

“But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful.”

Psalm 68:3 NIV

The Winter Retreat will be held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Grand Island on January 19, 2013. Please note that this is one week later than usual. The theme will be “A Joyous Celebration”. We will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Women of the ELCA.

Our main speaker will be Miss Jenny Herrick, a national humorist and motivational speaker. This is also a change, since our original presenter had to cancel.

Bishop Brian Maas will spend part of the day with us. This will be the first time for some of you to meet him.

We will also hear from representatives of Lutheran

Family Services of Nebraska and MOSAIC, who are in the midst of celebrating even greater anniversaries. Our offerings will be divided between those two organizations.

The Trinity Lutheran Bottle Band from Hildreth will be entertaining us in the afternoon. They are such a unique and entertaining bunch. You may remember them from convention some years back.

Please fill out the enclosed registration form. Do it now and it won't get lost amid your holiday preparations. See you there!

intervention and prevention programming to reduce risk of child neglect and abuse for low-income, at-risk families who have a child under five years of age or are pregnant.

The granting funds to organizations and programs that support that needs and the development of women is one way we fulfill the purposes of Women of the ELCA. Since 1990 our grants in support of women and children have totaled over three and a half million dollars.

As part of the our application review process our synodical women's organizations were asked to comment on the applications received from their synod, thus helping the churchwide organization make informed choices from among the many worthy applications submitted. It is our prayer that through projects we support this year Women of the ELCA will continue to make a strong and positive difference in the lives of women and their families throughout this country and aboard.

Women of the ELCA awards a 2012 Grant to an organization in Nebraska Synod

Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, The Centers for Healthy Families, receives a \$2,000.00 grant.

The centers provide early

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Devotions

By EMILY LAAKER, Metro East Board Representative



Luke 5: 27 –31, NIV

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth, “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but the sinners to repentance.”

On World Communion Sunday our choir anthem was “One at the Feast”.

He ate bread at their tables, he joined them in their feast, And many asked the Savior, “Why do you dine with these, the outcast and the sinner, the dying and the poor? There are many greater than these you sit before.”

So let the poor and the wealthy be seated side by side, The hungry and the thirsty with those who have been fed, And share the feast together, come share the wine and bread.

Gather at the table, come and take your place. There is room for many at the feast of grace. With the wine remember, with the wine recall Jesus gave his body and his blood for all.

Break the bread and pour the wine, let them drink, let

them dine. None is greater than the least, all are one, one at the feast.

I got to thinking. Who are the least in our communities? Who do we tend to regard as not worthy? The unwed mother who is trying to turn her life around? The little girl who is violated by her daddy, and the whole town knows, but no one does anything?

The family who comes to church wearing worn and tattered clothing and always stays for coffee fellowship and stuffs their pockets? Is it the first bi-racial couple you have ever met? Or the son of the town drunk who showed up for confirmation classes? Who of us do we consider to be righteous?

I remember the e-mail that went around, telling of a stranger who came to the church wearing dirty and torn clothing. No one greeted him, and he got the feeling that no one wanted him to sit in their pew. He slowly made his way to the front and sat on the floor right ahead of the first pew thinking he would not bother anybody there.

Some in the congregation noticed that one of the ushers also made his way to the front. They wondered how he would get the man to leave. But, instead, the usher sat down on the floor beside him. What a message for all! What a way to show the love of God for all his people!

Who does Jesus regard as worthy? Let us remember that Jesus did die for all, not just for those who dress nicely and have the right background. Let us always invite and welcome everyone in Christ’s name.

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 pastors, AIMs, and PMAs; Nebraska female seminarian students; the other SWO Presidents; and the CWO Officers and Executive Board Members.

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 nswo.expressions@gmail.com, or by phone, 402-719-1732. Content information can be sent via e-mail.

November *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson, Beth Meyer plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Carol Ortengren, Shirley Splittgerber, Nancy Steele, and Region 4 President/Vice-President 2012 Retreat Attendees. Event photographs courtesy of Gwen Edwards, Val Florea, and Kandy Pflaster.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dearest “Thankful Ladies,”

I can’t believe that it is time to write an article once again for our Nebraska *Expressions*. Often I wonder to myself what can I share with you that you haven’t already shared with me in some fashion. I am overflowing with information that as President of the NSWO (Nebraska Synodical Women’s Organization) I have the privilege of receiving at meetings, synod council, e-mails from the Churchwide organization, and so many other venues. My task is to always share and disseminate all the information in this newsletter, our scheduled women’s events, our NSWO Facebook page, our webpage www.nebraskasynod.org/welca, or your own NSWO Board members sending out letters to the active women’s units.



I have some information that I want to share with you this time about Thankofferings. I have a favorite silver bracelet with a widow’s mite that I have had for 6 or 7 years that I bought from a jewelry party from Premier Jewelry.

“He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

The Widow’s Mite, Mark 12:41-44

When I was asked to attend and speak to a congregation on a Thankoffering Sunday last year, I researched the Women of the ELCA website about Thankofferings. I found a wonderful presentation about the history of Thankofferings. That is when I discovered the above personal favorite Bible verse and Bible story. Here is another excerpt from the same resource:

Women’s offerings: a brief history

The idea of collecting donations in small offering boxes goes back to the very early 1800s, when women formed “mite” or “cent” societies to raise money. Mite boxes were given out as fundraising tools to collect pennies for the support of church projects and foreign missionaries.

Many of you will be celebrating a Thankoffering service in your own church as November is often the month we celebrate as women. Your unit’s should have received the Stewardship mailing from Churchwide which included a new worship for 2012 Thankoffering Service. You may also access this service on the website at www.womenoftheelca.org. Or you may choose to create one around the regular lectinary texts for a given Sunday, especially if those texts support discipleship or stewardship themes. There is also a recent publication in the *Interchange* and on the website about making your own personal Thankoffering boxes/jars/containers to use in your Thankoffering service

I invite you to share about what your unit does for their Thankoffering service with our *Expressions* readers; we would all like to know what others do to share in Christ’s name and Good Works.

God’s Peace to You Always,
Kandy Pflaster

Discipleship, Justice, and now Stewardship

By TERRI JOHNSON, Vice President



Having discussed the first two areas of focus in the Women of the ELCA, I turn to Stewardship. Our organization's website defines stewardship in this way:

- a. stewardship is careful and responsible management of the money, property, and resources that God has entrusted us.
- b. stewardship is providing for the ministries that God has entrusted to our care.

Earlier this week my *Daily Grace* e-mail from the Women of the ELCA was titled Growing Through Giving. (*Daily Grace* is the organization's first iPhone app, but you can also subscribe to the daily devotions via e-mail). Let me share it with you.

Which is greater: the church's need for our gifts, or our need to give the gifts?

Christ neither asks for help nor bargains for loyalty with those he helps. Rather he supplies what we need, and then asks us to go and help others. It's a pay-it-forward process.

In Matthew 6:21, Jesus tells us: "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" So why give? We might as well ask why breathe, sleep, or eat. Giving is intrinsic to our spiritual well-being just as these physical actions are to our physical well-being. Why give? Consider this:

God tells us to do so repeatedly.
Giving sets our priorities.
Giving encourages others.
Giving influences others.
Giving is good financial discipline.
Giving connects us.
Giving opens us up to new adventures.

As we give, we grow. Giving to the church is what sowing is to gardening. It plants possibilities. Both the givers and receivers benefit in the process.

Women of the ELCA offer several free resources on stewardship and giving. Visit www.womenoftheelca.org to find the current stewardship planning guide and Thankoffering service workbooks.

This message was adapted from Growing Through Giving written by Kathryn Hauelsen Cashen that first appeared in the May 2010 issue of *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine.

Individually and as units we need to keep in mind how we can be good stewards. Many women use their quilting talents and time to repurpose fabric into quilts for LWR, Lutheran World Relief. We also need to share our monetary resources. Churchwide and our Synodical organization need funding to cover the expense of the programming they provide and the costs of leadership training and event planning. After all, we are together as a community of women supporting one another in our callings.

Women of the ELCA encourages and equips women to consider their responsibility and capacity for stewardship. Churchwide Staff members create educational resources about giving and managing money, including devotions, Bible studies, and program materials for individuals and small groups. Each unit president should have received the 2012-2013 Stewardship Guide in September mentioned above. This is a great written resource for devotions about stewardship and information about offerings. If you didn't get one, confirm that we have your correct address or see if it was mailed to your church.

You may have attended Autumn Renewal and already heard about the \$25 for 25 years challenge issued by the synodical presidents and vice-presidents of our Rockin' Region 4. If not, be sure to read about it in this newsletter. One question asked was if it was a single donation of \$25 or that much for each year. It is a single donation request but the question got me thinking. Would it really be that hard to increase our yearly giving by about \$2.00 each month? Skip one treat a month. For me that would be forgoing two ice cream cones at Runza. Maybe for others it would be driving past Starbucks instead of stopping in. Buy LWR fairly traded coffee and brew it at home. Then you are supporting mission at the same time. Remember LWR also has chocolate and teas and Olive oil and NSWO always has some to buy at our events.

So, I invite you to grow in your stewardship. Greater stewardship equates to greater and more outreach and mission as Women of the ELCA moves into the next 25 years.

Celebrating 25 Years of Women of the ELCA,

The Many Hands of
Rockin' Region 4 are
Raising Up in Praise!
Reaching Out in Love!

Braving the sweltering heat of the 2012 summer, presidents, vice-presidents, and board Representatives from the Region 4 Synodical Women's Organizations (SWOs) and CWO Board Members from Region 4 met in Nebraska for a retreat July 13-16. We came together for some much anticipated fun and fellowship, but our main goal was to share ideas and discuss ways to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (W/ELCA) and promote our Appeal to support the ELCA Malaria Campaign and the 1,000 Days Movement.

This is a time to celebrate! This W/ELCA 25th Anniversary Appeal is not just about celebrating the past. This is about celebrating our future and all that we are accomplishing as women of faith empowered by the Holy Spirit. As a Region within our ELCA, we are called to lift each other up, "to mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ," recognizing and celebrating our roles as change-makers in the global church. Throughout our 25 years, the Women of the ELCA have joined hands and gathered together a growing diversity of cultures and generations, changing with the times and the needs of today's women while holding true to our foundations and traditions.

Brainstorming and sharing ideas during our retreat, we developed a theme for Rockin' Region 4 to promote the 25th Anniversary Appeal. We are issuing a challenge for *"every woman to each give \$25 in celebration of 25 years to reach and exceed a goal of \$25,000."*

Each SWO represented was asked to come up with comments highlighting our Rockin' Region 4 Retreat, their experience and what they will take home:

Region 4A, Nebraska Synod: "The God-moment when several of us shared the same vision of hands reaching out to help and exceed our initial goals." "The feeling of coming together as bold women of faith under one goal for the 25th Anniversary Appeal." "Praying sharing and laughing together."

Region 4B, Central States Synod: "As Rockin' Region 4, we work hard to get our six Synods involved in Churchwide incentives and appeals. 25 years of

service is a 'big deal' and calls for a special effort on our part. At our retreat we decided to challenge each individual woman to give \$25 to our 25th Anniversary Appeal and we also agreed to communicate with each other about publications and our end goals. It is fantastic to come together and find a common mission and goals, and refreshing to experience everyone's energy and excitement in getting our celebration going!"

Region 4C, Arkansas/Oklahoma Synod: "Networking makes the task of planning, promoting and engaging so much easier." "The fellowship is so very awesome! What a wonderful group of faith-filled, forward-thinking women we have in Rockin' Region 4!" "The blessing of shared prayer, support, assurance, faith, trust and affirmation!"

Region 4D, Northern Texas/Northern Louisiana Synod: "This dynamic group of women motivated by their faith in Christ and the Holy Spirit, committed to the Church, to this 25th Anniversary Appeal and to each other." "The amazing flow of ideas and shared vision this weekend has inspired us all to go back to our home congregations and Synods challenging our sisters to open their hands to give \$25 in praise and celebration of these 25 years." "These affirming relationships and the excitement and enthusiasm that is carrying us forward as change-makers in our world."

Region 4E, Southwest Texas Synod: "The joy, enthusiasm, and dedication of the Rockin' Region 4 women to promote the 25th Anniversary of the W/ELCA Appeal in our Conferences and Units is amazing." "The outpouring of generosity from all those people who provided our meals and for every need is such a blessing. We truly experienced God's love throughout this weekend."

We all left the Rockin' Region 4 Retreat invigorated and inspired to share what we learned about this 25th Anniversary of the Women of the ELCA and the Appeal. It is exciting to carry the news back home of how we are changing our world by supporting the Malaria Campaign and the 1,000 Days Movement. *This is a time to celebrate!*

We are called and equipped to share this news with all our churches, to gather our women together in every congregation and throw an anniversary party! Share the news, spread the joy, open our hands and give, raise our hands in praise and reach out in love!

*Roll it out
Rockin'
Region 4!*



Autumn Renewal 2012

“But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a neverfailing stream!”

Amos 5:24 NIV



On Saturday, September 8, approximately thirty women were warmly welcomed by the Women of the ELCA unit and Pastor Amanda Esping at First English Lutheran Church in Kimball. We shared a beautiful day that was inspirational, thought provoking, and informative. We met old friends and new, savored a delicious meal provided by a local PEO group, and enjoyed other goodies provided by conference churches. Kandy Pflaster, Women of the ELCA NE Synod President, brought us greetings and shared slides that had been taken at different Women of

the ELCA events this past year.

We were inspired by the video *Praying the Devil Back to Hell*, to understand the power of women, united together for an important cause. These women of different faiths suffered the same horrors and were trying to save their sons and daughters from the ravages of war and greed.

We were also able to bring a bit of the Triennial Convention held in Spokane to western Nebraska through the DVD of Leymah Gbowee's keynote address. Her talking about taking back our personal space gave us much to think about and fit in so well with the message brought to us from the director of CAPstone.

Debbie Fitts, from CAPstone, told us about their organization which provides a safe place for abused or neglected children or youth to tell their story. They provide a place to conduct collaborative interviews to obtain needed information that minimizes more trauma to the child.

From the music to the DVD's our day fit together very well. Though our numbers were small, we did come away renewed in our ministry and mission.



The East Autumn Renewal was held at Lord of Love Church in Omaha on September 15. One hundred plus ladies attended. We again want to thank the ladies of the church, especially team leader, Val Florea for the great day.

When your board members and officers attended Triennial in Spokane last year, we were so inspired by the story of African activist, Leymah Gbowee, winner of numerous awards including the Nobel Peace Prize, that we wanted to share her story with those of you who could not attend. Leymah, and thousands of women came together in the middle of

a bloody war in Liberia, Africa. These women were crucial to bringing about peace in their country as they staged silent non-violent protests and prayer vigils demanding an end to their country's civil war. We viewed her story in the film, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. We also viewed a video of her powerful speech to the Women of the ELCA at the Triennial Convention in Spokane, Washington, in July of 2011. She is living proof of how a grassroots peaceful activism can alter the history of a nation.

Amy Chisholm, Developmental Director of Project Harmony in Omaha spoke to the group about how their organization brings together in one site all the professionals who are available to help a child in crises. This means that a child only has to tell his or her story one time.

Phillip Rislvedt of the local Thrivent Financial office talked to the group about some of the services available through Thrivent Financial. The Thrivent Financial office furnished our morning donuts and also folders for the day. We appreciated their generosity.

Joyce Olson, a member of a clown ministry engaged the group in some fun activities that everyone enjoyed.

Everyone went home truly inspired and renewed.



News from your TGP

“Nothing could be finer than to go to North Carolina in July 2014, Charlotte is the host for the Triennial Gathering in July 2014. Fun and fellowship and learning opportunities. Worship and great speakers are just some of what you’ll see. Nothing would be finer than to go to North Carolina in July 2014.”

What a song to sing about the upcoming Triennial Gathering!!! Hope everyone is starting their plans and saving their pennies, so you can go to this fantastic, blessed event.

I have bookmarks, flyers, stickers, and business cards to give to anyone interested. We will be at the Convention Center in Charlotte, North Carolina from July 24-27, 2014, for the 9th Triennial Gathering. The theme is “**of many generations.**” So start planning to attend with your daughters, granddaughters, sisters, and friends. This would also be a great vacation spot for families. Churchwide had researched and secured four hotels near the Convention Center for our stay. They are blocking sets of rooms, so our NSW0 group can stay together. I believe we already have five ladies registered, so let see how many more we can get registered by December 2013 (So you can get a discount!). Churchwide is busy arranging speakers, worship leaders, tours, and servant events.

I will have a tri-fold and more flyers, bookmarks, stickers, and business cards available at the Winter Retreat in Kearney in January 2013. Keep me informed if you are planning to attend the Triennial Gathering, so I can provide you with the latest information. Also check the Women of the ELCA website, www.womenoftheelca.org, for breaking information.

Nancy Johnson
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NSWO CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2013 HOLIDAY INN, KEARNEY, NE

Registration begins on Friday,
September 20 at 1:00pm

Convention closes on Sunday,
September 22 at 12:00pm following worship

Theme: Sing a New Song

Convention Hymn: “Sing a New Song unto the Lord” by Daniel Schutte, S,J.

Bible Verse: Psalm 149:1 “*Shout to the Lord – Sing him a new song of praise*” CEV

Featuring:

Anita Gutschick

Women of the Bible Interpreter and
Convention Bible Study Leader
(for more information about Anita go to
womenofthebible.com)

Pr. Renae Johnson, Chaplain at Tabitha
Health Care in Lincoln
Convention Pastor and Worship Leader

Bishop Brian Maas, Bishop of the
Nebraska Synod

Simone Weber of First Lutheran Church
and Table Grace Café in Omaha
Convention Music Director and Saturday
evening program presenter with her
husband Matt Weber and other members
of her group.

Ladies, this is a marvelous gathering of speakers and presenters who will inspire you, encourage you, move you. The gifts and talents that they will share with you at convention will be outstanding in so many ways. This is definitely a convention you will not want to miss.

*Registration fee: \$90.00
no increase from 2011*

Rockin' Region 4 Presidents and VPs together in Nebraska

By TERRI JOHNSON, Vice President

It was Nebraska's turn to host the yearly weekend retreat of the Region 4 Synodical Organizations' presidents and vice-presidents. President Kandy stepped up to the task of organizing a full agenda for our guests from Kansas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas, representing five of the six synods in our region. Gwen Edwards, CWO Executive Board Member, and Jackie Wilson, CWO Secretary, also joined us.



Everyone converged on Omaha by car and plane on Friday, July 13. Our first stop was Table Grace Café, where we enjoyed a delicious lunch of gourmet pizza, salad, and soup. Matt Weber explained the concept of this unique community restaurant ministry where there are no set prices. A donation box sits on the counter and people are encouraged to donate as they are able and to help serve if they aren't. They also offer a training program to help people get jobs in food service. It is not a "handout" but a "hand up" concept. While eating, we also heard about the Synod's Metropolitan Ministries' program for Hispanic women. Rev. Dr. Damon Laaker explained that the

program was successful because they asked the women themselves what type of program they would like instead of planning a program and then asking women to come. Pastor John Backus of north Omaha's Trinity Lutheran Church told us about his church's ministry to north Omaha youth and the Sudanese community. The Nile Lutheran Church (a community of Nuer-speaking Sudanese worshipers) gather as Mission Partners in Trinity's building.

Next stop was Nebraska City to Arbor Day Farm Tree Adventure to give our guests a little Nebraska history. That evening was spent at the Lied Lodge. Philip Ristvedt of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans led us through a short workshop titled *Making a Difference, Sharing your time, talents and treasures* before our dinner sponsored by Thrivent. Kandy shared a devotion on talking hands (<http://www.juliabettencourt.com/dev/handsdev.html>) and later Terri had devotions based on our Women of the ELCA logo and purpose statement. Our group discussed the Women of the ELCA's 25th anniversary and it wasn't long before our idea sprang to life.



Saturday, we began with breakfast at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Nebraska City followed by a walk through the woods at the Tree Adventure. Refreshed, we polished our \$25 for 25 years idea back at the Lied Lodge, with sack lunches furnished by St. Paul's of Auburn. Then it was on to Camp Carol Joy Holling for that evening. Mary Mayfield and her husband, Nick, treated us to a great picnic supper around the campfire, including s'mores. Our evening devotion focused on folding the American Flag. We also discussed Bread for the World's Thousand Days Movement and decided we will focus more on that after

our 25th anniversary.

Sunday, after a breakfast at Bethlehem Lutheran Church at Wahoo, we headed back to Omaha to worship at Trinity Lutheran Church. This mission center sponsors a north Omaha sports team. Providing safe alternatives to gangs is just one benefit of this mission. After lunch at the church, it was homeward bound for all of us.

We greatly appreciated the hospitality of all who provided us meals during what was a truly uplifting retreat.



Plan your Thankoffering service to reach the larger community

by Emma Crossen

The new Thankoffering Service is printed and ready for use. You can find it in the stewardship guide, *Providing for Mission and Ministry*, and download it from womenoftheelca.org. The Thankoffering service is one of our most important and historic traditions, rooted in our celebration of generosity, gratitude and community. When we invite others to join our Thankoffering event, we welcome them to learn about and participate in the mission and ministry of Women of the ELCA. As you plan your next Thankoffering event, consider this question:

How can our Thankoffering event include women, men and children who do not regularly attend Women of the ELCA events?

Include new women on the planning team.

Helping with the Thankoffering service is a good way for newcomers to learn about Women of the ELCA and for women in your unit to build new relationships. For instance, do you know a mom who is involved with Sunday School but does not attend your unit meetings? Invite her to join the team and help plan a children's activity during the service. Do you know a gifted singer? Invite her to sing for the service and help plan the music.

Invite men and children.

Women of the ELCA is a community of women whose mission and ministry impacts the whole church, men and children included. The Thankoffering service is an opportunity to invite people of all ages to give thanks for their blessings, learn about Women of the ELCA and donate to support the churchwide women's organization. Often men welcome the opportunity to give in honor or memory of their mothers, wives or sisters.

Make the invites personal.

In addition to announcing the event on Sunday morning and publishing it in the church newsletter, find ways to personally invite guests, such as handwritten invitations, phone calls and individual emails. The guests might be personal friends or family, neighbors or people from other congregations and anyone who is likely to enjoy the service and support the mission of Women of the ELCA.

Include children and mothers.

Include children in your event by adding a children's sermon about gratitude, inviting the children's choir to sing or asking children to help collect the offering. Provide childcare during the service so that mothers of young children can attend. Invite children to participate in a structured childcare activity during the service, like decorating their very own Thankoffering container. Highlight some of the ways that Women of the ELCA ministries impact children and families.

Make time to decorate Thankoffering containers.

Invite attendees to make a Thankoffering container to take home and use throughout the next year. Set up a craft station before or after the service, or invite Sunday School classes to decorate containers ahead of time, using boxes, jars, or canisters and simple craft supplies. For more ideas on creating Thankoffering containers, visit womenoftheelca.org.

Promote the daily practice.

At its fullest, the Thankoffering is not only a once-a-year event, it's a daily practice! Individuals set aside small offerings at home to give thanks for the blessings of that day or week. At the annual Thankoffering event, they combine their offerings and the unit sends the full amount to the churchwide women's organization. Use your Thankoffering event to tell people about this daily Thankoffering practice.

Get names and follow up.

Record the names and contact information for everyone who attends. After the Thankoffering service, make a plan to follow up and thank them for attending. You can also use this list to send invitations to the next Thankoffering service and to other Women of the ELCA events.

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Saved To Serve Opportunity Participants Prepare Lutheran Service Corps For New Volunteers

By SUSAN WATSON

A cleaner, safer, and more welcoming place to call home for eleven incoming volunteers was the result of the Lutheran Service Corps Saved to Serve Opportunity in Omaha August 3-5.

Director Jan Donmeyer complemented the efforts of the participants saying, "The house looks GREAT! The shower downstairs looks fantastic. I can't tell you how nice it is to have the house ready to go."

Lutheran Service Corps in Omaha is part of a national organization that matches volunteers with full-time positions in social justice organizations for one year. The volunteers live together in a former convent where they share meals and household responsibilities. They each receive a small monthly stipend to cover basic needs but simple and sustainable living practices are encouraged and needed.

For the 2012-2013 year, eleven volunteers will be living in the house, an increase from

prior years, making it necessary to convert a room previously used as a library into a bedroom.

Fourteen women from across Nebraska met at the house for a Saved To Serve Opportunity aimed at cleaning and preparing the facility for the new residents. Outside, they reclaimed part of the yard and the use of the clothesline by trimming bushes and trees.

On the two floors of living space, they cleaned all the bedrooms, moved and reorganized the library, vacuumed and shampooed the carpets, cleaned kitchen



Vivian Ingraham and Emily Laaker clean and polish all of the wooden chairs used in the first floor chapel area at the Lutheran Service Corps.



To add to the fun, Saved To Serve Opportunity participants put on aprons and paper maid's hats and grabbed their dusters and work buckets as they prepare to scrub and clean the Lutheran Service Corps facility in Omaha. Shown ready to give the house a thorough cleaning before a new group of volunteers arrives are Emily Laaker, Sandy Olson, Phyllis Rahn, Mae Greve, Joyce Roesener, June Baumgartner, Michelle Steadman, Sandra Terry, Pearl Anderson (front), Brenda Krueger, Lana Novak, and Susan Watson.



Mary Mayfield and Mae Greve work in the yard beside the Lutheran Service Corps. Enough trees and overgrown bushes were trimmed to create a pile of fire wood and fill more than a dozen lawn bags.

cupboards and appliances, washed walls and curtains, cleaned furniture, organized linen closets and painted the entry and some woodwork.

In the basement, to make it easier with added students living in the house this year, a previously unused shower was transformed with paint and creativity into a useable part of the house. The laundry room was cleaned and the numerous items donated by units from across Nebraska were arranged in the storage room.

But this retreat weekend was far from all work. On Friday evening the group spent some time getting acquainted and making welcome signs for the new residents. They toured the



During a tour of the Mormon Trail Center, Brenda Krueger pulls a replica of a handcart used by Mormon pioneers as they migrated to Omaha in 1846.



SERVE THE SERVANTS



Verna Whitfield from the Luther Memorial Women of the ELCA Unit prepares breakfast casserole and warm cinnamon rolls for serving Saturday morning to Saved to Serve Opportunity participants. Women's units at Holy Cross Lutheran and St John's in Bennington also provided food and snacks for the weekend. Numerous units contributed to the tangible offering, too.

facility and learned about Lutheran Service Corps from Director Donmeyer and a former volunteer. Pearl Anderson led the first part of the Bible study on service and using our God given gifts.

After settling into dormitory rooms at the Turning Point, (former Nebraska School for the Deaf), participants snacked on green tomato and raisin pie and sweet potato ice cream from Big Mama's Kitchen, a nearby well known soul food restaurant.

Saturday evening after a delicious salad supper at nearby Trinity Lutheran Church, the group was treated to a presentation on the underground railroad quilt by Trinity Member Peg Keenan. Following that, LSC Board Member Vivian Ingraham arranged for the group to have a guided tour of the Mormon Trail Center at Historic Winter Quarters.

Sunday morning was filled with a servant dedication service, worship together at Augustana Lutheran Church followed by a pot luck dinner there and a traditional group hug.

Serving the Servants at the Lutheran Service Corps was a weekend full of shared spiritual insights, new experiences, a wealth of learning about different cultures, religions and historical events, wonderful food, hard work, warm friendship, plenty of laughter, and most of all a sense of being used by God as faith was put into action.

Social Media Tip

How to start a Facebook profile

by Terri Lackey

You've decided to join the Facebook fun club. Your kids are posting photos and videos of their families; your neighbors are learning the scoop about local store openings before you do; and your best friends are downloading free Kindle books. You want some of that, and we're going to help.

Below are instructions for creating a Facebook account. But first you'll need a couple of things: an email address and a photo. The photo is not really necessary, but without it, you'll look like the novice to Facebook that you actually are. Full disclosure: Many of the steps below are taken directly from Facebook's help page and not created by this writer (a brilliant step saver in her opinion).

1. To sign up for a brand new account, enter your name, birthday, gender and email address into the form on www.facebook.com. Then pick a password (see step 2). After you complete the sign up form, Facebook will send an email to the address you provided. Click the confirmation link to complete the sign up process.

2. To make sure your password is strong, create one that is at least six characters in length. Use a complex string of numbers, letters and punctuation marks. If Facebook alerts you that the password you entered is not strong enough, try mixing uppercase and lowercase letters or making your password longer. Ideally, the password you select should be easy for you to remember but hard for someone else to figure out. For added security, your Facebook password should also be different than other passwords that you use on the Internet. **Important: Write your password down and put it in a secret place (but not so secret that you'll forget where you've put it).**

3. Add a profile picture. Probably Facebook will ask you to add a photo as you create your account. So have a favorite picture of yourself (or your dog or your cat or a tree or a sunset) available on your computer desktop for uploading to your new account. If you skipped that step as you were creating an account, do it now by:

Going to your new profile (timeline) and mousing over your profile picture (or silhouette);

Clicking on "Edit Profile Picture" and

Uploading a new photo that you previously saved to your desktop.

4. After you sign up for Facebook, you simply must log in at www.facebook.com to see what your friends are doing. Find a friend through the search bar at the top left of the page. Click on your name at the top right of the page to see your personal timeline; click on the home button to see your friends' posts to your wall; and click on the "pull-down" arrow for Facebook helps and more instruction about your account and privacy settings.

5. Practice your new Facebook skills and "like" these three pages:

www.facebook.com/WomenoftheELCA

www.facebook.com/gathermagazine

www.facebook.com/boldcafe

(Continued on page 15)

WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEBRASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

WINTER RETREAT 2013



Saturday, January 19, 2013, at
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
1515 Harrison St., Grand Island, NE

"A Joyous Celebration"

*Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of
Women of the ELCA*

Featuring Main Speaker Jenny Herrick
Motivational Speaker, Humorist, Author

Miss Jenny offers fast-paced humorous presentations peppered with personal anecdotes and real-life experiences, including how she woke up one morning, and before the day was over, had become a widow and single parent at age 27. She says, "Without my deep faith and sense of humor... who knows where I'd be or what I'd become?" She brings laughter and encouragement, delighting her audiences as she offers life-changing reasons why laughter is key to a healthier, happier life.

Bishop Brian Maas will spend part of the day with us and will give us a chance to meet and greet him.

The Bottle Band from Hildreth, Nebraska will provide us with humor and wonderful bottle band tunes. Directed by Bonnie Fuerst, the band is made up of members from Trinity Lutheran Church, Hildreth, Nebraska. You won't want to miss this!

Offering will go ½ to Lutheran Family Services and ½ to MOSAIC

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

REGISTRATION FORM

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: January 9, 2013

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

Please make check payable to NSWO. Registration is transferable, but not refundable

Send registration form and \$18 to: JoAnn Rohrs

1409 10th Street
Auburn, NE 68305-1414

402-274-3058 (Home)

joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com

Today's Dreams: Tomorrow's Reality

By BRENDA KRUEGER,
TDTR Team Member



While I was in Colorado we attended services at Lord of the Mountains Lutheran Church in Dillon. They presented visitors with this welcoming statement:

We rejoice that diversity in God's creation enriches, nurtures and challenges our life and ministry as followers of Jesus and as servants in the world. Because we believe with Jesus that God's grace is truly amazing, we are committed to welcoming all people to this place...no matter where you come from, no matter what age, race, socio-economic or family status, no matter what gender identity or sexual orientation.

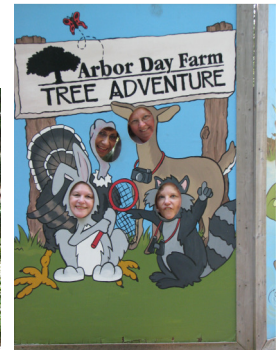
Grace is for everyone or it isn't grace. It's that simple. It's that amazing. We really do welcome all.

It is my hope that all of our congregations and our towns and cities could extend this same welcome to all!

I want to give you an update on Fran Hughes. In June she was much improved and at home recovering from the February traffic accident. Then she had to return to Intensive Care at Creighton because of complications dating back to the accident. Since that time she had shown some improvement and went to a rehabilitation facility but in early September she had serious setbacks and is back in Intensive Care at Creighton University Hospital. Her husband says he doesn't expect her to leave the hospital until after the first of next year.

I contacted President Kandy and requested that they find a new Racial Advocacy Team. I don't see a possibility of us continuing in the near future. It has been an interesting and enjoyable adventure for the two of us and I hope someone will continue this important work in Nebraska.

More Rockin' Region 4 pictures



More Autumn Renewal pictures



(Continued from page 12)

6. Check out some of the top questions asked by Facebook users: www.facebook.com/help/top_questions

If you just can't figure out how to create your profile on your own, ask a grandchild or a young neighbor to come help you. Don't forget to offer her homemade chocolate chip cookies for her trouble. Or money.

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ELCA Global Links...

100 Wells Challenge: We did it!

This year, young people of the ELCA set out to raise \$250,000 to support the water projects of ELCA World Hunger where they are needed most. Thanks to the generosity of youth across the nation, more than \$400,000 has been received in support of this effort to date. See www.ELCA.org/100wells and be sure to click the link on the left to learn about the 100 Wells Tour concerts with Agape, Rachel Kurtz and Lost and Found.

Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA, 2011-2013 Elected Board

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Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization
Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
P.O. Box 408
Superior, Nebraska 68978

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Send address changes to Valerie Killinger, NSWO Database Coordinator.

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

- ___ Share *Expressions* with members
- ___ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- 10 – NE Synod Mission Celebration -West/Chappell
- 11 – NE Synod Mission

- Celebration -West/Gothenburg
- 12 – NE Synod Mission Celebration -Lincoln
- 13 – NE Synod Mission Celebration - North/Staton
- 14 – Synod Staff Meeting
- 15 – NE Synod Mission Celebration - East/Aurora
- 16 – NE Synod Leadership Support Meeting
- 16-17 – NE Synod Lay Leadership Academy
- 16-18 – LYON Assembly
- 29-12/8 – W/ELCA 25th Anniversary Trip to Liberia
- 30-12/1 – Synod Council
- ___ Hold Thankoffering Service
- ___ (J) Plan Yearbook

December

- ___ (J) Prepare Yearbook
- ___ (J) Install Officers
- ___ (J) Adopt Budget

- ___ (J) Send list of new officers after unit elections to Valerie Killinger and to Conference Board Representative
- 12 – Synod Staff Meeting
- 27 – 100 Wells Tour/AGAPE
- 27-28 – NE Synod Middle School Assembly

January

- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 9 – Winter Retreat registration deadline
- 11-12 – Equipping Youth Ministry Leaders Retreat
- 15 – Synod Staff Meeting
- 18-19 – Clergy Spouse
- 19 – Winter Retreat
- 19 – NSWO Board Meeting in Grand Island, NE
- 25-27 – Operations IDEA - College Age