

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.

Have You Planned Your Thankoffering Service?

Thankofferings are gifts from individuals in gratitude for blessings in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. Lutheran women have been carrying on this tradition for more than 100 years. We put coins in a Thankoffering jar or box which we then present as our offering during a special Thankoffering service. Congregational units need to plan a Thankoffering service at least once a year, when women bring their individual Thankofferings. November, with Thanksgiving, seems an appropriate time, but it can be any time during the year. Some units plan and lead the service as part of a congregational Sunday service. This is special as they are honoring the work of the women as well as increasing the offering.



You will find a service in the Stewardship Guide that each unit received in the mail recently. It can also be found on our website, making it

easier to “make it work for you.” This year it has been written to help you observe our 25th anniversary also. You might want to click Resources on our website to find “All About Thankofferings.” It will help you understand the history and importance of the Women of the ELCA’s Thankoffering tradition.

Your unit then sends your entire offering directly to the churchwide women’s organization using Form B on page 11 of the Stewardship Guide. Make checks payable to Women of the ELCA. Mail to Women of the ELCA, P.O. Box 71256, Chicago, IL 60694-1256. Thankofferings support the total ministries of the Women of the ELCA and make up 52% of their budget, so please do your part. A lot of what we do depends on YOU! *Submitted by Gloria Tollefson, SWO president*

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(Nancy Poppe, after March 1)

Not Why but Why Not?

The question to ask yourself is “Why Not?” go to the Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA in Charlotte, NC in 2014. If you have never been to a Triennial Gathering, it is an opportunity to



JULY 24-27, 2014
 Ninth Triennial
 Gathering

of many
 generations

gather with other women (mostly—there are few husbands and men to be seen around the event) in Worship and Prayer and Study and Laughter and Grace. You never know who you might see or meet. If you have been to the Triennial, you might know of which I speak. You might be inspired to take action in your community, your church, your world, causing them to become better places for all of us. If you have never been to Charlotte, this may be your opportunity to visit this awesome place, schedule some extra time to see what it is like there and visit some of the other awesome places in North Carolina. This might be the opportunity your daughter or granddaughter is waiting for—the invitation to join you at a Women of the ELCA event, so they can learn first hand what calls them to be Women of the ELCA. Or maybe it is your sisters, sisters-in-law, cousins, girlfriends, aunts, mothers, neighbors that you want to spend the week with. We are

CALENDAR

Nov. 3 SWO Board
Nov. 3 LWR Pickup, Trinity, Waterloo
Jan. 19 SWO Board Mtg. with cluster coordinators
Mar. 23 SWO Board
Apr. 27 LWR Pickup, Bethlehem, Manly
June 15 SWO Convention, Wartburg College

not choosy. I have met couples that come together and the men go off and do what they enjoy while the women are at the gathering. They have their evening meals and attend worship together. There is no set plan or agenda for anyone. You get to choose how you participate, your interest groups, connecting with other women from other regions/synods. If you ask my opinion, why not? You might find something new that God is calling you to be involved with. I sure did. *Submitted by Anna Jetson, Triennial Gathering Promoter*

The Sacrifice

A devotion by Betty Rewerts, St. John's Lutheran, Vilmar, Shared at Cluster 5 Retreat at Camp EWALU

She was packed tightly between the other bolts of fabric on the shelf. It gave her a sense of security. She could see and hear what was going on. She liked it when someone commented on her beautiful colors. That was enough for her. She liked being alone. She wasn't interested in going places. Not like some of the fabrics who were always whispering, "Take me. Take me." Sometimes they would be taken off the shelf and then put back. They were so disappointed that a part of them wasn't chosen.

Then one day it happened. She was yanked off the shelf and thrown on the counter. A piece of her was sliced off. It was quite painful.

She was put in a plastic bag with other fabrics, thread, scissors, needles, pins and a pattern. She felt herself floating and swinging through the air. It almost made her seasick. The bag was tossed into the car. Away they went.

The car stopped. The bag was taken out. It was placed on a table. Other things were piled on top of it. It was dark. She thought she was going to suffocate. She didn't know if she would survive.

Then the weight was taken off. The contents of the bag were dumped on the table. Hands picked her up. A

voice said, "Look how wrinkled she is." A hot iron went back and forth over her. She thought, "I am going to be burned and have ugly scars forever."

"Oh, how pretty you look," the voice said. She was put on a cutting board, turned this way and that way, measured and sliced into so many pieces she couldn't even count them all. Pieces of her were picked up. Pins were stuck in her as she was pinned to other pieces of fabric.

"Oh no," she moaned, "I am no longer alone, please take me apart. Just leave me be."

But that was not her fate. She was taken over to the sewing machine. She was stabbed over and over by the needle. She didn't know if she would be able to go on. It was pure torture.

Then everything stopped. "It is finished," the voice said. "I think this is the prettiest and best thing I ever done."

She was hung on the wall. She felt sad and humiliated by all she had gone through. She felt ashamed. She just couldn't look around. Suddenly she heard voices saying, "Oh how beautiful this is!"

She felt the soft touch of a hand and a voice said, "I think this piece is my favorite. Look how it makes all of the other fabrics pop."

Hearing this she looked up. She saw her reflection in the mirror on the opposite wall. She was surprised at what she saw. Bits and pieces of her were scattered throughout the wall hanging. It looked like a kaleidoscope. Just like that, all she had gone through was forgotten. She was glad she was not alone. She was now a part of something beautiful. It could be enjoyed by all who looked at her. All of her suffering, torture and humiliation had been worth it.

Do you suppose, at times, Christ felt like this piece of fabric? Do you think he was pleased about being taken out of heaven and coming down to earth? He knew that the only way back was to take the path that led to the cross. He traveled this path willingly.

In the end, all of his suffering, torture and humiliation were worth it. His sacrifice is what makes it possible for us to travel that same path to the cross.

In 1 John 4:10 we read: "This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins." We only need to believe in him, confess our sins and ask him to forgive us.

Contact Women of the ELCA at:

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Women-of-the-ELCA

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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.)