



# Good News

*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**

Happy New Year! I hope this is the best one yet. This time of the year can be a struggle for some, me included. Everyone talking about their new year's resolutions to lose 10 pounds, or to get in shape, or get a better job, spend more time with family and friends. It makes me sometimes wonder why we think we are not enough. In 2019 I was reading the daily devotional *Confident Woman* by Joyce Meyers. There were days when I could really relate, and others, I felt, "Yeah, right." In the end it all comes down to God created me for now for a reason. God created you also! I don't know that I fully know or understand the reason, I just trust that God is guiding me, as long as I ask and listen. I want to invite you to have conversations with God about your purpose and our purpose as the Women of the ELCA.

I invite you to take a look at your ministries and see what is going on. Many of us have comfort in the projects we have done before. That is good. I invite you to look with new eyes. As some hands and eyes get older, does the quilting they liked to do go to the wayside as it is just too hard to continue? Or maybe quilting isn't your thing? Women of the ELCA is an opportunity for all women to participate. Maybe your church has newlyweds or new parents, or young adults. Or you could have an older congregation, and you have busy professionals or retirees from professional work, empty nesters, etc. Perhaps there is someone you want to get to know better. Invite them to join you at a meeting or event, or find out what they like to do and ask to join them.

So again, I extend the invitation to ask others to join you in your passion, or you join in theirs. The best bible studies I have ever participated in have been multi-generational—the more experienced have wisdom to share, the less experienced have the blessing of new eyes on old texts. I request we all be open to where the spirit moves us as we become together the Women of the ELCA.

## **Discipleship Committee**

*"For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 (NRSV)*

Serving is at the heart of Jesus' ministry. Making the connection between Jesus feeding the five thousand and setting up a food pantry is easy. God serves others through us. Jesus calls us to be more than good wait staff. The ministry of feeding is commendable, but there is more to serving.

To follow the example of Jesus and serve all people requires us to get involved in the lives of others. Jesus valued relationships. Jesus' conversation with the Samaritan woman, making time for children, and comforting his friends, Martha and Mary, serve as a blueprint for moving us beyond projects and anonymous charitable activities to relationships.

Following the life of Jesus leads us into the mess of life where lives are transformed and Christ is made known. Serving as Jesus serves brings us closer to Jesus, the one who did not come to be served but to serve.

As we serve, the following are just a few examples of how we can do this: Visit the sick and imprisoned, Feed the hungry and Respond to disasters. *Submitted by Bonnie Dralle*

## **Justice Committee Truckers Against Trafficking**

While working with one of my 7th grade students at Decorah Middle School, I noticed she had bracelet on that had the words "Truckers Against Trafficking." It caught my attention since WELCA has taken a special interest in the human trafficking crisis. The student told me that when she was at the Iowa State Fair there was a mobile exhibit inside a 48-foot trailer that she toured. The exhibit is a tool used by the Freedom Drivers Project (FDP) to educate members of the trucking industry and the general public about the realities of domestic sex trafficking and how the trucking industry is combating it. Within the exhibit there are actual artifacts from trafficking cases that connect people to the back stories of so many who end up enslaved in our country. This really made an impact on my student. She told me that she is researching the topic and plans to report her learning as part of her 4-H project this summer. As she was leaving the classroom, my student stopped and said, "It is too bad that more people my age are unaware of human trafficking." To learn more, go to the FDP page on the [truckersagainstrafficking.org](http://truckersagainstrafficking.org) website.

Women of the ELCA has resources available about human trafficking within its Justice section of their website. [womenoftheelca.org/ministry-action/justice/human-trafficking](http://womenoftheelca.org/ministry-action/justice/human-trafficking)

Know the warning signs:

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## CALENDAR

### Registration for the Triennial Gathering is now open

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 1  | Deadline for February <i>Good News</i>                                       |
| Jan. 18 | Board Meets with Cluster Leaders @ Synod Office, 9am–3pm (Jan. 25 Snow Date) |
| Jan. 20 | <i>Early Bird Discount to Triennial Gathering closes</i>                     |
| Feb. 1  | Deadline for March <i>Good News</i>  |
| Mar. 1  | Deadline for April <i>Good News</i>  |
| Mar. 7  | Board Meeting @ Synod Office 9am–12:30pm (Mar. 14 Snow Date)                 |
| Apr. 1  | Deadline for May <i>Good News</i>  |
| Apr. 25 | Upper Iowa River Cluster Spring Gathering, Immanuel LC, Cresco               |
| May 1   | Deadline for June <i>Good News</i>   |
| May 2   | Board Meeting @ Wartburg College 9am–12:30pm                                 |
| June 16 | Deadline for July-August <i>Good News</i>                                    |
| June 19 | Board Meeting at Wartburg College, 7–9pm                                     |
| June 20 | SWO Convention, 8:30am–4:00pm, Wartburg College                              |
| Aug. 1  | Deadline for September <i>Good News</i>                                      |
| Sep. 1  | Deadline for October <i>Good News</i>  |
| Oct. 1  | Deadline for Nov. <i>Good News</i>   |
| Nov. 1  | Deadline for Dec. <i>Good News</i>   |
| Dec. 1  | Deadline for Jan. <i>Good News</i>   |

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- An older “boyfriend” or “girlfriend” and is secretive about him/her
- Sudden change in clothes or expensive gifts such as jewelry, new cell phone
- Loss of interest in school and/or favorite activities
- Distancing from friends
- Signs of physical abuse and evidence of being controlled
- Fear, depression, or other unexplained changes in behavior

Submitted by Jennifer Larson

### **Stewardship Committee**

*Psalm 24:1 The Earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world and all who live in it.*

Using the resources God has provided us is one way to describe stewardship. God called us to be good stewards....to love and serve our neighbors. How do you

respond to this call? Maybe by being generous with your time, your talents, your possessions—all that God has so richly given you. With that in mind, I encourage you to be more generous in your daily life.

*Your Time:* Maybe you can visit a recently widowed neighbor, schedule a day each month or even a day each week to visit shut-ins, volunteer to tie quilts for LWR, or volunteer at a crisis shelter. How about a “Thinking of You” card or a call saying “Would you like a ride to church?”

*Your Talents:* God gave us all different talents. Maybe you could join the choir, volunteer to teach VBS, make meals for shut-ins, or to be a lay reader for your church. Make quilts, knit baby blankets, or use your gift of organization and be the stewardship chairperson.

*Your Possessions:* This doesn't have to be money. You may make quilts and donate them to a homeless shelter. Being generous with your words costs nothing. A thank you to your pastor, organist, choir director, or a Sunday School teacher would show that you care about what that person does.

Recently the members of the [Living Waters Cluster](#) sent 678 quilts, 142 baby kits, 1,063 school kits, 275 personal care kits, 16 fabric kits and 21 blankets to LWR. What a joy it is to see those numbers! The same cluster recently participated in a food pack for Feed My Starving Children. What a blessing those many hands were.

So again, I hope to encourage you to increase your generosity...no matter how you choose. *Submitted by Jo Ann Brunsvold*

### **Meet Your New Board**

Hi, my name is Jo Ann Brunsvold and I live on a farm near Kensett. I am the new secretary for the SWO board. My faith journey began as a child, attending Sunday School and church. A big change happened when I married and became a Lutheran. It may sound strange, but I feel at peace knowing I am a Lutheran and that by grace I am saved. I have been involved with Sunday School, choir, church board, WELCA, and circle. As a young mother, I was blessed to be able to attend the first triennial convention in 1990 and I have attended numerous Iowa church and WELCA conventions and gatherings. What a joy it is to have so many people rejoicing and praying together.

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### NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

#### Anna Jetson, President

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

#### Jan Harbaugh, Vice President

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

#### JoAnn Brunsvold, Secretary

641-512-4236 [jobvold76@yahoo.com](mailto:jobvold76@yahoo.com) [sjbruns@wctatel.net](mailto:sjbruns@wctatel.net)

#### Beverly Sheridan, Treasurer

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

701 Serenity Drive  
Decorah, IA 52101

*NEIA Women of the ELCA Facebook page:*  
<https://www.facebook.com/NEIASWO/>

#### **Good News**

Editor Jan Harbaugh

P. O. Box 18, Castalia, IA 52133

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)