

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.

AS I LOOK BACK ON MY FOUR YEARS AS YOUR PRESIDENT....

I am proud of the way we have worked through the changes in our clusters and how our cluster leaders have taken an active role in planning fall and spring events. With fewer active units, we have continued to be good stewards by supporting the Malaria Fund so well, Wartburg Seminary, scholarships and Lutheran World Relief, along with our Bible camps and missions for women around the world. I hope to see our effort in combating human trafficking continued at cluster and unit meetings.

I have listened to your concerns about the difficulties your units and clusters are having with finding new leaders and attracting younger women to becoming active members. I will be my own unit's president this coming year and look forward to seeing many of you as we attend synod activities together.

MY SPECIAL THANKS TO...

- * **Jan Harbaugh** who took the job as editor of this newsletter soon after I became president and now 44 issues later continues to get the Good News to you every month.
- * **Marcia Hahn** on the synod staff who has updated and added so much to our website www.neiasynod.org. I encourage you to go to it regularly.
- * **Bishop Ullestad** for his full support of the Women of the ELCA in our synod
- * **Board members**—those who have previously served and those currently on the board. Thanks for all you have done/are doing to make our board a positive link between churchwide and our clusters and congregational units. But even more for your friendship. I would not have known you except for working with you on synod board and I will miss seeing you at board meetings.
- * **And to each of you** for your support these past four years. It has been a privilege to have served as your president. *Gloria Tollefson*

CLUSTERS HOLD SPRING EVENTS

Shepherd of the Hills Cluster B

met at First Lutheran, McGregor, Iowa on Saturday, April 25th, for their annual Spring Flunge. Approximately 47 women attended from the 21 churches in our cluster. The program on "Social Media" was presented by Rev. Joelle Colville-Hanson, Director for Evangelical Mission, ELCA, from our Synod office. The discussion was AWESOME & program enjoyed by all present. The WELCA of First Lutheran served a lovely lunch at noon with coffee & treats before the gathering. *Submitted by Ruth Hilgerson*

Jubilee Cluster C, Tree of Life Cluster E, Three River Cluster H

The Spring Gathering for members of Jubilee (C), Tree of Life (E), and Three River (H) Clusters was hosted by Nazareth Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls on April 11, 2015. The theme for the program was "Human Trafficking Awareness," with the theme verse from Judges 19:30: "Consider it, take counsel, and speak up!" Michael Ferjak, Senior Criminal Investigator for the Iowa Department of Justice/Office of the Attorney General, gave a very thought-provoking presentation on human trafficking here in Iowa and across the United States. The offering was designated for LWR shipping and Braking Traffik, whose mission is to support and enable the discovery of and response to incidents of sex trafficking. Registration began at 8:30 and a delicious soup and sandwich luncheon was served after the program. Quilts, kits, blankets, and soap were collected and shipped for distribution by Lutheran World Relief. Cluster meetings followed the luncheon. *Submitted by Sheryl Moeller*

Upper Iowa River Cluster D

The Spring Gathering of Upper Iowa River Cluster D was held Saturday, April 25, 2015 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Decorah and Hauge Lutheran Church, with approximately 52 ladies in attendance representing 19 churches.

The program was presented by Lee Peterson on Organ Donation. Lee works very hard in promoting organ

CALENDAR

- Jul. 19 Ice Cream Social, Highland Lutheran Church, Decorah.
- Sep. 16 Free-will supper and bazaar/auction, St. Olaf Lutheran, Belmond, 5:30 pm
- Oct. 17 Jubilee Cluster C Event, Zion-Jubilee LC, rural LaPorte City, 9:30 am
- 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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donations. He discussed National Donor Sabbath, November 15, 2015. He handed out information on how you can incorporate information about organ, eye, and tissue donation within your congregation's service that week. So many people die waiting for an organ donation and the hope is that no one will die waiting for a donation in the future.

We followed with a business meeting and the installation of the new officers. The Fall Cluster Meeting will be at Washington Prairie Church. More information will be forthcoming! *Submitted by Vicky Kay Jaeger*

Riverside Cluster F

The Spring Retreat was held at St. Olaf in Belmond on Saturday, April 11. We began with coffee & treats at 8:30, opened with devotions by Pr. Jim Harbaugh, then learned much from a presentation on human trafficking by Joy Fopma from Wings of Refuge. At our business meeting, we elected and installed a new secretary and treasurer, then enjoyed a delicious salad luncheon prepared by the women of St. Olaf. *Submitted by Jan Harbaugh, unit secretary*

Living Waters Cluster G

Cluster G's Spring Gathering was hosted by St. John's Lutheran Church in rural Osage, IA on April 18, 2015.

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 (e.g. April 1 for May issue). Please put WELCA in your subject line. (You can also send paper copies by "snail" mail.)

We had a nice day and a good attendance for our gathering. A very nice lunch was provided, followed by a meeting in which information on the new *Gather* Magazine format was presented, and flyers with information on the upcoming Tri-Synodical convention were made available to all, with encouragement to attend. Election of officers was also held before the meeting was adjourned. *Submitted by Nancy Miller*

Shechem Cluster I

April 11, 2015, the Spring Gathering for Shechem Cluster I was held at Elgin Lutheran Church, Elgin, IA, with the theme, "Jesus, Savior of Our Souls." The program was Human Trafficking, Souls Lost on the Highway. Carol Berg spoke on Thrivent Action teams with ideas and hints. *Submitted by Marjorie Lewis.*

Upper Iowa River Cluster Spring In-Gathering

We were blessed with a beautiful day and lots of young, strong help to load a semi donated by Olson Explosives in Decorah for our LWR collection on May 2, 2015 from Upper Iowa River Cluster (D), Little Flock Cluster (B) and Shechem Cluster (I). We also had six churches from Living Waters Cluster (G) bring a big load which is very welcome because we sure have enough room in the semi. Our total counts was 2,050 quilts, 966 personal care kits, 188 school kits, 565 baby care kits, 125# of soap and 51 blankets. Our Grand Champion Quilters had to be St. Peters, Riceville, who brought 415 quilts! WOW!!

Thanks to all our great loading help.

Submitted by Shirley Steggall, Mission/Action Chair

Please Come!

Highland Lutheran Church Salad Luncheon and Bazaar on Labor Day September 7, 2015. Serving from 11:00 am to 12:30 pm. Auction of handmade goods, donations, and baked goods starting at 1:15 pm. Menu is hotdish, assorted salads and desserts. Church address: 3824 Highlandville Road, Decorah IA 52101. (North of Decorah) *Submitted by Anna Jetson*

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