



Expressions

VOL. 26, NO. 2, MAY 2012

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

Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another, to show love.

Hebrews 10:24 TEV

Are you ready to attend a Saved To Serve Opportunity?

Come and help create a County Fair type celebration to be held at Tabitha in Crete on June 9.

We will be preparing activity booths and helping to man those booths as well as assisting elders to attend the event. The elders attending will be those participating in the Crete Tabitha Home Health Care Program, as well as those living at Garden Square, an assisted living center, and at the Tabitha Nursing Center. The families of the elders and anyone in the community will be invited as well.

Some of the activities being planned are carnival type games and fun foods. Besides cotton candy, and popcorn, we might make homemade ice cream or have a pie baking or eating contest. Come, meet women

from across the state, learn about the Tabitha Health Care System, and be a part of brightening the lives of the elders in Crete.

Morning and evening Bible Study and Sunday worship are also on the agenda. Housing will be at the Doane College dormitories. If you have questions about this event, contact Joyce Roesener.

At our second event we will Serve the Servants at Lutheran Service Corps, August 3-5.

Roll up your sleeves and join us at Lutheran Service Corps in Omaha to help spruce up the building and grounds of this facility that houses eight volunteers who are working in the community. The building was a former convent and it is in need of fresh coat of paint inside and some care to the grounds outside. So pack some old cloths and bring your favorite paint brush and some blue masking tape or a pair of garden gloves and garden tools. We might even plant a few perennials.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn about Lutheran Service Corps and the work being done



by the volunteers. The weekend will include a multi-part Bible study, time for some fun activities on Saturday evening, and Sunday worship at nearby Trinity Lutheran Church. We will be housed off site.

For more information about this Saved to Serve Opportunity, contact Karen Anderson at kaanders@gmail.com.

Register now! The registration fee for these events is \$39.00 each. Lodging and most meals are provided. In addition to the service activities, each event will include a multi-part Bible study, community building among participants, learning about the agency associated with the ELCA, interaction with the others, satisfaction, fun, and JOY in serving our Lord Jesus Christ!

If you have general questions about these events or Saved to Serve Opportunities, contact Mary Mayfield at mayfieldm@cox.net, or Susan Watson at swat55@windstream.net.

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Living Water

By NANCY STEELE, High Plains Board Representative



What a weird spring this has been weather wise. We've had earlier than normal tornados, warmer than average temperatures, and very little moisture. As I sit down to write this, the winds outside are blowing 50+ miles per hour and it sounds like the roof is coming off our house. There is the smell of dirt and smoke in the air—the dirt so thick you can't see across the street, and the smoke from several grass fires around the area. How we pray for moisture to settle the dirt and lessen the fire danger.

It reminds me that we humans can also experience tumultuous storms and extremely dry times in our lives. We can experience unexpected upsets or turmoil, where just a spark can ignite a fire storm of devastation. We wonder where God is in these trying times and why He doesn't seem to hear our prayers. We may forget to turn to Him for comfort, wisdom, or strength to get us through whatever is happening. Our souls may feel dry and withered, ready to blow away in the wind. God seems so far away.

These are the times when we need to step back, take a deep breath and let God rehydrate us with the living water He promises. If we just let Him, God will guide us to those deep cool springs and replenish our dry souls with the life giving water we need to help us through those difficult times.

God's living water can come to us in many

ways: through reading scripture, praying, reading your daily devotional books, worshipping, talking with others, taking a break from the routine, or serving others—anything that brings us closer to Him and refills our souls to carry us forward.

Whatever our problems in life, we can count on God's promise of living water to sustain us through those dry times. Like cold water to a thirsty soul, God is always with us ready to calm the storms and quench the fires. He gives us the strength and power to help us through all of life's ups and downs. Let God's life giving water bubble up and replenish the dryness of your soul today.

Let us Pray: *O God, water our dry souls with your living water that we might always be ready to weather the storms that come into our lives. Draw us close to you and keep us ready to be your witnesses and serve others. AMEN.*

John 4:10 Jesus answered, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

Revelation 7:17 "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Expressions is a 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; and the other SWO Presidents.

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 nswexpressions@gmail.com, or by phone, 402-291-1087. Content information can be sent via e-mail.

May *Expressions* team members included Beth Meyer plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Carol Bosshardt, Mary Hanson, Carol Ortegren, and Shirley Splittgerber.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Sisters of Nebraska and other distinguished readers,



Still feeling really new to the position of serving as your President, I am challenged on what I should write for my article in this edition of *Expressions*. I attended the Conference of Presidents at the end of February, where approximately sixty-one of the sixty-five synodical presidents convened. This meeting is an annual event was very intense in disbursement of information that was key to our Christian organization, I feel like my head is about to burst with all the excitement of things I am tasked to do.

One thing is that the NSWOW board has been addressing how to change the direction just a little towards some of our programming and events to focus on Discipleship, Justice, and Stewardship. Vice President, Terri Johnson, has been writing some fantastic informative articles on the the mentioned areas. Another is that while at the Conference of Presidents, there was a session on the Discipleship that pertains to the Women of the ELCA purpose statement.

“As a community of women,
created in the image of God,
called to **discipleship** in Jesus Christ and
empowered by the Holy Spirit,

Let’s look at the first part of this statement, it tells us we are called to **discipleship**. Well if you think about it, disciples are students, as were the twelve disciples of Jesus. Ladies, we or YOU are the students or the disciples in this statement. Jesus is commissioning us to go out, spread the news, change the world, and make a difference one person or day at a time. It further states **empowered**— we are all disciples not just the leaders of women in today’s world. If you don’t see yourself as a leader then think of yourself as the student for Jesus.

The rest of the purpose statement goes

“we commit ourselves to
grow in faith,
affirm our gifts,
support one another in our callings,
engage in ministry and action, and
promote healing and wholeness
in the church,
the society, and
the world.”

In the second part of our purpose statement, what are we commissioned to do??? There are at least five actions that as Women of the ELCA (not W/ELCA) we should be doing in our spiritual lives— **growing, affirming, supporting, engaging and promoting!!!!** Ask yourself “How am I doing these in my everyday life and my church unit?” Ask yourself “What needs to change in my unit or life to carry out the instructions of the purpose statement?” Each of us accomplishes these tasks at different times and in different places, this is what makes us such a powerful entity in our congregations and communities. Our DISCIPLESHIP is evident in Nebraska in many ways and in many places. *Matthew 20:32 Jesus stopped in the road and called, “What do you want me to do for you?”* Servant leaders listen and respond to the needs of those around them.

I encourage you to have a simple meeting in your unit to ask these questions. Consider inviting someone from our board to your unit meeting. Please pray for the Nebraska Synodical Women’s Organization in its quest to do God’s work and your will.

God’s Peace Always,
Kandy Pflaster

Focusing on Discipleship

By TERRI JOHNSON, Vice President



As mentioned in my February *Expressions* article, discipleship, justice and stewardship are the three areas we are asked to focus on as Women of the ELCA. Discipleship is truly the core as we must begin there in order to hear God calling us to action. Our purpose statement begins like this:

As a community of women,
created in the image of God,
called to **discipleship** in Jesus Christ, and
empowered by the Holy Spirit,
we commit ourselves to
grow in faith,
affirm our gifts,

Individually, we can study our Bible, do daily devotions, and set aside prayer time. As disciples, we are not only followers but students. We need to read and reread scripture and embrace Jesus' teachings in our daily behavior. I admit that I still struggle with keeping the discipline of daily devotional time. I always start the day with a better focus when I go to my Bible at the start of my day but the habit slips away and it might be a week or so before I pick it up again. That is why being in community with my Christian sisters is so important to my faith growth. Each time I go to a unit meeting, a spring gathering, retreat, or convention, the programs and fellowship recharge my spiritual battery. We should never look upon attending Women of the ELCA events as obligations but instead as awesome opportunities!

As leaders of our units and in our synodical organization, we can turn to the Churchwide staff for resources to bring faith-building programs to our meetings. Included in their written resources is a seven-session study called *Lessons for Today's Disciples*. This resource

will help you discover, practice, and be empowered by the seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Use it individually or as a group study, perhaps covering each of the seven marks over seven sessions of about an hour each. This study is found on the website in the *Growing in Faith* program resource section on the website. Our unit enjoyed using *A Bold Life of Faith: Katharina von Bora Luther* as a meeting program. This program is in the *Affirming Our Faith* section. Programs often apply to several section of our purpose statement, so don't limit yourself in looking at the programs to just one section. In the *Promoting Healing and Wholeness* section is *Sacred Spaces*, a helpful guide to creating a personal sacred space that enriches and supports your practice of regular worship within a community of faith. Learn how to select and create a sacred space, whether that space is a whole room, a quiet corner of a room, or your garden. These programs can be downloaded and printed for free at www.womenoftheelca.org. You can also call 800-638-3522, ext. 2730, or email women.elca@elca.org if you have questions or need these materials mailed to you.

For additional assistance from the Churchwide office on Discipleship you can contact Valora Starr at the above number on extension 2741 or by email at Valora.Starr@elca.org. Valora assists all participants in their desire to be a disciple of Jesus. Valora develops and coordinates programs, events, and conversations that involve discerning God's call, understanding God's gifts, and responding to God's presence in our lives. Valora has written several resources and offers workshops and retreats on discipleship.

Global Missions

By SANDY OLSON,
Global Missions Coordinator Appointee

My name is Sandy Olson, your new Global Missions Coordinator for the NSWO. I am honored to be able to serve however I can to bring you information about the work of Global Missions.

Since 1988, the ELCA has worked with more than eighty companion church bodies and agencies to proclaim “God's Work. Our Hands.” In 2011 the ELCA worked within ninety countries. Briefly, here are some of the outreaches of Global Mission:

- 230 missionaries served in 45 companion churches or institutions.
- 54 scholarships helped emerging global church leaders.
- 13 million was committed to combat poverty.
- Emergency aid for refugees and disaster survivors.
- Support for Lutheran World Federation programs.
- Help for Southern African churches to respond to HIV, AIDS, and malaria which disproportionately affects people living in poverty.
- Additional work is supported through Lutheran World Relief.

Global Missions is mission rooted in relationships that provide everyone involved the opportunity to grow in understanding of one another worldwide. As we begin to recognize and affirm each other's gifts, we become “better global citizens, more compassionate human beings by emphasizing human dignity and interconnectedness in all of our relationships”.

A good resource for keeping informed of Global Missions is Global Links, the monthly ELCA Global Mission e-newsletter at: www.elca.org/global-link. Check it out.

A special emphasis of the NSWO this year

is the ELCA Malaria campaign. World Malaria Day was April 25, 2012. The ELCA has committed to raise \$15 million to join hands with eleven African companion churches in the global effort to prevent, treat, and contain malaria by 2015. It's not too late to encourage your congregations to participate.

When I have visited Tanzania, I have been humbled experiencing the warm welcome everywhere, the joyfulness of the people, and their generous sharing of whatever they have. Tanzania is one of the poorest of third world countries where people generally live on a dollar a day. Yet I have witnessed the deep compassion of caring for others—the orphans, elderly, and widowed in their communities. It's truly an example of Christian community. I'm reminded of Jesus' examples of compassion for others such as feeding the 5,000, healing the sick, raising the dead.

Ephesians 2:10 says: “For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life”. *Thank you Jesus for showing us the way and truth. In our gratefulness and counting of blessings, help us to respond to the needs of others. Help us to see opportunities to give of ourselves for your mission in the world. Amen*

Tanzania Update

By MARY MAYFIELD,
Saved To Serve Appointee

Pastor Joyceline tells me they think the new multipurpose room will hold up to 500 for conferences, weddings, etc making it a real fundraiser for the Anganza Women's Training Center. They can hold graduation there and it can also serve as a recreation area for the girls during the rainy season.

The Vision Trip to Tanzanian 2011 participants stayed at the Angaza Women's Training Center instead of at the Uhuru Hostel. We had such a wonderful time getting to know the girls and the staff.

Today's Dreams: Tomorrow's Reality

By BRENDA KRUEGER,
TDTR Team Member



Fran Hughes, the appointed member of the Nebraska Synod Woman ELCA board and my partner as a Racial Justice Advocate was in a serious van-semi accident on February 13 where she received multiple injuries. After spending two weeks in intensive care at Creighton University Hospital in Omaha, her condition improved and she has spent the last few weeks in rehabilitation at Arbor Manor in Fremont. On April 12, she was released from traction but cannot do any weight bearing activity for four weeks. Fran wants to send her thanks to so many of you for your prayers and thoughtful messages during this time of recovery. God is good in providing us with such a caring community. She is also blessed to have her thoughtful husband and sons as well as sisters from various parts of the country who have been such a help and good company for her during this long recovery.

She and I continue our ministry of caring about the weak, the poor, and the marginalized and pray that their cries for help and their need to be elevated from discrimination may be heard and be acted on by those who have power over them. Those of us who are safe and comfortable in our setting must remember those who are not. We ask for God's justice and that we may be instruments of his peace here in Nebraska where the legislature looks at bills concerning the needs of the unborn, the immigrants and other humanitarian issues.

As we read the paper and watch television we must be aware of injustices throughout our nation. We ask for God's vision to act boldly and appropriately.

Christ Makes Like Exciting



It was a beautiful, sunny day February 25, for the **Northeast Spring Gathering** held at Christ Lutheran Church Wisner,

Highlights of the day was Bishop deFreese's Bible study and the exciting workshops, wonderful music, banner, and keynote speaker Rachelle McCalla. Ms.

McCalla shared her experiences as a writer and the excitement Christ has brought to her life. Her passion for being a writer, a pastor, a mother, and a wife were evident in her presentation.

Six workshops were offered on Prison Ministries and Bridges of Hope; Foot Reflexology; Chair Yoga; Photography; Real Estate Sales; and Author Rachelle McCalla.

The Bible study main idea was "with." God is with Adam and Eve, with Noah, with Abraham, with Jesus. God is with us too.

Also in attendance was Mitch McCartney to share about Mission Field Nebraska. Offering for the day was \$2,093.00.

NSWO CONVENTION SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2013

T F N E L W H K S V P I N O M
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| CONVENTION | FAITH |
| FOOD | FUN |
| GATHERING | HUGS |
| MUSIC | OFFERING |
| SMILES | SPEAKERS |
| WOMEN | WORKSHOPS |
| WORSHIP | |

On Saturday, March 24, ninety-five women drove to Trinity Lutheran at Wolbach for the **Central Spring Gathering**. It was a lovely day and a beautiful drive. We were warmly welcomed by the ladies; they were wonderful hosts.

There was singing and praying, clapping and laughing! Our offering was \$1,252.00 and tangible offering was forty-five pounds of food for the local food pantry.

Bishop deFreese led an enlightening Bible study. Communion and healing service were held with the Bishop and three of our sister clergy.

Michelle Oeltgen, formerly of Palmer and author of *Love, Lies and Lesson Learned* shared with us about violent dating as she lived it. A Massage therapist taught us some stretching and relaxing techniques. Barb Dvorak brought us laughter and fun with her "Clapping Clips" through out the day.

Kandy Pflaster, NSWO President, gave introductions and remarks. We were invited to Shell Creek at Columbus for the 2013 Spring Gathering.

Southern Prairie Conference Update... Thank you to all the churches and conferences who have contributed to the Shoeman Water Project Tangible Offering. As I write this report more than a month before the Southern Prairie Spring Gathering on May 5, you have contributed nearly 3,500 pairs of shoes toward our goal of 10,000 pairs of shoes. We look forward to successful completion of our project and reporting back to you in the next *Expressions*.

Top 10 Reasons to Subscribe to “Gather”

Gather, the magazine of Women of the ELCA, is not sold at newsstands in airports, grocery store check-out lanes or on street corners. So the best way for non-subscribers to hear about this faith-based magazine is by word of mouth. Endorsement from friends is one of the best marketing tools. When encouraging your friends and family to subscribe to *Gather*, you can offer them the following 10 reasons:

- It has award-winning Bible studies
- It has faith-in-daily-life articles that inspire and challenge
- It has columns that inform and encourage
- It offers connection to other women (and in some cases, men) in the church
- It can be used for evangelism (by giving your old copies away)
- It helps broaden your knowledge of global mission and other ministries in the ELCA
- It offers support to the church, specifically Women of the ELCA
- It enriches your experience of the liturgy and the church year
- It deepens your prayer life
- It moves you to engage in ministry and action

It's easy to spread the word about *Gather*. Pass along an issue to a friend or family member with articles marked that moved you. Buy a gift subscription. Some units buy extra subscriptions so they can give copies to visitors or new members. Some groups invite other congregations to join them for Bible study in the summer as a one-day retreat. Some readers donate their copies of back issues to local nursing homes, women's shelters or leave them in doctors' offices.

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Use subscription blank on the inside of this issue to renew.

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.)

May

- ___ Share *Expressions* with members
- ___ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- ___ Publicize/Promote Saved to

Serve Opportunities

- 5 – So. Prairie Conference Spring Gathering
- 21-22 – Bible Study Intro, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, IA
- 31 – NE Synod Council Meeting in Elkhorn, NE
- 31-June 2 Nebraska Synod Assembly, Elkhorn, NE

June

- ___ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- May 31-June 2 – NE Synod Assembly, Elkhorn, NE
- 1-3 – CWO Program Resource Consultation, IL
- 8-9 – NSWO Board Meeting, Location TBD
- 8-10 – Saved to Serve

Opportunity at Tabitha Elder Care Continuum, Crete, NE

- 9-17 – NE Synod Minot Mission Trip

July

- ___ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- ___ Publicize/Promote Saved to Serve Opportunities
- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 12-13 – Bible Study Intro, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN
- 15-17 – Definitely Abled Conference, NE Synod
- 18-22 – ELCA Youth Gathering, New Orleans, LA
- 21 – Bible Study Intro, Grand View University, Des Moines, IA