



Expressions

VOL. 16, NO. 2

MAY, 2003



Northeast Conference women with their "listening ears" are Melissa Nielsen, Sandy Boots and Mary Thomas.

March Gatherings

Bishop David deFreese conducted a study of the entire 30th chapter of Isaiah at the Southern Prairie Spring Gatherings. He apologized for not being able to attend more of the gatherings, saying ideally he would like to be at all of them.

His main points:

Christianity is not a formula, or a test of faith or a recipe, it is a relationship.

People mess up that relationship through sin (which he equated to selfishness).

God re-establishes the relationship through

(Continued on page 10)

Convention To Urge Boldness of Faith

"Font of Faith - BE BOLD" is the theme for the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization convention Oct. 3-5 at the Holiday Inn, Kearney.

Theme verse is "You are the letter from Christ. . . written. . .

with the Spirit of the living God." (2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV)

Jacqueline L. Tobin, Colorado author, will be the keynote speaker. She will talk about coded quilts made by slaves as escape maps for the

journey to freedom.

Music will be by Sounds of Celebration, which leads contemporary worship at First/Fremont. Carolyn Cook of Oregon will be the official representative. (Continued on p. 5)

Inside . . .

Devotions	2
President	3
Sexuality	4
Young Women . . .	5
Global Missions . .	6
Community	7
Growth	8
Saved To Serve . .	9
Spring Gath. . . .	10
Action	11

Convention

Between Pages 6 & 7

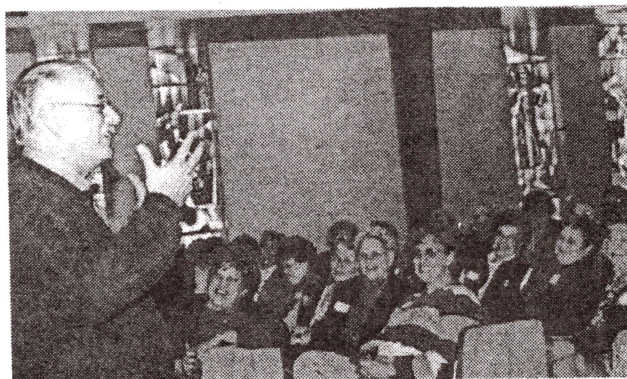
Role of Family Critical To Faith

"Keep meddling in the lives of the child God gives you. Meddle...meddle...meddle."

This was some of the advice from Dr. Dick Hardel, head of The Youth and Family Institute, Minneapolis, Minn., as he led the NSWOW Winter Retreat in Grand Island in January. His topic

(continued on page 9)

Dr. Dick Hardel entertains at Winter Retreat as he advises the women how to leave a "Legacy of Faith" for the younger generation.



A Devotional Study

*By R. LaDene Rutt, treasurer
Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization*

Pick a Resolution; Make a Plan

Jesus talked more about money in the Bible than he did about spirituality. I wonder why?

He knows our tendencies as humans to ignore the important and concentrate on the critical. Usually we spend more of our time mopping up spilt milk than we do planning where we can put the milk carton so it won't get spilled. That's very true of our finances, too. Nearly everyone has made a New Year's Resolution to read the Bible, move toward tithing, and pray more frequently. But also, nearly everyone has broken those resolutions by the end of February.

So if we are just going to break them, why make them? And what are some practical steps toward keeping those resolutions? First we need to concentrate on only one of them. Pick one, then make a plan. When will I pray? Early morning, before bedtime? How often? Once a day, twice? Where? In the bedroom, the kitchen, or should I set up a small worship center? What will I pray about? The list of ailing, hospitalized and homebound; friends (by name), relatives (by name), members and leaders of the Church and the State and the Nation (by name). How can I find uninterrupted time to pray?

Expressions 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's Organization, Women of the ELCA, and helps for congregational units. It is distributed free to congregational unit presidents and pastors of congregations.

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.

Editor: Beth Bohling, 1345 North Commercial, Superior NE 68978-1023 Phone: 402-879-3494 e-mail: beth.b@alltel.net

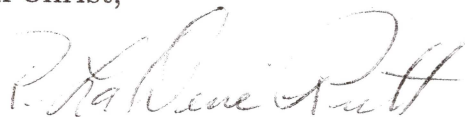
Send subscriptions to Linda Fuhr, 1158 132nd Rd, Osceola NE 68651. \$4 per year.

I have a candle and a prayer list near my place at the kitchen table. The kids and grandkids all know when the candle is lit Grandma is busy with prayers and they don't interrupt. I can guarantee that Jesus will keep the promise to be with us always. All we need to do is be there to listen.

As we look back and ahead from the New Year 2003 there are many things to ponder. Our income for last year is down about \$8,000, but considering the drought that isn't an unexpected number. Our expenses, however, did not go down. We are still running in the black for the year because of the stewardship of previous years. It is my hope and prayer that the weather turns wet -- even if it is during Spring Gatherings -- and that we are able to give more because we have more.

Thank you for your generous contributions to the ongoing work of the Nebraska Women of the ELCA.

In Christ,



R. LaDene Rutt

Upcoming Events

**Saved To Serve
Tabitha at York
June 6-8**

**NSWO Convention
Oct. 3-5
Holiday Inn, Kearney**

Message from the President

"To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ" This is our mission as the Women of the ELCA. It became official upon action of delegates to the Fifth Triennial Convention in July 2002.

To mobilize.....what does this mean for us? What are we doing to fulfill our mission "to mobilize women" as the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization?as congregational units?.....as individual women?

Mobilize, as defined in the dictionary, is "to put in a state of readiness for active service." This implies activities involving intentional planning, preparation and action. I believe intentional is the important factor here because without a concerted, clear, organized effort, mobilizing will not happen. The membership of our organization will remain status quo and eventually diminish.

How are we preparing women to be ready to serve actively? And perhaps the question we should be asking is how are we preparing for the young girls in our congregations to learn, to experience, and to feel what it means to be involved in the Women of the ELCA?

During the formative years is the time to introduce girls, middle school age, to the varied ways that Women of the ELCA act boldly on our faith by growing in the faith, affirm our gifts, supporting one another, engaging in ministry and action, and promoting healing.

What ways can we impress young girls? These are just a few ideas, absolutely not a complete list!

§ Sponsor joint activities or events with the young people in your congregation

§ Have a Bible study with them or use one of the new Listen, God is Calling resources, i.e. Called "To Love as God Loves---Unconditionally!"

§ Serve as a mentor

§ Invite them to help cut quilt squares and show the video of the people who receive them



There are a host of other ideas that you can generate through your units

The key is intentional planning and action. What will you do within the next year? I challenge us/you to do at least one intentional thing as NSWO, as a unit, as an individual woman.

I believe that God does not send us on a mission that we cannot accomplish. He equips us with gifts to plan, prepare and act...to get ready for service.

Linda Post Bushkofsky, Churchwide Organization Executive Director, wrote in the Fall *Interchange* issue, "In some places, the women's organization is a well-kept secret. We need to share our mission. We need to invite women of the church to find the Women of the ELCA as a meaningful, relevant and inviting community." I believe this begins with our girls, our teens, our young women and, yes, all women. Reveal the secret!!!

Paul wrote, "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12-13 NIV)

May God direct our heads, hands and hearts to mobilize those who wish to serve Him boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

Your Sister in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ardi".

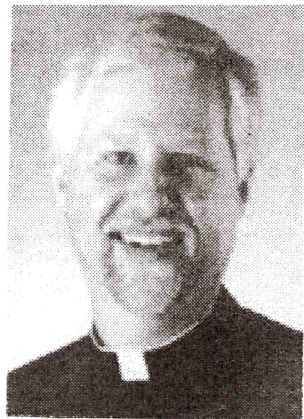
Ardith Hoins, President
P.O. Box 6, Davenport NE 68335
402-364-2142 jahoins@navix.net

May, 2003 - 3

Bishop: Important to Discuss Sexuality

"We are not good at talking about sexuality," Bishop David deFreese told the Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA Board, "but among the many things we need to talk about in our society, sexuality is one."

The board had asked for an appointment with the bishop concerning the request from churchwide Women of the ELCA that women be involved in congregational participation in the ELCA Studies on Sexuality.



Bishop deFreese

Bishop deFreese noted that the resolution urging study had not been handed down from churchwide, but had originated in congregations, who took it to their synod assemblies, who in turn presented it at the national assembly.

The church has asked members to begin with a study of common convictions on sexuality as a prelude to talking about what the ELCA position on homosexuality should be, the bishop said. "Where it will end up, I have no idea."

For the present, congregations are asked to take part in studying a four-session study entitled "Journey Together Faithfully." (See Crystal Corman's column, facing page, for more about study.)

The study is based on an ELCA statement, "Sexuality: Some Common Convictions." The statement articulates where there is agreement in the ELCA on sexuality issues such as creation, single adults, marriage, responsible procreation and parenting, divorce and misuses of sexuality.

The study guide, which contains the complete text of the statement, can be downloaded from www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/pdf/study01.pdf or ordered from Augsburg Press for \$1.50 per copy (Item No. 6000164068)

"Even in families," Bishop deFreese said, "it is not easy to talk about sexuality. My greatest fear is that congregations won't talk it over."

He said the need is there, as "people in our congregations are hurting over sexuality issues."

The second phase of the study will start in the

fall, when materials for discussing diverse opinions about homosexuality will begin to appear. "The church is seeking fair, honest conversation," the bishop said. "We have no agenda."

Task forces have been established in the ELCA and the Nebraska Synod to lead the second study.

"The church has worked very hard to balance the task force," Bishop deFreese said. "Members have displayed high integrity as they articulate their own and other positions on homosexuality."

Members of the Nebraska Synod Task Force, of which Fred Nelson is chairman, are sensitive to the fact that people have trouble talking about sexuality, he said. They have conducted several "How Do We Talk About Tough Issues" seminars.

"As Christians, we need to struggle to articulate our positions without hurting each other," he said.

All 65 ELCA Synods are expected to do the study and provide feedback before the next General Assembly. A vote is scheduled for the 2005 meeting.

Basic questions to be answered at that time are the ELCA's position on blessing same-sex unions, and the ordination and rostering of practicing homosexuals, both of which are not currently approved.

During the discussions, Bishop deFreese said, "Be kind to each other. . . Allow yourselves to disagree and still be okay. . . Allow God's Holy Spirit to inform you."

"We need to prove to the world that we are the church, and we don't just divide and divide and divide."

Discussion Resources

Some suggestions of materials which may be helpful for initiating a study of sexuality:

Video: "I Feel So Alone, Sharing the Pain of Suffering" from Nebraska Synod Video Library, synodvideo@juno.com

Booklet: "Called To Deal With Difficult Issues" from Augsburg Fortress, P.O. Box 1209, Minneapolis MN 55440-1209, 800-328-4648. or download from [www.elca.org/wo/resources/pdf/Ethical Decision Making.pdf](http://www.elca.org/wo/resources/pdf/Ethical%20Decision%20Making.pdf)

Let's Talk About Sex

"Let's Talk About Sex. Let's talk about all the good things and the bad things that there can be." When this song, by Salt-N-Pepa, came out in 1991, many people were offended by the blunt openness of the song. Yet, this was a time when HIV was in the headlines. People having sex needed to know about the dangers.

Today we have sex education in schools. When does it start in your school system? Junior high? Sixth grade? Maybe fourth grade? When should kids learn about sex? Then there is the question of who should teach it? As a parent, did you give the "Birds and the Bees" talk? How old was your child?

The ELCA has a study, "Journey Together Faithfully," which encourages discussion and thought about sexuality and the church's responsibilities regarding sexuality. Earlier this semester, I participated in this four-session study at the Lutheran Student Center. The ELCA is trying to form a social statement and, quite democratically, wants our feedback.

This study has not only raised many eyebrows, it has totally turned people and congregations away from the ELCA! I, as a liberal Christian, must immediately ask "Why?" and secondly, look at the "offending" literature entitled "Sexuality: Some Common Convictions."

Very briefly, I want to walk you through the topics brought up in each session. Remember, for each topic, references are made to Bible passages; the ELCA wants to guide its stance from God's Word.

SESSION ONE: In the beginning (Genesis) God created. He called it good. He created man, then woman. He created humans as sexual beings. The text then looks at how the Ten Com-

Font of Faith -- BE BOLD

(Continued from page 1)

sentative from the Churchwide Executive Board.

Other special features will include a Saturday night pajama party with entertainment by T. Marni Vos, worship services and Bible Study. The Rev. Anjanette Rist, Fremont, will serve as chaplain; Vicar Catherine Braasch, former executive director of the Women of the ELCA, will lead the Bible study.

Official business will include election of officers and delegates to the next Triennial convention. President Ardith Hoins will preside.

Youth Representative

Crystal Corman
4325 N. 1st, Apt. 365
Lincoln NE 68521
402-474-9904
crystalcorman@hotmail.com
or ccorman1@bigred.unl.edu



mandments provide sexual guidance. Sometimes sex is seen as sinful. How can Christians be responsible?

SESSION TWO: Relationships affect the physiological, psychological and social aspects of our sexual identity. This session talks about singleness, dating and marriage.

SESSION THREE: One reason for sex is procreation. This session discusses responsible procreation and parenting. Included here is the duty of parents to teach their children about sex. Divorce is also discussed.

SESSION FOUR: Misuses of sexuality are covered, including adultery, abuse, promiscuity, prostitution, practices that spread sexually-transmitted diseases, pornography, and sexuality in the media.

I encourage you all to look at sexuality in our world. Then look at sexuality in yourself. Because you are (God-created) human, you have sexuality. So maybe "sex" should not be treated as a bad word. In my opinion, respectful education started at an early age, set in a church may be the best prevention for sexual misuse/disrespect in our (children's) world.

The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without fear for newer and richer experience. —Eleanor Roosevelt



Skits at Spring Gatherings urge women to attend NSW convention Oct. 3-5.

More details about convention in the center pull-out section, as well as a poster for hanging in your church.

Issues for Women Around the World

(study Isaiah 61:1-2a)

Among the critical issues faced by women around the world are the following:

Poverty — Women make up about 70 percent of those living in poverty. Factors contributing include sexual discrimination, poor education, lack of health care, wars, global economic issues.

Global Awareness

Shirley Daire, Advocate
311 James St.
Alma NE 68920-2024
(308-928-2839)
sdaire@yahoo.com



Education — The global gender gap in education is getting better, but 2/3rds of the world's illiterate adults are still women. This is primarily in rural areas. Girls are often denied places in higher education. Most who drop out in primary school are needed to care for their families.

Health — Many factors complicate women's health including lack of access to health care, food, poor housing, bad water, and social customs. Pregnancy and childbirth are a leading cause of death. Now, HIV/AIDS have a double impact on women. First, they are the main caregiver for the family and second, because of unsafe sexual practices by their husbands.

Violence — Violence against women happens all over the world. Rape, sexual abuse, slavery, prejudice against girl babies, forced sterilization and abortion are examples of such violence.

Economic Participation — Standards for paying women's wages and women owning businesses are on the increase around the world. Usually, though, their work remains underpaid and undervalued. In many places women are the primary food producers and yet are excluded from making decisions about markets and usage.

Power and Decision-making — The im-

6- May, 2003

provement of women's social, economic and political status depends on the sharing of power and the making of decisions equally by men and women. Globally, only 10 percent of the members of legislative bodies are women.

Questions for discussion in your women's group:

- ° Which of these issues impact most seriously women in your companion synod country?
- ° Which of these issues do you feel are the most critical for U.S. women? Why?
- ° Which of these issues are the most important in your own community? Talk about one or more situations in your community.
- ° Which ministries that your women's group is doing will help make life better for women in your community and globally?

Let's DO IT!

Working for justice with women around the world...

1. Educate yourself and others
2. Do activities that promote justice and solidarity with women
3. Get involved in public policy initiatives — laws and governmental affairs

Prophetic Diakonia: A Call To Advocacy

Diakonia means witnessing through deeds or, we could say, church social service.

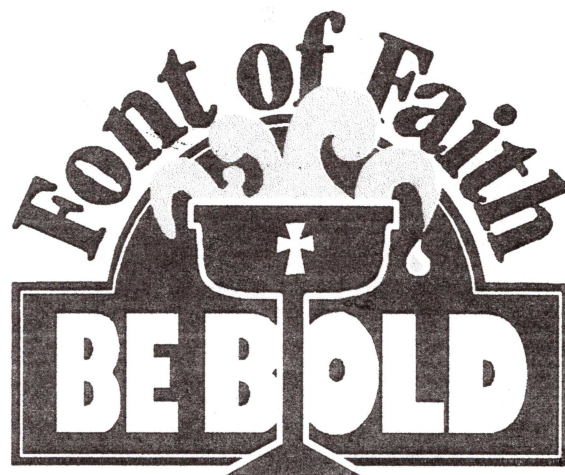
The Lutheran World Federation held a conference in South Africa last November with the theme: "Prophetic Diakonia — For the Healing of the World."

They identified poverty, violence and HIV/AIDS as the 3 major issues that today challenge churches in their serving. The conclusion emphasized our need to work to banish hunger, to build peace and to withstand AIDS. We do this two ways—with social service and social change.



**October 3-5, 2003
Holiday Inn,
Kearney**

**JOIN US
at the
CONVENTION
of the
NEBRASKA
SYNODICAL
WOMEN'S
ORGANIZATION**



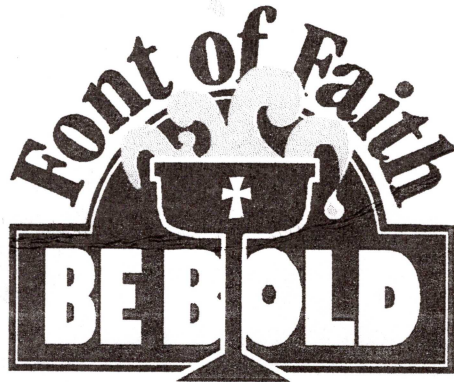
**"You are the letter from Christ....*written*...with
the Spirit of the living God." 2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV**

Featuring:

- ✦ Jacqueline L. Tobin, author, speaker, workshop leader
- ✦ Singing with Sounds of Celebration
- ✦ Communion & healing service Friday eve
- ✦ Young Women Track
- ✦ Being Bold in Mission
- ✦ Vicar Catherine Braasch, worship & Bible Study
- ✦ Pajama Party with T. Marni Vos and Mother Abess
- ✦ Free daycare on Saturday
- ✦ Worship with communion on Sunday morning
- ✦ Convention bags for the first four hundred
- ✦ Offerings: Mission - Lakota Center
 Tangible - \$ for animals to fill God's Global Barnyard \$
 Worship - ½ Operation I.D.E.A., ½ Churchwide
 Women's Organization of Women of the ELCA

PLAN **NOW** TO ATTEND

October 3-5, 2003



CONVENTION of the **NEBRASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION**

**"You are the letter from Christ.....*written*.....with
the Spirit of the living God." 2 Corinthians 3:3 NIV**



T. Marni Vos

Tarni Vos is a bold, clean, honest & refreshing humorist. She is as funny as she is inspiring. As a motivational speaker, she leaves her audience laughing, free of stress, & ready for change. As a former high school instructor in a stressful environment, she used humor & creativity to inspire & motivate students to go beyond their potential. Through laughter & communication, she continues to educate people in all walks of life to meet their challenges with a light heart & the echo of laughter.

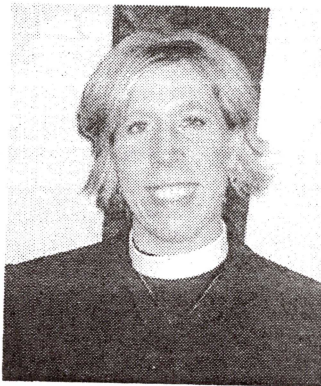


"There are *five square knots* on the quilt every two inches apart. They escaped on the *fifth knot* on the *tenth pattern* & went to Ontario, Canada. The *monkey wrench* turns the *wagon wheel* toward Canada on a *bear's paw* trail to the crossroads....." And so begins the fascinating story that was passed down from generation to generation in the family of Ozella McDaniel Williams. **Jacqueline L. Tobin**, an author from Colorado, tells the story of Williams and how slaves made coded quilts to navigate their escape on the Underground Railroad. In her workshops, she encourages attendees to "tell their own story."

(To make poster: Trim and attach to adjacent page)



Carolyn Cook was elected to the Executive board of Women of the ELCA in July, 1999. She has served as board member, vice president, convention coordinator, & president of the Oregon Synodical Women's Organization, and has participated in cross-cultural programming events. She serves as administrative assistant & organist in her congregation. Her family includes seven children & six grandchildren. She enjoys the beach, making banners, planning worship services, reading, and collecting teddy bears.



Rev. Anjanette Rist, serving as chaplain, is an Associate Pastor at First Lutheran in Fremont, specializing in youth & family ministry. She is a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead, MN and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN. She is currently active with the NE Synod Operation I.D.E.A., local planning committee for CROP Walk & serves as President of the Board of Directors for the Crisis Center for Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault. She is married to Karl & has a daughter, Sela Grace.



Vicar Catherine Braasch brings a variety of faith & life experiences to her role as Bible study leader for this convention. She's an adult convert to Christianity, a ranch woman since her early teens in a rural foster home, & a veteran of 15 years in ELCA churchwide staff ministries. Before coming to Hope Lutheran Church at Smithfield, NE, she served as executive director, Women of the ELCA, for five years. Cathi will graduate from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago on June 8, 2003, & looks forward to ordination & serving her first call at Hope.



Sounds of Celebration has been leading contemporary worship at First Lutheran Church in Fremont since August, 1995. Musicians include Gregg Poe & DaVal Johnson on the guitars, Jon Moxness on piano, Jeff Vyhldal on drums, Cheri Johnson & Deana Vyhldal provide the vocals.

(To make poster: Trim and attach to adjacent page)

PRE-CONVENTION OPPORTUNITIES

- ✠ Called to Lead Wherever You Are
2 ½ hour workshop
Presenters: Shirley Splittgerber & Karen Tjarks
- ✠ Citizenship
Presenter: Kathleen Cowan
- ✠ Flow of Faith in Daily Life -
Presenter: Synod Ministry & Daily Life Committee
- ✠ Walking the Labyrinth
- ✠ Being Bold in Mission

SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| † Telling your Own Story | Jacqueline L. Tobin |
| † Afghanistan Today | Abdul Yaseer |
| † Being Bold in Mission | Action, Community, Growth |
| † Stewardship through a
Legacy of Love | Karen Tjarks |
| † Young Woman Track | |
| † Walking the Labyrinth | |

⇒ ⇒ ⇒ Scholarships available ⇐ ⇐ ⇐
one/conference for first time attendees
one/conference for a woman under age 25
one for woman differently abled
one for woman of color

Apply to Ardi Hoins by June 15, 2003
402-364-2142

Join us to Experience Boldness in your Faith!

Mission: Community

I'd like to focus in this issue on Goal #6 of our Mission Community Goals:

"Promote mentoring situations within our units and in our communities."

Mother's Day is coming up on May 11. How is this related to mentoring?

If you are a mother, thank God! Thank Him for the special gift that each of your children is. Thank Him for the gift of life and for allowing you to be a partner with Him. Pray for your children daily. Let them know that you love them. Spend time with each of your children individually. Help them develop their God-given talents. Share a skill of yours. Read to them. Share family history. Pray with them.

If you are a grandmother, thank God! Support your children in their parenting, and give them a break sometimes. Include your grandchildren in community service projects. Talk to them. Read to them. Play games with them. Take them to concerts, museums or art displays. Cook together or work on a hobby together. Use your imagination.

Someone needs you as a mentor, even if you have no

children by birth or adoption. Ask God whom He'd like you to relate to as a "sister," "aunt" or spiritual "mother." Each one of us is needed in the circle of influence in which God has placed

us. Perhaps you can think of someone who's just waiting to be invited to a circle meeting, a spring gathering, or a Saved to Serve event. The impor-

tant thing is that we keep our spiritual antennae up regarding one or more younger people who will be receptive to our input.

PURPOSE: *To enable each woman to value herself and others as created in God's image and redeemed through Christ and to build up and celebrate relationships that are global, diverse and interdependent.*

Ingrid Hoper

Committee Chair
Box 494
Osceola NE 68651
402-747-3471
crhoper@alltel.net



God has a place for YOU in His family to serve and share your gifts.
Happy mentoring to you!

Elected Board Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA 2001-2003

President
Ardith Hoins
Box 6
Davenport Ne 68335
402-364-2142
jahoins@navix.net

Secretary
Shirley Splittgerber
5046 S. 174th Street
Omaha Ne 68135
402-896-1787
Shirley38@worldnet.com

Vice President
Arlene Johnson
Box 71
Shelby NE 68662
402-527-5500

Treasurer
R. LaDene Rutt
2234 Road 181
Chappell NE 69129
308-874-2982
llrutt@megavision.com

Brd. Reps.

Southern Prairie Conf.
Marydae Eigenberg
1207 W. Sixth Street
Hastings Ne 68901
402-463-4605
marydae@inebraska.com

Midlands Conf.
Donna Bathke
7120 Eagle Drive
Lincoln NE 68507
402-466-0521
tadbathke3@juno.com

Northeast Conf.
Nina Kramer
130 S. Colfax
West Point NE 68788
402-372-2225
niner1949@hotmail.com

Metro East Conf.
Trudy Hutton
2233 Colfax St.
Blair NE 68008
402-426-4358
dhutton@acad2.dana.edu

Central Conference
Ingrid Hoper
Box 494
Osceola Ne 68651
402-747-3471
crhoper@alltel.net

High Plains Conf.
Kandy Pflaster
1009 Meridian
Cozad NE 69130
308-784-2193
tkpflast@cozadtel.net

Southeast Conference
Rose Miller
10366 E. Cherry Road
Adams NE 68301
402-988-2725

Mission: Growth

What is Rachel's Day? It is an observance on the first Sunday of May. It is a time to mourn the loss of children and question the evil and fear in our land.

It used to be we feared "things that go bump in the night." Not any more. Today's

children fear guns at school, no one at home to comfort them, unsafe environments and gangs. Children have friends who have com-

mitted suicide; they are afraid of being alone and of not being loved.

Rachel's Day was started in Bethel West in Chicago in 1996. A memorial was brought to the Third Triennial

Convention of the Women of the ELCA asking all women to encourage the observance of this day in their congregations. The memorial was adopted.

In Jeremiah 31: 15-17: "A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more." (NIV) The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in Matthew 2:16 where Herod ordered that all male infants in Bethlehem and surrounding area be killed.

Rachel was the favorite wife of Jacob, and the name is used to personify the Northern Kingdom of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. She, the nation, is weeping for the tribes that were taken into exile. It is fitting that Rachel's Day be so named, as we too weep for the children at risk.

We honor The Holy Innocents, Martyrs on Dec. 28. One account said that more than 14,000 children were believed to have been killed on this day. Our children may not be killed in such a great number at one time, but they are being

killed and abused in large numbers. We ask ourselves, "Are our children safe anywhere?"

If these fears are important to you, plan to observe Rachel's Day in your Unit. If it's too late for this year, put it

PURPOSE: To provide a variety of learning experiences that strengthen each woman as a whole person, develop her potential and equip her for ministry

Marydae Eigenberg

Committee Chair
1207 W. 6th Street
Hastings Ne 68901
402-463-4605
marydae@inebraska.com



on your calendar for next year. I'm sure you have heard the African saying, "It takes a village to raise a child." Let's become a "village" for the children in our congregation.

(Information taken from web page www.elca.org/wo/rachelslit.html)

A Litany for Rachel's Day

Open our eyes, God,

So we may see the value of all God's children and that we may together plan for their safety and protection.

Open our ears, God,

So that we may hear the cries of the youth who are suffering from hunger and malnutrition and that we may together plan for their feeding and sustenance.

Open our hearts, God,

So that we may feel the powerlessness of the teens who are struggling to succeed in homes

plagued with apathy, divisions, anger and hopelessness and that we may help provide words of comfort, paths of power and courage for their successful journey to adulthood.

Open our lips, God,

So that we may overtly confront racism and sexism and that we may together bring about the utopia of unity in diversity necessary for our babies' growth and wholeness.

Open our minds, God

And purge away individualism, negative
(continued on p. 9)



York-Tabitha Next Project

Projects for every age and physical condition are scheduled for the next Saved To Serve weekend, June 6-8 at Tabitha Health Care Services in York. Women who attend will sew, bake, plant, clean and help with other chores the clients can't manage.

Special recreation will be a Saturday night outing to the Eighth Annual Christian Music Festival, where 30 musical groups are expected. Housing will be at York College.

Registration deadline is May 21. For more information, see brochures mailed with this newsletter.

Five 12-foot banners for the Lutheran Student Center at UNL and a stole for Campus Pastor Larry Meyer were constructed during the February Saved To Serve opportunity. The banners had been designed by the students, who assisted with making them.

Left, Crystal Corman and her mother, Mary, add golden letters to the Easter banner. Right, Arlene Johnson and Donna Bathke display the green Epiphany banner, one of five Saved to Serve made for the Lutheran Student Center at UNL.

Students also led the Bible Study and provided a pot luck dinner on Sunday. Lincoln churches supplied other meals,

as well as housing.

The banners were on display at Sunday services, and received much acclaim.

Winter Retreat: Legacy of Faith

(Continued from page 1)

was, "Leaving a Legacy of Faith."

Hardel said meddling in children's lives was about eternal life. "Help them see Jesus in the boundaries you give them," he said.

He also pointed out that Luther wrote the Small Catechism for use in the home. "Make use of the Word of God in your familying," he said. "Children cannot understand family values without understanding who God is."

The former assistant to the bishop of the Nebraska Synod said the church cannot pass on the faith without mothers and fathers, grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncle, neigh-

bors and friends.

Family is the first vehicle for passing on the faith, he said. Church, worship, pastor, Sunday school are all auxiliary. He said the role of the congregation is to equip the home as a primary place to nurture faith.

Hardel had the 145 women who attended practice sharing "heart stories."

"Tell your grandchildren about your grandparents," he said. "Teach them the Word of God through your heart. Whose heart will God use if not yours?"

An offering of \$1,000 was divided among Nebraska women seminarians.

Litany, continued . . .

pride and superior attitudes, and help us to understand that each and every child of God is given bountiful gifts regardless of color, gender or race.

Open our arms, God,

So we may welcome children whose parents are incarcerated, absent from the home or struggling with addiction, and help us, together, to

provide them with the love, strength and the stability needed to run this race of life.

Open us, God, so we may feel the breath of your spirit;

Open us, God, so we may feel the power of your majesty;

Open us, God, so that together we may be strengthened to bring about human liberation and wholeness for our children.



Southern Prairie: Front, Planning: Joan Classen, Judy Woodsie, Diane Kelly, Carol Deepe (coordinator). Back, Nominating: Mona Mueller, Linda Fangmeier.



Metro East: Planning, Kim Coleman, JoAnn Leo, Pat Stevens, Verna Whitfield (coordinator), Carole Woodworth.

March Gatherings Stress Listening

(continued from p. 1)
grace (his love freely and unconditionally given).

So that Christians are transformed, to respond to God's calling and leading.

Rev. Harold Stromer, Assistant to the Bishop, led the Bible study for Northeast, and Metro East.

Continuing on the gathering theme, "Listen," President Ardith Hoins listed five prerequisites to listening: 1. Be ready; 2. Express a desire to listen; 3. Experiment with prayer postures; 4. Be quiet, slowing down; 5. Unload the "stuff" from your mind -- Focus.

She said God had called her to serve in ways she hadn't dreamed she could, and asked

the women if they had missed opportunities when God called them. "God is at my side, encouraging, comforting, listening," she said.

Treasurer R. LaDene Rutt encouraged the women to use the Stewardship Packet from churchwide. She also suggested they send in a percentage of money raised through projects as they do with regular offerings.

Holy Communion was served at the first three gatherings.

A skit, "Let's Make a BOLD Deal," urged women to attend the NSWOW convention in the fall.

Below are listed specifics of the first three gatherings. Later meetings will be covered in the next *Expressions*. Information includes attendance, offering, program highlights, election results and tangible recipients.

Southern Prairie - 150, \$1,228.25

"Listen" workshops dealt with the body, grandparenting, music, witness and young women. Special music was by the "Hearts Alive" group.

Carol Deepe, Deshler, was reelected coordinator. Planning committee: Joan Classen, Blue Hill; Brenda Norblade,



Northeast, Vicky Hingst (coordinator) and Marian Maas. Not pictured (due to ice) Judy Stahlecker, Joyce Ausmussen and Joyce Yusten.

Axtell; Judy Woodside, Holdrege; Diane Kelly, Hildreth. Nominating: Linda Fangmeyer, Deshler; Kathleen Tams, Alma; Mona Mueller, Hastings.

Tangibles to Bethphage, Axtell.

Northeast - 98, \$1,170.

Pastor Norma VanderMeer showed and explained her Matthew Quilt featuring religious symbolism from that gospel. She and a friend had designed and made it. Workshops: Tanzania Teacher Exchange, Dr. Jon Cerny; bandage rolling, Marlys Meyer.

Vicky Hingst, Allen, was reelected coordinator. Planning Committee: Marian Maas, Pierce; Judy Stahlecker, Spencer; Joyce Ausmussen, Ponca, Joyce Yusten, Dakota City; Danielle Feenstra, South Sioux City.

Tangibles to New Haven



Workshop leader Ruth Jackson, left, with So. Prairie committee member Kay Goll. Jackson's minister husband was killed by rebels in Liberia.

10 - May, 2003

Mission: Action

PURPOSE: To enable women to articulate and act on their faith as disciples of Christ and in all areas of life.

As the mission statement of the Women of the ELCA states: Our mission is to mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.

In our 2002-2003 NSWO Mission: Action goals, goal #5 is to provide information about opportunities which exist for service to others. When you think about this, it is a huge responsibility, whether you provide the information or whether you receive the information.

There are so many avenues to follow to provide information about service opportunities, whether on local, state, regional or national levels. Acting on your faith on the local level can be as simple as helping at a funeral meal, visiting a shut-in or heading up your local food pantry drive and getting out the information about that. The opportunities for service to others is limitless!

Service opportunities on the state level are always covered

Nina Kramer
Committee Member
130 S. Colfax
West Point NE 68788
402-372-2225
niner1949@hotmail.com



can be used for service/action opportunities. All you need to do is order the materials and get active in serving others! Some of the most recent publications include the "Listen, God Is Calling" series, which covers many different topics that can be used to help us in our active

service. Does your congregation feel as if they need help in welcoming strangers? There is a hospitality workshop entitled "Welcoming the Stranger" which is available from Augsburg Fortress. And the list goes

on - there are so many resources out there for just about any area of service you might need.

Be involved!

Be active!

Be faithful!

Colossians 3:23, 24b states, **"Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters...you serve the Lord Christ."**

March Gatherings, continued



Metro-East's keynoter Faye Hill Thompson had been a presenter at Triennial.

House, South Sioux City, and Sister Virginia's Tiendita, West Point.

Metro-East - 140, \$2,145.

Author Faye Hill Thompson spoke on "Avoid Sitting on the Sidelines of Life." Workshops concerned mission work in Africa and Russia, music of praise, hearing God's voice, and hospice.

Verna Whitfield, Luther Memorial, was reelected coor-

dinator. Planning Committee: Kim Coleman, St. Timothy; Ann M. Grinbergs, First, Blair; JoAnn Leo, First, Omaha; Pat Stevens, St. Michael; Darlene White, Kountze; Carole Woodworth, Kountze.

Tangibles to Project Hope and the Food Pantry at First, Omaha.

Check List for Congregational Units

To Do Every Month

- ☐ 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 September - J to those starting in January)

May

- ☐ 2 CWU World Fellowship
- ☐ 4 Rachel's Day
- ☐ Get 2003 Resource packet from pastor (plastic wrap)

☐ S - Send new officer list to Linda Fuhr, 1158 132nd Rd., Osceola NE 68651 or lfuhr@alltel.net

☐ Circulate *Expressions* among participants

☐ Send travel fund assessment (\$10) to R. LaDene Rutt, 2234 Rd 191, Chappell NE 69129

☐ 29-31 Synod Assembly/Festival at Lincoln

June

- ☐ 6-8 Saved To Serve at Tabitha/York
- ☐ S - Install officers

☐ S - Have you sent new officers list to Linda Fuhr?

☐ Did you send travel fund?

July

☐ 1 *Expressions* deadline-- did you send items for "Light" or "Laughter"?

August

- ☐ S - Prepare yearbooks
- ☐ S - Prepare budget
- ☐ Circulate *Expressions* among participants

IS YOUR ADDRESS LABEL COLORED?

If so, that is a signal that **your subscription expires with this issue.**
Use subscription blank on page 11 to renew.

The Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization
of the Women of the ELCA
1345 North Commercial Street
Superior NE 68978-1023

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
SUPERIOR NE
PERMIT #6

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

