



Report of the Commission for Women

Organization

Steering Committee

Pr. Mia J. Baumgartner, Seattle, Wash. (2005)
Ms. Jacqueline DeLaat, Marietta, Ohio (2007)
Ms. Kristina L. Diaz, San Juan, Puerto Rico (2005)
Mr. Frank Hanna-Williams, Tillamook, Ore. (2007)
Ms. Kathryn M. Lohre, Pine Island, Minn. (2009)
Mr. James D. Lynch, Jersey City, N.J. (2007)
Ms. Agnes McClain, *chair*, Glendale, Calif. (2007)
Mr. Jay McDivitt, Loveland, Colo. (2009)
Ms. Sarah H. Meckler, Missoula, Mont. (2005)
Pr. Timothy C. Rapp-Seitz, San Marcos, Texas (2005)
Pr. Cathy E. Rosenholtz, Whitestone, N.Y. (2009)

Advisors

Ms. Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director, Women of the ELCA
Bp. David A. Donges, South Carolina Synod
Pr. Charles S. Miller, executive for administration, Office of the Presiding Bishop
Pr. Frederick E. N. Rajan, executive director, Commission for Multicultural Ministries

Executive Staff

Executive Director: Ms. Joanne Chadwick
Director for Leadership Development, Cross-cultural Advocacy, and Budget: Ms. Charlotte Williams
Director for Women in Leadership and Ministry: Pr. Michelle L. Miller

Statement of Purpose

The Commission for Women will advise, encourage, and challenge the ELCA to achieve full participation of women in the church and society. The Commission for Women will promote faithful witness to the gospel, safety and justice for all women, healthy partnerships between women and men and creative service to the world. The constitutional description of the Commission for Women appears in continuing resolution 16:22.B00. printed in Section X of this *Pre-Assembly Report*.

Report of Work for 2003-2005

Women in Ordained Ministry

The percentage of pastors who are women reached a significant milestone during 2005, the 35th anniversary year marking the first ordinations of women within North American Lutheranism. In that year the number of women serving on the active (non-retired) roster of ordained ministers reached 24 percent. The actual percentages vary by synod, i.e. Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod is 31.4 percent, but overall the number of women in ordained ministry has been increasing steadily for several years. A survey of women rostered leaders to commemorate the 35th anniversary was sent to a random sample of rostered leaders—men and women, ordained ministers, associates in ministry and diaconal ministers—to assess their experiences. This survey will be compared to one completed for the 25th anniversary of ordination of women.

A clergy-women head of staff academy was held January 25-29, 2004, in Del Ray Beach, Florida, for 60 participants. The number of women who are lead pastors continues to increase and thus the need to collaborate.

Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence

The Commission for Women supports the United Nations' Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence. This global emphasis is one way in which this commission unites itself with others who promote the respect of all human life and who work to build a culture of peace.

Together with other churchwide units this commission sponsored a training event, *Equipping for Peacemaking*. Forty-five people from all nine regions of this church were trained.

Ministry with the Abused

This commission continues to provide resources related to all areas of abuse, with the goal of making a safe place in this church for everyone. Resources for domestic violence and child abuse conflict resolution are available. Responding to calls concerning clergy sexual misconduct from victims, synods, and congregations helps to assure safety.

Engaging the Church Cross Culturally

This commission participated with other churchwide units in a training and a resource for the ELCA in *Talking Together as Christians Cross Culturally*.

Areas of Focus

The Commission for Women focus for the 2003-2005 biennium was:

- advocacy for marginalized women;
- leadership discovery and development, particularly among young women and women of color;
- anti-sexism education and training; and
- Decade for a Culture of Non-Violence.

Restructuring the churchwide organization

The Commission for Women staff and steering committee have addressed in this biennium the questions raised about the positioning of this work. A gathering of 30 women from across this church met to address this issue. Following that meeting, eight people who were able to think critically and imaginatively met for the same purpose: Where and how would this work be best done within the churchwide organization. The role of commissions has a unique position within the organization as a catalyst and initiator within its focus areas. The Commission for Women has been a full partner in the extensive process of the proposal for restructuring. It will be integrated into the structure in a new way as justice for women.

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN

Agnes S. McClain, *chair*
Joanne Chadwick, *executive director*