

WHAT'S NEWS

Women of the **ELCA** 

Southwest California Synodical Women's Organization • Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 2020

JOANNA WHO?

by Maxine Cameron Stenstrom

Just a few of many empowered women in the Bible: Sarah, Miriam, Rahab, Ruth, Esther, Deborah, Jael, Abigail, Mary, Elizabeth, Mary Magdalene, Eunice, Lydia, Susanna, Junia, Lois, Phoebe, Dorcas and Joanna. Joanna? Who is this Joanna??

Luke: 8:1-3 explains she, upon her own choosing, traveled with Jesus, had been cured of an evil spirit or disease, and was married to the guy who managed King Herod's household. But rich and famous was not for her. She dedicated her life and riches to following Jesus. Joanna was among the women who first delivered the news of the resurrection of Jesus.

Luke: 23:55, 56, Luke 24:1

The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. The women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb.

These women were not scared to venture out very early in the morning, in the dark to a graveyard. Must have required a lot of courage and determination and definitely abundant love of Jesus. Luke 2-8 explains how the women met the angel of God who proclaimed that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead.

Luke : 24:9-10

When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the others. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles.



Joanna was among the three women who were the first messengers of the good news of the resurrection of Jesus. **Today, we celebrate that beginning, a beginning that years later culminated in officially ordaining women to carry that message as pastors in the Lutheran Church.**

Joanna was empowered. She was determined, she had courage, and she believed she was doing the right thing.

When did Rosa Parks become aware of the role that would be hers in the civil rights movement? She does not recall for certain, but says she felt the serenity, the peace of mind, the strength and courage that only God can give long before she took the empowering stand for right over wrong by sitting down in a seat at the front rather than in the back of a bus.

Even at our current age and stage in life, there is time for us to ask God to give us courage to do the right thing - to take a stand, or if the situation calls for it, to take a seat - for a worthy cause. To march for women's rights, to write letters advocating social justice, to vote for leadership in our country, our community, our church - or to be like Joanna and carry the message of the resurrection whenever and wherever possible. Believe in something larger than yourself... get involved in doing the right thing.

THE EMPOWERED WOMAN

(paraphrased) – by Sonny Carroll

The Empowered Woman moves through the world with confidence and grace.

Her reckless spirit now tempered by wisdom. She speaks her truth without doubt or hesitation and the life she leads is of her own creation. She understands what it means to live and let live. How much to ask for and how much to give.

She has a strong, yet generous heart and her inner beauty truly sets her apart.

Her senses heightened, she sees everything clearly. She hears the wind rustling through the trees; beckoning her to live the dreams she holds so dearly.

She feels the softness of her hands and muses at the strength that they possess.

Her needs and desires she has learned to express. She has tasted the bitter and savored the sweet fruits of life, overcome adversity and pushed past heartache and strife. And the one thing she knows to be true above all, with God, all things are possible.

From Dixie Hanson, SoCal SWO President



In our fourth month of quarantining in place, I ask you; how are your units doing at keeping in touch? As our state is opening up, but still watching the virus circulate, we in the church must keep everyone's health in focus. Last night I had a conference call with two women from my circle and we read through the June Bible Study titled "Just Love." This is our 3-session study in *Gather* for the summer. It was a wonderful study and so timely with the present events. It also worked well to share with one or two others. Our circle has divided into partners or threesomes to read the study together by phone or read alone and then call to discuss the study. In addition to sharing the study together we have had an opportunity to get to know each other even better. Other ways of connecting with the Bible Study might be to use Zoom or maybe down the road, meet outside on the church grounds with everyone bringing their chair and doing social distancing with masks. What has worked for you?

The up to date information on our Triennial, originally scheduled for this July in Phoenix has been postponed to August 3-5, 2021 for the Convention and August 5-8 for the Gathering. Registrations for the Triennial made for this year will be transferred to next year, but hotel reservations will

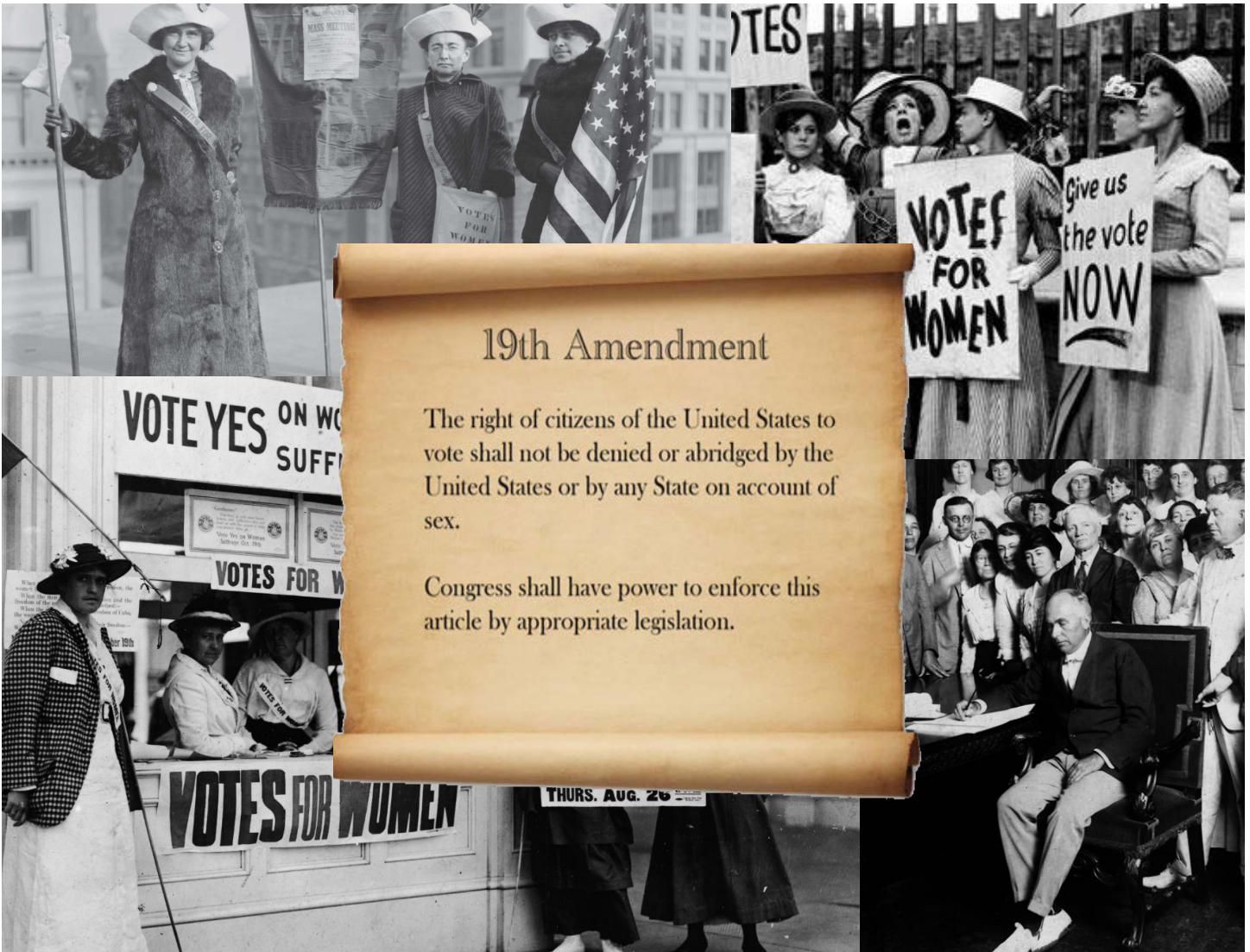
have to be renewed.

Our Synod convention originally scheduled for October this year is being postponed to October 2021 at the Echo Park Episcopal Retreat Center. We hope to have a Winter Gathering in 2021, but will see what can be done safely. In the meantime, please keep the offerings coming which will be forwarded on to Churchwide Women of the ELCA to help keep our organization strong.

This issue of *What's News* focuses on the 50th anniversary of the ordination of women. Thank you to the women pastors in our synod who have contributed their thoughts in this issue about this anniversary. During this anniversary celebration, we celebrate the added dimension that women in the ministry bring to our faith life.

God's blessings to all!
Dixie Hanson





19th Amendment

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.

Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE THE 19TH AMENDMENT

On August 19, 2020, we will celebrate 100 years of women being able to vote in the United States. This came about by decades of struggle and protesting to obtain the right for women to have an equal share in voting.

The unrest began before the Civil War when other reform groups were being formed such as, temperance leagues, religious movements, moral-reform societies, anti-slavery organizations, in which women played a prominent role.

The Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 brought together a group of abolitionist activists, who were mostly women, in Seneca Falls, New York, to discuss the problem of women's rights. They were invited by two reformers, Elizabeth

Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott. Most of the delegates agreed that women were autonomous individuals who deserved their own political identities. They appealed to the Bill of Rights.

In the 1850s the movement gained momentum but was slowed during the Civil War time. After the War, the 14th Amendment extending Constitutional Rights to all male citizens and the 15th Amendment, in 1870, extending the right to vote to black men, were made into law.

Stanton, along with Susan B. Anthony, believed that this was now the time to push lawmakers for universal suffrage. In 1869 this faction formed a group, led by Lucy Stone, called the National Woman Suffrage Association, which began their fight for universal suffrage.

By 1890 the groups merged to be

known as The National American Woman Suffrage Association, of which Elizabeth Cady Stanton was the first president. They appealed to the idea, not that men and women were equal, but that they were different, and, therefore, deserved the right to vote.

By 1910 some of the Western states were allowing women to vote, but momentum was again slowed by World War I. During this time there were more militant groups staging hunger strikes and picketing at the White House.

Finally, on August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution was ratified and on November 2nd of that year more than 8 million women across the United States voted in elections for the first time. ■

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS



50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE ORDINATION OF ELCA WOMEN PASTORS

by Dianne Tillman, SWO Board Member

5332... Number of Women Ordained
1970- July 2019

32..... Number of Women Elected
as Synodical Bishops

33%.... Women as % of ELCA Clergy
serving Congregations

These numbers say it all in the statistics from pages.stolaf.edu/Lutheranwomensordination. Thirty-two women bishops from April Larson (who spoke at the Churchwide Triennial which I attended) to the first and current Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton (who attended the last two Triennials I attended).

In my women's synodical experience we have highlighted our SoCal SWO women pastors as bible study leaders, chaplains and speakers at our convention and Autumn Renewal. But let us hear from some of these pastors themselves as they share, in their own words, some of their experiences.

From Pam Challis: I received my call to become a preacher at the age of 17. I was praying at the altar in my home church, First Church of the Nazarene, in Marion, Indiana, when I heard God say to me, "Pam, I want you to be a preacher." I bolted upright and said softly, but out loud, "I think you mean him!" I was absolutely sure God wouldn't call a woman - especially since I had never seen a woman pastor - and women weren't exactly high on the list for being trained! I fought this call for 16 years - and finally - married, and with three children, we went to seminary

together. That was 29 years ago! When I was ordained in November 1995, our son's arm was around me nearly the whole time - he was so proud! I remember our youngest daughter asking what she should call me now, and I said, "I'm thinking Most Holy Reverend Mother should work just fine!" Our oldest daughter said, "I'm thinking, Mom!" It's been a journey...

From Ruth Sievert: Reflections on 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women in the ELCA • In September 1976, I entered Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, CA as a special student, with no intentions of being ordained. I had graduated from college in Ohio with a teaching credential and, after a nightmarish student teaching experience, determined that I was not going to be a teacher. So, I didn't know what to do with myself. Once I got my letter of acceptance and got my parents to fill out the forms for financial aid, I headed for Berkeley at the end of the summer, because I knew how to be a student. I loved being a student. I was going to study theology for a year and see what might come up next.

It never occurred to me to think about ordination because I had never met an ordained woman and because nobody ever told me I might have the gifts to be a pastor. I certainly did not see those gifts in me. But a few things happened that nudged me forward. First, I had no idea what classes to take because I wasn't in the M.Div. program in which all the classes were spelled out. The very wise Dean at the time, Dr. Walter Stuhr suggested I just take the same classes as the M.Div. students so I would be with my peers, and it would give me a good idea about ministry. Second, I absolutely loved my classes more than I had ever enjoyed 95% of the classes I had taken in the past. They were small, intimate, and the subjects just grabbed my attention. Third, my advisor kept asking me questions like "Do you want to do Teaching Parish in January?" "Sure. Might as well," and "Are you going to apply for Clinical Pastoral Education in the summer?" "OK, I guess." Fourth, I loved the whole atmosphere of seminary. My professors and peers were supportive of me and encouraged me to think about officially becoming an M.Div. student, on the ordination track. So, I just decided to say "yes" to each step of the process, expecting to finally hit a brick wall with my inadequacy to do the work asked of me. I still wouldn't say that I was going to be ordained. I was just saying "yes." Finally, in the middle of my internship, where I had received enormous support and encouragement from my supervising pastor and the congregation, I said "yes," I believe I am being called to be a pastor.

Seminary was the easiest part of being a pastor! I waited 18 months for my first call. It has not been easy as a woman faced with a lot of sexism along the way, and being a pastor is already really hard! But in over 38 years of ministry there has been a lot more wonderful than misery. I have been deeply blessed to share

the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a lot of people over the years, and while I cannot point to an illustrious career in terms of money or a big congregation or a long-term pastorate, I can point to a lot of people who have heard the Gospel from me and been touched by it. I can point to a lot of moments when people have known God's love through me and I through them, and I am grateful for it all.

**Erin Martinson,
Luther Seminary Class of 2000:**

I grew up in the Lutheran Church, my dad was the director of education for the old ALC. My great grandfather was a missionary pastor from Germany. Leading churches is in my blood...but even with that, being a woman church leader has been a challenge. More since I have reached middle age and recognized the strong arm of the more conservative lay leaders of the church. In my first 20 years as an ordained leader I took my naivete and raced ahead with social ministry and evangelism and shifting norms to using more social media. These days I am working more with pastoral care, and hopefully will regain my passion/ability for storytelling...

Megan Fryling: I was ordained at Grace Lutheran Church in Covina, CA on June 1, 2014. I had been at Grace for over a year at that point, mostly as an unordained interim pastor while their called pastor was deployed as a military chaplain. It was an incredible day - my ordination was at Grace, surrounded by people who supported me and recognized God's calling in my life. The wonderful reception following the service was at Prince of Peace in Covina where I was also serving part-time.

In my ordination photos, there's something that stands out that most certainly has been an integral part of my ministry. I was very visibly 38 weeks pregnant on that Sunday afternoon. Exactly one week later, on Pentecost Sunday that year, my son was born.

One of my friends who was present re-

marked to me later how powerful that visual was for her, that there I was, so obviously female and so obviously a pastor. She had grown up in a tradition where that wasn't an option. At home I have a small framed photo of my ordination and when I see it, it's a powerful reminder of the broader life & ministry that I've been called to. Over 6 years later, I'm a parent to my Pentecost Child and I'm also a resource/foster parent to two young children. Looking back, I can see that from the start of my ministry, God was making it clear that my calling is to more than one thing and on the days when it seems nearly impossible to be fully all that I'm called to, I'm reminded that I'm supported by Jesus & by the larger church family. While both life and ministry can be daunting challenges sometimes, that reminder gives me hope & strength to keep going.

Ellen Jennrich: I was originally not too keen on women pastors - never was in a church with one. But at a SWO conference in Santa Barbara back in 1990, while singing "Here I Am," I was absolutely overcome, even to tears, with God's call to ordination. After an early morning walk on the beach and a long time in prayer, I left the conference ready to "test the waters." My husband wasn't too thrilled, but our older daughter, then in high school, simply said, "Well, Mom, if God is calling you, GO FOR IT!" OK - maybe God just wanted me more active in teaching and music, so I made God a bargain - if I pass Greek (in the first semester of seminary), I'll try it. I passed and sure enough, with support of several women pastors, finished at Fuller and PLTS seminaries and was ordained in 1996. I served three congregations before retirement - Grace, Culver City; Church of the Cross, Arcadia; Mt. Olive, Santa Monica. All a wonderful experience serving God's people! Now I'm still active in the Synod as chair of the Global Partners Team, and I'm a member at Grace, Culver City where I lead a women's Bible study and will again sing

in praise band and choir (post COVID-19). All because I went to a SWO conference and sang "Here I Am"!

The Rev. Tracy M. Williams: As a 2nd career pastor and the youngest African American female to be ordained in the Southwest California Synod, I began my journey in 2015 working with Pastor James Lobdell, at Holy Trinity, Inglewood, CA. I started my ministry at Holy Redeemer Lutheran, Bellflower, CA in 2016 as a TEEM pastor while completing my years at PLTS/Luther Seminary.

I was officially ordained on October 21, 2018. As an African American woman coming into a predominantly white historically European church, I have found it to be quite rewarding, but not without its challenges. I am blessed to be in partnership with the people of God. It has been altogether five years as a servant for the Lord in this church.

I have the pleasure of working on the following SoCal Synod boards: The Cooperative Candidacy committee, the Disciplinary committee, and the local ELCA women's board, as well as the Dean for the Long Beach Conference.

With the unrest going on in our country with both the pandemic and the senseless killings of black and brown people at the hands of the police, I have had to adjust my time to deal with those issues. Over the last few weeks, we have all been traumatized again and again seeing and dealing with the death of African American people.

I was honored to host a Zoom conversation with 265+ pastors, deacons, and lay people on "what now?" I believe until Black Lives Matter, No Life Matters! I know that God is hearing the cries the African American community and justice will come. I love the work that I do and have faith that God has equipped me to handle the tough times with the good ones. To God Be the Glory!!!

More from ELCA women pastors in future What's News editions.

Women of the ELCA Churchwide Ministeries and Support Opportunities



The ongoing ministries of the churchwide expression of our organization can be described in four categories: Communications, Programs, Governance, and Operations.

Communications

Communications account for the biggest part of the operating expenditures of the churchwide expression – nearly half. That includes *Gather* and its Bible study, *Daily Grace*, *Café*, *Bold Connections*, *Interchange* and *Intercambio*, our social media presence, the many free resources available on our website, welca.org, and so much more. All these things help us strengthen our connections across the miles.

Programs

Our Discipleship, Global Education, Justice, Stewardship, Membership, and Intergenerational programs together take up about a quarter of our annual operating expenditures, but they change lives - and no one can put a dollar figure on that.

Our communications and programs are the most visible parts of our ministry together, but there's a lot that goes on behind the scenes, too.

Governance

Our 21 elected churchwide board members and officers crisscross the country, attending training events and synodical events, leading workshops,

developing local leaders, and so much more, all on a volunteer basis. Did you know that every one of our elected board members is also a generous donor? That's good stewardship and good leadership. In 2018, governance accounted for about a sixth of our annual expenditures. Travel costs are the biggest part of this piece of the pie, as we'd expect for a national organization like ours.

Operations

This slice of the pie is just about an eighth of our annual expenditures. Included here are such things as the annual audit, liability insurance, and ordinary office expenses. The biggest single item in this slice is our annual \$186,000 payment to the ELCA for our office rent, which also covers technical services and other business expenses.

Other ways you can support Women of the ELCA besides through offerings to your units:

Katie's Fund

Women of the ELCA established the Katie's Fund Endowment in 1997 to honor the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther, raise up bold leaders for the women's organization, and support bold and creative ministry for generations to come. Your gifts to Katie's Fund, whether to the endowment or to the current fund, ensure the organization's

continued commitment to community, growth, and action. The income earned by the Katie's Fund endowment, along with Katie's Fund current, supports ministry in three key areas: leadership development, global connections and living theology. Give online at welca.org/katiesfund or by mail to: Women of the ELCA, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009. Please make your check out to Katie's Fund Current or Katie's Fund endowment. And thank you!

Faithful Friends

Have you heard about the Faithful Friends of Women of the ELCA? These especially dedicated women make a difference in the life of our community of women created in the image of God by giving regularly, every month — automatically! In fiscal year 2019, 132 Faithful Friends gave a total of \$28,234 to our churchwide organization by automatic withdrawal from either a checking account or a credit card. This is by far the easiest, most effective way to give generously to Women of the ELCA. Will you join these Faithful Friends? It's easy to do. Sign up with a credit card online at welca.org/faithfulfriendsonline, or download the form at welca.org/faithfulfriends. You can choose to give any monthly amount from \$10 on up.

Thank you!

2020 SWO BOARD MEMBERS, OFFICERS & SUPPORT

OFFICERS

President: Dixie Hanson
11806 Bergamo Ct.
Moorpark, CA 93021
(h) 805-529-3716
(c) 805-368-5709
dixhanson@gmail.com

Vice-President:

Rosemary Lawson
2832 N. Brighton St.
Burbank, CA 91504
(h) 818-767-2879 (w) 818-767-7260
LAWSON5323@sbcglobal.net

Secretary:

Beth Bunnell
20118 Marilla St.
Chatsworth, CA 91311
(h) 818-718-2086 (c) 818-903-6608
bethbunnell@yahoo.com

Treasurer: Karil Drake
3046 N Buena Vista St.
Burbank, CA 91504
(c) 818-395-2353
KarilDrake@yahoo.com

BOARD MEMBERS

Lillian Simons
3757 York Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(h) 323-254-6632
ltsimons83@gmail.com

Mary Ridenour-French
145 North 4th Street, #329
Santa Paula, CA 93060
(c) 805-746-7751
mkridenour@gmail.com

Janet Simmons
1906 Wheaton Ave.
Claremont, CA 91711
(h) 909-399-4049
jbjs41@hotmail.com

Mary Stewart
1000 Figueroa St., #42
Wilmington, CA 90744
(h) 310-835-8126
(c) 310-339-4836
marystewart0884@att.net.

Dianne Tillman
19443 Cypress Point Dr.
Northridge, CA 91326
(h) 818-363-5951
(c) 818-429-0474
Dianne.tillman08@gmail.com

Pr. Tracy Williams
14515 Blaine Ave
Bellflower, CA 90706
(h) 323-702-7278
twilliams_teacher@yahoo.com

Facilities Liaison

Julie Jensen
What's News Database Manager
921 Gill Ave
Port Hueneme CA 93041
(h) 805-486-5762
(c) 805-218-8416
juliejnsn1@roadrunner.com

Newletter Editors

Karil Drake (point person)

Maxine Stenstrom
Graphic design/editor
PO Box 5350, Pine Mtn Club, CA
93222
maxineststrom1@gmail.com



PEACE WITH JUSTICE

by Sharon Heck

We celebrated World Refugee Day on Saturday, June 20th reflecting on the life of our own Migrant Savior, Jesus, who fled persecution as a baby with his family into Egypt. Today, this part of his life is mirrored by the nearly 80 million displaced people, refugees, and asylum seekers in the world today:

1. In 2019, there were 25.9 million refugees worldwide.
2. 37,000 people are forced from their homes daily due to persecution or conflict.
3. In 2018, there were 2.8 million new refugees. Ongoing conflicts, climate disasters, and COVID-19 could certainly increase these numbers in the future.
4. More than 2/3 of all refugees came from just five countries in 2019:
 - Syrian Arab Republic: 6.7 million • Venezuela: 3.7 million
 - Afghanistan: 2.7 million • South Sudan: 2.2 million • Myanmar: 1.1 million
5. Many of those who fled Myanmar were from the Rohingya minority, who've faced harsh persecution for years. 745,000 Rohingya, including more than 400,000 children, now live in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. They're at increased risk for Covid-19 in the refugee camps' close quarters.

The executive branch of our U.S. government has greatly limited the number of refugees allowed to enter our country. Our aid is urgently needed by ELCA agencies that help these refugees who are in great need. **Our gifts will indeed make a difference.** Please send contributions to the following:

- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, 700 Light St., Baltimore, MD 21230
- World Hunger, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009
- Lutheran World Relief, P.O. Box 17061, Baltimore, MD 21297-1061.

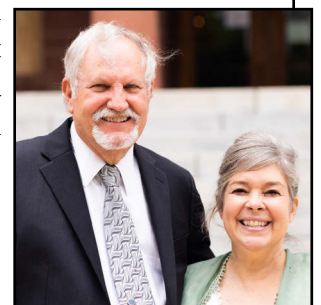
FROM OUR TREASURER

Dear Ladies, I hope you all are doing well! This is definitely the most different times I have ever experienced. I am one of the "Baby boomers" so I do not remember the tough war times but I do have a "Victory Garden" growing in my yard! I love the fresh fruits and vegetables that we are able to grow in California!

So I know it is all different for you but please try to keep your support coming in. There have been only a few that have come in so far. So when you have time, please send in your monetary support. Thanks so much!

I have a new address, just got married on June 4th! I am still legally Karil Drake. I live a block away from Rosemary Lawson at 3046 N. Buena Vista Street, Burbank, CA 91504.

Peace,
Kari Drake Starleaf





Julie Jensen, 921 Gill Avenue
 Port Hueneme, CA 93041
 CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

EMPOWERED WOMEN MIX AND MATCH

American women's history is full of pioneers: Women who fought for their rights, worked hard to be treated equally and made great strides in science, politics, sports, literature and art.

See if you can match up names with accomplishments. It is okay to Google if you need some help.

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Mary Jacob | 11. Temple Grandin | — 1st Woman U.S. Cabinet Member | — NASA Mathematician |
| 2. Patsy Sherman | 12. Ruth Handler | — Invented the Brassiere | — Invented Barbie Doll |
| 3. Ruth Wakefield | 13. Bette N. Graham | — Opened 1st Birth Control Clinic | — Invented COBOL Language |
| 4. Margaret Mead | 14. Dolores Huerta | — Invented the Chocolate Chip Cookie | — Invented Animal Handling Technology |
| 5. Juliette G. Lowe | 15. Kathrine Switzer | — Invented Windshield Wipers | — Founded the Girl Scouts |
| 6. Grace Hopper | 16. Katherine Johnson | — Invented Disposable Diapers | — Anthropologist |
| 7. Rosalind Franklin | 17. Edith Wharton | — Invented Wireless Communication Technology | — DNA Science Pioneer |
| 8. Sharon Heck | 18. Frances Perkins | — 1st Woman to Run Boston Marathon | — Social Justice Advocate |
| 9. Mary Anderson | 19. Hedy Lamarr | — Invented White Out | — Invented Scotchgard |
| 10. Marion Donovan | 20. Margaret Sanger | | — United Farm Workers Co-Founder |
| | | | — 1st Woman Pulitzer Prize Winner |