

**Women of the North American Lutheran Church**  
**Annual Gathering Minutes**  
**August 4, 2020**  
**GoToMeeting**

*God created women of purpose:  
Women who reflect the heart of God*

The WNALC Council members present: Jacqui El Torro (Chair), Marcella Nelson (Vice Chair & Missions), Kim Isiminger (Secretary), Jill Nesheim (Treasurer), Rachel Busch Jones (Communications), and Sheila Westrick (Spiritual Growth)

Jacqui began our first virtual Annual Gathering with her customary “Grace, Grace! Favor, Favor!” and expressed her excitement to welcome everybody to the very first virtual Women of the NALC Annual Gathering. After giving some basic instructions on how we would be handling motions in the online format, Jacqui introduced pastoral intern Lynnae Douglas from Calvary Lutheran Church, Brookfield, Wisconsin to deliver the opening prayer.

Following the opening prayer, each member of the WNALC Council came on screen and introduced themselves. Jody Ford, who had been a member of the Council for two years until resigning her seat in July, was introduced by Sheila Westrick. Sheila thanked Jody for all of the hard work she did during her two years on the Council.

When the Council introductions were finished, Jacqui read from Philippians 1:2-6 and expressed how this passage speaks to the good works that the Women of the NALC carry out every year in support of many local and international ministries. She specifically mentioned the 1,168 flood buckets, 560 health kits, 648 blankets and quilts, 275 school kits, 200 layettes, 800 Bibles, and \$13,120 in gift cards that had been collected and donated to NALC Disaster Response. She relayed Mary Bates’ grateful thanks and reminded everyone that they can continue to send gift cards to the NALC office, Attention: “Stuff the Truck” in support of the ongoing Disaster Response efforts. Jacqui also thanked Jill and her husband Ed for trekking across the mid-west to collect many of the items listed above and delivering them to the Disaster Response warehouse in Ohio.

Jacqui then thanked Sheila and Jody for their time on the Council. She also thanked Linda Brower who was stepping down as the facilitator of the Texas Mission Region, and she announced that Pat Dittrich would be taking over that position. Jacqui then introduced Bishop Dan Selbo.

Bishop Dan expressed his pleasure at being able to meet with us, and he assured us that God also was with us as we met in our unexpected venue. He shared that his first year had been both challenging and promising, and he gave us a short introduction of his vision for the next four years. He expressed the importance of discipleship and encouraged us, as the women of the church body, to continue working and networking within the congregations and ministries of the NALC. Above all, he reminded us, we are called to keep our eyes on Jesus and the purpose he has set before us.

The next item of business was for Kim to present the minutes from the 2019 Gathering in Indianapolis. Rachel Busch Jones (Mahomet, IL) made the motion to accept the minutes as written and Trina Petersen (Lithonia, GA) seconded the motion. After the 2019 minutes were accepted, Jill Nesheim presented the account summary for the calendar year ending December 2019 and introduced the recommended budget for the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Lynn Coughnour (Salisbury, NC) moved to accept the recommended budget and Robin Harris (Jonestown, PA) seconded the motion.

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The introduction of the candidates for the four open WNALC Council positions followed. Candidate bios were included in the Gathering packet, and four of the six candidates submitted short videos of introduction which were played during the Webinar.

Following the candidate videos Marcella expressed the Council's thanks for the generosity of support for last year's Mission Bank Partners and other ministries, and then she introduced the recommended Mission Bank recipients for 2021: NALC Disaster Response (domestic) and The Great Commission Society (both domestic and international). Pastor Nijhar Ekka shared several Bible verses with us to underline how we continue to be in mission with the Lord through our ongoing support of those who work in mission and ministry fields. She offered a prayer of thanks for God's many blessings and a petition that these good works would continue.

Following a few final instructions on how voting would proceed, delegates were invited to follow the link that they had been emailed to complete their ballots. Sheila offered a prayer over the candidates and the voting process. We then observed a short break during which voting took place. Coming back from the break Jacqui introduced our featured speaker, Rev. Trina Petersen, pastor of A New Thing Christian Church, Lithonia, Georgia. Pastor Trina took us on a quick journey through the Bible, pointing out the characteristics and faith journeys of many of the women found there. She spoke to us about what it means to be a woman of God, and she reminded us that we become the women that God intends for us to be only when we open ourselves to being part of His purpose and plan.

After Pastor Trina's reassuring and inspiring words, Rachel gave a Communications update on the improvements made over the past year to the website and newsletter. She gave a brief tour of the website and invited anybody who was not yet familiar with it take a few minutes to visit. Rachel also pointed out the variety of resources available on it. She reminded everyone that the newsletter is now being sent through ConstantContact every other month, and anybody who would like a copy delivered to their email can sign up for that right on the WNALC website. She also reminded everyone that the WNALC has a Facebook page where women can connect and fellowship.

The final presentation of the 2020 Gathering included the Credentials report and the results of voting. We had a total of 94 registered attendees - 30 Delegates and 64 Visitors who represented 64 churches from 26 Mission Districts. By tabulated vote the 2020-2021 Budget and the recommended recipients of the 2020-2021 Mission Bank unanimously passed. On the same ballot Rachel Busch Jones and Jill Nesheim were both re-elected to a second term on the WNALC Council while Peggy Jording and Sandy Strohecker were elected to first terms.

With all of the business of the 2020 Annual Gathering of the WNALC being concluded, Jacqui acknowledged that, while not everything flowed smoothly, our first attempt at Gathering virtually had been a success. She thanked everyone in attendance for participating and asked Sheila to close us in prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kim Isiminger  
WNALC Council Secretary