

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**

### **Blessed are the weary.....**

Really?? Have you ever been so tired, so mentally and physically exhausted that you aren't sure if you can keep going? I have, a few times, but there is one time in particular that I would like to share with you. Ten years ago, our daughter, Amanda, fell from a 3rd story window while studying in Scotland. Long story short, she required surgery, and after two days of harrowing air travel complicated by winter weather, I arrived at her bedside. It was the day before Ash Wednesday and when I left home, I asked for everyone to pray for us as we entered into our "darkness" journey. I knew this Lenten journey was going to be fraught with decisions and lots of the unknown, but I was not prepared with how mentally, physically and spiritually exhausted I would feel. I can still remember coming back to the flat (walking at least a mile from the hospital) and being unable to think of what to do next. No computer or cell phone, only a daily phone call on a land line to talk with my husband. I journaled every day. This journal helped me to see the blessings of each day (sometime very small things) and see the progress to health Amanda was making. I forced myself to daily remember God's blessings, even when I could not think straight. When my husband arrived to "relieve" me and I returned to the States, I still found myself trying to recover from the drama. The darkness seemed to prevail, but with the help of my dearest friends from my circle, I kept fighting. It was probably another year later that I finally felt as if the darkness had lifted, and I felt spiritually "whole" again. Our Gathering theme this year is about that feeling of "weary" and how the Bible encourages us to keep going, even when we cannot see how we might do that. What I do know is that through God's healing hand, lots of prayer, Bible reading, journaling, the great care of some amazing physicians and Amanda's determination, she is completely healed, married, a mother of two great kids and soon to be a rostered Minister of Word and Service in the ELCA! God's blessings truly abound!

*Blessed and weary, Diane Wills*

## **Mission Area: Discipleship**

To begin, I'd like to thank Marcia Hahn for stepping in for me last month while I was in the hospital. And all those who were praying for me and the family, thank you!

And because prayer was so crucial for us through it all, I'd like to share my Lenten Journey book with you. Each Lent I choose a book to read as I contemplate my Christian calling and my path to the death and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus. This year I have returned to *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home* by Richard J. Foster (New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 1992). In it, he explores the many manifestations of Christian prayer. Many are familiar. Some not so familiar. But Foster says, "...this book is about a love relationship with the God of the universe....Real prayer comes not from gritting our teeth but from falling in love." (P.3)

May the love of the Father of us all be with us, and carry us to the joy of the Easter celebration. *Submitted by Jan Harbaugh.*

## **Mission Area: Justice**

One of my favorite bible verses is Micah 6:8, "He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." There is so much injustice in the world that I find it hard at times to keep focused on acting on the individual issues. However, we have a couple of great websites to help each of us stay focused on the current issues and take positive action to work to eradicate the injustices. One site is Cherish all Children, which is found at [info@cherishallchildren.org](mailto:info@cherishallchildren.org) This is an ELCA ministry, and a wonderful site from which you can receive an email every Wednesday. Each week it has a prayer and issues regarding children to lift up in prayer, there may be action you can take and you can also donate to the organization if or when you want. Another site is the ELCA Advocacy Action Center <http://www.elca.org/Resources/Advocacy> which will email ELCA Advocacy Alerts to you. This site will inform you of the different issues in current events that our church is concerned with praying about and acting on. Sometimes this might be signing a statement to send to Congress or it may have information regarding a statement our bishop has made regarding a current event. I have enjoyed receiving emails from these two sites as it is

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## CALENDAR

Mar. 1	April <i>Good News</i> deadline
Mar. 3	SWO Board, 9–12:30, Synod office (snow date Mar. 10)
Apr. 1	May <i>Good News</i> deadline
Apr. 14	Spring Gathering, Clusters C, E, H, Fredsville LC, rural Cedar Falls
Apr. 28	Upper Iowa Cluster Spring Gathering, Big Canoe LC Little Flock Cluster Spring Gathering, St. Sebald, Strawberry Point
May 1	June <i>Good News</i> deadline
May 4	LWR Truck Loading, First Lutheran, Decorah
May 19	SWO Board, 9–12:30, McCoy Room, Wartburg College
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
Nov. 3	LWR Truck Loading, Decorah

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a way I can be involved in current issues and do a part in seeking justice. They also help me stay informed as to what our church is doing in society to seek justice. I believe it is important to live our faith daily by being actively involved in doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with our God. I encourage each of you to check out these sites, if you haven't already, and become active in supporting the ELCA in seeking to do justice in our world. *Submitted by Nancy Miller*

### **Mission Area: Stewardship**

Do you know someone who gives regularly to Women of the ELCA, rain or shine, no matter what? Someone who's a faithful friend and steadfast supporter of the organization we all love? What does the Bible say about people like that?

*Sturdy shelter. Beyond price. Life-saving medicine.* Yes, we thought, those phrases certainly describe the many steadfast supporters of Women of the ELCA. So that's what we've named our new giving program: "Faithful Friends."

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### **NEIA Women of the ELCA Executive Board**

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"Faithful Friends" is an easy way for you (or your congregational unit or your synodical organization) to give monthly to Women of the ELCA by automatic withdrawal from your checking account or by automatic charge to your credit card. Download the form at: (<https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/FaithfulFriends-1.pdf>).

Then mail the form to:

Women of the ELCA Faithful Friends  
c/o ELCA Gift Processing Center  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield VA 22116-8009

The "Faithful Friends" program supports the Women of the ELCA General Fund, which makes it possible for your churchwide organization to act quickly and flexibly in response to any need that may arise.

The prophet Isaiah tells us that God says, "I am about to do a new thing" (43:19a). And "Faithful Friends" is one way you can help Women of the ELCA be ready for whatever new thing God has in store. (from the [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) website)

Did you know that you can also donate to Women of the ELCA through AmazonSmile? Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. You will see eligible products marked "Eligible for AmazonSmile donation" on their product detail pages.

Did you know that you can direct your Thrivent Choice dollars to many organizations: your home congregation, EWALU, LSI, Women of the ELCA, Wartburg Theological Seminary, and many more. If you are a Thrivent member, just go to <https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/living-generously/thrivent-choice/> and look for Direct Choice dollars and they will direct you from there.

As you can see there are many opportunities for you to help your favorite charity, some without even having to write a check. Giving opportunities are all around.

*Submitted by Beverly Sheridan*

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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)