

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.

AVAILABLE SYNOD SCHOLARSHIPS for Women of the ELCA

Each January your synod board meets with the leaders of our clusters. Among many things, we review the scholarships that are within our budget to give to women who are members of ELCA congregations in our synod. The following scholarships are available to give women an opportunity they might not have otherwise. Some years they are not even used. Hopefully, you will help us publicize them.

Global Mission Event: Three scholarships of \$100 each. There is no form as each event is different. Send the information with your written request to our treasurer 60 days before the event.

Synod Convention: Ten scholarships for “first timers” (excluding delegates) that will pay for your entire registration fee! (We hope this will encourage women who have not attended one of our conventions.) You must register early (before May 15) and indicate that you are a “first attender” on the registration form.

Triennial Gathering: Five grants of \$300 each for women attending the triennial gathering are available to help with costs. First attendees will receive priority. Applications must be received by November 15.

Educational: Three scholarships of \$500 each are available to women who need further education to enter/re-enter the work force. This is NOT for those who are recent high school graduates. Recipients are highly encouraged to be available to receive their scholarships at the convention (June 15).

All forms can be found on the synod website, or contact our treasurer, Nancy Poppe. (See the back of this newsletter for her addresses and telephone number.) The synod treasurer and president will meet to select the recipients. *Gloria Tollefson, your synod president*

Spring Gathering —Clusters 4, 5, 6 & 7

Cluster 4 will hostess the Spring Gathering and LWR Pick-Up Saturday, April 18 at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 2001 Bremer Ave. W in Waverly (across from the synod office). The truck will be available from 8-11 a.m. Coffee and registration begin at 8:30 and the worship program at 9:30 a.m. The speaker will be Dr.

Jenny McBride, Regents Chair of Ethics and Director of Peace and Justice Studies at Wartburg College. What an opportunity for us to learn about “Deepening Faith Through Action.” Offering will be given to the Women’s Prison Theology Program and Cedar Valley Friends of the Family. Noon lunch (free will offering) and cluster meetings will follow. Hope to see you there! *Gloria Tollefson, Cluster 7*

Spring Gathering—Cluster 1

Bishop Ullestad will speak on the future of the ELCA at the Lake Cluster Spring Retreat at St. Paul Lutheran in Hampton April 9. Registration and coffee begin at 8:30 a.m., business meeting at 9, followed by lunch. *Cindy Pogge, President, Cluster 1*

WELCA Cluster 10 Spring Gathering

April 6, 2013 at West Clermont Lutheran Church, 221 Larrabee Street, Clermont, Iowa. Theme: “African Safari.” Speakers Donna Menhard and Arleon Kelly, Hope of Nigeria.

WELCA Cluster IX Little Flock Spring Gathering

April 27th, 2013 at St. John Lutheran Church, 203 Pearl Street, Guttenberg, Iowa. Theme: “Bind Us Together Lord.” Speaker: Quilts by Marie Weber. Each of the WELCAs is to bring a quilt square and quilt to display.

Thank you!

Thank you for calling me to serve as your treasurer for the Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women’s Organization. February 1, 2013 was the beginning of the new treasurer’s term. Nancy Poppe of Ionia, Iowa is the new treasurer (her address is below). Just a reminder: **Form A** (regular offerings, Convention offerings, etc.) is sent to the Synodical Treasurer (Nancy). **Form B** (thank-offerings, Katie’s Fund, 25th Anniversary gifts, etc.) is sent to the Women of the ELCA at the Chicago address. More information may be found in the stewardship booklet which was sent to your unit president. May you enjoy the Lord’s blessing as you serve in your several positions. *Submitted by Shirley Retz*

What’s the purpose?

Jill was showing her daughter Allison how to prepare the famous family ham. Jill placed the ham in the pan with the secret spices. Allison was puzzled when her mom cut both

CALENDAR

- April 6 Cluster 10 Spring Gathering, West Clermont, Clermont
April 9 Cluster 1 Spring Retreat, St. Paul, Hampton
April 13 Clusters 4, 5, 6 and 7 Spring Gathering and LWR pickup, Redeemer, Waverly
April 20 Cluster 3 Spring Gathering, Bergen, Roland
April 20 LWR Pickup, Trinity, Cedar Rapids
April 27 Cluster 1 and 2, LWR pickup in Manly
April 27 Cluster 8 Spring Gathering, St. Paul Lutheran (Maple Leaf) Elma
April 27 Cluster 9 Spring Gathering, St. Johns, Guttenberg
April 27 Cluster 8 Spring Gathering (location to be determined)
May 4 SWO Board meeting at convention site
May 4 LWR Pickup, Olson Explosives, Decorah
May 22 - 23 Women of the ELCA Bible Study Seminar with Dr. Kay Ward, Wartburg Sem.
June 14 SWO Board Pre-convention meeting at convention site
June 15 SWO Convention, Wartburg College
Nov. 2 LWR pickups, Olson Explosives, Decorah and Redeemer, Waverly
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ends off the ham before shoving it in the oven. Allison asked why? Jill thought for a moment and replied, "That's the way my mother and grandmother did it." Later, Allison asked her grandmother why she and her mother cut the ends from the ham. Grandma Annie answered with a chuckle, "We only had one pan that would fit in the oven."

We have lived this story for generations. It's not really about ham or women in the kitchen. The lesson is about purpose, change and telling our stories. If there's a "ham in the pan" situation in your congregational unit, read on.

Women of the ELCA unit leaders are always on the hunt for resources, programs and events for their units. They feel a pressure to meet women's wants and needs with tradition or new ideas and ministries. So what's a unit leader to do?

Purpose

Our purpose statement anchors our ministry. It says who we are, what we are called to do and how we will get it done. Jill's actions in the story were based on accepting a practice she perceived had purpose without questioning the practice. Over the years we have used the statements "women today

are busy, working, raising children" and "women are aging" as the answer to a decline in numerical participation. The truth is women have always been busy, working, raising children and celebrating another birthday every year. Without asking why fewer women are participating in Women of the ELCA, our purpose gets distorted and we are no longer working toward one purpose.

Change

We live in a culture that thrives on change. Allison took an essential step further to change the practice of whacking off the ends of the ham by simply asking questions. The first answer is not always enough to change perception or practice. Now that Allison had additional and accurate information, her options looked different. Natural change—bigger ovens or, in our case, more ministry options for women—increases our mission field and methods for accomplishing the mission.

Telling our stories

In this community of women created in the image of God and called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, each generation is responsible for telling the story to the next generation, not just once but over and over again. Allison and the three generations before her had not shared their stories with each other.

Leaders are to assist the community in asking the questions and keeping the conversation going. But often our leadership is busy trying to meet the needs of those who participate or a particular group of women. Instead, leaders are called to point and encourage women to our purpose.

The work of leaders called to women's ministry is to engage each generation of women—busy, working mothers, widows, students, unemployed, retired women on church council, teaching Sunday school, youth leaders—in what they need to be disciples today and to make room for them to achieve our purpose.

Begin with prayer. Reflect on the purpose statement. What are your questions and answers? Invite women to share stories and listen to one another. Widen the circle, encouraging all women to share and to participate in building programs and activities that support what you have seen and heard. *Reprinted from March 2013 Interchange. Valora K Starr is director for discipleship*

Good News

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Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter. Please put WELCA in your subject line. (You can also send paper copies by "snail" mail.)

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