Women of the ELCA

NORTH CAROLINA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

WWW.NCWELCA.COM

THE BULLETIN

MARCH-APRIL 2025

The Bulletin is the official publication of the NC Women of the ELCA, published bi-monthly. Articles and information relating to the Women of the ELCA are accepted for publication, following review by the Synodical Women's Organization (SWO) President and the SWO Secretary, who serves as the Editor. You may submit articles to Anita Miller, anitamiller0919@gmail.com, or 150 New Sterling Road, Stony Point, NC 28678 .

CONTENTS

Articles:

Land Acknowledgement	Pg2
President's Letter	Pg2
Conference Leaders	Pg 3
Spring Gatherings	Pg4
What are you giving up for Lent?	Pg4
New Committee Formed	Pg5
Did you hear about?	Pg5
Church World Service	Pg6
All Can Be Fed	Pg6
Human Trafficking in NC	Pg7
Writing Our Representatives	Pg8
Sample Letters	Pg9
Bullying: A serious issue	Pg11
Climate Change	Pg13
Offering Updates	Pg14
One Day Retreat Photos	Pg15-16

Attachments:

Spring Retreat Form
Annual Gathering Registration Form
Young Women Guest Registration Form
Health Form

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.

Mission Statement:

MOBILIZING WOMEN TO ACT BOLDLY ON THEIR FAITH IN JESUS

THE NC WOMEN OF THE ELCA LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The North Carolina Women of the ELCA acknowledge that the land where we gather is the ancestral homeland of several First Nation tribes, who were stewards of this land for many generations. God has entrusted us with the continued stewardship of this land as we honor them, their ancestors and descendants, respectfully acknowledging their traditions and teachings.

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Dear Sisters in Christ,

In February I attended a wonderful women's group at Grace, Salisbury and on that evening our discussion centered on the topic "Bloom where you are planted." We discussed struggles, challenges and how we can see what God has in store for us. From that discussion, I kept thinking about how I know that I am in the right place and am I doing what God wants me to do. I thought about how we often find ourselves in places where we least expect or desire to be. Sometimes we feel like we've been planted in the wrong place. But, dear sisters, I have come to the conclusion that we have been divinely placed, and our growth can bloom even in unexpected places. That was the outcome of my thoughts and our discussion at Grace. Some of the ladies in the group had lived in large cities but somehow, with husbands, God placed them in the smaller town of Salisbury. Even though they were in a smaller setting, they found that God had put new experiences in their path, and they had grown in Christ.

God has a way of using our location to shape us. However, as women of the faith, we must remember that we are never alone in our growth. God and our WELCA sisters are right there with us, nourishing us, encouraging us, and providing all the tools for our growth. I thought about all the times that I needed an encouraging word and one of my WELCA sisters knew just what to say to me; that is being divinely placed. So, think about a time that you received just what you needed and remember the words from prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord,"plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future".

This reminds us that no matter where we are planted, God has a purpose for us. Even when it feels uncomfortable, He is still working in us.

My sisters in Christ, take heart, wherever we find ourselves, God is using that location and that moment in time for growth within us. So, bloom where you are planted. Trust in the process and know that your roots are deeply nourished by His love and grace.

With love in Christ,

Terri Brown, President, NC WELCA

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Conference Leaders Article – March/April Bulletin

I always feel a little sacrilegious this time of year. When everyone else is planning for Easter, all I can think about is the beach. The beach is my happy place, which harkens back to spending my childhood summers in a rented cottage on the CT shore. It's our childhood memories that prompted my sister and I to start a tradition five years ago spending a week together every summer at the beach. Which beach we choose is irrelevant; it's the time spent together that matters.

Last year, we tried to recreate our childhood memory with a week at the CT shore instead of here in the Carolinas. Well, that experiment failed. Remember Hurricane Debbie? It rained every single day. It reminded me of last year's Beach Retreat in Isle of Palms SC. It was my first NC WELCA Beach Retreat. And it rained every single day. The rain finally stopped, as we were packing our cars to leave.

Have you ever found yourself in a place like that? You've anticipated something for so long…. And then somebody or something rains on your parade. You've looked forward to something for so long….. And it doesn't live up to your expectations, leaving you feeling empty and out of steam. You're unsure how to move forward, or even if you want to move at all, never mind forward.

As I contemplate my dreams of the beach this year, I am putting 2024 behind me as I look towards 2025 with renewed hope. The Beach Retreat is late in March this year, which should mean better weather. My sister and I are returning to the Carolinas this year, but in June instead of August, hoping to avoid any hurricanes this year. My sense of anticipation has returned, quieting my anxiety.

Another way my spirits have been boosted recently is preparing for the Spring Conference Gatherings. Our Spring Program "Wonder Watchers" is designed to help us recapture that sense of awe we had as children. Wonder invites us to be surprised by God's mystery, to let God be big, to half understand God and to enjoy for a moment how God fills us and this world with beauty, even when the world around us looks anything but beautiful. Wonder leaves us feeling more connected rather than alone in this world.

I encourage you to register and attend one of the Spring Conference Gatherings being held between late March and mid-May. I promise you'll come away with a renewed sense of wonder and fulfillment, even if it rains all day!

God's Peace & Joy,

Lorri Monterose, NC SWO Conference Coordinator

2025 SPRING GATHERING CALENDAR

ALEXANDER/IREDELL	ST. MARK'S MOORESVILLE	MAY 10
CATAWBA	MT. OLIVE, HICKORY	MARCH 22
CENTRAL/SALEM	BECK'S LEXINGTON	APRIL 5
MECKLENBURG/UNION	A MIGHTY FORTRESS CHARLOTTE	MAY 3
NORTHERN	MACEDONIA, BURGLINGTON	MAY 3
ROWAN	GRACE, SALISBURY	TBA
SANDHILLS	LIVING WORD, LAURINBURG	APRIL 26
SMOKY MOUNTAIN	GOOD SHEPHERD, BREVARD	MAY 3
SOUTHWESTERN	SALEM, LINCOLNTON	MAY 3
TRIANGLE	CHRIST THE KING, CARY	APRIL 12

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What are you giving up for Lent?

If you are reading this, the title of the article did not scare you away. Congratulations!
I sometimes think the season of Lent almost emulates coming up with New Year's resolutions. Why do we try to identify things to give up? Will our practices last longer than our resolutions have lasted? Let's reframe how we should be approaching Lent.

Lent is about only one thing—growing deeper in our relationship with the Lord.
According to Wikipedia, three traditional practices to be taken up *with renewed vigor* during Lent are known as the three pillars of Lent:

- prayer (justice toward God)
- fasting (justice toward self)
- almsgiving (justice toward neighbors)

Notice the emphasized phrase "with renewed vigor". <u>These three practices should already be part of our daily living</u>.
Notice, also, the use of the word "justice" within each practice. What does it mean to be just or fair or right with God, with ourselves, and with our neighbors? <u>Again, this is something we should already be doing all year</u>.
Perhaps what we need to give up for Lent is more time. Time to reflect on how God wants us to interact with others. More time in prayer, fasting, and giving. Then we may truly grow deeper in our relationship with the Lord
Lori Schaefer, Discipleship Committee

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New Committee formed:

There has been a new committee formed in your NC SWO. The new committee is called Media Outreach. We are recruiting new members from across our wonderful state. If you love taking pictures and going to NC WELCA events then you already have all of the qualifications needed. We work cohesively with all the other committees, the board, and the webmaster. Our goal is to take pictures and post them to Facebook, email to the webmaster. Act as a liaison between the webmaster and the secretary to get information out to our ladies all across the state. Interested in helping out – reach out to committee chair/Board Representative – Robin Stuart via email rstuart74@gmail.com or phone 828-999-8923. Please put your name and reason for reaching out in subject line of email and in text message.

Robin Stuar

t, Media Outreach Committee

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DID YOU HEAR ABOUT?

Again, there is so much to draw your attention to, that I run out of paper. So here is another Odds and Ends, that hopefully will encourage you to look into further information about the topic you find interesting or thought provoking.

Fayetteville Observer article on January 27, 2025 by Zac Anderson from USA TODAY, notes that President Biden was sending six deportation flights per week the six months through December, 2024, before the reports of President Trump's flights. In reality, deportation flights had never stopped. Department of Homeland Security was doing the job of returning the illegals.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has a mission to help people before, during and after disasters, including hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes and floods. They bring emergency personnel, supplies and equipment to stricken areas. They have a workforce of 20K and can call on 50K when needed. Currently they are supporting 108 major disasters and 10 emergency declarations, according to Fayetteville Observer, January 29, 2025 Reuters article. From the reports we are receiving from friends in the Asheboro area, they are working.

The state of NC, churches and non-profits are sending help, in addition to FEMA. But it is slow.

A rumor response page has been set up on its website to tramp down falsehoods.

President Donald Trump advocating tougher punishments for vandalizing public monuments, statues and religious displays was included an executive order celebrating the nation's 250 th birthday. This is a resurrection of a similar effort made to protect the rule of law and free speech, during President Trump's last term. Mara Verheyden-Hilliard, executive director of the Center for Protest Law and Litigation says "It's not about underlying claims about damages to person or property. Because there are already provisions to deal with this."

The executive order aligns with efforts to push back against education that focuses on the failings of the U.S., particularly when it comes to slavery and colonialism. Ms. Verheyden-

Hilliard noted the January 6, 2021 attack on the U.S. Capitol was to be exempt from the executive order. Legal challenges are being prepared. Justice is not known for being swift. How many children will be educated and grown without knowing about the wide spread protests, deaths and violent property damage and arson? I'm thinking about my lifetime, not to include history, think BLM, Floyd, Watts, Roe.
Found in February 10, 2025 Fayetteville Observer, Karen Weintraub, USA TODAY

Temporary Protected Status was typically available to folks arriving from countries that had natural disaster or military conflict, under Biden. 1 million from 17 countries were protected. The Trump administration revoked it for more than 600K Venezuelans in the U.S. 300K will lose their jobs and deportation protections by Feb. 1, 2025 and the rest in September. The action again will likely draw legal challenges. How many will again be homeless when the dust settles? Fayetteville Observer, January 31, 2025, Page 7A, Lauren Villagran, USA TODAY

Submitted by Tonie Neal, NCWELCA, Justice Ministry, Feb. 10, 2025

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CHURCH WORLD SERVICE

Hi Ladies, An article that reinforced a call from Church World Service's Roberta Smith from Raleigh, I received two days ago. I have been on the planning team for Cumberland County Crop Walk for many years, which is under the umbrella of Church World Services. We started the "walk" to raise money for hunger 30 years ago, before all the other "walks" got on board to raise money for their causes. So these walks all around the country for Crop Walk, are a big fund supplier for Church World Services as they work for ending hunger and building self sufficiency for other needs around the world. Stories are unending of how we did walk 3 miles and now are down to 1 mile in our fight to eradicate hunger, because Church World Services has instituted wells and means with communities around the globe for the family that walked those first 3 miles to fresh water. Roberta said the office has stopped all movement for the time being, folks not working, and this is affecting the average man on the street. Until the fallout from this new directive is settled. The work they do is "feeding, clothing, visiting the need our neighbors have", so important, but working people are important as well, as they possibly lose their jobs. Pray ladies, pray. On my knees, Tonie Neal, Justice Committee
https://open.substack.com/pub/steady/p/doing-trumps-dirty-work?r=1y3avq&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=email

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ALL CAN BE FED

Deanna Deaton, Teacher, Minister, Musician
Co-Presenter at Spring Coastal Retreat March 28-30, 2025

Just before the feeding of the 5000,Jesus and the disciples were going to a solitary place
Because they were exhausted and needed to rest. Rest didn't come, however,
Because people followed them and Jesus had compassion on the people.

On Friday night, I reflected on Mark 6's telling of this story. First, I wrote down what I imagined Jesus saying through the text .Then I wrote down what God was saying to me for this time of history.
Maybe one of these will speak to you. Maybe you need these messages, too.
…

Come.Rest awhile. Eat with me. Drink with me.
But no—Nevermind. There is more work to do.
Look at them—The people—They are hungry and hurting.
Compassion runs over.
And it's up to us to show them a steady presence—
To teach about love and To heal through being together.
So keep going.
I will make it possible—Even when you need rest.
And when it seems impossible—I will feed thousands with
5 loaves and 2 fish—And still there will be enough.
…
Keep going. Keep giving .Keep showing up .Keep writing .Keep praying.
There will be moments of rest on the boat—The journey with me can renew and restore.
Just keep going.
I am greater than
The country going backwards
Eating disorders
Cancer diagnoses
Deportation
Broken justice
Misplaced blame
Fear
ALL can be fed. But you have to keep going. Let me do what you cannot. Amen.

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North Carolina ranks ninth in human trafficking cases

Julie Arndt (Director of Communications, Sandhills conference for Justice committee

Most crimes are visible, but human trafficking is not a visible crime. But human trafficking is a crime which hides in the shadows, so the true number of cases in North Carolina, or anywhere, for that matter, is likely much higher.
Since 2005, the North Carolina Women of the ELCA have been working to raise awareness and fight for an end to these crimes against women and young people in the world.
In 2023, the most recent available statistics, the National Human Trafficking Hotline reports rank North Carolina No. 9 among the 50 states in cases reported. Statistics from 2023 report

684 contacts of the Hotline, yielding 235 actual cases involving 394 victims. Most of those cases were related to sex trafficking.

Human trafficking is happening in all parts of North Carolina. Major interstate highways, a large and transient military population, numerous rural agricultural areas with a high demand for cheap labor, and an increasing number of gangs all contribute to making our state a hotbed for human trafficking. Large sporting events like professional football and NASCAR may be part of the draw for traffickers. Charlotte, especially the city's economically distressed communities, seems to be a hub for trafficking activity.

Additionally, and most tragically, areas that have been impacted by natural disasters such as Hurricane Helene in western North Carolina, may draw traffickers in search of displaced individuals, in need of food, shelter, and other necessities. Traffickers look for victims in vulnerable populations. Social media has also become a "hunting ground" for predators in search of victims. National trafficking hot-line statistics point to the ease of recruitment most trafficking and exploitation taking place online. Parents should be aware of their child's screen time and contacts. Experts say any game or app that involves interaction with an unknown individual is probably connected to a predator seeking targets. Monitor your child's behavior at home and at school.

The North Carolina Human Trafficking Commission is the legislatively mandated leader of anti-human trafficking efforts in North Carolina. The commission is responsible for leading anti-human trafficking efforts in North Carolina. They fund research, educate the public, and suggest new legislation.

The Polaris project leads a survivor-centered, justice- and equity-driven movement to end human trafficking. Polaris has built the largest known dataset on human trafficking in North America. Since 2007, Polaris has operated the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline, connecting victims and survivors to support and services, and helping communities hold traffickers accountable.

HOTLINE 888-373-7888
Text INFO to 233733
Website: https://humantraffickinghotline.org
Languages: English, Spanish
Hours: 24 hours, 7 days a week

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COMMITTEE DAY II: JANUARY 18, 2025, ST. MARK'S MOORESVILLE
JUSTICE COMMITTEE MEETING

Here are a few notes for us to consider in this Justice Committee meeting: In my opinion Justice is a difficult committee to be a member of as Justice is subjective to the member who participates and it may be difficult to "extend" ones passions or grievances on to paper or physical action regardless of the subject. Of course, we, in this committee hope to remain in the "Lutheran and Christian mindset" to allow for respect to our committee's and the members of the body we address, whether it

is by letter writing, personal meetings, or some other action deemed necessary to draw attention or action to a particular mission.
For the state of North Carolina, the first session of the 2025-2026 General Assembly: House of Representatives, Senate and General Legistrative branch meet Wednesday January 29 th , 2025 at noon. You may access all governmental sessions streamed and or through the NC.gov website.
The address for the General Assembly for this session is:
Legislation Building
16 West Jones Street
Raleigh NC 27601
You may also contact the information center from the State Board of Elections who maintains contact information for all meetings and each representative's office address and phone number. I have included a list of Representatives, from the website, by county and districts. I hope this helps if you choose to reach out and contact any one of them for any cause that moves you.
If you go to the North Carolina dot Gov website you can access all meetings, committees, bills for review or vote and all information pertaining to the states business.
Because St. Mark's is in Iredell county I chose to include information from NC Legislation Branch, Iredell County: our reps are: Todd Carver (R), Jeffrey C. McNeely (R) and Mitchell S. Setzer (R). Iredell's Government office address is Iredell County Office, 300 N. Salisbury Street, Room 603, and Raleigh NC 27063-5925. Their phone is 919-733-5741. Similar information can be retrieved from the NC.gov website as well for each county.

I am enclosing several samples for writing to our representatives. You may paraphrase and copy as written. We will discuss topics and or causes to highlight this year in Justice. Thank you for participation in the committee and I hope you grow in your passions and involvement in any cause you desire.

June 22, 2024

Dear Senator (Sir or Madame) Representative, Commissioner, Council Member, Judge, Police Chief, Principal of School - etc. .

I am writing to you as a resident of North Carolina living in the town of . I am also a member of WELCA, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. For many years our women have been very active in ending human trafficking and its causes. Due to those commitments, I strongly urge you to support anti-trafficking both human and or sexual, legislation.
I understand that several bills, including are on the table and will be voted on in the near future, or may expire soon. The passage of these bill(s) is

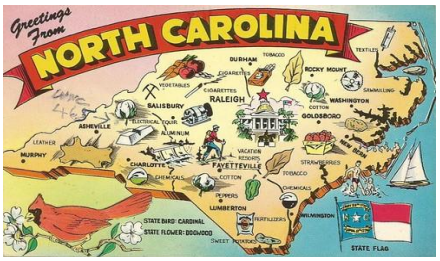
important to me and I hope you will work to support these type of protections for these vulnerable children and youth in our state.
In faith, .
Name, Address, Phone number (not required)
A simple word of encouragement is also appreciated.

Sample letter to legislators
Written in your own words, a personal, thoughtful and well-written letter to your elected officials is powerful and can make a difference. In your letter, educate your elected officials on the impact the governor's budget proposal will have on your schools, students and programs by sharing specific local concerns and examples. Alert them to the types of programs that would be cut if education funding is taken away.
Letters can be written by individuals or on behalf of your entire board. If you are writing on behalf of your board, print your letter on district letterhead; if you are writing an individual letter, use personal stationary if you have it. Letters should be no longer than one page and, if applicable, attach copies of news releases, newspaper articles, adopted board resolutions, etc. to augment your letter.
(Date)
The Honorable (Full Name of Legislator)
California State Assembly or California State Senate
State Capitol, (Room #)
Sacramento, CA. 95814
Dear Senator (Last Name) or Assembly Member (Last Name):
As a school board member of the [insert school district/ county office of education] and concerned voter in your legislative district, I am urging you to reject all legislative proposals that call for massive and devastating cuts to our public schools. In total, the governor is proposing more than a $4.4 billion reduction in education funding, including a suspension of Proposition
98 in the 2008-09 budget year. Not only are these proposals disastrous to schools in your legislative district and throughout the state, they are fundamentally inconsistent with the state's goal of improving student achievement.
[Insert local concerns and provide examples of how the reduction of state revenues will affect your students and programs. Examples are listed below.
My school district/ county office of education:
• Has suffered more than $ (___) million in cuts in the last several years and further reductions to our funding stream will have devastating consequences in the classroom
• Stands to lose $ (___) in 2008-09 due to the suspension of Proposition 98
• Will be forced to lay off: # of teachers, # of classified employees, etc.
• Will be forced to eliminate or reduce the following programs and services: _____, _____]

While it is clear that there are extraordinary challenges in balancing the state's budget, the progress that our students have made should not be put in jeopardy. [Insert examples of academic achievement in your local district.] If we want this progress to continue, the state must hold our students and our schools harmless.

Our students and schools did not create this budget problem, and fixing the problem should not come at the expense of their educational progress and success. Accordingly, I respectfully urge you to vote "NO" on any budget that fails to honor the state's commitment to public education. I also urge you to consider all options to solve this crisis, including new revenue sources to balance the budget. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and I look forward to being in touch with your office soon.

Sincerely,
[Your Full Name]
[Title]
[Board of Education/ County Office of Education]
[Address]
[Daytime Telephone Number]
[Email Address]



Note: Please fax a copy of your letter to CSBA at 916.325.4030 or email govrel@csba.org.

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Bullying: A Serious Issue

Bullying is a significant problem affecting millions of people worldwide, both children and adults. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1 in 3 students aged 13-15 worldwide report being bullied at school. It is defined as any unwanted, aggressive behavior intended to harm or intimidate someone. Bullying can manifest in various forms, including:

Physical Bullying: Hitting, kicking, pinching, shoving, tripping, stealing, or damaging property.

Verbal Bullying: Name-calling, teasing, making inappropriate sexual comments, taunting, or threatening harm.

Social Bullying: Targeting a person's social reputation or relationships with others to isolate or embarrass them.

Cyberbullying: Occurs over digital devices such as cell phones, computers, or tablets. A study by Pew Research shows that 59% of teens in the U.S. have experienced some form of cyberbullying.

Racial Bullying: Offensive behavior based on someone's skin color, cultural background, religion, ethnicity, or perceived ethnicity.

Religious Bullying: Negative treatment based on someone's actual or perceived religion, aimed at causing emotional, mental, or physical harm.

Sexual Bullying: Involves aggression based on a person's body, sexuality, or sex, and is commonly observed among adolescents as a form of sexual harassment. According to the National Women's Law Center, 1 in 4 girls experience sexual harassment in school.

Disability Bullying: Targeting individuals because they have a disability. According to a study by the National Bullying Prevention Center, students with disabilities are twice as likely to be bullied compared to their peers.

The Effects of Bullying

Bullying can have devastating consequences for victims. Research shows that 1 in 4 students who are bullied consider suicide, and 1 in 5 attempt it. The effects can range from physical injuries to emotional trauma and, in severe cases, even suicide. Victims are more likely to experience anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. Other possible impacts include difficulty sleeping, eating disorders, concentration issues, and physical health problems like headaches, stomachaches, and fatigue.

Causes of Bullying

Bullying does not have a single cause. However, several factors contribute to why it happens:

Individual Factors: Bullies often have low self-esteem and struggle with anger and aggression. Victims may be perceived as "different" or "weak," due to characteristics like being overweight, having a disability, or coming from a different cultural background.

Family Factors: Children raised in households where violence or aggression is accepted may be more likely to bully others. Victims may also come from homes where they experience neglect or abuse.

School and Social Factors: Environments that tolerate fear and intimidation are more prone to bullying. Schools or workplaces where bullies target those perceived as weaker or "different" are especially at risk.

Preventing Bullying

While there is no easy solution, several strategies can help prevent bullying:

Education: Both children and adults must understand what bullying is, how to recognize it, and how to respond. It's important to teach individuals how to stand up to bullies and seek help when needed.

Creating a Positive Environment: Schools, workplaces, and other social settings should foster a climate where bullying is not tolerated. This includes enforcing clear anti-bullying rules and promoting respect and safety for all. According to StopBullying.gov, schools with clear anti-bullying policies see a 25% reduction in bullying incidents.

Supporting Victims: Victims need emotional and practical support from their family, teachers, peers, and employers. They should know they are not alone and that help is available.

What to Do If You're Being Bullied

If you're being bullied, there are several steps you can take to get help:

Talk to Someone You Trust: Inform your parents, teachers, or employer about what is happening. They can work with you to address the issue and develop a plan to stop the bullying.

Stand Up to the Bully: If it feels safe, assertively tell the bully to stop their behavior. Let them know that their actions are not acceptable.

Seek Professional Help: If the bullying is affecting your mental or emotional well-being, speak to a counselor or therapist. They can provide support, help you develop coping strategies, and guide you through overcoming the effects of bullying.

You Are Not Alone

SENIOR SERVICES

Remember, there are people who care about you and want to help. Over 70% of students who are bullied do not report the incidents, so it's crucial to reach out to those who can help. Bullying is never your fault,and there are resources available to support you. You deserve to feel safe, respected, and valued in all environments. Submitted by: Eleanor Ernst Justice Committee

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Please fill out the attached Health Form and keep it in your purse at all times. We never know when it might come in handy for emergency assistance. Keep a copy on your fridge too!

Climate Change

Ladies, I found a new twist to our problems with climate change in Tuesday, December 31, 2024's Fayetteville Observer newspaper. We have quite a few of threatened species and one of the problems is the lack of food, but in addition to that is the lack of nutrition in the food they do find. Sort of like us?

I've said for years, "food just doesn't taste like it did, back in the day". And of course, folks said it was old age. Every one of my problems seem to stem from "old age". Yours? Well now there is more to tell you, about lack of taste.

Ellen Welti, Smithsonian Institution wrote in The Conversation the human activities increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are raising global temperatures and so plants are growing faster. What happens when things grow faster? They aren't as strong or in the plant life fewer nutrients. So the ecologist, Ms. Welti and colleagues think the nutrient dilution affect species of animal populations, i.e. low birth rates. Research has shown that climate change is a cause of nutrient dilution in our food crops, so growth and health decline could be a natural outcome for us as well.

There was comments on the different parts of the world having the population health survival effected due to dependence on certain crops (East and Central Asia rice and wheat was and example).

"Insects are essential members of the web of life that pollinate many flowering plants, serve as a food source for birds and animals, and perform other important ecological services. Around the world many insect species are declining in developed areas, where their habitat has been converted to farms or cities, as well as in natural areas. "

The list of declining animals can fill a page, but a few: rodents, rabbits, koalas, horses, rhinoceroses, pandas, sheep, cattle, goats and elephants are mentioned in the article. Of course humans caught my eye. What are we doing to ourselves ladies? Our planet? Our Stewardship of this beautiful earth?

Pray ladies, and see where you can make a difference and with God's help, we can change climate.

Submitted by Tonie Neal, Justice Ministry, NCWELCA January 5, 2025

PENNIES PROJECT UPDATE

WOW! The Women Of the Word outdid themselves in raising money for the 2024-2025 Pennies project, Sleep in Heavenly Peace. A total of $5,555.74 was collected during the year and sent to this organization. Just think how many beds can be built with the funds we provided! This is such a worthy cause. Please visit their website, shpbeds.org, and see how you can volunteer. Several bed builds are taking place and one might be in your neighborhood. I was fortunate to attend a bed build at the Lowe's hardware store in Mooresville last year. We sanded the wood, assembled headboards and footboards, branded the SPH logo, and doused in lacquer. Also the side rails were prepared. The 150 actual beds we prepared are put together at the children's home. Our money is also helped by pillows, sheets, mattresses, and blankets.
A huge thank you to everyone who encouraged their churches or neighbors and communities to support this needed ministry.

Our 2025-2026 project is North Carolina Diaper Bank. Start saving those pennies and hopefully they will turn into many dollars

2025 Offering Designations:
2025 Spring Gathering = Ebenezer Children's Home, North Wilkesboro, NC

37th Annual Gathering:
50% = Lutherans Restoring Creation
30% = CWO
20% = Supporting Our Sisters

After February 1, please forward remittances to
Nena Babb, SWO Treasurer
6130 Heavner Road
Vale, NC 28168
nhbabb@gmail.com
(704)238-5700
CU Treasurers should continue to use Form A!