

# *Generous Giving*



Stewardship  
PLANNING GUIDE 2011-2012

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# Planning Guide Introduction

**Generous giving.** We all have the ability to be generous givers but are we sacrificial givers as well? Do we give out of our abundance only? And what does that mean?

We are called as women of faith and God's disciples to grow in our stewardship, to be equal in our sacrifice, and, if we care about justice and love for all as Jesus did, we will grow in our generosity. There is transformative power in our stewardship, and we can teach others that when we display the generous and yes, sacrificial giving of our time and our resources, we are doing it because it is what God calls us to do and we are doing it for the sake of others.

As you read through this planning guide, think about how, as a stewardship leader, you are encouraging others to grow in their generosity. What are you, as a congregational unit, cluster or synodical organization ready to give up so you may work more towards God's work and mission? And when you look at the examples of your stewardship, what story does it tell? Does it show what you care most about? Does it show your faith and hope; your generosity and your sacrifice?

Our stewardship promise to Women of the ELCA, inspired by our organizational purpose and mission, demonstrates our desire to shape not only our future ministries but also those of the greater church. We must be intentional about connecting our beliefs about stewardship to the work of the women's organization and the whole church so we continue to grow in our generosity, encouraging others to do the same.

## Our 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.

## Our Mission

Mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.



# Assessing Your Needs and Resources

## During your time of preparation, you will need:

- this stewardship guide
- a copy of your budget and current treasurer's report
- a list of available resources within your group

## List your activities and how they help carry out the organization's purpose and mission:

## Do you have everything you need to accomplish your ministry?

## Are you challenging yourself and others to look at how you are using your resources?

## Your Treasurer's Task List

- Pray for abundant giving, serving and ministry.
- Challenge others to give so that God's mission will increase.
- Praise God and give regular reports on what has been accomplished.
- Participate in the ministry planning session and prepare a proposed budget.
- Collect and process your unit's offerings and other income as quickly as possible.
- Pay bills in a timely manner, making payments in accordance with the budget.
- Prepare for an annual review or compilation.
- Make the unit aware of any surplus funds and the ministries that could benefit.
- Share what would be possible if the group increased giving by 5 percent or more.
- Connect with other treasurers, participating in conferences and other gatherings.
- Challenge yourself to personally acknowledge all gifts.
- Prepare books and files for a smooth transition to the next treasurer's term.



## The Widow's Mite: A Stewardship Reflection for Treasurers

### Reflection on Mark 12: 38-44

*As he taught, he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honor at banquets! They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation."*

*He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them,*

*"Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on."*

### Questions to Ponder

**Why does Jesus call his disciples over?**

**What is this teaching moment for you?**

**What do you think is the primary meaning of the story, and how can it relate to your stewardship?**

## Reflection

If you paint a visual picture in your mind of this passage from Mark, you will see an official treasury where people are not only bringing their offerings but also announcing them for all to witness. And what is Jesus doing? He is watching the crowd and seeing the poor widow put in everything she had. Yes, Jesus honors her sacrifice but at the same time, isn't he also disapproving of those who have so much more and are only giving out of their abundance? Isn't Jesus condemning a system where the "least of these" is sacrificing TOO much? This passage is asking us to think about why this woman was in such a position of poverty and why there is not equal sacrifice from all who were in the temple that day. This story is not just about generous giving. This story is about compassion and justice.

## Closing Prayer

Good and gracious God, help us to always see Jesus' compassion for others. Let his justice and love for all of us transform our relationship with our own blessings that are from God, for God and all of God's people. Amen.



# 2010 Offerings Report: Your Gifts at Work!

It is important to give God thanks and praise by reporting how we have used the gifts we have been given and by reporting what work has been accomplished. Women of the ELCA operates primarily on the gifts voluntarily given to the organization. Each triennial convention approves a budget for the following year and the executive board approves the budget in the other two years of each triennium.

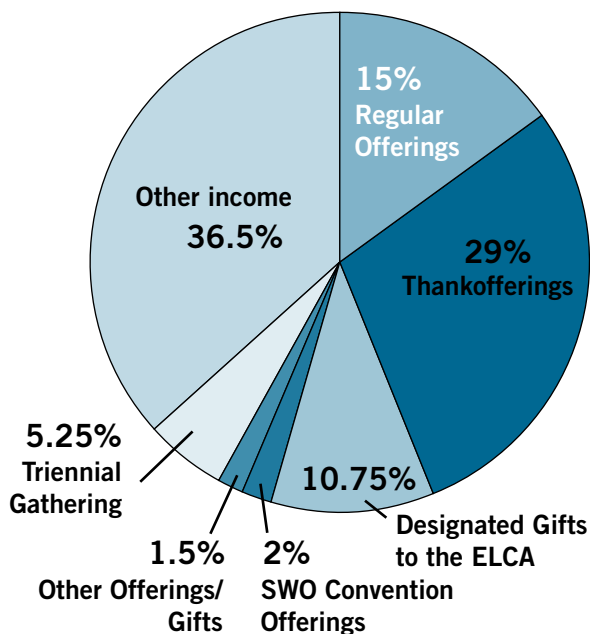
## Revenue for 2010

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| Regular Offerings  | \$526,095   |
| Thankofferings   | \$1,006,316 |
| Designated Gifts   | \$372,477   |
| SWO Convention Offerings   | \$71,566    |
| Other offerings/gifts  | \$54,721    |
| Triennial Gathering  | \$182,020   |
| Other income<br>(endowments, bequests, miscellaneous,<br>interest income*) | \$1,276,787 |

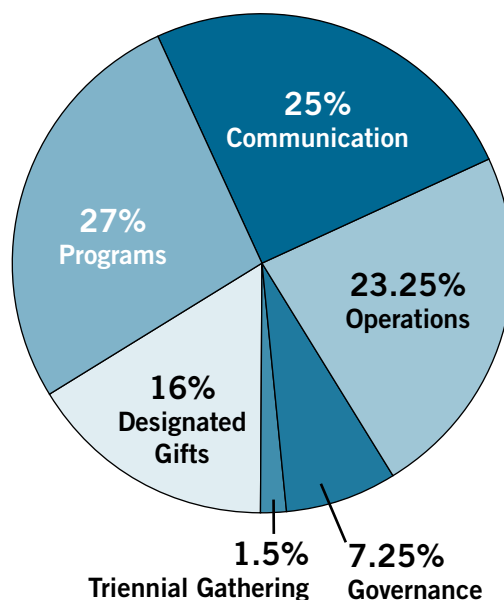
## Expenses for 2010

|                     |           |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Programs            | \$629,955 |
| Communication       | \$576,689 |
| Operations          | \$540,197 |
| Governance          | \$168,460 |
| Triennial Gathering | \$35,094  |
| Designated Gifts    | \$372,477 |

2010 Revenue



2010 Expenses



# How You Can Support the Important Ministries of Women of the ELCA

As you consider where you will direct your gifts and offerings to support the important ministries of Women of the ELCA, *make sure that your check is always made payable to Women of the ELCA*. Why is this so important? Making contributions through Women of the ELCA is crucial for acknowledging and honoring how women collectively contribute to and support the ministries of Women of the ELCA and those of the whole church. We celebrate and are grateful for your stewardship towards Women of the ELCA and the greater church body, both of which benefit from your offerings.

The grouped listings that follow provide a description of the various offerings and gifts that can be made, as well as instructions for submitting the offering and what form is needed when submitting.

## Offerings and Gifts

### Regular Offerings

Units at circle meetings, Bible study sessions and general meetings usually collect regular offerings. Regular offerings keep our organization running! These offerings provide income to support the ongoing work of Women of the ELCA and cover the operational costs of the organization so you may collectively make a difference.

**How to send your regular offerings:** Use the blue transmittal form A. Send a portion of your unit's offerings—**50% or more is recommended**—to your synodical women's organization treasurer. If you need her name or address, call the churchwide office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2702.

### Thankofferings

Thankofferings are collected during a Thankoffering service or devotion and are to be **sent directly to the churchwide organization**. Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings. When significant or ordinary moments happen, we can say thank you to God! Thankofferings help Women of the ELCA provide new resources and events.

**How to send your Thankofferings:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the **total amount received** to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Be sure to indicate it is a Thankoffering on both your check and form.

### Designated Gifts

Designated gifts give you the opportunity to support a specific ministry and are passed **in total** to that chosen ministry. Your designated gift can provide direct support to the Women of the ELCA Grants program. You can also make a designated gift **through the Women of the ELCA** to specific ministries of the ELCA including World Hunger, Missionary Support and Lutheran World Relief.

**How to send your designated gift:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the **total amount received** to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Be sure to indicate it is a designated gift on both your check and form.

### Special Offerings

The funds that benefit from special offerings are passed in total in order to make a lasting memory and difference. The funds are typically endowment funds for which only the interest earned on your gift is used in order to grow the fund. You can make a special offering to Katie's Fund, either the current fund or endowment, or one of the Women of the ELCA scholarship endowment funds.

**How to send a special offering:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the **total amount received** to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Be sure to indicate it is a special offering both on your check and form.



# Designated and Special Gift Opportunities for Women of the ELCA Ministries

## Women of the ELCA Grants Program: A Designated Gift

Your designated gift to the Women of the ELCA grants program goes **in total** to support domestic and international grant awards given annually by the women's organization. Our grants support women and children in crisis, health projects and community building programs all of which fulfill our organizational commitment to "promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world." Your designated gift will ensure that we can increase our granting efforts towards projects and agencies dedicated to education, healthcare and justice here and around the world that embolden women and girls to live healthier lives. If you would like to see listings of past grant recipients, please visit [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

**Instructions for giving:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the total amount received to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Be sure to indicate it is a designated gift to the grants program on both on your check and form.

## Women of the ELCA Scholarships: A Special Offering

A special offering to one of our Women of the ELCA scholarship endowment funds will enable us to continue our important work of supporting women who live and work in extraordinary circumstances as they pursue their educational goals. There are several categories of scholarships including general laywomen, ordained ministry and administrative leadership. Your gift goes **in total** to the scholarship fund of your choosing. For a description of the various scholarship funds, please visit [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

**Instructions for giving:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the total amount received to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Be sure to indicate it is a special offering to the scholarship program and to which scholarship endowment fund you wish your gift be given on both your check and form.

## Katie's Fund: A Special Offering

You now have two options when giving to Katie's Fund. You can make a difference by giving either to the annual portion of the fund, which directs your gift to the most immediate needs, or to the endowment, which makes use of the interest earned on your gift. Gifts to both the current fund and the endowment are used for ministries in three key areas: leadership development, global sharing and living theology. These three areas are central to the mission and life of Women of the ELCA and your gift goes **in total** towards these areas of ministry. If you would like to receive our Katie's Fund materials, including our brochure, poster and envelopes, please contact the churchwide office.

**Instructions for giving:** Use the green transmittal form B. Send the total amount received to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form. Please indicate whether your Katie's Fund gift is to go to current needs or to the endowment on both your check and form.



## Designated Gift Opportunities for ELCA Ministries

When women collectively give gifts to ELCA designated ministries, they support the ELCA's efforts to go where we cannot. All gifts designated for an ELCA ministry will be directly forwarded **in total** to that ministry. Making your contribution **through Women of the ELCA** is crucial for acknowledging and honoring how women collectively contribute to and support the ministries of the whole church.

### ELCA World Hunger Program No. 555

Your gift helps eliminate hunger and its root causes through education, health care, employment opportunities and community development.

### Missionary Support Program No. 570

Your gift to missionary support honors the long tradition of women's missionary societies. Your gift will help ELCA missionaries share the good news of Jesus Christ in word and in action.

### Lutheran World Relief Program No. 515

Your gift assists LWR in continuing much-needed ministries that support some 150 development projects in health care, education, agriculture, leadership and training to our neighbors around the world.

**To contribute a designated gift to one of these ELCA ministries:** Use the green transmittal form B. Make your **check payable to Women of the ELCA**, writing the program name and number in your check memo line. Send the form and check to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA at the address on the form.

## Other Offerings

If your unit supports a local ministry that is not directly connected to the ministries of the churchwide organization, send your offering directly to the ministry or organization that you've chosen to support. As you make your determinations regarding support to ministries outside Women of the ELCA or the ELCA, please consider these questions:

1. Has your unit/cluster/synodical organization met its commitment to the women's organization?
2. Does the ministry help fulfill the Purpose Statement of Women of the ELCA?
3. Will your financial support cause actions and responses that will benefit women?
4. Is it a Lutheran agency or ministry? Is it already receiving funding from the ELCA?
5. Are there women decision-makers? How many women hold positions of influence?
6. Is the organization tax exempt? Do they publish their financial data?
7. Is the organization evaluated by the National Charities Information Bureau or the Council of Better Business Bureaus?



## Congregational, Intercongregational and Special Unit Offerings Grid

| Offering type   | Where and when the offering is received  | Amount of the offering or gift to be mailed  | Where to mail the offering or gift   |
|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Regular Offerings</b><br>Use blue Form A   | These offerings are collected at your regular monthly or quarterly meetings.     | By Triennial Convention recommendation, <b>at least half</b> of regular offerings should be sent to your synodical organization. | Mail to your synodical treasurer at the address she has published. If you do not know her name and address, call the churchwide office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2702. |
| <b>Thankofferings</b><br>Use green Form B   | These offerings are received one or more times per year as your unit determines. | Mail the <b>total amount</b> of these offerings as soon as possible. (Thankofferings cannot be designated offerings.)            | Women of the ELCA<br>P.O. Box 71256<br>Chicago, IL 60694-1256  |
| <b>Designated Gifts for Specific Ministries and Special Gifts</b><br>Use green Form B | These gifts are received as often as your unit determines.                       | Mail the <b>total amount</b> of these gifts and offerings as soon as possible. Please include the name and program number.       | Women of the ELCA<br>P.O. Box 71256<br>Chicago, IL 60694-1256  |
| <b>Synodical Convention and Other Offerings</b><br>Use blue Form A                    | These offerings are received before the synodical convention.                    | Mail the <b>total amount</b> of these offerings as soon as possible.   | Mail to your synodical treasurer at the address she has published.   |

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Where can I get help?

Begin with your unit's treasurer or president. You can also contact your synodical women's organization treasurer. If you need further information, contact the churchwide office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2702.

### Who is my synodical women's organization treasurer?

Her name and contact information are available through the churchwide office at 800-638-3522, ext. 2702. Your synodical treasurer can help you set up your checking account and record-keeping system and answer questions about how to send in your offerings.

### Where do I find my congregational number or region/synod code?

Ask your pastor or church secretary, consult the ELCA Yearbook, or call the ELCA Resource Information Service (RIS) at 800-638-3522. Using these numbers and codes ensures accurate crediting of your offerings.

### How do I get more offering forms?

Offering transmittal forms can be ordered at no charge (except for shipping) by calling 800-638-3522, ext. 2580. You can also download offering forms directly from [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

# Shaping our Future Mission and Ministries

## Including Women of the ELCA in your estate plan

One viable option for all that provides crucial support and shaping of future mission and ministries is including Women of the ELCA in your estate planning. There are a number of compelling reasons to consider this option, three of which are highlighted below.

### Managing your assets

Including charitable gifts in your estate is a way for you to manage with confidence the distribution of your assets, so you can provide crucial support to ministries of this church. Charitable planned gifts are a realistic option for all women regardless of income level and are directed to the ministries you designate exactly according to your wishes.

### Making known your compassion

Making a planned gift is a powerful means of expressing the important values in your life by allocating assets in ways that provide ongoing support to those ministries most important to you. This gift is your witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ and makes known your compassion for the women served by the ministries of Women of the ELCA.

### Motivating others

Through your planned gift you are connecting with others now and in the future, teaching and modeling good stewardship. Because of your generosity, you become a role model to other women, challenging them to be life-long stewards. We will grow as an organization because your planned gift will inspire others to give.

### How to Make a Planned Gift

You can leave a legacy to positively impact generations to come by way of a charitable bequest written into your will. A bequest provision is the most common way to make a planned gift and it is your opportunity to provide crucial support to ministries in the future. There are various options for you in making a charitable bequest, including:

- a specific dollar amount
- a percent of your estate's residual value
- a paid life insurance policy
- other specific asset

You can also make a planned gift benefiting Women of the ELCA and at the same time receive guaranteed income for life through a charitable gift annuity. To establish a gift annuity, you contribute funds or assets now to the Women of the ELCA, and we in turn make fixed annuity payments to you for the rest of your life. You receive an immediate income tax deduction for your gift, and the portion of the gift not used for payments will benefit Women of the ELCA in the future.

By making a planned gift, you leave a legacy for the ministries about which you are most passionate. Your gift will not only shape future mission and ministries but will help to ensure the livelihood of Women of the ELCA. Call or write for more information:

Women of the ELCA  
8765 W Higgins Road  
Chicago, IL 60631  
800-638-3522, ext. 2736

# Stewardship Resources

## 2011-2012 Thankoffering Service

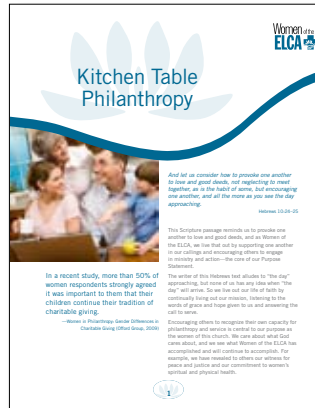
This Thankoffering Service was celebrated by 2,000 women at the Eighth Triennial Gathering in Spokane in July 2011. It has now been produced for you as a separate, user-friendly piece that is easy to duplicate. Tips for creating your own Thankoffering devotion and service planning notes are included. A copy can be downloaded for free at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org). You may also request a copy by calling the Women of the ELCA offices.



## 2012 Devotions

Our 2012 monthly devotions will be published in *Interchange* as well as downloadable from our Web site. The monthly devotions include biblical texts; devotional thoughts; offering focus and prayer. And when appropriate, the monthly devotions will connect to a seasonal theme according to the liturgical calendar. We hope you will use these monthly devotions when regular offerings are taken in study groups, circles, general meetings or other events.

## Kitchen Table Philanthropy



Do you discuss your beliefs and values around giving together as a family? Have you ever asked your children if there are places or causes they would like the family to make a commitment to? This short resource has ideas to help you start talking about giving with your

family. It includes conversation starters, questions for personal reflection and ideas on how to make giving a regular part of your children's lives.

Download your **free** copy at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).\*

## All About Thankofferings

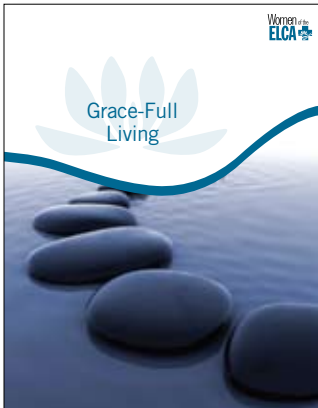


Thankofferings show gratitude for God's blessings and give us an important and tangible way to express that gratitude. It is a tradition grounded in our celebration of community, of meeting together to joyfully give thanks for what God has given us. This

program resource will help you better understand the history and significance of Women of the ELCA's Thankoffering tradition. Did you know that the concept of Thankoffering celebrations dates back more than 100 years and beyond Lutherans? This is a great tool for individuals and groups to use when talking about Thankofferings and stewardship.

Download your **free** copy at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).\*

## Grace-Full Living

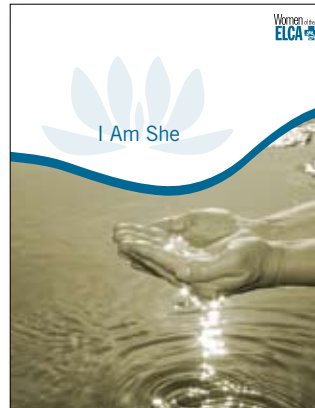


With this resource, Women of the ELCA continues to focus on women's health in all its many facets. If we wish to look at our complete and total health holistically, doesn't it make sense to include our financial health in that picture? When we consider health in mind, body and spirit, do we

ponder how financial health and giving are integral to our well-being?

Download your **free** copy at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).\*

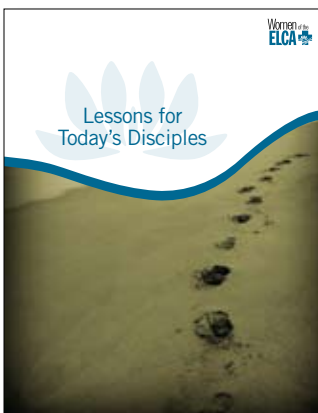
## I am She



Do you know what is "your best bold"? This resource is a do-it-yourself retreat designed for participants to discover their bold! The retreat is grounded in our mission statement and divided into three sessions: "Boldness in Advocacy," "Boldness in Caring" and "Boldness in Teaching." The

"Boldness in Caring" session includes specific examples and discussion questions about caring demonstrated through stewardship and sacrifice.

Download your **free** copy at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).\*



## Lessons for Today's Disciples

This resource helps you discover or recover the seven marks of discipleship including giving. The lessons in the resource include exercises for practical application including an overview of each of

the seven marks and a biblical text that supports a format of reading, reflecting, and responding to the call of discipleship.

Download your **free** copy at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).\*

\*If you are unable to download a resource, call us at **800-638-3522, ext. 2730**. We'll gladly print a master copy and send it to you in the mail.

## Stewardship Partners

### Women's Funding Network

Women of the ELCA has teamed with the Women's Funding Network in an ongoing effort to recycle cell phones and raise money at the same time. Money raised will be used to support programs that lift women and families out of poverty; help support women-led solutions to the most pressing global issues, from climate change to economic security; and provide 911 emergency phones for senior citizens and people at risk. For fact sheets, collection box labels and further information, go to [www.womensfundingnetwork.org](http://www.womensfundingnetwork.org) and search "cell phones."

### Fair Trade

Lutheran World Relief is among many groups supporting fair trade. It all began with fairly traded coffee and has expanded to include tea, chocolates and crafts. By supporting fair trade more of the money you spend reaches those who grow and craft the items. Your purchases of fair trade items insures better incomes for farmers and artisans along with better working conditions, promotion of women's rights and protection of children and good stewardship of resources and positive development in poor, rural communities. You can support fair trade by purchasing items yourself as well as serving or selling fair trade products at your church and your women's events. For further information, visit [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org) where you'll find several resources, including a devotion on fair trade and a series of four downloadable resources that explore fair trade and women, human rights, environment and education. You can also call 800-597-5972 for further information.

Notes

# LutheranWoman TODAY

INVITES YOU TO

# gather

FOR FAITH AND ACTION

September 2011



## SAME GREAT MAGAZINE, BRAND NEW NAME.

*"...Where two or three are gathered in my name,  
I am there among them."*

MATTHEW 18:20

Our thoughtful articles and award-winning Bible study will remain. Through our new name we seek to expand our community of thinkers and doers and bring together women of faith.

Learn more at [gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org)  
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