

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.

## Thankoffering: Give with Gratitude



For more than 100 years, Lutheran women have carried out the tradition of collecting Thankofferings during their circle/general meetings or Sunday congregational service. Years ago, we were given a small thankoffering box that we filled with coins in gratitude for

blessings throughout the year. There might still be some of those around!

Thankofferings remain an important part of our total stewardship using God-given gifts to support the ministries that God has entrusted to our care. These offerings (100%) are to be sent directly to our Churchwide office in Chicago, where they are turned into life-changing ministries for thousands of women within the United States and around the world.

Your offerings provide for:

- Leadership training
- *Gather* magazine and Bible Study
- Support for new units
- Program resources (on women's health, spiritual practices, church history, human trafficking, etc.)
- *Café* and *Daily Grace*
- Racial justice network and trainings
- Advocacy for women and children
- Grants and scholarships
- Outreach through social media
- Partnering with other Christian women's organizations:

Will you please make your women aware of how important this offering is to all we can do as an organization? *Gloria Tollefson, NE IA SWO President*  
*Additional information can be found on our website and Interchange July/August 2014 issue.*

## How Will You Respond?

At our recent Ninth Triennial Convention, delegates voted and passed memorials that we as an organization are to focus on during the next three years:

- AWARENESS AND PREVENTION OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING
- BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND RELATED VIOLENCE

- CREATING SAFE CHURCHES FOR CHILDREN
- SOLAR ENERGY FOR THE PHOBE HOSPITAL IN LIBERIA

At our recent synod board meeting, we discussed how we would respond as a board. We felt that we could best help our units and clusters to become more aware of human trafficking, bullying, harassment and domestic violence. We will begin by finding available resources: speakers, films/DVDs and books on these topics that we will share with you in this newsletter. Please help us by adding to the resource list.

At our last two synod conventions we have had speakers on School Bullying led by teenage girls from Denver High School. You might have girls from your own congregation and a high school counselor speak to you about what is happening in your high school to counteract bullying and harassment. This could be an intergenerational meeting which should interest younger women to attend. Women at our convention gave it the highest ratings.

A year ago, we had a speaker on International Human Trafficking from Lutheran Social Services. This, too, was found very interesting by the women who attended. But we know that many of our women do not attend the convention. So it is important that we address these issues at our congregation (unit) and cluster meetings. We hope that our unit and cluster leaders keep this in mind as they plan their meetings. Then let us know which of these resources you have used and how effective you felt they were. Churchwide has asked us to share with them also.

We know that our synod has and continues to hold seminars throughout our synod on creating safe churches for children and we are thinking Churchwide will give us direction on special fundraising for providing solar energy to the hospital in Liberia. *Gloria Tollefson, NE IA SWO president*

## Recommended Films

I attended the Triennial Gathering in Charlotte, NC with my great-granddaughter in July, 2014. While there I had the opportunity to view three film screenings. The first, **"I Believe You: Faiths' response to Intimate Partner Violence."** It is an hour-long interfaith documentary that explores the stories of survivors of abuse and the response of faith groups to address their needs. It was written and produced by Debra Gonsler Vinik and directed and produced by David Vinik. The documentary was nominated for two Emmy Awards for best Religious Programming and Best Editing.

The second film was **"Harvest of Empire,"** which spans 500 years, from the first New World colonies to our nation's 19th-century westward expansion, from the days of gunboat diplomacy to the turn of the millennium. The film is "a history of Latinos in

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## CALENDAR

Nov. 1	LWR Ingathering, Olson Explosives, Decorah LWR Ingathering, St. Peter Lutheran Church, Greene
Nov. 8	Living Waters Fall Cluster Event.
2015	
Apr 25	Cluster VIII Spring Gathering, Hauge & St. John, Decorah
May 2	LWR Pickup, Olson's Explosives, Decorah
Jun 19-20	Iowa Tri-Synodical W-ELCA Convention, Iowa Central Community College, Ft. Dodge

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the U.S.” It features family portraits of real-life immigrants from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua, along with sketches of political events and social conditions that compelled them to leave their homeland. Producer is Wendy Thompson-Maquez.

The third film, “**Miss Representation**” by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, explores how the media’s representations of women have led to the under-representation of women in positions of power and influence. In a society where media is the most persuasive force shaping cultural norms, the collective message that our young women and men overwhelmingly receive is that a woman’s value and power lie not in her capacity as a leader.

These are available at the Lutheran Resource Center, 630 US Hwy 18 E., Ste 2, Clear Lake, IA 50428-1440. Phone: 641-357-4451 or [lrc@netins.net](mailto:lrc@netins.net). Submitted by Carolyn Loftaas, Kensett Lutheran Parish

### **Application Period for Seed Grants Opens October 15**

Will the Churchwide organization plant a seed in your congregation, allowing it to engage women and girls in your church and communities in making and fostering emotionally, spiritually and physically healthy choices?

The 2014–2015 cycle for seed grants in our health initiative, Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls, opens October 15. Application materials will be available at [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org). All applications must be postmarked or e-mailed by December 15, 2014 and be submitted by active units of Women of the ELCA who are familiar with the Raising Up Healthy Women and Girls initiative and the criteria of this program. From [www.BoldConnections](http://www.BoldConnections)



## GATHER—our own magazine

We hope that as you have GATHERED this fall, you are enjoying our new Bible study, “Transforming Life and Faith.” Each month we will be considering how our lives and our faith journeys are transformed by the events we experience and the people we meet. I can really relate to that right now, as I am spending seven weeks at the Mayo Clinic with my husband as he goes through treatments for bladder cancer. The support we have received from so many of you and all the people who are serving us here is life transforming.

In this thought-provoking study we will discuss people in the Bible who had life-changing experiences too—Paul on the road to Damascus, Moses in the wilderness, Lydia praying by the river and the Ethiopian man traveling from Jerusalem to Gaza. Other articles in *Gather* support the lesson. As I study the lesson, I read the articles as they are referenced in the study (“See name of article, pp. 10–14,” for example). You can even attend a seminar with the author every May to get additional insights. Companion Bibles (\$3.95), and leader guides (\$7.95) are also available, but not necessary. It is also available now in audio and digital form. Our website has a video each month that supports the lesson.

This is our magazine. We are proud of it. It has earned many awards for excellence in religious periodicals. Why would a Women of the ELCA Bible study group want to use something other than their own Bible study/magazine? Do you remember when it was just a small magazine with no color? We all renewed our subscriptions at circle? We updated its name from *Lutheran Women Today* to *Gather*? This magazine just keeps improving with each issue. It is a beautiful magazine with many excellent articles and updates on what we as an organization are doing church-wide.

If you are not using our *Gather* study now, **subscribe by calling 800-328-4648** for only \$15 a year. A downloadable brochure about the Bible study is available at [gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org). Share it with the women in your Bible study group, strongly encouraging them to use our Bible study and magazine. To further support our own magazine, why not do as some of our church women are doing?

- Give a subscription to new women members at your church
- Give a subscription to the women’s jail/prison
- Give it as a gift to a person in your family who cannot get to a circle meeting
- Start a new Bible study group in a care facility near you; in your own church
- Purchase a subscription for each circle that a visitor could use and then give it to that person
- Redeemer Lutheran women in Waverly place used/extra copies in a basket for free pick-up by interested women.

Try it! You’ll like it! *Gloria Tollefson, NE IA SWO president*

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

[neiasynod.org/womenoftheELCA](http://neiasynod.org/womenoftheELCA)

### **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.)

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