

We Are WELCA

What is WELCA? It's an easy way to say Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Quite a mouthful, we know. Our organization includes Lutheran women who gather in [over 7,000 locations](#) in the U.S. and the Caribbean, for [service](#), [study](#), [advocacy](#), fellowship and more! WELCA embraces all kinds of ministries that support our mission of mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. There is a place for you in [Women of the ELCA](#).

How does WELCA work?

There are three expressions of Women of the ELCA, each with its own [constitution](#):

- * Congregational, inter-congregational and special units (about 7,000)
- * Synodical Women's Organization (in 64 of the ELCA's 65 synods)
- * Churchwide Women's Organization

The **congregational, inter-congregational and special units** are the largest expression of the organization and are the heart of the organization. This is where we grow the organization, inviting women to experience the reconciling and transforming love of God through Jesus Christ, encouraging women to act on their baptismal covenant.

The **synodical women's organizations** (SWOs) establish a partnership with units in their geographic areas and with the churchwide women's organization. [SWOs](#) exist to support women in congregations. Each SWO has a board whose members are elected at an annual or biennial convention by delegates from units. Each SWO establishes clusters or conferences of units within its geographic area.

Conferences and clusters are groupings of congregations within a synodical organization. While they have no legislative responsibilities, conferences and clusters provide learning opportunities through leadership development, community building, stewardship education, networks for communication and opportunities for joint ministry and action with the guidance of the SWO.

The **churchwide women's organization** (CWO) is the entire organization. Within the churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA, the [triennial convention](#) is the highest legislative authority; the delegates to the convention are elected by synodical organizations. Between conventions, the [churchwide executive board](#) (volunteers elected by the triennial convention) conducts the business of the organization.

The churchwide executive board hires an executive director to oversee the operations of the CWO; the executive director, in turn, hires staff to assist in that endeavor. The only paid [staff](#) is located within the CWO. In all other expressions of the organization, volunteers carry out the organization's mission and purpose.

WELCA is the women's ministry organization of the [ELCA](#). It is separately incorporated and is not an auxiliary of the church. It is financially independent and responsible for its own financial affairs. Financial support comes from individual and group offerings and gifts.

Want to know more? Contact [Eva James Yeo](#), our director for membership.

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