



# Expressions

VOL. 31, NO. 1, FEBRUARY 2017

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

## Sisters in Christ

*"She is strong and graceful as well as cheerful about the future."* —  
Proverbs 31:35 CEV



The holidays are over, the Christmas decorations are down, and it's time to get back into our routines. January held days with ice and snow to remind us it is winter with very cold temperatures and wind. However, let's warm up those hearts and mark the calendar with the upcoming Spring Gathering dates.

"Sisters in Christ," the theme of our 2017 Spring Gatherings start next month. The Spring Gatherings give you the opportunity to refuel, refresh, and relax yourself.

There will be a Spring Gathering in each of the NSWO seven conferences. So attend your conference, attend another, or do both. Here are some highlights planned from each of the conferences.

**Central Conference, March 4**, are so excited about this year's conference, "Sister's in Christ." St John's in Norfolk is hosting the event. They

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have a great church facility and wonderful food for all to enjoy as we visit with our "Sisters in Christ." There will be speakers, yoga, personal safety from a retired policeman and much, much, more. The tangible project will need paper products and money so they can help the battered women in the area. Come join us for fun, education, music and a wonderful break from the cold winter! Happy Spring!

**High Plains Conference, March 11**, is being held at Zion Lutheran in Gothenburg.

**Southeast Conference, March 18**, invites all to come join them at Christ Lutheran Church Pickrell to enjoy music by the *Grace Notes*, learn about Adult and Teen Challenge, and the organization Sister Hugs. We will also join together for worship and Bible study. Connect with your friends with fellowship, a great meal, music, and information about Camp Carol Joy Holling, Fair Trade, and much more. See you there!

**Midlands Conference, April 1**, will listen to Lisa Kramme, Nebraska Synod, as

she presents on the "The Life of Katie." We will learn about the woman who partnered with Martin Luther who led the Reformation. Joy Johnson, author of *The BOOB Girls: The Burned Out Old Broads*, will be the afternoon speaker with, obviously, a sense of humor. We will find that we are sisters in the serious and in the comedy.

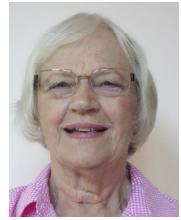
**Metro East Conference, April 8**, will be held at St. John's in Bennington. Our tangible offering will go to YES (Youth Emergency Services). Our guest speakers will be Cathie Fife, a humorist and motivational speaker; and Heather Goertz who will share how she views life with ten children as a Mary and Martha blessing. We will have a visit from Martin and Katie and to top it off the St. John's Chime Choir will perform. Come join us for a fun and informative day.

**Southern Prairie Conference, April 22**, is being held at Grace Lutheran in Hebron. A curator from the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island will lead one of the workshop.

(Continued on page 7)

# Devotions

By MARY PETERS, Board Member/Metro East Conference



John 15:9-17, *“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. These things I command you, so that you will love one another.”*

How can love change us? Not love as associated with Valentine's Day, defined as feeling a deep romantic attachment to someone; but as the Bible defines it in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 (GW), *“Love is patient. Love is kind. Love isn’t jealous. It doesn’t sing its own praises. It isn’t arrogant. It isn’t rude. It doesn’t think about itself. It isn’t irritable. It doesn’t keep track of wrongs. It isn’t happy when injustice is done, but it is happy with the truth. Love never stops being patient, never stops believing, never stops hoping, never gives up.”*

What do you do when your “sister” hurts you by her actions or words? Do you retaliate? Do you complain about her to others? Do you quit speaking to her? Do you still love her? If you love her as God loves, you will continue to love her through good times as well as bad. You won't stop loving her when she doesn't meet your expectations. God loves us in spite of our wrongdoings. Loving others in this way will transform our relationships. We need to love others as God loves us. We need to make a choice to love others even when we consider them unlovable. Our love shouldn't stop when we don't feel love for them because of those actions or words.

Sometimes we do not like ourselves. We sinned, we are ashamed. We don't like the way we look. We feel left out because we are not as perfect as we want to be. Do we need to love ourselves before we can really love others? God made us, He forgives our sins, He loves us unconditionally, despite our imperfections.

How do I love others - the foreigner, the man who robbed me, the lady who gossiped about me, the neighbor who has different religious beliefs? How can I learn to love them as God loves them? My emotions and feelings get in the way. I need God's help, I need to pray for them, I need to show mercy and compassion.

*Heavenly Father, thank you for your unconditional love. Help me to love others as you love.*

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

*Expressions* provides information concerning programs and projects of the Churchwide and Nebraska Synodical Women Organizations, Women of the ELCA; and helpful information for congregational units. It is distributed free to Nebraska congregational unit presidents/coordinators; Nebraska female seminarian students; the other SWO Presidents; the CWO Officers and Executive Board Members; and past NSWOW Presidents.

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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.

Contact the *Expressions* Editor at [nswow.expressions@gmail.com](mailto:nswow.expressions@gmail.com). Content information can be sent via e-mail and is the preferred method.

February *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Karen Anderson, Marilee Brinkmeyer, Jam Kammerer, Val Killinger, Elysia McGill, Beth Meyer, and Trisha Peters.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hope you are all enjoying this new 2017 year!!

February 1, 2017 begins a new fiscal year for NSWO. I am hoping that many were able to attend the Winter Retreat at St. Paul's in Grand Island last month. "Mary, Martha and Me" was the theme. Look for an article in the next *Expressions* highlighting the event.



Rev Sarah and Adam Erickson have left Young Adults in Global Missions for new service to the Lord. Please continue to keep them in your prayers as they enter this new journey. So we are looking to support a new Young Adults of Global Missions starting February 1, 2017. We will have more information for you in the next issue and at the Spring Gatherings.

I am looking forward to the Conference of Presidents later this month, being held at the Lutheran Center in Chicago, Illinois. The theme is "Do You Know This Woman?" with the scripture verse Luke 36:50. Congregational units and individuals may participate in the in-kind offering by donating gift cards (VISA, Wal-Mart, Target) in any amount. These will be given to an organization that supports homeless youth. They can be sent to me before February 15 or you can send them directly to Churchwide W/ELCA offices.

Bold Women's Day is February 26 (4th Sunday in February). It celebrates all Lutheran women who acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Whether they live their lives boldly in the workplace, family, or community, their faith compels them to make a difference in the lives of others. Does your congregational unit do something special? The Churchwide Women's Organization would like to know. And, I would also like to hear about what is happening, so we could spread the word in Nebraska.



The Tenth Triennial Convention and Gathering is July 11-16, 2017 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Nebraska has a bus going, visit the Triennial Gathering website, [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org), to register online. You can also prepare for the Tenth Triennial Gathering in any number of ways: knitting, sewing, crocheting, and more. Quilters should consider entering a black & white +one quilt challenge. Using only black and white fabrics, plus the addition of one color, make a quilt that's 40-inches square with the purpose of interpreting the gathering theme, "All Anew." See website for more details, the deadline to enter is May 17. Or make a finger labyrinth, quilted, knitted, crocheted. They are hoping to collect 5,000 so each voting member at Convention plus each attendee at the Gathering may receive one. If they have extra they will go to chaplains in schools, hospitals, hospices, and nursing homes. Examples, patterns, and directions are available on the website. The Churchwide Women's Organization needs to receive them by June 1.

Our NSWO Convention will be September 28-30 at Carol Joy Holling Camp. Save the date and be looking for more information. Your congregational voting member will attend on Friday, September 28. You can come for the weekend or for just one day. This is a great way to see what is new at the camp while women learn, encourage, support and live out our mission.

Remember our emphasis on Human Trafficking and the work being done on the Women and Justice social statement. Hopefully, our work will be able to help other women and girls who are in need. It is an honor and privilege to serve such a wonderful organization as the NSWO. Thanks for all your support, love and inspiration.

God Bless You All,  
Nancy Johnson



By CHRISSEY GARTON,  
Appointee

Nebraska Women of the ELCA has reserved some hotel rooms at Hyatt Regency and as of the writing of this article, there is still openings available for more ladies, as well as openings on the bus. For more information you can contact me at [Chrissylovescake@gmail.com](mailto:Chrissylovescake@gmail.com) or 402-763-7672.

Congratulations to the four first timers who were awarded scholarships from the NSWO.

- ♦ Karen Daffer, Lincoln
- ♦ Sharon Floth, Adams
- ♦ Fran High, Holdrege
- ♦ Kim Metzger, Adams

We are excited to have them join us along with all of you. For information regarding registration, details about travel, and hotels, please contact me.

## NSWO Convention 2017



Mark your calendars ladies!! The NSWO convention will be held September 28-30 at Camp Carol Joy Holling! We are so excited to be partnering up with NLOM and enjoy using the beautiful space that camp has to offer. After visiting with many of you at the Autumn Renewal, please let me reassure you that this is for EVERYONE! We will make this happen for you, regardless of age, trouble walking, etc. This is a time to come together, get back in touch with our good and gracious God, and be with all of our Sisters in Christ.

The business of our NSWO will be finished on Friday and then we move our thinking to the retreat and get back to nature with ourselves and God! Please come and join us at Camp this year, meet some new friends, share your faith in new and old ways. Connect with our theme of "As Children of God we face Changes, Challenges, and Choices" and which is based on our theme verse Isaiah 30:21.



## Summer Service Project

NLOM will be reaching out to the Nebraska Synod Women's Organizations across the state to partner on this summer service project. A family is "food insecure" if they do not have enough healthy food or if they do not know how they are going to get their next meal. In the USA, 1 in 6 children worry about when they'll have their next meal. The Service Project for summer 2017 is going to teach campers about food security and what it means to people who don't have this basic need met. Campers will also act to help ease the burden of these people by working in the garden and putting together emergency food kits for food pantries. The emergency food kits will contain: canned vegetables, canned fruits, pasta, sauce and peanut butter. Information will be sent out soon to Women of the ELCA units on the project. If you have any questions about the project, please contact Heather Abbott at [habbott@nlom.org](mailto:habbott@nlom.org) or 402-944-2544.

## Shine Your Light

### Shine Your Light





On Tuesday evening, December 6, 2016, 270 women from various church memberships joined in an Advent program at First Lutheran Church in Fremont titled "King of Kings." The guest artist was Jill Miller of Sioux City, IA. Jill is a Christian singer/songwriter who has worked in Nashville and opened for Lorretta Lynn, Brian Littrell and performs with the Christian group New Song. Her newest CD release is titled *King of Kings*. This song was written by Jill, along with Jimmy Nichols and Robert White-Johnson. Devotions, "Are You Ready?" were led by Pr. Steph Tollefson. The fellowship hall was very festive, decorated with crowns, candles, greenery, and white beads. The ladies were served by some of our men so the ladies could fully enjoy an evening of entertainment and fellowship. Check out Jill Miller on YouTube where she has a devotional blog - Butterfly Nation.



# Nebraska W/ELCA Human Trafficking Task Force

By BARBARA FANNING, Task Force Chairperson

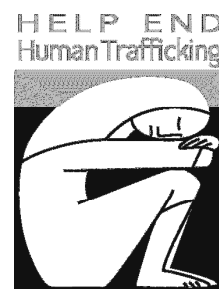
The Nebraska W/ELCA Human Trafficking Task Force has received the following additional information on Human Trafficking in Nebraska:

- Salvation Army Fight to End Human Trafficking (SAFE-T) has identified the following Human Trafficking Specialist:  
Omaha/Lincoln/Southeast Nebraska: [christine\\_spangrud@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:christine_spangrud@usc.salvationarmy.org)  
Western/Panhandle Nebraska: [leeann\\_nielsen@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:leeann_nielsen@usc.salvationarmy.org)  
Tri Cities/Northeast Nebraska: [melissa\\_kometscher@usc.salvationarmy.org](mailto:melissa_kometscher@usc.salvationarmy.org)  
This information can also be found on [www.SalArmyOmaha.org](http://www.SalArmyOmaha.org) or [www.SalArmyWestern.org](http://www.SalArmyWestern.org).
- Magdalene Omaha plans is to get involved with the Thistle Farms and provide a home for the women who have survived trafficking, abuse, and addiction. The home should be available for women in 2018. Their sponsor's are Magnolia Hotel in Omaha, Friends of Tamar, Women's Fund of Omaha, Coalition of Human Trafficking, Methodist Hospital Foundation and the Trinity Episcopal Cathedral. There is more information available at [www.magdaleneomaha.org](http://www.magdaleneomaha.org).
- Glen Park has replaced Stephen Patrick O'Meara as the Assistant Attorney General – Nebraska Human Trafficking Task Force Coordinator which with involved Salvation Army's Fight to End Trafficking Program (SAFE-T), educating a statewide network of law enforcement, prosecutors, social service agencies, doctors and nurses, and industries that are more likely to encounter prostitutes.
- I'VE GOT A NAME (End Sex Trafficking Where We Live) is a non-profit located in Lincoln, Nebraska, their Mission is to commit to eradicate sexual exploitation and sex trafficking through education, prayer, and financial support. Through their fundraising efforts, they partner with those that have proven their effectiveness to prevent, protect, rescue and restore those who are vulnerable, threatened or have become victims. They offer prayer and hope for the broken and to all that are impacted. There is more information available at [www.ivegotaname.org](http://www.ivegotaname.org).

The Human Trafficking Task Force is in the process of updating the brochure and cards which were available last month at the Winter Retreat. Also please contact Chrissy Garton if your congregation is interested in a Human Trafficking Presentation.

NET broadcasted *Sold For Sex: Trafficking in Nebraska* last month. Also January 11th was Human Trafficking Awareness Day and W/ELCA is calling us to dedicate a time of prayer to end human trafficking.

The Nebraska Women of the ELCA Human Trafficking Task Force includes Nancy Johnson ([nancy.johnson5@cox.net](mailto:nancy.johnson5@cox.net)), Phyllis Eriksen ([jperiksen14@yahoo.com](mailto:jperiksen14@yahoo.com)), Mary Mayfield ([mayfieldim@cox.net](mailto:mayfieldim@cox.net)), Chrissy Garton ([chrissylovescake@gmail.com](mailto:chrissylovescake@gmail.com)), and Barbara Fanning ([bfann7@msn.com](mailto:bfann7@msn.com)). If you need additional information on human trafficking, please contact any of the task force members.



# Goal Met! Over 150,000 Meals Packed At York Correctional Center

By Susan Watson

Saved To Serve Opportunity retreat participants and inmates of the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York waited with anticipation and tired feet and backs at the end of the day November 5 to hear that their goal was exceeded and 150,390 meals for Chapter 25 (formerly Lincoln/ Kids Against Hunger) were packed that day.

When the total was announced, smiles of satisfaction and feelings of worth prevailed.

During the day, four two-hour packing sessions were held staffed by twenty-one Saved To Serve Opportunity participants and 222 prison inmates who chose to volunteer. Eight assembly lines of ten helpers each were formed which were assisted by others who refilled the food supplies, assembled and taped boxes, wrapped and stacked twenty-one and a half pallets and loaded the semi trailer.

The meal packages contain a mixture of fortified rice, soy protein, and dehydrated vegetables which is weighed, sealed, and dated. Recipients boil the contents in water for an easy to fix, nutritious meal intended to feed six people.

Food packed at this event was designated for distribution to hungry people in Nebraska as well as victims of Hurricane Matthew.

With tears swelling in her eyes, one inmate said, "Thank you for allowing us the opportunity to help others. I cannot express how good it makes us all feel to be allowed to help others in such great need. Thank you so very much for letting us feel normal even if for just one day."

The idea of holding a packing event within the prison began when one woman inmate wrote a letter to Pastor Bob Bryan, Director of Prison Ministry for the Nebraska Synod, asking how those in prison could give back to others. Pastor Bryan had the vision to combine the desires of the women prison inmates to add purpose to their lives, with Chapter 25's need for help in packing much needed food for distribution, and the Lutheran women's willingness to serve the hungry and imprisoned.

The combined effort also exceeded the \$37,500 fund raising goal to pay for the food and packing materials. The excess is to be used for a future packing event behind prison walls.

Funding came from a \$15,000 Abbot Foundation matching fund grant and generous donations from the NSWO, Thrivent Financial, churches, businesses, and individuals.



*The York event was the first STSO retreat attended by Sharon Bohling, McCook; Jerri Haussler, Hastings; Susan Largent, Creighton; and Michele Brandenburger, Glenvil.*



*Inmates and STSO participants concentrate on their work of packing food in the Chapel at the Correctional Center. Assembly lines were also set up in the Recreational Center. In the test packing event, the inmates were so eager to help that they packed food at twice the normal rate. Taking that into consideration, the goal for the day was doubled and everyone was determined to meet the goal.*



*Retreat participants and Pastor Bob Bryan pause at the main entrance of the Correctional Center for a photo after a full and satisfying day of packing food..*

On Friday evening, those attending the retreat met at First Evangelical Lutheran Church in York to learn about ELCA prison ministries and the Correctional Center, receive tips on how to relate to the inmates, and learn how the food packing assembly line worked.

After Saturday's packing event, participants gathered back at the host church for supper, a time for reflection, and a sing-along celebrating a productive day. Music for the sing-along was provided by a four person band led by Bud Christenson, interim pastor at First Lutheran Church.

Sharon Bohling inspired the group with devotionals on gifts and the gift of serving. The weekend activities closed on Sunday with worship at First followed by a delicious brunch and the traditional servant commissioning service, servant towel signing ceremonies, and farewell group hug.

(Continued from page 1)

Those attending are invited to bring old pictures and small artifacts and the curator will determine the best method of preservation. We hope to see a lot of pictures of “sisters”! Plans are developing for displaying the pictures for everyone to see. Additional workshops will be offered including an opportunity to make a bead bracelet.



**Northeast Conference, April 29**, will be held at St. Mark’s in Bloomfield. Tangible offerings of new or slightly used purses along with personal items and toiletries for victims of domestic violence will be collected. The purses will be filled during one of the workshop sessions and distributed to Haven House of Wayne and South Sioux City. A full slate of entertainment and workshops are planned including the *Front Porch Pickers* from Wayne providing music and entertainment. Workshops include Lynette Krie, Farm Bureau Financial, leading a Financial Planning workshop; and Jennifer Van Meter on Human Trafficking. Charissa Loftis of Wayne, will provide a chair yoga session teaching everyone how to provide a new way of centering our mind and body to focus while turning our hearts and minds to God. We look forward to a fun-filled day shared with all of our “Sisters in Christ.” We strongly encourage new attendees to join us. If you have attended in the past, invite someone to join you, your mother, daughter, granddaughter, friend to take part in this uplifting day with you and join in the fellowship with their “Sisters in Christ.”

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## Check List for Congregational Units

### To Do Every Month

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

### To Do on Specific Months

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

#### February

- \_\_\_ Share *Expressions* with members
- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote Spring Gatherings
- \_\_\_ (J) Send list of new officers after unit elections to Elysia McGill and Conference Board Member
- 4-11 – NE Synod Adult Mission Trip, San Antonio, TX
- 4 – NE Synod Transformational

#### Ministry Training Part 2

- 13 – Chrism Mass, First/Lincoln and Holy Cross/Beatrice
- 16-19 – Conference of Presidents
- 21 – NE Synod Deans Meeting
- 23 – Chrism Mass, Grace/West Point and Shell Creek/Newman Grove
- 24-25 – NE Synod God's IDEA High School Retreat
- 25 – NE Synod Seeking the Spirit Within Winter Retreat

#### March

- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote Spring Gatherings
- 4 – Central Spring Gathering, St. John's/Norfolk
- 11 – High Plains Spring Gathering, Zion/Gothenburg
- 18 – Southeast Spring Gathering, Christ Lutheran/Pickrell
- 21 – Chrism Mass, St. Matthew's/Omaha

- 24-25 – NE Synod Council

#### April

- \_\_\_ Publicize/Promote Spring Gatherings
- \_\_\_ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 1 – Midlands Spring Gathering, Bethlehem Lutheran/Wahoo
- 4 – Chrism Mass, Messiah/Aurora and Bethany/Minden
- 6 – Chrism Mass, St. Mark's/Oshkosh and Grace/Sutherland
- 8 – Metro East Spring Gathering, St. John's/Bennington
- 20-23 – CWO Executive Board Meeting
- 22 – S. Prairie Spring Gathering, Grace Lutheran/Hebron
- 28-29 – NE Synod PMA Convocation 2017
- 29 – Northeast Spring Gathering, St. Mark's Bloomfield