



Expressions

VOL. 31, NO. 3, AUGUST 2017

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

Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

Isaiah 30:21 NIV

Thirteenth Biennial Convention

September 28, 2:00 p.m. -
September 30, 4:00 p.m.
Carol Joy Holling Camp
27416 Ranch Road
Ashland, NE

As Children of God, we all face Changes, Challenges, and Choices.

Are you all ready to come to camp? Have you packed your comfortable clothes, walking/hiking shoes, jacket, and flashlight? Is a new adventure calling to you? Then come along with us to Carol Joy Holling Camp for our 2017 NSWOW Convention.

This is a new venue for us and we are focused on new

programming, so you can enjoy it to the utmost. Come Thursday to Saturday if you can. Thursday and Friday will be the traditional convention format and then on Saturday we will change to a retreat where you will have the opportunity to do "camp" things.

If you cannot make it the whole time, you are invited to join us for Saturday only. Please check the registration form for the fee.

Your housing will be at the Swanson Center or the Sjogren Center. These are modern, comfortable facilities. The food will be wonderful. Transportation will be provided when needed so all you need to do is ask.

Here is what we have planned for:

- Thursday workshops: Chair Yoga; Sole Hope; Nebraska's Immigrant Story; Human Trafficking; Listening; Faith, Sexism, and Justice; and the Servant Room.

- Friday workshops: President and Treasurer Training; Sole Hope; Human Trafficking; Faith, Sexism, and Justice; Yoga; Sole Hope; Building Community; TED Talks; and the Servant Room.

- Saturday activities: Yoga; Drum Circle; Prayer Tools; Photo Hike; Bible Journaling; Mixed Media Spiritual Practice; Radical Hospitality; and making ribbon stoles.

- Featured speakers and entertainment: Ely Smith, Churchwide Representative; Lisa Kramme as Katie Luther; Pastor Paula Lawhead, convention pastor; 2 Gals and a Guitar Band plus a variety of presenters for the workshops.

We have planned free time for you to enjoy being outside at camp, walking, hiking, rocking on the Swanson Center front porch, or riding along on a tour of the camp. Remember that we are promising that we will make sure that you can do

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Devotions

By ELYSIA MCGILL, NSWO Vice-President



“Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all He has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. “—Philippians 4:6-7.

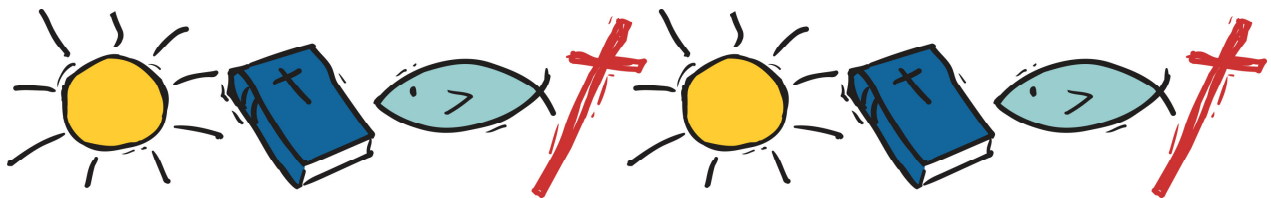
Child of God, I notice you! As I am writing this, I am sitting at the Tenth Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA, surrounded by over 300 other voting members. There is healthy discussion and much passion going on around me during this break time, it's amazing what we as women are passionate about! It's a wonderful and scary experience all at the same time! But as I sit here, words from Philippians come to me. To let go and to let God take over is the heart of this scripture.

Change can be a scary time for everyone. New ideas, new ways of doing things that we have done for years can raise anxiety levels, and we tend to get short tempered with those around us. God has created us with fire and passion! But as I

sit and I feel my anxiety levels raise, I know that I need to lean on scripture and to thank God daily for the blessings He has placed in my life. All of us want what is best for our families, ourselves, our units, our churches, W/ELCA, the list can go on and on. Sometimes in the midst of the changes we forget to listen to those new ideas being brought forth and we need to remember to thank God for those women who are courageous enough to bring forth those ideas. We need to thank God for all He has done and is doing in our lives.

My dearest sisters, as hard as this is to do, lean on the words of this passage, “Don't worry about anything, instead pray about everything.” Let go and Let God, love each other, and be open to the Spirit working in and among us! Be willing to truly listen and try things, as hard as it might be for you!

Heavenly Father, thank you for the amazing opportunity you have given us to serve you! Help us all find the peace that we need in order to fully let go and let your will and work be done! Amen.



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 NSWO Presidents.

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Contact Gwen Edwards, *Expressions* Editor, at nswo.expressions@gmail.com. Content information can be sent via e-mail and is the preferred method.

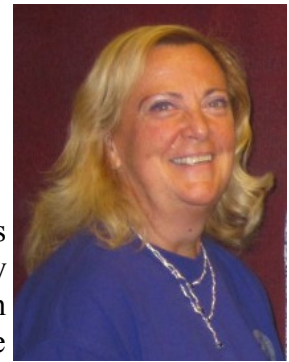
August *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson, proofreader. Additional contributors included Karen Anderson, Carol Mueller, Trisha Peters, and Shirley Splittgerber.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Ladies,

I am busy packing for the Triennial Convention and Gathering as I write this letter. “All Anew” what a great theme. I am very excited to have more than forty ladies from Nebraska attending either just the Gathering or both the Convention and the Gathering. It would have been fun to have more attend, however, we are often busy in July. Make sure you ask them about it when you see them. I am looking forward to hearing ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton preach, Nobel Peace Prize winner Leymah Gbowee speak of her work, Rev. Alexia Salvatierra speak about poverty and immigration issues, and Kelly Fryer lead us in Bible study. There are workshops to attend and a couple of movies to view along with servant events. Plus there are always places to shop for Women of the ELCA items. It will be hard to say good-bye to our Women of the ELCA president, Patti Austin. She has led us well. It should be a wonderfully enriching experience.



Next on our NSWO agenda is the Convention/Retreat to be held at Carol Joy Holling Camp on September 28-30. I hope each congregational unit has elected a woman to represent you at the Convention part. One of our main jobs at Convention will be the election of Officers and Board Members from each conference. There will be workshops you can attend and a servant room to volunteer in on Friday. Once the business sessions have been completed, there will be some unique retreat opportunities to attend on Saturday. Hope many of you will come explore the wonderful Carol Joy Holling Camp which has all the upscale rooms and its outdoor places to explore and just enjoy nature.

The Saved to serve opportunities are approaching in August and October. Check this issue of *Expressions* or our NSWO website for more details. Hope to see many of you at these events.

We continue to spread information about human trafficking which could help stop human trafficking!!

Let me know if there is something new happening in your congregational units. I love to be able to share new ways of sharing God's love.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all you ladies for such a wonderful two years as your NSWO president. I have enjoyed meeting many of you at different events during my term. It was fun to get reacquainted with some who I met when I previously served as treasurer. What fun!! I love how each event is so well planned and different. We truly are doing God's Work! Hope to see many of you one more time at the Convention/Retreat event in September. God Bless You All.

Nancy Johnson



(Continued from page 1)

all the activities regardless of your physical condition. We will push, pull, drive you, or accompany you wherever you want to go.

You will need to bring these items to camp with you: Comfortable clothes, shoes (not sandals) for hiking/walking, a jacket, and a flashlight.

- Weaving: One piece of cotton or cotton blend fabric with red, purple, or blue print 2½" x 42-44". These will be woven together, praying for peace as you weave. They will then be made into a quilt that will be shown at the 2018 Spring Gatherings, and then donated to the Camp Quilt Auction.
- The Tangible Offering will be items to help restock the Camp craft supplies: #10 embroidery floss in various colors (not yarn); Sharpies—regular and colored; construction paper—not black; dry erase markers; socks for kids with wet feet.
- Servant Room: Donation of fleece for tied blankets that will be made for Lutheran World Relief. Please bring two pieces 58"-59" x 80". Please do not donate items with any religious symbols, messages or your congregation's name, a U.S.A. flag, patriotic or military symbols, or references to the armed forces, including camouflage.

This is a new venue for us with retreat-style programming on Saturday. Please join us in this venture. We need YOU to make this a success.

Shine Your Light



Fall 2016, Phoebe Circle of St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Omaha hosted a lunch and learn opening it up to the entire congregation and guests. Sr. Rosalee Burke presented a program on Human Trafficking.

—submitted by Mary Peters

If you think you have come in contact with a victim of human trafficking, call the National Human Trafficking Resource Center at 1-888-3737-888 or visit www.polarisproject.org for more information and resources.

Saved to Serve Opportunities August/October 2017

By SUSAN WATSON

Plans are being finalized for a Saved To Serve Opportunity to be held at The Lutheran Student Center in Lincoln October 20-22. The deadline to register is September 26. Participants and students will join together to sew altar paraments and cook a community meal. The tangible offering is for OpeN Shelf Campus Pantry, supplies which are provided free to Husker students. Needed are women's hygiene products, paper towels, tissues, laundry detergent (26□32 oz.) and toilet paper. Cash or gift cards can also be donated to buy pantry items.

Tangible items can still be contributed for the Saved To Serve Opportunity to be held August 25-27 at Spirit of Grace in Holdrege. Needed are Items for Lutheran World Relief personal care kits which will be assembled at the event. This includes full-sized, wrapped bars of soap, thin bath towels between 20" x 40" and 52" x 27", nail clippers, toothbrushes, sturdy combs, and cash donations or gift cards to buy kit items. The registration deadline for the Holdrege event was August 1.

Prison Food Packing Events Postponed

The food packing events planned for August 24 at the Nebraska State Penitentiary and September 23 at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women have been postponed.

Pastor Bob Bryan wrote, "Not only were we far from reaching our goal of raising \$112,000 for the two events, but our Chapter 25 partner and director, Becky Snedeker, has very regrettably resigned from her position due to personal health reasons. She continues to wholeheartedly support the mission of Chapter 25 and the plans for future prison food packaging events with the Nebraska W/ELCA, Followers of Christ Prison Ministry, and the Department of Corrections." Pastor Bryan expressed gratitude for the support of the food packaging events and was hopeful that another serving event would be scheduled.



Metro East Spring Gathering was held April 8, at St. John's Lutheran Church in Bennington. It was a beautiful day and we had ninety-eight registered with ninety-three attending. Rolls were donated by Hy-Ve and coffee was served by Morning Star Lutheran. The day began with a Sister's in Christ devotion given by Lori Rothermund Garabrandt. President Nancy Johnson, Treasurer Sandy Terry, Triennial Gathering Promotor Beth Meyer, NSWO Convention co-Chair Shirley Splittgerber, and Saved to Serve Appointee Mary Mayfield all shared information from NSWO. The tangible offering went to YES (Youth Emergency Services) in Omaha. A van load of items was collected which included food items, blankets, underwear and socks, cash gifts, and gift cards. Allison Brown Corson told about the ministry that YES provides to homeless youth in Omaha. Vice-President Elysia McGill moderated the video Bible study given by Nebraska Bishop Maas. Pastors Diana Kuhl and Dwight Williams gave a wonderful presentation depicting Katie and Martin Luther and emphasizing the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation. Dr. Heather Goertz shared about the Martha Mission at St. John's and its emphasis on foster child care. She and her husband have fostered twelve children since 2011. Their family has five children and five foster children. Cathie Fife shared her personal story of her blessed life which included humor as well. Music was provided by St. John's Exultation, a contemporary music group, and also by St. John's Chimes. A wonderful lunch was provided by the women of St. John's and each one received a bookmark made by the Women in Action of St. John's. The day concluded with Holy Communion with Pastor Andreas Stein presiding. The 2018 Spring Gathering will be held at Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church. The new Planning Board will consist of coordinator Debra Parks and members Diana Bodnar, Nancy Harms, Elaine Hanson, Ann Hoff, and Sharon Larson. Nominating Committee will be Delores Hansen and Jan Zarestky.

Northeast Conference Spring Gathering was held April 29 at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Bloomfield. The theme of "Sisters in Christ" was used to encourage guests to get to know their "sisters" throughout the day. Pastor Deb Valentine of St. Mark's, Bloomfield led the group in opening devotion and prayer centered on the theme of friendship and love. With a total of eighty-nine women in attendance and a total of twenty congregational units represented, it was a fitting devotion to start the day.

The generosity of our Conference was evidenced by the offering totaling \$2,247. The tangible offering of purses filled with essential items for victims of domestic violence was designated to Haven House of Wayne and South Sioux City as well as Bright Horizons of Norfolk and O'Neill. An unbelievable 297 purses were filled and distributed to those organizations. What an amazing project!

The busy day continued with workshop sessions following the Bible Study. Available workshops included: Lynette Krie – Putting Your House in Order, Jen Van Meter – Human Trafficking, Kristol House-Schwenn – Healing Touch, and Packing the purses for Haven Houses and Bright Horizons. All attendees were also treated to yoga with Charissa Loftis who led a variety of exercises to help with range of motion and improved mobility.

A delicious lunch was prepared and served by the Women of St. Mark's Lutheran Church. After lunch, attendees were welcomed back into the church sanctuary by the music of Sherie Lundahl of Laurel. She started out by leading the theme hymn in a duet with pianist Laurel Johnson. She provided several Easter and traditional hymn favorites inspired by her country and gospel roots.

To conclude the day, Pastor Deb Valentine provided an inspirational sermon sharing her experiences about how God has sent her "sisters" to help her get through life's challenges. She also shared stories of "sisters" in the Bible such as Ruth and Naomi. Pastor Deb also presided at communion and closed with a prayer and hymn singing.

Several hours of planning and setup go into making the Spring Gathering happen each year.

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Special thanks is given for the 2017 Planning and Nominating Committee as well as the Women of St. Mark's Lutheran in Bloomfield for all of their hard work in hosting this year's event! We look forward to seeing you April 28, at Immanuel Lutheran in Coleridge.

Southern Prairie Spring Conference was held on April 22, at Grace Lutheran Church in Hebron. Carol Mueller was the Conference Coordinator. Serving on the Planning Committee were Chrissy Garton, Lu Krueger, and LaDonna Pendleton. The Nominating Committee was chaired by Teresa Christensen and included members Courtney Peeler, Judy Gosswein, and Rose Remmers.

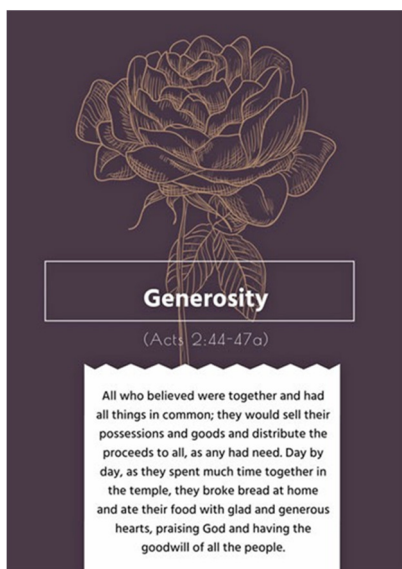
Morning devotions were led by Pastor Keith Brozak. The Bible Study by Bishop Brian Maas was by DVD and was presented by NSWO Vice-President, Elsie McGill. Nancy Johnson gave the President's report. Three workshops were presented throughout the day: Preserving Our Sisterhood by Megan Sharp, curator from Stuhr Museum; Sharing Our Sisterhood, making bracelets from Fair Trade beads, and learning about Human Trafficking by Chrissy Garton; and Exploring Our Sisterhood, exploring our similarities and differences by Tracy Mueller Knezevic. Communion was celebrated to close the Conference.

The tangible offering of paper goods, canned food, and other non-perishable items was given to Blue Valley Community Action.

The 2018 Spring Conference will be held at Trinity Lutheran, Hildreth, NE. Lynette McCutcheon was elected as the 2018 Conference Coordinator. Planning Committee members elected are Corinne Jensen, Janice Smidt, and Lynn Embury. The Nominating Committee will be Susan Watson, Loretta Kellogg, and Sherri Albert.

Generosity

By NANCY JOHNSON, NSWO President



Those first believers gave generously close to home, sharing their bounty with their own community. Later, as Paul began his missionary journeys, believers gave to support other communities further away.

Does that sequence of giving carry a hint for us, for Women of the ELCA? I think it does, and our purpose statement seems to say the same thing.

The first three things we commit ourselves to in our purpose statement are to “grow in faith, affirm our gifts and support one another in our callings.” It seems to me that “supporting one another” means supporting our beloved community of women in all its expressions first, before looking further out “to promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.” Sharing our blessings first with our community of women created in the image of God and then reaching

out to the rest of God's beloved creation is a wonderful way to act in glad generosity as those first believers did. It's good for our hearts?”

Regular Offerings are a wonderful way to support one another in our callings. When women gather in the circles or groups of the congregational unit and receive an offering, their unit treasurer puts some of it to work for the congregational unit's own ministry and shares the rest with the synodical women's organization, sending it to Sandy Terry, NSWO Treasurer, with Form A. The treasurer of the synodical women's organization puts some of that shared offering to work for the synodical organization's ministry, and then shares the rest with the churchwide women's organization, which puts that shared offering to work for women's ministries throughout the church. Our Thankofferings go directly to churchwide on Form B from the local congregational unit.

Shine Your Light



In December of last year, 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 and she has a devotional blog - Butterfly Nation.

First Lutheran Women of the ELCA sponsored performances by Pr. Jonathan Swenson called "Celebrate the Child" in December 2016 at all three of the worship services. He portrayed six characters that may have been around at the time of that first Christmas. He is an excellent performer and was well received by the members of First Lutheran. We were blessed by his messages that day.

First Lutheran Quilters made 300+ quilts that were sent to LWR in 2016.

—submitted by Beth Meyer

Nebraska Synodical Women of the ELCA, 2015-2017

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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.)

August

- ☐ Share *Expressions* with members
- ☐ Publicize/Promote NSWOW Convention
- ☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this

month

- 25-27 – Saved to Serve Opportunity
- 9 – Essential Boundaries for Wise Leaders

September

- ☐ Publicize/Promote NSWOW Convention ☐ Publicize/Promote Saved to Serve Opportunities
- ☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- ☐ Have you sent your travel fund assessment to Sandy Terry? Each unit needs to pay \$20 per year for 2016 and 2017
- 9 – NE Synod Council
- 11 – Reformation Prayer
- 18 – NSWOW Convention

Registration Deadline

- 26 – Saved to Serve Registration deadline
- 26-27 – NE Synod First Call
- 27-28 – NE Synod Systems Thinking
- 28-30 – NSWOW Convention

October

- ☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month
- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 19-22 – CWO Executive Board Meeting
- 20-22 – Saved to Serve Opportunity
- 29 – Reformation Commemoration Service
- 30-Nov 1 – Theo-Con '17

