



Good News

Jan/ Feb
2024

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, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

From our President

Glad Tidings! Winter has arrived and we celebrated Christmas, the arrival of Baby Jesus! Thank you, God, for sending your Son and all the blessings we have enjoyed! We need to remember that God is in control even if it seems like our World seems to be spinning out of control. I was not able to be at our NEIA SWO meeting in November, but Your NEIA Women of the ELCA Synod Board and Katie's Fund will be hosting Rejoice and Renew gathering that will take place on February 23rd and 24th at EWALU Stone Center, 35124 Hwy 13, Strawberry Point, IA which is 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point. Handicap accessible facility. Snow dates March 1, 2 Questions? contact: Christine Schmitt, candcschmitt@gmail.com 641-397-2572 or check the webpage at neiasynod.org God's Blessings to all of you! Enjoy the miracles of winter!

Sondra Nelson, President

Welcome to the Board, Christine Schmitt

I am married and have 4 children. 3 boys and a girl ages 17- 26. I work as a Hospitality specialist (janitorial/ caterer cook) at Hoover's Hatchery in Rudd. I live just north of Marble Rock and currently a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Rockford. I grew up in Bremer County: St. John's Lutheran Buck Creek where I helped with VBS and Sunday School as soon as I was old enough. After graduating from ISU, I returned home and attended Zion Lutheran in West Union with my parents until moving back to the Buck Creek area where I was active in Christian Ed., WELCA, Church Council, Choir and church janitor. I married and moved to Marble Rock and St. Paul's Lutheran. At St. Paul's, I was active with Christian Ed., pianist for Sunday school and worship, church council, community VBS, and restarting an active WELCA group that remained vibrant to the closing of the church in Oct. 2023. I am continuing the Good News Club, St. Paul's Christian education program. It meets on a weeknight in the Methodist church in Marble Rock. I became active with the synod WELCA around 2018 and am the chair for 3 River



Cluster. I am involved in girl scouts and cub scouts, including cub scout commissioner for the Lakeland district for Winnebago Council organizing day camps and cubmaster for Pack 4034 in Rockford. I hope to be a positive addition to the NEIA SWO organization. It is a joy to meet and make new friends and family.



Rejoice and Renew

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!
Philippians 4:4

This is an appreciation event, celebrating all of us, as women, uniquely created by God to serve others!

***When: Friday & Saturday, Feb 23-24, 1 or 2 days
(snow date is Mar 1-2)***

How much: \$35 or overnight, \$15 for one day

Includes: Food, games, crafts, Bible study, singing, fellowship, relaxation, renewal

Where: The EWALU Stone Retreat Center, near Strawberry Point

Registration Deadline is Monday Feb 19, 2024

Hosts: NE IA SWO and Katie's Fund

***Contact: Christine Schmitt, 641-397-2572 or
candcschmitt@gmail.com***

Go to [Women of the ELCA - Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.womenoftheelca.org/) or NE IA Women of the ELCA Facebook page to find the registration form.

Stewardship Committee

Within the Lutheran liturgical offertory prayers there are two phrases that make me think about my stewardship and how I can try to fulfill my life's offering. They are "...we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made..." and "you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time and our possessions..."

I try to fulfill these promises that I have made by being active in my church's activities, the WELCA Bible studies, being on our unit board, and serving on the NEIA SWO board. I was reluctant to make the commitment to the SWO board, but was urged to give it a try, with the assurance that I could count on much help given by the other members of the board. I feel so blessed to have taken the leap of faith and being welcomed by wonderful, helpful women that have served on the board. Even as the members have changed, I have found that the willingness of others being on the board has given me an amazing, larger circle of friends, sharing their offering as part of this organization.

The nominating committee for the SWO met on December 18 to start the search for women who would be willing to serve on the board to keep our service, dedication and stewardship of this organization moving forward. We will be looking for a President, Secretary, and 4 Board members. We are hopeful present members will agree to continue, but we would like others to prayerfully consider being part of this wonderful organization.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

Discipleship Committee

Living our Faith in God and sharing the Good news of Jesus Christ. That is discipleship. As a congregation we make Baptismal promises to the baptized. To teach, to tell, to love. The commitment to these promises are forever. Our church started the Good News Club over 5 years ago, because regular SS wasn't reaching our kids and their parents. We meet on Wednesdays, have a meal, a story, song, activity, and close with the Lord's Prayer. Our church closed in Oct, but the kids and the stories we share live on. The Methodist church in town now hosts the Good News Club. We have 3 families that come regularly and a few more that come occasionally. It is not the amount of people that is important. What is important is the stories and that they go to church. They learn about God and his promises. **AMEN!** Baptism promises: People of God do you promise to support and pray for them in their new life in Christ? To bring them the word of God, teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed and the 10 Commandments so that they may learn to trust God? Proclaiming Christ through word and deed, caring for others and the world God made, nurturing them in faith and prayer and giving them the Holy Scriptures— That is truly a promise kept!

Submitted by Christine Schmitt

CALENDAR

Feb 23-24	Rejoice & Renew Retreat @ Ewalu
Mar 1	Deadline for Mar/ April <i>Good News</i>
Mar 9	SWO Board @ Synod Office
May 1	Deadline for May/ June <i>Good News</i>
May 4	SWO Board @ Synod Office
Jun 14	SWO Board @ Redeemer, Waverly
Jun 15	SWO 36 th Annual Gathering @ Redeemer, Waverly
July 1	Deadline for July/ Aug <i>Good News</i>

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President's Sparks

Our winter retreat at the Stone Center in Strawberry Point is scheduled for Feb. 21 and 22. Come and spend the night or just come for the day! See Discipleship article for more information.

On March 22 the women's synod board will have a meeting in Waverly @ the synod office @ 9am with all *interested people /cluster leaders invited*. We will be finalizing June party gathering activities.

We are having a sharing party on June 14, 2025 @. Zion Lutheran Church in Oelwein. This fun is for everyone. There will be a few interest sessions and "new" circle sessions. Circle sessions are a chance to share the good things happening in your church community. Ideas might be: Food needs, clothing and home needs, school needs for kids, different ways to worship, supporting your members. We look forward to lively discussion and fun.

We are giving out educational scholarships again this year, so look for the forms on the webpage [Women of the ELCA - Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA](#) and each church will receive a registration form, flier, and scholarship form.

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Justice Committee

Lily Bags are given out to Crisis Intervention and hospitals for women in crisis. Many times, women need to surrender their clothing as evidence in hospital emergency rooms. This program has been going on for approximately four years and over 365 bags have been distributed. It started in a nine-county area and has now increased to 15 counties. Each bag contains essential items such as a shirt, pants, underwear, socks and sports bra. In each bag there is a card with a lily on the front and an explanation of the lily. In part it says, "*you are beautiful like the lily and you can draw strength from deep within you – your core.*" These bags are distributed by St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mason City, with assistance from Our

Saviour's Lutheran Church. This is one of our missions for justice. Psalm 101:1 "*I will sing of your love and justice to you, Lord, I will sing praise.*"

Submitted by Janice Nelson

Stewardship Committee

Katharina von Bora Luther was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie's Fund, Women of the ELCA honors her life by supporting global connections, leadership development and living theology. Our churchwide organization has started a special campaign to honor Katharina's legacy to us today. 2122 is a \$1 million campaign for Katie's Fund that is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry. Please consider giving to continue Women of the ELCA into the next 100 years. [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#) or call **800-638-3522**.

Discipleship Committee

The women at St. Paul in Lime Springs are getting ready to lead a once-a-month Community Free Soup Supper, January - March. It is open to our whole community. Last year it was very well attended and people enjoyed socializing in the middle of winter. What is your women's group doing during the long winter months?

The Board is excited for everyone to join us for our Mary and Martha retreat at EWALU Stone Center, Strawberry Point on Friday, Feb. 21, 4 pm and Saturday, Feb. 22 till 3pm. If you are unable to come on Friday please join us on Saturday for all the fun activities! There will be Bible study, hymn sing, games, time to work on your own craft projects or watch and learn a new one. On Saturday, Pastor Susan & Norman Friedrich will speak to us about the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) "Bridges of Hope." Registration is due Feb. 19th. The cost is \$35.00 for both days or \$15.00 for just Saturday.

O God, your Son, Jesus Christ enjoyed rest and refreshment in the home of Mary and Martha of Bethany: Give us the will to love you, open our hearts to hear you, and strengthen our hands to serve you in others for his sake; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Submitted by Becky Paul

Go to [Women of the ELCA - Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA](#) to get registration forms!



Mary and Martha fun for all
Friday Feb 21 and Sat. Feb. 22, 2025

YOU and your friends are invited to a retreat to Celebrate all the Marys and Marthas! This is a Celebration of YOU!
Who is welcome? Any woman who belongs to the ELCA and their friends.
A Woman, a Christian, a helper, a doer, a listener, a learner.

Activities: bible board games, mixer game, puzzle, **bring your own crafting projects** (everything is welcome including: Quilting, bandage rolling, knit/crochet, etc)
Celebrating and learning and doing.



Friday Feb 21st arrive anytime after 4pm
join soup supper, hymn sing, game, puzzle and crafting time.
Stay overnight and meals for \$35
Beds, bedding, and towels included (Share a room)
What to bring: comfortable clothes, craft projects opt, yourself with a joyful heart

Saturday Feb. 22nd: come for the day,
breakfast/ coffee @ 8am; Noon meal,
bible study, hymn sing, crafting time and lots of fellowship
Afternoon speakers: Pastor Susan & Norman Friedrich from the National Alliance on Mental Illness "Bridges of Hope"

Welcome @ 9am, Day ends @ 3pm
Day only rate for meals and building usage \$15
Registration deadline: Monday Feb 19th

EWALU Stone Center, 35124 Hwy 13, Strawberry Point, IA
which is 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point. Handicap accessible facility.

hosted by Your NE IA Women of the ELCA Synod Board and Katie's Fund
Snow dates Feb. 28- March 1
questions ? contact: Christine Schmitt candcschmitt@gmail.com
641-397-2572 or cell 641-220-5361

Event plan:

Friday night:
4-6pm Coffee/ drinks/ mixer/ settling in/ visiting
6-7pm meal: soup and sandwiches(devotional reading)
7pm hymn sing followed by activities (bring your own projects, games, puzzles, coloring/crafts)

Saturday:
8-9am: Coffee/ breakfast: egg bake, breakfast potatoes
check-in for day people
9am: Welcome, Hymn Sing
9:30: Bible Study
10am: Local project showcase "What do you do to help in your area?" discussion
11am: project/crafting time and visiting, sharing and/or learning a new skill
Noon meal: hot beef/hot turkey, mashed potatoes, green beans
1pm: speakers: Pastor Susan & Norman Friedrich from the National Alliance on Mental Illness "Bridges of Hope"
2pm share your crafts/projects
2:30pm Hymn sing top 10 count down, send off

Bold Women's Day will be observed on Sunday, February 23. On this day we celebrate all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. For more information on planning a celebration at your church, go to [Bold Women's Day - Women of the ELCA](#)

CALENDAR

Feb 21-2	EWALU Winter Retreat
Feb 23	Bold Women's Sunday
Mar 22	SWO/ Cluster Meeting in Waverly
Apr 5	Cluster D Spring Gathering @ Highland Lutheran
Jun 14	M & M Sharing Party, TBD

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President

It is hard to believe another year has passed by and I will be stepping down as your president. I want to thank all of you that supported me during this past year. Being a newbie, there was a huge learning curve.

Our conferences have had several programs and LWR in gatherings around the synod. We are so thankful for all your efforts. LWR totals are: quilts-8203; school kits-4604; Personal care kits-3624; Baby kits-1524; Fabric bundles-159; Blankets-66. Thank you WELCA groups for all your serving throughout our synod.

Rejoice and Renew was the theme for the women's retreat that took place on February 23-24 at the Stone Center EWALU, Strawberry Point. It was a great opportunity to connect with other people in NE IA.

This year's NE IA SWO Convention was held June 15th at Redeemer Lutheran in Waverly, with a total of 53 attendees. Total offering was \$2,235.

Interest sessions were Mike Knipp LSI, Kim Dickey GHM, Karen Weltzin Joni and Friends. We had bandage rolling during the business meeting, for those who are not voting members. Displays: Joni and Friends, Our Savior of Mason City- Lily Bags; Kim Dickey-GHM fliers and pictures; LSI; Care for Creation-Donna Busch.

2024-26 SWO Board Members elected were Christine Schmitt, President; Chris VanDeventer, Secretary; Board Members: Jo Ann Brunsvold, Donna Busch, Darlene Emery, Carolyn Loftaas, Janice Nelson, Becky Pahl, Karen Weltzin. Continuing Board Members (per resolution) Alice Greimann, Vice President, Nancy Poppe, Treasurer, Darlene Emery.

2023/2024 Board Goals

1. Rejoice with the women of NEIA ELCA.
2. Rejoice in all God's gifts revealed in women of the ELCA and renew their commitment.
3. Renew communication and rejoice in those contacts.

The 13th Triennial Convention and Gathering will take place in Des Moines, IA on July 14-16, 2026, with the Gathering following from July 17-19. The web address is www.WELCAtg.org. You will be able to get information and register at this site.

Blessings to all, Sondra Nelson

Justice Committee

What a wonderful gathering held by the NE IA SWO! Interest sessions shared so much information about three of the charitable organizations in our region: Lutheran Services in Iowa, Joni and Friends, and Global Ministries. What was learned and shared in each session should make each of us reflect on what we can do for those who need help: the immigrants and refugees, the mobility challenged, and those needing medical care. But there are also others: prisoners, the hungry, homeless, and others living with chronic afflictions or mental issues.

We simply need to open our eyes, hearts, and minds to know where to share our resources with those in need and to educate others. Rolling bandages, making quilts and care kits, donating unused wheelchairs, canes, and walkers are just the start. Treating the marginalized among us should be a daily part of our lives.

Jesus said: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

1 John 3:17

Submitted by Chris VanDeventer

Stewardship Committee

Our annual gathering was held on Saturday, June 15, at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Waverly. The offering collected that day was \$1,705. An additional amount of \$530 had been sent in earlier. The total offering collected was \$2,235.00. \$1,117.50 was given to Churchwide, \$558.75 to ELCA World Hunger, and \$558.75 to Joni and Friends. Kim Dickey from Global Health Ministries collected rolled bandages that were rolled by participants. One wheelchair was donated for use by Joni and Friends Chair Corp. In kind donations for LSI included 10 tubs of kits for new immigrants, \$150 cash donation, \$250 in Walmart gift cards, and one Kwik Star gas card for \$25. Other donations to LSI included eighteen towels, eighteen

kitchen towels, twelve toothpaste, twelve tooth brushes, seventeen bars of soap, thirteen shampoo, thirteen combs, ten body wash, two fitted sheets, two flat bed sheets, two pillows with pillow cases, sixteen small quilts, sixteen large quilts, twenty disinfectant wipes, miscellaneous kids' games, and lots of clothes hangers. The SWO board thanks everyone for their generosity.

Submitted by Karen Weltzin

Discipleship Committee

Our 2024 gathering was June 15th. We had very good interest sessions full of discipleship. Joni and friends collects manual wheelchairs and parts. The chairs are refurbished and given to people who don't have access to wheelchairs. Volunteers go and outfit the chairs for each individual. You can learn more @ [Wheels for the World™ |Joni and Friends](#) . Global Health Ministry collects supplies for hospitals and clinics in rural areas. We rolled bandages for them and collected suitcases for transport. You can learn more @ [Global Health Ministries \(ghm.org\)](#) . LSI/ Lutheran Services in Iowa explained that even though the Bremwood residential facility is now closed, the LSI ministry is still strong! They continue with programming for families throughout Iowa. One of their newer focus areas is working with legally immigrated families in Iowa. They have starter kits you can build to help families starting over. Our in-kind offering was gathered for LSI. We were able to give them bathroom supplies, bedding kits, wipes, clothes hangers, and games for kids. Also \$425 in gift cards and cash donations were given to LSI. You can learn more @ [Home main - Lutheran Services in Iowa \(lsiowa.org\)](#)

Submitted by Christine Schmitt

Decorah LWR Spring In-gathering

Saturday, May 4, 2024, was the LWR Spring- In-Gathering at Olson's Explosives in Decorah. Donations were received from Upper Iowa River and Shepherd of The Hills. We also received donations from West Paint Creek, Waukon, IA; Trinity Lutheran Church, Spring Grove, MN; and St. Peter Lutheran, Dubuque, IA. A total of 41 churches, with 705 boxes, brought donations for workers from Postville, Elgin, Elkader, Limes Springs, and Cresco to unload and stack. Many thanks to all who helped with the "heavy lifting", to Olson's Explosives for their continued support, and especially to every individual for the countless hours spent quilting, organizing, and assembling various kits. We CAN make a difference.....We DO make a difference. Saturday, November 2, 2024, is the next date for LWR Fall In - Gathering.

1686 Quilts
119 School Kits
27 Fabric Kits

1102 Per. Care Kits
524 Baby Care Kits
3 Blankets

Submitted by Carol Maki

CALENDAR

Aug 3 SWO Transitional Meeting
Oct 5 Cluster D Gathering @
St Paul, Lime Springs
Oct 12 C/E/H LWR Ingathering, LaPorte City
Nov 2 LWR In-gathering @ Decorah

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President's Sparks

Hello to all the Women of the Church and others who make things happen. We had a great time at our Sharing Party in June with 32 people attending. We had 4 speakers and a great worship service. A special thank you to Pastor Liz Bell for coming and helping with the question/ answer portion of our service. Also thank you goes to our other speakers from LSI, EWALU and Shepherd of the Hills and a shout out to Zion Lutheran in Oelwein for hosting us.

A couple of questions were given to Mike Knipp from LSI and he sent back these answers:

1. **Do children in detention get to keep the quilts that are given to them?** As far as LSI knows, they do get to keep them.
2. **What early childhood programs are covered in our areas?** Black Hawk County Birthing hospitals are staffed 5 days a week by LSI. Starting in Oct. 2024, coordinated efforts gave information out to 450 new parents. They had a baby shower where 200 parents received resources and education. I asked what they needed. Early childhood programs can use baby blankets, potty seats, board books and developmental toys for ages 0-3, , high chairs that strap to a regular table chair, Moby wraps, and retractable sun shades for the car.

Regular sized quilts are welcome for all other programs: refugee, detention center youth, host families, and transitional housing for young adults that age out of the system.

Now looking into the future, plans are being made for the fall field trip to Clayton County, Oct. 18. Hope you can come and enjoy the day.

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Discipleship Committee

When we practice discipleship we give our love in the form of service, even at the price of sacrifice. We enthusiastically learn about Jesus and his teachings. BUT if we stop at this point, we fail to complete the second part of discipleship – spreading the word. Spreading the word can be as easy as bringing someone to circle, letting others help you in a community church pantry or garden, asking the neighborhood kids to help clean a yard for someone who can't or taking lunch to a farmer during harvest season. Let it grow and see the benefits you will reap!

In the ELCA we have "God's Word, Our Hands" Sunday, Sept. 7th. This isn't meant to be only one day of the year. It's meant to be a starting point for getting out in the community and sharing the love of God, the gift of grace given by Jesus, and the energy of the Holy Spirit with others will melt a heart and let the Spirit enter.

The discipleship road isn't always newly paved asphalt. We know that it may take years of enduring potholes before the new road is paved, so too is the way of Christ. Nothing comes easy, but endurance will strengthen and challenge you in your service to others.

Holy One, you stretch wide your tent that all may be welcomed in, and in Jesus you stretched out your hands in expansive love for a weary and wounded world. Help us to reach out with your own wounded hands of love, that through us your life may be known in the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Submitted by Becky Paul



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!

Justice Committee

Our purpose statement (see header for this newsletter), was quite evident in our sharing party held in Oelwein on June 14th. Thank you for all who attended. Our ‘brag’ board certainly showed our commitment to these goals. Examples:

- Immanuel, Cresco – 14 years of free clothing give-away for school children; donate and visit Pine Ridge Indian Reservation for 30 years
- Zion Lutheran, West Union – cookie walk fundraiser, quilts and LWR kits
- Zion Lutheran, Oelwein – LWR quilts and personal care kits, Global Health rolled bandages
- Zion St. John Lutheran, Sheffield – sponsor and provide program and treats for local care center; quilt auction for campership assistance
- Our Savior’s, Mason City – Little Free Pantry (food & personal care items); volunteer at Community Kitchen.

I recently volunteered at the Community Kitchen. It was very surprising to learn that it has been serving the Mason City community for 43 years and the need is growing. In the last five years the program has grown from serving 806 adults and 82 children to 1346 adults and 282 children.

We all need to continue our mission and serve our neighbors in need, both here and abroad.

Submitted by Jan Nelson

LWR Totals

Saturday, May 3, 2025 was the LWR Spring In-Gathering Day at Olson’s Explosives in Decorah, Iowa. We received donations from 34 churches in Upper Iowa River and Shepherds Of The Hills clusters and Trinity Lutheran, Spring Grove, MN. Workers from Calmer, Decorah, McGregor, and Postville churches were busy unloading and stacking 594 boxes in the truck.

Donation Totals were: 1423 Quilts, 673 Personal Care Kits, 174 School Kits, 409 Baby Care Kits, 23 Fabric Kits, and 5 Blankets.

Many thanks to all who helped with the “heavy lifting” (loading the truck), to Olson’s Explosives for their continued support, and especially to each and every individual for the countless hours spent quilting, organizing, and assembling various kits. We CAN and DO make a difference!

Submitted by Carol Maki & Sue Darling

2026 Triennial Update

The next Triennial for the Women of the ELCA will be July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines!! This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, especially those who have not had been, to experience this national event, in our own backyard! Because it is so close, it makes it more affordable, even if you want to attend for just one day! The theme is *I am Worthy* registration opened on July 15, 2025. You can find more information at [New Triennial Event Page - Women of the ELCA](#). Our SWO offers a scholarship if you need help to offset the cost of registration. You can find the form on the Facebook page or the WELCA webpage. Don’t miss this once in a lifetime chance!!

2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines:

www.WELCAtg.org

CALENDAR

- Aug 23 SWO Board Meeting
- Oct 4 Cluster D Fall Gathering, Zion, West Union
- Oct 11 LWR In-Gathering, Albert Lea
LWR In-Gathering, St John, Sumner
- Oct 18 SWO Field Trip
- Oct 25 Cluster B Fall Gathering, Zion, Oelwein
- Nov 1 Triennial Scholarship App Due
LWR In-Gathering, Decorah

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Rejoice and Renew Recap

Rejoice & Renew was the theme for the Women's retreat that took place on Feb 23-24 at the Stone Center EWALU just north of Strawberry Point. It was a great opportunity to connect with other people in Northeast Iowa. Lots of eating, laughing, playing games, coloring, talking, learning and sharing. There were short devotions and Bible study about spreading the word. Did you know that the average Lutheran shares their faith every 67 years?

We also learned about Global Health Ministries and rolled bandages for them. GHM was started in the 60's by Lutheran health workers. They realized the overseas rural hospitals needed help with supplies. They started GHM in their garage, expanded to a storage unit and now have a warehouse in the Twin Cities. They help the medical facilities (most are Lutheran hospitals and clinics) who request items. Items can be anything from x ray machines, ultrasound, to scissors and medicine. Last year they sent cargo containers full of medical supplies to countries in Africa, India and Central America. Many of these clinics serve 10,000 people. Most are large areas with small villages. It is the little things that make the most difference. The rolled bandages that we make out of old sheets are used to tie IVs in place or to hold dressings on wounds. They also have things you can make for newborns, baby hats, quilts. They also have a suitcase ministry. You can donate old suitcases and they use them when they go to different countries to take medical supplies to the clinics they visit. They are packed and then left, so they always need more suitcases. We had 22 women gathered and they rolled enough bandages to fill a suitcase. Many sheets were ripped into strips and 7 bandage rollers were cranking.

Like to help and learn more? Our next gathering is June 15th at Redeemer Lutheran in Waverly.

Submitted by Christine Schmitt

Stewardship Committee

When I think of stewardship, it makes me think of things I did with my mom when I was growing up. I remember we would bring a hot dish to a family that had lost a loved one or had surgery or was ill. Sometimes we would visit someone in the nursing home and at Christmas we would go Christmas caroling. Whenever there was a fund raiser in church, we would prepare a food item to help

raise money for Luther League or other related church projects. These memories are still very fresh in my mind and helped me learn how to help others. This stewardship and hospitality continue today in my adult life. Continuing these traditions is vital and gives us better insight into the current needs of others. In our church, Burr Oak Lutheran, we have a "Be Jesusy" event for all our church members to participate in. One event was to invite someone to attend a Christmas Eve or Christmas Day Worship. We also prepared and sent care packages to our Military in our church and the SS children made cards to be included with the care packages. We also made sack lunches and brought them to the farmers in the fields to tell them "Thank you." Just recently our church had a potluck and then put together birthday kits to be distributed to our local food bank. These kits included a cake pan, cake mix, cake frosting, birthday candles and birthday supplies. We all can benefit from the opportunities for stewardship and service. This is Graceful living. We have a common vision as women of faith to seek renewal and transformation, not just for ourselves but for the greater community. 1 Peter 4:10, *As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*

Submitted by Darlene Emory

Discipleship Committee

Going back to Biblical times, you may recall that a disciple was someone who studied under a valued teacher. Christians today view it as a follower of Jesus the Christ, who guides and leads us by his example. Jesus says, "*Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*"

I was taught this years ago: A disciple is someone who, by God's grace is learning to:

+**Be With Jesus** – to know and walk with Him in all of your life.

+**Become like Jesus** – choose to be more Christ-like in our character.

+**Live like Jesus** – how would Jesus handle this situation.

Let's continue in your journey "learning by God's grace."

Submitted by Jo Ann Brunsvold

Fall LWR Totals

November 4, 2023 was the LWR - Fall - In - Gathering Day at Olson's Explosives in Decorah We received donations from Clusters D, B, & I. We also received donations from Trinity Lutheran and Blackhamer Faith; Old West Paint Creek and Old East Paint Creek, Norway, and St. Peter. Thank you to the workers from First in Cresco & St. Paul in Postville. 941 boxes were loaded into the truck filled with 1805 quilts, 571 personal care kits, 1811 school kits, 615 baby kits, 53 fabric kits and 33 blankets. We CAN make a difference...We DO make a difference.

Submitted by Carol Maki & Sue Darling

Justice Committee

"The Biblical role of women is to live in such a way that glorifies God – to obey the teachings of Jesus, to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed, to trust the Lord as Provider and Protector, and to follow Christ." (Paul Maxwell. Thithe.ly.com). This Biblical role fell on the shoulders of so many women in the Bible – Mary, the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Ruth, Hannah, Rachel, Deborah, Esther, Elizabeth, to name a few. Their situations were difficult. Women who were childless until late in their lives, who lost husbands and status and who worked so hard to care for and save others.

All these women were stretched seemingly beyond limits, yet they persevered, they gave, they survived, and they continued to care and show justice for others. Proverbs 31 tells us, "Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised." This fear is a sense of "wonder" that comes as a result of Christian love and respect for God. A willingness to obey God. And just like those women in the Bible, our "fear" of the Lord finds us caring for our neighbors, making blankets and quilts, rolling bandages, shelving in the food pantry, taking a casserole to a grieving family, and sincerely saying the words, "How can I help you." Just let that "fear", the sense of wonder and respect for God, take over in your life.

Submitted by Donna Busch

Cluster Gatherings

❖ April 13 Living Water Cluster G Spring Salad Luncheon @ Our Savior's, Mason City, 8:30 am to noon. Speaker will be Nancy Jewell from Freedom Inn His Grace Ministry. RSVP to Nancy Nielsen, 641-420-6562 by April 10.

❖ April 27 Little Flock Cluster B Spring Fling @ St. John's - Luana 9a-1p. Themed program starts with 2 Corinthians 5:17, with guest speaker Director Jim Langhus, of the Monona Butterfly Garden & Trail. Please RSVP by April 17 to Betty Handke : handbett@netel.net, or call the St. John's church at 563-539-2321, stjohnsph@alpinecom.net

CALENDAR

Apr 13	Cluster G Gathering @ Our Savior's, Mason City
Apr 27	Cluster B Gathering @ St John, Luana
May 1	Deadline for May/ June <i>Good News</i>
May 4	SWO Board @ Synod Office LWR Ingathering, Decorah
Jun 14	SWO Board @ Redeemer, Waverly
Jun 15	SWO 36 th Annual Gathering @ Redeemer, Waverly
July 1	Deadline for July/ Aug <i>Good News</i>

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Justice Committee

Check out these resources available on the Women of the ELCA website:

Called to be Political Bible Study:
[Calledtobepolitical.pdf](#)
Human Trafficking [Social Justice in Religion, Ending Trafficking | Women of the ELCA](#)
Racial Justice Bible Study [Racial Justice Advocacy Network resources - Women of the ELCA](#)
Domestic Violence [Domestic Violence - Women of the ELCA](#)

Stewardship Committee

As our faith journey continues toward Easter, how can we be good stewards of God's gifts?

Years ago, I clipped an article about being a good steward. The article listed one of the qualities as "generous: willing to share and to give what you have." This isn't just giving our weekly monetary offerings. It includes being generous with our talents that we can share with others. This could be volunteering to be a Sunday School teacher, joining the church choir, being an usher, volunteering to be on the church council or women's SWO board, offering to be a share-a-ride driver, etc. We can also give our time to visit shut-ins. What qualities would you include to define a good steward? I would add, being humble, grateful and prayerful.

When thinking of stewardship, this verse comes to mind. *So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.* (1Corinthians 10:31) Sharing our time, money, talents, and faith with others is being a good steward of gifts God has blessed you with!

Submitted by Jo Ann Brunsvold

LWR – 2024 Fall - In - Gathering

Saturday, November 2, 2024, was the LWR Fall In-Gathering at Olson's Explosives in Decorah. Along with donations from Upper Iowa River and Shepherds Of The Hills clusters, we also received donations from West Paint Creek, Waukon; Trinity and Black Hammer, Spring Grove, MN; Scheie, Mabel, MN; and St. Peter, Dubuque.

Thank you to workers from Postville, Calmer, Springfield, Burr Oak, and Hesper churches for unloading and stacking 930 boxes in the truck.

Donation Totals: 1650 Quilts, 762 Personal Care Kits, 1755 School Kits, 595 Baby Care Kits, 63 Fabric Kits & 7 Blankets. We CAN make a difference.....We DO make a difference. Next gathering will be Saturday, May 3.

*Submitted by
Carol Maki & Sue Darling*

CALENDAR

Apr 5	Cluster D Spring Gathering @ Highland Lutheran
Apr 12	LWR In-Gathering, St John Sumner
Apr 26	Cluster B Spring Gathering @ St John, Arlington
	Cluster G Spring Gathering @ Rock Creek, Osage
May 3	LWR In-Gathering, Decorah
May 17	LWR In-Gathering, Albert Lea
Jun 14	M & M Sharing Party @ Zion, Oelwein
Jul 15	2026 Triennial Registration opens
Oct 11	LWR In-Gathering, Albert Lea

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2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines:

www.WELCAtg.org

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neiasynod.org/women-of-the_-ELCA-



Good News

May/ June
2024

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, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President

Spring has arrived along with the robins and other songbirds that have been gone for the winter months. We are in the season of renewal so let us rejoice for all of God's creation. I hope everyone had a wonderful and blessed Easter with family and friends. He is risen indeed! Indeed, He is risen! We are so blessed to be Easter people.

I hope everyone was able to make it to their Cluster meetings these past couple of months. There was a lot of good information gathered from the Cluster meetings. There is a lot of energy now going into our SWO convention on June 15th. This year's theme is "Rejoice and Renew!" I encourage you to attend. We will be rolling bandages and have three interest sessions, (LSI, Mike Knipp); (GHM, Kim Dickey) and (Joni and friends, Karen Weltzin). We hope that you will learn from and enjoy this experience. There will also be the opportunity to take part in the rolling of bandages and take back what you have learned to your WELCA groups so they can also add this to their in-kind mission. And as always a nice luncheon and door prizes will be given out. Hope to see you all there!

Blessings to all,
Sondra Nelson

Justice Committee

At our June 15 gathering we will be having three breakout sessions. The first session will be Mike Knipp from LSI who will update us on the closing of the Bremwood residential care facility and the changes in emphasis to immigrant and refugee programs. The second session will be *Global Health Ministries* presented by Kim Dickey. Be sure to stop and learn about the rolling of bandages to send across the world. The third session will be *Joni and Friends* presented by Karen Weltzin. Karen just returned from a trip to Guatemala. We hope these presentations make you

more aware of the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world and at home in Iowa.

The Gathering will be at Redeemer in Waverly with coffee and registration at 8:00 am, followed by worship, sessions, meeting and lunch from 8:30 am to 2 pm. The registration form can be found on the Women of the ELCA website. [Gathering-Registration-2024-C.pdf](#) (neiasynod.org) Be sure to mark your calendars for the 15th.

Submitted by Jo Ann Brunsvold

Stewardship Committee

Monetary donations for the gathering will be divided between Church-wide WELCA (50%), ELCA World Hunger (25%) and Joni and Friends (25%).

LSI will be our in-kind gift recipient. Here is a list of needed items:

Personal care: body wash, deodorant- solid only, shampoo, conditioner, ethnic hair products, Toothpaste, toothbrushes (individual), towels

Towel bundles: bath towel, wash cloths, toothbrush, toothpaste, ChapStick/lip gloss, shampoo, conditioner, solid deodorant, body wash

Bedding Bundles: sheets, pillowcases (twin bed)

School supplies: acrylic paints, brushes, paper or canvases, construction paper, markers (washable) Expo Markers, journals, craft items or kits

Games: Speak Out, Mad Gab, Pie Face, Jenga, UNO, Hedbanz

Kitchen items: dish towels, dish rags, pot holders, Tupperware, plastic drinking cups

Gift Cards/ Misc:

Wal-Mart gift cards, gas cards, Earbuds, basketballs, shower caddies

Submitted by SWO Board

Discipleship Committee

What better way to show your faith, than to join other Women of the ELCA for our annual gathering, June 15th, Redeemer Lutheran in Waverly. We want to promote the scholarships that are available. First is the Gathering Scholarship which will pay for the registration for a first-time attendee. What a great way to experience fellowship and the chance to learn of ways to help others. The registration form can be found on the NEIA SWO webpage, [2024-Gathering-Scholarship-registration.pdf \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.neiasynod.org/2024-Gathering-Scholarship-registration.pdf).

Another scholarship is the Triennial Gathering, to be held in Des Moines, IA, July 17-19, 2026. This scholarship registration is due by November 1, 2025. This is a wonderful gathering of the women of the ELCA from all over the United States and its territories. [Scholarship-Application-for-2026-Triennial.pdf \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.neiasynod.org/Scholarship-Application-for-2026-Triennial.pdf)

Our third scholarship is an educational scholarship for Women of the ELCA in our synod. The scholarship is for women who want to continue their education, whether it is at a college or a training program. [2024-Educational-Scholarship-application.pdf \(neiasynod.org\)](https://www.neiasynod.org/2024-Educational-Scholarship-application.pdf) What a great way to help with education costs.

Submitted by Jo Ann Brunsvold

Little Flock Cluster Recap

Little Flock Cluster B met Sat. April 27 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Luana, with 57 in attendance and 1 Vicor, Jeremy Wolfe. God's Creation of Butterflies was the theme of our gathering and our presenter was Jim Langhaus from the Butterfly Garden in Monona. Jim has tagged 6000 Monarch butterflies since 1990, with 100 being found in the south. Jim has been one of many volunteers that started this beautiful park after attending an Earth Day 2000 program. This group has transformed an area that collected trash into a terraced garden with a bridge over the watershed area. The park contains a Gazebo, a swift bird tower, hosta, perennial, and memorial gardens, including 2 miles of paved trails. Area 4-H, FFA, school children, and the St. Paul community have worked to make this area free to the public and attractive to butterflies and bees. Fresh cinnamon rolls were shared from St. John's in Farmersburg and a lasagna dinner at noon by the Luana WELCA ladies. There was a short video shared that day from

the ladies of St. John's that fit perfectly with the theme, however, the message was so powerful in everyday life.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=dQ26D_Ck158

CALENDAR

Jun 1	3C Synod Event @ Wartburg
Jun 14	SWO Board @ Redeemer, Waverly
Jun 15	SWO 36 th Annual Gathering @ Redeemer, Waverly
July 1	Deadline for July/ Aug <i>Good News</i>
Oct 5	Cluster D Gathering @ St Paul, Lime Springs

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NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!



Good News

May/ June 2025

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President's Sparks

Hello all Mary and Martha people. It's time to party!

A sharing party on June 14, 2025 @. Zion Lutheran Church in Oelwein is for everyone. There will be interest sessions from EWALU, LSI, Synod programs and Shepherd of the Hills in St. Olaf. and "new" circle sessions where you can talk with others about what is working and to share blessings for your congregations.



There is no business meeting this year. Instead, we look forward to lively discussion and fun. We are giving out educational scholarships again this year. Each church was emailed a registration form, flier, and scholarship form. These forms are also available on the WELCA webpage and the Facebook page.

I have been thinking of the basketful of blessings we are all given. It is shown in all the work you have been doing in LWR and other work you do for others. You are a Blessing!

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

2026 Triennial Update

The next Triennial for the Women of the ELCA will be July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines!! This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, especially those who have not had been, to experience this national event, in our own backyard! Because it is so close, it makes it more affordable, even if you want to attend for just one day! The theme is *I am Worthy* and one of the speakers will be Martha Ambarangu, who is a Pastor in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania and a New Testament PhD Candidate at the Lutheran School of Theology in

Chicago. Registration opens on July 15, 2025. You can find more information at [New Triennial Event Page - Women of the ELCA](#). Our SWO offers a scholarship if you need help to offset the cost of registration. You can find the form on the Facebook page or the WELCA webpage. Don't miss this once in a lifetime chance!!

Discipleship Committee

Christian discipleship is the process by which disciples grow in the Lord Jesus Christ and are equipped by the Holy Spirit to overcome the pressures and trials of this present life and become more and more Christlike. This process requires believers to respond to the Holy Spirit's prompt to examine their thoughts, words, and actions. I was recently prompted by the Holy Spirit to answer the call to go on a Wheels for the World mission outreach to Nepal. We took wheelchairs to adults and children who had a disability. In Nepal, a disability is considered a curse or punishment for a past sin. It was a humbling and rewarding experience to serve the people of Nepal in this way. Hinduism is the main religion in Nepal and Christianity is discouraged. It is the first time I traveled to a country where we couldn't give out Bibles. Despite that, the people were very open to hearing about Jesus and allowing us to pray with them. This trip was way out of my comfort zone, but I am so glad I answered the call to go. This trip reminded me that Jesus is with us always and will be right beside us wherever He calls us to share the Good News, whether it is with our neighbors here at home or across the ocean.

Submitted by Karen Weltzin



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!

Justice Committee

Justice is equity and impartiality, mercy and compassion. Justice includes serving God in ways that brings healing and wholeness to the church, the society and the world. Justice is integral to the practice of faith. Micah 6:8 states, *What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?* In Jeremiah 31:15-17, Rachel wept. She did not shed just a few tears, she wept bitterly, uncontrollably, loud, nonstop and unforgettably. Rachel refused to be comforted for herself and her children. On the first Sunday in May, Rachel's Day is observed by Women of the ELCA. It is a time set aside to mourn the loss of our children and to renounce the forces of violence and fear. Much has been done to make us aware of gun violence, but it doesn't seem to be enough. In all 50 states, gun laws have expanded for gun owners making it legal for qualified individuals to carry guns—even automatic weapons. This means more children are exposed to gun violence and the trauma, physical, mental, and emotional harm and even death than ever before. Scripture can help us find common ground and we must always remember—when we ask for help in this chaotic world – that God is always listening when we ask.

Submitted by Darlene Emery

Stewardship Committee

As we move away from the Easter season, we are so thankful that Jesus was the one to save us from our sins. We move into spring, receiving the much-needed rain for the anticipated crops in the fields and gardens, and we are very thankful. We should be good stewards of all that we have received, just as we read in this poem by Catherine Pulsifer.

God gives us many blessings,
Many we cannot see
But if we didn't have them
Oh, where would we be?

God gives us many blessings,
Many we take for granted
Everyday things like
The garden that we planted.

God gives us many blessings,
Which gratitude we should show
His blessings are many
Through which his love is shown.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

Spring Gathering

55 ladies attended the program hosted by the women of St. John Lutheran in Arlington. Claudine Zoughbi shared her faith journey with us, "Answering God's Calling", a testimony from a Palestine woman. Karen Martin from the Fayette County Food Shelf shared how many they have served in Fayette County. In 2004 they helped 523 people/families and in 2024, 2,408. Bring spring cleaning items to this location to help raise funds for their food shelf. The ladies from St. John presented our speakers with quilts that they made.

CALENDAR

- Jun 14 M & M Sharing Party @ Zion, Oelwein
- Jul 15 2026 Triennial Registration opens
- Oct 4 Cluster D Fall Gathering, Zion, West Union
- Oct 11 LWR In-Gathering, Albert Lea
LWR In-Gathering, St John, Sumner
- Oct 25 Cluster B Fall Gathering, Zion, Oelwein
- Nov 1 Triennial Scholarship App Due

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Good News

November 2025

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President's Sparks

We had such a wonderful adventure touring around the Guttenberg area in October. Thank to everyone who joined in on the fun! We are received this thank you from the Pioneer Rock Church Association:

On behalf of the Pioneer Rock Church Association, I want to thank your group and you for the generous collection of \$80.00 that was received on Saturday. I hope that your group enjoyed the visit to the Pioneer Rock Church. We who make up the Association very much appreciate any financial support that is received.

Sincerely, Kevin Clefish



Coming up in November, the Wartburg community is welcoming us to their Thank Offering service on Sunday November 9 @ 6:30 pm. The worship will be held in the

Wartburg College Chapel, a beautiful setting for rejoicing in our blessings! Hope everyone can make it! If you haven't already celebrated with a thank offering service in your own congregation, there is still time and don't forget to share your thank offerings!

Also coming up is the deadline for scholarship applications for 2026 Triennial Gathering that will be held in Des Moines. Complete the form at this link [2025 Triennial Gathering Scholarship Application.docx](#) and email to Christine Schmitt @ candeschmitt@gmail.com ASAP!



*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Discipleship Committee

In WELCA, we practice seven types of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. If our minds and bodies are not fit, then practice is hard, almost impossible. We are not ready for the game.

A volleyball player works out in the weight room, in the classroom studying plays and, on the courts, putting her body through drills. She eats nutritious meals giving her body the energy it needs to endure a day long tournament. She basically eats, sleeps and breathes volleyball.

Do we do that with God? Do we focus our lives on him and then let it shine in our daily work? Or are we a *benched*, not bench, player who is just along for the ride hoping no one notices that we are not really participating.

How do we get into the game? Let's start with opening our dusty Bibles and reading daily devotions from sources like *Daily Grace* or *Bold Café* on the **Women of the ELCA** website. Then start with a three-word prayer, *Thank you God*, adding more words every time you say it. Google the ABC's of prayer to give yourself ideas for jumpstarting your daily prayer routine. Remember, a prayer doesn't have to be on a set schedule or even in a quiet room. You can talk with God anytime, anywhere! After re-energizing your focus on the Word and prayer it's time to let the joy in your heart be seen by others.

Have you felt the excitement at a game when your team is close to winning and they ask the crowd to be the "6th man"? Your voice is what brings on the players' adrenaline to push them for the win. The "6th man" spirit at church is what you need to jump start your soul, whether it is the sermon, songs or Bible readings that motivate you. Invite others to come and experience what you do. And don't be afraid to extend your talents to others in the church or community. You can control the time/ways you have to give. By now

you're a starting member of the "God squad" and others can see that light shining within you. You are ready mentally and physically to give of yourself so others may jump start their lights also. And that's how we do it with God's love once we experience it.

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around can warm up in its
glowing;
That's how it is with God's love,
Once you've experienced it,
Your spread the love to everyone
You want to pass it on.

It Only Takes a Spark - Kurt Kaiser

Submitted by Becky Paul

Justice Committee

The world thinks of justice in the "eye for an eye" mentality. God's justice is not punishment, but instead the healing of hearts and restoration of humanity. We can take confidence that God's justice will prevail. No matter what our situation might be, God makes the best decision.

In September, Burr Oak Lutheran held a WELCA Bazaar. Because of the generosity of so many, we were able to give love gifts to 26 charitable groups and 5 groups within our church. We were able to share God's love with so many. Other projects included tied quilts and school kits for LWR and sack lunches for our local farmers to say thank you for all their hard work.

On November 9th, our church will have a Thank Offering service, a visual opportunity for us to give thanks for our many gifts and blessings. We need to say thank you God for time with our family and friends, the peace and the beauty around us, the freedom to worship, food and shelter and all that God has given us. **THANK YOU, LORD! THANK YOU!** Rejoice and be glad in the light of God's love and share it with others.

Submitted by Darlene Emery

2026 Triennial Update

The next Triennial for the Women of the ELCA will be July 16-19, 2026, in Des Moines!! This is a wonderful opportunity for all of us, especially those who have not had been, to experience this national event, in our own backyard! Because it is so close, it makes it more affordable, even if you want to attend for just one day!



The theme is *I am Worthy* registration opened on July 15, 2025. You can find more information at [New Triennial Event Page - Women of the ELCA](#). Our SWO offers a scholarship if you need help to offset the cost of registration. You can find the form on the Facebook page or the WELCA webpage. Don't miss this once in a lifetime chance!!

2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines:

www.WELCAtg.org

CALENDAR

- Nov 8 Triennial Scholarship App Due
LWR In-Gathering, Decorah
- Nov 9 Thank Offering Worship @ Wartburg
Chapel, 6:30 pm
- Feb 20-1 M & M Retreat @ EWALU Stone Center

NEIA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

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773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the_-ELCA-

NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!





Good News

Nov/ Dec
2024

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, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President

Hello all Mary and Martha people! We had a grand time on our Mary & Martha travel day. 24 people meet at the Grotto (including 2 men) Lots of rocks. On to Algona with an interesting POW museum and nativity scene. We are looking forward to planning a trip next fall.

We have 2 additional fun events planned for this year. 1. Our winter retreat at the Stone Center in Strawberry Point is scheduled for Feb. 22-3. Come and spend the night or just come for the day! More details to come! 2. We will have a party, June 14, where we plan on having a bunch of things to hear about and learn. If you have a group you would like people to know about, let us know and we will try to get them there.

On March 22 your SWO board will have a meeting in Waverly with all interested/cluster leaders invited. We will be finalizing June party gathering activities. Make plans to join us at one or all the fun events!

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Justice Committee

Biblical justice involves making individuals, communities, and cosmos whole by upholding both goodness and impartiality. In our Bibles we read: *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world, James 1:27, or The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern, Proverbs 29:7.* Justice flows from God's heart and character. On September 11, our church held its annual church bazaar. It is a great event that shows how the people share God's great love by purchasing items at a greater value, knowing that the money raised will be given as Love Gifts to those not as fortunate. It is also a great time to have fellowship and show love for one another. Our church also

participates by making care kits and quilts for LWR that will be brought to the warehouse in Minnesota to be distributed to those in need. As God's people, justified by faith, by a God of all justice, we can experience the love of sharing and as our Pastor Dave says, "and have fun doing it." We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us to opportunities to bless others.

Submitted by Darlene Emery

Stewardship Committee

At this time of the year we especially think of what we have been given and show appreciation for the blessings we have received. One way to give is to bring Thankofferings in support of the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization. These offerings support healing and wholeness for women of all ages through the affirmation and advancement of women's emotional, physical, and spiritual health. We also have members that work together to prepare quilts and kits or roll bandages to be sent to LWR. This "work" brings hope & comfort to neighbors worldwide. Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.*

We are asking **each unit** to share the number of kits/quilts being sent to LWR, as well as other contributions that your unit may have sent, by contacting:

JoAnn Brunsvold or Alice Greimann
sjbruns@wctatel.net alice.greimann71@gmail.com
(641) 512-4236 (641) 430- 7527

Submitted by Alice Greimann

The Cluster D Spring Gathering will be at Highland Lutheran Church, rural Decorah on April 5, 2025 coffee 8:30am and Gathering at 9:30 am.



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!

Discipleship Committee

What does discipleship mean to you? As Women of the ELCA we practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Whether it be making quilts or kits for Lutheran World Relief or other charities – local or international or assisting in worship, we grow in faith and share what we've learned with friends and neighbors. Email our NE IA SWO discipleship committee members with your group's ideas. We'd love to share them with others!

To give you a start, I'll share a few things we have done at Our Saviour's and St. Paul in Mason City: the Lily Bag Project for women who need clothing immediately at the hospital or the women's crisis center after escaping abuse; the Little Food Pantry that is always open to anyone to not only take food items, but to also give food items they may have to share. We also connect through Bible study groups (with and without the men in our congregations). Our present Bible study is based on the video series, "The Chosen", where we are developing a better understanding of life during Jesus' time and what it was like for him and his followers.

We look forward to hearing from each of you so that we may share your ideas and expand our discipleship activities. Join me in prayer: *Dear Lord, may we be good disciples by worshipping you, studying your word, doing your works, and encouraging others to do the same. In your Son's name we pray. Amen*

*Chris VanDeventer, Karen Weltzin
Becky Pahl, Donna Busch*



Mary and Martha fun for all

Friday Feb 21 and Sat. Feb. 22, 2025

YOU and your friends are invited to a retreat to Celebrate all the Marys and Marthas! This is a Celebration of YOU!

Who is welcome? Any woman who belongs to the ELCA and their friends.

A Woman, a Christian, a helper, a doer, a listener, a learner.

Activities: bible board games, mixer game, puzzle, **bring your own crafting projects** (everything is welcome including: Quilting, bandage rolling, knit/crochet, etc)

Celebrating and learning and doing.



Friday Feb 21st arrive anytime after 4pm

join soup supper, hymn sing, game, puzzle and crafting time.

Stay overnight and meals for \$35

Beds, bedding, and towels included (Share a room)

What to bring: comfortable clothes, craft projects opt, yourself with a joyful heart

Saturday Feb. 22nd: come for the day, breakfast/ coffee @ 8am; Noon meal, bible study, hymn sing, bible study, crafting time and lots of fellowship

Welcome @ 9am, Day ends @ 3pm

Day only rate for meals and building usage \$15

Registration deadline: Monday Feb 19th

EWALU Stone Center, 35124 Hwy 13, Strawberry Point, IA

which is 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point. Handicap accessible facility.

hosted by Your NE IA Women of the ELCA Synod Board and Katie's Fund

Snow dates Feb. 28- March 1

questions? contact: Christine Schmitt candcschmitt@gmail.com

641-397-2572 or cell 641-220-5361

CALENDAR

Feb 22-3	EWALU Winter Retreat
Mar 22	SWO/ Cluster Meeting in Waverly
Apr 5	Cluster D Spring Gathering @ Highland Lutheran
Jun 14	M & M Sharing Party, TBD

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Good News

Sept/ Oct
2024

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, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President

Hello everybody. My name is Christine Schmitt and I am the new president of the NEIA Women of the ELCA Board. We have an exciting year ahead!! I'm just sparkling everywhere!

We are going on the Mary and Martha theme. Talkers, listeners, and doers. I know a lot of you are Do-ers! We have such a great group of Ladies that give and serve their churches and the organizations that they support like Lutheran World Relief, Global Health Ministries, local food pantries and charity shops, prayer shawl ministries, Bible studies and many other things. As a group of women we can do more together than separately. Share your events with the women's synod board and you may have a couple of people from a different area come to visit.

Our Board goals this year are to have 3 events/parties and tell you all about them and to work hard and have fun. So get your calendar out and save the dates.

1. Our first BIG party is a field trip! We are heading to West Bend to see the Grotto of the Redemption. Then to Algona to see the POW museum and nativity scene. Let us know if you are coming!!
2. Our winter retreat at the Stone Center in Strawberry Point is scheduled for Feb. 22 and 23. Come and spend the night or just come for the day! More details to come!
3. And we will have a party, June 14, where we plan on having a bunch of things to hear about and learn.

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Justice Committee

Where has 2024 gone? It is now fall and our women's groups are busy starting to think of Fall Bazaars, Fall Breakfasts, etc. My church ladies started quilting after taking 3 months off. It is also

time for us to be thinking of the Thankoffering service, LWR quilt/kit drop offs, and Thanksgiving meals or services at the church. Stewardship always makes me think about Thankoffering. We give thanks for all the blessings we have received. As Women of the ELCA, we are so grateful for what God has given us. We have generously given Thankofferings to help support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide organization. Almost 50 years ago I learned about Thankoffering boxes, a box placed somewhere in the home, where small amounts of are deposited throughout the year. I remember placing money each Sunday for the new week God had planned for me. Then I bring my gifts to the Thankoffering service. This was and is a great way to celebrate the ministries of the women in our churches. A Thankoffering service does not have to be a once-a-year event. Hopefully we are grateful more than once a year! Why not start a monthly event, having people share what they are grateful for that month. [Thankofferings - Women of the ELCA](#)

Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold

Stewardship Committee

As many of you know, LSI no longer has a residential children's facility in Waverly. The mission now is to help welcome and settle LEGAL immigrant families to our state from around the globe. So the offerings of money and inkind gifts have a new focus. The kits have now changed to Meal Service, Meal Prep, Cleaning, Adult Bedding, Child Bedding, and Baby. These supplies will help get a family started in their new surroundings, many in the Waterloo/ Cedar Falls area. At our June gathering, we gathered gifts and completed kits. For more information you can go to [Home main - Lutheran Services in Iowa \(lsiowa.org\)](#) or contact Mike Knipp @ 319-610-3202 or Michael.Knipp@lsiowa.org. Mike is very prompt to answer messages and emails. Donations of kits, kit items or money can be delivered or mailed to the Waterloo office @ 3460 University Ave. They estimate the total cost of most kits is around \$100.

Jesus reminds us in Matthew 25:40, *Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.*

Submitted by Nancy Poppe

Discipleship Committee

What does discipleship mean to you? Discipleship is a noun that means • a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and • disciples are followers of Jesus who are intent on carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”) and the Great Command (Acts 1:8: “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”). In WELCA, we practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. We pray, study the Bible, and worship together. We make quilts and health and school kits for Lutheran World Relief. We grow in faith and share what we’ve learned with friends and neighbors. Whether it is at home or in a different country, when we share our faith and talents we are being disciples of Christ.

Submitted by Karen Weltzin

Fall Field Trip to West Bend Grotto

When: October 19, 2024
Where: Meet @
Our Savior’s Mason City, 8:15 am
St Paul, Lime Springs, 7:05 am
Salem, Lake Mills, 8:20 am
Cost: \$5, POW Museum
Free will, Grotto & Nativity
Lunch, on your own
Schedule: 10 Grotto, West Bend
11 :15 Lunch, Wagon Wheel
1:15 POW Museum, Algona
2:30 Nativity, Algona

RSVP to Chris VanDeventer @ 515-320-2877 or cdvandeven@gmail.com by Oct 14
[grotto-trip 33.pdf \(neiasynod.org\)](#)



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church’s activities!

Cluster B Gathering

The fall gathering of Little Flock Cluster B will be Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 1st Lutheran in McGregor. The theme will be "Plentiful, Bountiful Harvest". Key scriptures are Leviticus 26:3-5 and Leviticus 19: 9-10. Speakers will be Adelyn Helle trip to Europe, Utioni Ruff from Clayton County Food Shelf and Heather Hagaman, Shepherd of the Hills. Contact Betty Schweitert, 563-873-2031 or Donna Staples, 563-534-7663.

CALENDAR

Oct 5 Cluster D Gathering @
St Paul, Lime Springs
Oct 12 C/E/H LWR Ingathering, LaPorte City
Oct 19 Grotto Field Trip, West Bend
Oct 26 Cluster B Gathering @ 1st, McGregor
Nov 2 LWR In-gathering @ Decorah

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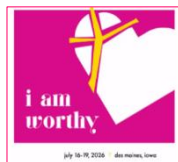
President's Sparks

Hello to all the Women of the Church and others who make things happen. So many exciting things are happening. We had 20 people attend our field trip to Clayton County. Everyone really enjoyed the Froelich museum. We learned a lot about Iowa.

Lutheran World relief trucks have been gathered for the fall. Spring dates are April 11 @ Nazareth Lutheran in Cedar Falls and May 2 @ Olson's Explosives in Decorah.

Now to the future:

- **M&M Retreat** is coming! **Feb 20-21 @ the EWALU Stone Center** just north of Strawberry Point. It is always a good time.
- **Our annual Gathering is June 20 @ Our Saviour's Lutheran** in Mason City.
- We are looking for people to help plan our events during the year.
- We are in need of new **Board members**. All board members are finishing their terms and only 3 can be re-elected. We will need 6 new members to serve for 2 years. The board meets four times a year. If you know anyone who would like to serve, please contact Alice Greimann.
- Don't forget about the Churchwide **Triennial Gathering July 16-19** in Des Moines. Register now @ <https://welcatg.org> There is a one-day option for attending.



*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Justice Committee

Our Saviour's & St. Paul Lutheran Churches of Mason City recently had several study sessions about Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German who lived in the WW II era. For those not familiar with him, he gave us great insights into what should be the next faithful step for a broken and imperfect world. He was imprisoned at Tegel Prison in Berlin, Germany, and later executed at Flossenburg Concentration Camp.

One of our sessions discussed justice and the words we associate with justice. As individuals and in our small groups, the words we found included fairness, equality, compassion, and responsibility.

There are four types of justice:

- a) Retributive – punishment of wrong doing
- b) Distributive – spreading things out equally
- c) Restorative – repairing past wrongs
- d) Procedural – unbiased process in serving justice to perpetrators

According to Bonhoeffer, the main issue is whether we learn to live with others as human beings, practicing fairness, equality, compassion and responsibility.

What can you and your congregations do to learn more and practice justice?

Submitted by Jan Nelson

In-Gatherings, Past and Future

Sat, Nov 1, 2025 was the LWR Fall In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives in Decorah. Donations began arriving from 42 churches, workers from Postville, Decorah, Arlington, and Calmer were busy unloading and stacking 841 boxes in the truck. It was great having youth and adults from these churches helping.

Donations Totals, 1576 quilts, 445 Personal Care Kits, 1764 School Kits, 566 Baby Care Kits, 48 Fabric Kits, & 8 Blankets.

Additional thanks to Olson's Explosives for their continued support, and especially to each and every individual for the countless hours spent quilting, organizing, and assembling various kits. We CAN make a difference! We DO make a difference!

Sat, May 2, LWR Spring In-Gathering is our next truck. We always have plenty of room on the truck and would encourage any church groups to learn more.

Carol Maki Camaki44@gmail.com
 563-277-1197
 605-270-0625 Cell

Sue Darling Suedarling90@yahoo.com
 563-735-5707
 563-419-9423 Cell

Information about Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls, 2026 In-Gatherings for C & E clusters. Contact Donna Kirschenmann, 5300 South Main St., Apt. 31, Cedar Falls, IA 50613; dkmann39@yahoo.com; Phone # 319-231-2251.

CALENDAR

- Feb 20-1 M & M Retreat @ EWALU Stone Center
- Mar 7- SWO Board Meeting @ 9 am
- Apr 11-Upper Iowa River Cluster D Spring Gathering @ St. Peter Lutheran Church, Eldorado, Ia. Coffee time @ 8:30 am In-Gathering @ Nazareth, Cedar Falls
- May 2-SWO Board Meeting @ 9 am In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah
- Jun 19-SWO Board Meeting, Mason City
- Jun 20- Annual SWO Gathering, Our Saviour's, Mason City
- Jul 13-15- Triennial Convention by Zoom
- Jul 16-19-Triennial Gathering, Des Moines
- Nov 7- In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah

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Published by NE IA Women of the ELCA



Mary and Martha fun for all
 Friday, Feb 20, and Sat., Feb. 21, 2026

Celebrating and learning and doing.

YOU and your friends are invited to a retreat to celebrate all the Marys and Marthas! This is a Celebration of YOU!

Who is welcome? Any woman who belongs to the ELCA and their friends.
A Woman, a Christian, a helper, a doer, a listener, a learner.
 Activities: Bible board games, mixer game, puzzle, **bring your own crafting projects** (everything is welcome including: quilting, bandage rolling, knitting & crochet, etc.)



EWALU STONE RETREAT CENTER

The Stone Center is located just 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point on Highway 13.

Friday, Feb. 20th
 Arrive any time after 4 p.m.
 Join us for a soup supper, hymn sing, games, puzzle, and crafting time.
 The overnight stay and meals for the two days are \$45. Beds, bedding, and towels included (You may have to share a room.)

What to bring: comfortable clothes, craft projects are optional, and yourself with a joyful heart.

Saturday, Feb. 21st
 Come for the day.
 Breakfast and coffee at 8 a.m.; noon meal, Bible study, hymn sing, crafting time and lots of fellowship
 Afternoon speakers: Family Resource center, Guttenburg
 Welcome is at 9 a.m., Day ends at 3 p.m.
 Day only rate for meals and building usage is \$20

Registration deadline: Monday, Feb. 16th

Location: EWALU Stone Center, 35124 Hwy 13, Strawberry Point, IA which is 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point. Handicap accessible facility.

hosted by Your Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization Board

Questions? Contact: Christine Schmitt, candeschmitt@gmail.com or call 641-397-2572 or cell 641-220-5361