



# Expressions

VOL. 23, NO. 5, NOVEMBER 2009

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization

## Joys for the Soul

*Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you. Psalms 33:22 NRSV*

Next month the church season will change to Advent, we will prepare our hearts for the birth of our Saviour. We also start the preparations for the holidays, including decorating our homes, our churches, our schools. We will attend Sunday school programs, Christmas programs at schools, churches, and in the community.

Many of us will travel or have guests traveling to our homes. Our hearts and souls are filled with love.

Continue the feeling of love and preparations by starting 2010 with giving yourself the gift of a day devoted to *JOY For The Soul!*

Music, a delicious lunch, and three terrific presentations will fill the day.



**MISSION:** Rev. John and June Reehl, Grand Island, and their daughter, Karen Tiedeman, Hickman, will share the story of how they founded through Orphan Grain Train a mission assisting orphanages and prison ministries in Russia and the Baltics. They find sponsors and work to provide much needed medicine and hygiene items. John is a retired Lutheran Church Missouri Synod minister and Karen is a registered nurse who assists with the mission trips.

**LAUGHTER:** Sue Brown, Hastings, will bring home to us the importance of laughter. She will give us ten points on how to enhance one's living instead of being negative. You will find ways to add laughter to your own life as well as to the lives of others around you. Sue served as an Adam's County Extension Educator for over thirty-five years and received numerous awards of excellence including UNL Extension Educator of the Year. She

**Join Us for  
Winter Retreat,  
January 16,  
Grand Island**

enjoys sewing and quilting and owns Calico Cottage in Hastings.

**SPIRITUAL GROWTH:** Vera Hummel, Wayne, will guide us in Seeking the Spirit Within. She

has a passion to journey with people who desire to deepen their personal relationship with Christ. **Vera Hummel**



Vera is a certified spiritual director and is currently serving as the Director for the Nebraska Synod Institute for Spiritual Direction Formation. She is emeritus faculty at Wayne State College and is experienced in small group leadership having conducted team building workshops, prayer seminars, and church council retreats for spiritual growth.

So mark that calendar and we will see you in January!

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# Devotions

By JANE FLORES, Midlands Board Representative

*Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Let your good spirit lead me on a level path.*  
Psalm 143:10

As we come to harvest time we wonder, “How things will produce?” As we look at our lives we ask, “What have we sown and what is our legacy of love?” Perhaps it is a smile. Many forget how pleasant a smile can be. As I walk down a shopping center, it is amazing. People almost look shocked if you smile at them. On a church sign it says, “A cloudy day is no match for a sunny disposition.” A man I know when asked, “How are you?” replies “Never Better.” Believing that attitude will lead to better things or maybe if you say it enough, you will believe it. Teach us your ways.

Perhaps we could share our things. I have made two loaves of zucchini bread many times this year, but I have never kept both at home. There is sharing other goods like tomatoes, sweet corn, etc. Teach us your ways.

Perhaps, we could share our time. Making phone calls, sending greeting cards, making visits to homes, or visits to hospitals. Teach us your ways.

What part of that time is thankfulness? Thanking God for guidance in big and little things. I know God is with me when working with machinery and I am very thankful for that. When thinking of this, a story of a make-believe trip to see heaven comes to mind. All the angels were really busy at the request center with an over-load of requests. Then they went to the blessing center and all the

angels were over-loaded there too. Finally they came to the gratitude center where one angel could handle all the messages. Please Lord; let us not forget to be thankful. Teach us your ways.

We are all examples of what God can and does do. Perhaps our challenge should be to share our beliefs with others. People need to know God. Are we telling them? How about telling them how God is at work in our lives? We must be more intentional on these things. Find someone to invite. Find someone to tell about Jesus. We can't harvest without planting. Talk about these things to your children. Speak about them in your homes and work areas. Teach us your ways.

There is a country song called, “Believers.” It tells of an eighty-nine year old mother who prays for her son to see the light. Others tell her it is no use. One night the phone rings and it is her son, “Mom, I've seen the light” Believers! Teach us your ways.

*Heavenly Father, we thank you for our many blessings. Special thanks for your love. Lord, we ask that your loving spirit be within and through us so that we may be a blessing to all we meet. That your Glory be made known among all nations and that we follow a level path. Teach us your ways. In Jesus name, Amen.*

*Expressions* is a publication of the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization, Women of the ELCA.

*Expressions* provides information concerning programs and projects of the Churchwide and Nebraska Synodical Women Organizations, Women of the ELCA; and helpful information for congregational units. It is distributed free to Nebraska congregational unit presidents/coordinators, pastors of Nebraska congregations, and Nebraska female seminarian students.

The newsletter is published four times a year, in February, May, August, and November. Deadline is the first of the month preceding the issue date.

It is currently team designed, edited, and proofread. Contact the team at [expressions@nebraskaelcawomen.org](mailto:expressions@nebraskaelcawomen.org), or by phone, 402-291-1087. Content information can be sent via e-mail.

November *Expressions* team members were Gwen Edwards, Arlene Johnson, and Beth Meyer. Photographs provided by Leslie Marchando-Cook, Gwen Edwards, Mary Mayfield, Ruth Manning, and Susan Watson.

# THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Random Thoughts

God is Good.

Be Still.

Feel Christ's Heart.

We all have random thoughts pop into our minds. Sometimes they are short, quick thoughts as those listed above. No explanation, no further in depth thought to them.

Be Still. Did each of you take time to be still at the NSWO Convention? Each time I walked into the "Stations of a Healthy Heart" room, I felt the peace of God. It's where I went when I needed to be still and stood there. Does 'Be Still' mean to be physically still or does it mean to make our hearts be still?

Saturday morning at convention, prior to delegate orientation, my heart, my mind, my soul, were fluttering, anxious; the time had arrived for the convention to start. I knew where the prayer team was that moment, I found them, we prayed, my heart became still.

I'm physically still at the moment. The weather is crisp, cool, 47°; good football weather ~ it's a bye week for the Huskers ~ not for the Tigers. They are not being still. They are running up and down the soccer field; blocking, kicking, scoring. Sure the YMCA itself does not keep score, you know the players do. (Yes, I watched from the Pilot that morning and my son made a goal from the half field mark.)

Feel Christ's Heart. I remember a message from the NSWO convention, to feel Christ's heart beating in my heart. Wow, what a statement, 'beating' in my heart. We each feel Christ's heart differently. We feel it listening to the Word; with smiles of by-passers; with hugs from friends. We felt it Friday night during our social at convention.

I felt it last week when Lord of Love presented our 3<sup>rd</sup> graders their Bibles. My son was excited all morning and just beamed when he received his; he followed along in his new Bible while the lessons were read.

When we are still it's easier to feel Christ's heart; it can be felt when we are busy, moving. We need to share Christ's love, so others can feel His heart.

God is good. All the time. Yes, He is in many ways. We can all name ways He is good. Jeremiah 29:11, *"For I know the plans for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."* We need to embrace it when God calls us. When we feel challenged, we need to remember God is good and He will help us, guide us. After all, He called us, it's His plan.

Matthew 18:30, *"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."* That verse is comforting to me. No matter how few show up for my Bible study group, He's there with us. He is with my family, the three of us. God is good.

Psalms 62:8, *"Trust in him at all times, pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge."* All the time, we need to trust Him, for He is good. We need to pray all the time. He wants us to pour our hearts to Him and we should.

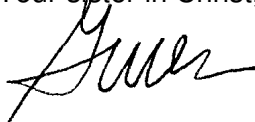
Philippians 4:6, *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God."* All the time God wants to hear from us, about everything, anything.

God's Word in our hearts helps us tell that roaring lion to leave, we belong to God. It also helps us "Be Still," helps us "Feel Christ's Heart Within Us."

Thank you to all of you who mentor me, support me, and pray for me. As the new board holds their first meeting this month, I ask that you pray for them, for us. That we hear God's voice, feel Christ's heart, as we do His work in Nebraska.

Have a blessed Holiday season and I look forward to seeing you at Winter Retreat.

Your sister in Christ,



## What Really Happens at an NSWO Convention?

By BETH MEYER,  
NSWO President, 2005-2009

For those of you who have never attended a convention of the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization or any other synodical convention have you ever wondered what really happens?

At the 2009 NSWO Convention, it all began on Friday morning with the setting up of the displays and preparing the environment for the plenary sessions and worship to embrace the theme "Be Still and Feel Christ's Heart Within You." The altar, with the cross, is in place during the whole convention to remind us Christ is at the center of all that we do. This year the committee borrowed the idea from the Nebraska Synod Assembly Committee using colorful pieces of material on the tables in the plenary area making it look like a large quilt. This material was then used to make sewing kits for Lutheran World Relief.



*President Beth Meyer and Vice-President Gwendolynn Edwards Friday afternoon.*

At 2:00 p.m. Friday, registration started with women signing in and delegates turning in their credentials to receive their voting packets. Signing up for workshops also takes place at this time. This year women also had the opportunity to sign up for the "Run, Walk, and Roll" which took place very early Saturday morning. Eleven women had signed up prior to arriving at convention and had collected \$728.00. Twelve ladies signed up on Friday and were given a challenge to get as many pledges as possible with a prize awarded to the one collecting the most money on Friday. These ladies collected \$630.93 for a grand total of \$1,358.93. Way to go, ladies!

Two sessions of workshops were held that afternoon and after dinner the women returned to the

convention center for a worship and healing service led by Bishop David deFreese and Pastor Connie Raess. After worship, Anita deFreese helped us become acquainted with women from all around the synod by having us participate in a mixer (game). To the toot of a train whistle, and according to the number of toots, we were to form groups of that size and then each women was to answer the question asked at that time. It was great fun and helped the women become more comfortable in speaking with strangers. Brownies and coffee topped off the evening.



*Friday Workshop "Prayer 201" led by Marydae Eigenberg*

Saturday morning twenty-three women rose early and participated in the "Run, Walk, and Roll." This was about a mile walk on Betty's Trail in Yanney Heritage Park; the money raised was for Women of the ELCA initiative – "Raising up Healthy Women and Girls."



*Run, Walk, and Roll Participants.*

Delegates went through orientation prior to the gathering music, led by the worship team and then Bible study led by Bishop deFreese.

The first plenary session began with the official opening of the convention and introductions of speakers, worship leaders, the CWO Representative, special guests, the Parliamentarian, and the convention Chaplain. The plenary sessions follow an agenda with a script to keep everything on track





Delegate Leslie Marchando-Cook with her red (no), white (question), and green (yes) voting cards.

using Robert's Rules of Order. Appointing of committees and key people are some of pieces of business followed by the first vote for president. This vote is a nominating vote where anyone's name may be submitted. It is

sometimes called an ecclesiastical ballot. For someone to win the election on this ballot, one person would need to receive three-fourths of the votes. Throughout the convention and especially before each vote, Pastor Connie led us in prayer.

We were blessed to have the President of Women of the ELCA, Beth Wrenn, with us for the entire convention and while waiting for the results of the first vote she gave her presentation.

Without an election on the first ballot, we went to the second ballot where a person needs to win by two-thirds of the votes. People not wishing their name to remain on the ballot may have it removed by speaking at the microphone. We took a short coffee break before the keynote address.

We were privileged to hear from our keynote speaker, Patty Morrison, who talked to us about the times of our lives.

In plenary session two, it was announced that a third ballot for president was needed with the names of the two people who received the most votes



Keynote Speaker Patty Morrison

on this ballot. This vote requires a simple majority for an election.

It was time for lunch. At this year's convention, we were hosted at breakfast and lunch tables by women that had participated in a "Saved to Serve" opportunity. Each table was decorated to depict what servant duties had taken place at a specific event. Many women learned more about Saved to

Serve and were given the opportunity to sign up for the 2010 events.

When we returned for plenary session three, the Committee on Elections reported Gwendolynn Edwards had received the majority of the votes and President Beth Meyer declared an election. Gwen addressed the convention and accepted the position of NSWO President.

Election of NSWO officers followed with Leslie Marchando-Cook elected vice-president, Jane Johnson elected secretary, and Nancy Johnson elected treasurer. This was followed by the election of the conference representatives.



Saved to Serve luncheon table decorations

They are as follows: Central

– Carol Ortgren; High Plains – Nancy Steele; Metro East – Jody Ptacnik; Midlands – Jane Flores; Northeast – Mae Greve; Southeast – Michelle Steadman; and Southern Prairie – Carol Bosshardt.

President Beth Meyer gave her report by using a PowerPoint showing pictures of events from the past four years and women she met during her past four years as president. The tune accompanying her presentation was "Faces of Our Friends" by Celia Whitler. We indeed do see God's presence in the faces of these women.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in two sessions of workshops, servant room activities, and fellowship with cookies and punch. You could take time to meditate in the "Stations of a Healthy Heart" room, set up with appropriate activities at each station. This is a piece included in the "Journey to Wellness" resource.



"Stations of a Healthy Heart" – Strong Heart table

Following a delicious evening meal, it was time to relax, sit back, and laugh. Lena showed up again this year to act as the emcee and she sang a little ditty about 'lutefisk' and also had a reading about it. The NSWO Board members put on a skit titled "Bold Mama." Teresa Christensen was the mama and she had retrieved children from camp and they



*Big Mama aka Teresa Christensen, Southern Prairie Board Rep.*

stopped by to recite their favorite Bible verses from camp and what their mamas had told them to never forget. Some of you SWO presidents will remember this skit from the Conference of Presidents in 2006. The evening concluded with Arlene Johnson giving us some grandmotherly advice and a special reading of the "Quilt of Holes." We were treated to ice cream sundaes and then a night of rest.



*Servant Room Participants*

Sunday morning started with the fourth and final plenary session. Election of Delegates to the Triennial Convention of Women of the ELCA in Spokane, Washington, July 12-14, 2011, was the first thing on the agenda. The following were elected as delegates: Tara Bahnfleth, Carol Bierman, Lynn Echternkamp, Fran Hughes, Terri Johnson, Lanetta Kellogg, Shirley Kehne, Emily Laaker, and Mary Mayfield. The SWO presidents are also delegates.

The treasurer's report was approved and upon recommendation of the NSWO Board the budget for 2010-2011 was adopted. The Financial Review for 2008-2009 was approved as presented.

Resolutions brought to the convention and approved were:

- A courtesy resolution showing appreciation to the convention committee, the hotel staff, and all those involved in putting on a successful convention.
- A resolution that a Saved to Serve Reunion be held at each NSWO convention. Invitations will

be sent to all participants of the events that have been held since the previous convention.

- One resolution was referred to the 2011 NSWO Convention Committee concerning past president's presentations taking place at a time other than Sunday morning.

The generosity of the women of this organization is phenomenal. Our Mission/Convention Offering totaled \$6,411.50. This will be divided ½ to CWO and ½ to Katie's Fund. Our worship offering will be given to Lutheran Campus Ministries of Nebraska. The committee on offerings counted this offering and the amount will be reported in the next *Expressions*. The Tangible offering of items for health and school kits was amazing. That report is page 13.

Throughout the convention there were times to visit the displays of the serving arms of the Nebraska Synod and of the convention committees. The final bids were taken on the linens from Argentina with the highest bidders announced on Saturday night.

Yes, there is the business that needs to be completed; however, with the worship and workshops to help us on our faith journey, or teach us how to be a leader, or teach us to pray, or learn what it is to be a Mary in a Martha world, or help do a service project, the convention becomes more than just a business meeting. Fellowship is always a big part of the convention.



*Gathering Music time, Saturday morning*

This is one of the important reasons for participating in an NSWO Convention because women feel the connectedness they have with the other women there. We are truly a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We do 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.

If you were not able to attend this convention mark your calendar for the next convention to be held September 23-25, 2011. Once you come, you will understand what brings you back time after time.

Thank you to the Convention Team for their time in planning for and carrying out an excellent convention.



# Meet Your 2009-11 NSWO Officers and Board Representatives



**President Gwendolynn Edwards** lives in Bellevue and is a member of Lord of Love Lutheran Church in Omaha. She has been married for sixteen years to John and they have one son, Aaron, who will be nine-years-old this month. She is employed with National Indemnity Company and celebrated twenty-three years of service this past June.

She will be launching the 'Book of Faith Initiative' at Lord of Love this month, is an active member of her Circle, and serves as an advisor to the Women's Ministry Team. 2009 marked her third year as the Vacation Bible School coordinator after volunteering in other positions for three years. She served as NSWO Vice President 2005 to 2009.

Gwen is involved at her son's elementary school and the Information Chair and co-Popcorn Kernel of her son's Cub Scout Pack. She is a blood donor, and coordinates bloodmobiles and the United Way campaign at her place of employment. She is an avid bowler and travels to participate in the state and national tournaments. In her spare time, she enjoys playing games with Aaron and scrapbooking with friends.



**Vice President Leslie Marchando-Cook** is a member of Holy Trinity Lutheran in Sidney. She is married to Kenneth, a veterinarian and rancher; and her son, Michael is a junior at UNL majoring in business/marketing.

She is her unit's president, a Stephen Minister, Home Communion Server, Memorial Committee member, and has served on the stewardship committee. She has participated in several Spring Gatherings and Winter Retreats, and past High Plains Conference Coordinator.

In her community she serves as the food service coordinator for homebound individuals, 4-H leader, PEO officer, Sidney Shooting Park Vice President, and assists with community outreach. Leslie is involved with professional sporting clays shooting, where she is currently traveling around the United States shooting the National targets; at the end of last month she competed at Nationals held in San Antonio, Texas.



**Secretary Jane Johnson** lives in Newman Grove where she is a member of Trinity Lutheran Church. In her church she serves as choir member, pianist and organist, reader, after school program music leader, and is a member of the worship and music committee. She has participated in Vision trips to Argentina and Tanzania and attended Triennial Gatherings in San Antonio and Salt Lake City.

She is a recently retired Spanish teacher and currently a freelance Spanish translator/interpreter. She is in the process of becoming a Nebraska Registered Court Interpreter. In her community, she is a Newman Grove Blue Jay fan, substitute teacher, and enjoys working with families who speak no English.

Jane's other interests include participating in adventurous family activities, reading, writing, biking, and caring for her pets, which include a rescued Chihuahua and ferret. She is an avid traveler and until her retirement from teaching, served as group leader for student travel abroad summer tours. In June 2006, she attend worship services on three consecutive Sundays, in three different countries, on three different continents; Italy, USA, and Argentina. She is passionate about saving the Rainforest and helping young people build international friendships.



**Treasurer Nancy Johnson** is a member of Rejoice! Lutheran in Omaha. She is a member of two Bible study groups, president of Rejoice! Woman, offering counter, handbell member, Altar guild member, communion assistant, Marketplace keeper, quilter, and helps with Spirit Matters. She has served on the Metro East Spring Gathering planning committee and served as Conference Coordinator. She has attended several Saved To Serve events.

She is a retired school teacher and still substitutes, is a regular blood platelet donor, member of Chapter EK of P.E.O., and past National President of Kappa Kappa Iota.



**Central Conference Board Representative Carol Ann Ortegren** is a member of Salem Evangelical Church in Stromsburg. She was a school administrator for over twenty years, both as an elementary principal and Director of Special Education for Educational Service Unit in Columbus. She is an avid quilter (prolific if not perfect). Carol and her husband, Carrol, have three children, seven grandchildren, and three step-grandchildren (I always just say ten). Everyone lives in Nebraska. They all love quilts and antiques. They celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last year (I was of course, a child bride!). We are so blessed.

She does a lot of volunteer work including being the past president of her local W/ELCA, an officer for Women's Civic Improvement Club, and an officer in quilt guild. Carol is also on the board for our Senior Busy Wheels. She loves to attend our grandchildren's school activities. She strongly believes that a little humor can help most any situation and enjoys making new friends.



**High Plains Conference Representative Nancy Steele** is a member of Calvary Lutheran in Scottsbluff, and has lived in western Nebraska for 40 years after college graduation; her husband Bill and her just celebrated 43 years of marriage.

She is active in her local Women of the ELCA unit as Mission Community Chair, Board member, and Helping Hands coordinator. She has also been a Confirmation mentor, Stephen Ministry leader & minister, Bible Study facilitator, and shut-in ministry. Nancy has participated in the Spring Gatherings and Autumn Renewals and was a former Conference Coordinator. She has attended many of the Women of the ELCA Synodical Conventions often as a voting member; also been a voting member to the Nebraska Synod Assemblies several times, and once was a delegate to a

Churchwide Assembly.

In her community, she serves their local Cooperative Ministries Council as the Secretary/Treasurer and also the local annual CROP WALK organizer.

**Metro East Conference Board Representative Jody Ptacnik** is a member of First Lutheran in Blair. She is coordinator for First Lutheran Women's Group, member of FLC Christian Education Committee, Sunday school teacher, Esther Circle member, and treasurer for FLC Women's group. Jody is part of the original committee for development assets in Blair Community and does calligraphy and enjoys teaching.





**Midlands Conference Board Representative Jane Flores** is a member of St. Paul in Hooper, is a Bible school music leader, Women of the ELCA Mission Growth leader, softball organizer, lay reader, and choir member. She has participated in Saved To Serve events and was a previous NSWO Conference Coordinator.

Jane was a voting delegate at Churchwide Assembly 2009, is a blood donor, helped organized a benefit in 2007, and is the Thrivent Congregational representative.



**Northeast Conference Board Representative Mae Greve** is a member of Salem in Wakefield. She is the chairmen of the Hospitality committee, president of Women of the ELCA, and serves on the memorial and visitation committees.

Mae served on the Northeast Nominating Committee; traveled to Tanzania on a Goodwill trip; and volunteers at Oaks Retirement Home, Meals on Wheels, and Senior Center. She loves to cook, entertain, and work with older people.



**Southeast Conference Board Representative Michelle Steadman** is a member of St. Paul (Hickory Grove) in Auburn. She is co-president of her church's women's group, active Circle participant, Sunday school teacher, youth group leader, manages the LWR Coffee Project, and encourages congregational participation in Eco Palms and Chocolate Project.

Michelle has been a Saved To Served participant and Youth Leader for the Mississippi Mission Trip in 2007. She is a blood donor, helps with Habitat for Humanity, service projects through work, and youth group activities.



**Southern Prairie Conference Board Representative Carol Bosshardt** is a member of First St. Paul in Hastings. With her husband, Tom, they have lived in the Tri-Cities area (Kearney or Hastings) for more than twenty years. One daughter, Anne, her husband, John, and son, George, live in Bayard. Our other daughter, Mary, and her husband, Joshua, are expecting a daughter early in December. Carol said, "Women of the ELCA have encouraged my spiritual growth and service in so many ways that I am excited to serve as the Southern Prairie Conference Board Representative."



Does your Women of the ELCA Unit have a newsletter? Do you they have a page, a section in your church's newsletter?

If so, please send your newsletter, your page, your section to President Gwendolynn Edwards. She wants to read about the happenings in your unit. You can either mail it to her or e-mail it to her.

# Why Am I Here?

By ESTELLE RIEMANN, PMA

I am blessed to be sitting in the middle of all these women, not on the edge; however, surrounded by women of all kinds, all in common with you, Christ our Savior.

It's about a message of relationship to God, relationship to fellow women, relationship of me to God. Moments of worship that lift us so high we can feel your presence, God.

Smiles of leaders who can make all of us have the feeling of being included in the community, women who are both young and old.

The joy of the event, the convention really begins with the filling out of forms and mailing them. It begins with the anticipation of renewed friendships, seeing the latest in material and ideas.

If you are blessed, you have women to share the ride with to the event, women to talk with, to share with. You start to feel the freedom from the day-to-day burdens that we all have in our lives. Letting go of our concerns, for a time of fellowship with our sisters in Christ is at hand. We have the freedom from hidden agendas if we allow the trust and love in God to work in our hearts.

When we get to the event or convention, once you are registered and signed in, the adventure really begins. Whether we know it or not, when we start on the journey with the sisters of Christ with whom we are in the room, it is really unique in the whole world. There are 190 women attending this convention. There are a lot of strangers among us; in reality, we are not strangers, because how can we trust and love strangers? We can trust and love each other with our hearts because we each love and trust our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Within any given event or convention, we meet people from all walks of life, within all needs or wants, from all areas of life, from in-state or out of state, sometimes from other countries. I learn from others. I grow when I step outside myself. The encouragement from others is at times overwhelming. When I get

past being overwhelmed, the joy of knowing and seeing God's work within myself (yourself) and my (your) life knows no bounds.

God gave me such a blessing in the women I have met at so many different events and occasions. The joy of fellowship was very evident in all the women at this convention. Women, who have given of their time, talents, love, their very being in service to God and each other. We give without expecting anything in return, which means when a smile or greeting comes to us, it really feels like it is coming from God.

The women giving of themselves represent the many gifts or talents at the convention. I ask what may be a difficult question of each one of you. Do you accept your gifts or talents with a joyful heart? When somebody compliments you on a job well done, can you accept it as what it is? God has called you. You have responded. You have done your best. Knowing your success in every endeavor comes from God; it really isn't prideful to accept it. It is a precious gift from God.

I have to tell you that the skit after the banquet was joyfully over the top. We needed to laugh and enjoy the moment. We need occasionally to take ourselves a little less seriously. I got to thinking about it. I have never gotten up in front of anyone with the intent just to give that part of myself that would help someone have fun or laugh. What a gift to laugh, and to help someone else laugh truly is.

Tables, tables, tables everywhere. The fellowship was wonderful to experience; it is something to be cherished at every convention. Always meeting new people and renewing old acquaintances and friends from the past; making those connections that will last a lifetime. Learning about the NSWOW by sitting at the tables set up for the different Conferences. Tables were used in the servant room, women sitting around doing something for people they will never meet, and getting to know each other. It was a privilege to sit at the table selling pins

and scarves because of the number of women I was able to greet and get to know a little bit more. Tables were used in workshops for displays and interactive guidance, hands on experiences. Tables were used to display everything from information about our agencies, the various aspects of our own Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization, missions around the world, and there was a table that could be used for prayer requests. We ate at different tables, with different women for each meal, around the room. One of the most important tables was the Communion table. We were a part of something that day that ties us to the past when Christ first instituted it. We were in communion with all Christians everywhere at that moment in time. It is truly awesome, isn't it?

We are called to be Bold Women. Pastor Karen Tjark, past NSWO President, had a wonderful message of how much she had grown into being a bold woman of faith as the NSWO President, which led to her becoming a pastor. We sometimes worry about how the numbers dwindle in circles, units, events, and conventions. I have to say here, are we so empowering our women to be *Bold* that we are empowering ourselves out of a job. I have to say that I actually feel that instead of being without a job, the empowerment of women who are working in a professional career or staying at home is as important as ever.

The Worship on Sunday was held in the room where the Convention Business Meetings were held. Where we had been separated into specific groups for the purpose of the meetings, preparation was made before with Gathering music to create a unifying space. When we started the Worship Service, we were all one body in Christ. All of the usual parts of the Worship were present, Gathering, Confession, Word, Message, Meal. In addition to these parts, we had installation of the new NSWO Board. CWO President Wrenn did the installing. The part of the Service I want to mention here, was the Sending. We were told to "Go in Peace and Serve the Lord." This is always poignant to me. When we leave we have so much to share; it is hard to figure out where to start first. This piece of writing is one way for me to share this Convention with other women. Encouraging women to go to the next event is another. Growing love and trust with all of my sisters in Christ is indeed very important to me.

May God Bless, Encourage, Empower each one of my sisters in Christ Jesus.

May each one "Be Still and Know God."

May each woman then pursue what God has indeed called her to do.

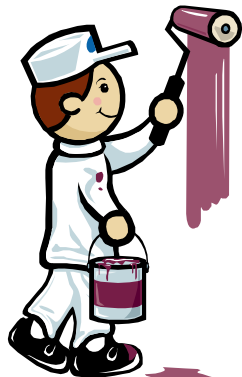
Including me, Lord.

*Yours in Christ,  
Estelle*

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## Announcing the 2010 Saved to Serve Opportunities

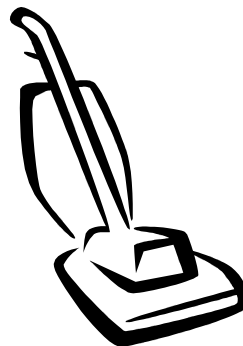
### MOSAIC, GRAND ISLAND



Refurbish a group home with Paint, Paper, and Love.

May 21, 22, 23

### CAMP CAROL JOY HOLLING



Make the camp shine for the quilt auction and the retreat season.

July 30, 31, Aug. 1



# Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel Dedication

By NANCY STEELE, High Plains Conference Board Representative

After many years of praying, planning, and fundraising, the new building for the Lakota Lutheran Center and Chapel in Scottsbluff was dedicated on Thursday, August 27, 2009. Approximately 175-200 people from across the Nebraska Synod, as well as many local and regional people attended. The Dedication and Celebration of Ministry began with an outdoor gathering on the east side of the building. Everyone gathered into a circle for the Litany of the Four Directions, the Sage Ceremony, and the Call of the Drums.

Everyone then proceeded into the building - "The Grand Entry" - to their seats where the service continued with the Youth Exhibition Dancers. The service continued with words of welcome from Pastor Will Voss, Prayer of Dedication, the message from Bishop David deFreese, and a personal testimony by Willard New. Greetings were brought from Chruchwide by Rev. Marilyn Sorensen, from the Muscogee Creek Tribe by Ms. Liz Gaskins, Local Cooperative Ministries by Rev. Brad Gustafson of the First Presbyterian Church, and the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs from Andrea Miller (a local attorney).

Special recognitions were presented for work on the project, there were hymns, a piano solo, a special song remembering volunteers (present and past), and ending with a specially commissioned hymn "In the East, the Day Star" by a local writer Rae Whitney.

Guests were then treated to a simple supper of beef or chicken soup, fry bread, and a traditional wojapi (a fruit like dessert).

It was a great celebration for the Lakota Center and Chapel, the community, the Nebraska Synod, and for all who have given their support to the center's work and ministry. Please continue to remember this important ministry with your prayers and support.

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## ***"Be Still and Feel Christ's Heart Within You"***

### **NSWO Convention Highlights**



**Peggy Nelson**, Calvary Lutheran/Scottsbluff, recently moved to a retirement home in Gering. She has been holding back in her new surroundings, however, after hearing the convention speakers she said she is determined to BE BOLD now. She said, "I am convinced that I should be still and watch for leadership opportunities and times to share my faith and story." At my age, I have to get going," she commented.

**Laura Roof**, St. Andrew's/Lincoln, was a Young Women Scholarship recipient, who invited her mother, **Marilyn Roof**, Messiah/Ralston, to attend the NSWO Convention. Way to go Laura! What an inspiration for the daughters to ask their mothers

to attend with them. Hope to see you both at future NSWO events.



Did you see all those **First Timers**? 26.56% of our attendance was First Timers, a total of 51. That is awesome! Get them involved in your local units. Encourage them to attend Winter Retreat, Spring Gathering, and Autumn Renewal next year. Encourage your friends to attend the 2011 Convention so we can continue to have First Timers.

**Pauline Shaffer**, 81 years old, Lord of Love/Omaha, attended her first NSWO Convention this year and after returning home stated, "Sign me up for the next one." She enjoyed herself and is ready for the 2011 Convention.



## Mission Community

By LAURA HUNT,  
NSWO Board Committee Chair, 2005-09



Lord, what would you have me do today?  
Read, study my Bible. Pray! Listen! Probably  
the hardest to do is listen.

Mission Community?

Tanzania and Argentina? I can't go there in  
person, but I can pray and I can support with  
Lutheran World Relief.

Pray! Listen! What is my Church doing that  
I can participate in? I can pray. I can volunteer  
my time. I can support with money. I can meet  
new people – my circle will grow and I will see  
the mission the Lord is showing me.

There are mission opportunities all round –  
far away, yes. But there are many mission  
opportunities in our communities, our churches,  
and yes, in our own neighborhoods and families.  
Pray! Listen! Then act boldly with God's help.

## Silent Auction Results

By PEARL ANDERSON,  
NSWO Companion Synod Coordinator



The tangible offering for the 2007 NSWO  
Convention was a monetary contribution to be  
divided between Argentina and the Northern  
Dioceses of Tanzania. The \$5,000.00 sent to  
Argentina was given to Dios es Amor (God is  
Love) Congregation in San Martin.

With the money they improved the outdoor  
restroom facilities and built a covered patio where  
they can hold church and community events. They  
were so grateful for the monetary assistance that  
they painted linens to be sold in Nebraska and the  
money raised be given to a charity of our choice.

The NSWO board selected the Building  
Families Boutique project of Lutheran Family  
Services, a program that our companion synod  
sisters toured in 2008 during their visit to  
Nebraska. These linens were on display at all  
Spring Gatherings and a silent auction was held.  
At the NSWO Convention in Kearney in  
September, the final bids were taken. A total of  
\$650.00 was raised for Lutheran Family Services.  
*Thank you* to all the women that participated in the  
silent auction.

## Servants Forever

By CAROL BOSSHARDT  
Convention Servant Room Coordinator

Thank you to all the servants who brought supplies  
or cash for Health and School Kits. Thanks  
especially to all of you who also spent a few  
minutes (or a few hours) putting together and  
packing the kits.

We sent 338 Health Kits, 249 School Kits, and  
4 boxes (about 272 bars) of soap to Lutheran  
World Relief from the convention. Several  
churches will finish boxing up more than 30  
School Kits that just needed to be bagged, and  
others will finish kits that needed both notebook  
paper and bags (or nail files or clipper for the  
Health Kits).

Your efforts will be greatly appreciated by  
refugees across the world.



## Save These Dates

- January 16, 2010 - Winter Retreat, Grand Island
- Spring Gathering 2010 schedule:
- March 6 - Northeast - Salem/rural Dakota City
- March 13 - High Plains - Mariah/Hershey
- March 27 - Southeast - American/Adams
- April 10 - Central - St. Johns/Norfolk
- April 17 - Metro East - First/Blair
- April 24 - Southern Prairie - Bethel/Holdrege
- May 1 - Midlands - St. Andrews/Lincoln
- May 21-23, 2010, STS Mosaic/Grand Island
- July 30-21, Aug. 1, STS, Camp Carol Joy Holling
- Sept. 18, 2010, Autumn Renewal, Gothenburg
- Sept. 25, 2010, Autumn Renewal, Wahoo
- February 7-22, 2011, Tanzania Vision Trip
- July 12-14, 2011, CWO Triennial Convention, WA
- July 14-17, 2011, CWO Triennial Gathering, WA
- Sept. 23-25, 2011, NSWO Convention, Kearney



# Saved to Serve Opportunity Focuses on Prison Ministry

By SUSAN WATSON, Brochure Coordinator Board Appointee



*Cutting brownies for the FEAST dinner for inmates and their families are Carolyn Schlake, Lana Novak, Sandy Olson, Laura Hunt and Ardith Hoins.*



*Jeannette Allen, Ruby Westman, Nancy Johnson, Betty Kempf and Mae Greve wash dishes at Our Saviour's Bridge To Hope Warehouse.*

New insight into prison ministry was the prime result of the Saved To Serve Opportunity held July 10-12 based out of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Lincoln. Twenty-three women from across Nebraska participated including nine women attending an opportunity for the first time.

The weekend serving retreat featured an interactive presentation by Pastor Wm Barth, director of Prison Ministries for the NE Synod of the ELCA, who emphasized that compassion is the key to prison ministry. Jim Brewer and Jan Redman explained the prison ministry programs at Our Saviour's including

The FEAST which stands for Friends Eating And Singing, studying and sharing Together.

Each Sunday, church members who serve as inmate sponsors take a bus to pick up work release inmates from the Community Corrections Center to bring them to church. Following the worship service, prisoners and their sponsors, families and friends share lunch, singing, Bible study, prayers, and fellowship.

As a part of the weekend experience, Saved To Serve participants toured the Community Correctional Center in Lincoln and the Bridge To Hope Warehouse which assists former prisoners with clothing and household items to get started in the community.

Half of the women worked at the warehouse unpacking the more than seventy boxes of donations brought to the event, marking and sorting clothing, washing dishes, and cleaning.

A second group sewed curtains to help create a cheery environment for the mothers and children staying at St. Monica's House, which is part of a substance abuse program. A third group prepared a homemade lasagna dinner for 125 which was served for the FEAST Program on Sunday.

About the time the group planned to leave to sing as a choir at the Fellowship of Believers Worship Service at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, the prison was put on lock down. Plans were quickly rearranged and the women sang at the 5:30 p.m. service at Our Saviour's.

Other highlights included, an upbeat Sunday worship service including a celebration of affirmation of faith by an inmate, a substance abuse presentation by Jody Busse, Bible study times, a special tour of the Arboretum on the University of Nebraska East Campus, and time to stroll through Lincoln's Sunken Gardens.



*Betty Dasenbrock and Margaret Hoffmeyer display the curtains they sewed for windows at St. Monica's House, part of a substance abuse program.*



# Saved to Serve Participants Host Saturday Lunch

By MARY MAYFIELD, Saved To Serve Coordinator Board Appointee



On Saturday, September 26, luncheon at NSWO Convention in Kearney, Nebraska, over thirty women took part in making centerpieces and hosting tables celebrating the completion of the 25th Saved to Serve Weekend Service Retreat sponsored by the NSWO Women of the ELCA.

Each of the twenty-five tables were decorated with photos and items representing a particular Saved to Serve Opportunity starting with the first weekend service project at Hastings, Nebraska, in 1998 where a Martin Luther Duplex was decorated through the twenty-fifth, the Prison Ministry Saved to Serve Opportunity in 2009 held in Lincoln, Nebraska. The hostesses had attended the Saved to Serve Opportunity and created their centerpiece to represent their weekend. They explained what Saved to Serve is, what a weekend normally consists of: SERVICE, BIBLE STUDY, AND COMMUNITY BUILDING with the participants and the ELCA agency we are serving.

The hostesses shared experiences from their Saved to Serve weekends and encouraged the ladies at their tables to write out a check for \$39.00 and SIGN UP THAT DAY. We had nine reservations for a 2010 Saved to Serve Opportunities at either May 21-23 with Mosaic in Grand Island or July 30 to August 1 at Camp Carol Joy Holling in Ashland at the closing session of the convention. Fun was had by all and the room buzzed with conversations, several ending with, "I need to go," or "I need to take the time to go." Thank you ladies for hosting the tables and encouraging us to attend a Saved to Serve opportunity.

## Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA, 2009-2011 Elected Board

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## Check List for Congregational Units

### **To Do Every Month**

- \_\_\_ Send stories and pictures about your unit to the *Expressions* Team
- \_\_\_ Remind women to use their Thankoffering boxes
- \_\_\_ Share information received from SWO and CWO
- \_\_\_ Send offerings to synodical treasurer

### **To Do on Specific Months**

(S applies to units whose year starts in Sept.; J to those starting in Jan.)

### **November**

- \_\_\_ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions being held this month
- \_\_\_ Share *Expressions* with members

- 6-7 – NSWO Board Meeting in Axtell, NE
- 9-13 – NE LWR Ingathering
- 13-14 – NE Synod Council Meeting in Omaha, NE
- 20-22 – LYON Assembly in Kearney, NE
- \_\_\_ Hold Thanksoffering Service
- \_\_\_ (J) Plan yearbook

### **December**

- \_\_\_ (J) Prepare Yearbook
- \_\_\_ (J) Install Officers
- \_\_\_ (J) Adopt Budget
- \_\_\_ (J) Send list of new officers after unit elections to Database Coordinator and to Conference Board Representative

### **January**

- 1 – *Expressions* deadline

- 6 – Winter Retreat registration deadline
- 16 – Winter Retreat – St. Paul Lutheran Church/Grand Island
- \_\_\_ (J) Distribute Yearbook
- \_\_\_ (J) Install Officers
- \_\_\_ (J) Send list of new officers after unit elections to Database Coordinator and to Conference Board Representative

### **February**

- \_\_\_ Share *Expressions* with members
- 13 – NE Lutheran Men in Mission Annual Meeting
- 18-21 – CWO Conference of Presidents – Chicago
- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote Spring Gathering
- \_\_\_ Plan Gathering Offering