

**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.**

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## **YOUR INPUT IS IMPORTANT**

A resolution from our 2012 Synod Assembly asked for changing the boundaries/number of conferences/clusters within our synod. It was felt it was needed because of the changes in numbers of congregations within some clusters. Some clusters are not functioning well if at all. We should be pleased that the women of the ELCA are being asked for our thoughts and concerns. Sue Ollman, our secretary, and I are on a small task force that is meeting to make final recommendations. Since I am there to represent you, please address this issue at your next unit board meeting. Discussion might focus on:

How your current cluster serves your unit

- Current challenges for your cluster
- Ideas you might have for cooperative ministry within newly organized clusters
- Thoughts on changes in size of clusters/joining clusters
- Use of the term conferences rather than clusters to be consistent

Please get your input to me before we meet again in March. Your views are important in this decision as we probably use the cluster organization to carry out our ministry more than other ministry. This will be on our agenda when the synod board meets with the cluster presidents/co-ordinators. Please pray for us and our efforts in working through this change. Please e-mail/send me your thoughts. *Submitted by Gloria Tollefson, 4614 Whispering Pines Circle, Cedar Falls, IA 50613 or [gltollefson@cfu.net](mailto:gltollefson@cfu.net)*

## **Please Note:**

Our new treasurer, Nancy Poppe, begins her term this month. Her contact information is printed on the back.

## **Today's Dream: Tomorrow's Reality: Women of the ELCA Anti-racism Program**

Women of the ELCA believe that our diversity is a gift from God. Cross-cultural programming provides tools for effectively relating across barriers that both define and separate us into racial and cultural groupings. Do you know someone who does not feel welcome at church, at school, or in your community? We are about doing something to make everyone feel welcome.

As we follow the ministry of Jesus in the New Testament, we see that Jesus accepts everyone—ministering to those who are different, who are not included.

How can we welcome everyone to the table?

- By learning about each other and celebrating our unique differences.
- By having a person from the Synodical Organization go to training that is happening in August. The training is very interesting and you meet women who are committed to welcoming everyone. After the training, you can give presentations to help others appreciate and celebrate our diversity.

When women of the church make a commitment to ministry, they don't let much stand in their way. Women of the ELCA have stepped forward in faith to confront obstacles, rejoiced in and relied on the grace and mercy of God to sustain them.

Do you feel the call to enter into this work of Women of the ELCA? It will change your life!

*Submitted by Cecil Maureen Johnson*

*Please consider becoming our synod Racial Justice Advocate. A new training retreat is planned for August 8-11 in Kansas City. Please call me if you are interested. Gloria Tollefson (319) 266-4075.*

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## CALENDAR

- April 9 Cluster 1 Spring Retreat  
April 13 Clusters 4, 5, 6 and 7 Spring Gathering and LWR pickup, Redeemer, Waverly  
April 20 LWR Pickup, Trinity, Cedar Rapids  
April 27 Cluster 1 and 2, LWR pickup in Manly  
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 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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### **The LWR Quilt Campaign: Did you say 500,000 quilts?**

In 2013, Lutheran World Relief (LWR) is challenging Lutherans across the U.S. to donate 500,000 quilts to send around the world to people in need. That's an increase of approximately 25 per cent or 100,000 quilts over previous years.



No matter what the disaster, LWR mission quilts are one of the most requested items because of their durability and versatility. And there have been too many disasters around the world! LWR strives to

provide as many quilts as possible but the supply is limited. The good news is you don't have to make all 100,000! However, every mission quilter or quilting group should set their goal to do more. Mission quilters,

you are the best advocates for this project. Tell everyone you know about your new goal. Tell them how they can help you. Even those who have never sewn before can lend a hand in many ways by just showing up, ready and willing to help. Anything, from threading needles, pressing seams to making coffee is always appreciated. Thank them for their support and help them to see how their contribution is an act of service. This challenge is a way of celebrating and giving God thanks that is (as LWR would say): Tied in Faith. Sent in Hope. Wrapped in Love. (Go to [www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org) to get detailed instructions on how to make mission quilts.) *Submitted by Gloria Tollefson abbreviating an article by Valora Starr in the January, 2013 Interchange. She is the director for discipleship in our churchwide office.*

### **World Day of Prayer—March 1, 2013**

World Day of Prayer is celebrated by women in more than 170 countries. Each year, a different host country is chosen to develop the worship materials and choose the theme. This year, the women in France wrote the liturgy, selected music and created the artwork to be used by women around the world on the first weekend in March. The 2013 theme is, "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me," echoing Jesus' call to be in relationship with immigrants.

The World Day of Prayer worship service features stories and voices of six women in France with diverse immigrant experiences. The prayers, music and scripture call attention to the theme of welcoming the stranger. Materials are available at [wdp-usa.org](http://wdp-usa.org).

In the United States, the offerings collected at World Day of Prayer events go to the World Day of Prayer Committee USA, which distributes the money as grants to organizations that do work related to the year's theme.

Is there a World Day of Prayer in your community? Then promote it through your Women of the ELCA network. If not, hosting it at your church is an opportunity for showing hospitality to women from other churches. *Submitted by Gloria Tollefson, using information in the January Interchange.*

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

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