



# Expressions

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

## Concrete or Clay?

We have a choice. We (individuals / congregations / Women of the ELCA groups) can be concrete or clay. Concrete is hard, rigid, has to be pushed and manipulated and once it sets up, it is permanent. Clay is soft, pliable and something we can mold into a new creation.

Concrete or clay—which do we want to be? Let's look at the church, try to digest what it means to be spiritual but not religious,

examine our heritage and grounding as Lutheran Christians and reflect on the call and challenge of being a disciple of Christ in the year 2014. What are the facts? Where are we headed? What are we to do? What's the point? Concrete or clay?

Mark those calendars and join us January 18, 2014, at St. Paul's



Sunni Richardson

Lutheran Church in Grand Island for our annual Winter Retreat.

- \* Coffee and registration starts at 8:30 a.m.
- \* Begin at 9:00 a.m.
- \* Bishop Brian Maas will be joining us during the day
- \* Ending by 3:00 p.m.

Sunni Richardson, child of God, loved and forgiven, will be our leader for the day. Sunni is a Associate in Ministry in the ELCA and the Director of Discipleship at First Lutheran Church in Lincoln. She is a retreat and workshop leader, program consultant, mentor, and life coach. Ms. Richardson was the Director of Programs with Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries helping to grow the program and design facilities needed at Carol Joy Holling Camp, Sullivan Hills, CrossWalk Day Camp, congregational based day camp programs, Tomah Shinga in Kansas, Jay Novicki program, and served as a consultant with the camp in the Northern Diocese of Tanzania. She was a professional with Camp Fire serving as District Director, Camp Director, and Executive Director in Iowa, Alaska, Minnesota, and Nebraska. Sunni enjoys the outdoors, photography, landscaping and flowers, time with friends and family and Koda, the wonder

dog, as well as walking with and being a part of other's faith journeys.



Sisters – What an AMAZING event! Even though I have always loved every convention I've attended – and yet you have been by far my favorite!! There is a warmth and generosity of spirit within all of you – and I'm so very grateful that you shared it with me. I continue to pray for you and for the continued success of your ministry.

Love,  
Jenny

To the women of the NE SWO board – Thank you so much for the work that you do on behalf of Women of the ELCA! It is a true ministry of the heart to put yourself "out there" to do this work – and with Kandy, you know that can sometimes be really "out there!" But still you faithfully give of your time and resources to make all of this come together – you are truly a blessing!

Love,  
Jenny

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# The Promise of Love

By RANDI VenHUIZEN, Secretary 2011-2013



A very familiar Bible verse to most is John 3:16 — *For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

What does this verse have to do with the Advent season? God promised a Savior who would redeem His people and His people looked for that promise for many years. When the Savior finally came, many did not believe the promise and many today still don't. But we are more fortunate than those who lived in Jesus' day. Although we don't see Him in the flesh, we know that He lives and continues to love us because we have the Holy Scriptures and we have for these past two thousand years seen and heard of the wonderful love that God shares with those who seek Him.

How do we know that God loves us? Last year at your Thanksgiving meal, did you take a few minutes to thank God for the many blessings in your life? All of the blessings in our lives are gifts from God and only would our loving God give us so many blessings. We need only to acknowledge that they are from Him. He provides for us so abundantly that we can only stand in awe before Him and say thank you. That's why we know that God loves us.

I know that I am abundantly blessed. I have a husband who loves me and puts up with me and my many idiosyncrasies including all my many vacations. I have adult children whom I have a wonderful relationship with. I live in a beautiful part of our country and I have a beautiful home in which I live. I have the best friends in the world and I have one of the most wonderful church families ever. How can I not consider myself loved by God? How can you not?

Some of you are probably saying, that's easy for you to say Randi. It sounds like you do have a wonderful life. What about me? I've been battling this chronic illness for over a year. OR

I've been without a job for much longer than I care to remember. OR my husband left me and I don't have a job. How am I going to take care of myself let alone my kids? OR my Mom just died. How can I see God loving me when I feel so alone? These are not easy questions to answer but in hard times, we must look to scripture to see and know that God does indeed love you and He is always with you even in the hard times. One example is found in Nahum 1:7 which tells us that *The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him.* And again in Psalm 145 we read, *The Lord is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. He fulfills the desire of those who fear him, He hears their cry and saves them.* Jeremiah 29:11 says, *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.* Jesus tells us in Matthew 10, *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care. And even the very hairs of your head are numbered. So don't be afraid for you are worth more than many sparrows.* Ephesians 2 tells us *that it is by grace we have been saved through faith and this is not from ourselves, it is the gift of God.* And one of my favorites Romans 8:28 and we know *that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose.* I could go on with many more examples but I think you get my meaning. God does love you and He will use you in ways you'd never expect.

Yes indeed, God's love is very abundant to all who still seek Him. I hope you will take a few moments to reflect on the abundant and unconditional love God has given to you through His Son Jesus Christ.

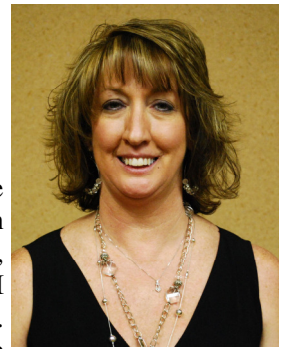
**May God richly bless  
you this Advent  
Season.**



# ***FROM THE PRESIDENT***

Hello to all of my friends, sisters, and women in Nebraska,

I am excited to share with you that I am once again serving as your President of the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization from 2013-2015. I know what has happened in the last two years has been a wonderful faith journey and ride with our Lord & Savior, Jesus Christ. What I don't know is what is in store for us in the next two years, but I welcome anything that involves the women in our great state and beyond its borders. Serving as your president opens doors to meet wonderful Christian women from all over the United States, and a host of other countries. When I meet wonderful women of faith, I often hear stories that are all about phenomenal faith in action. Being witness to these stories, actions and results inspire me to come back to you to share, however, what I take from Nebraska's women to share is often empowering to other Synodical organizations.



I am so excited to share with you that when Nebraska Lutheran Women were celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013 we were one of the Synods that was the highest contributors to the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Appeal. Many Nebraska women were challenged to give \$25 to raise \$25,000 for 25 years in Region 4 as Women of the ELCA. We were very successful in leading the nation in our giving of \$10,087.83 toward the appeal that supported our Churchwide organization and the Malaria Campaign. In addition, Nebraska sent offerings from spring gatherings last year in the amount of \$2,990.05 directly to the Malaria Campaign. Nebraska Women are very caring, mission oriented, and motivated in our calling to be Bold Women.

I want to be the first to promise everyone that NSWOW has some wonderful events, resources, and plans in store for our units, churches, and followers in 2014. The first will be Winter Retreat in Grand Island in January, plan to attend for a super fulfilling day. Sunni Richardson and Bishop Maas will be there to share the day. Spring Gatherings are in the planning process, so look for more information to be revealed for your conference.

Last but not least is the wonderful board that your delegates at convention have elected to serve you in our organization. The ladies serving our NSWOW have answered the Holy Spirit's calling by saying yes. Remember that NSWOW is your organization and we are here to serve you. We welcome ideas, stories of what you or your unit is doing, and anything that shares the Good News of our Great God!!!!

I leave you with this Max Lucado quote "Don't measure the size of the Mountain; talk to the One who can move it!"

God's Peace to you always,

*Kandy K Pfister*

*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; the CWO Officers and Executive Board Members; and past NSWOW Presidents.

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November *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Sunni Richardson.

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# *of many generations*

The **Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America** are coming together in 2014 for the Triennial Gathering in Charlotte, North Carolina. This dynamic event July 24-27, 2014 will not disappoint any woman who attends as it will uplift and move one to spiritual fulfillment and a greater understanding of one's personal faith journey. SO, get into action now to join Lutheran Women from around the world at this world class event.

At the Nebraska Convention in Kearney, seven more piggy banks were given to ladies interested in attending the Triennial Gathering for saving their change so they will be ready to go to Charlotte. The winners were Susan Jewell (Cairo), Mary Morris (Cozad), Marge Stottler (Bloomfield), Jane Flores (Hooper), Susan Watson (Spencer), Elysia McGill (Falls City), and Gwen Edwards (Bellevue).

Registration booklets are available and I have some if any one wants one either call or e-mail and I'll get it to you. They are also available online, [www.welcatg.org](http://www.welcatg.org). Early registration started on September 16th for \$325 and will continue until January, 6, 2014.. Then it will cost more.

Our NSWOW is giving six scholarships to cover the registration cost on November 22. Look for the form in this Expressions or on our website. Scholarship forms need to be sent by November 8.

The NSWOW have booked ten rooms at the Westin Hotel across the street from the Convention Center for any ladies who would like to stay together with the Board Officers and Representatives. Let me know if you are interested in staying with us. I plan to check on reserving more rooms as I would love to see at least seventy-five of us from Nebraska in attendance.

Nancy Johnson  
Triennial Gathering Promoter  
Region 4A  
12777 A Street  
Omaha, NE 68144  
402-330-8649  
cell 402-871-7906  
[nancy.johnson5@cox.net](mailto:nancy.johnson5@cox.net)



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## *Shine Your Light*

The sewing women of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Wayne, has a small group that meet on a monthly basis. They strive to engage in ministry and action to promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world by providing quilts and lap robes to those in need. This past year, they quilted two quilts and a church member donated two quilts to Camp Carol Joy Holling raising, \$3,775 for the camp. They also did a quilted quilt for Camp Tomah Singa in Kansas which sold for \$535. They gave thirty-four tied quilts and eighteen lap robes for two area fire victims, Wilderness Camp in Minnesota, MOSIAC, a Rescue Mission, Orphan Grain Train, and the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans. With the help of the congregation they were able to send three sewing kits, 10 quilts, twenty-nine health kits to LWR and \$550 to Project Comfort.

—submitted by Phyllis Rahn





# Sing a New Song

By DEBRA GILLESPIE

Sing a New Song... That was the theme of the Fifteenth Convention (Eleventh Biennial) of the Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization held in Kearney Nebraska on September 20 to 22.

In addition to the business meetings conducted and the election of new NSWOW officers, highlights of the convention included: Bishop Brian Mass speaking to the group on Friday evening; exceptional music throughout the weekend by Simone Weber and her band (you may associate Simone and her husband Matt with Table Grace, a community outreach café in downtown Omaha); presentation by Churchwide Women of the ELCA President Jenny Michael; and keynote speaker and actress Anita Gutschick, who entertained us and captivated our attention numerous times throughout the weekend by vividly acting the parts of notable women of the Bible. Everyone loved her performances!

The fellowship and food we enjoyed were great. And, if anyone came to shop, there was ample opportunity to do so, as an array of items were for sale including many items from Tanzania. The profits were allocated to worthy causes. A silent auction was held, with dozens of themed baskets and other lovely items that were awarded to the highest bidders. Also, time was allotted for educational workshops which most attendees took advantage of and proved very worthwhile.

It was obvious that much careful planning went into this convention. Those of us attending appreciated the efforts of NSWOW President Kandy Plaster, her capable board members, and everyone who served on the convention team for making this weekend so very enjoyable and rewarding.

# A Story to Share

By SHARON JOSOFF

I was a "first time" attendee to this year's Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization Convention in Kearney and it will forever be engraved on my heart and mind. I personally witnessed and experienced the Holy Spirit moving among the women there and felt the need to share my story with you.

I was not a delegate so chose to spend some of my time in the Servant Room tying fleece blankets. On Saturday morning, I joined nine other women sitting

around a table cutting and tying blankets. The conversation led to the auction items and we all commented on items we had placed bids on. I said I was interested in the beautiful walnut Nativity set donated by Hope Lutheran from Burr, Nebraska. I said that my seven year old grandson was blind and I was sure he could feel the details in each piece of the scene. One woman asked if my grandson had been born blind. I said "No, he was born with sight but he has a terminal degenerative brain disease." As strong as I'd like to think I am when telling others this, my voice cracked and I struggled not to shed tears. I simply left the table for a brief moment to regain composure. Nothing more was discussed about my grandson.

The Nativity scene was eventually priced "out of my reach" and I resolved it was not meant for me. I was happy to see someone else valued it that would appreciate it. The bidding closed at 6:00 p.m. and my friend, Barb Kahlandt (our delegate), asked me to take her check into the auction area and pay for her items she had bid on and won. I grabbed her auction items and when I approached Heather Abbott to pay for Barb's items, Heather noticed my name tag and said "I have something for you!" She turned around and handed me that beautiful Nativity scene! She told me that someone who wanted to remain anonymous had purchased it for my grandson and asked Heather to give it to me! I was so overcome with emotions and joy—all at once. Once again, my strong resolve melted and I began to sob uncontrollably...sweet Heather came around the table to hug me and to let me know that this was God's Spirit moving among us. I asked for the person's name so I could thank them personally but Heather declined my request, saying "They wanted to bless you and your grandson anonymously." I returned to my hotel room with the Nativity scene, with prayers of praise and thanksgiving for whoever blessed us so richly.

People ask our family how we get through such devastating news? Some days are better than others but we ALWAYS see God at work in and around us each day. It comes from the love and actions of those around us who give us hope. God's faithfulness is revealed to us in so many amazing ways.....that wonderful Nativity scene has been one of them. Our grandson, Oliver, loves it. He especially loves how the baby Jesus lays in the cradle or can be lifted out of it to hold. He takes "Baby Jesus" to bed with him most nights.

If possible, Kandy, could you please print a special **Thank You** to the individual or possibly the group who purchased the Nativity scene for Oliver in the next *Expressions* newsletter? Their very generous and heartfelt gift was such a blessing to him and our family. Our theme this year was "Sing a New Song"—Psalm 149:1, each of us have much to praise God in song for. I sing for my sisters in Christ!

# Meet Your 2013-2015 NSWO Officers and Board Members



**President Kandy Pflaster** is a member of American Lutheran Church in Cozad, where she serves as chairperson of a serving group. She was the Tanzania Organizer for Safari across Nebraska. Within the past five years Kandy has served the NSWO Board as the Global Mission Coordinator, was appointed vice-president in 2011, and became President when Gwen Edwards was elected to the Churchwide Board in 2011. Kandy was elected President at the NSWO convention that year and serves in that position now. As NSWO President Kandy attends the Synod Council meetings and served on the nominating committee to Synod Assembly.

Kandy is married to Tony, who is a farmer, and is the mother of three children and is a doting grandmother to 6½ grandchildren. She is on staff of the Good Samaritan Hospital as an admissions nurse and a surgical nurse.

In Kandy's community of Cozad, she serves on the Cozad Community Hospital Board of Directors and is a Foundation Board Member. Kandy has lived in Cozad for 33 years.



**Vice President Terri Johnson** is a member of Maria Lutheran in Hershey and was elected as the NSWO Vice-president in 2011. She also serves as liaison to this year's convention committee. Starting as a young woman in LCW at her church, she has served in most of the unit positions, conference positions, and as the High Plains Board Representative for four years in the late 1990s, and she is still feeling young!

She is a farm wife, mother of two grown children, grandmother to two adorable tots, and a public library computer technology assistant.

She has held positions on two library organization boards and of course enjoys reading. Traveling, photography, and cooking are her top hobbies.



**Secretary Beth Meyer** has been a member of her unit since 1966 when she moved to Nebraska from Minnesota. She has served in all positions in her unit and is currently the Team Leader of First Lutheran Women in Fremont. She has served on the church council, is a volunteer receptionist, and sings in the adult choir.

Working with Women of the ELCA is a passion of Beth's and she truly enjoys the business workings of the organization. She served in the Midlands Conference as the coordinator and on the planning team. Beth served as the NSWO President from 2005 to 2009. Being elected as the delegate to the Triennial Convention 2014 has once again fulfilled a dream to help elect a new president and board for the Churchwide Women's Organization.

Beth works part time as a paraprofessional substitute in the Fremont Public Schools and is Nana to three grandsons. She is married to Terry and they have three adult daughters. Beth has become a 'Big Red' fan, but still roots for the Twins and the Vikings. Her hobbies are crossword puzzles, reading and playing computer games.



**Treasurer JoAnn Rohrs** is a member of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Auburn, currently serving as their treasurer. She belongs to the Dorothea Wood Circle and chairperson for the Discipleship Committee. JoAnn has two children, a daughter Valerie Able and a son Kirby Rohrs, seven grandchildren, and fourteen great-grandchildren.

She enjoys serving as the coordinator for the American Red Cross in the Auburn Community, member of the American Legion Auxiliary, Heritage Needlework Guild, and for fun she bowls on the Caron National Bank Team. JoAnn enjoys hand quilting and helping their ladies make and tie quilts for Lutheran World

Relief. Her highlight of the summer was helping several days at Camp Carol Joy Holling with their quilt project.



**Central Conference Board Representative Valerie (Val) Killinger** and her husband, Gene, have been married for thirty-seven years. They have three children; Gena, Justin & Elizabeth, and Michael and one beautiful grandson, Jace. Val is an active member of St Mark's in St Paul. A Bethel teacher, organist and pianist, she's held numerous positions in the Women of the ELCA group and Council. She enjoys music, gardening, canning, and quilting. Val has served as the NSWO database coordinator and the Central Conference Coordinator, along with Central Conference Planning team secretary and member, and is happy to serve as the Central Board Representative. In the community, Val is the secretary of the SPDC board, on the Community Foundation board, secretary of the Area ARC Board, secretary/treasurer of the Heartland's Clerk Association, and president of the Sonderup Community Board.



**High Plains Conference Board Representative Jackie Frances** attends church at American Lutheran Church in Gothenburg, where she was baptized, confirmed, and married. She is an active in a Bible study circle, sings in the choir, attends adult Sunday school, services on a food committee, and is on the Youth and Family Committee. Jackie has taught Sunday school, Bible school, and helped with WINGS and LYON, she also orders the LWR Fair Trade coffee for her church.

Jackie has served as a sponsor to the National Youth Gathering of the ELCA, she has attended Nebraska Synod Assembly twice, and traveled on a vision trip to Tanzania, and hosted many guests. She has been active in raising money for an orphanage in Tanzania.

Jackie and her husband, Scott, have been married for thirty years and have always lived in or near Gothenburg. They have three grown children: Kelly is studying at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, to become a minister in the ELCA; Robby is studying to be a physical therapist at UNMC in Omaha; and Tommy is studying construction management at UNK. They also have the companionship of two dogs, Gus and Scott. In her spare time, Jackie enjoys reading and is a member of a book club. Jackie says they are so blessed to have such a wonderful church family.



**Metro East Conference Board Representative Emily Laaker** is a member of St. John's Lutheran Church in Bennington, where she has served as president and secretary of St. John's Women. She has served on the church council, served 5+ years as Liturgical Worship Team leader, sings in the choir, works with 'Cooks 4 Christ,' and is a member of the Christian Fellowship Club. She served as a voting member at Synod Assembly this past year.

Emily is serving for a second time as Metro East Board Representative and served as a Triennial Delegate in 2011.

She and her husband, Clancy, have three grown children and four grandchildren. She keeps track of the money for BennTown Gals. Emily is president of the Northwestern Douglas-Sarpy chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. She is a member of the board for the Over-60 Center.



**Midlands Conference Board Representative Joyce Olson** attends St. Mark's in Valley and is active in her Women of the ELCA unit. She serves on the Audit Committee, is active in Bible study, and sews the Confirmands' quilts and the Graduates' quilts. She has been a voting member at Synod Assembly.

These past two years Joyce has served as the Midland's Board Representative. Joyce has four children, fourteen grandchildren, and 12½ great-grandchildren including a set of twins. She is a certified Christian Clown and teaches Christian Clowning. She loves to read, quilt, travel and sew. She has been an accountant and business owner and has been retired for a longer time than she cares to admit.

*(Continued on page 9)*



# Saved To Serve Opportunity Focuses on Lincoln Prison Ministry Programs

By SUSAN WATSON

Chances are you know someone who is or has been in prison. What is it like to be incarcerated—sometimes for years, to be free again, to struggle to return to living in the community, to be supported by fellow Christians, and to draw strength from a relationship with God?

The Saved to Serve Opportunity (STSO) held August 9 to 11 gave women from across Nebraska new insights into these and other aspects of prison life and ministry.

For many, one of the most memorable experiences was worshiping along side prisoners at the Nebraska State Penitentiary as Pastor Bob Bryan led the Followers of Christ Prison Ministry service. The STSO group sang as a choir during the service with the accompaniment of Pastor Bryan's wife, Audrey.

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church served as the program base for the weekend which began with an informative panel narrated by Pastor Bryan who is also the Director of Prison Ministry for the Nebraska Synod.

Panel members included three former inmates who shared their stories, representative from Our Saviour's who told how a prison ministry came to be started by the Congregation and staff and volunteers with the FEAST ministry and the Bridges To Hope Warehouse.

FEAST stands for Friends Eating And Singing, studying and sharing Together. Each week a bus from Our Saviour's brings inmates eligible for religious passes from the Community Corrections Center Lincoln to the Church for worship, a meal, a



*Elaine Gregory, Terri Johnson, Nancy Johnson, and Jane Flores prepare to serve the FEAST meal.*



*Phyllis Rahn, Mae Greve, Sandy Terry, and Chris Salmon create kitchen kits at the Bridges To Hope Warehouse. Bridges To Hope is a non-profit resource agency for the formerly incarcerated which has a large warehouse with essential items to set up a home. Newly released prisoners are allowed to select from the items of clothing plus bedding, furniture, and appliances to help them get reestablished in the community.*

time for singing and prayers, and a time for Bible or book study.

Saved To Serve Opportunity participants joined in all the Sunday activities plus helped with the meal. Sandy Olson led the group in preparing, cooking, and serving the meal which was one of four serving options.

Other participants worked with Volunteer Mary Barton at the Bridges to Hope Warehouse where they helped process donations brought from Women of the ELCA units across the state, assembled kitchen kits, and completed a mailing to raise funds to support the Warehouse.

Jan Riedman, the director of outreach ministries for Our Saviour's, hosted a group that cleaned the kitchen blinds, stove, refrigerator, cupboards, and floor at the House for Sober Living, a transitional house for drug or alcohol addicts.

Another group went with Pastor Bryan to the House of New Life, a transitional house for sex offenders, where they cleaned and polished cupboards and painted a hall.

St. Andrews Lutheran Church provided places for the group to eat, sleep, hold choir practice, relax and enjoy an enlightening multipart Bible study on grace led by June Baumgartner. The study centered around the song *Amazing Grace* by John Newton.

The Lincoln congregations of Sheridan, Grace, First and Spirit of Hope also provided meals.



*Participants Kathryn Otto and Barbara Fanning make the kitchen sparkle at the House for Sober Living.*



(Continued from page 7)



**Northeast Conference Board Representative Judy Stahlecker** lives in Spencer and is a member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Judy is married to Glen who is the vicar of Our Saviour's; and Spencer and Trinity in Bristow. They have two married daughters and four grandchildren. She is currently the president of her women's unit and also serves on the altar committee, organize funeral dinners, other church events and mission projects. Judy is a Meals on Wheels volunteer and has served on the NSWO board, been a Northwest Conference Coordinator previously and have participated in Saved to Serve Opportunities. She is currently the Alumni president, the Community Club president, a Lions Club member, a P.E.O. member, Wild Turkey Days committee member, and am in charge of our community Thanksgiving Dinner. Judy works in Butte as a floral designer.



**Southeast Conference Board Representative Elysia McGill** is a member of St. Paul's in Falls City serving as an Assistant Minister, Sunday School leader, VBS coordinator, and is an active member of her circle group. She has served as an adult chaperone to the National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, participated in many women's retreats, and helps out in her church any time she can. Elysia is married to Matt and they have two daughters, Madyson and Pyper. She is an Elementary Music Teacher and sings in many area choirs and her Christian Rock Band, One Way Out. She is looking forward to serving and showing her daughters and other young women what BOLD women look like!



**Southern Prairie Board Representative Ann Schultz** is a member of Bethany Lutheran in Ruskin. She currently is serving as co-chairman of her women's unit and chairman of the altar guild. Ann is the assistant financial director on the Mid-South chapter of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. She was a volunteer at the 2012 Youth Gathering Event in New Orleans and has served on the Southern Prairie nominating committee.

Ann is married to Kevin, a farmer, and is mother to a grown daughter and son. She considers herself a farm wife first and works outside of the home at Superior Pharmacy submitting insurance for medical equipment. Ann also volunteers at the Superior Hospital front desk.

She enjoys spending time with her family and friends. Crafting, sewing, and attempting to knit are her hobbies.

(Continued from page 4)

The Women of the ELCA of Salem Lutheran Church of Ponca, make an average of 120 quilts yearly; most are sent to LWR. Some are given to families in our community that are dealing with a crisis, several are donated to a local Boy Scout troop for distribution to need families, some are donated to the "Freed For Life" project at the Nebraska State Penitentiary, and one is donated each summer for the Camp Carol Joy Holling auction.



We meet twice a month, February through October, and the quilts are displayed in November and blessed at our Sunday worship service before shipping.

We have made a monetary donation to the ELCA Malaria fund for the Anniversary Appeal. We also celebrated our 25 years of Women of the ELCA at our annual congregational meeting in January by serving cupcakes for desserts at our potluck dinner.

—submitted by Barbara Bauman



# NSWO Vision Trip 2014

By SANDY TERRY, NSWO Companion Synod Coordinator

The NSWO Vision Trip to our Companion Synod, Tanzania is now a reality. Are you being called to visit our sisters in Christ in Tanzania? The dates are set and a tentative itinerary has been planned for June 9 to 24, 2014. Coordinators for this Vision Trip will be Sandy Olson, NSWO Global Missions Coordinator and myself along with Bill Davis, the Nebraska Synod Companion Synod contact.

- \* The question is “What is a Vision Trip?” A Vision Trip to Tanzania is to learn about the culture of Tanzania and the ministries of the North Diocese. A “Vision Trip” is different from a “Mission Trip.” We will not step off the plane and set about building a church or a school but will be building relationships. We are traveling to Tanzania to learn from our brothers and sisters in Christ, to pray and worship with them, to bring encouragement, support, and love.
- \* Question number two is: “What will we do and what will we see?” Here is the tentative itinerary for the trip:
  - June 9 – Depart Omaha Airport
  - June 10 – Arrive at Kilimanjaro Airport Tanzania
  - June 11 – Single Mother’s Group & Ushirika wa Neema Deaconess Centre Visits
  - June 12 – Nronga Women’s Group, Houses for Health, Neema Orphanage, Machame Hospital and School of Nursing Visits
  - June 13 – Women’s School at Himo, Mwika Bible College, Mwika Market, Agape Visits
  - June 14 – Gezaulole & Siha Women’s Group, Angaza, Hai, Faraja Visits
  - June 15-16 – Villages - Worship and Visits
  - June 17 – Depart for Safari, lunch at Mwangaza in Arusha
  - June 18-21 – Safari
  - June 22 – All Day Worship in Village Parishes
  - June 23 – Office of the Women Department, Mosaic Visit; Depart for Kilimanjaro Airport
- \* The next most asked question is “How much will it cost?” Approximate cost is \$4,500 per person; cost covers airfare, visa, ground transportation, all lodging and meals. Individuals are responsible for securing a passport, inoculations, and oral anti-malarial medication taken during the trip. Trip payment schedule:
  - \$600 – due now to reserve your spot on the trip (deposit is non-refundable)
  - \$950 – due November 11, 2013
  - \$2,000 – due February 28, 2014 (this payment covers your plane ticket and is non-refundable)
  - \$950 – due May 30, 2014
- \* The next question is “Are there any scholarships available?” NSWO will offer twenty - \$1,000 grants for Nebraska ELCA women traveling on this trip. Grant Application forms are available by contacting Vision Trip Coordinators Sandy Terry or Sandy Olson.

Is God calling you to visit our sisters in Tanzania? Seek a quiet place and spend time in prayer asking the Holy Spirit to guide your decision. As you visit with others who have visited Tanzania a common response will be, once you visit our brothers and sisters of Tanzania you will fall in love with their faithful spirit and will be hooked!!

More information can be obtained by going to the NSWO website, [www.nebraskasynod.org/welca](http://www.nebraskasynod.org/welca); Nebraska Synod website, [www.nebraskasynod.org](http://www.nebraskasynod.org); or contacting: Sandy Olson at [sandyoly@neb.rr.com](mailto:sandyoly@neb.rr.com); Sandy Terry at [sterry9415@yahoo.com](mailto:sterry9415@yahoo.com); or Kandy Pflaster at [tkpflaster@gmail.com](mailto:tkpflaster@gmail.com).



## Shine Your Light

Lord of Love Lutheran Church in Omaha celebrated a special day commemorating 25 years of the Women of the ELCA by hosting an adult forum, displaying our activities in the narthex, and serving a special cake with the 25 year celebration logo. Our adult forum invited all members of the church. We informed the attendees of the issues Women of the ELCA have embraced, acted upon and worked on over the past 25 years. Our forum was lead by Gwen Edwards, a member of the Churchwide Executive Board, and a member of Lord of Love. In the narthex we had a drawing for a free subscription to the Gather magazine and we displayed our prayer shawls and quilts, Thankoffering boxes, and upcoming events.

— submitted by Valerie Florea  
Women's Ministry Team Coordinator



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

#### Officers

##### **President**

Kandy Pflaster  
1009 Meridian Avenue  
Cozad, NE 69130-1758  
308-784-2193  
tkpflaster@gmail.com

##### **Vice President**

Terri Johnson  
25725 W Suburban Road  
Hershey, NE 69143  
308-368-7522  
cranefarm@yahoo.com

##### **Secretary**

Beth Meyer  
2051 Fairacres Drive  
Fremont, NE 68025-2736  
402-719-1732  
nanabeth1999@gmail.com

##### **Treasurer**

JoAnn Rohrs  
1409 10th Street  
Auburn, NE 68305  
402-274-3058  
joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com

#### Board Representatives

##### **Central**

Valerie Killinger  
505 N Street  
St. Paul, NE 68873  
308-754-5315  
killinger505@q.com

##### **High Plains**

Jackie France  
76614 Road 416  
Gothenburg, NE 69138  
308-537-2853  
jfrance307@htomail.com

##### **Metro East**

Emily Laaker  
PO Box 107  
Bennington, NE 68007  
402-238-2583  
elaaker@cox.net

##### **Midlands**

Joyce Olson  
4 Ginger Cove Road  
Valley, NE 68064  
402-359-4131  
idano@cox.net

##### **Northeast**

Judy Stahlecker  
Box 267  
Spencer, NE 68777  
402-589-9086  
gstahlecker@nntc.net

##### **Southeast**

Elysia McGill  
1711 Towle Street  
Falls City, NE 68355  
402-801-0521  
elysiamcgill@gmail.com

##### **Southern Prairie**

Ann Schultz  
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Superior, NE 68978  
402-879-5348  
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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
- ☐ Publicize/Promote NSWO

### Winter Retreat

- 7-8 – Nebraska Synod Faith Stewards
- 14-16 – ELCA Region 4 Global Mission Consultation
- 22-23 – NSWO Board Meeting
- 22-23 – LYON Assembly
- 23-24 – Lay Leadership Academy
- 28 – Thanksgiving Day
- ☐ Hold Thankoffering Service
- ☐ (J) Plan Yearbook

### December

- ☐ Publicize/Promote NSWO Winter Retreat
- ☐ (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
- 6-7 – NE Synod Council
- 24 – Nebraska Synod Office Closed
- 25 – Christmas Day

### January

- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 6 – Triennial Early Registration Deadline
- 14-15 – Nebraska Synod First Call Retreat
- 18 – NSWO Winter Retreat, Grand Island
- 18-19 – Nebraska Synod Middle School Gathering