

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.

2015 CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS

February 20–22 I met with the other 64 synod presidents, six churchwide board members and the staff at The Lutheran Center in Chicago. This annual meeting is used to update, inform and inspire us to go back to our synods as better leaders. We met non-stop from 8 in the morning ‘til 10 o’clock at night, and during bathroom breaks we made about 60 fleece blankets for Lutheran World Relief! It continued back at the hotel as I became acquainted with my roommate, who is our sister synod’s new president from South Carolina. It was time well spent—every minute of it!

The theme, “**And the Dance Goes On,**” was carried out throughout the weekend with titles of presentations, skits and worship including a liturgical dance team. I want to share with you—

***TRIENNIAL UPDATE**—Over 500 have already pre-registered for our 2017 Triennial in Minneapolis! It has been decided to have only 9–15 promoters—women with specialized skills in their area. We were given a deadline for updating our unit information, which determines the number of delegates each synod is allotted.

***HUMAN TRAFFICKING**—On Friday night, two young women from the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation shared with us how they are focusing on the pimps and Johns (the market), hoping to end demand with help from the Chicago Police Dept. We wrote letters to our congressmen, asking for more stringent laws against the pimps and Johns who are using young girls (and boys) to make huge amounts of money. Go to www.polarisproject.org for more information.

***HUMAN SLAVERY**—Inez Torres Davis, from

our churchwide staff, has developed a PowerPoint presentation that will be made available to us with much current information on children, women (and men too) who are very poorly paid for long hours of work making products that we buy in our stores.

***PHEBE HOSPITAL FUND**—The NE Minnesota synod president made each of us realize the importance of helping them provide solar power for the Phebe Hospital in Liberia. It is needed more than ever as they fight the deadly ebola crisis. The good news is that we have received much help from RReal, a non-profit which has sent an electrical engineer to assess the project. With their help it is a project that is feasible for us to complete. Go to [Skip the grid PV](#) to find a 3-minute YouTube. What can each of our synods do to save many lives?

***CHANGES IN OUR GATHER BIBLE STUDY**—Our Bible study will not be a nine-month study (Sept.-May), but a three-month study (Sept.-Nov.), a special Christmas devotion, a study based on Philippians (Jan.-April) and an intergenerational lesson (May). The reason for the change is that it is too difficult to find authors who are able to devote a year to writing and seminars. I think it will encourage women to join us during the year. When each new study begins, we can publicize it as a good time to join us for a new study! More information can be found in the March issue of *Gather*, page 4. Send “new Bible study ideas” e-mail to gather@elca.org.

***USE OF OUR WEBSITE and SOCIAL MEDIA**—During every session we were encouraged to use our website. “Just remember WELCA.org and you will have at your fingertips everything you want to know about our organization.” It is full of resources (and there will be some new ones) for programs for your unit/cluster events. I realized that we need to add pictures and more information to our www.neiasynod.org/ website. Have you added information to your congregation’s website that would encourage women to (Continued on [page 2](#))

CALENDAR

- Apr. 11 Spring LWR In-Gathering for Clusters C (Jubilee), E (Tree of Life) and H (Three Rivers) at Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls
- Apr. 11 Riverside Cluster Spring Retreat, St. Olaf LC, Belmond
- Apr 19 Awareness Day, Bethesda LC, Jewell, 3 pm
- Apr 25 Little Flock Cluster B Spring Gathering, First LC, McGregor
- Apr. 25 Upper Iowa River Cluster D Spring Gathering, Hauge & St. John, Decorah
- May 2 LWR Pickup, Olson's Explosives, Decorah
- May 16 SWO Board Meeting 8:30-noon, Synod Office
- Jun 19-20 Iowa Tri-Synodical W-ELCA Convention, Iowa Central Community College, Ft. Dodge
- Oct. 24 Little Flock Cluster B Fall Gathering, St. Paul LC, Monona
- Nov. 7 Fall LWR In-Gathering for Clusters C (Jubilee), E (Tree of Life) and H (Three Rivers) at Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls
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become active in the Women of the ELCA? We were encouraged to go to *Daily Grace, Café, Bold Connections*, Facebook, Twitter, and blogs. This is where we can encourage younger women to join us.

***NEWSLETTERS**—Many of the synods' newsletters are printed quarterly and are now sent electronically. They feel their readership is going up with the change. We must realize how fortunate we are that our monthly newsletter is sent with the NE Iowa Synod *STAR* newsletter. Maybe it is time to add the e-mail also. There are plans to revive *INTERCHANGE*.

***KNOW and UPDATE OUR CONSTITUTIONS**—I felt guilty as some of the presidents knew their constitutions so well and I have

NEIA Women of the ELCA website:

neiasynod.org/womenoftheELCA

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.)

to find ours! I do intend to study it! Can you find yours and can you update it and get a copy to me?

***ARCHIVING:** Has your unit/cluster collected lots of files and photos over the years? What must be kept and what should be shredded? I am in contact with the Archive office at the Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque.

***STEWARDSHIP**—Giving is down and needs are up. Some of the BOLD CREATIVE MINISTRIES we were able to support in the past have been curtailed. Our summer Bible study will focus on stewardship. We were reminded that Thrivent dividends can be given to the Women of the ELCA.

AND SO THE DANCE GOES ON *Gloria Tollefson, your synod president*

Iowa synod Presidents



Judy Lange (Western Iowa), Gloria Tollefson (NE Iowa), and Sandy Chandonia (SE Iowa)

share the plans for our Tri-Synodical convention with our Churchwide president Patti Austin (Georgia). Patti and two other Churchwide reps—Cindy Arnett (California) and Jackie Wilson (Arkansas)—will be with us too.

**WE HOPE YOU ARE PLANNING
TO BE THERE TOO
JUNE 19-20
CENTRAL IOWA COMMUNITY COLLEGE
FORT DODGE**

Go to our website neiasynod.org to find the registration form! There are scholarships available for first-timers.

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