

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**

*Be still and know that I am God. Ps. 46:10*

This has been my centering verse for the last year and I think it is especially fitting for the Advent season. It is so easy to get wrapped up in the preparations for the arrival of family and friends.

Is the house clean; is there enough food; did I get the right present; are the decorations up, etc....

My question for you is, do you spend as much time on your

preparation for the arrival of the Baby Jesus? Do you take some quieting moments? Do you spend time in prayer? I have been blessed the last six years to be a part of a wonderful Advent tradition at my church in Sheffield. On the first Sunday evening of Advent the women of our church gather, dressed in our Christmas best, for Advent by Candlelight. We marvel at the creative Martha Stewarts in our midst, share fellowship and then quiet worship time with a well-prepared program that always speaks to my heart. I think it is the most important part of my Advent preparations. This intentional quiet helps me to focus on the most important part of Christmas! I pray that each of you will also find the Baby Christ in this

**Christmas!**

*Blessings, Diane Wills*



## **Mission Area: Stewardship**

Just a note to all of our Women of the ELCA units of Northeastern Iowa. There are many ways to give generously through our organization to those who struggle every day to survive.

Our purpose statement says we shall “promote healing and wholeness in our church, the society and the world.”

Women of the ELCA has a grant application program for those whose projects meet the criteria. These grants generally are in the range of a few hundred dollars to about \$3,500.

[www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org) has all the details about it. Look under “OUR WORK.” In the past, help has been provided to refugee women, victims of sexual assault, teenage mothers and the homeless, as examples.

Proposals should be sent electronically to Women of the ELCA between December 15, 2015 and February 15, 2016 for consideration.

This might be a source of funding for whatever is your passion for helping others! *Submitted by Nancy Poppe, your Synod Women Organization Treasurer.*

## **Mission Area: Justice**

The Polaris Project is a leader in the global fight to eradicate modern slavery and restore freedom to survivors. Their website is [www.polarisproject.org](http://www.polarisproject.org). The National Human Trafficking Resource Center phone number is 1-888-373-7888 and there is also a Polaris Be Free texting Helpline. Text BeFree (233733). Please put the NHTRC ph# in your cell phone. If you notice something not right, call and they will investigate. For more information on the signs of trafficking see the website above. Human Trafficking is still considered low-risk and high-profit. The Polaris Project is trying to turn that around to make it high-risk and low-profit. If there is no demand, then there is no

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## CALENDAR

2016

- Jan. 16 SWO & Cluster Leaders, Waverly, 9-3  
(snow date Jan. 23)
- Mar. 5 SWO, Waverly 9-12 (snow date  
Mar. 19)
- May 14 SWO at Wartburg 9-12
- Jun. 17 Pre-convention SWO meeting at  
Wartburg, 5pm
- Jun. 18 NEIA Women's Synodical Convention,  
Wartburg College, Waverly
- Sep. 9-10 Three Rivers Fall Retreat, Camp Ewalu
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need for supply. What action can you take to help remove the demand? *Submitted by Anna Jetson*

### **Mission Area: Discipleship**

The NEI women's synod board cordially invites the cluster presidents to our January 16th board meeting from approximately 9-3. We will talk about plans for the new year and the upcoming convention in June. The presidents will have a chance to see how the board carries out business for our women. It is also a time for our leaders to get acquainted with the officers. We will have a soup lunch at the office and then finish up any unfinished business from the morning session. The snow date for this meeting will be January 23. We hope as many of you as possible can attend and we look forward to seeing you and learning what you are doing in your clusters.. *Submitted by Cindy Pogge, SWO Vice President*

### **Resources from the Women of the ELCA website:**

*Advent: A Season for All Generations*

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### **NEIA Women of the ELCA website:**

[neiasynod.org/womenoftheELCA](http://neiasynod.org/womenoftheELCA)

### **Good News**

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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.)*

This two-part Advent program can be used by a group of any size. You'll discuss various customs and explore the biblical figures of Advent (Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, Joseph and Mary, and more). You might use it with your regular study group or as a special Advent Bible study group. Each part takes about 20 to 45 minutes and includes prayer, hymns, Scripture, narration, and discussion.

### *The Colors of Christmas: A Reflection on Preparing for Christmas*

Our celebrations are often sprinkled with seasonal traditions that bring us joy and remind us of times gone by or people who have graced our lives. Do you know where or when your traditions began and the meaning behind them? This resource takes a look at the some of the customs around Christmas.

See more at:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/liturgical-year>

*Submitted by Jan Harbaugh*

### **From Linda Bushkovsky**

Most, if not all of you, should have received *Bold Connections*. In there you would have seen the post-board meeting summary that describes the various actions taken by the churchwide executive board at its meeting last weekend. You'll find the news article on our website at

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/november--board-meeting-oct-2015-news-377.php?category-id=6>

Please share this meeting summary with your board members and encourage unit leaders to read it too.

**The blessings of the season be  
with you and yours.**

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### **NEIA Women of the ELCA Treasurer**

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