Anchorage's August newsletter. Margie Ungrodt from Lord of Life Lutheran in North Pole will share her experiences at this Gathering during our Fall Retreat.

Over eleven hundred women from across the country assembled in Des Moines, Iowa, for the thirteenth triennial WELCA Gathering. Participants from our congregation included Karen Voris, Bonnie Kragt and myself, Birte Eliasen. We would be remiss if we did not also include Jan Jones, former Centralite who now lives in Michigan, but is still an Alaskan at heart. Karen, Bonnie and Jan all taught school together in Anchorage some years ago.

The theme of this gathering was "I Am Worthy," based on Psalm 139:14: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." The logo was a broken heart, pieced together by a cross, and reminding us that "as women and followers of Christ, we experience brokenness, but when we focus on Christ's love for us and when we extend that love to others, we experience repair."

The gathering began officially with a worship service on Thursday night. Friday and Saturday began with Plenary Sessions containing bible study as well as speakers who would be leading the workshops that followed throughout the day. Workshop titles included Cultivating Courageous Leadership, The Transgender Experience, Religion and Politics, How Can We Battle for our Young People, The Art of Belonging, What is Faithful Language for God, I AM WORTHY – Even when the ground shakes, Claiming My Sacred Sex, and What to expect when you weren't expecting the – Taking your mental health field guide home. Many of the workshop leaders had also published books on their topics, and those books were available for sale. Unfortunately, most workshops were only offered once, so we sometimes had to choose between two that we would have liked to attend, but ran concurrently.

Throughout the gathering, the display hall was always open. Vendors were many and varied. Some represented services available to congregations. Others, such as Lutheran World Relief, were there to collect items for distribution nationwide and overseas. Still others were vendors selling items such as books and jewelry. One of these vendors, called "Made For Freedom" sold finely crafted goods made by survivors of human trafficking and by those lifting themselves out of poverty around the world. Their stories of survival were a compelling reason to purchase their goods.

By far, the most interesting display to me was very small, and staffed by two women. The display itself was very modest – a small booth with a few pamphlets to hand out, but the work they do is amazing. Reaching out to seventeen countries around the world, Global Health Ministries is a collection and distribution center for donated goods from all across America. The operation is nothing short of amazing! Goods arrive at their warehouse in Minneapolis from congregations nationwide. Here they are sorted, packaged and prepared for shipping. When I told the ladies that my cousin in Minneapolis happens to volunteer there, and that I would be spending a few days with her on my way home, they asked me if I would like a tour. My eyes were really opened! We are asked to donate to many organizations, all of which seem worthy, but I found it rewarding to see how the monies and goods donated to this organization are applied and put to such good use.

The Gathering concluded on Sunday with a beautiful worship service. The Preacher was ELCA Secretary Rev. Lucille Mills, and we were treated to a special visit by our new Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Jehiel Curry.

We left the event feeling tired, but inspired. Jan went back to Michigan, and Karen, Bonnie and I went to spend a few days with our collective families in Minnesota before returning home to Alaska.

If you would like to know more about our experiences, ask any one of us, we will be happy to share with you. F.YI., pre-registration for the next gathering is available, taking place in Louisville, Kentucky, July 12 – 15, 2029.

– submitted by Birte Eliasen

Alaska Synodical Women's Organization

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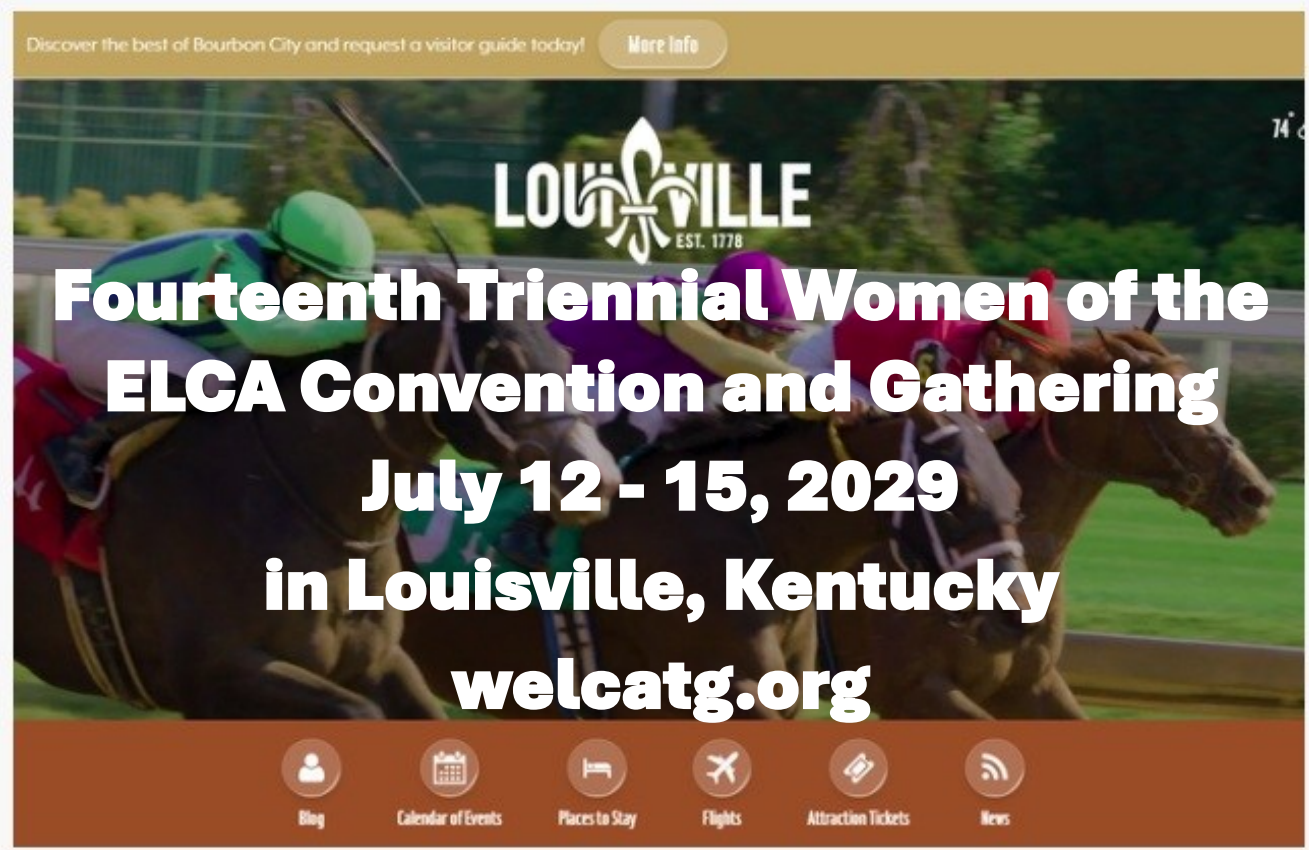
ALASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
WOMEN of the ELCA

Women of the ELCA

The mountains represent the quiet strength women bring to our organization. The mountains are the source of life-giving waters that bring us prosperity and fill our needs – as in the baptismal waters, we rejoice in the promise of our salvation. The meandering river that supports the water lily represents the diversities and distances we conquer in Alaska as we strive to do the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Any offerings, from individuals or congregational women's groups, may be sent to ASWO treasurer Samantha Aleshire at Lord of Life Lutheran Church "attn: Sam" 1005 Saint Nicholas Dr, North Pole, Alaska 99705

Register by September 1 for best price!