



Expressions

VOL. 30, NO. 2, MAY 2016

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?

Join other women from across Nebraska for a Saved To Serve Opportunity-a working retreat!



The 2016 Saved To Serve Opportunities will allow you to serve by being a Camp Carol Joy Holling Helper or a Mosaic Memory Maker this Summer. The Saved To Serve Opportunity at Camp Carol Joy Holling near Ashland is being held later this month and there is still time to help with the tangible offering.

The primary need is for fleece for the campers' blanket making service project. The goal is for the campers to make 1,000 blankets for homeless persons. That means 4,000



yards of fleece! Please consider donating some fleece. It should be sent with a participant or brought to the Camp as two 2-yard lengths of coordinating fleece wrapped together for each blanket. Alternately, apply for a Thrivent Card and hold some type of event to help provide bolts of fleece. Other Camp tangible offering items are Sharpie pens, embroidery floss, crochet thread, white socks (SML), and gift cards for program needs.

Mark your calendars now and plan to join other women from across Nebraska for a Saved to Serve weekend retreat August 5-7 at the Mosaic Home in Minden. Participants will meet at 6:00 p.m. on Friday at the lodging site which is the Retreat Center at Bethphage Mission near Axtell. Friday evening we will get acquainted, learn about Mosaic and how it was started

at Axtell and is now International, tour the campus and enjoy devotional time together.

Saturday we will plan our activities to make some memories with the residents at the Minden Home. Perhaps we will take them bowling, enjoy a song fest, and ring the bells. We may even do a little gardening and sprucing up for fall. That evening our Minden friends are planning an outing for us and perhaps dinner out. Sunday we will worship and enjoy coffee hour at the Lutheran Church, enjoy a group hug, and ask God's blessing as we travel home.

The tangible offering items requested for the Mosaic Home are dish cloths or towels, bath towels, wash cloths, Wal-Mart, Penney's, or Target gift cards for socks, underwear, and other necessities. Don't miss out on the fun, friendship, spiritual growth, learning, and serving!

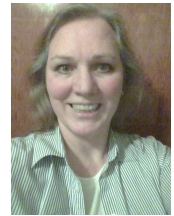
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registration
today.



Devotions.....	2
Friendly Reminders	2
Online	2
From The President.....	3
Spring Gathering Highlights	4-6
NSWO Missionary.....	5
Fair Trade...Human Trafficking	5
Shine Your Light	6
Autumn Renewal	6

Devotions

By KIM HALL, Board Member/Midlands Conference



As I write this, about half of the Conference Spring Gatherings have taken place, with just a few more to go. We are experiencing being “happy in God’s grace.” And then there’s the wonderful message of grace we have just experienced in Easter. What better time to be reminded how God’s grace simply sets the tone for our lives.

When I spend some time thinking about what it means to be happy in God’s grace, it is easy to focus on “being happy” and how hard I may want to work to be happy. I can think of all the ways I want to improve my life or maybe just wish that certain circumstances in my life would be different so that I can be happy. This focus may even find me making a list of “things to do” to be happier or maintain my own happiness. But if I focus on “God’s grace,” I realize that it is God’s work, not my own, that creates the happiness.

All I have to do is sit back and let him do the work.

We can see grace in the simple things of daily living. Grace doesn’t have to appear only in our big and complex struggles. God’s grace appears in all the things that happen every day that we simply take for granted. I encourage you to take time to enjoy a simple moment, just seeing God’s grace in that moment; be it the way the sun is shining into the room you are in right now or the text message you just received from a family member or friend who is just keeping in touch. Take time to see God’s work in this moment and realize the only “work” we have to do is trust him to provide our happiness. It’s that simple!

“From the fullness of grace, we have received one blessing after another.” ... John 1:16



Please send your 2016 Annual Contact/Officer Report Form to NSW Vice-President Elysia McGill. They can be found online if you need another copy.



Registration forms can be found online at www.nebraskasynod.org/welca. The following forms are located there: Autumn Renewal and Saved to Serve. Along with our updated NSW Directory



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 NSW 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 nsw.expressions@gmail.com. Content information can be sent via e-mail and is the preferred method.

May *Expressions* team members included Arlene Johnson plus layout editor. Additional contributors included Carol Bosshardt, Val Killingr, Kandy Pflaster, and Susan Watson..

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

BLESSED EASTER AND HAPPY SPRING!!

I am hoping everyone has enjoyed a blessed Conference Spring Gathering. I have heard wonderful things about the three that I was unable to attend. Thank you to Vice-President Elysia McGill for attending in my place. She enjoyed meeting many new ladies and found the day inspiring. The last four which I attended, were enjoyable.



Women of the ELCA held its annual Conference of Presidents in February using a theme of “The Ripple Effect.” It was a full weekend of learning, fellowship, and worship combined with fun and laughter. These days were spent at the Lutheran Center in Chicago with sixty-three other synodical presidents. A lot of information was received, good workshops attended, plus a book review on *Color of Water* by James McBride, an award winning book written by a black man about his white mother, a must read. New friends were made and reconnecting with friends met before. Pastor Rhonda Pruitt encouraged us “to jump ten feet high, thirty feet out from a standing position over a three foot fence” that we may have to face. This truly is a leap of faith. The workshop topics included leadership training, racial justice and implicit bias, and preparation for the Tenth Triennial Convention and Gathering in Minneapolis in July 2017. About \$5,000 in gift cards was collected for Lutheran Social Services of Illinois. During pre-conference events, the presidents viewed Women of the ELCA’s anti-human trafficking display from the ELCA Youth Gathering and turned in reports regarding our synods’ anti-trafficking efforts. At the 2014 Women of the ELCA Triennial Convention, voting members voted on a memorial to bring awareness to and prevent human trafficking. The synodical presidents also tested two triennial gathering-related exercises: a coloring sheet and a beading project. If you are interested in seeing them let me know as I have examples of both of them.

Linda Bushkofsky and Patti Austin offered ministry reports. President Austin asked us to think about three questions. “How did you come to be involved in Women of the ELCA? What do you think is God’s purpose for the ministry of the women in your synod? What vision do you have for the future of your synod and for Women of the ELCA?”

Linda Bushkofsky asked the synodical presidents to “take a look at where our ripples are leading us and how we can fulfill our purpose. Our passion is the driving force in everything we do. Embrace our passion.” She asked us to consider our legacy as participants in Women of the ELCA. “What will future historians write about Women of the ELCA in general? What will be our legacy? We can be reminded of whose shoulders we stand upon and challenged to lead into the future.”

Offering collected during the Sunday morning worship was \$6,960, with half going to the Chicago-based Partnership to Rescue Our Minors from Sexual Exploitation and half going to the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women’s organization.

The Holy Spirit is truly working in our synod. God is good. God is great. I am continually awed by His presence in my life as we travel this journey together on this earth. May you experience the peace that only our God can provide.

Nancy Johnson

Please note: Our NSWO is working to get information out to all congregational units about Human Trafficking. We will be taking part in the Ministry Fair at the Synod Assembly on Saturday, June 4 in Kearney. Be watching for ways to help by attending, providing supplies, or giving financially.



Central Conference Spring Gathering was held at Our Saviour's in Dannebrog on March 5. We had a good attendance not knowing about the weather. It was all about being happy. Pru'dance" gave us quite a show with humor of the 60's and 70's and a wonderful voice for singing.

The Christian Clowns from Bellevue shared their ministry of humor with us in the afternoon. The tangibles went to the Howard County Food Pantry. Elections were held, Deb Swedenburg was re-elected as the Central Coordinator.



Southern Prairie Conference Spring Gathering was held March 12, attended by more than fifty-five women who gathered at First Lutheran, Kearney. They enjoyed opening devotions by Pastor Sylvia High Karlsson, Elysia McGill's report from our NSWO President, Bishop Brian Maas' DVD Bible Study, and Chrissy Garton's Justice Advocacy and Human Trafficking presentation before they attended their first workshop of the day. Workshop presenters included Sue Brown (Health and Humor), Connie Stover (Spiritual Direction-Mission Field NE), and Mona Mueller (Lutheran World Relief Quilts and Kits).

Throughout the day they visited displays by Susan Medina from Lutheran Family Services, Heather Abbott from NLOM, Phyllis Erickson for the NSWO Human Trafficking Task Force, Ann Schultz's Fair Trade delicacies, as well as other NSWO and Saved to Serve displays.

After a baked potato bar with Jell-o salads and happy face cupcakes, First Lutheran's Middle School "Heavenly Treble Makers" and a Saved to Serve skit entertained us. Sandy Terry presented the Treasurer's Report, including a \$733 offering. Our slate of Conference Coordinator-Carol Mueller, Planning Committee Members-LaDonna Pendleton, Chrissy Garton, and Lu Krueger, and Nominating Committee Members-Teresa Christensen, Rose Remmers, Courtney Peeler, and Judy Gosswein were elected



NSWO Missionary

By SANDY OLSON, Global Missions Coordinator Appointee



In the February issue of the "Expressions" I wrote about our NSWO Sponsored Missionaries, Rev Sarah and Adam Erickson, serving in Cambodia as Country Coordinators for Young Adults in Global Missions (YAGM) and some background information on them personally. Have you e-mailed, checked their blog or Facebook? I hope many of you have and if not, I encourage you to do so. We have a covenant relationship with Sarah and Adam and that means getting to know them, what they are doing and experiencing and them getting to know us here in Nebraska.

E-mail: sarah.erickson@elca.org and adam.erickson@elca.org

Blog: yagmcambodia.wordpress.com

Facebook: facebook.com/yagmcambodia

Please remember them, YAGMs, the Lutheran Church in Cambodia and the Cambodian people in your prayers.

Many thanks for your generous support of our Covenant Sponsorship of Sarah and Adam through the NSWO Missionary Fund. Donations can be sent to our NSWO Treasurer Sandy Terry.

Fair Trade Products and Human Trafficking

Did you know that choosing Fair Trade products can help end Human Trafficking?

“People who are impoverished are especially vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. Fair Trade workers are paid a living wage so that their children don't have to work to support their family and can attend school instead. Profits from Fair Trade ventures are reinvested into the community through Fair Trade Funds that address social, economic, and environmental challenges in each community. Fair Trade certification guarantees that no child or forced labor was used in the production of goods.” From a UNICEF article, *END TRAFFICKING*.

Another reason to support Fair Trade and use their good quality products and help carry out our NSWO emphasis on Human Trafficking!

(Continued from page 4)

unanimously, and participants continued through two more workshops. Before the end of the day we laughed and sang, prayed in several ways, and the LWR workshop had assembled 126 Personal Care Kits, tied four fleece blankets, and three quilts for Lutheran World Relief, and several boxes of personal care items were also taken to the Kearney Safe Center as part of our Tangible Offerings.

Pastor Meg Duering gave a closing devotion before everyone returned home with an apple, cookies, and water for the road.

High Plains Conference Spring Gathering was held on March 19 at American Lutheran Church in Cozad. There were thirty-seven ladies in attendance for the spring day. The theme “Happy in God’s Grace” was carried out and celebrated. The theme verse of “A friendly smile makes you happy and good news makes you strong” was evident all day long, the participants could be seen with a friendly smile and there was lots of good news to make them stronger. There were three main activities for the day.

One was learning about a new way to pray. Kandy Pflaster and Carol Stark presented *Praying in Color*

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

by Sybil MacBeth. It was a new path to God with discussions of prayer frustrations and prayer dilemmas. Ladies attending found out that praying in color was active, meditative, and playful. All the women had a finished product of praying in color with the simple process to enhance their prayer life.

At lunch time there was an activity that the ladies wrote a concern or a joy on an egg filled with paint. Then they threw the egg at a white board to break the egg. The finished product after the eggs were thrown was the theme verse revealed. Many ladies asked to throw a couple of eggs. Many, many smiles were evident

The afternoon event was doing an activity called Bubbles for Watercolor art. The ladies picked the size of their canvas and put some adornments on the canvas before blowing colored bubbles. This was to create something that could be given to someone or to be placed in the woman's sacred space. There was lots of laughter and sharing of why they chose their ideas.

The business for the Women of the ELCA was carried out, with Conference Coordinator Gail Jurjens being elected. The ballot was not filled, two ladies Jo Anderson and Sharon Bohling were elected to the planning committee, however, there will be appointments to the nominating and planning committee. We heard from Elysia McGill, NSW Vice President who presented on behalf of our NSW President Nancy Johnson. Also an update by the new NSW Treasurer Sandy Terry was welcomed by all. Bishop Brian Maas delivered an excellent Bible study to enhance the chosen theme verse. A pulled pork sandwich, salad, and mixed vegetable was catered for our lunch. The ladies of Eustis provided the yummy desserts for lunch. The ladies unit from American in Gothenburg provided sacked goodies to send the ladies on their way at the end of the day.



Shine Your Light



Shine Your Light

St. John's Schuyler Women of the ELCA sponsored a community salad luncheon in August 2015 to provide funds to purchase supplies for the LWR school kits and personal care kits. Karen Henry personally made a total of 117 school bags that were filled on God's Work Our Hands on Sunday September 13, 2015. In addition to the 117 school kits, we shipped thirty-three quilts, five baby care kits, three fabric kits and fifty-eight personal care kits with enough funds to cover shipment aboard. —submitted by Lemay Anderson





Autumn Renewal — Calling All Models

Calling all *Fashionista's & Divas of the Lutheran Women* to a fun filled day on Saturday, October 8 for this year's **Autumn Renewal** at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd in Hastings. The theme for the Day will be to focus **on the many generations of women** in the Lutheran Churches of Nebraska. The program will be **YOU!!** We are looking for Mother-Daughter Duos; Grandmother-Granddaughter Duos; special themes – Antique Styles; Sport Themes; Cultural – Vintage, etc. You will even see a special presentation by the NSWO Board. The Autumn Renewal registration form is available online at www.nebraskasynod.org/welca and then click on the forms tab. We are also looking for models – yes – YOU to participate – contact Autumn Renewal Co-Chairs – Kandy Pflaster – 308-529-0151 or Sandy Terry – 402-957-4480 with your questions. Registration cost is \$18 - Please mail Registration Form by October 1, 2016!

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.)

May

- ☐ Share *Expressions* with members
- ☐ Publicize/Promote Autumn Renewal
- ☐ Remember in prayer the

SWO conventions this month

- 11 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 24 – NE Synod Staff Meeting

June

☐ Publicize/Promote Autumn Renewal

☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month

- 2 – Synod Council Meeting
- 2-4 – Synod Assembly
- 2-4 – Synod Youth Convo
- 15 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 18-24 – Synod Youth Mission Trip

July

- ☐ Publicize/Promote Saved to Serve Opportunity
- ☐ Publicize/Promote Autumn

Renewal

☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month

- 1 – *Expressions* deadline
- 12 – NE Synod Staff Meeting

August

☐ Share *Expressions* with members

☐ Publicize/Promote Autumn Renewal

☐ Remember in prayer the SWO conventions this month

- 18 – NE Synod Staff Meeting
- 19-20 – NE Synod Candidacy Retreat
- 25 – NE Synod Seeking the Spirit Within Commitment Retreat