

History of name change from Thankoffering to Joy Offering in South Carolina

In the 1896 convention, Mrs. M. Kinard, president of the South Carolina Lutheran Women, initiated the practice of collecting Thankofferings in “mite” boxes whenever they felt gratitude for God’s gifts. These were to be used for specific projects sponsored by Lutheran Church Women, such as for foreign missionaries or women and children in need.

Between 1918 and 1962, the prime purpose of the SC women’s organization was that of missionary education and support of the world missionary enterprise. The key to the stewardship of the women in South Carolina has been the overwhelming proportion of contributions given to “others” as contrasted with monies retained. The ingathering of Thankoffering has been one of the highlights of each convention.

In the 1971 Triennial Convention of Lutheran Church Women, the Auxiliary adopted South Carolina’s idea of Thankoffering as a special gratitude offering, in addition to Regular Offering. However, the constitution reads, “These offerings shall be transmitted in full to the churchwide organization for the support of the ministries of this organization and the church.” (Article X, Section 4, Item 1.b.)

In the 2008, the Stewardship Planning Guide stated “Thankofferings help Women of the ELCA provide resources, events and programs, and also support the organization’s crucial annual gift to the ELCA.” Publicity on programs and services supported by Thankofferings stated “25% Annual Gift to the ELCA, 40% Programs, 30% Communications, 5% Governance. Thankoffering supported as much as \$1 million toward the annual gift to the ELCA. In turn, the ELCA provided the Women of the ELCA free rent in their Chicago offices.

In 2009, the Women of the ELCA cut the unrestricted gift to the ELCA “due to declining revenue.” The only funds going to the ELCA from the Women were designated giving from units and synodical organizations. The ELCA began charging rent for use of office space.

At the 2011 Triennial Convention, the South Carolina delegation presented a resolution to strike “and the church” from the CWO constitution (quoted in the third paragraph above) since that was no longer true. The resolution was signed by 25 delegates at the convention and was told that it would be referred to the Resolutions Chair of the Executive Board. No action was ever taken.

At the June 25-26, 2011, South Carolina synodical women’s convention, the resolution shown on the following page was passed unanimously. See the definition of Joy Offering on page 73 of this handbook.

References:

- History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina 1842-1924, page 46
- A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina 1971-1987, page 55
- A Brief History of Women in the ELCA Celebrating 20 Years, by Nancy Stelling,
editor of Lutheran Women Today magazine from 1987-2001
- Women of the ELCA Stewardship Planning Guides

THIS RESOLUTION WAS PASSED AT THE SC WELCA CONVENTION, JUNE 25, 2011

A RESOLUTION ON THE USE OF THANKOFFERINGS IN SOUTH CAROLINA

WHEREAS, in 1896 the South Carolina Lutheran Women initiated the practice of collecting Thankofferings (in "Mite boxes") in response to their gifts from God to be used for definite projects; and

WHEREAS, at the Lutheran Church Women National Triennial Convention in 1971, the Auxiliary adopted South Carolina's idea of Thankofferings to be used for specific projects sponsored by Lutheran Church Women; and

WHEREAS, the constitution of the Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Churchwide Organization reads, "Thankofferings ... shall be received by the unit and transmitted in full to the churchwide organization for the support of the ministries of this organization and the church"; and

WHEREAS, Thankofferings are used by Women of the ELCA for the "total outreach" of the women's organization to relieve suffering and injustice around the world, to care for God's creation, providing safe shelter, secure food, and clean water to those in need, to provide care and treatment for women and children who are abused; and

WHEREAS, financial records available to us from Women of the ELCA Churchwide Organization show that our Thankofferings are NOT held separate for outreach projects as the list above implies, plus they are NO LONGER given to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ministries, but rather are combined with Regular Offering and other offerings and income for operating expenses within the organization, such as to "provide new resources and events"; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the South Carolina Women of the ELCA collect gratitude offerings as special gifts to be called JOY offerings as it was called in 1971, and sent directly to the SC Synodical Treasurer so that these offerings can be used as intended ONLY for outreach projects determined by the South Carolina Women of the ELCA Synodical Board; and be it further

RESOLVED, that South Carolina Women of the ELCA continue to submit a generous portion of our Regular Offering to the Women of the ELCA Churchwide Organization ministries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that Congregational Units in South Carolina may continue to submit their Thankofferings and Designated Gifts directly to the Women of the ELCA Churchwide Organization on their Offering Transmittal Form B; and be it further

RESOLVED, that "JOY offering" replaces the Thankoffering line item in the Synodical budget; and be it further

RESOLVED, that these resolves become effective immediately upon their adoption by the South Carolina Women of the ELCA convention on June 25-26, 2011.

Resolution Task Force: Carolyn Torrence (Chair), Virginia Herlong, Donna Fulmer, Sharon Ganis,
Sandra Wanto, Linda Wilkerson, Martha Koeller, Jenny Cannon, Marsha Mikell
Resolution was approved by the SC Women of the ELCA Synodical Board, May 14, 2011

