

# New Jersey Circular



1<sup>st</sup> Quarter  
2016

VOLUME 25. NO 1

*New Jersey Circular Editor, Jennifer Zinone*  
*Web Page Editor, Charlene Rollins*

[www.njwelca.org](http://www.njwelca.org)

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## **SAVE THE DATE**



**Saturday, September 24, 2016**

**29<sup>th</sup> Annual New Jersey Women of the ELCA Convention**

**Zion Lutheran Church**

Old Turnpike Rd. and Church Street, Oldwick, NJ 08858

***"I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship."***

*(Louisa May Alcott, Little Women)*

*Want to get involved beyond your unit? Want to make great friendships?*

We have 4 Board Member positions opening in 2016. If you or someone you know may be interested, please contact Linda Benitz at (609)698-6113 or [taxlady@comcast.net](mailto:taxlady@comcast.net). Youth members can join the board too - Confirmation to age 21.

And please remember... one delegate is needed at the convention for each unit. Make your voice heard!

## President's Message



Greeting in the name of Christ our Savior

My name is Jean Wilkinson-Heard. On September 26, 2015, at the Annual New Jersey Women of the ELCA convention, I was elected president for the New Jersey Women of the ELCA. Let me introduce myself to those of you who might not know me. I will tell you my story.

I was born in Barbados, West Indies. I was baptized and confirmed as an Anglican. My family attended St. Phillip Anglican church. On Sundays, I would go to Sunday school at 9:45 a.m. then worship with my family at the 11:00 a.m. worship service and the 7 p.m. Evening worship service. My mother was a very religious woman who always instilled in us to “put God first and you will be okay”.

I migrated to the United States. When I was living in Brooklyn, I visited some churches, but didn't feel that the “Word” was there. I got married and moved to Jersey City. One Saturday evening I was out shopping and met a young lady and we started talking. She invited me to come to church with her the next day. I said let me think about it, but I didn't hesitate for long and accepted her invitation. Her invitation was the beginning of my Lutheran life. The next Sunday I was asked to join the choir which was the beginning of my many different roles at Redeemer, Jersey City. I have served as president of the church council, youth coordinator, lay ministry person, etc.. My journey continues by joining the Women of the ELCA board. I was elected Vice President and now I have been elected as President.

My vision for the New Jersey Women of the ELCA, is to mobilize women and young ladies to act boldly in our faith in Jesus Christ. That we all be connected with each other so that together we can work to promote healing and wholeness in the church and the world. **WE ARE ALL ONE in CHRIST.**

THANKS BE TO GOD!

Jean M. Wilkinson-Heard, NJ WELCA President

# New Jersey Women of the ELCA Board Members 2015-2016

| <b>Responsibility/Term End</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <b>Name/Address</b>                                                       | <b>Phone Number/Email</b>                                      | <b>Church</b>                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <b>President</b><br>2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Jean M. Wilkinson-Heard</b><br>69 Wegman Pkwy<br>Jersey City, NJ 07305 | 201-725-2383 (c)<br>201-547-4473 (day)<br>JeanW@jcnj.org       | Redeemer<br>Jersey City                             |
| <b>Vice President</b><br>2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Viola Richardson</b><br>239 Stegman St.<br>Jersey City, NJ 07305       | 201-988-3999<br>bigsue8@verizon.net                            | Trinity<br>Jersey City                              |
| <b>Treasurer</b><br>2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Linda Holscher</b><br>1840 Frontage Road #303<br>Cherry Hill, NJ 08034 | 856-858-1512(h)<br>lmholscher@comcast.net                      | Christus<br>Camden                                  |
| <b>Secretary</b><br>2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Charlene Rollins</b><br>244 Brook Ave<br>North Plainfield, NJ 07060    | 908-698-1454 (c)<br>908-754-1514 (h)<br>chroll@comcast.net     | Trinity<br>Dover                                    |
| <b>Youth Board Member</b><br>2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Rosa Guzman</b>                                                        | njwelca@yahoo.com                                              | St. John<br>Passaic                                 |
| <b>Board Member</b><br>2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Linda Benitz</b><br>132 Village Dr<br>Barnegat, NJ 08005               | 609-698-6113 (h)<br>609-290-6766 (c)<br>taxlady@comcast.net    | Lutheran Church<br>of the Holy Spirit<br>Manahawkin |
| <b>Board Member</b><br>2017                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Jennifer Zinone</b><br>21 West Drive<br>Bayonne, NJ 07002              | 551-655-7507<br>JZinone@aol.com                                | Grace<br>Bayonne                                    |
| <b>Board Member</b><br>2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Ruth E. Ruediger</b><br>22 Hamilton Road<br>Annandale, NJ 08801        | 908-638-6661 (h)<br>908-310-0105 (c)<br>ruthruediger@yahoo.com | Spruce Run<br>Glen Gardner                          |
| <b>Board Member</b><br>2016                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Lorraine Simakowicz</b><br>89 Fenner Avenue #1<br>Clifton, NJ 07013    | 973-868-3380<br>lejsrn@yahoo.com                               | St. John<br>Passaic                                 |
| <b>Board Member 2016</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>One Year Unexpired Term &gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; VACANT &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;</b>   |                                                                |                                                     |
| <b>Board Member 2017</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; VACANT &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;</b>                           |                                                                |                                                     |
| <b>Board Member 2017</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>&gt;&gt;&gt;&gt; VACANT &lt;&lt;&lt;&lt;</b>                           |                                                                |                                                     |
| <b>NJ WELCA Circular - Editor: Jennifer Zinone: 551-655-7507 Email: JZinone@aol.com</b><br><b>Website: www.njwelca.org Charlene Rollins: 908-698-1454</b><br><b>Emails can be sent to <a href="mailto:njwelca@yahoo.com">njwelca@yahoo.com</a></b> |                                                                           |                                                                |                                                     |

# Welcome New Board Members

## 2015 – 2017 Term



### Linda Wohlert Benitz

A third generation Danish Lutheran, I grew up in Our Saviors Lutheran Church in Edison, NJ. I am so proud that my daughter, Charlotte, my son-in-law Ben and my granddaughter Alice are current members to continue the tradition. My husband, Bill, was confirmed as a Lutheran there shortly before our wedding. After moving to Barnegat, our family have been members of Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit Manahawkin and until closing, Joy Lutheran Church Waretown. I was council member for 14 years, I have taught VCS, worked on finance, stewardship and evangelism committees.

Remember that Christ associated with tax collectors and forgive me for being an IRS agent for 27 years, now retired. I now use my powers of tax knowledge to help people with problems with the IRS.

The WELCA group at Holy Spirit has just been re-formed this year and in leading the bible studies, I can feel the Holy Spirit moving through us as we grow in faith and numbers.

### Jennifer Zinone

I am the newly elected council president at Grace Lutheran Church, Bayonne. I grew up in Grace. Actually, my mother, grandmother and great grandmother grew up there as well. While in college, where I studied microbiology and physics at the University of New Hampshire, I bounced around a few other churches. But none ever felt like home. Then, after a lifetime love of science, I was not so gently pushed by the Spirit to leave that behind and dive into a career as a writer and return to my hometown.

As testament to God's perfect timing, my family returned to Grace a few months before my grandmother passed away. Newly returned, I was a stranger in my family church. Hardly any familiar faces surrounded me. Yet, despite their unfamiliarity, the community at Grace embraced my family in that difficult time. Strange voices called on the phone, some even helped plan the service. Unfamiliar faces swarmed the fellowship hall, setting up my grandmother's repass and helping clean afterwards. The love and community I felt made me know I was home again. Now years later, those strangers have turned to dear friends.

Until that experience, I never gave a lot of thought to faith. Being born a Lutheran, faith and love of God was always a part of my life. But now I truly recognize God's amazing grace permeating my life. As I continue to grow in my faith, I try to follow the pull of the Spirit. This has led me to chair my congregation's stewardship committee despite being the last person comfortable asking for money. I just reinstated our Prayer Group, which again forced me to step out of my comfort zone to plan and lead our

Prayer Meetings. I also oversee Grace's memorial fund and participate in Grace's planning committee. I'm honored to now join the board of amazing women in NJ WELCA, and I'm excited to see where God leads me next!

# *Thankoffering Service*

Grace Lutheran Church  
836 Avenue C  
Bayonne, NJ 07002

**Saturday, March 5, 2016 at 10:00 am**

*Join us for this Synod-wide Gathering around the theme:*

## **Chicks & Chocolate**

### **A Sweet Fellowship**

**Lunch and Chocolate desserts provided**



**IN KIND OFFERING** – non-perishable food for H.I.G.H.W.A.Y.S., the community's emergency food bank in Bayonne.

*Please contact Jennifer @ 551-655-7507 or Jzinone@aol.com  
Help us save a place for YOU! RSVP by March 1st*

#### History of Thankofferings

Did you know that the concept of Thankoffering celebrations dates back more than 100 years and beyond Lutherans? Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us.

Beginning in the late 19th century, Lutheran women were given small Thankoffering boxes to place in a special location in their homes as a visible reminder of blessings received. Women would add coins to those boxes almost daily as particular blessings were noted. From their use came the idea of an annual church service to celebrate their collection, and so the women of the congregation would come together for a Thankoffering service.

# What's Happening in Your Unit?

## **Trinity Lutheran Church, Jersey City**

*"Taste and See that the Lord is Good!" Psalm 34:8*

In December, Trinity's Women of the ELCA hosted a "Prayer Brunch." The theme for our brunch was "Prayer: A Time of Reflection, Connection & Praise".



## **St. John's Lutheran Church, Lexington Ave, Passaic, NJ**

*St. John's is celebrating their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year!*

They host a monthly thrift shop the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of each month at 9:30 am.

## **First Lutheran Church, Van Houten Avenue, Clifton, NJ**

First Lutheran has started quarterly Blood Pressure Screening. The first scheduled date is February 14, 2016.



## **NEWS FROM WOMEN OF HOPE LUTHERAN, FREEHOLD.....**

Our Adopt-a-Family tree goes up around Thanksgiving each year. The Women of Hope Lutheran, Freehold offer help in the form of Gift cards which go to less fortunate families in our community to help them celebrate the holidays and to purchase basic needs. Target, Walmart, Toys-R-Us and ShopRite cards may be purchased. The Samaritan Fund donations go to Pastor's Discretionary Fund to help people in need in the community throughout the year. Lutheran Disaster Response Donations go to help victims of disasters in the U.S., and Lutheran World Relief Donations help the Middle East/Europe Refugee Relief effort. Members and Hope Christian School families purchase the cards and the Women of Hope distribute these cards in gift bag to the families with a Christmas message.

### **Sponsored a Welcoming Workshop in November**

The Women of Hope Lutheran, Freehold recently sponsored a "Welcoming" workshop. Our Pastor, Pat Medley, conducted a Bible Study. There were several members of the Synod LGBT Taskforce in attendance. There were thirteen others attending.

The Bible study was from the Old Testament: Genesis 19, Leviticus, Ezekiel and then the New Testament: Romans 10:4, Hebrews 8:13, Colossians 2:a3-14, Romans 1:22-27, I Corinthians 6:9-10 (where Paul is speaking to the community, not the whole people) I Corinthians 6:11 and 11:4-15.

It was noted that the Asbury Park Press lists LGBT welcoming places of worship in the Sunday issue. As of the November 8th issue, there were 41 houses of worship in Monmouth County listed in this paper.

This is the second time the Women of Hope had the opportunity to hear from the Synod LGBT Taskforce and each time we came away with better understanding, more compassion and the question "where do we go from here". Submitted by Wanda Nebiolo, Treasurer



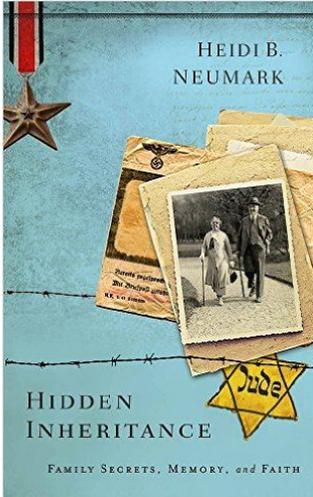


Thank you, **Thrivent**, for your generous support of New Jersey Women of the ELCA!

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**Convention Book Club Selection:**

**Hidden Inheritance: Family Secrets, Memory, and Faith**  
By Heidi B. Neumark



Imagine discovering a secret—that your family has a hidden Jewish heritage. That your grandfather died in a concentration camp and your grandmother was a death-camp survivor. How did you not know? How would it change your spiritual life? Heidi Neumark, a Lutheran pastor, happened upon records that revealed her family’s loss and trauma and resulted in the shocking revelation that she was suddenly and inherently connected to the multi-ethnic, marginalized community she had been ministering to for three decades and to which she felt a deep affinity. Hidden Inheritance is a combination of compelling personal story and bold call for social justice that links the past with contemporary challenges.

Available on Amazon and barnesandnoble.com. Copies will be available for \$10 (while supplies last) on Sept 24 at the convention. To reserve one, please email [njwelca@yahoo.com](mailto:njwelca@yahoo.com) or call Charlene Rollins at 908-698-1454.

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**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Rest, Refresh & Renewal Day for Women**

The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

**Saturday, April 2, 2016**

The theme this year is:

***"The Power of Ten - Celebrating 10 Years of Rest, Refresh and Renewal."***

They have a lot of celebratory things planned for this 10th anniversary. Come out for a day to explore ways to strengthen and firm your foundational faith through Worship, Bible Study, Gatherings, Rest, and Community Time.

Women are invited to renew, reconnect and refresh physically, emotionally and spiritually in a day of fellowship and gathering. Invite your friends, colleagues and fellow church women to share this day.

Call Kathie Afflerback at [kafflerbach@ltsp.edu](mailto:kafflerbach@ltsp.edu) for more information. Registration begins at 8:45 am - Price is \$45.



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# “Wednesday Away”

Wednesday Away at Crossroads Camping and Retreat Center is a wonderful monthly one-day retreat. A time of rest and renewal on the first Wednesday of each month.



Check out the Crossroads website for more details [www.crossroadsretreat.com](http://www.crossroadsretreat.com)

**DONATION for NJ Circular  
\$5.00 OR MORE TO HELP  
DEFRAY THE COST!**

You may submit your donation to the New Jersey Circular anytime during the year. Each donation helps defray the cost of postage. *Thank you for your support.*

## DONATION FORM

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Church Name \_\_\_\_\_

Be sure to check out Gather’s four-session Bible study exploring the book of Philippians, “Christian Citizenship 101,” written by E. Louise Williams and the Rev. Phyllis N. Kersten. January – April 2016. Order your copy by calling 800-638-3522 ext. 2580 or visit <http://resources.elca.org/Products-Women.html>

**MAKE PAYMENTS TO: “NJ Women of the ELCA”**  
Send to Linda Holscher, Treasurer  
1840 Frontage Road #303, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034

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**Mark your calendars.  
You don’t want to miss it!**



## Save a Tree!

Email us at [njwelca@yahoo.com](mailto:njwelca@yahoo.com) with your email address and we will send future NJ Circular Newsletters to you electronically!

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The

Tenth

Triennial Gathering will be held July 13-16, 2017, in Minneapolis, Minn. "All Anew" is the theme. While the planning continues, think about ways in which God is calling our organization to new ventures. For the latest information visit <http://www.welcatg.org>

Hope Lutheran Church  
211 Elton-Adelphia Rd  
Freehold, New Jersey 07728

Please visit our website at [www.njwelca.org](http://www.njwelca.org) for upcoming events and other information about the New Jersey Women of the ELCA. Web Page Editor, Charlene Rollins, [njwelca@yahoo.com](mailto:njwelca@yahoo.com).



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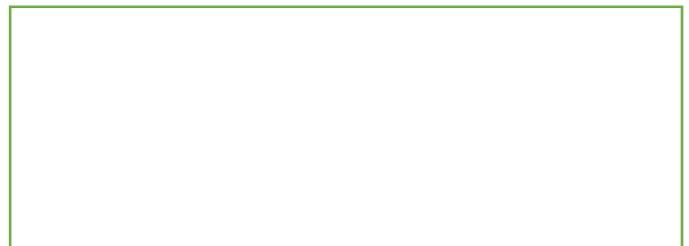
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Pastors and Administrators – please give this issue to your women's group.

**DATED MATERIAL**



**Our Mission and Purpose**

*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.*

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***Thankoffering Service - Statewide***

***Saturday, March 5, 2016 at 10:00 am***

***Grace Lutheran Church - 836 Avenue C, Bayonne, NJ 07002***

Please post the enclosed Thankoffering flyer in you church. You may also make copies and distribute them.

**PLEASE PASS THIS NEWSLETTER ON.....After reading, share this Circular with others.**