

Selecting Women's Ministry Presentations

There will be a handful of presentations at the WELS Women's Ministry Conference. We understand it might be hard to read through their descriptions online and keep them straight in your head. So, our hope is that this document helps as you decide which presentations you would like to attend. You can print this and mark it up. Then, when you go to register, you will know exactly which presentations you are picking. This will explain the differences between the presentations, the various types of breakouts that we have offered, and ways you and your congregation might maximize what it takes from the conference.

KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

The conference has four keynote presentations, three held on Monday and one on the last day of the conference. These keynotes are intended for every attendee. The foundation for the 2024 Women's Ministry conference, "Empowered to Proclaim," is Luke's account of the spread of the kingdom of God by the power of the Holy Spirit through God's chosen apostles and everyday believers. Learn how these early Christians—who had just witnessed or been told of the ministry, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ—were emboldened and empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the word. All our keynote presentations on Monday will revolve around this theme. On the last day of the conference, the keynote will be a more conversational format, "Question and Answer" style.

BREAKOUT PRESENTATIONS

There are 15 breakout presentations, one of which is considered an "intensive". This means it will be digging deep n to the study of Acts and cannot cover the topic in just one breakout sessions. It will expand over two breakout sessions. Attendees choose their top four in the registration form. If selecting the two-session breakout, you will still have to select an extra back-up breakout option. We also ask you to provide two alternative choices, in the event that a top-four choice has reached capacity. If you have selected the two-session breakout and are allotted that before reaching capacity, you will indeed be scheduled to expand two sessions, and will have one less breakout topic to attend. The breakouts are narrower in scope. Some are niche, applicable only to certain interests of individuals. And the breakouts fall into a number of categories.

BREAKOUT PRESENTATION "TRACKS"

As you read through the breakout presentation descriptions, you will note some crossover. This is by design. It is easy to construct a breakout presentation track that allows a congregation or individual to dig into a topic more extensively. Here are five examples.

→ LEADING THE NEXT GENERATION

They're known as "Generation Alpha": those born between 2010 and 2024. Are you a parent, relative, friend, or teacher of someone in Generation Alpha? Are you concerned about the various pressures this generation faces? These breakouts will help encourage and prepare you to nurture the faith of those following behind you.

3. *Spirit-Fueled Resilience for Today's Challenges*

5. *"Who Am I?" the Crisis Among Teens Today*

12. *Fostering Faith in the Next Generation – Making Time for What Matters Most*

→ **SHARING GOD'S WORD WITH OTHERS AROUND YOU**

You know you're called to share Jesus with those around you. And you want to tell others about your Savior, but it can be difficult to figure out just how to do this across the spectrum of all your various relationships. These breakouts will help you find ways to be better prepared and confident and to give an answer for the hope that you have.

- 2. *Moving From Fear to Boldness*
- 4. *Leadership in a World That Does Not Recognize Jesus*
- 6. *The Power of Story*
- 7. *Opportunities to Grow, Learn, and Serve*

→ **BUILDING CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS**

Serving your local congregation can be incredibly rewarding, but getting started can also be incredibly intimidating. If you'd like to organize a new Bible study group or retreat, grow as a Bible study leader, or become a more effective member in your church's ministry, these breakouts will offer encouragement, practical tips, and resources.

- 9. *Digging Deeper*
- 11. *Developing Strategies for Women's Bible Studies and Retreats*
- 14. *The Power of Connecting Women in Christ*
- 15. *The Power of Partnerships*

→ **A CLOSER WALK WITH GOD**

Throughout the conference, you'll be hearing about the power of the Holy Spirit and how all Christians—you!—are empowered to proclaim. The following breakouts are wonderful ways to strengthen your daily walk with Jesus and help you prioritize time spent with your heavenly Father as you seek to carry out your personal ministry.

- 1. *The Baptismal Life*
- 8. *How to Stop Surviving and Start Thriving in Singleness*
- 10. *Acts Bible Study Intensive (2 sessions)*
- 13. *Prayer: God's Gift to His People for All Time*

WHY SO MUCH VARIETY?

It is a lot of presentations. But every congregation is different—different challenges, different people, different priorities. The Women's Ministry conference planning team wanted to make the conference something that is beneficial for every congregation and/or individual. This conference is for any woman who is passionate about the spread of the Good News of Jesus in our world today.

NEW CHRISTIAN – Are you a new Christian? Learn sound doctrinal teaching in keynote and breakout sessions.

SEASONED CHRISTIAN – Are you a seasoned Christian woman who needs to refresh your daily habit of being in the Word? Learn a variety of ways to build the Word into your daily life, making God's Word a priority.

LAY PERSON – Are you a lay person who feels you have been called to greater influence as a Christian in an increasingly anti-Christian culture? Become familiar with resources available through Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran College, and Bethany Lutheran College, as well as through Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and Northwestern Publishing House.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN – Are you a young Christian woman, struggling in a society that has abandoned God? Learn how to live and witness in a world that does not recognize Jesus. Make connections with others who feel the same isolation.

LOVES TO GATHER – Are you a woman who loves to gather with other women around God's Word, but don't know how to start? Learn how to start a Bible study (inside or outside the church) or host your own retreat by gaining wisdom from women who have sound, established practices and resources.

MOTHER OR GRANDMOTHER – Are you a mother or grandmother concerned about raising or assisting the next generation in raising a godly family? Learn how to incorporate the teachings of Jesus into family life in all stages.

SINGLE WOMAN – Are you a single woman who feels isolated when all the conversation is aimed at couples and families? Challenges of living in a culture increasingly hostile to Christianity and God's guidance for joy-filled and purposeful relationships? Join in scriptural guidance and discussion to be encouraged in your walk with Jesus.

WANT TO SERVE – Want to serve within your own congregation? Learn how to work more closely with your pastor and congregation leadership in your church.

WANT TO LEARN – Want to learn more about the everyday early Christians and how they grew from fear to boldness in their Christian lives? Do an intensive study on the book of Acts and watch how apostles and everyday Christians, empowered by the Holy Spirit, worked together in the spread of the kingdom of God.

IN SUMMARY

Since 2007, sisters in Christ have joined together around God's Word in a conference presented by WELS Women's Ministry to be equipped, nurtured, and encouraged in our walks of faith. These conferences include worship and keynote speaker-based presentations from a book of the Bible (this year from Acts). Numerous breakout sessions are being offered, with each participant choosing breakouts that best suit individual needs.

The breakouts will emphasize growing in faith despite fierce cultural adversity as you are empowered by the Holy Spirit to defend your faith while proclaiming the gospel to unbelieving friends, neighbors, relatives, and co-workers. If you attend with a group from your home congregation, we encourage you each to choose different breakouts to gather the most information.

We look forward to seeing you this summer!

WELS Women's Ministry

2024 Conference planning team

Breakout Presentations

Breakout 1

THE BAPTISMAL LIFE

Rev. Dr. Michael Berg

In this session we will explore the power of water in Scripture, the impact of baptism, and how this precious sacrament connects believers to Christ. The Scriptures are dripping wet. There is water everywhere. This water jumps off the pages of the Bible and into the hands of a pastor on onto a sinner now made a saint. This adoption into the rich family of God is a one-time event, but its ramifications are felt every day. In fact, it ushers in a baptismal life.

Rev. Dr. Michael Berg



Rev. Dr. Michael Berg is an associate professor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis. He is the author of *Vocation: The Setting for Human Flourishing* (1517), *The Baptismal Life* (Northwestern Publishing House), *On Any Given Sunday* (1517), and an upcoming volume entitled *Peter: Theologian of the Cross* (Northwestern Publishing House). He is also co-host of the podcast *Let the Bird Fly!* He is married to Amanda and together they have three daughters.

Breakout 2

MOVING FROM FEAR TO BOLDNESS

Rev. Donn Dobberstein

On Holy Thursday, Peter got called out by a servant girl and caved in to fear. Days later, he's standing as spokesman before a crowd of thousands, boldly saying, "Jesus is Lord and Christ."

In this breakout, we will track Peter's journey from fear to boldness and apply it to your journey. What's holding you back? What does an "emboldened you" look like? What impact could this have on relationships God has directly placed you in? What if there were practical resources to help you on your journey? Empowered by the Spirit and gifted with grace, you can change, just like Peter.

Rev. Donn Dobberstein



Since growing up in Lutheran parsonages throughout the Midwest, Donn served mission parishes in Topeka, Kans. and Port Orange, Fla. for twenty-two years. Additionally, he served on the Nebraska District Mission Board and South Atlantic District Evangelism Commission. In 2004, he was appointed to the WELS Commission on Evangelism and served as chairman from 2007-2017. He has presented for the WELS Schools of Outreach, Telling the Next Generation workshops, and past National Conferences on Worship and the Arts. In November 2017, he accepted the call to be director of WELS Discipleship (a merger of adult discipleship and youth and family ministry). Donn is married to Beth, an art teacher in the Palmyra-Eagle, Wis. school district where they live. They have four children.

Breakout 3

SPIRIT-FUELED RESILIENCE FOR TODAY'S CHALLENGES

Karen Fischer

The challenges of this time in history come at us fast and furious: social media concerns, climate change, sexual identity, and financial uncertainty, not to mention our personal worries. But the anxieties of this generation are not unprecedented, and they are not insurmountable. As Jesus ascended and left the disciples, he said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8). As Jesus' disciples of today, we have that same promise to keep us resilient and to help us carry on as his witnesses. Rooted in his timeless promises, this session will provide nine specific, evidence-based social science strategies to increase resilience. The goal: to bolster our ability to weather life's challenges in order to better be the witnesses Jesus promises to empower.

Karen Fischer



"Living in grace, working with wisdom, transcending through humor." Karen is a licensed professional counselor passionate about mental wellness. She serves people in outpatient settings, groups, mentorship, and education. Her mode of operating is to look for the "what to do" over "Why do I feel like this?" in helping people. Karen's passion surrounds marrying the grace and truth of the gospel with understanding psychological stewardship.

Breakout 4

LEADERSHIP IN A WORLD THAT DOES NOT RECOGNIZE JESUS

Steve Hansen

We all experience firsthand the world that we live and work in: a world that does not recognize Jesus as Lord of all creation—a world that does not acknowledge the saving work of Jesus, saving work that has rescued us from our sins and through faith promises eternity with him in heaven. And that is just the beginning. We live in a world that is still governed by the words of our Lord God in Genesis 3 to put hostility between those of the world and those who put their trust in Jesus. And we can sure feel that hostility. It is not easy. It is not fun. And it perplexes us when we try to understand what we may have done wrong to earn such treatment . . . perplexes us until we return to God's Word and lean on Jesus instead of our own understanding.

In such a world that is openly hostile to Jesus and his followers, how are we to be effective leaders in our vocation, that station in life the Lord has assigned to us? How are we to honor our Lord with our decisions, plans, strategy, and approach when these can turn those we collaborate with against us? We all hold tight to the promise of our place being secure in the kingdom that is coming. But how do we have confidence to lead in our world when so many openly criticize what we stand for?

In this presentation, thoughts and experiences will be shared that will provide some leadership guidance in how to approach such situations and reflections that point us back to Jesus, our strength in time of need. This side of eternity there are no remedies to end such difficulties; however, we can draw lessons from God's Word and apply them as we put our faith into action in our vocation and life.

Steve Hansen



Steve Hansen is a business executive, engineering leader, and technical innovator in the medical and industrial x-ray device industry with the demonstrated ability to generate organizational vision, transform into executable plans, build and inspire team support, and deliver new and exciting commercial products.

Steve has held numerous leadership roles with increasing responsibilities, including President of Nikon X-Tek Systems, Ltd. (UK); Chief Executive Officer (CEO) & Chief Technical Officer (CTO) at Tribogenics, Inc.; Vice President of Research & Development and Chief Operations Officer (COO) at Oraya Therapeutics, Inc.; and Vice President of Research & Development at Xoft microTube. Previously, Steve spent 15 years at GE Medical Systems in various roles of technical and organizational leadership including Manager, Global X-Ray Source Engineering, and Manager, Technical Development—Emerging Markets.

A technical expert in x-ray source design, production, and commercialization, Steve has over 35 U.S. patents related to x-ray source technology and the use of x-radiation in diagnostic and therapeutic applications. Steve holds foundational green-field patents in x-ray generation and has founded a company to grow this technology. Steve has a Master of Science and Bachelor of Science in Materials Engineering from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. He has been awarded the GE Dushman Award and was named the UW–Milwaukee College of Engineering and Applied Science alumni of the year. Steve has numerous performance awards and has publications on electronic thin-films.

Steve is the president of Gloria Dei in Belmont, Calif., and has served as the Arizona-California district lay representative on the WELS Synodical Council since 2012.

Breakout 5

“WHO AM I?” THE CRISIS AMONG TEENS TODAY

Rev. Dr. Phil Huebner

The pressures, challenges, and real-life problems that teens experience today could not have been foreseen by previous generations. These many problems often overwhelm teens with all kinds of feelings: of being unloved, worthless, guilty, anxious, lonely, and more. To fight this, we will look to establish and root our identity in Christ through the facts of God’s Word instead of personal feelings.

The presentation will offer real-life counseling suggestions to those who work with, teach, pastor, or lead teens. Along with exploring the identity crisis among teens, this session will also offer suggestions for how to encourage teens to activate and involve them in ministry. The information for this session comes from careful research and intimate knowledge of teen life over years of ministry.

Rev. Dr. Phil Huebner



Rev. Dr. Phil Huebner was assigned from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., to start a new mission church in Palm Coast, Fla., where he served for nine years. Since 2016 he has served as the campus pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Milwaukee. He received a second master’s degree from the seminary in 2016 and his doctorate in ministry in Missions and Culture in 2019 from Concordia Theological Seminary. His entire ministry to date has seen emphases in outreach, children, teens, and families. In his free time, he loves to travel and read and research more on the topics of families and teens. He is married to Becky, and they have two children, Noah (17) and Gwen (14).

Breakout 6

THE POWER OF STORY

Rev. Mark Paustian

As participants learn to link the stories of Jesus in the four gospels with the skeptical challenges they regularly encounter in our world, they will tap into an inexhaustible supply of witnessing material and hone a style of Christian apologetics that keeps Jesus himself on center stage. This presentation will include a window into narrative scholarship to understand why the story form is the most powerful communication form available to us.

Rev. Mark Paustian



Mark graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis., in 1988 and went on to launch an exploratory mission in Rockford, Ill. He has been teaching at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minn., since 2001, specializing in the areas of interpersonal communication, Old Testament Hebrew, apologetics, and homiletics. Mark holds a Ph.D. in communication from Regent University. He is a frequent presenter and has written books on witnessing and worship. He and his wife, Connie (Kroll), have two daughters, Abby and Hannah, and two sons-in-law, Keenan Smark and Joe Rodewald.

Breakout 7

OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW, LEARN, AND SERVE

Angie Scharf

As God's children, each one of us can take advantage of new experiences by way of interacting with others, new (and sometimes "not-so-new") programs, as well as furthering our knowledge through continuing education options. Angie will highlight just some of the varied opportunities that are available to empower our WELS laywomen to grow, learn, and serve in our faith.

Angie Scharf



Angie Scharf is a member at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in New Ulm, Minn. In addition to the most important title of "God's redeemed child," she has had varied vocational titles in her adult life including teacher, mission volunteer, crew administrator, and general manager. Angie currently serves as the Director of Women's Services at Martin Luther College in New Ulm, where she gets the opportunity to work with and encourage some of our synod's young adults as they prepare to serve in HIS kingdom.

Breakout 8

HOW TO STOP SURVIVING AND START THRIVING IN SINGLENESS

Hannah Schermerhorn

Singleness is full of difficulties: the loneliness, the uncertain future, and the question of "Why do I have to be single when everyone else has someone?" In this breakout session, Hannah will share the lessons she learned that transformed her struggle with singleness to joy and confidence in God's special purpose in singleness. This session will encourage both singles and people who want to support the single people in their lives to see how singleness can truly be a gift.

Hannah Schermerhorn



Hannah is the author of *A Single Life to Live: Stop Waiting for Your Life to Begin and Thrive Where God Has You Today*. After breaking off an engagement and struggling with singleness for many years, Hannah slowly began to see God's overwhelming goodness in singleness. As her heart began to change, she made it her mission to uplift and encourage singles in the truth of God's love through her writing and speaking. Hannah lives in Milwaukee, Wis., with her husband (Josh), puppy (Shasta), cat (Fritz), and turtles (Scoops and Bacon). Learn more at HannahSchermerhorn.com or @onlyasinglelife.

Breakout 9

DIGGING DEEPER!

Amber Albee Swenson

Are you longing for a relationship with God that is more than surface deep? Do you get frustrated when reading the Bible because it seems so hard to understand? Do you want to teach, but wonder if you know enough? Amber Albee Swenson will give you the tools to get into the Word in deeper, manageable, and meaningful ways with the goal to know and love God more and to help others do the same.

Amber Albee Swenson



Amber is an author, blogger, and podcaster for the media ministry Time of Grace. Her podcast Little Things helps women look at little, everyday issues from a biblical perspective with the goal of knowing and loving God more. For more information on her books and ministry, go to timeofgrace.org or amberalbeeswenson.org.

Breakout 10

ACTS BIBLE STUDY - Two Session Intensive

Kathie Wendland

This study of Acts will be an interactive overview of Luke's letter to his friend Theophilus with a focus on "empowered" by the Holy Spirit "to proclaim" the message of Jesus the Christ in settings and circumstances among brothers and sisters in Christ, friends, neighbors, and strangers.

Session 1 will discuss the kingdom of God and the work of the Holy Spirit and what that means to us as 21st-century witnesses.

Session 2 will then consider many of the witnesses who testified as recorded by Luke and the application to us today as Jesus' witnesses in various situations for which the Lord has prepared us.

Note: The Bible will be the "textbook" for this study. Be sure to bring one with you to both breakouts. Also, there will be recommended sections of Acts that will be very helpful to read prior to the breakouts. Taking advantage of the opportunity to read those sections ahead of time will enhance the discussion for everyone in the group.

Kathie Wendland



Kathie grew up among six siblings on a dairy farm in Wisconsin. Her Christian parents modeled and taught their children to keep focused on the one thing needful and to proclaim the message of Jesus formally and informally in whatever situation in which the Lord placed them. Kathie has been privileged to serve in three U.S. states and four countries of the world, putting her nursing skills to work in a wide variety of settings. In the course of her journey, she encountered countless souls of all ages who knew nothing of God’s love for them and what Jesus did for them, in addition to Christians who needed to hear again what they already knew well.

A goal in her life came to be to know Jesus and Scripture so well she’d always be prepared to give an answer, with gentleness and respect, for the hope she has had her entire life to anyone who needs to hear it.

Breakout 11

DEVELOPING STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN’S BIBLE STUDIES AND RETREATS

Linda Gumm & Paula Sulzle

Are you interested in gathering women around the Word? Perhaps you are offering or would like to offer a women’s Bible study or host a women’s retreat. Doing either has both blessings and challenges! This workshop is packed full of guidance and vital considerations when hosting studies and retreats that point to Jesus.

Linda Gumm



Linda currently resides with her husband, Tim, in Watertown, Wis. Linda has been involved in numerous ministries in her home congregations and WELS Women’s Ministry, and she has also worked in the secular field for 21 years. She and Tim have been blessed with 4 adult married children and 17 grandchildren. “It’s all about grace.”

Paula Sulzle



Paula has served on the WELS Women’s Ministry Committee for 12 years and on the Executive Board for 8 of those years. She lives in Redwood Falls, Minn., and is married to her college love, Peter, who serves as a pastor of a large church and school ministry. Together they are guiding six young adults and children through life, ranging in ages from 14 to 22.

Paula finds joy in helping others see their God-given potential and purpose. She currently serves in a number of roles—small business owner, substitute teacher, Bible study leader, and blog writer; however, the roles she holds most dear are wife and mom.

Breakout 12

FOSTERING FAITH IN THE NEXT GENERATION—MAKING TIME FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST

Amy Weichel, Tracy Siegler, Tania Kopplin & Rachel Halldorson

How can each of us work to foster faith in the next generation? This breakout aims to offer encouragement and ideas to Christian parents as they endeavor to pass on their faith to the next generation. And whatever our age or life situation, we can all be working to encourage faith in those younger than us. In this interview-style breakout,

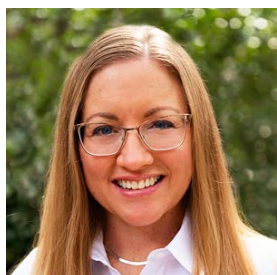
you'll hear from real parents in the trenches of discipling their children for a lifetime of spiritual growth and following Jesus. They will speak to the challenges that come with this desire to live counterculture in a world that is so good at keeping us distracted and busy. Are you a grandparent, godparent, Sunday school teacher, or youth group leader? How can you work with families to nurture the faith of their children and help them to fulfill their God-given role in teaching the next generation of Jesus? Come brainstorm ideas with us!

Amy Weichel



Amy is a homeschooling mom of four children and married to Derek. Together, they founded Faithful Parent, a ministry that helps parents develop a Christian parenting plan to keep their families focused on Jesus for this generation and future generations. She's a Christian mom on a journey to be more intentional with the children God has blessed her with, especially in spiritual matters, and to help other parents do the same.

Tracy Siegler



Tracy is the mother of two teenaged boys, the wife of a pilot, a leader of women's Bible study, a Sunday school teacher, and a part-time researcher for the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her parents, grandparents, and extended family taught her about Jesus and raised her firmly in the Bible. The Lord built on that foundation as she attended a WELS grade school, and by his grace she continues learning to this day. She served on the WELS Women's Ministry Committee from 2011-2017, and currently lives outside of San Antonio, Texas, with her heart firmly living in the Midwest. Tania Kopplin

Tania Kopplin



Tania Kopplin has been married to Kevin for 28 years. They are currently living in Dallas, Texas. They have 3 children Jacob, 25 married to Carissa. Katie, 23, soon to be married to Zach, and Laura, 20, who is currently a sophomore at MLC in the Early Childhood program. Tania has been in ministry over 30 years, 15 years as an elementary school teacher, and many years volunteering and serving in a variety of roles at several churches in 3 different states. Currently she serves at Divine Peace, Rockwall, TX as the Children and Family Ministry Coordinator and the Personal Member Ministry Coordinator. In May, 2023, she graduated from Bethel Seminary, St. Paul's MN, with a Master's Degree in Children and

Family Ministry. Tania's passion is to teach children about Jesus, and to walk alongside parents in discipling their children.

Rachel Halldorson



Rachel is wife to Wayne (her favorite pastor) and mom to two amazing kids, William and Hosanna. She lives in East Texas where she serves as church secretary and works at the local public school. She also serves on the WELS Women's Ministry Executive Board as the Congregational Ministries team leader (aka the CONGO team). This team connects women of our synod to resources, offers ministry encouragement to groups and individuals, and provides a platform for women to hear biblical conversation on relevant topics. They do this primarily through Connection Calls and women's ministry webinars. Meeting fellow sisters in Christ and connecting them with each other by sharing their

ideas and gifts is one of Rachel's favorite things to do!

Breakout 13

PRAYER: GOD'S GIFT TO HIS PEOPLE FOR ALL TIME

Ruth Schaller & Su Hanson

In this session, Ruth and Su will highlight how prayer and the power behind it was used throughout Acts by the early Christians and apostles in order to be empowered to proclaim! As they point out examples from Acts, Ruth and Su will also share similar personal prayer experiences throughout their years as seasoned prayer warriors. Finally, they will lead attendees in a discussion on creative ideas of prayer in more modern, digital times and settings.

Ruth Schaller



In her 84 years, Ruth has played many roles—first and foremost as a blessed daughter of the King. She has been a wife and widow twice, and a natural, foster, and step-parent. She also has served as a family nurse practitioner, a university instructor, and an editor/author. She has been deeply involved in issues related to health care and developmental disabilities, and in women's ministries and Mission to the Children in Mexico.

Su Hanson



Su and her husband reside in South Carolina. They have raised three children and have four grandchildren, ages 8 through 24. Su is founder of Comforter Ministry, a Christian quilt ministry for women diagnosed with cancer. She served as the director of Comforter Ministry for 17 years. Her love of God's Word has led her to write faith-based articles, devotions, Bible studies, and topical presentations. She has also served as a speaker and led women's Bible studies.

Breakout 14

THE POWER OF CONNECTING WOMEN IN CHRIST

Katie Martin & Sarah Proeber

Connections. Forged in the early Christian church. Important in today's Christian church. Learn how connections contribute to our encouragement and position us to share Jesus with others. Hear about a unique approach to women's ministry in a congregational setting. Learn how to dig into the analytics of your unique women-membership; hear ideas on how to partner that with your congregation's overall ministry needs; and get strategies to foster deeper, genuine connections by meeting women where they are at in their seasons of life.

Katie Martin



Katie Martin currently lives in Jefferson, Wis., with her husband, Josh. They have four children (two who have grown and flown), one daughter-in-law, and a rescue dog named Kobe. Katie has followed her pastor husband to Minnesota, Texas, and Germany, where they lived for nine years until 2016. Katie is a former teacher and will graduate in May 2024 with a master's in clinical mental health counseling. She has written for Forward in Christ and published her first book, *Cherished Gifts*, in 2013. Her passions are helping families grow in Christ, mental health prevention, writing, and traveling the world.

Sarah Proeber



Sarah Proeber is currently the digital projects manager for WELS Communication Services. In this role she has helped WELS Women's Ministry broaden its reach to the women of the synod. Sarah dives deep into analytics and data to help strategize and understand where ministry is going and what women are looking for. Always eager to connect women with each other, Sarah has been active in various congregations, creating ministry opportunities and connections. In addition, she has spearheaded an approach to ministry participation at the planning level, which allows women to get involved as they are able. Attend her breakout to find out more about that. Sarah is also a busy wife and mom of three rambunctious kids. She cannot wait to connect with you!

Breakout 15

THE POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS

Dr. Kristi Meyer & Rev. Eric Schroeder

Many congregations have vibrant and thriving women's ministries: natural places for female congregation members to volunteer and get involved. However, it can be difficult for women to participate in and contribute to other aspects of a church's ministry, especially if the congregation's governance model follows a typical male-only board structure. In these situations, partnerships are key—partnerships among all congregation members but especially partnerships between female members and their pastors.

In this session, we'll detail the real-life partnership that exists between the presenters and how this partnership naturally grew and developed over time. We'll look at how similar partnerships might be cultivated at other congregations, and we'll give some practical suggestions and tips for how session participants can get more involved at their local congregations.

Dr. Kristi Meyer



Dr. Kristi Meyer has served as a mathematics professor at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, since August 2006. Since July 2019, Kristi has also served as the part-time Communications Coordinator at St. John's, Wauwatosa, Wis. She earned her Master of Arts in Theological Studies degree from Martin Luther College in May 2022, writing her thesis on headship and the roles of men and women. Kristi is a member of the WELS Women's Ministry Executive Committee and an adjunct instructor for Martin Luther College. In her spare time, she enjoys running, camping, and directing the St. John's handbell choir.

Rev. Eric Schroeder



Rev. Eric Schroeder has served at St. John's, Wauwatosa, Wis., since August 2013. Until last summer, he primarily oversaw discipleship and Christian education, especially working with Sunday school, catechism class, and adult Bible studies. In July 2023, Eric transitioned into the role of lead pastor, taking on responsibilities in the areas of administration and leadership development. He is also a trained facilitator in the Prepare/Enrich premarital and marriage counseling program. In his spare time, Eric enjoys spending time with family and getting outdoors into nature by hunting and fishing.