

SOUTH DAKOTA SYNODICAL

Women of the ELCA

VOLUME XXX NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 2011



PRESIDENT VERDELLE ANDERSON

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” Philippians 4:4

This is the theme we have chosen for our coming synodical convention and what a great message for everyone to live by.

Your state board and the conference coordinators met the second weekend in January and yes, we again had a snowstorm. That Friday morning I was visiting with my daughter and stated, “Why does this always happen?” Lisa’s response was “What do you expect in South Dakota, Mom, when you call it a winter board meeting!”

We had a great meeting of afternoon, evening and morning sessions. Friday afternoon, Jim Schade came with a report from Answer the Call and Pam Walkins gave us an update on progress of Joy Ranch. Then the conference coordinators with representative from Our Redeemer Church, our host church, met and started the preliminary plans for synodical convention. While they were meeting, the state board had their general board meeting.

Following evening meal, we commenced again and discussed plans for convention. Saturday morning we then met at Our Redeemer Church and Vivian Westgard and Doris Stowe gave us a tour of their beautiful church. We then closed our meeting with Bible study and closing worship service led by Rev. Ericka Lehmann. The balance of the plans for convention are completed by e-mail with the state board members. This also works best with everyone’s busy schedules and saves additional expenses without additional meeting.

Please note in this newsletter the preliminary schedule of the events which will be held June 16-18. It will be a fun event which will include time at Joy Ranch, Bible study, educational awareness groups, meetings, fellowship and also a great opportunity to visit the many attractions available for you and your family in Watertown.

Have you made plans to attend Triennial Gathering at Spokane, Washington? At time of writing this article, we have 30 ladies registered. We hope to have more. Your 9 delegates and new president will be attending the convention July 12-14. The gathering then starts July 14 to 17. During the gathering we have exciting news.

We will have an exhibit on Joy Ranch with Lutheran Outdoors co-sponsoring. This idea came about by Vivian Westgard and she stated her husband, Rev. Gary Westgard, would be willing to assist. Lutheran Outdoors will prepare the exhibit supplies. What a way to show the ladies attending what South Dakota has to offer!

This is my fourth and final year as your state president. It has been a wonderful experience. I have met many great ladies who have become friends and this would not have happened without this opportunity. Please give some thought about who you would like to become the new president. Erica Lehmann is chairwomen of the nominating committee. If you have suggestions, please contact Erica. Also if you are interested and have questions about the duties involved, don’t hesitate to give me a call anytime.

Yes, it is fun and rewarding to serve God through our South Dakota Women of the ELCA.



VICE-PRESIDENT ERIKA LEHMANN

Water--Sacred and Life-giving

Every fall I feel compelled to bring the potted plants from my deck into the house to squeeze in next to my houseplants over the winter. It takes a lot of watering to keep them happy. They droop and even die when neglected. I can relate to that. When I get thirsty, I get a little panicky, so I seldom go anywhere without a supply of water. Water by my bed, in my car, by my chair during worship: water, water everywhere and all of it to drink.

In recent years there has been a lot of attention paid to the severe shortage of water in many places in the world. Climate change is making the problem worse. More than 1.1 billion people do not have access to safe water and over 4 million children and 1 million adults die each year from water-borne diseases. Over half of the countries in Africa face serious water problems, where water is either not in enough supply, difficult to access or unsafe. Almost always it is women and girls who suffer the most. Women bear the burden of walking for hours to get water and then must carry it home. They make do with what they can haul for drinking, cooking, washing, and for gardening or taking care of the family's animals. Girls often cannot attend school because they must help carry water. Health suffers because there is not enough water to keep clean or for sanitation and in many cases it contains parasites, dangerous bacteria or toxins. Sometimes the walk to the water source is dangerous in itself, because of militants and wild animals.

We take water for granted most of the time, often worrying more about flooding than shortage, though obviously we can also experience drought in South Dakota. It would be pretty unusual for us to do without water to drink, cook or wash, or even not to have water flowing readily into our homes. We need to remind ourselves that water is precious. It is so easy to treat it like an endless resource that we can use or waste as much as we want, because we do not see the pain of those who do without. All the water that ever will be was here at the time of creation. There is no new water. What there is must be enough and without it, there can be no life.

The Bible is full of references to water all the way from Genesis to Revelation. Ancient people could relate very easily to the life-giving quality of water, without any

science or statistics to back them up. In the same way, our brothers and sisters in dry places in the world know the need, but not always the means of getting adequate water. ELCA World Hunger offers Good Gifts to supply water for those in need. \$12 provides six water jugs for transporting clean water. \$150 will buy a hand water pump. \$1250 will provide the materials and knowhow to build a community rainwater catchment system to catch and hold safely the water that falls during the rainy season into the dry season. Other ways you can help provide water for people in need are through Lutheran World Relief and Church World Service (CWS), both of which do life-saving development work with water, sanitation and irrigation.

Please consider having a special Water Sunday this year in your congregation. There are many resources available from the ELCA or our partners LWR and CWS, including some great activities for children and youth. I would be happy to help you if you need ideas. We were baptized with water and every day can be reminded of our baptism when water touches us. Water comes from God and has always had sacred connotations. Now, perhaps the most meaningful way we can celebrate the gift of water in our lives is to help our sisters around the world to have it, too.

God bless you all. Erika Lehmann



SECRETARY KATHY HEFFERNAN

Wintery greetings to all!

As I walk down the hallways at school, I hear many, both students and staff, saying "It's almost February! Spring can't be too far away" or "I'm tired of all this snow. Can't wait for Spring." I'm probably in the minority, but I thoroughly enjoy winter. OK I'll agree, driving or trudging through deep snow isn't the most fun, but I love the look and sense of winter. The whiteness, crisp air, a sense of peacefulness, warm comfy blankets, a mug of hot cocoa, a sense of warmth and security. Winter seems so right to think about the celebration of Jesus' birth and the peaceful love he brings to our sometimes busy lives. (Doesn't just the thought of baby Jesus take away your stress?)

With the winter waning, our church directs us to the Season of Lent. Lent has always been to me a period of reflection and feelings of heaviness as I again listen to the Scripture accounts of Jesus' suffering and death. (Kind of like the sensations during those cold, rainy pre-spring days when the Earth and sky are seemingly dark and lifeless- a chill to the bone). For some reason the Season of Lent also takes me to thoughts of hunger.

Maybe it's all those soup and sandwich suppers at church during Lent that make me think of hunger. I remember one conversation I had with a group of church high school youth. We were discussing what kind of meals to serve before the Lenten services. They were talking spaghetti, BBQ's, lasagna, big hefty meals. Our discussion led to the reason why Jesus suffered and died and how it is important that we reverently acknowledge this act. I believe that these kids began to understand that a meal of soup and a simple sandwich leads us into our own understanding of Lent.

But yet, I still can't shake that feeling of hunger, because I know that in our world people suffer and sometimes die from hunger, everyday. And then I read 2 short articles in the January 2011 issue of *Seeds for the Parish* on page 7: One is titled "**Sell chicks and make a difference this Easter**" It's about an opportunity for congregations to provide impoverished families with chicks that will become a source of food and income. Called **Buck a Chick**, a member can decorate a paper chick for themselves, friend, or loved one and the one dollar donations are sent to the ELCA Good Gifts program. The chick coloring page is found at www.elca.org/hunger/lent. The other article is: "**Plan a Lenten meal series**", This is about planning 6 different (global) meals and have the donations for the meal go to support the ELCA World Hunger. Each of the six plans include recipes, printable table tents, placemats, table prayers, and more which are also found at www.elca.org/hunger/lent.

So as we journey from the peaceful white of Jesus' birth to the sometimes dreariness of Lent, just remember the newness and celebration of Easter are coming soon!
God Bless, Kathy Heffernan, SD WELCA Secretary



TREASURER
DARLENE BRESSON

Greetings to All!

It's difficult to look out at the white landscape and imagine Spring, but it will be here before we know it. The Board of the SD Women of the ELCA met in Watertown on Jan. 7th and 8th to make plans for your 2011 State Convention, which will be held in Watertown at Joy Ranch and Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer on June 16th, 17th, and 18th. The theme is Renew, Respond, Re-joyce! The registration fee this will be \$40, but you'll also notice that the Convention is longer this year – starts on Thursday afternoon and goes to Saturday morning and includes one more meal. There will be a Love offering for Joy Ranch, as well as the ever popular Silent Auction with proceeds going to Lutheran Outdoors, Campus Ministry, Prison Congregations of America, and St Dymas (25% each). A nursery may be provided if there is a need for one. **Please let me know by June 1st if you'd like a nursery and the number and ages of the children.**

For those of you coming from a distance, here is information on hotels and availability. When you make a reservation, please ask for the block of rooms reserved for WELCA or by Darlene Bresson. **If you plan to attend, I encourage you to make your reservations early** – whether hotel or campground.

Country Inn & Suites – 20 rooms - \$79.99/room – deadline for reservations: June 9 – 605-886-8900

Days Inn – 10 rooms - \$71.99/room – deadline: May 16th –605-886-3500

Drake Inn (Rodeway) – 18 rooms - \$54.95/room – deadline: May 16th – 605-886-8411

Holiday Inn Express (water park) – 10 rooms - \$95.00/room – deadline: May 17th – 605-882-3636

Travelers Inn: 10 rooms - \$54.99/room; deadline: June 2nd, 605-882-2243

Campers: There are several City parks, but the City does not take reservations – it's first come, first served. Information on camping in Watertown can be found on this website: http://www.visitwatertownsd.com/index2.php?page_id=113&group=1. There is also a county park on Lake Kampeska, Codington County Memorial RV Park, which *does* take reservations. Daily rate is \$18 (elec. hookup) or weekly (\$108). These are 2010 rates; 2011 rates will be set the end of February. Phone: 605-882-6290. Mention that you're with WELCA, and they'll try to place everyone in one area. If you'd like a brochure, email me at: Minnie@wat.midco.net. Lutheran Church of Our Redeemer also has a worship service on Sunday morning at Memorial Park. The last note concerns a very nice quilt shop that you may want to visit when you're in Watertown (Dakota Quilt Shop) if you have time.

I received communication from James Noss, who coordinates the financial support from America to the Women for Christ, as well as the Meiganga Seminary, both in Cameroon. He wrote, "While in Cameroon, and even during the last two weeks I have received numerous cries for help from the director of the Femmes Pour Christ (Women for Christ), equivalent to our current ELCAW. Right now it is especially critical, given that in recent months the ELCA Global Mission office in Chicago has not been able to send the full amounts budgeted for overseas church operations. The few staff they have are way behind in their salaries and they have not been able to carry through with several of their planned programs for 2010. Mrs Ada Jeanette Maina wrote me earlier this week, pleading for help..that the situation is critical. I immediately telephone her, then wrote her, asking for more details. I hope to have a response within the next few days. Anything that can be done for the Femme Pour Christ program would be greatly appreciated.

While in Cameroon, and again just recently since my return, I have been in contact with the dean of the seminary, Dr. Jean Koulagna about needs there. They also are in a critical situation due to the lack of funds from the ELCA-GM, to complete their 2010 budget. Another problem has been with their main funding partners, the ELCA and the NMS from Norway, who set a ceiling on what they could give years ago. Unfortunately, there, like

here, prices continue to escalate...and it becomes harder and harder to even carry out the basic programs at the seminary. I had some small gifts I was able to send which was like a drip in a bucket...but meant a lot since their received them, just before Christmas. There are many more needs at the seminary so any financial support that can be provided, would be greatly appreciated". The Board voted to send \$1,000 to Mr. Noss, to be split between Women for Christ and the Meiganga Seminary, and he was very appreciative of this help.

The Triennial Convention in Spokane, WA is coming up quickly also. The Board has decided to fund all attendees (other than delegates) \$150 to help offset expenses. Each Conference Coordinator was given a form to be submitted to me for reimbursement upon your return from the Triennial. Unfortunately, I won't be able to attend because my niece's wedding is the same weekend, but I'll be thinking of you. Have fun!

SD Women of the ELCA made two commitments in the past – Joy Ranch Kitchen - \$200,000 and Answer the Call - \$100,000. As of the end of December, we have donated \$167,299 to Joy Ranch and \$65,110 to Answer the Call. When you're deciding how to split your Spring Gathering offerings, please remember these two commitments.

I received a \$50 donation for Answer the Call from Zoar Lutheran Church in Revillo, in honor of their Pastor, Keith Smith. Thank you to Zoar Lutheran. What a nice way to honor your Pastor!

A reminder to all Conference Treasurers that the annual report for their Conference is due to me by May 31st. If anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Until next time, may God be with you! Darlene Bresson, Synodical Treasurer

PS: Another letter from Jim:

Dear Darlene,

Thanks so very much for the additional information you sent concerning the program for the WELCA mtgs. for June. We look forward to this time together and will be in contact later on.

Thanks so much for the very special gift of \$1000 that you sent for the Seminary and Women's movement in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon. Those funds are on their way.

When I wrote earlier about this special support that was coming, the director of the Women's Program responded so excited and with so much thanks for prayers answered. Due to the lack of funding last year, they had cancelled their annual meeting scheduled for November...and had set Jan 24-25 but had no idea how they were going to cover the expenses. All of a sudden...out of the sky...e-mail...word came of this special gift coming so they were able to proceed with their meetings. They called it a miracle...and it was. What a blessing for them all to gather together...knowing it was made possible by women from far away South Dakota...who gave just what they needed. More than that, they know you all are praying for the ongoing work of the women in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon...and they are so thankful.

Blessings and Peace!

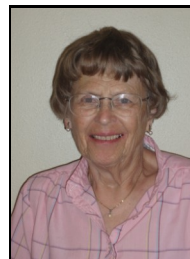
Jim



MISSION ACTION KAREN LINDGREN

I have had some questions about Star Academy, what it means and do they take quilts. **State Training and Rehabilitation.** Their address is 12279 Brady Drive, Custer, SD, phone 605-673-2521 and it is for boys and girls, they have twin beds. Some churches collect and make pillow cases (all light color) and these pillowcases are taken to Sharon Starks in Sioux Falls. They are sent to Pierre to the Women's Prison where an inmate machine embroiders the child's name and a bible verse is also embroidered on them.

Just a reminder I hope you have all sent your Mission Action of your churches to your Mission Action Chairperson.



MISSION COMMUNITY GRACE WANGBERG

Dear Sisters in Christ ,

The Letter from James in the New Testament is a fascinating letter which could have been written to our Mission Community people. In James 1:22 we read: "Do not fool yourselves by just listening to His word. Instead, put it into practice." In other words, Go out from Sunday Worship Service or private devotion time ready to reach out with your hands and your feet to whatever Jesus has led to do!

Maybe it is to make a phone call to a neighbor living alone, or offer a fellow church member a ride to Circle Meeting. Or maybe it is to bring a meal to the family across the street or write a letter to Congress regarding World Hunger.

Volunteering your time at a Homeless Shelter, the Food Bank, or at a Nursing Home or other service to the less fortunate is much needed in every community. The list of possibilities for helping others is endless. Yes, money is needed in many needy areas, but your time, your abilities and your creative ideas to reach goals are often the most necessary ingredients in any successful community or world ministry of compassion. You can't possibly help them all, so let God will guide you to where He wants you.

I know I have said this many times before, but it is so very true---you and the busy women in your local Women of ELCA Unit are already doing many of the things I have mentioned here, as well as the lengthy list you find in your Mission Community Packet. So in this practical

21st Century Business society, the next thing is to remind you to BE SURE that you get a record of them to whoever is filling out the Annual Mission Action Report your Unit sends to your Conference at the end of the year. Many of the items requested are overlooked because no one has told the Mission Action person that, for example, you have written to our Congressmen 7 letters (or 47 letters) or whatever. Or 3 people have brought Sunday Service bulletins or a recording of the service to shut-ins each week. Or, 2 women helped serve a soup kitchen meal in June or provided some furnishings or supplies for the Immigrants being served by LSS. Yes, this list is endless, as is God's mercy to us.

I suggested in my last newsletter article that you might like to set a goal of doing one special kind deed to someone outside your own personal circle of friends. I'm sure you did, consciously or not, as you look over the list of reminders I have mentioned here.

I began my column with a quote from the Epistle of James. This is an extremely interesting little book to read—chuck full of ways to express our faith in Jesus. One little bit of “trivia” I found interesting is that when Martin Luther translated the Bible into German he did not believe this Epistle should be included in the people's Bible, so he left it out of his earlier printings. He felt that it placed too much emphasis on “works”. As you read it yourself can you see how he might have reached that conclusion? How do you feel about it? Would you agree with Luther on this point, or with the other theologians who saw to it that James was included in the German and English Bibles?

May Christ richly bless you as you strive to put into practice your Faith in Him.

Grace Wangberg, Mission Community



MISSION GROWTH ARDITH MCFARLAND

I am so glad that God looks out for us “westerners” who travel east for the winter board meetings! It was in the 30's with sunshine when Bobbie and I left Rapid City. From Mitchell to Sioux Falls to Watertown we experienced slippery roads, strong winds, ground blizzard with many vehicles in the ditch, some upside down or on their side.

But when the Synodical board and conference gals get together under the leadership of our competent coordinator, the business and planning gets done from 2 p.m. Friday to 12 p.m. Saturday and home we go! A few finishing touches are done by e-mail.

I hope that whatever your circles or groups have chosen to study this year, you are learning gleaning and growing.

For some, the studies are hard to lead and hard to feel like you are covering the whole lesson. I feel that if you take parts of the study and concentrate on fewer points, it makes it a little more manageable. The articles have been very helpful, we have used them in our lessons. One of my circle members was giving the lesson, googled the lesson topic and was able to get some great information. Keep on keeping on, God knows we're trying. The 2011 summer Bible study will be: Renew, Respond, Rejoice. This three session study carries the theme of the ELCA Triennial Gathering. Written by the Rev. Catherine Malatky and the Rev. David Engelstad, this study will explore how we can renew our faith lives, respond to Gods call, and rejoice in our many blessings.

February and love seem to go hand in hand just like God and love do. If I remember correctly, the first verse I ever memorized as a child was John 3:16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

From the Life Application Bible Commentary: The entire gospel comes into focus in this verse. True love is not static or self-centered; it reaches out and draws others in. God sets the pattern for true love here, the basis for all love relationships---if you love someone dearly, you are willing to pay dearly for that person's responsive love. God paid dearly with the life of his Son, the highest price he could pay. Jesus accepted our punishment, paid the price for our sins, then offered us the new life he bought for us. When we share the gospel with others, our love must be like his---willingly giving up our own comfort and security so that others might join us in receiving God's love.

May we continue to grow in love, grace, and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Stay safe and warm, spring is coming. Ardith



MEMBER AT LARGE Vicki Persson

A rose can say “I love you,” Orchids can enthrall,
But a weed bouquet in a chubby fist, Oh my, that says it all! Anonymous

I am counting the days until spring. The snow has been cold and moisture for our fields. I have been ordering from my seed catalogues and dreaming of gardening. Why do we enjoy gardens of all types? Can you imagine God's delight as He spoke the words and new growth sprang from the earth. That delight is mirrored in our faces as we marvel at what we've nurtured, whether an herb in our kitchen window or a large plot of vegetables. I grow my share of various weeds along with my vegetables.

Each experience is like sharing something with God. Gardening gives us the chance to see the miracle of life spring forth from a seed or cutting. Watching a plant grow and produce is a vision of God's care for us as His children. Gardening is a way to provide for our family and friends, just as God provides for us. Every time we share fresh produce or a plant we've raised, we are extending God's love to those around us. I can't imagine a better way to share Christ than to give to others from the fruit of our hands. Gardening is my favor form of relaxation

Dates to remember:

24th Annual Synodical Convention, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church and Joy Ranch, Watertown-June 16-18, 2011

Triennial Spokane, Washington July 14-17, 2011 The theme is Renew, Respond, Rejoice! For nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37



MEMBER AT LARGE

Lucille Birkholtz

I want to apologize for this newsletter being so late. First I was on vacation, then had everything lined up and found that my computer had just come down with the 'Security Shield' virus. This stopped everything until I had it in the shop and they cleaned it up. This is an ugly virus that can get by your program anti-virus' programs quite easily and make a mess for you.

The Triennial Gathering in Spokane is coming soon!! Time to get ready, register, make transportation arrangement and hotel accommodations. I have heard from a couple of ladies who had registered prior to now and aren't able to go. I have used my e-mail list for subscriptions and put our their requests to sell their registrations and have had very good results. I do feel bad for those ladies who had anticipated attending and now their church body has voted to leave the ELCA. If you are in this situation, there are options on how you can remain connected to the Women of the ELCA. The January issue of the 'Women of the ELCA, INTERCHANGE' newsletter explains this. If you need help with this, please call Eva James Yo at 1-800-638-3522, Ext. 2450 or e-mail her at <eva.yeo@elca.org>. Or you can go to this internet page: <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Women-of-the-ELCA/Newsletters/Interchange.aspx> Scroll to the January 2011 issue, click on it, it is a PDF file and go to page 5 for more information.

As an elected delegate, I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Spokane, it isn't too late to make that commitment and be part of this churchwide gathering.

24th Annual Synodical Convention June 16-18, Watertown, SD

Mark June 16-18 on your calendar. The following are the preliminary plans for our 24th Annual Synodical Convention. Registration will start Thursday at 1 p.m. at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Watertown and registration fee will be \$40.

Theme: Renew, Respond, Rejoice

Convention Offering: 50% Churchwide Women of ELCA, 25% Answer the Call and 25% Lutheran Shared Ministries at Pine Ridge

Love Offering: Supplies for Joy Ranch Camp

Silent Auction: Lutheran Outdoors, Campus Ministry, Prison Congregations of America and St. Dymas of South Dakota (Silent auction will start Thursday and close at 8:15 a.m. on Saturday).

Thursday events: Afternoon and evening at Joy Ranch. This will include tours of camp, evening meal followed by program put on by Lutheran Outdoors. We will carpool from Our Redeemer's because of limited parking at the camp.

Friday events: Morning will be start of convention with Bible Study, Awareness Sessions both morning and afternoon, lunch followed by Business meeting, awareness sessions. Evening banquet followed by special music. Evening speakers will by Jim and Karen Noss, retired missionaries who served Cameroon. (see Darlene Bresson's reports about Jim & Karen Noss in this issue!)

Saturday morning events: Hymn sing, report from **Churchwide Women of ELCA representative.** We will then close convention with communion service and installation of officers. Following the close, Bishop David Zellmer will give report from Synod office and answer any questions.

Awareness Sessions: Preliminary topics include: How to revitalize your unit, Mission work in Cameroon, Camping Ministry, Prison Congregations in America, St. Dymas of South Dakota, Today's Dreams – Tomorrow's Realty, Book suggestions for your Church Book group and Have you considered being an organ donor.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

As part of the Nominating Committee I would like to encourage all of our ladies that are members of Women of the ELCA in South Dakota to prayerfully consider giving me a call if you are at all interested in serving on the South Dakota Synodical Board. Also consider giving me names of ladies you think might be good for us to call and invite to run for an office.

I served on the board for 4 years and it was such a 'blessing' I received so much more than I gave I am sure.

Please be a part of helping us recruit some ladies that will be willing to serve.

In HIS Love, Janet M.

SOUTH DAKOTA LITERACY

SALLY HILLNER

The Spirit moves among us, calling us to greatness. How many of us feel that we're too tired, or too busy, or just too involved in daily life to add one more thing to our schedule. Routines are so comfortable, but the Spirit always encourages us to stop and listen to life. To heal the brokenhearted, to bind up wounds, to love our neighbor, to do greater things than we would ever be able to do on our own. Little by little we can listen to the Spirit as our best friend who always says "You can do it. I love you and I know how much more you can do."

Imagine not being able to read or write. The #1 reason why people enter a literacy program is to learn to read the Bible. You can help someone do that! You can become a tutor. All you need is to be able to read and write and have a degree in caring. We can help you get started with a brief workshop on this topic. You can donate funds so that we can buy books for our students and provide training for our tutors. You can pray for the students and for the tutors who help them.

There are many ways to greatness. Perhaps the Lord is calling you to help someone else to learn a lifelong skill. If you would like to help, please give me a call at 605-692-5560.
Sally Hillner, Literacy Chair

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

AMY POKELA

Greetings from the Family Connection here in Sioux Falls! We've had a great winter so far welcoming families from Washington, Montana, Nebraska, Minnesota and of course South Dakota. Despite the sometimes tricky weather January brought several guests coming to stay at the Hospitality House for the last time as they were picking up their released loved one. It's always a bittersweet time for us as we're saying goodbye to families we've had known for many years, but a joyful time knowing we helped them through this often difficult and unfamiliar journey of incarceration.

The families who stay with us for the first time come with a lot of anxiety and worry about what they're going to face at the prison, how it'll feel to see their child or spouse behind bars and how they'll be able to leave them once the visit time is done. One of the ways we assist these families is by providing a house for them to come home to instead of a lonely hotel room or too often a long drive back to their town. Families of the inmate can come back and enjoy fellowship and a meal with other families that are going through this unique situation. Since many of our guests come from small communities this often is the first time they've been able to speak of their experience with people who are going through the same thing. This is an invaluable service for people who feel the isolation that incarceration brings.

We provide the housing, food and other resources in order to facilitate these visits. The grandmas, grandpas, mothers, fathers and children of the inmate are greeted with love and understanding, not judgment. We show them by our actions who we are and whose we are and that they are not alone on this journey.

WELCA has been a very important part of the work we do in Christ's name. We are called to visit those who are in prison and WELCA has honored that call by providing the funds, in-kind donations and prayers that sustain our ministry. If your WELCA group, or you individually, would like to tour our house and see first hand the work we do together please give us a call.

WOMENS PRISON MINISTRY

Sharon Stark

Dear W/ELCA,

During this long cold winter, it is so important to continue with prison ministry. Women and children need to know that God loves them and so do we. The quilts and pillowcases we sent are such a big gift to someone who is so down and out. We are planting seeds of hope for Christ Jesus for folks who are so lonely and pretty much at the end of their rope thinking that nobody cares. Jesus commands us to go to the prisons; for therefore am I with the least of them. The quilts you give are a security blanket that provides much more than warmth. The pillowcases have the recipients name embroidered plus a scripture verse for the young kids at STAR Academy.

When they get their pillowcase, they run for a Bible to see what their verse is all about. Well, most of these kids have never had a Bible in their hands. Before long the Bible verse is memorized and helps them get to sleep at night when they are so lost and alone. God says if we will just bring them to Him, He will do the rest. I count on God's faithfulness.

Thank you to everyone who helps out with this ministry in thought, prayer or monetary. There are over one thousand kids in corrections. I know that we can't help them all but we are doing pretty good with the ones we do help with Christmas treats, quilts, pillowcases, books, sports equipment, fruit etc. just to name a few ways we help. We help with book club at the Wm's Prison. Check out the Prayer Gardens at Spirit of Joy Lutheran Church...spiritofjoy.net then scroll down to photos and you can see how the gardens have grown. Plan to visit this summer. We enjoy giving tours.

Your sister in Christ,
Sharon Starks
206 W Maple St.
Harrisburg, SD
57032 starks.sharon@hotmail.com 241-4140

BREAD FOR THE WORLD



Cathy Brechtelsbauer

The malnourished children I saw in rural Cameroon are dear to God's heart and now dear to the hearts of all of us who were there. We also saw people working hard to feed their families. People here do the same. We must not sit by, while we have a voice to help.

1. In alternating years we have Bread Days in Pierre. If you get this article before Mon-Tue, Feb 7-8, try to come. Call Nancy Olson (605-321-2032) or Cathy Brechtelsbauer (605-335-6222 or 605-261-0764) for any info. Come and be a presence in the Capitol for people in need.

2. The **state legislature** is in progress. We can help change the attitude in Pierre toward helping struggling South Dakotans. For example:

- The proposed 10% budget cuts would cause more "sacrifice" for the young and the sick than for many others. Surely there must be ways those of us with higher incomes could do our part so the more vulnerable people could be less affected. Special worry: cuts to nursing homes in rural areas.
- Money is tight, but Medicaid coverage for more pregnancies could cost little or nothing to the state budget, if pregnancy care results in even a few less intensive care bills for infants.
- Something that would not cost state anything, but would be a great help to a lot of people, would be to restrict predatory lending. Everyone who works at helping agencies says Amen to that.
- Legislators need to understand that South Dakotans really do not like the food tax. Some lawmakers still claim people want tax on food, even with a bill before them that preserves state funding. Legislators should not keep hiding behind a 7-year-old refund program that now reaches only 372 households. Such programs are inherently ineffective. Let's keep working for more humane tax rules, that don't tax people's food and heat.

3. **Email alert network** during the 40-day state legislature informs and gives contact info for legislators. If you want to join these advocates, let me know (via my email, below).

4. **Obesity.** While certainly not the whole cause of obesity, the food tax has an impact. Healthy foods often cost more. South Dakota is now among the 10 states with the worst obesity rates. Guess what? 8 of these 10 states tax food. - Significant because so few states tax food. Hmmm -maybe a connection there?

5. Thanks for your letters. Last year Congress voted to continue important tax credits for low-income working families, as we asked.

Letters in 2011: To make lasting progress on hunger, development must be a top priority of the U.S. foreign policy. We'll ask Congress to push the government to focus even more directly on reducing poverty and to strengthen accountability for how aid is spent and its results. Let's plan to write in our circles, spring gatherings, and/or state gathering. Policies have a critical role long-term in ending hunger, poverty and corruption. When Jesus challenged the Pharisees and Sadducees, he was confronting the public policy decisionmakers. In our own time, we are likewise called by the Spirit to pray, open our hearts to God, reach out to others in their need, and confront structures, behavior, and policies that impoverish and oppress. Today there is significant progress to build on, but much yet to be accomplished.

Cathy Brechtelsbauer, volunteer, SD Coordinator for Bread for the World 605-335-6222, ryebread@breadrising.org

Quilts needed at Pine Ridge

Pastor Karen Rupp, Director of the Pine Ridge Retreat Center, reports that there is great need for quilts to keep families warm at night on the reservation. If you or your congregation have any quilts to donate, you may send them to the Synod office and we will make sure that they are delivered



TRIENNIAL GATHERING PROMOTER Nancy Renner

ROSES ARE RED
VIOLETS ARE BLUE
I'M GOING TO SPOKANE
HOW ABOUT YOU?

It's not too late for you to register for the 8th Triennial Gathering in Spokane, WA. July 14-17. If you have any questions, please call me at 605-336-8578 or e-mail, <drenner@sio.midco.net> Do it, You'll have a great experience. God be with you all. Nancy



Renew, Respond, Rejoice!

ANYONE can receive a copy of this newsletter by e-mail at no charge. Please send your name and e-mail address to Lmbirk@itctel.com. This will be in PDF format so that you can open it if you have PDF, which I will instruct you in downloading a free copy when I send the newsletter out.

You can also find this newsletter on the internet at: <http://www.sdsynod.org/> At the top of the page, position your cursor on 'Congregations & organizations', then click on WELCA on the drop down menu. When this page comes up, click on the SD Synod WELCA newsletter.

LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICES

Heidi S. Gough

Fast Facts from LSS:

For some, the transition from youth into adulthood can be a difficult and overwhelming experience. Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota understands this and helps develop independent living skills in young people through a Stepping Stones Program. Stepping Stones serves youth by providing housing, assisting with employment, offering educational services and teaching life skills.

“Stepping Stones has given me time to prepare to go out on my own,” said a former stepping stones youth. Last year, LSS helped more than 60 young people become responsible adults. With your help, LSS helps young people to grow, belong, thrive and succeed. For more information: www.lsssd.org or 800-260-1439.

2011 Calendar of Events

March 6, Mitchell Area Benefits, First Lutheran Church’s new Family Life Center, Continental Breakfast Event, 9:25 to 10:10 am; Lunch Event, 1 to 2 pm

March 19, Taste of Cultures: Ethnic Buffet & Silent Auction, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, 909 West 33rd Street, Sioux Falls, 5:30 to 8:30 pm

March 26, Brookings Area Dinner Benefit, Volstorff Ballroom, SDSU, 6:45 pm

April 3, Aberdeen Area Dinner Event, Zion Lutheran Church

April 10, Sioux Falls/Southeastern South Dakota Lunch Benefit, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church’s new Gathering Place, Sioux Falls, 1 pm

May 1, West River Dinner Event, Calvary Lutheran Church, Rapid City



LAMP MINISTRY

Jeanne Johnson

The other day I heard from a friend of mine who lives in a native reserve in northern Ontario. After our initial “pleasantries,” (“How are you? What’s the weather like?” “Whatcha doin?,” etc.) she got right down to business.

“My mom and dad are not together anymore.” (My friend is 9 years old.) “Oh, I’m so sorry,” I replied. “Yes,” she went on to say “I was there during all of their fights. I was scared.” Oh my! What do I say to that? How can I help? Lord, help me comfort her with Your words. “Yeah, and I thought I would have to go to [be in foster care]. But I’m staying with my mom for now.” Yikes! Now I really didn’t know how to respond. Then I said again, “I’m so sorry. I will pray for you.” To which my friend responded with, “Do you know why I wanted you to be my ‘friend’ on Facebook?” “No,” I replied, “why?” “Because I knew you would pray,” came back the response.

I continued to encourage my young friend with reminders that God was and is with her and loves her very much, and that I and my teammates would pray for her and her family. Will you join me in praying for this little nine-year old? You see, she doesn’t have a school counselor, she doesn’t have a Sunday School teacher, or anyone else in her community to turn to. I thank God that I didn’t ‘ignore’ her, but took the time to listen. Now I can pray, and trust that God will continue to develop her faith and love for Him as only He can do.

To become involved in the rewarding (and sometimes heart-wrenching) ministry of LAMP, go to www.lampministry.org or phone 1-800-307-4036. Consider supporting the ministry financially, with your prayers, or even volunteer to teach VBS this summer. Teams are forming now!

COMPANION SYNOD

Cathy Larson

The area in Northeast Cameroon was, until recently, a hard place to establish Christianity because of persecution. Now with a change in leadership the people are enjoying the freedom to become Christians. Bishop Nyiwe told me, and the other five South Dakota travelers who were in Cameroon in January, that even the traditionally Muslim chiefs there are becoming Christians. He said that region has about 15 new Lutheran congregations that have built church walls. Like other churches in Cameroon, these new Christians cannot afford the roof.

On our travels we saw first-hand how thrilled the villagers are to have a roof on the church walls they have built. We also passed some churches that had received roofs, and they sure looked good. It costs about \$8000. to put on a roof.

Consider this: If every member of SD Synod ELCA churches would give \$1.50, the price of a drink at many establishments, this would provide materials for roofs for these 15 churches in Cameroon! It is South Dakota’s privilege to be able to supply the materials for the Cameroon Lutherans’ church roofs.

Any one person or circle could start a campaign for church roofs. Cameroon travelers from St. Mark’s Lutheran, Sioux Falls, are willing to come to promote with a program or report after fund-raising has been completed. Call me at 605 274 4031.



LUTHERANS OUTDOORS Karen Kraus

A "Old West" Evening at Joy Ranch June 16, 2011

Mark your calendars! You are ALL invited to Joy Ranch on Thursday, June 16th, as a prelude to your Synodical Gathering in Watertown. You are invited to tour the ranch, ride in a horse-drawn buggy, visit the one-room school, pray in the old country church, and experience the Old West as you walk down Main Street throughout the afternoon. Enjoy a delicious picnic supper along the boardwalk, followed by entertainment - and even a few surprises!

Thanks to an anonymous donor, Joy Ranch has received a no-interest loan that enables us to complete construction by late 2011. Yes - you will soon see the completed "Feed Bunk" (ie, kitchen), dining room, lodging and meeting rooms, healthcare and the "Thirsty Boot" cafe! Exact completion dates are yet to be determined - pray for a gentle spring! This same donor has offered a \$1,000,000 Challenge/Matching gift to help raise the remaining dollars needed to complete Joy Ranch. We are very blessed!

Thank you, South Dakota Women of the ELCA, for your gifts for this project - now totaling more than \$173,000! You are amazing!

Quick Camp Updates

Joy Ranch - served 968 youth - a total of 3,000 people in day programs this summer, even as construction continues

Outlaw Ranch - building a new Welcome Center, a gift from DeMaris Nesheim and Jason Mathison in memory of daughter and sister, Jodie Mathison

NeSoDak - broke an attendance record for second consecutive summer

Klein Ranch - dedicated new Welcome Center, in honor of former LO Director Gaius and Sheila Ausland

Atlantic Mountain Ranch - now offers kayaking in the Black Hills for middle and high school youth

Thank you, Women of the ELCA, for ALL you do to support camping ministry in South Dakota!



TODAY'S DREAM TOMORROW'S REALITY Margene Thompson

This partial Glossary is intended as an educational tool for parents, children, teachers, students, researchers,

and Women of the ELCA. It is an offering of information, of history, and of possibilities. The definitions are specific to the current usage of the terms in the United States.

Caucasian A person traditionally classified as a member of the Caucasian race, especially a person with light to fair skin. (This definition is no longer in scientific use.) In the United States, this term is often used interchangeable with the term White. There is a growing movement to discontinue the use of Caucasian and Caucoid as racial terms, and discard them alongside their archaic partners: Australoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid.

colored* A person with any amount of non-White ancestry, especially ancestry from the African diaspora.

culture The customary traditions and values of a social or ethnic group that span generations.

Eskimo* A person with ancestors from the aboriginal inhabitants of the circumpolar region, excluding Scandinavia and most of Russia. The two main groups are the Inuit and the Yupik.

Ethnic relating to a large group of people who share common traits such as culture, religion, or language.

Ethnicity Self-identified association with an ethnic group or groups because of shared values and history, related to common traits such as culture or religion. Usually passed down through family or community traditions.

Eurasian A person with both European and Asian ancestry.

European American A resident or citizen of the United States with European ancestry.

First Nations A person with ancestors from the indigenous peoples of the Americans, excluding Inuit. In Canada, this term also excludes constitutionally-recognized Metis. Originally used in Canada, now also used in the United States.

half* A biracial person. Often considered offensive because of the implication that a biracial person is not complete or whole, and the possible abbreviation from the offensive term "half-breed".

Hapa A person with mixed Asian or Pacific Islander ancestry. From the Hawaiian for "part" or "half." Some Asian transracial adoptees also use this term to identify themselves.

heritage something that belongs to a person as a result of their birth; birthright.

Hispanic A resident or citizen of the United States with Latin American, Spanish, or Spanish-speaking ancestry. In the United States, the largest Hispanic populations are Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Guatemalan, Colombian, and Spanish. The term Hispanic is often used interchangeably with the term Latino.

*An asterisk designates controversial or offensive terms. Can you remember the words with asterisks? Can you omit those words from your vocabulary?

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Please remember, all addresses MUST be your mailing address, some of you have 2 addresses, a physical address (street or 911) but I have to have your mailing address to insure that your newsletter is delivered.

Seven days without prayer makes one weak.

Dates to remember:

Bear Butte Conf.- 4/30 at St. James @ Belle Fourche
Medary Conference- 4/16 at American in DeSmet
Prairie Coteau Conference- 4/30 at St. John's in Webster
Prairie Rivers Conf.- 4/9 at Salem Lutheran at Parkston.
Crossroads Conference
Northern Plains Conference—4/2 at Trinity at Mobridge
Southeastern Conference

2011 Synodical Convention – June 17-18 at Joy Ranch at Watertown. This will be hosted by Our Redeemer Lutheran of Watertown.

2011 Triennial Convention – July 12-13 at Spokane, Washington

2011 Triennial Gathering – July 14-17 at Spokane, Washington

2011 Leadership Workshop July 29 & 30 at Resurrection Lutheran at Pierre

PASS IT ON!!

This SD Synodical Newsletter is published to inform Women of the ELCA of the SD Synodical happenings, activities and opportunities with the Synod. The newsletter is published four times a year: February, April, July and November.

Please share this newsletter with your congregational unit officers:

President _____ Vice President _____
Secretary _____ Treasurer _____
Mission Growth _____ Mission Action _____
Mission Community _____

Anyone can subscribe to this newsletter for \$5 per year. You will receive four issues. Due dates for article are Feb. 1, April 1, July 1, November 1.

Name _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State & Zip _____

Make your check payable to SD Women of the ELCA and mail it with the above information to:

Darlene Bresson, 621 S Lake Dr. Watertown, SD 57201

Send Address changes to Lucille Birkholtz, 42341 193rd St., Willow Lake, SD 57278
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South Dakota Synodical

Lucille Birkholtz, Editor

42341 193rd St.

Willow Lake, SD 57278

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

LUTHERAN PLANNED GIVING

Kurt Osborne

What does your faith inspire?

This question is often a great way to begin the process of "gift planning".

Gift planning is the preparation of a plan that considers your blessings, your needs, the needs of your loved ones and your interest in supporting ministry, both now and in the future. Gift planning empowers you to make decisions that have a larger impact than ever imagined possible. Whether you have much to give or a small amount to share, you can benefit from a gift plan.

As we consider the process of "gift planning", a good place to start is to take a few minutes and account for our blessings. While many of our most treasured blessings are people and ministries- one of the ways we show our love and support for faith and family, is through the prudent use accumulated assets. Assets are anything that we own. We have an opportunity to share your assets with others.

Consider these various assets you may own:

- ** Cash
- ** Investments like CD's, money market accounts, etc.
- ** Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Funds
- ** Retirement Plans/ IRA's

- ** Insurance
- ** Personal Property (automobiles, collectibles, heirlooms, etc.)
- ** Real Estate (residential, recreational, commercial)
- ** Business Ownership Interests

Current gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Assets can also be used to make a gift with a long-term impact on the mission and ministry of this church. Whether you are interested in a gift through your will or trust, retirement plans, life insurance, charitable gift annuities, donor advised funds, charitable trusts or endowments, careful gift planning will make an impact forever.

Getting Started on Your Gift Plan

At a Glance—Benefits of gifting from your assets

- Can be used in multiple ways
- Can make an impact on ministry immediately or for the long-term
- May provide tax deductions

If making a plan is on your list of things to do for the New Year- consider getting started by making a contact with Lutheran Planned Giving of South Dakota.

We offer objective, complimentary consultation on gift planning. We have no products to sell, only a service to provide.

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Jim Schade- schade@augie.edu, 605 940 2363