

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.

"Of Many Generations" Triennial in Charlotte, NC—a Great Experience!

The Ninth Triennial Convention took care of business as 363 voting members elected a new board, adopted a 2015 budget and voted on proposed constitutional changes. Our new president, Patti Austin from Decatur, Georgia, Vice President Jody Smiley from Blacksburg, Virginia, Secretary Becky Shurson, Yucaipa, California and Treasurer Ely Smith, Fircrest, Washington and 17 board members will lead our organization at the Churchwide level the next three years.

The proposed budget of \$2,941,593 for 2015 was adopted. Proposed changes to the Churchwide Constitution and Bylaws came to the Ninth Triennial for a second reading and vote. The proposal to reduce the Churchwide Executive Board from 17 members to 9 failed, so the number of Churchwide board members remains the same. We voted to change the language from "voting delegate" to "voting member" to keep consistency in all Churchwide documents. Memorials on awareness and prevention of human trafficking, bullying, harassment and related violence, creating safe churches for children and solar energy for the Phebe Hospital in Liberia were passed. These issues will direct our programming during the next three years.

Our synod was represented by 24 women at the Gathering. The worship services were outstanding. The pastors who presided and preached were exceptional examples of the Women of the ELCA. The Global musicians of the ELCA led us in different languages as we all came together to raise our voices to praise God. Diane Jacobson led us in our bible study for the two sessions.

Stephanie Burke coordinated an interactive mural project. She also did a drawing during the opening worship service and even painted it upside down. When turned it was a picture of Jesus and the crown of thorns. The mural was completed by people attending the Gathering in paint-by-number style. It enhanced the altar space during the closing worship service. On Saturday, we were asked to write the name of a mentor or a special person who had an influence on our life on the canvas. Then during a song on Sunday morning,

Stephanie put the finishing touches on the painting. As the lights dimmed and a black light shone on the mural, a bright neon image of Jesus magically appeared. It was amazing—such talent!

The featured speaker for the event was Susan Sparks, who helped us explore our Gathering theme. She is the first female pastor of the historic Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York, a stand-up comedian, trial lawyer, and breast cancer survivor who worked at Mother Teresa's mission in Calcutta. She used humor to get her message across to us in a delightful and meaningful presentation.

Bringing a servant's heart to our Gathering was Becca Stevens, founder of Magdalene & Thistle Farms, a community and social enterprise that stands with women recovering from violence, prostitution, addiction and life on the streets. Magdalene, the residential model, serves women for two years at no cost. Thistle Farms employs 35 residents and graduates who manufacture, market and sell all-natural bath and beauty products in over 200 retail stores across the globe. She was humorous, informative and an accomplished author. She emphasized, "A church without beggars is truly a museum!"

There were many workshops to choose from in a wide range of interests, and also servant events, where you could listen and learn or participate in different projects. Three movies made a debut at the Gathering also: "I Believe You," faith's response to intimate partner violence; "Harvest of Empire," which is a history of Latinos in the U.S.; and "Miss Representation," which explores how the media's misrepresentation of women has led to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence in a society where media is the most persuasive force shaping cultural norms. These will be available to us to use at cluster and unit meetings.

The 9th Triennial of the Women of the ELCA came to a close with a very inspiring closing worship service. But the highlights for me were the two services our Presiding Bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, led. She is one force to be reckoned with! We also attended receptions for international guests and Bishop Eaton. During the reception for the Bishop you could stand in a very long line for a photo op with her. She was quite a trooper standing there giving everyone who wanted a chance to get a picture with our first woman Presiding Bishop. The international guests *(Continued on [page 2](#))*

CALENDAR

Sep. 5-6 Three Rivers (H) Fall Retreat, at Ewalu
Sep. 24 Riverside Cluster (F) Fall Festival, Story City
Sep. 27 Upper Iowa River Cluster (D) Fall Gathering,
Norman Borlaug Foundation, Rural Cresco
Oct. 4 Jubilee Cluster Fall Gathering, Trinity, Waterloo
Oct. 25 Little Flock Cluster (B) Fall Gathering
Nov. 1 LWR Ingathering, Olson Explosives, Decorah
2015
Jun 19-20 Iowa Tri-Synodical W-ELCA Convention,
Iowa Central Community College, Ft. Dodge

included pastors from around the globe, including India and South America, as well as other regions.

We gained a lot of information and enjoyed fun times at the Gathering. If you haven't experienced a Triennial, I suggest that you start thinking ahead about attending the 10th Triennial in Minneapolis, Minnesota, right across the border from us, in 2017.

I want to close with a thought from Bishop Eaton, "We are powerhouses, but we are Lutherans, so don't tell anyone, because that would be boastful. And also because we have Jesus we have everything. Jesus, not youth, is the future." *Cindy Pogge, Vice President, NEIA Synod*

The Spring Gathering of the Upper Iowa River W/ELCA Cluster

was held Saturday, April 26, 2014 at Orleans Lutheran Church, near Ridgeway, Iowa. Approximately 40 ladies participated. A very interesting program was given by Maryn Olson, Initiatives Program Director of "Camp Noah." "Camp Noah" is a week-long day camp for children who have encountered a disaster in their communities and/or traumatic experience in their lives. It provides a safe, caring and fun environment where children build resiliency skills within the familiarity of their own communities, using a proven curriculum provided by screened and trained, caring volunteers, and designed to help children process their disaster and/or traumatic experience through creative activities and play. In-kind gifts of KID'S KITS and FLEECE BLANKETS were brought by the Cluster W/ELCA Units. One unit

made 50 fleece blankets. Each child receives a KID'S KIT and FLEECE BLANKET to use at camp and takes them home at the conclusion of the week. *Carol Burnikel, Secretary*

Riverside Cluster (F) Fall Festival

Riverside Cluster F is planning a Fun Fall Festival on Wednesday, Sept. 24, at Story City. We plan to meet at 9:30 a.m. for coffee and registration, followed by a mixer, bible study, small group interaction and possibly a time to visit the famous Carousel. We will have a catered luncheon at noon and then tour the Historical Museum. We should be done by 3:00, leaving time for shopping if you care to. Registration fee has not been set, but will be reasonable for a fun day of Christian camaraderie, learning, and food! *Shirley Knudson, Cluster President*

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

The women of the Ninth Triennial Convention and Gathering truly appreciated your handiwork. The pinwheels were a big hit. We took them all and I think they all went home with someone new. We decorated the edge of our table at the convention with them and each time someone stopped to admire we advised them to pick their favorite. Each synod did something unique—some gave recipes, some gave book marks, prayer squares, handmade scrubbies, wooden bead/button bracelets, wooden crosses, just to name a few. Each and every pinwheel was a treasured selection. So thank you again. *Anna Jetson, TGP of the Ninth Triennial Gathering, Of Many Generations.*

P.S. Now to start planning for our 10th Triennial, which will be in Minneapolis July 2017.

Thanks from UIHC

What a privilege and pleasure it was to be a part of the Northeastern Iowa WELCA Convention at Wartburg College. I was grateful for the opportunity to say "Thank You" to all the women and congregations from whom the University of Iowa Spiritual Services Department continually receives prayer shawls and prayer blankets. At the convention, we were blessed to receive 115 shawls and blankets through your in-kind gifts. Our patients and families thank you and I thank you for your loving response to doing "God's Work with Your Hands." *Rev. Victoria L. Shepherd, Staff Chaplain, UIHC*

NEIA Women of the ELCA website:

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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.)

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