



# Expressions

VOL. 28, NO. 4, NOVEMBER 2014

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

## Many Gifts but One Spirit



Wow! Ladies have we got an outstanding day planned for you! Rachel Kurtz will be joining us from Minnesota on Saturday January 24 at St. Paul's Lutheran in Grand Island. The theme is: Making a Difference. So make a difference and invite someone you care about to the retreat. Be prepared for some laughs, lots of music, and a glimpse of how you can make a difference.



Rachel Kurtz of Minnesota will share her powerhouse singing voice with the joyful message of

"Many Gifts but One Spirit". Her song "Make a Difference" has become a widespread sensation. Rachel has performed in benefit concert tours across the country helping to raise awareness for world hunger, hurricane relief, and multi-cultural reconciliation.

Please share this with the Church ladies and your friends. This is open for everyone. Please consider sharing the day with your younger gals also.

NSWO is really encouraging generations of women; please invite your mother, daughters, and granddaughters. Rachel's message is based on Corinthians 12. She will speak to our hearts that we work together to use our gifts for the good of others.



In 2004, the Women of the ELCA created a church wide health initiative called **Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls**. This initiative seeks to help women and girls make healthy spiritual, physical and emotional choices in their lives. The primary way the Women's Health Initiative is funded is by the Run, Walk and Roll held at Triennial Gathering. We have also had this event at our conventions for several years. This year we decided to use our Winter Retreat offering to contribute to this valuable program.

As with any initiative, it is an ongoing effort. It was started in 2005 and won't stop until we're all emotionally, spiritually and physically healthy... which means this will be going on for quite a while!

**What are your units doing or can do to promote healing and wholeness?**

### LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Women of the ELCA are committed by our purpose statement to promote healing and wholeness in our church, society and world. **Making a real difference** in the total health of women begins at the "heart" of the matter... being physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy balanced women.

## Edwards Elected Executive Board Member

Gwendolynn Edwards, NSWO President 2009-2011, was re-elected to the Churchwide Women's Organization Executive board serving this triennium, 2014-2017. Her second term began July 24, when installed by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton.



Edwards stated, "Women of the ELCA is an organization

**Gwendolynn Edwards**

Picture from Women of the ELCA website

of many generations. And all of us are vital, regardless of ages, how young or old. Women of the ELCA is 26 years old and we are going strong. There is work to be done. God has called us to serve. To serve in many ways. Sometimes it's being there listening to one another, mentoring--often not realizing we are mentoring, or being the mentored; sometimes it is to serve in leadership roles. I continue to ask God to use me according to His will. Serving you, serving Him within the Women of the ELCA is an honor, a privilege, and passion. I will continue listening to your voices, continuing to work on the issues that face the women and our communities, I will call on you enabling us to work together to mobilize women to act boldly in their faith in Jesus Christ. Many blessings to you and my prayers are with you. Thank you"

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# Devotions

By ANN SCHULTZ, Southern Prairie Broad Representative



*I thank my God every time I remember you.*  
Philippians 1:3

We could look at the book of Philippians as a thank you letter. Paul writes to the believers at the church of Philippi declaring, "I thank my God every time I remember you." Paul didn't only thank God, Paul also told his friends of this thankfulness.

Perhaps the joy in Paul was that he was seeing the believers at Philippi by faith. Not as they were, but as they would be when God was done.

How often do we hear the phrase...is the glass half full or half empty? We tend to look at what we don't have and not focus on what we do. I like to think if you can't decide if it's half full or half empty...how about you look at it like this...Be thankful you have a glass? Being thankful can change our perspective. There is always...ALWAYS...something to be thankful for.

I've had the pleasure of meeting and visiting with many new sisters in Christ this year. I hope to get a chance to meet more of you at either Winter Retreat, Spring Gathering, or another one of our women's events. So many units are doing much more than they are giving themselves

credit for. Offerings, stewardship projects, fellowship, and prayer are acts of God that you are all carrying out. THANK YOU for all that you do! What He calls you to do, He equips you. He only needs your commitment.

As I write this, Thanksgiving is just around the corner. Our thankfulness should not be a once a year event. THANKS-GIVING should NEVER end! I pray that our hearts will remain in an attitude of Thanksgiving all year round. God is good every day...not just on the fourth Thursday of November. Let us thank him each day.

How can we be like Paul and not only thank God for those in our lives, but let them know how grateful we are for them? Maybe send a card or call someone we thank God for each time we remember them? Someone is waiting to hear how thankful you are for them. It might just make their day... and yours.

I thank my God every time I remember YOU!

You are all inspirations to me...your encouragement, advice, and sometimes mere presence have been blessings to me. Thanks be to God!

If the only prayer you say is Thank you...that will be enough.

*Expressions* is a quarterly 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; Nebraska female seminarian students; the other SWO Presidents; the CWO Officers and Executive Board Members; and past NSWO Presidents.

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November *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Terri Johnson, Val Killing, Beth Meyer, and Carol Stark..

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# FROM THE PRESIDENT



Hello Friends of NSWO,

As I write this President's article today, I ask myself what is it that I can share with you to make a difference to you, to me, and to others. I can think of so many things that I would love to share with you about the work of Women of the ELCA at the Churchwide level, the synod level, and at our congregational unit level. I will share just a few for this publication. I do ask that you PLEASE PLEASE share my information with others. One of the plainest expressions of love in Scripture is fellowship—*sharing* with others.

In October the NSWO board members met for the weekend to carry out the business of your organization. Your elected leaders were tasked with planning of events, reviewing unit offerings, and the needs expressed by our units in Nebraska. We are truly grateful that we are here to serve God, your churches, and those in need. Most people understand what it means to serve. You can serve a ball when playing volleyball or tennis. You can serve your family a meal. Some computers even serve files to other computers. But what does the Bible say about serving? I am pretty sure you won't find the ball games nor the computers in there, but the Bible has much to say about serving. *"For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve..."* (Mark 10:45).

The first thing that I need to share with you is that "your" organization is dependent upon the support of your unit offerings to carry out the events and communication needed to share our gifts with others. Luke 21:1-4 ESV: *Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."* This scripture verse makes me think of those of you that are in the smallest of units but you do make a difference in your giving as the widow did. I can share with you that I hear at the National level that Nebraska women's organization is truly blessed comparatively to other synods. That is because you and your unit make a difference. Proverbs 19:17 ESV: *Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.*

Second most exciting news to share is that of an upcoming event to be held in January. WINTER RETREAT 2015 will be so much fun for all ages of women. Our guest speaker and entertainer is Rachel Kurtz of Minnesota. Read more about her in this publication. I heard very impressive things about her from the youth that attended the National youth gathering two years ago and I also had the privilege of hearing her at our own Nebraska Synod Assembly in Kearney. I am challenging you to bring your daughters and granddaughters to make this a fun day. The cost is only \$18 for a wonderful day to hear about our Lord and have a meal with friends and family. Rumor is that the Bishop Maas might be there! I have plans to come down the night before rent a hotel room and share the evening with family as well.

One of the beauties of serving is that it requires no special talent or special gifts. Of course, we are to use our spiritual gifts to serve one another. But it requires no spiritual gift or talent to wash feet, give to those in needs or serve a meal. All that is required is a servant's attitude. It does take a servant attitude to want to serve others and an observant eye to see what needs to be done. Share with us what you are doing in your units or churches so others can gather ideas from actions. Please help us in serving as your organization by spreading the news in *Expressions*, coming to this event, and sending in your offerings however plentiful or small. I am so blessed to serve with you.

*Kandy K Pfister*



# RejYOUvenate

## A Day of Spiritual Renewal For All Women

What matters is not your outer appearance—the styling of your hair, the jewelry you wear, the cut of your clothes—but your inner disposition. *Cultivate inner beauty, the gentle, gracious kind that God delights in.*— 1 Peter 3:3-4, The Message.

“How are you?” Admit it, most of the time our automatic response is “I’m fine.” Our Autumn Renewal speaker, Jennifer Brown, encouraged us to admit how we really are. We aren’t always fine; we may be struggling physically, emotionally; we may be “in a place of sin.” Our physical appearance doesn’t always reflect what is going on inside of us. Have a heart for every woman as she may be going through something her appearance doesn’t reflect. Through Bible verses, Jennifer reminded us that God is with us in both the good and the dark times of our lives. Christ has given us freedom so rejoice and don’t be anxious. These are some of the thoughts that resonated with me—Terri Johnson, NSWO Vice President.

We had a great crowd at St. Andrew’s in Lincoln on September 13, including a family of three generations! The ladies of St. Andrew’s were wonderful hosts serving breakfast treats, lunch, and afternoon cookies! Jennifer was a wonderful and motivating speaker and really rolled with the punches! She reminded us that sometimes what goes on, and the choices we make in our day to day lives don’t match what the world sees in our appearance. We may look great on the outside, but be falling apart on the inside. We ended the day with a devotional reminding us to find the time to be with God. Mundane everyday tasks, such as getting ready in the morning can give us the time to cultivate the inner beauty that God desires for us.

Thirty-two women enjoyed the hospitality of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church in North Platte on October 4. Maria Lutheran Church women provided coffee cakes and breads to start the day and we enjoyed delicious salads, fruit, and cookies prepared by the host church women. Attendees came from as far west as Chappell and as far east as Lincoln. The offering collected will be divided between Nebraska women seminarians and our churchwide women’s organization.





## Groups Come Together To Serve At NeLCM

By SUSAN WATSON

When Saved To Serve participants, college students, and others gathered at the Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry Center in Kearney September 27, it was a beehive of activity to make the Center more attractive, and welcoming for students and to serve others.

A major project was making the Center's landscaping more appealing and manageable. STSO participants, students, and members of the Hole In The Roof Gang from Kearney removed unwanted plants, pulled weeds, trimmed bushes, removed a vine, and installed wheelbarrow after wheelbarrow of rock. Inside, the kitchen was cleaned and painted, fleece blankets were made, and Lutheran World Relief quilts were tied. In the afternoon, Chrismons, symbols of Christ, were created and decorated for the Center's two Christmas trees and LWR backpacks were stuffed with school supplies.

Eight of the fleece blankets were taken to the Kearney Crossroads Homeless Shelter where the women toured the facility and heard two residents tell their stories. In the evening, the group watched an informative showing of the night sky at the UNK planetarium.

Throughout the weekend, participants also learned about the important work of the Lutheran Campus Ministry Center from Pastor Rachel Ziese-Hacker and several students, gained added incites into the Bible story of Ruth, and experience a moving prayer service similar to ones the students have on Wednesday nights during the school year.



*During the NeLCM Saved To Serve Opportunity, the participants and students assembled seventy-six school kits for Lutheran World Relief as a way of serving others.*

Overnight accommodations were at Mosaic's 101-year-old Bethphage Village at Axtell which gave participants the opportunity to tour the campus Sunday morning before worship at First Lutheran in Kearney.

First Lutheran and Family of Christ of Kearney; Spirit of Hope, Holdrege; and Adullum and Immanuel from Bertrand provided delicious meals for the participants. Units across the state stocked the Center with paper products and cleaning supplies and contributed enough money to purchase the dishwasher wished for by Pastor Hacker and the students.

Additionally, Thrivent Financial Action Team cards helped purchase fleece, Christmas trees, Chrismon, and kitchen supplies, a hedge trimmer, grass seed, other items needed for the projects and some refreshments.

Shirley Kehne served as the spiritual leader. Task force members preparing for the event were Pastor Hacker, Betty Kempf, Marian Kotas, Carol Bosshardt, Tori Klaus, Ann Schultz, Susan Watson, and Mary Mayfield.



*Judy Gosswein and UNK Student Tatum Pfortmiller paint the kitchen at NeLCM. Ann Schultz and Nancy Johnson show off their muddy hands after digging weeds from between the bricks in the sunken patio. Alberta Panning, Kim Hall, and Maribeth Hohenstein work to finish a fleece blanket for the Center's living room. Hohenstein was joined by (not pictured) her mother, Grace Bentzinger, and her daughter, Emily Hohenstein, who is a UNK freshman. Betty Kempf, and her daughter and granddaughter, Amy and Abbie Graham, formed another three generation team.*



# 2015 NSWO Convention

September 18-20, 2015

First Lutheran Church, Lincoln, NE

Convention Theme is "The Power of M"

Bible Verse: *"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly...."*

Colossians 3:15-17 NIV

Keynote Speaker: Pastor Brigitte Weier of Lutheran Church of the Master in Lakewood, CO

## Shine Your Light

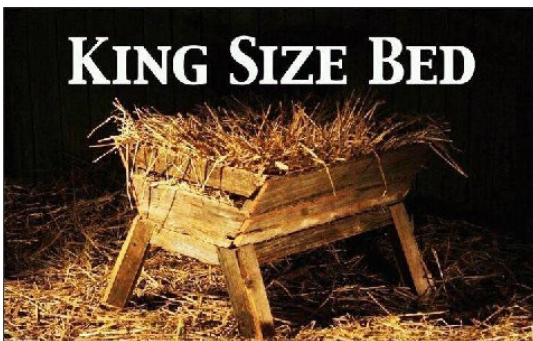


Forty-four years ago the Trinity Lutheran quilters of Paxton set a goal to make 100 quilts for Lutheran World Relief every year. They were able to exceed that goal and have continued to make at least 100 quilts every year. Seven to eight women meet once a month through out the year to work on the quilts that mean so much to those that receive them. They have more than sixty-one quilts completed so far this year. The ladies of Trinity Lutheran are confident that once again that goal will be met.—*submitted by Karen Eakins*

St. John's Women of the ELCA of Leigh, NE hosted it's annual Women's Night Out on August 7 with an extended invitation to our Community Sister's in Christ. Everyone was greeted by our vibrant garden getaway. Those present enjoyed an evening of fun, fellowship, and of course food. After some soul searching the Ladies packed 101 school backpacks for LWR. — *submitted by Marilyn Lund*



## KING SIZE BED



*The very first.... King Size Bed.*

*Thank you God for that bed and the Baby who slept there! Amen.*

Merry Christmas and have a Blessed New Year!!

—from your *Expressions* Team Members





The Charlotte Convention Center was the location for the Ninth Triennial Convention and Gathering with more than 2,000 participants in attendance. Nebraska was well represented with over forty in attendance.



*Forty-two of the Nebraska attendees*

Women of the ELCA gathered in Charlotte, July 24-27 for a weekend of learning, inspiring speakers, worship, and service in the largest gathering of women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. For detailed information on both the Convention and the Gathering, visit the Women of the ELCA website for news updates.

Of the over forty participants from Nebraska, twelve were voting delegates, one NSWOW officer, and five NSWOW Board Members. Ten of the eleven delegates were elected at the NSWOW Convention in September 2013; our president Kandy Pflaster was the eleventh delegate by virtue of office; and the additional delegate was Churchwide Executive Board Member Gwendolynn Edwards.



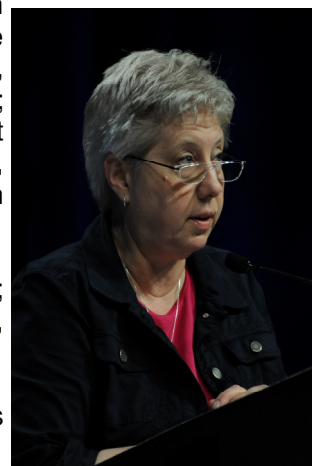
*Patti Austin and Gwen Edwards*

On the fourth ballot delegates elected Patti Austin, Lilburn, Ga., as the Churchwide Women of the ELCA president. Austin said she looks forward with "great anticipation to see what God has in store for us in the next 25 years. I know we will continue to nurture the seed of faith that was planted, knowing that it will continue to develop and grow into an active and vibrant ministry beyond anything we could have ever imagined because this is the mystery of the kingdom of God."<sup>i</sup> Austin currently serves on the churchwide executive board and is a former vice president of Southeastern Synodical Women's Organization and former president of her congregational unit."<sup>ii</sup>

Jody Smiley, Blacksburg, VA, was elected vice president; Becky Shurson, Yucaipa, Calif., secretary; and Ely Smith, Parkland, Wash., treasurer. Churchwide executive board members elected to serve the next three years are: Cindy Arnett, Sierra Pacific Synod; Deborah Banks-Williams, Metropolitan Chicago Synod; Lois Bylund, Northwestern Minnesota Synod; Lydia Davila, Caribbean Synod; Dinah Dutta, Central States Synod; Gwendolynn Edwards, Nebraska Synod; Joyce Gibson, Montana Synod; Nancy Giddings, Minneapolis Area Synod; Sandra Grier, Upper Susquehanna Synod; Joan Iverson, Southwestern Minnesota Synod; Gwendolyn King, Southeast Pennsylvania Synod; Barbara Miller, Southeast Michigan Synod; Lisa Plorin, Western North Dakota Synod; Anna Sarver, Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod; Dawn Smith, Northwest / Lower Michigan Synod; Karen Voris, Alaska Synod; and Jackie Wilson, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod

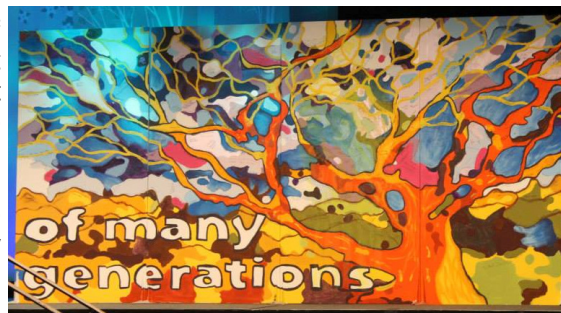
The Gathering offered participants the opportunity to attend a variety of workshops; work on service projects on-site at The Dor (exhibit hall); participate in the 5K Run, Walk and Roll; make new friends; worship with over 2,000 people; and much more.

The 2013-15 NSWOW Officers, Board Members, and Delegates had these reflections to share regarding their experience after attending "of many generations."



*Diane Brauer, Scottsbluff, NE*

**President Kandy Pflaster** said, “My greatest feeling of attending Triennial Convention and Gathering is that of JOY. It was such a great feeling serving Christ in so many vast ways at this event where sisters come from all sixty-five synods of the ELCA. God was present everywhere from speakers, testimonials, election of board members & President Patti Austin, events @ The Dor, to our worship services. Celebrating the church with friends of old and new found friends was very rewarding to my faith and trust in the Lord. I am thankful to be in the great Nebraska Synod.”



*Participants had the opportunity to work on this art piece.*

**Central Board Rep Val Killinger** said, “One of the perks of being on the Board is getting to go to the Triennial. As many know it was in Charlotte, North Carolina. The travel and worship together was very energizing. The friendships that were established during this convention are amazing. Traveling and staying together will really make a difference in our lives. I found the speakers: Presiding Bishop Eaton, Susan Sparks, and Diane Jacobsen to name a few were outstanding. These are ladies that have made a difference for themselves and for many of us in what they have done and continue to do in their lives. You too can make a difference in other’s lives. Never be afraid to step out of your comfort zone for the Lord and say Yes I can do that.”

**Midlands Board Rep Joyce Olson** said, “I was so impressed by the workshop about human trafficking. I was inspired by our national leaders and in total AWE over our new Presiding Bishop. What great roommates I had. The music was awesome! Next time it will be in Minneapolis, I REALLY, really want to go in three years. I will encourage others whenever I have the chance. Thank you so very, very much for the opportunity, wish we could have it oftener.

**Southeast Board Rep Elysia McGill** said, “The 2014 Triennial Gathering is now a memory for most of us, but what a memory it is!! This was my first time attending the Gathering and I can say with certainty that it will not be my last! It’s hard for me to pinpoint a certain thing; there are so many things that made this memorable for me. Meeting Presiding Bishop Eaton, worshipping with my Lutheran sisters, making new friends, hanging out with old ones, and seeing such a beautiful city are all great memories. I think that the one thing I truly learned was more about what the Women of the ELCA do. As a Board Representative, I feel that it’s important for me to know more about what we do together, locally, state wide, and nationally. I feel more knowledgeable but I know I still have so much to learn! Thank you for your prayers as we continue on this journey together.”

**Southern Prairie Board Rep Ann Schultz** said, “Where do I begin to share the highlights of my trip to Charlotte, NC? My first Women of the ELCA Triennial did not disappoint! We gathered under the theme “of many generations.” How exciting to be there with six...YES...six generations of women! Presiding Bishop Eaton shared something that I cannot forget...”What are we doing if we just hold on to that good feeling of having Jesus Christ in our life and NOT share that experience with others in this world?” We need to show and share our relationship with Jesus Christ. We are the role models for the future. The Rev Susan Sparks, who was a keynote speaker, an ex-attorney, a Baptist pastor, and also a comedian shared the message that we ALL laugh in the same language. There is no communication barrier. The power of humor is when we can step back and use it to help get a different perspective. She put some good stories and laughs to one of God’s greatest gifts to us...laughter. I am thankful for the opportunity to attend this Triennial. How can I describe the connection felt with over 2000 Women of the ELCA? I encourage you to attend the next Triennial in Minneapolis and feel this same connection in 2017. See ya there?”



*The art piece revealed at Closing Worship.*

**Delegate Pearl Anderson** said, “This was my first Triennial convention and gathering. As a delegate there was business to conduct. Among the resolutions passed was one to encourage each unit to educate the members on the plight of the unaccompanied children entering across our southern border. Since some of these children are arriving in Nebraska it is our responsibility to be informed. I would encourage attendance at the Gathering. It is a wonderful opportunity to hear speakers that will inform, motivate, and inspire you. This could be the only opportunity to hear some of these speakers. It is an opportunity



to meet women of faith from across the nation and of all ages. It can be a weekend get-away with girlfriends for you to relax, refresh, and renew your body and spirit to be ready to lead your units into a new year."

**Delegate Sandy Boots** said, "360 delegates elected by each of the sixty-four synodical women's organizations, took action on several social justice issues, including human trafficking, bullying, creating safe places, the current immigration crisis involving children and approved the 2015 budget of nearly \$3 million. These actions call into action every expression of Women of the ELCA—congregational units, synodical women's organizations, and the churchwide women's organization. We also approved several housekeeping items to update the Women of the ELCA constitution. We encouraged many ministries around the world supported by the Women of the ELCA.

Delegates elected Patti Austin from Decatur, Ga., as the organization's executive board president. Austin, a member of All Saints Lutheran in Lilburn, Ga., was elected on the fourth ballot. We reelected Gwen Edwards from Omaha to continue on the National Board, which is great to have some local representation.

I was one of ten Nebraska delegates plus our president and I had many fun, personal experiences with my trip, including great food, meeting new bold friends, flying into Charlotte in a lightening/rain storm, and a chance encounter with a neighborhood friend who now lives in Texas and was in Charlotte on business. Always a small world.

I was very moved by the great organization that we are a part of and how far reaching the ministries are, encompassing the entire world. The speakers were uplifting, encouraging and downright fun. Thanks for the opportunity to represent the Women of Nebraska."

**Delegate Lanetta Kellogg** said, "I liked the easiness of the Convention. We had a lot of downtime which made the time go faster and it was more laid-back than the Convention I attended in Spokane."

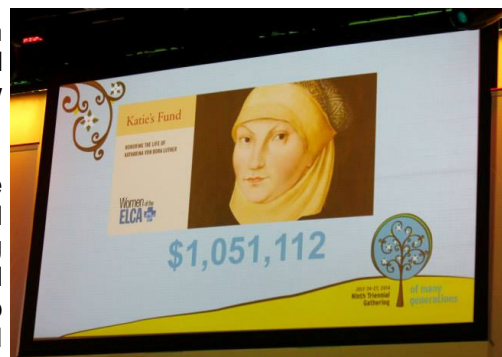
**Delegate Mary Mayfield** said, "The business of the Ninth Triennial Convention was the election of officers/ executive board for the 2014-2017 term. Patti Austin, a former regional retail manager from Decatur, Georgia and motivational speaker was elected President of the Women of the ELCA. Jody Smiley, an analytical chemist and environmental engineer at Virginia Tech was chosen as Vice President. Becky Shurson, account executive from Yucaipa, California is our new Secretary and Ely Smith from Fircrest Washington, also an accountant was elected as Treasurer. Our very own Gwendolynn Edwards from Bellevue, Nebraska was the highest vote getter and was re-elected to the executive board along with sixteen other very qualified women.

**Delegate Beth Meyer** said, "Attending the Convention as a delegate means that I get to participate in the decision making of Women of the ELCA. This has been a passion of mine since the first time that I was a delegate in St. Louis and even when I am not a delegate I enjoy sitting at all the plenary sessions. This year was no different from the other six I have attended in the past. The excitement of the election of the President, Vice-President is an awesome process. The expectation of finally hearing the name of the new president is a thrill to see how God has worked in the hearts and minds of the voting members. Not quite on the level of electing a bishop, but almost.

The Gathering is also filled with great speakers and of course the worship services are the highlight. To be in communion with 2,400 sisters in Christ is an uplifting experience that will keep you coming back to the next convention and gathering. I can't wait to go to Minneapolis, MN in 2017! And I say thank-you for electing me to be a delegate."



*New friendships are formed! Pictured with some Nebraska women is Syd Brinkman, Churchwide Rep to the 2011 NSWO Convention (left); Jenny Michael, Churchwide Rep to the 2013 NSWO Convention (center); and Jackie Wilson, Churchwide Executive Board Member (right).*



*The Challenge set by the 2011-2014 Churchwide Executive Board to raise \$1 million was exceeded! Congratulations & Thank you!!*

**Delegate Tammie Sanford** said, "WOW! WOW! WOW! is the only way to describe the Triennial Convention and Gathering. This was my first time going to the convention. At the convention, congratulations goes to Gwen Edwards for being elected to the National Executive Board of the WELCA. The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, spoke both at the convention and gathering. I was surprised by how smoothly things were run.

*(Continued on page IV)*

The gathering had over 2,400 Lutheran women, ranging from age ten months to ninety-seven years old. They came by airplanes, buses, and cars from all fifty states and Puerto Rico. What inspired me was the speaker Becca Stevens. She told us how she started Thistle Farms in Nashville, Tennessee. She was also here in Nebraska a couple of years ago. Deborah's Legacy, here in North Platte, was started based on this place.

**Delegate Carol Stark** said, "Sisters in Christ of many generations. As I begin to write this for the *Expressions* I am saddened by the loss of my mother-in-law a couple of days ago. Her generation went through many changes in her lifetime. Her family went through the Great Depression and they saw war come to the family, but through that they remained a close knit family. With her passing we are losing one of her generation but because of her the generations will live on. At the Triennial we had a place to meet our sisters in "The Dor" which means generation in Hebrew. I meet and made new friendships with those sisters at the meetings, workshops, and servant events. We had fun with our sisters from Rockin' Region 4 and hopefully you will have seen some of the pictures from the event. I was very blessed to serve as one of your delegates for the Triennial. The Holy Spirit was among and surrounding us as we elected our new President Patti Austin of Georgia and the rest of the board that represent and educate us about the issues we see in our world today. We had awesome speakers in Becca Stevens of Thistle Farms. Susan Sparks a pastor, stand up comedian, and lawyer. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton brought us the love of Christ and how we can help our fellow sisters. Stephanie Burke brought Jesus to life in her art and even had women at the Triennial help with the art that came to real life at the closing worship on Sunday. I look forward to sharing the Triennial events with you as we see each other at future events. Thank you for letting me be a part of this blessed Triennial."



Kandy Pfister and Gwen Edwards

**Churchwide Executive Board Member Gwen Edwards** said, "The Ninth Triennial Convention and Gathering marked my fourth of such events to attend and I tell you there are many more in my future. Attending Women of the ELCA Triennial Conventions and Gatherings are a great way to grow in my spiritual walk and to find motivation and new ideas to take back to my congregational unit, to encourage women of all ages to get involved at a new level and/or in new projects."

This is my second time to serve as a delegate and I thank President Pfister for her leadership in leading the delegation from Nebraska and including me in the delegation orientation she held earlier in the summer. I wouldn't be where I am today

in my personal spiritual journey and serving the Women of the ELCA without the women of Nebraska. Your prayers, encouragement, love, and hugs are appreciated!

Charlotte was a fun city to visit where I made new friends, spent time with old friends, and seeing friends who live across the state or nation from me. It enabled me to see the many new friends I made during my travels to the SWO Conventions I have attended during the 2011-2014 triennium. I had many laughs with all of you as Susan Sparks inspired us. It was exciting to be there and see the dollars raised so far for Katie's Fund.

It was a privilege to be part of the body's discernment as we elected the 2014-2017 Executive Board. I am thankful for Nebraska's Bishop Brian Mass for being only a phone call away that Tuesday evening and his insightful words—and then to receive a text message from him. I am thankful for my son, Aaron, who texted me during the event to see how it was going—and his full support of his Mama as she does God's work.

You bet I am registered to attend Minneapolis and I hope to see many more Nebraska women to be in attendance. I encourage each of you to challenge your women in your congregation to attend. I challenged the ladies of Lord of Love to increase their numbers to the same attendance level as our men attending Lutheran Men in Mission. Let's go ladies, start saving those dollars! The reduced registration rate of \$280 is only available until December 31, 2014. Act now!

Mark those calendars now, July 13 – 16, 2017, Minneapolis, Minnesota, for the Tenth Triennial Gathering.

Mark those calendars now, September 18 – 20, 2015, Lincoln, Nebraska, for the NSWO Convention where we will be worshipping, learning, networking, and electing voting members for the 2017 Triennial Convention.

<sup>i</sup> <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/women-of-the-elca-elect-new-officers--board-news-267.php?category-id=6>

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/convention-elects-new-president-news-264.php?category-id=6>

Pictures from Women of the ELCA website and Nebraska SWO Facebook page



## *In Memoriam*

The NSWO honored Shirley Daire's memory by sending \$750 each on upcoming trips by the Nebraska Synod to our Companion Synods, Argentina in July 2014 and Tanzania in February 2015. The women in these Companion Synods had the wonderful opportunity to meet and serve Christ with Shirley. Here are some pictures of the women in Argentina provided by Pastor Rebecca Sheridan, Director for Evangelical Mission in the Nebraska Synod.



## *Racial Justice*

By REBBECA SIPF,  
Racial Justice Advocacy Appointee



The Racial Justice Advocacy Team (also known as Today's Dream Tomorrow's Reality, TDTR) met August 21 to 24 in San Jose, CA for training. Some team members were new like me, some were returning for more training. We went through the basic trainings and some more in depth modules and Bible studies.

While it might seem that the need for active advocacy for racial justice is a thing of the past because individual racism is primarily a thing of the past, racism still exists on a systematic and organizational level.

I have resources and am prepared to offer presentations on a variety of racial advocacy topics using different presentation formats including Bible studies throughout the synod. If you have any events you think you might like me to present, please let me know and I'll get you on my calendar! I can't wait to get out into Nebraska to share all of this amazing insight and knowledge!



## **Save These Dates**

January 24, Winter Retreat, St. Paul's/Grand Island

March 7 - Southeast, St Paul's/Fall City

March 14 - Northeast, Grace/West Point

March 21 - Southern Prairie, Prince of Peace/Geneva

March 28 - High Plains, Chappell/Berea

April 11 - Central, Calvary/Rural Stromsburg

April 18 - Midlands, Salem/Fontanelle

April 25 - Metro East, Rejoice!/Omaha

September 18-20, NSWO Convention, First Lutheran/Lincoln

July 11-13, 2017, Triennial Convention, Minneapolis, MN

July 13-16, 2017, Triennial Gathering, Minneapolis, MN



# Rachel Kurtz

Winter Retreat of the Women of the ELCA

Saturday, January 24, 2015

9:00 AM—3:00 PM

St Pauls Lutheran Church

1515 Harrison Street, Grand Island, NE

Come hear Rachel Kurtz's powerhouse vocals  
and her message to *Make a Difference!*

Registration Required—\$18 (Includes Lunch)

Registration forms available online at [www.nebraskasynod.org/welca](http://www.nebraskasynod.org/welca)

Or contact JoAnn Rohrs @ (402) 274-3058 or [joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com](mailto:joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com)

Or contact your church Women of the ELCA unit





### **What is the Women's Health Initiative?**

In 2004, the Women of the ELCA created a church wide health initiative called **Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls**. This initiative seeks to help women and girls make healthy spiritual, physical and emotional choices in their lives. The primary way the Women's Health Initiative is funded is by the Run, Walk and Roll held at Triennial Gathering. We have also had this event at our conventions for several years. This year we decided to use our Winter Retreat offering to contribute to this valuable program.

### **How is the funding used?**

- From the funds of the Women's Health Initiative the Women of the ELCA has co-sponsored the federal HEART Act for Women. **Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls** focuses on the importance of taking care of our hearts...physically, emotionally and spiritually. \*
- Seed Grant Programs are offered to congregational units who are expanding and growing their work within the initiative. (Health Fairs, Exercise Events, Healthy Cooking Classes, Spa Days, etc.) Seed Grants were given to Women of the ELCA units to continue raising awareness, educating and promoting wellness among women and girls. The *Planting Seeds for a Healthy Tomorrow* resource was created to help understand about the seed grants. Every unit that receives a seed grant is expected to "seed" back the initiative with some money. It's a wonderful circle of stewardship! Generally stories of the seed grants appear in the Interchange.

### **How do we learn about the health initiative?**

- Resources are necessary to help women in our organization understand and support the health initiative. *A Journey to Wellness* is a discussion starter program resource. *Sacred Spaces and Shared Wisdom*, *Knitting as a Spiritual Practice* and *The Faces of Grief* are all program resources addressing emotional, spiritual and physical health. There are many more and many more to come!

As with any initiative, it is an ongoing effort. It was started in 2005 and won't stop until we're all emotionally, spiritually and physically healthy...which means this will be going on for quite a while!

### **What are your units doing or can do to promote healing and wholeness?**

## **LET'S MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Women of the ELCA are committed by our purpose statement to promote healing and wholeness in our church, society and world. **Making a real difference** in the total health of women begins at the "heart" of the matter...being physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy balanced women.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEBRASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

## WINTER RETREAT 2015

Saturday, January 24, 2015

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Grand Island, NE



### *"Many Gifts but One Spirit"*

Rachel Kurtz of Minnesota will share her powerhouse singing voice with the joyful message of "Many Gifts but One Spirit". Her song "Make a Difference" has become a widespread sensation. Rachel has performed in benefit concert tours across the country helping to raise awareness for world hunger, hurricane relief and multi-cultural reconciliation.

We encourage you to invite your friends of all faiths to attend with you. NSWO is really encouraging generations of women; please invite your mother, daughters, and granddaughters. Rachel's message is based on Corinthians 12. She will speak to our hearts that we work together to use our gifts for the good of others.

**Come, Be Energized!**

Coffee/Registration – 8:30 a.m.  
Singing & devotions – 9:00 a.m.  
Closing 3.00 p.m.

**Offering will go to The Lutheran Women's Health Initiative**

**Driving Directions:** From I-80, take US Highway 281. Turn East onto W. Stolley Park Road. Turn North onto S. Harrison Street to 1515.

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#### REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: January 12, 2015

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or PO Box \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Church Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Church Town \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Needs (hearing or sight impaired, wheelchair, dietary, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Conference:  
☐ Midlands  
☐ Metro East  
☐ Southeast  
☐ High Plains  
☐ Northeast  
☐ Central  
☐ Southern Prairie

---

Please make check payable to NSWO. Registration is transferable, but not refundable  
Send registration form and \$18 to: JoAnn Rohrs 402-274-3058 (Home)

1409 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Auburn, NE 68305-1414

[joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com](mailto:joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com)



# Global Missions

By KANDY PFLASTER, President

## ELCA Global Church Sponsorship



Missionaries • Young Adults in Global Mission • International Leaders • Global Ministries

In June the NSWO Board met and decided that our organization would establish a fund to sponsor a missionary for our women's units in Nebraska. There has been one donation to the Missionary Sponsorship Fund of \$66. It was so incredible to receive that first donation towards this wonderful action. The need is great for sponsorships-10 new missionaries went through orientation in July. Our organization could do a minimum sponsorship or the maximum of \$25,000. Either is being sought to support their service in 2015. Also there were sixty-four young adults scheduled for orientation in mid-August before they fly to their countries of service. There are two websites: [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org) and [www.elca.org/yagmsupport](http://www.elca.org/yagmsupport).

Also, at the closing worship service at the Ninth Triennial Gathering the offering provided \$20,824.53 for scholarships for international women leaders, a program of ELCA Global Church Sponsorship. This is a part of Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA. Our church has committed to raising up 200 global women through educational opportunities. Please contact Sandy Olson, Global Missions Appointee for NSWO at [Sandyoly@neb.rr.com](mailto:Sandyoly@neb.rr.com) or call her at (402) 474-2870 to assist you with making plans for donations and future speaking opportunities for our missionary.

### Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA, 2013-2015

#### Elected Board

[www.nebraskasynod.org/welca](http://www.nebraskasynod.org/welca)

#### Secretary

Beth Meyer  
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Fremont, NE 68025-2736  
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#### High Plains

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#### Northeast

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### Officers

#### President

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#### Vice President

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### Board Representatives

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#### Southern Prairie

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[annschultz2007@hotmail.com](mailto:annschultz2007@hotmail.com)

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Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
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Superior, Nebraska 68978

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Use subscription blank on the inside of this issue to renew.  
Send address changes to Terri Johnson, NSWOW VP and Interim Database Coordinator.

## Check List for Congregational Units

### To Do Every Month

- \_\_\_ Send stories and pictures about your unit to the *Expressions* Editor
- \_\_\_ 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

- \_\_\_ Share *Expressions* with members
- \_\_\_ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote Winter Retreat

- 2 – Daylight Savings Time ends
- 4-9 – NE Synod God's IDEA (College)
- 9 – NE Synod Freed for Life
- 13 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 15-16 – NE Synod Lay Leadership Academy
- 21-23 – LYON Assembly
- 25 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 27 – Thanksgiving

### December

- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote NSWOW Winter Retreat
- \_\_\_ Have you sent your travel fund assessment to JoAnn? Each unit needs to pay \$20 per year for 2014 and 2015.
- \_\_\_ (J) Prepare Yearbook
- \_\_\_ (J) Install Officers
- \_\_\_ (J) Adopt a Budget
- \_\_\_ (J) Send list of new officers

after unit elections to Terri Johnson and to Conference Board Representative

- 5-6 – NE Synod Council Meeting
- 8-9 – Seeking the Spirit Within Residency
- 10 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 24 – Christmas Eve
- 25 – Christmas
- 31 – New Year's Eve

### January

- 1 – New Year's Day
- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 15 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 17-18 – Middle School Gathering
- 20-21 – First Call Retreat
- 23 – NSWOW Board Meeting
- 24 – NSWOW Winter Retreat
- 25-26 – NE Synod Staff Retreat