



# Good News

April 2016  
Volume 29  
Number 4

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 the President:**

I Timothy 4:12 “Let no one despise your age, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

What a wonderful reminder of what it means to live as a disciple of Christ, no matter what your age or ability! We will be using this verse as our theme verse for our convention, June 18, 2016.

Although we have a long list of “business” to complete, we also will be spending time together in fellowship and learning opportunities. This is a great chance for all of us to learn more about being disciples and living out Christ’s mission in this broken world. We will have representatives from Wings of Refuge, Retrieving Freedom, LSI and our Churchwide expression of Women of the ELCA. Laura Gentry will be doing our Bible study and teaching us about Laughing Yoga. And some of your board members are also getting into the act with sessions on chair aerobics and generational communications. It is going to be a fun and spirit-filled day for all ages and abilities!

Make sure to mark your calendars and attend! If you have not gotten information yet, you can find all the information on our website, [neiasynod.org/womenoftheelca/](http://neiasynod.org/womenoftheelca/). See you soon! *Diane Wills*

## **Mission Area: Stewardship**

Have you thought of Katie’s Fund as part of your stewardship ministry?

Katie’s Fund is an endowment that supports ministry in three areas: leadership development, global connections, and living theology. Women of the ELCA established Katie’s Fund in 1997 to honor the legacy of Katharina von Bora Luther (wife of Martin Luther). Katie’s life illustrates the importance of sharing theology, building connections, and supporting leaders from all walks of life. She and Martin showed that bold lives of faith were not limited to monasteries and convents; they lived out their vocations in domestic and worldly affairs, fully engaged with the larger community. Women of the ELCA is driven by this same understanding that women of faith are called to live boldly in their own time and place. Katie also understood the need to support each other in this vocation. She cared for the ill and fed the hungry. She made her home a place where guests could engage with challenging ideas, meet new friends, and be nourished in body and spirit to go forth and change the world.

It is easy to understand why Katie Luther is so beloved. It is a story of following God’s call into community to boldly bring about healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world. It is the story of Katie’s Fund. Your gift to Katie’s Fund will help raise up bold women of faith today and for generations to come. Katie’s Fund dollars support ministry in three areas—leadership

development, global connections, and living theology. More information can be found at the Katie’s Fund website, <http://www.womenoftheelca.org/katie-s-fund-pages-115.php>

You can give individually or as a board or group. The Northeast Iowa Synodical Women’s Organization board recently gave a designated gift in memory of the death of a family member of an SWO board member.

Give today and make a difference in women’s lives—now and far into the future! *Submitted by Beverly Sheridan*

## **Mission Area: Discipleship**

Looking for some direction for your Altar Guild or lectors? Maybe these books would be of help to you.

*The Altar Guild and Sacristy Handbook* by S. Anita Stauffer is a book filled with information to help people understand everything from the meaning of the ministers’ vestments, to all things to do with the worship service and space, to the church year. It explains all the colors of the church, how to set up the worship space for regular Sundays as well as special services like funerals, baptisms and other church festivals. It talks about membership and how to run the meetings also. The book is a wealth of information that cannot possibly be included in this article.

Another great guide for your church is *Getting the Word Out* by Christopher George Hoyer. It tells us how we should prepare to do our reading at the church services, and explains how to deliver the readings. It has a guideline to follow, and also a section on how to pronounce the names that often trip up the reader.

These books are published by Augsburg Fortress and would be a great addition to your church library that you and others will find very helpful. *Submitted by Cindy Pogge, Vice President SWO Board*

## **Mission Area: Justice**

The prophet Micah states what God requires of us: “...to do justice, love kindness and to walk humbly with your God.” Micah 6:8b. Do the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students at Rock Run Elementary School, Iowa Falls, and their teacher, Susan Jones, know that they are doing justice as they work with the Leader Dog program?

Thirteen years ago Mrs. Jones spoke with a coordinator of the Leader Dogs for the Blind Puppy Training Program for the State of Iowa with the good news that her students had raised \$500, the amount needed to sponsor a puppy for the program. However, not only money was essential for the program to succeed; good trainers were needed for the puppies. Those puppies would one day grow up to be the eyes for the visually

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## CALENDAR

- Apr. 2 Cluster I Shechem Spring Gathering, Trinity, Hawkeye
- Apr. 8 Cluster F Riverside Spring Gathering, Bethesda, Jewell
- Apr. 16 Cluster G Living Waters Spring Gathering, St. James, Mason City
- Apr. 17 Stop Human Trafficking Workshop, 4 p.m., First Lutheran, Decorah
- Apr. 23 Clusters C, E & H Three River Spring Gathering, St. Paul, Waverly and LWR Ingathering
- Apr. 30 Cluster B Shepherd of the Hills Spring Gathering, Zion, Oelwein
- Apr. 30 Cluster D Upper Iowa River Spring Gathering, Washington Prairie
- Apr. 30 LWR Ingathering, Bethlehem LC, Manly, from 8–11
- May 7 LWR Ingathering, Cluster B, Little Flock Olson Explosives, Decorah
- May 14 SWO Board at Wartburg 9–12
- Jun. 17 Pre-convention SWO Board meeting at Wartburg, 5pm
- Jun. 18 NEIA Women's Synodical Convention, Wartburg College, Waverly
- Sep. 9–10 Three River Fall Retreat, Camp Ewalu
- Oct. 22 Little Flock Fall Festival St. Paul, Postville
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impaired.

The puppies the school sponsors are being raised in a prison, and only around men. The dogs were missing a very important part of their training—being around children and being in a different learning environment. The inmates cannot raise the money needed to sponsor a puppy; they also cannot socialize the puppies to people and events outside the prison setting. Hence, a need for encounters with crowds and noise. What better place than a school setting for this type of experience?

Four to six times a year 15–18 puppies, ages eight weeks to one year old, are brought to the school. Training sessions are held in the gym; the children and puppies learn the basic commands of sit, stay, and come. Eventually the puppies are allowed to go up and down stairways, an adventure that tires many of the pups. One student claimed that carrying a tired

puppy back to the gym was “always my favorite part.”

During one of the training sessions the puppies are told to sit while loud instruments like cymbals, recorders and drums are played. The students are to be as loud as possible so that the puppies could practice distraction training. For a puppy to successfully graduate to be a Leader Dog, they must learn how to ignore distractions so they will never put the life of their blind person in danger.

Training the puppies is a multi-faceted job; both the students and puppies learn much. As of January, 2015, the 4<sup>th</sup> grade students, 9–10 year olds, have sponsored 46 Leader Dog Puppies and raised over \$38,000. Congratulations to all involved!

One of the popular fundraising projects is the Kennel Club Restaurant. The students do all the work, preparing, hosting, serving, even banking—taking the money to the bank along with Mrs. Jones. The menu is hot dogs, chili, chips, Jell-O and bars. The next Kennel Club Restaurant is April 15, 2016, Rock Run Elementary, 710 North St., Iowa Falls. The meal is served from 11–12:30. Reservations are needed one week prior to the event: 641-648-6420. Let's be a part of helping these 4<sup>th</sup> graders succeed in “doing justice” by helping the visually impaired to “see” with the help of a Leader Dog. *Submitted by pastor Jane Granzow, retired.*

### C, E & H Clusters Spring Gathering

Saturday, April 23 at St. Paul, Waverly. The program leader is Deborah Wise from Trinity United Methodist Church in Waverly, who will discuss her experience with Syrian refugees on the island of Lesbos in Greece. The LWR ingathering truck will also be here. *Submitted by Joyce Thompson*

### Stop Human Trafficking Event

Stop Human Trafficking Workshop is being offered April 17, 2016 at 4 pm at First Lutheran in Decorah. It is free and open to the public. Clergy members, hotel staff, law enforcement officials, first responders, teachers, social service professionals and others are invited to learn about human trafficking in Iowa and how to identify possible victims. If you are in the Decorah area, please join us find out what we can do to stop to modern-day slavery in which children and adults are illegally traded and exploited for sex or forced into labor against their will. More information is available at <http://www.neiasynod.org/> or the March 2016 Northeastern Iowa Star. *Submitted by Anna Jetson*

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*Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter (e.g. April 1 for May issue). Please put WELCA in your subject line. (You can also send paper copies by “snail” mail.)*

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