



Good News

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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

Business Meeting? UUUGH!!!

As a board, we are busy preparing for our gathering on June 16, 2018. I have had quite a few people ask why we need to have a "business meeting" when everything is "cut and dried"? That is a great question and here are the answers. First, it is mandated by our constitution that you, the members of all the congregations of NE IA have a say in what we do collectively with our money and our time. We, as a board, try to make decisions in your interest, but you ultimately are the decision makers. Second, this is also your opportunity to bring items of concern or great passion before the other members of NE IA Women of the ELCA. Perhaps you have a concern about how money is spent, or a great passion about hunger issues in Iowa. If that is the case, download the resolutions form from the website, fill it out and send it in. Then it can be brought to the convention and discussed and voted on by all of us. And if it is something that should be brought to national attention, we then pass it along to our Church-wide organization, just like we did this last Triennial. We had three memorials (resolutions) that made it to the floor and all three passed! That is how we, the people, make change in policies that can help all of us! So, if you want to have a voice, send a voting member from your congregation, be a voting member, write a resolution, get involved! *Make a change,*
Diane Wills

Mission Area: Discipleship

What's wrong with me? Is it the after-Christmas blues or the let down after the hustle and bustle of the Christmas season? It's time for an EPIPHANY. What does that mean? A sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something. Do you want to understand yourself, others, or the world better? On the Women of the

ELCA web site, there is a resource on [Unfolding the Discovery](#). You can do it alone or with a group. On January 6th our church celebrates this festival of the Epiphany and the coming of the Magi with their gifts. Growing up, our wise men were always placed in the back of the tree by our mother and each day of the season we got to move them closer to the Christ child and at the last they would reach the end of their journey. In the new year, take time to reflect on the birth of the child and your own personal journey and be open and ready for any small or great epiphanies that might show themselves to you. Whether it be in the form of a new friend who has something new to offer to your life or the gentle flutter of a butterfly wing that brings an epiphany to you, the biggest and greatest one in our lives is that GOD loves ME. *Submitted by Cindy Pogge, VP NEIA WELCA*

Mission Area: Justice

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness. . . . He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." Mark 1:1-8

Remember the musical, *Godspell*? "Prepare ye the way of the Lord" repeated over and over again. The lyrics become more insistent and the audience is encouraged to join in. Something significant is going to happen, we have to be ready. Jesus is coming and he will turn things upside down. There will be cataclysmic change.

That's what is happening in the world of sexual exploitation, too. Women and men who have been abused are speaking up and calling those who have harmed them to task. We're not sure how deal with it. Do we fire them all and start over? What consequences do they face? Where does forgiveness enter in? Is there

CALENDAR

Jan. 1	Feb. <i>Good News</i> deadline
Jan. 20	SWO Board and Cluster Leaders 9:00–3:00, Synod office (snow date 1/27)
Feb. 1	March <i>Good News</i> deadline
Mar. 1	April <i>Good News</i> deadline
Mar. 3	SWO Board, 9–12:30, Synod office (snow date Mar. 10)
May 19	SWO Board, 9–12:30, McCoy Room, Wartburg College
Apr. 1	May <i>Good News</i> deadline
Apr. 28	Upper Iowa Cluster Spring Gathering, Big Canoe LC
May 1	June <i>Good News</i> deadline
May 4	LWR Truck Loading, First Lutheran, Decorah
Jun. 15	SWO Board 7 p.m.–9 p.m., McCoy Room, Wartburg College
Jun. 16	31 st Annual NE IA Synod Women of the ELCA Gathering, Wartburg College, Waverly
Nov. 3	LWR Truck Loading, Decorah

a continuum on which we can measure the severity of exploitation? It will take some time to sort it all out.

In the meantime, let's continue to raise healthy boys and girls. Let's keep them safe and shield them from predators. We can help those who have been exploited and we can **work to make sure our laws protect victims and survivors and discipline those who have used them.**

Holy God, We are at a turning point. As attitudes change, knowledge grows, and we recognize the trauma of sexual exploitation, open our hearts to share your loving grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

From [Wednesday Prayer](#), written by Ginny Rudloff, Minneapolis Prevention Coordinator, <http://www.cherishallchildren.org>

Mission Area: Stewardship

Welcome to the New Year! What's your tradition(s) for beginning each year? Do you make resolutions?

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How do you handle the sometimes overwhelming generosity of others during the holiday season? I sometimes joke that I was born recycling. I remember getting boxes and bags of hand-me-downs as a child. Unless it was worn out, when it no longer fit, it kept going to the next one to use. These days, instead of going to relatives, sometimes we do garage/rummage sales, donate it to the resale shop, which turns it around to use profits to help the community. Those items that are too worn out end up being made into other things, like quilt squares or rag rugs made by my mom. I like what my brother and sister-in-law do: after merging two households into one, they have the policy, if they want to bring in something new, something old has to leave. Something new to think about in the New Year. How will you show your stewardship side in caring for the earth? *Submitted by Anna Jetson*

Around the Synod

Lutheran World Relief Fall In-gathering

Our collection process took place as usual at Olson's Explosives' parking lot in Decorah on Saturday, November 4. The day was chilly and misty, but did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the Postville Youth Group and a Luther College service group, who were there to help load the truck. Donations from Upper Iowa River Cluster D, Little Flock Cluster B, and Shechem Cluster I soon began arriving. By 10:30 AM, a total of 753 boxes had been delivered and packed into the semi truck!!

Totals

1,182 quilts, 720 Personal Care Kits, 1,809 School Kits, 539 Baby Care Kits, 76 Fabric Kits, 34 blankets, and 132.5# of soap.

Many thanks to each and every one who contributed to another successful LWR In-gathering. The needs worldwide are enormous, and we truly can make a difference. *Submitted by Dee Wyatt and Sandy Gavle*

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.)

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