Young Women in the WELS
Understanding the Crisis and Building Connection

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Introduction
In the church, in what ways have you experienced a sense of belonging? In what ways have you felt valued?

Who's your person?

Part 1: UNDERSTANDING THE CRISIS

What's the Crisis: Women are leaving

1) Women's church attendance has dramatically declined in the last 25 years.

2) 40% of Gen Z women say they have nothing to do with church or faith practice. Up 11 points in the last 13 years, up 25 points from a generation ago.

3) Gen Z Women lag behind men in faith engagement as well.

Why are they leaving?

Burnout | Competing Priorities

Social DIsconnect | Differing Life Stages

Social DIsconnect| **T**he Loneliness Epidemic

Cultural Mismatch | Growing Gap In Opportunities

Cultural Mismatch | Political Polarization

Cultural Mismatch | Speaking Faith

Autonomy | She Has A Choice

Women are leaving the WELS too.

1) Overwhelmingly**,** the reason women give for leaving a church is a lack of meaningful service. They don't feel heard or that their gifts are being utilized.

2) 64% of WELS women ages 18-34 "highly disagree" with this statement: I am using my God-given gifts and talents to support the mission of my congregation.

3) 84% say they can't or don't know where to serve in their congregation.

4) 25% of women under age 35 said they felt disconnected to their congregation.

" "We've put women in a box." ~ Paul Wendland

Why does it matter?

- These are souls that Jesus died for.

Luke 15:4-6 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

- Women are hurting.

Matthew 9:35-36 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

- The body of Christ suffers.

I Corinthians 12:12-13, 21-22, 27 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- We lose the partnership in mission.

Romans 16:12-16 Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord. Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them. Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord’s people who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

- Gospel proclamation is hindered.

I Peter 3:14-16 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

Part 2: FROM DISCONNECT TO DISCIPLESHIP

What can we do about it?

1) **Create a sense of belonging**

   a. Be Present

   b. Give It Time

   c. Invite Her To Join You

   d. Be Transparent and Vulnerable

   e. Point to Jesus

2) **Communicate Their Value**

   a. To God

   b. In God's Kingdom Work

   c. In the local congregation

Resources You Might Find Useful

WAYS TO STAY IN TOUCH WITH WOMEN'S MINISTRY
Facebook
Instagram
Subscribe to Women's Ministry newsletter
This is a twice monthly email that shares devotional thoughts, resources, and ideas for ministry.

WM WEBSITE
WELS Women's Ministry
Here you'll find Devotions, Bible Studies, Advent by Candlelight programs and more.

WM WEBINARS (specific to this topic)
You are an Influencer (Feb 19)
Fostering Faith in the Next Generation-Prioritizing Gen Z
The Power of Connecting Women in Christ
Reviving Relationships Through Biblical Hospitality

RESOURCE: Equip Women To Teach The Word

Training Website-Equip Women To Teach The Word
This is the online resource for women eager to learn or improve their skills to teach and share God's Word. Includes introductory, testimonial, and concluding videos as well as pdf pages of the reference book.

Reference Book-Equip Women To Teach The Word
This is the complete reference book in pdf form for easier viewing.

Vimeo-Equip Women To Teach The Word
Same videos as on the congregational website, but you don't have to download them. (videos are not in a playlist and therefore out of order)

Printing-Equip Women To Teach The Word
A printing company that's given the best rate if a published book is desirable.

WM DEVOTIONAL AND PODCAST SERIES
Subscribe to Reflections on our Unique Callings Devotion and Podcast
This devotional series reflected on the principal and application of the callings of men and women.

SYNODICAL RESOURCES
Pastoral Letter Addressed to Pastors Regarding the Roles of Men and Women
WELS Conference of Presidents, September 2024

Spiritual Gifts Discovery Tool
Shadow of the Shepherd
Healthy, thriving church cultures don't happen by chance. God builds them through leaders who deliberately focus on the culture needed to help the congregation fulfill its purpose. You can be one of them.

OTHER RESOURCES
Faith Unleashed Consulting
Engage, equip and empower God's people and ministries for maximum kingdom impact.

SOURCES

Jon Hein's presentation at synod convention in 2025

Young Women are leaving Church in Unprecedented Numbers

Why Young Women Are Leaving the Church and How Pastors Can Help

Why Young women Are Leaving the Church More Than Ever

I'm a Gen Z Woman. I'm Staying in Church

In a First Among Christians, Young Men Are More Religious Than Young Women

Behind the Steep Decline in church attendance Among women

Belief in Jesus Rises, Fueled by Younger Adults

The Largest, Most Undervalued Demographic In the Church

Developing Female Leaders: Navigate the Minefields and Release the Potential of Women in Your Church, Kadi Cole

Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood, John Piper and Wayne Grudem

Jesus, Justice & Gender Roles, Kathy Keller

The Struggle to Stay: Why Single Evangelical Women are Leaving the Church, Katie Gaddini

Hours of conversation with Paul Wendland