

Conference Leader Guide

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Forms on Website:


Conference Meeting/Event Report Form

Conference Newly Elected Leaders Form



Mission Statement

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.



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.

Glossary of Terms

- Assembly:** ELCA's term for the gathering of voting members for a decision-making or legislative function
- By-law:** A standing rule governing the regulation of a corporation's or organization's internal affairs
- CU:** Congregational Unit
- CWO:** Churchwide Women's Organization
- Churchwide Organization:** The entire Women of the ELCA which is manifested in the Women's triennial convention and the executive board; also used to describe the staff and office which support the activities of the organization
- Circle/Group:** A non-legislative grouping of women within a congregational unit, usually for the purpose of program activities, Bible study, fellowship, and personal growth, which meet regularly, and support the purpose of the Women of the ELCA
- Conference:** Grouping established by the Synodical Organization for the purpose of fostering interdependent relationships among congregations
- Congregational Board:** The women elected by the Congregational Unit to fulfill the various functions of the congregational unit; can be made up of officers, committee chairpersons and circle/group leaders
- Congregational Unit:** The women's organization in a congregation
- Constitution:** A legal document that outlines the name, purpose, authority, relationships, and financial structure of an organization
- Contact Person:** A person selected to receive and disperse information for the purpose of networking
- Convention:** The gathering of delegates for decision-making or legislative functions within Women of the ELCA
- Delegate:** A person designated to act for or represent another or others.
- Designated Gifts:** Offerings received above and beyond regular offerings which are sent to the Churchwide Women's Organization. Designated gifts make possible specific ministries of the ELCA and Women of the ELCA.
- Executive Board:** The officers and board members elected at the Churchwide Triennial; the highest level of authority of the Women of the ELCA
- Gathering:** A term used for the coming together of the conference for training, fellowship, and elections
- Gifts:** A type of designated gift for special projects determined by the organization
- In Kind/ Love Gifts:** Tangible gifts that can be given to a local agency or ministry from a gathering or convention
- Intercongregational Unit:** A local organization for women from two or more congregations which have no congregational units
- Gather:** The magazine of the Women of the ELCA (formerly *Lutheran Women* magazine)
- Interchange:** Women of the ELCA newsletter mailed to congregational units; includes information from the Churchwide staff and Executive Board
- Joy Offering:** A special gratitude offering designated for the wider ministry of the ELCA.

Membership: Refers to the congregational/intercongregational units who have affiliated with Women of the ELCA; it does not refer to individual women

Memorial: Resolutions brought by a synodical organization to the triennial convention

Participants: Individual women who choose to participate in a variety of activities which fulfill the purpose of the organization

Participation: Involvement that indicates a commitment to the purpose of the organization and is expressed in local and other settings; open to all women in the ELCA

Purpose Statement: States the purpose for the Women of the ELCA

Region: A geographic territory which includes several synods; our Region is 9; South Carolina is 9C

Regular Offerings: Received in circles/groups, general meetings, or through individual pledges; are the primary source of support for the ongoing ministries of the Synodical and Churchwide Women's Organization

Resolution: An item brought by a voting member (or voting members) to the convention for action

Resource Packet: Sent twice a year in the spring and fall to congregational units and contains new program information, stewardship materials and updates on the organization

SWO: Synodical Women's Organization

Special Offerings: A type of designated gift for the special projects determined by the organization

Synod: A territory of the ELCA which has its own governing body

Synodical Board: The officers and board members elected at the Synodical Convention; the highest level of authority of the Synodical Women of the ELCA

Synodical Women's Organization: A legislative and programmatic entity that assists congregational and intercongregational units within its synod to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA

Thankoffering: A gratitude offering which cannot be designated and is sent on Form B directly to Churchwide; used by the Women of the ELCA for *Gather* and resources

The Ripple: A publication of the South Carolina Women of the ELCA

Triennial Convention: The convention of Women of the ELCA; the highest legislative authority of the Women of the ELCA that meets every three years

Unit Convention Offering: Offering brought to the Synodical Women's Organization Convention by congregational units

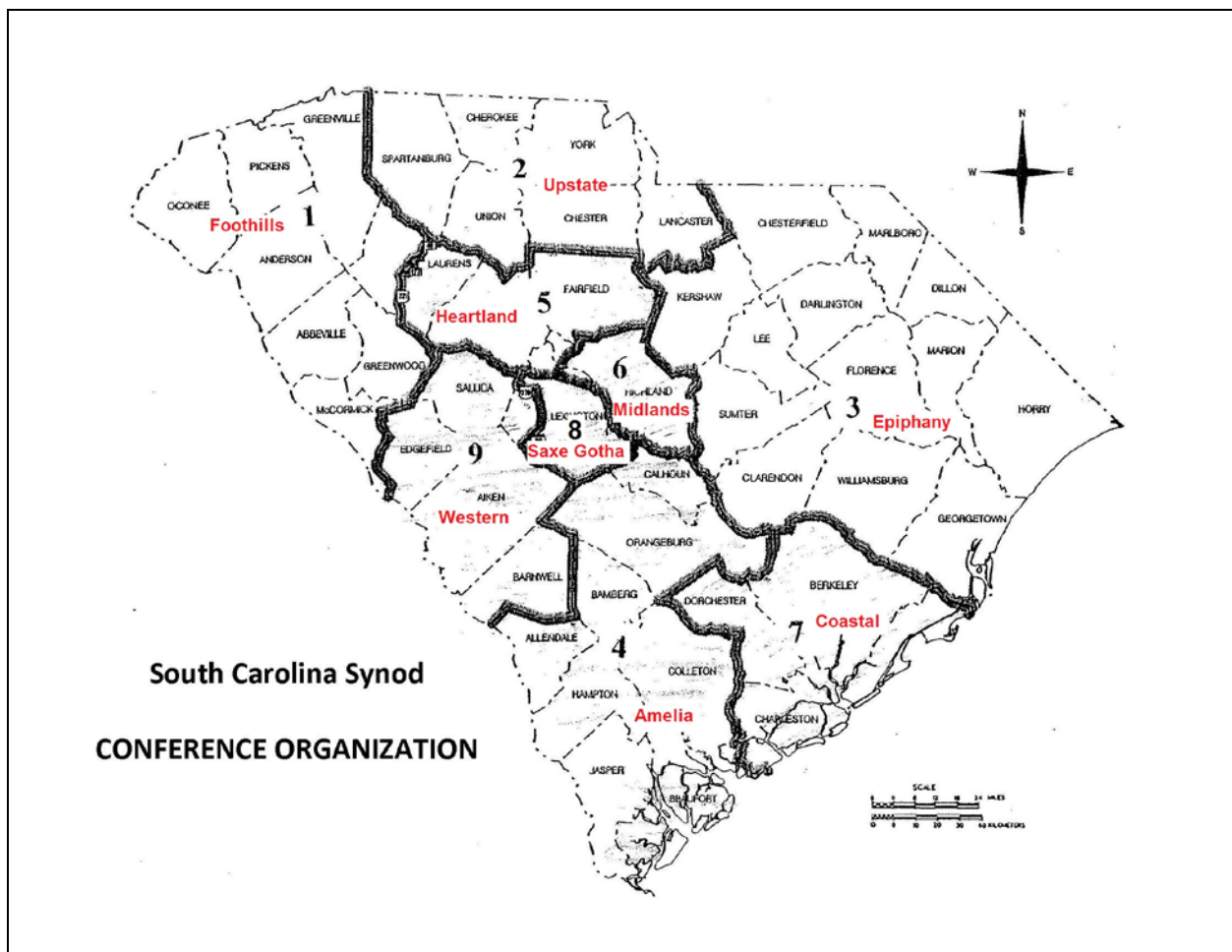
Voting Member: Eligibility is to be a participant in a Congregational Unit and a voting member of an ELCA congregation. Two are selected by each CU to represent their unit at the Synodical Convention with voting privileges. CWO assigns the number of voting members for each SWO, which are to be elected at the Synodical Convention, with voting privileges at the Triennial Convention.

Women of the ELCA: Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

What is a Conference?

In the spring of 1998, the South Carolina Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America followed the suggested realignment of the South Carolina Synod to form nine conferences within the state instead of the previous cluster groupings.

Conferences are geographical groupings of Congregational Units within a synodical organization, which seek to bring Congregational Units together for leadership and special events. The boundaries coincide with the boundaries established by the South Carolina Synod.



The following is from the **Constitution and Bylaws of SC Women of the ELCA**., 2015

ARTICLE IV - RELATIONSHIPS

SECTION 1. Units

Item 1. This synodical women's organization shall establish a partnership with the units within its territory.

Item 2. This synodical women's organization shall provide for grouping units into conferences whose boundaries normally shall coincide with the boundaries established by the South Carolina Synod.

SECTION 2. Conferences

Item 1. Conferences shall be composed of units on the roll of this synodical women's organization.

Item 2. Conferences shall work interdependently with the synodical women's organization and the units to fulfill the purpose of Women of the ELCA through activities which:

- a. Provide experiences for learning and leadership development.
- b. Build community.
- c. Provide opportunities for joint ministry and action.
- d. Provide opportunities for stewardship education and offerings.
- e. Establish networks for communications.

Item 3. A conference planning committee of three members, one of whom shall serve as coordinator, shall be elected at the conference fall meeting of even years and shall serve a two-year term.

Item 4. The conference planning committee shall plan and facilitate programmatic activities with guidance from the synodical women's organization. There will be a fall meeting with a meeting in the spring encouraged.

Item 5. Conferences shall work cooperatively with the synodical women's organization in funding the conference and synodical women's organization's program and projects.

The following is from the **2015 Standing Rules of SC Women of the ELCA**:

CONFERENCES:

1. Each conference leader shall be elected for a two (2) year term in the fall of each even year and will be eligible for re-election.

2. Meetings shall be held each fall on a date, time, and place selected by the conference leaders and agreeable with the host church. Other meetings are encouraged.

3. Offerings shall be remitted to and disbursed by the synodical women's organization treasurer.

General Information

The purpose of conferences in the synodical women's organization is to support the activities of units that are in close geographic proximity to one another. The conference is not legislative (making policy decisions) or another layer of bureaucracy. Offerings received at conference gatherings should be remitted in full to the synodical treasurer with request for disbursement of designated projects or expenses.

Many synodical women's organizations have established a practice of sending board representatives to conference gatherings, based on the churchwide model of sending a President's representative to the synodical convention. The goal of the synodical representative at conference gatherings is to build community between the synodical women's organization and the units within each conference. To accomplish this goal, the board representative has the major objectives of:

- ❖ Demonstrating interdependence between the churchwide organization, the synodical women's organization, the conference and the unit
- ❖ Providing information about the work of the synodical board and its impact on units and about program plans of the synodical women's organization and the churchwide organization
- ❖ Listening to comments, questions and concerns of participants from units and conveying them to the synodical board

In order to achieve these objectives, the board representative should be provided an opportunity to:

- ❖ Bring a greeting and report from the president and the synodical board during a plenary session
- ❖ Interact with participants at the gathering to hear comments and concerns and to provide information about Women of the ELCA and synodical women's organization programs and activities

To improve the linkage between the synodical board and conferences, the board representative should maintain contact with the conference throughout the year. This contact may take the form of an occasional telephone call, a note or a personal visit. The conference coordinator should be invited to share news of activities within the conference. In addition, the board representative can act as a sounding board and as a resource for the conference.

The synodical women's organization should develop a standardized format and timing for conferences to use in reporting their activities to the synodical board. The information gathered should include the total number of participants, the number of participants from each unit, offerings received, results of elections held, and a brief summary of programming activities.

Conference Guidelines

1. Purpose:

- a. To assist the Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) in promoting the programs of the Women of the ELCA.
- b. To encourage community building.
- c. To promote opportunities for personal and spiritual growth.

2. Conference Leaders:

- a. Conference Leaders are elected at the fall meeting in the even years for a two-year (2) term.
- b. Appoint a nominating committee in the odd year. Leaders shall be eligible for re-election.
- c. Interpret program and the purpose of Women of the ELCA for the Congregational Units (CUs) in the conference
- d. Inform the SC WELCA Board Liaison of plans including dates, places and times of conference events.
- e. Conference events will be self-supporting.
- f. Offerings shall cover expenses and designated projects as voted on at the meeting. Each conference will send its funds to the SWO Treasurer for disbursement as requested.
- g. Include time on the agenda for a report from the Board Liaison.
- h. Should a vacancy occur, the SC WELCA board shall appoint a person from the conference to fill the vacancy until the next election at a regular conference meeting with recommendation from the Conference Leaders.
- i. Conference Leaders shall receive a mailed copy of *The Ripple* at no charge.
- j. Conference Leaders should contact inactive congregational units to offer help and information.
- k. Plan and implement the details of conference events.
- l. The host CU is responsible for greetings and refreshments.
- m. The conference leaders will develop the program in collaboration with the host CU.
- n. When the conference is the host for the synodical convention, attend convention planning meetings and assist as needed.

3. Duties of Conference Leaders:

- a. Coordinator
 - 1) Conduct conference meetings.
 - 2) Serve as the contact person for the SWO.

b. Secretary

- 1) Send notices of meetings to the CUs and Board Liaison.
- 2) Keep an up-to-date list of the names and addresses of each CU officer and/or contact person in the conference.
- 3) Provide this list to the CUs at the conference event.
- 4) Notify Synodical Secretary of CU officer name and address changes.
- 5) Notify Synodical Secretary of conference leader name and address changes.
- 6) Have a roll call of churches or registration of churches.
- 7) Keep accurate minutes or records of all conference events.
- 8) Give Conference Meeting Report and Leaders Report to Board Liaison immediately after the meeting. A copy of the minutes of the meeting shall be sent to the Conference Coordinator within 7 days of the event.
- 9) Assist Conference Coordinator as needed.

c. Financial Secretary

- 1) Keep an accurate record of conference finances.
- 2) Give a financial report at conference meeting.
- 3) Collect conference offering and remit to the SWO Treasurer.
- 4) Submit conference disbursement requests to SWO Treasurer for expenses of the conference. Almost all monies should be disbursed at the discretion of the conference.
- 5) Assist Conference Coordinator as needed.

4. Meetings:

- a. Meetings are to be held in the fall. There should be devotions/worship time, Christ centered, and may be in a formal or informal setting.
- b. Spring meetings are encouraged. This time may be used for fellowship.
- c. Date, place and time of fall meeting should be published at the time of the SWO convention.
- d. Use convention theme at fall meeting.