

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.

## **From the President**

*“Mary set out and went with haste to...the house of Zechariah and Elizabeth.” Luke 1:39*

After finding out she was pregnant (out of wedlock), the first thing Mary does is journey to see her friend and “sister” Elizabeth! Mary was searching for love, support and acceptance and she found it in Elizabeth. I was thinking about when I was a young mother and so far from family and in need of support and wisdom in my everyday struggles. I found my support in my very first circle at Zion Lutheran Church in Muscatine, Iowa. This circle of mothers, young and not so young, taught me that my struggles were not unique and that I could rely on them whenever I doubted myself. We shared our worries, joys, and concerns in prayer, Bible study and fellowship. I came to rely on these monthly get togethers as my own form of psychological therapy. And what is even better, no matter where my husband and I have been called by God, I have found new sisters to share with and learn from. I pray that you my sisters, will find solace, comfort, support, love and acceptance, just as Mary did so many years ago!

*Merry Christmas my sisters,  
Diane Wills*

## **Discipleship Committee Light of Love**

Christmas—a season to show how much we care! As disciples, we are blessed to be a blessing. Our spiritual adventure awaits... and what better time to express ourselves and our love of one another than the season of Advent and Christmas!

*“Christmas is the season of joy, of holiday greetings exchanged, of gift giving, and of families united.” ~ Norman Vincent Peale*

*“Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most.” ~ Ruth Carter Stapleton*

Even the simplest acts of kindness can touch someone deeply. It is a time to remember those who have served us throughout the year. Be sure to include those who are alone or away from family.

My most precious memory of Christmas is one spent in the hospital and giving birth to my son. I had prayed for a child and longed to be a mother for a long time. I was finally blessed with a little boy—a new generation! I contemplated how Mary must have felt giving birth to a king! It was a harsh winter so I was not allowed to leave the

hospital, as the roads were shut down, until Christmas Day. Tears of joy ran down my face as I heard the carolers come down the hall singing “Silent Night” on Christmas Eve. I hugged my little one close as I thanked God for his MANY BLESSINGS, but especially for my son and the carolers!

Be a disciple—put Christ in Christmas and share his love!

*Submitted by Della Benson*

## **Justice Committee**

As a woman, imagine one of the worst days of your life. You are sitting in the hospital in a hospital gown, you have been interviewed, and your clothes have been taken as evidence against the person who assaulted you. Now consider how you feel when given a Lily Bag. It includes a set of clothes (shirt, sweat pants, underwear, bra and socks and a note offering support). You actually have clothes to wear out of the hospital instead of a hospital gown. You realize someone thought of you even before you knew you needed help.

Or you are homeless and have nothing. Someone gives you a blessing bag. It has socks or mittens or other needed items. I first saw these on Facebook. I did a quick Google search and there are lots of types and suggestions.

During this busy time we want to give the perfect gift. What if instead of giving one more thing that someone else doesn't really need this year, you could make up some Lily bags or Blessing bags and contact your local hospital or crisis intervention center. They might have other needs as well.

*Submitted by Anna Jetson*

## **Stewardship Committee**

### **Scholarships keep some women in school**

“Among the greatest challenges to returning to school in today's economy are mapping out a financial plan and going through scholarship application processes,” said Valora K. Starr, Women of the ELCA's director for discipleship, who oversees the scholarship process.

Starr said some applicants choose to leave school if their scholarship applications are unsuccessful. “Many recipients say Women of the ELCA scholarships made the difference in whether they continued school,” she said.

Gifts to Women of the ELCA general scholarship fund is one way to pay forward the legacy of our foremothers, she said. Visit [welca.org/donate](http://welca.org/donate). Applications for the 2019–2020 academic year will open in mid-November. Visit [welca.org/scholarships](http://welca.org/scholarships) or email [valora.starr@elca.org](mailto:valora.starr@elca.org) for application instructions.

*Submitted by Jan Harbaugh. Downloaded from  
[https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/IC\\_2018\\_Fall-Web.pdf](https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/IC_2018_Fall-Web.pdf)*

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## CALENDAR

- Dec. 1 Deadline for January *Good News* (Bev, LaVonne, Nancy, LaVonne)
- 2019**
- Jan. 12 SWO Board meeting with Cluster Leaders at Synod Office, 9–3 (Jan. 19 snow date)
- Mar. 9 SWO Board meeting at Synod Office 9–12:30 (Mar. 16 snow date)
- Apr. 13 LWR Ingathering, Clusters H, C, E, St. Peter, Denver
- Apr. 13 LWR Ingathering, Cluster G, Living Waters, Bethlehem, Manly
- Apr. 27 Little Flock Cluster B Spring Fling, Bethany, Elkader
- April 27 Cluster D Upper Iowa River Cluster Spring Gathering, Good Shepherd, Decorah
- May 4 LWR Ingathering, Cluster D, Olson's Explosives, Decorah
- May 18 SWO Board meeting at Wartburg College 9–12:30
- June 21 SWO Board meeting at Wartburg College, 7–9 p.m.
- June 22 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual NE IA Women of the ELCA Gathering, Wartburg College, Waverly
- Nov. 9 LWR Ingathering, St. Peter LC, Denver
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### Meet Your New Board Members

Greetings from Decorah! My name is Jennifer Larson, a member of First Lutheran Church. Through my congregation I am a member of the bell choir, prepare communion each month, attend monthly women's bible study, book group, and help lead liturgy as a viola player. I have taught Sunday school, volunteer at many events and enjoy participating in Sunday morning adult forums.

I am the mom to two college-aged sons, a wife, and an owner of an aging dog. Professionally, I teach middle school orchestra and am the past director of the Nordic Dancer orchestra. My interests include playing the viola in the Oneota Valley Community Orchestra, reading, and I love to learn new things.

I welcome the opportunity to be part of the NE IA SWO and hope to offer my gifts in a variety of ways.

### Around the Synod

#### Fall Gathering - Little Flock/Cluster B

St. Paul Lutheran Church (*Volga City*) is nestled down in

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### NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

#### Diane Wills, President

641-425-8628 [wills.dianes@gmail.com](mailto:wills.dianes@gmail.com)

#### Jan Harbaugh, Vice President

563-412-8906 [jan.harbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:jan.harbaugh@gmail.com)

#### Anna Jetson, Secretary

952-240-9569 [amjetson@yahoo.com](mailto:amjetson@yahoo.com)

#### Beverly Sheridan, Treasurer

563-382-9025 [sherida701@gmail.com](mailto:sherida701@gmail.com)

701 Serenity Drive  
Decorah, IA 52101

the beautiful valley of northeast Iowa. Leaves are turning, sun shining through the clouds on this magnificent gathering of 53 ladies from 16 churches. Lorna Christeleit and Rev. Margaret Yackel-Juleen welcomed us to their church Saturday, October 27, 2018.



A funny but powerful skit was delivered to us “If God should speak...are YOU listening?” The Lord's Prayer was spoken BUT interrupted periodically by God to get YOU think about its meaning.

“Hallowed be thy name”...

HOLD IT. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT?

It means...it meant...Good grief I don't know what it means. How should I? It's just part of the prayer. By the way what does it mean?”

IT MEANS WONDERFUL. HONORED. HOLY.

Jane Godson, Little Flock Cluster Shepherdess, challenged us to help grow KATIE'S Fund, continue to recognize human trafficking and Native Americans.

Ellen Friedrich shared with us her mission trip to Madagascar through [Young Adults in Global Mission](#). We were taken to Vohipeno village where the Antemoro tribe resides. Eighteen tribes are scattered throughout the 25 million that live in Madagascar. Many of the people are in agriculture and Ellen was able to teach 60 kids at Fikaonana English and American sports. Ellen also worked as a farm hand and sold (bartered) goods at the local market. 90% live in poverty on less than \$2/day. About 50% follow a religious belief, 42% Christian (catholic/protestant) and 7% Muslim. Their church service would last 4 hours and sometimes the announcements took 45 minutes! She did see some LWR deliveries along with World and Norwegian Lutheran Aid. Many thanks to Ellen for sharing her experience with us.

Little Flock/Cluster B's main business was focused on communication tools and the non-perishable items were donated to Clayton County Food Shelf. St. Paul Church wished to send half of the offering collected to Katie's Fund. Many THANKS to St. Paul for a sweet breakfast, delicious lunch and door prizes. 2019 Spring Fling will be at Bethany Church in Elkader April 27. *Submitted by Rosetta Anderson*

### **A BLESSED ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS TO ALL!**

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#### *Good News*

Editor Jan Harbaugh

112 W. Wilbur St., Hawkeye, IA 52147

563-412-8906 [jan.harbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:jan.harbaugh@gmail.com)

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.)

#### **Contact Women of the ELCA at:**

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

8765 W. Higgins Road

Chicago, IL 60631-4189

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

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