

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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## **From the President** **What is our future?**

What do you think is the future of the Women of the ELCA? Before you answer this question, think about these thoughts: 1. As women, what do we want to leave the next generations of women? 2. Are the Women of the ELCA important to your church? 3. How has the Women of the ELCA been a part of your personal faith journey?

While you are pondering these questions, let me tell you a little bit about a bold new initiative of the Women of the ELCA. Our church-wide expression is beginning a new campaign to strengthen our organization for the generations to come. They are going to raise \$3 million for [Katie's Fund](#), named after Katie Luther. Now I can already hear the whispers: *We barely have enough for our group, that is impossible, are they CRAZY!!!!* I challenge you to think more like Jesus and less like a human! Nothing is impossible if God is with us, and I believe He is! If we break this down over the next 3 years, they are asking each SWO to raise around \$45,000, but if we break by year, that is \$15,000 and if you do it by 150 congregations (give or take), it is around \$100 per year for three years. That doesn't seem nearly so scary, right?

So now, I will ask you again: What will be the future for our beloved organization? Will we give up? or will we fight and leave a legacy of faithfulness and stewardship to our daughters and granddaughters?  
*Blessed to be a Woman of the ELCA,*  
*Diane Wills*

## **Mission Area: Discipleship** **Tell Your Story?**

One of the questions I asked in my president's article was "How has Women of the ELCA been a part of your faith journey?" I know so many of you and I also know that each of you has a story to tell about how a woman of the church invited you to a special event or a Bible study, or held your hand and prayed with you as you worried or grieved or rejoiced or gave you the biggest bear hug when you needed it most. When we are sharing our stories about how our circle of friends from the church have guided us, helped us, loved us and most of all, accepted us, we are sharing Jesus' love and showing our younger ladies why the women of our church are so

important. Remember Jesus had a small group of followers (a circle, if you will) that shared the most intimate and important parts of his ministry. Making our presence known in our churches is a good reminder to everyone, just what an important part of the ELCA we are! Try sharing your story this month and see what happens! *Submitted by Diane Wills*

## **Mission Area: Justice**

*Did you know our church is working on a "draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice?"*

This is an excerpt from the STAR, January 2018.

"The 66-page 'Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice' was released Nov. 15 for ELCA members to review and discern what this church should teach about contemporary issues related to sexism and patriarchy in our society. This draft is part of the process for preparing a social statement on women and justice to be considered by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, as mandated by the 2009 assembly.

The 19 members of the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ began working on the document in 2012. Task force members represent diverse walks of life, perspectives, genders, geographic regions, ethnicities, and skill sets. The members studied relevant topics and discussed important issues that will enable them to draft a social statement that represents the hopes and concerns of the whole church."

You can read the full statement of the draft at <http://elca.org/womenandjustice>. We have the opportunity to read and study the draft and send our thoughts and questions to the task force by Sept. 30, 2018. This is a chance to help form the document "Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice." Will you help?  
*Submitted by Jane Godson*

## **Mission Area: Stewardship**

Wow, it is June and time for our 31<sup>st</sup> annual WELCA Gathering. Our theme is "blessed are the weary..." and our verse is "and let us not grow weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we do not lose heart" Galatians 6:9. Let this be a time that we can be refreshed and reap from the fellowship, worship and wonderful presenters at our gathering.

In an effort to reduce our carbon footprint, we are asking participants to bring their personal portable devices,

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## CALENDAR

- Jun. 15 SWO Board 7 p.m.–9 p.m., McCoy Room,  
Wartburg College
- Jun. 16 31<sup>st</sup> Annual NE IA Synod Women of the ELCA  
Gathering, Wartburg College, Waverly
- Jun. 22 July/August Good News deadline
- Jul. 30–31 Field Trip to Minneapolis-St. Paul to visit Global  
Health Ministries, the LWR warehouse, and more
- Nov. 3 LWR Truck Loading, Decorah  
Ingathering for C, E and H, Fredsville Lutheran,  
rural Cedar Falls
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reusable water bottles, coffee mugs and a tote bag to collect your goodies! We will have paper copies available also if you do not have a personal portable device. Reusable water bottles and coffee mugs will also be available for a freewill donation that will go to the LSI WELCA challenge fund, spiritual life.

Offerings will be received Saturday morning at our worship service. The SWO Board has designated that 50% will go to Church-wide Women of the ELCA and 50% will go to our LSI WELCA Challenge Project, Spiritual Life. Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) has asked the Women of the ELCA for support in a special project that they have identified as crucial to the families of Iowa. The projects are client assistance, spiritual life, and God's Work, Our Hands. The NE Iowa Synod Women's Organization has chosen to support the Spiritual Life project with a goal of raising \$5,000. The Spiritual Life Program centers both staff and residents on LSI's mission to respond to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. We are about halfway to our goal, and with your help hope to reach it this year. Your regular offerings from individuals and congregations are used for the SWO budget. No Gathering offerings are kept by the NE IA SWO.

In-kind gifts of bars of soap for LWR (4–5oz) and rolled bandages for Global Health Ministries will also be accepted. Many of you have seen the bandage-rolling machine at your spring gatherings. If not, there are instructions at [www.ghm.org/hands-on-projects](http://www.ghm.org/hands-on-projects). We will

be delivering them to their headquarters in Minneapolis/St Paul on July 30/31. We hope that many of you can join us on this bus trip.

See you at our Gathering in June! *Submitted by Beverly Sheridan*

## Around the Synod

**Shechem Cluster** met at St. Peter's in Eldorado on April 7. Our theme was "Caring, Protecting and Serving." Our speakers were Marilyn Westpfahl and Jan Pleggenkuhle, reporting on their ongoing Toro bag project (they will have a table at the Gathering!) and Sergeant Schweiger, who talked about avoiding various scams. Devotions were led by Pastor Jenny Olson. Dorothy Reiling reported that in the past year, the cluster has given 775 quilts, 398 personal care kits, 744 school kits, 5 fabric kits, 244 baby care kits and 25# of soap. After we sang our table prayer, the ladies of St. Peter's served a delicious lunch. *Submitted by Jan Harbaugh, Shepherdess*

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At last...Spring has arrived..and the LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF TRUCK is,once again, loaded and ready to deliver its cargo of Quilts, Kits and Soap to the LWR warehouse in St. Paul, Mn.

Our collection process took place as usual at Olson's Explosives parking lot in Decorah on Saturday, May 5th. We were blessed with beautiful weather and great volunteers to help load the truck. Many thanks to the Postville Youth Group, students from Luther College and volunteers from St. John's Church in Sumner. Donations from Upper Iowa River Cluster D, Little Flock Cluster B, and Shechem, Cluster I soon began arriving. Items from St. Peter's Church in Elma and St. Paul's Church in Monona also were received.A total of 529 boxes were delivered and packed into the semi truck!!

Totals: 1397 Quilts - 757 Personal Care Kits - 102 School Kits - 27 Fabric Kits - 362 Baby Care Kits - 31 Blankets and 55 lbs of Soap.

Thanks so much to each and every one who contributed to another successful LWR In-gathering. We truly do make a difference!*Submitted by Dee Wyatt & Sandy Gavle, Big Canoe Lutheran Church, Decorah, IA*

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## NEIA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

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

[neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA](http://neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA)