

# Faithful Stewardship

Supporting our mission and ministry



Women of the ELCA operates almost solely on your offerings. Those offerings support the programs of the women's organization as well as the total outreach of the ELCA and are essential to our partnership with God in accomplishing God's mission for the world.

*And he said to them, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions."*

Luke 12:15

**As a community of women,** we are stewards of all that we have been given. And sharing what we have been given brings us real joy.

We should always ask ourselves: What would God have us do?

Faithful stewardship is a principle that we are committed to by our organization's constitution. It affirms that Women of the ELCA will "acknowledge itself as a steward of the resources entrusted to it. It shall commit itself to the effective use of these resources in its life and work and in the life and work of the church."

Have members of your group ever said, "We wish we could afford that" or "If only we had more money, we would give"? Ask yourselves: How much is enough? How much do we need?

We give in order to make a difference, and it is exciting to watch change come about. Always remembering that we are stewards of all that we have been given, we should endeavor, as Jesus tells us, to be rich toward God. In that way, we may live faithfully, living the lives God intends for us.

### How to Use this Resource

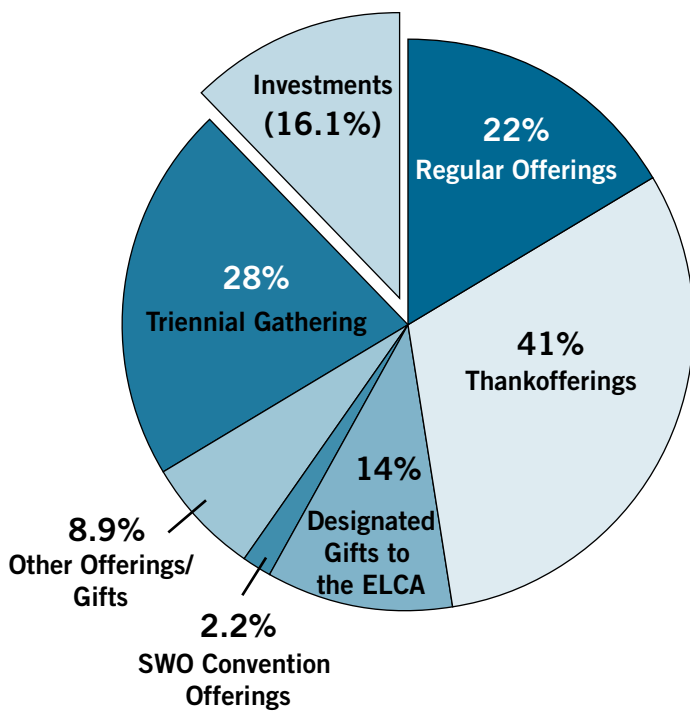
*This is a tool for individuals and groups to use when talking about offerings and stewardship. On the following pages you will find the most recent financial reports from the churchwide organization and descriptions of the various types of offerings.*

*The purpose of this resource is to help participants understand the importance of giving to Women of the ELCA as well as how to give.*

### 2008 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.

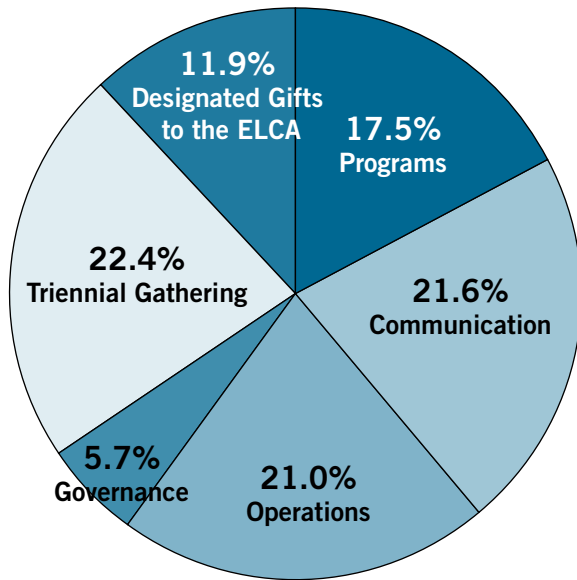
#### Women of the ELCA 2008 Revenue



- Regular Offerings
- Thankofferings
- Designated Gifts to the ELCA
- SWO Convention Offerings
- Other Offerings/Gifts
- Triennial Gathering
- Investments

Regular Offerings	22%	\$671,084
Thankofferings	41%	\$1,243,395
Designated Gifts to the ELCA	14%	\$428,560
SWO Convention Offerings	2.2%	\$68,472
Other Offerings/Gifts	8.9%	\$271,341
Triennial Gathering	28%	\$854,024
Investments (loss)	(16.1%)	(\$490,969)

## Women of the ELCA 2008 Expenses



- Programs
- Communication
- Operations
- Governance
- Triennial Gathering
- Designated Gifts to the ELCA

Programs	17.5%	\$632,508
Communication	21.6%	\$778,573
Operations	21.0%	\$757,717
Governance	5.7%	\$205,565
Triennial Gathering	22.4%	\$806,851
Designated Gifts to the ELCA	11.9%	\$428,560

Thank you so very much for supporting the churchwide women’s organization! We celebrate and are grateful for your stewardship! Your gifts and offerings make it possible for the churchwide women’s organization to create and support:

- publications, including *Interchange*, *Bold Connections*, *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine and *Café*
- anti-racism and cross-cultural programming
- our free DVD, “Created in the Image of God: A Community of Women,” which helps you tell other about who we are
- 13 new program resources covering a variety of topics—all free—that have been introduced since the 2008 Triennial Gathering
- our extensive Web site
- networks that nourish and sustain synodical leaders
- cooperative efforts with other units of the ELCA and ecumenical partners
- the regular meetings of the churchwide executive board, the attendance of executive board members at synodical conventions, and annual trainings for synodical treasurers and presidents
- the salaries and benefits of the churchwide staff, because none of these events or resources could happen without them

## How You Can Support Our Mission

There are four ways you can support the mission and ministry of Women of the ELCA.

### Regular Offerings

**How you give:** Regular offerings are collected by women’s groups at circle meetings, Bible study sessions, and general meetings. Send a portion of your unit’s regular offerings—50 percent or more is recommended—to your synodical women’s organization treasurer.

**Why you give:** Your regular offerings keep our organization running! These offerings provide income to support the ongoing ministries of Women of the ELCA and cover the operational costs of the organization, at both the churchwide and synodical expressions.

### Thankofferings

**How you give:** Thankofferings are collected during a Thankoffering service or devotion. Thankofferings show gratitude for God’s blessings. In significant or ordinary moments, we can say “thank you” to God! Send the total amount of Thankofferings received to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA. Be sure to indicate that it is a Thankoffering.

**Why you give:** Thankofferings help the churchwide organization provide new online and print program resources as well as trainings and special events.

### Designated Gifts

**How you give:** Designated gifts give you the opportunity to support a specific ministry and are **passed in total** to that chosen ministry. Send the total amount of the designated gift to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA. Be sure to indicate that it is a designated gift.

**Why you give:** Your designated gift can provide direct support to the Women of the ELCA grants program, for example. You can also make a designated gift to specific ministries of the ELCA,

such as World Hunger, Missionary Support, and Lutheran World Relief. Making your contributions to ELCA ministries through Women of the ELCA is important—it helps us acknowledge and honor how women collectively contribute to and support the ministries of the whole church.

### Special Offerings

**How you give:** You can make a lasting memory and difference with a special offering. Often these gifts are made to Women of the ELCA endowment funds, from which only the interest earned is used so that the fund can grow for future generations. Send the total special offering amount to the churchwide office of Women of the ELCA. Be sure to indicate that it is a special offering.

**Why you give:** By making a special offering, you can support Katie’s Fund or one of the Women of the ELCA scholarship endowment funds.

As you work to encourage faithful stewardship in your congregation and synodical organization, remember to take time to thank women for serving their church and for using their gifts in ministry. We hope you will make the effort to develop new connections with women outside your normal circles as you lift up stories of the mission of Women of the ELCA.

If you would like more stewardship information and materials, including our 2009–2010 Thankoffering Service and offering transmittal forms, please visit our Web site. There you can also read more about Katie’s Fund and our scholarships program, as well as see a listing of the most recent Women of the ELCA grant recipients. See [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org).

If you would like to speak with someone directly about stewardship and giving opportunities, please contact Emily Hansen, director for stewardship and development, at 800-638-3522, ext. 2736, or [Emily.Hansen@elca.org](mailto:Emily.Hansen@elca.org).



Copyright © 2009 Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved. May be reproduced for use in Women of the ELCA units, clusters/conferences, and synodical women's organizations provided each copy is reproduced in its entirety, unless otherwise indicated by the material, and carries this copyright notice. Please direct all other requests for permission to reproduce to [women.elca@elca.org](mailto:women.elca@elca.org).