



January 2026

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's Sparks

Hello to all the Women of the Church and others who make things happen. So many exciting things are happening. I look forward to seeing you

▪ **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/ convention is June 20 @ Our Saviour's Lutheran** in Mason City. Look for information coming to you.

▪ **We need new Board members.** The board plans our events during the year. 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 help, 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. Early Bird pricing ends Jan. 5th. Girls under 18 can attend.



▪ Lutheran World Relief announces A New **Congregational Engagement team colleague Rev. Brian Scott, who will now be serving congregations in your region.** You can contact him at bscott@lwr.org

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

2026 Triennial Gathering

The theme for the 2026 Triennial Gathering is "I Am Worthy," based on Psalm 139:14: "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." This statement serves as a reminder of God's promise to be with us, even in times of devastation and division. By repeating the phrase "I am worthy," we can recognize the Holy Spirit's ongoing work in our lives. This practice of self-affirmation opens up opportunities for healing and restoration within ourselves, our church, society, and the world. When we declare, "I am worthy," we align ourselves with God's promises. There is great power in our resolve. Register @ [Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](https://www.elca.org/2026-triennial-gathering)





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 games, 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 23.

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 23, 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 cschmitt@lwr.org or call 641-997-2572 or cell 641-320-5361

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



Stewardship Committee

“Lord, let me know my end and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is. You have made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in your sight. Surely everyone stands as a mere breath.”
Psalm 39: 4-5



Time is a weird thing. Sometimes it flies by, and we don't know where it went. Other times, it drags on and it feels like a few minutes last a whole hour. But most of the time, we just kind of take time for granted. It's just... there. Ticking away.

The Psalmist writing these Bible verses does not want us to take time for granted. Their prayer asks God to remind them that their time on earth is short, especially in comparison to God's perception of time. The implication in their words is that they want to remember that their life is "fleeting" so that they can make the most of their time.

On Ash Wednesday, the start of the church season of Lent, we are invited to remember that our time on earth is not infinite. It is a churchly reminder that we are going to die someday. And we are encouraged to return to God in the time that we have left. We all know that we are going to die at some point—but because we often avoid thinking or talking about death, we function as if we have all the time in the world. We "kill" time doing things that don't matter. We say "yes" to time commitments that we don't want to do. We fritter away hours scrolling through social media or get sucked into binge-watching mindless TV shows. When hours go by, we can wish we had used the time differently, but by then it's too late. Those are hours we will never get back.

Instead, being intentional with our time means balancing work, play, rest, and God time (prayer, devotions, worship, etc.). It's about being aware of how we are using our time, and using our time deliberately, just as the Psalmist reminds us.

by the Rev. Dr. Becca Ehrlich

CALENDAR

Jan 5- Early bird Triennial registration ends

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

June 21- Triennial registration deadline

Jul 13-15- Triennial Convention by Zoom

Jul 16-19-Triennial Gathering, Des Moines

Oct. 10 **LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls**

Nov 7- **In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah**

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Nancy Poppe, Treasurer

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2775 Durham Avenue, Nashua, IA 50658

Checks payable to NE IA SWO, include Form A

Good News, Editor Diane Wills

641-425-8628, wills.dianes@gmail.com

1399 Beeds Lake Drive, Hampton IA 50441

Contact Women of the ELCA:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

[neiasynod.org/women-of-the -ELCA-](http://neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA-)

Published by NE IA Women of the ELCA



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President's Sparks

Wow. Here we go into another month and time for planning. I hope everyone is recovering from the holidays and enjoying the Epiphany season. (I was sick over the holidays)

- ✚ Thinking about coming to the M&M retreat? Now is the time to get things done! It will be a great time. Feb. 20-21. 1 or 2 days.
- ✚ Our biennial convention is June 20. We would like to have someone from every church attend on June 20@ Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mason City.
- ✚ Churchwide Triennial "I am Worthy" gathering in Des Moines is July 16-19. There is a Day Option for attending and girls under 18 can attend also.



I am looking forward to seeing everyone, both new and established friends. Come join the fun!

Christine

Discipleship Committee

So often when I hear a word or a phrase, it will remind me of a song. It may be a song or hymn from my childhood, something I heard on a radio station, or a song my father would sing while playing his guitar. That's the way it is with discipleship. Mathew 28:19-20 contains what has come to be called the *Great Commission*: "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, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." I don't remember when I first heard and sang "Go Make Disciples", but it is a song that has always stuck with me:

Go make disciples, baptizing them, teaching them
Go make disciples,

For I am with you 'til the end of time
Go be the salt of the earth,
Go be the light for the world, Go be the city on a hill
So all can see that you're serving me
Go make disciples.

Not only is the instruction given in this song, it also tells us we are not alone! So often we struggle, thinking we might not say the right thing. Yet, we needn't worry. Be the salt! Be the light! Be the city on a hill! God is with you wanting you to show who you serve!

Submitted by Donna Busch



Mary and Martha fun for all
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EWALU STONE RETREAT CENTER

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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, Guttenberg
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. 18th

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 Schmidt, cschmidt1@gmail.com or call 641-297-2572 or call 641-320-5361

CALENDAR

Feb 20-1 M & M Retreat @ EWALU Stone Center

Mar 7- SWO Board Meeting with Cluster leaders @
9 am

Apr 11-Upper Iowa River Cluster D Spring
Gathering @ St. Peter Lutheran Church,
Eldorado, Ia. Coffee time @ 8:30 am
**C-E-H LWR In-Gathering @ Nazareth,
Cedar Falls, 8 am – noon**

Apr 25- Little Flock Cluster B Spring Gathering @
St Paul, Postville, 9 am-1 pm

May 2-SWO Board Meeting @ 9 am
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Decorah**

Jun 19-SWO Board Meeting, Mason City

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Nancy Poppe, Treasurer

641-257-8199, popcan1952@gmail.com
2775 Durham Avenue, Nashua, IA 50658

Checks payable to NE IA SWO, include Form A

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization

GATHERING/CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

June 20, 2026

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 2502 S. Jefferson, Mason City, IA 50401
(This form may be copied as needed for your attendees)

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ Receive convention reports via email? _____
Home Congregation _____ at _____

Check the category(s) that applies to you:

☐ Voting Member (only one per congregational unit) ☐ Alternate Voting Member
☐ Synodical Women's Board Member ☐ Visitor
☐ First Timer (check if this is your first time attending) ☐ Other _____

REGISTRATION FEE: to be paid by each person attending convention events
Registration includes:

+Use of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church +Technology for Gathering/Convention
+Guest speakers +Snacks and noon meal
+Supplies for activities

_____ \$50.00 Postmarked by May 23 _____ \$60.00 Postmarked May 25 or later

Please list any dietary restrictions _____

Please bring travel coffee mugs and/or reusable water bottles, and a light sweater for your use during convention.

Make check payable to NEIASWO and send this form to:

Nancy Poppe
2775 Durham Ave.
Nashua, Iowa 50658

If you prefer to receive paper copy of receipt include a SASE (self-addressed stamped envelope)

If you prefer to receive receipt by email: _____

Good News, Editor Diane Wills
641-425-8628, wills.dianes@gmail.com
1399 Beeds Lake Drive, Hampton IA 50441

Contact Women of the ELCA:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>
773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

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

Published by NE IA Women of the ELCA



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and
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Achieves More

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's Sparks

Do you have a willingness to step up by helping plan events (retreats, conventions, and sharing parties)? Do you have a love of Lord you want to share? Has a special woman touched your life and brought you to faith? If so, come and join our Board. We are asking you to prayerfully consider accepting a nomination for NEISWO leadership or board positions or the 2028 Nominating Committee. The nomination forms and role descriptions were sent to your group (or congregation) in January. For more information, please contact Alice Greimann at 1868 Lark Ave., Hampton, IA 50441 or call 641-430-7527.

- ✚ Try, try again! M & M Retreat has been rescheduled to March 20-21. It will be a great time.
- ✚ Checkout all the cluster meetings in the calendar section! April will be busy!
- ✚ Our biennial convention is June 20. We would like to have someone from every church attend on June 20@ Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mason City.
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all individuals. The Bible consistently calls for believers to care for the less fortunate. Deut. 15:7-8 instructs us to be open-handed toward the poor. The Bible emphasizes the importance of social justice in ensuring that all people have enough food. It encourages believers to care for the poor and share what they have, reflecting God's love and kindness. As people of God, we have a responsibility to help. At Burr Oak Lutheran, we participate in monetary and food donations for our local food pantries. On the last Sunday of the month, loose change is collected to help with the summer meals for area children. At Christmas, ornaments are placed on the Christmas tree with items from the Gifts of Love magazine, where we send our gifts to other countries. These gifts will help feed or sustain life. God is the light of the world but we are reflectors of that great light. A quote from Dr. Norman Borloug, "Almost certainly, the first essential component of social justice is adequate food for all. Food is the moral right of all who are born into this world." Yet today 50% of the world's population goes hungry. Without food, humans can live at most but a few weeks; without food all other components of social justice are meaningless. Jesus uses us to change the world. He reminds us of our duty to feed the hungry. God inspires us to act and share our blessings with others.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me.

Matt. 25:35

Submitted by Darlene Emery

Christine

Justice Committee

You shall love your neighbor as yourself. Matt. 22:39
Learn to do good; seek justice; rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow. Is. 1:17

Understanding social justice is deeply embedded in the teachings of the Bible, reflecting God's heart for fairness, compassion, and wellbeing of



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Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____ Receive convention reports via email? _____
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☐ Voting Member (only one per congregational unit) ☐ Alternate Voting Member
☐ Synodical Women's Board Member ☐ Visitor
☐ First Timer (check if this is your first time attending) ☐ Other _____

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Registration includes:

+Use of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church +Technology for Gathering/Convention
+Guest speakers +Snacks and noon meal
+Supplies for activities

\$50.00 Postmarked by May 23 \$60.00 Postmarked May 25 or later

Please list any dietary restrictions _____

Please bring travel coffee mugs and/or reusable water bottles, and a light sweater for your use during convention.

Make check payable to NEIASWO and send this form to:

Nancy Poppe
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Nashua, Iowa 50658

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President's Sparks

We just had our 3rd annual Retreat at the Stone Center in Strawberry Point. Great fun for everyone!

Check out all the cluster meetings in the calendar section! April will be busy!

We are getting closer to our convention on June 20 @ Our Saviour's in Mason City with the focus on Women and Children in Crisis and personal faith growth through prayer and devotions. Come and join the fun! I am looking, with excitement, at meeting new people and electing a new board. And for those attending the Triennial Gathering, there will be a useful gift.



Consider a road trip to Des Moines for the Churchwide Triennial Gathering July 16-19. Come one day or more.

Do you have a willingness to step up by helping plan events (retreats, conventions, and sharing parties)? Do you have a love of Lord you want to share? Has a special woman touched your life and brought you to faith? If so, come and join our Board.

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Christine



Stewardship Committee

Stewardship is one of the essential topics that we learn as a disciple of Christ. The role of stewardship was common during biblical times and is often used as an example of the Christian's relationship to God. Everything belongs to God and we are to manage it and treat it not as our own, but as God's. The Bible calls us to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to His people - including time, talents and our possessions, for God's glory.

For example: imagine that you are invited to a friend's house. While you are there, your friend is called about an emergency. Your friend asks you to watch her young puppy while they are gone. You agree. Now even though the puppy is not yours, you are responsible for taking care of it while your friend is away. You are its steward.



So, what are your thoughts when you hear the word "stewardship"? Do you mainly think about your finances? Do you answer the call to use your time, talents and abilities and make the most of every

opportunity to share your blessings? (maybe volunteering to help on the SWO board?) Does taking care of the environment enter your mind? These are just a few of the ways that we are called by Christ to live our lives, for the glory of God.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

CALENDAR

- Apr 11 *Upper Iowa River Cluster D Spring Gathering @ St. Peter Lutheran Church, Eldorado, Ia. Coffee time @ 8:30 am
- *C/E LWR In-Gathering @ Nazareth, Cedar Falls, 8 am – noon and Spring Gathering, 8:30-11 am
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NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!



Convention Registration

June 20, 2026

Our Saviour's Lutheran, 2502 S. Jefferson Ave., Mason City, IA 56401

Check-in 8-9am 9am Welcome and worship

The women of the church are invited to a convention and information sharing event.

Registration form

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Home congregation and town _____

Favorite Hymn(s) : _____
(For up to three songs)

Dietary restrictions (e.g. allergies) _____
Please bring coffee or water containers and a sweater for your use for the day.

Registration fee: \$30 deadline June 1, 2026 (call for late registration)
includes morning coffee, noon meal, church use, speaker honorarium, paper & postage.

Please make check payable to NEIA SWO and send this form to:
Nancy Poppe
2775 Durham Ave.
Nashua, IA 50808
A receipt will be emailed to you unless you send a self-addressed stamped envelope.
641-257-8199

Questions???? Christine Schmitt (president) candcschmitt@gmail.com or 641-220-6361

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President's Sparks

I have had questions. Hopefully, there are a few answers here.

We have exciting things happening this summer. The first is our gathering and convention on June 20 (this is every other year). Along with approving a budget and electing new board members, you can also learn new ideas to share at home, help others, and meet new people. This event includes all ladies in the NEIA synod. Women are invited even if they don't have a "WELCA" unit in the church. It is at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mason City. Cost is \$30 to attend.

The 2nd gathering is our Triennial in Des Moines, July 16-19. This gathering will have women from all over the USA. It is a churchwide event and it is right on our doorstep. If you would like to attend the Des Moines event, I would like to build a network to help with hotel room and car pool sharing. Let us know if we can help.



Christine Schmitt

Discipleship Committee

We have just recently celebrated Easter-the resurrection of our Lord and Saviour. The disciples experienced all types of emotions from the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday to Jesus' resurrection the following Sunday-joy, fear, worry, confusion, and doubt to name a few. Even though Jesus told them what would happen, they didn't truly understand it all. We have the benefit of hindsight yet we, too, experience those same emotions at different times of our lives and don't always understand what Jesus is trying to teach us. The characteristics and roles of the disciples included active following, learning/obedience, transformation, mission-oriented and relationship focused. As disciples of Jesus, we, too, should display these same characteristics. By listening to sermons and reading our Bibles we demonstrate

active following by living out Jesus' ideas. As we study His word, we learn to obey his commands. As we love Jesus wholeheartedly, we are being changed to be more like him. As we pursue His command for us to go and make disciples of all nations, we are carrying out His mission. We should develop a genuine relationship with Jesus, abiding in Him. Just as the disciples made personal commitments to following Jesus, we also should. To become disciples, we need to respond to Jesus' call to follow him, surrender control to God, trust in Christ's righteousness, rather than our own, and actively learn to live according to Jesus' teachings, transforming our lives. Jesus' disciples were not perfect but they learned much from Jesus' example. We aren't perfect either, but we can strive to continue to grow as disciples, striving to be more like Jesus. That is our challenge.

Submitted by Karen Weltzin

CALENDAR

- May 2 *SWO Board Meeting @ 9 am
* LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah
- Jun 19 *SWO Board Meeting, Mason City
- Jun 20 *Annual SWO Gathering, Our Saviour's, Mason City
- June 21 *Triennial registration deadline
- Jul 13-15 *Triennial Convention by Zoom
- Jul 16-19 *Triennial Gathering, Des Moines
- Oct 10 *LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls
- Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County
- Nov 7 *LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah



WELCA Convention June 20, 2026

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, 2502 S. Jefferson Ave, Mason City, IA 50401

*The women of the church are invited to our annual convention.
We need you. You help run this program.*

This year there will be elections for a new Board and a constitutional amendment to vote upon.



There will be a valet service available for those who need to be dropped off near the east middle door for the elevator to the worship sanctuary and the fellowship hall. (Please drive up to that door on the sidewalk.)

8-9 a.m. Check-in

9 a.m. Welcome and worship

We will worship together with communion.
The interest sessions will be focusing on Prayer
and helping Women in Crisis.
A homemade meal will be gluten free friendly.
Fun door prizes, too!

Interest sessions:	Make a prayer journal	How to Pray
	Northern Lights (MC)	Beacon House (MC)

Collecting Offerings for:

In Kind Items: Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless

Monetary Offering: 1/3 churchwide, 1/3 Beacon House, 1/3 Northern Lights

Sponsored by your Synodical Women's Organization of the Women of the ELCA



Convention Registration June 20, 2026

Our Saviour's Lutheran, 2502 S. Jefferson Ave., Mason City, IA 50401

Check-in 8-9am 9am Welcome and worship

The women of the church are invited to a convention and information sharing event.

Registration form

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Home congregation and town _____

Favorite Hymn(s) 1: _____
(For up to 10 Hymns/sing)

Dietary restrictions (e.g. allergies) _____
Please bring coffee or water containers and a sweater for your use for the day.

Registration fee: \$30 deadline June 1, 2026 (call for late registration)
Includes morning coffee, noon meal, church use, speaker honorariums, paper & postage.

Please make check payable to NEIA SWO and send this form to:

Nancy Poppe
2775 Durham Ave.
Nashua, IA 50658

A receipt will be emailed to you unless you send a self-addressed stamped envelope.
641-257-8199

Questions???? Christine Schmitt (president) candcschmitt@gmail.com or 641-220-5361

June Gathering In-Kind Gifts for Northern Lights Shelter

Clothing

- Socks- All sizes, NEW, child and adult
- Adult disposable absorbent products
- Pants & Slacks—New men's and women's jeans and casual pants
- Outerwear-Coats, hats, scarves, and gloves
- Undergarments | New, in-package, all genders and sizes

Hygiene & Personal Care

- Oral Care - Toothbrushes, full-size toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss
- Hair & Body - Bar soap/body wash, shampoo & conditioner, combs/brushes, hair ties
- Shaving | Disposable razors, shaving cream
- Feminine Hygiene & Foot Care
- Essential Needs - Deodorant, unscented lotion, lip balm, travel-size hand sanitizer, antibiotic ointment, bandages, small first-aid kits

Cleaning & Facility Supplies

- Multi-Purpose Cleaners, Laundry Supplies
- General Supplies - Toilet paper, paper towels, trash bags, new bath towels and washcloths

NEIA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Christine Schmitt, President

641-220-5361, candcschmitt@gmail.com

Alice Greimann, Vice President

641-456-2973, alice.greimann71@gmail.com

Chris VanDeventer, Secretary

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Checks payable to **NE IA SWO**, include **Form A**

TEAMS, Editor Diane Wills

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June 2026

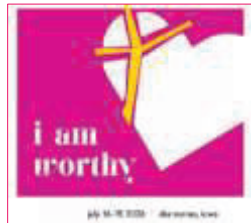
As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President's Sparks



We have exciting things happening this summer. The first is our gathering and convention on June 20 (this is every other year). Along with approving a budget and electing new board members, you can also learn new ideas to share at home, help others, and meet new people. We are also excited to share all we have accomplished these last two years. This event includes all ladies in the NEIA synod. Women are invited even if they don't have a "WELCA" unit in the church. It is at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Mason City. Cost is \$30 to attend and that includes lunch!

The 2nd gathering is our Triennial in Des Moines, July 16-19. This gathering will have women from all over the USA. It is a churchwide event and it is right on our doorstep. I am looking for a list of people going to the Triennial gathering. We have not been given a list of those attending but we would love to connect with you. Share your name with us! If you are attending the Des Moines event, we would like to build a network to help with hotel room and carpooling. And we will have special gifts and a special gathering for all those from Iowa before the gathering starts on Thursday.



Let us know if we can help.

Christine Schmitt

Stewardship Committee

There are several ways to support the work of the NE IA Women of the ELCA. If you are attending the gathering on June 20, bring your monetary offerings and any in-kind gifts you would like to donate for the Northern Lights Homeless Shelter. Go to their website

[Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless Shelters](#) for more information on their incredible work! Even if you are unable to attend the gathering on June 20, you can send your monetary offerings to Nancy Poppe (for address, see board members on the 2nd page). Help us continue to be Jesus' hands and feet in this world!!

June Gathering In-Kind Gifts for Northern Lights Shelter

Clothing

- Socks- All sizes, NEW, child and adult
- Adult disposable absorbent products
- Pants & Slacks—New men's and women's jeans and casual pants
- Outerwear-Coats, hats, scarves, and gloves
- Undergarments | New, in-package, all genders and sizes

Hygiene & Personal Care

- Oral Care - Toothbrushes, full-size toothpaste, mouthwash, dental floss
- Hair & Body - Bar soap/body wash, shampoo & conditioner, combs/brushes, hair ties
- Shaving | Disposable razors, shaving cream
- Feminine Hygiene & Foot Care
- Essential Needs - Deodorant, unscented lotion, lip balm, travel-size hand sanitizer, antibiotic ointment, bandages, small first-aid kits

Cleaning & Facility Supplies

- Multi-Purpose Cleaners, Laundry Supplies
- General Supplies - Toilet paper, paper towels, trash bags, new bath towels and washcloths



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

CALENDAR

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- Jun 20 *Annual SWO Gathering, Our Saviour's,
Mason City
- June 21*Triennial registration deadline
- Jul 13-15 *Triennial Convention by Zoom
- Jul 16-19 *Triennial Gathering, Des Moines
- Sep 26 *Cluster D Gathering, Springfield, Decorah
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Decorah

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WELCA Convention June 20, 2026

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*The women of the church are invited to our annual convention.
We need you. You help run this program.*

This year there will be elections for a new Board and a constitutional amendment to vote upon.



There will be a valet service available for those who need to be dropped off near the east middle door for the elevator to the worship sanctuary and the fellowship hall. (Please drive up to that door on the sidewalk.)

8-9 a.m. Check-in

9 a.m. Welcome and worship

We will worship together with communion.
The interest sessions will be focusing on Prayer
and helping Women in Crisis.
A homemade meal will be gluten free friendly.
Fun door prizes, too!

Interest sessions:	Make a prayer journal	How to Pray
	Northern Lights (MC)	Beacon House (MC)

Collecting Offerings for:

In Kind items: Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless

Monetary Offering: 1/3 churchwide, 1/4 Beacon House, 1/4 Northern Lights

Sponsored by your Synodical Woman's Organization of the Women of the ELCA



Convention Registration June 20, 2026

Our Saviour's Lutheran, 2502 S. Jefferson Ave., Mason City, IA 50401

Check-in 8-9am 9am Welcome and worship

The women of the church are invited to a convention and information sharing event.

Registration form

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Home congregation and town _____

Favorite Hymn(s) : _____

(For top 10 Hymn sing)

Dietary restrictions (e.g. allergies) _____

Please bring coffee or water containers and a sweater for your use for the day.

Registration fee: \$30 deadline June 1, 2026 (call for late registration)

includes morning coffee, noon meal, church use, speaker honorariums, paper & postage.

Please make check payable to NEIA SWO and send this form to:

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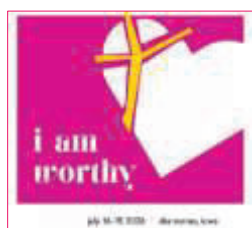
As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President's Sparks

The 37th Convention is in the books. We have a new Board, but there is plenty of room for more voices. We have 3 vacant board seats and we still **need** a Vice President. I am more than happy to appoint people. The 1st Board Meeting is set for August 22 @ the Synod office in Waverly, 9 am. Walk-ins are welcome.



I look forward to seeing all the people at the Triennial gathering in Des Moines July 16-19. Make note of the All-Iowa Luncheon for Gathering participants, freewill offering, @ Buzzard Billy's on Thursday, July 16, 11 am-1 pm. You do need to RSVP to me ASAP! Come and get a gift and things to give away! I am still looking for a list of people going to the Triennial gathering. We have not been given a list of those attending but we would love to connect with you. Share your name with us! If you are attending the Des Moines event, we would like to build a network to help with hotel room and carpooling.



Christine Schmitt

Gathering/ Convention Highlights

We gathered on Saturday, June 20 @ Our Saviour's in Mason City for our 37th annual gathering. The ladies of Our Saviour's did an awesome job of providing us with coffee, morning treats and a beautiful luncheon.



And it was a special treat to have their bell choir play for worship!



Thank you Karen Weltzin for playing piano!



Christine and Anna did a good job of keeping the business meeting on time.



We were also treated to 4 learning sessions. Chris VanDeventer led us in creating our own prayer



journals and then a second session on how to use them. It was lots of fun to do a hands-on project and take it home and use it!





Due to a mix up, Beacon Lights was unable to join us, but Mike Knipp from LSI did a wonderful job filling in at the last minute! Jesse from Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless did an amazing presentation about his work at the local homeless shelters in Mason City. Check out this website for more information on how you can help! [Northern Lights Alliance for the Homeless Shelters](#)



We said thank you to five ladies who will be leaving the board after the August meeting. Alice Greimann, Carolyn Loftass, Nancy Poppe, Karen Weltzin and JoAnn

Brunsvold served with great perseverance during the COVID years!

Newly elected to the board are Chris VanDeventer, Darlene Emery, Mary Wemark, Becky Pahl, Janice Nelson and Christine Schmitt. Not pictured, Christina Koth.



Our monetary gifts were \$1700.00, and we collected over 10 boxes of in-kind gifts for Northern Lights Alliance of Homeless Shelters.

Thank you to our board and Our Saviour's for a wonderful, relaxing and fellowship-filled day!!!

Check out our FB page for more pictures and videos!



CALENDAR

- Jul 13-14 *Triennial Convention by Zoom
- Jul 16-19 *Triennial Gathering, Des Moines
- Jul 16 *All Iowa Luncheon, Buzzard Billy's, DM
- Aug 22 *SWO Transitional Meeting-Waverly
- Sep 26 *Cluster D Gathering, Springfield, Decorah
- Oct 10 *LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls
- Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County
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NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!



August 2026

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's Sparks

Well lots of exciting things happened this last month. The Triennial in Des Moines was a new adventure for me and my daughter. We had about 80 people attend the Iowa lunch at Buzzard Billy's with a free will offering. We had some extra that went to Dorothy House.

There is a low price, just \$295, to register for the next Triennial, July 12-15, 2029, located in Louisville KY. This price is available until Sept 1st and is transferable to someone else (even from a different synod) if you are unable to attend. Sign up for the 2029 Gathering (registrations will start again July 12, 2028)

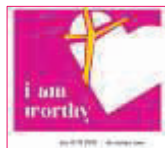
[Pre-Register for the 2029 Triennial Gathering](#)

We have a new Board, but there is plenty of room for more voices. We have 3 vacant board seats and we still **need** a Vice President. I am more than happy to appoint people. The 1st Board Meeting is set for 9 am August 22 @ the Synod office in Waverly. Questions? Let me know. On to exciting new things, come and join us!

Blessings and Peace
Christine Schmitt

Triennial Highlights

The 13th Triennial, held July 16-19 in Des Moines, was a busy, fun-filled long weekend! Our theme was "I am Worthy", based on Psalm 139:14, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made*. Over 1000 women



from all over our country and the world gathered to celebrate, learn and worship. Thursday began with opening worship with an energizing

message from SE IA Bishop Amy Current, lots of great music and of course communion. Friday's highlights included two Bible studies from Pastor Sara Olson-Smith, a frequent Bible study author for Gather

Magazine. She reminded us that God determines our worth, not this world. She also gave us a new perspective on the story of Eve and a reminder that we should not "flatten" a person's story to change a narrative in our favor. Go here to learn more: [the danger of a single story ted talk - Search](#)



The rest of Friday was spent learning in the interactive center, shopping in the exhibit hall and more in depth learning in workshop sessions.

Saturday started with the Run, Walk and Roll. Even though the temperatures were already in the 80's, a good time was had by all. The morning Bible study by Pastor Sara was completed with the story of Zaccheus. She reminded us that we live in community, Ubuntu, a word that Desmond Tutu reminded us of @ the St Louis National Youth Gathering. Because Jesus SAW Zaccheus, he gave him



a new story, a chance to restore and re-story his life. After more keynotes, we spent the afternoon in workshop sessions. Some of us even got to make



our own earrings from art crafted by Ryan, a young man

who helped tell the story of Mosaic. Learn more about their ministry here: [Home - Mosaic](#)

We also want to share some of the huge impacts of our Gathering:

Participants Registered: 1078

Exhibitors and Vendors: 50

Sponsors: 13

In Kind Gifts: Over \$16,000 in gift cards and personal care items for the Food Bank of Iowa, DMARC Food Bank, and Dorothy House

Silent Auction Proceeds: Women of the ELCA, over \$7,000

Vintage Store Proceeds: Women of the ELCA, over \$7,000

Raising up Healthy Women and Girls: Over \$8,000

Triennial Gathering Offering: over \$42,000

You can still give to the Offering until September 1st

<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/donation-form/triennial-gathering-offering>

25% Lutheran World Relief

25% DMARC Food Bank

50% Women of the ELCA

Discipleship Committee

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Mark 11:24

The use of prayer is a direct way to communicate with God, aligning our desires with His will and trusting in His timing and power.

This summer one of the group sessions at the NEIA SWO gathering was "How to Make Prayer Journals and Use Them" led by Chris VanDeventer. Has anyone started writing in theirs? Has anyone shown other women/men in their church how to make them?

Here is another good idea for how to divide out your journal into categories. Be sure to go back monthly and look to see if any of your prayers have been answered, maybe highlight these to keep track.

1. Prayers for Yourself
2. Prayers for Others
3. Prayers for Family & Friends
4. Scripture that Speaks to Me

The fourth section of your journal can be reserved for Bible verses that speak to you as you read your Bible. Compare your chosen verse to different versions of the Bible and write them down. Circle, underline or highlight the differences between the two, adding notes on how they speak to you. Maybe there is a history behind the verse, use your commentary or computer to research. Did the verse bring up questions you need to get answers for later? Write them down.

There are so many ways you can personalize your Prayer Journal and make it work for you. We hope this project stimulates your group and helps bind you as Women of the ELCA.

Becky Pahl

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



HERE WE GO AGAIN!

Contact Nancy Rockman at 641-530-5081

Thursday August 6, 2026

Global Health Ministries & Lutheran World Relief Tour

Bus leaves Trinity at 7 AM

Snacks will be provided
Bring your own drink
MEN ARE WELCOME TOO!

1. Global Health Ministries	10 AM - 12 Noon
2. Lunch at	Noon
3. Lutheran World	1:30 - 2:30 PM
4. Leave for home	2:30 - 5 PM

*Bus Fair Cost is \$45/person.
Lunch is on your own.*

CALENDAR

- Aug 6 *LWR Bus Trip from Trinity, Mason City
- Aug 22 *SWO Transitional Meeting-Waverly
- Sep 26 *Cluster D Gathering, Springfield, Decorah
- Oct 10 *LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls
- Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County
- Nov 7 *LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah
- 2027**
- Apr 17 *Cluster G Gathering, Salem Lutheran, Lake Mills
- Jun 27 *Sharing party, St. Peter's, Garnavillo

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September 2026

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President's Sparks

Greetings and Joy to all as we start a new season. We have a new theme for the next couple of years. **Be Brave**. We will be exploring different ways to Be Brave. Check out our calendar. We have updated event and meeting dates.

Our new Board just met for the first time, but there is plenty of room for more voices. We have 3 vacant board seats and we still **need** a Vice President. I am more than happy to appoint people. Let me know if you have questions or are interested in helping plan our fun events.

Our first fun event is our field trip to Black Hawk County on Oct 17. In the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area, we will be visiting the Grout Museum, Barn Happy and the campus ministries on the UNI campus. Please contact Chris VanDeventer before October 1st. (optional: go back and visit the John Deere Museum)

I hope to see many people there. It is fun to learn and grow together.

Jesus and all his Jazz!
Christine Schmitt

CALENDAR

Sep 26 *Cluster D Gathering, Springfield, Decorah

Oct 10 *LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls

Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County

Nov 7 *LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah

Nov 14 *Board meeting @ synod office

2027

Feb 19-20 Retreat @ Stone Center Strawberry Point (snow date Feb. 26-27)

Mar 6 *Board Meeting @ synod office

Apr 17 *Cluster G Gathering, Salem in Lake Mills

May 1 *Board Meeting @ synod office

Jun 25 *Board meeting/ party set up, St. Peter's Garnavillo

Jun 26 *Sharing party, St. Peter's, Garnavillo

2028:

Jun 28 *Convention, tentative Zion in West Union

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



Travel Fun Fall field trip with NE IA Women of ELCA

Saturday October 17, 2026

Come Join us on an Adventure.

Exploring Waterloo/ Cedar Falls in Black Hawk County

WHO: Anyone can come. Bring a friend, spouse, Children and grandchildren

RSVP by Oct. 1 (for reservations at Barn Happy)

10am Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum & Grout Museum of History & Science

(enter top of the hill)

Museum Only Cost: \$15 Adults, \$8 Veterans & Children 4-13, 3 & Under & Museum Members Free

Or add the planetarium show

Museum & [Norris Corson Family Planetarium](#) Cost: \$20 Adults, \$13 Veterans & Children 4-13, 3 & Under & Museum Members Free



1 pm

Lunch at **Barn Happy** 11310 Univ. Ave. Cedar Falls, IA

They have a gift shop of antiques and Iowa made products
(pay your own way)

2:30 pm

ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries 2422 College St, Cedar Falls, IA (free learning about campus ministries at UNI)

We end our day together here.



Optional on your own:

John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum

500 Westfield Ave, Waterloo, IA 50701

(free admittance) They are open until 5pm.



RSVP by Oct. 1 so we can put reservations in at Barn Happy

RSVP TO: Chris VanDeventer cdvandeven@gmail.com 515-320-2877

Note all activities are pay as you go.

If you have a carpool location, let us know so we can share with others.