

The Joyful News

The Women of the ELCA
Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization

December 2008



IN THIS ISSUE:

- A Message from the President.....page 1-2
- Mark your Calendar!page 2
- SWO Spring Convention, SWO Officers.....page 3
- Stand with Africa Water Project - SWO 2008/09 Fundraiser.....page 4
- Grant & Scholarship, 2011 Triennial, Together in Mission, Reminder, Thankspage 5
- Leadership Event, All Lutheran Women's Retreat.....page 6
- Today's Dream:Tomorrow's Reality.....page 7-8
- Program Ideas/Resources, Notes from Around the Synod.....page 9-10

Merry
Christmas



A Message from the President

Dear Sisters,

"How can we get younger women involved"? This frequently asked question was addressed in a 2001 *Interchange* article authored by Lynn Frank, who, at that time, was a leadership development specialist with the Women of the ELCA. Instead of answering the question of how to involve younger women, she thoughtfully turned it around for those of us who have been involved with the organization for a long time. She asked "Why do you want younger women involved?" Lynn's answers to that question are also ours. We know we need help with projects and events, but we also know what we have found through our participation in the Women of the ELCA: relationships that last decades, that provide support in times of stress and joy, meaning in life beyond the day-to-day activities of home, family and work found in service to others in the name of Jesus Christ, and a pathway to a deeper relationship with God. With that in mind, the question of how we can get younger women involved becomes this one: How can we encourage younger women to become involved with this partnership in the Gospel? And there are other questions to consider for creating this partnership in our congregations:

- What are some things that might change if younger women start attending?
- What do younger women say they need?
- How can we help younger women understand why the Women of the ELCA is so important to us?
- In what ways do you partner with younger women to do ministry?
- How do we encourage younger women and what prompts us to encourage them?

Thessalonians 5:12-18 gives us directives for answering these questions about how to encourage one another, how to live out God's love in community: We are to respect those who labor among us; esteem them very highly in love because of their work; be at peace among ourselves; be patient; always seek to do good to one

another; rejoice, pray and give thanks. Encouraging one another is one of the seven marks of discipleship explored in the new resource *Lessons for Today's Disciples* developed by Valora Starr, Women of the ELCA. From the resource we learn that when practicing this mark of discipleship we place our selves in the other person's shoes and make a conscious decision to be guided by the Holy Spirit. Our acts of encouragement are affirming for the other person and are faithbuilding for us

The Women of the ELCA has developed two great opportunities to help us act on the faith-filled question of how to encourage younger women to become involved with this partnership in the Gospel. One opportunity is to become an Individual Partner with a young woman by inviting her into the organization with *Lutheran Woman Today* and *Café* subscriptions and a special Women of the ELCA electronic newsletter. The second opportunity is to invite the young women, and all of the women of your congregation, to participate in the Women of the ELCA's discussion of the book *Radical Welcome* by Rev. Stephanie Spellers which will start in January 2009. Details on the Individual Partnership and the book discussion are available in the Program and Ideas section of the newsletter. And don't forget the Synodical Women's Organization's annual Spring Convention. Here is yet another opportunity. Invite the young women in your congregations to *Come to the Waters* on May 2, 2009 at St. Luke, Silver Spring, to hear keynote speaker Mary Minette, ELCA Director of Environmental Education and Advocacy, and to attend the workshops.

Blessed Sisters, you are a blessing to those you encourage and affirm in your current ministries and to those you will encourage and affirm each time you open your hearts to new ministries.

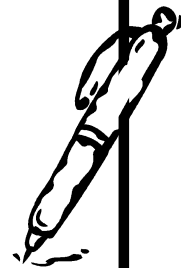
Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing. (Thessalonians 5:11).

Your sister in Christ,
Marcia Ihnen



Mark your Calendar!

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Dec 15 -
Feb 15 | Grant and Scholarship proposals accepted (see page 5) |
| Dec. 31 | Deadline for registration discount for 2011 Triennial (page 5) |
| Jan 10 | Annual Together in Mission program at King of Kings (page 5) |
| Feb 22 | Bold Women's Day (page 10) |
| April 15 | Donation deadline for STAND WITH AFRICA project (page 4) |
| May 1 | Deadline for recycled cell phones (page 9) |
| May 2 | Metro DC SWO Spring Convention
St. Luke, Silver Spring (page 3) |



Come to the Waters

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink.
As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”
John 7:37b, 38

2009 SPRING CONVENTION

Metro DC Synodical Women’s Organization
St. Luke, Silver Spring, Maryland
MAY 2, 2009

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: MARY MINETTE
DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND
ΔΔΥΟCΔCΥ

You are invited to come to the waters with your Metro DC Synodical sisters for this day of worship, learning, stewardship and fellowship. We will explore stewardship of water and wade in the waters of baptism. There will be an opportunity to study women’s cardiac health issues as part of the health initiative of the Women of the ELCA. The convention will also give us an opportunity to consolidate our resources in the form of in-kind and financial offerings that will have a local and global impact.



Please look for the detailed convention information and registration materials which will be sent to each congregation in **February 2009**.



Marcia Ihnen	President, Holy Trinity, Falls Church
Barbara Piotter	Vice President, Good Shepherd, Woodbridge
Paulette Sandene	Secretary, Faith, Arlington
Fran Eck	Treasurer, St. Mark’s, Springfield
Laura McDowell	Board Member, Our Redeemer, Washington, DC
Angela Miller	Board Member, Epiphany, Alexandria
Patricia Nau	Board Member, Christ, Fairfax
Gloria Cline-Smythe	Board Member, Zion, Tacoma Park
Sheri Swackhamer	Board Member, Good Shepherd, Alexandria



2008-2009 SWO OFFICERS

THE METRO DC SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION
2008 - 2009 FUNDRAISER

STAND WITH AFRICA WATER PROJECT

A Project of the WOMEN OF THE ELCA with ELCA HUNGER
and LUTHERAN DEVELOPMENT SERVICES OF ZIMBABWE

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

Lutheran Development Services of Zimbabwe, an independent program of the Lutheran World Federation, is focused on sustainable community development in Zimbabwe, including access to safe, drinkable water supplies. The organization plans to provide all households in its targeted area with safe, drinkable water by the end of 2009. Donations from the Women of the ELCA have already funded twelve bore holes and wells in this area. Our SWO goal is to raise \$5,000 for the Stand with Africa Water Project.

WHAT CAN OUR MONEY DO?

There is great need in Zimbabwe today following months of political unrest, social upheaval, staggering unemployment of 85% and devastating inflation. Many are in dire poverty, hungry and homeless. Women and girls spend many hours of each day walking to a source of water and then walking home. But lives can be changed and it all begins with water.

Our money will:

BE AN ADVOCACY FOR JUSTICE FOR WOMEN
STRENGTHEN FAMILIES
PROVIDE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE
CHANGE LIVES

WHAT CAN YOUR UNIT DO?

WELCA units and all congregations are invited to share their blessings and donate \$250 to the project so we can reach our goal of \$5,000.

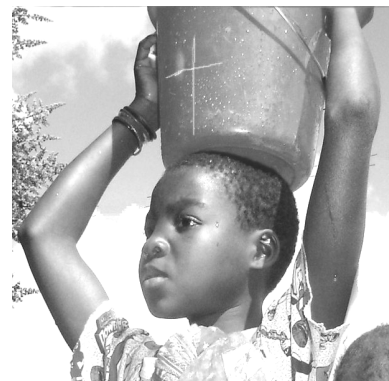


WHERE DO WE SEND OUR COLLECTED MONEY?

By April 15, 2009 please send
your contribution in the form of a check to

SWO Treasurer, Fran Eck
6215 Hibbling Avenue
Springfield, Virginia 22150

Active congregational units are also asked
to complete and enclose Offering Form A
www.womenoftheelca.org/resources/forms.html



WELCA SEEKING GRANT PROPOSALS

The Women of the ELCA is seeking grant proposals from not -for- profit organizations, both domestic and international, that are dedicated to education, healthcare and advocacy for women's emotional, physical and spiritual health. Online applications and downloadable PDF files will be available on the website, www.womenoftheelca.org, through February 14, 2009. **Proposals will be accepted from December 15, 2008 through February 15, 2009.** Please see the website for complete information.



Just a reminder that all offerings sent to your Synod Treasurer, Fran Eck (6215 Hibbling Avenue, Springfield, VA 22150) should be accompanied by "Form A".

This form is available from Fran or on-line at www.womenoftheelca.org/resources/forms.html

WELCA OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS

The Women of the ELCA is offering scholarships to women who are members of the ELCA. The scholarship money will be awarded to Lutheran laywomen studying for a career other than ordained ministry, to women interested in pursuing additional education for administrative leadership, and for women in their final year at an ELCA seminary.

Additional information and downloadable forms for the 2009-2010 school year are available on the website, www.womenoftheelca.org. **The application period is from December 15, 2008 through February 15, 2009.**

TRIENNIAL
2011

Register for the Women of the ELCA's 2011 Triennial in Spokane, Washington before December 31, 2008 and enjoy the discount fee of \$240. This registration fee is fully transferable, but is non-refundable. Visit www.womenoftheelca.org for information.

TOGETHER IN MISSION

The Metro DC Synod's annual **Together in Mission program will be held on January 10, 2009 at King of Kings, Fairfax, 8:00 am to 3:00 pm.** The guest speaker is Matthew Anderson-Stembridge, Director of the Creative Care Fund which supports grassroots Christian environmental efforts around the country. See www.metrodcelca.org for more information and registration details.



thank
you

The Joyful News Editor Robin LeMunyon will be leaving this position after the publication of this edition of the newsletter. Thank you to Robin for her dedicated service to the Synodical Women's Organization. We are all enjoying the new look of our user-friendly newsletter and being able to access the newsletter through our synod website. During her tenure, Robin also created an informative brochure about the Synodical Women's Organization. The position of newsletter editor will be filled by Cheryl Dwyer, St. Mark's, Springfield. The SWO Executive Board looks forward to working with Cheryl in 2009.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING EVENT

The Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization's annual Fall Gathering was held at Holy Trinity, Falls Church, on September 13. Fifty women were in attendance. The guest speaker was Esther Whieldon, BeadforLife Community Partner Representative for the tri-state area. BeadforLife benefits Ugandan women by teaching them to make jewelry from beads created from colorful recycled paper and then uses the profit from the sale of the jewelry for vocational and financial management training for the women. Through Esther's presentation we met these women



and had a chance to try our hand at making a bead. We also enjoyed a performance of the Lifeline Partnership Players, the Gospel Drama Troupe from First Trinity, Washington, DC, which empowers persons with developmental disabilities to spread the Good News through their own ministry of drama and mime. There was an additional session for highlighting new program ideas and resources for congregational ministries. An in-kind offering of 41 health kits and 4 layettes was collected for Lutheran World Relief.

ALL LUTHERAN WOMEN'S RETREAT

Submitted by Paulette Sandene

Although the weather was wet and chilly, there was nothing but sunny smiles at the 2008 All Lutheran Women's Retreat, held from October 17-19 in Williamsburg, VA. More than 90 women enjoyed a weekend of study, discussion, fellowship, dining, and entertainment at the cozy Ramada Inn 1776 in historic Williamsburg. The retreat facilitator was Debra Farrington, a nationally-known lecturer, teacher, columnist, publisher, and author of eight books on Christian spirituality, including "Hearing with the Heart: A Gentle Guide to Discerning God's Will for Your Life" which formed the basis of the study sessions during the retreat.

The retreat began on Friday afternoon, October 17 with registration and a welcome reception hosted by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, followed by a lively get-acquainted session. On Saturday morning, a bountiful breakfast buffet was followed by two study sessions on the topic of discernment and listening to God's word. After a tasty luncheon of salads and sandwiches, the group completed another study session before taking a break for the rest of the afternoon to explore the town, do some shopping, take a nap, or participate in a beaded bracelet workshop. Everyone gathered again at 6:30 PM for a delicious dinner. Entertainment was provided by the Strasburg "Mop Ladies", a hilarious comedy duo, and the Williamsburg Women's Chorus and Choraliers, a talented a cappella singing group.

The final day of the retreat started with another fine southern-style breakfast buffet, singing, and a wrap-up session to summarize the themes that had been discussed throughout the weekend. At the end of the last session, many women stayed to talk with Debra Farrington and purchase some of her books. After checkout, the women gathered one last time for worship and Holy Communion led by Rev. Cheryl Griffin.

I would like to thank the staff at the Ramada Inn 1776, the organizers and leaders of the event, and all the women who came with open minds and hearts for making the 2008 All Lutheran Women's Retreat a great success.

Planning Committee: Sabrina Chandler (chairperson), Carol Bailey, Till Blackwelder, Fran Eck, Lohre Holter, Carol Moonan, Barbara Schwartz and Margaret Tucker

Retreat Leader: Debra Farrington

Retreat Chaplin: Rev. Cheryl Griffin

Music leaders: Pat Moler and Claudia Tameris

Publicity: Zoraya Stern

Staff at Abiding Presence Lutheran (Burke, VA): reproduction of retreat booklet



TODAY'S DREAM : TOMORROW'S REALITY

(TDTR)

Submitted by Laura McDowell and Martha Sherman

For those who may not be familiar with the TDTR term, it is the title of Women of the ELCA's anti-racism effort, with its commitment to dismantling racism. Two women from the Metro DC Synodical Women's Organization - Martha Sherman and Laura McDowell - attended a Churchwide WELCA's training retreat in Savannah, GA, to prepare them to conduct anti-racism workshops in this area. These workshops seek to promote awareness of the systemic nature of racism and of what we can do to combat it.

Workshop at Good Shepherd: This Metro DC TDTR team was invited by Sheri Swackhamer to conduct a workshop at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA, on November 8. The topic we chose for this presentation was "**Better or Worse,**" comparing the racial situation today with that of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement era, with discussion on ways things are better, and ways they are worse. Attendees individually shared their views and, in some cases, their experiences with racism. (See Sheri's article).

Why We Chose To Work With Anti-Racism: In the following paragraphs, the TDTR Metro DC team shares their views on racism and why they have chosen to promote anti-racism:

Laura McDowell: Being a person of color myself, I, of course, have a very personal interest in anti-racism. However, when I was first asked to consider involvement in WELCA's anti-racism training, I had to pray about it for a while before saying "yes."

My reason for hesitation was my fear that I would become too emotional because of my own experiences - like the times, growing up in the south, I was told (or just knew) to go to the other side of the café to order my hot dog, or to go to the back of the bus. Further, my mother would never be addressed as "Mrs." by whites because "negroes were not worthy of that honor." Later, when I moved to the Nation's Capital, believing I'd have more freedom, I learned that I could not sit down at most lunch counters and restaurants, and that applying for a job I'd be told "we don't hire negroes for this job." In addition, the job section of the local newspapers specified the race requirement for most jobs (to name a few of the indignities I find hard to forget).

Of course, we don't face such blatant racism today. However, when I hear comments like "Oh, that is reverse racism" and "We don't need affirmative action because everything is now equal" still tends to evoke negative emotions in me. Thus, I was afraid that if I became too emotional in discussing racism, it might defeat the purpose of what we're trying to do.

But, from our WELCA theme of ACT BOLDLY, and 2 Timothy 1:7: *God has not given us a spirit of timidity but of power, of love, and self-discipline*, I am now able to enjoy working in this area. I believe that we can all benefit from these workshops because I, too, may need to change some of my ideas and perceptions. So I am now committed, through love and with God's help, to do what I can, to dismantle racism because, as Martin Luther King said, "If all are not free, none are free."

Martha Sherman: Unlike Laura, who has known she was living with racism her whole life, I as a white person could ignore the reality of present-day racism until I chose to examine it.

Embracing this work has changed my life. It has deepened my relationship with God in powerful ways. I am now a racist in recovery. But I assure you that is life-giving whereas being a racist in denial is life-ending, first and foremost for my own heart-and-soul-self.

We are all born into a racist culture, and we all suffer in this racist culture, no matter our color. We did not create this culture, we do not choose to be racists, but it is the air we breathe, and hence we cannot avoid it. Precisely because it is the air we have been breathing our whole lives, we whites do not see racism unless we make the choice to see it.



Only by examining the legacy of slavery, Jim Crow and the reality of present-day institutional racism and peeling back the layers of my own ignorance and brokenness do I heal and start to make the world a slightly better place for all, including myself.

Arranging a workshop for your group: Laura McDowell and Martha Sherman, trained by Women of the ELCA, work as a team to facilitate anti-racism workshops for any group in the Metro DC area. Groups of at least 8-12 are recommended. Workshops can range from 1-2 hours to a full weekend retreat. Please contact either of us to explore how we can help your group embrace this call of Jesus, to help heal the world.

Laura McDowell
lauramd32@msn.com
202-332-0570

Martha Sherman
msherman4420@yahoo.com
703-505-7840

REFLECTIONS OF A TDTR WORKSHOP

Submitted by Sheri Swackhamer

President of Women of the ELCA at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Alexandria, VA.

On the first Saturday in November, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church members gathered at 8:45 in the morning to share a wonderful breakfast together. We dined on crème brulee french toast with sausage, coffee and orange juice to become fully nourished to absorb the information presented by Laura McDowell and Martha Sherman who were our presenters for the "Today's Dream: Tomorrow's Reality" anti-racism workshop. We had a good mix of 12 men and women, young and old and of various ethnic backgrounds, who showed up to learn and share in the workshop. We started the session by each expressing a personal experience we had had with racism in our lives. Some shared experiences from long ago in their childhood that they recalled and others shared more current experiences, as recent as this year. This sharing experience was enlightening in itself to learn more about our fellow church members, but also to experience a personal racism experience as told from someone else's eyes, which was totally unique to them, pursuant to their gender, age, race, socio-economic background, education and many other factors. It was actually eye-opening and forced us all to listen as we shared some heart-felt real-life stories in our group setting.

As President of our Women of the ELCA chapter at Good Shepherd, I wanted to bring this workshop to our church members as I had attended this workshop once when it was held during our May 2008 SWO Convention and found it very rewarding. I thought our church would benefit from the open discussion that occurred during the workshop and would present a forum for conversation about how racism is handled in today's society and heighten awareness of some situations that might be called racism. Personally, I feel like our congregation is predominantly Caucasian with a few multi-ethnic families mixed in. To the best of our abilities, by using this workshop and participating, I wanted to at least involve some of our congregation in being open-minded about discussing racism and situations that might occur in their workplace, while they are out shopping or that could even occur in our congregation. The more open we are as a congregation to allowing different ethnic groups to participate in our services, the more diverse and rewarding our congregations will become as they grow.

As growing congregation size is important to any of our Lutheran churches and as America becomes more of a melting pot of immigrants from different countries emigrating to the U.S. and entering our schools and communities, this workshop will bring a wealth of discussion and ideas for further studying to engage your congregation to being open and welcoming to new opportunities. Learn to grow together in your knowledge about this topic and learn from each other's experiences: diversity in where we've grown up, how we were parented as youngsters, who our neighbors were, how our college educations and travels have affected us, are all an important and integral part of formulating our adult opinions and knowledge of racism. Please consider bringing Laura and Martha to your church congregation for an educational discussion and learning experience in an interactive workshop format.

PROGRAM IDEAS AND RESOURCES

RECYCLING CELL PHONES WITH THE GOOD DEED FOUNDATION

Do you know that in the United States there are half a billion cell phones that are no longer being used and that the recycling, rather than the discarding, of these phones can generate much needed income to lift women and families out of poverty, provide lasting solutions to climate change, which is a major contributor to poverty, and provide 911 emergency phones for senior citizens and people at risk? The Women of the ELCA, a member of the Good Deed Foundation, has set a goal with the foundation to **recycle 250,000 cell phones by May 1, 2009**. To help reach this goal go to www.gooddeedfoundation.org/welca and request a **free postage-paid collection envelope, a free collection box with postage-paid FedEx pickup or print a postage-paid shipping label** suitable for any box.. Please note the phone charger and other accessories may be recycled with the cell phone.



BECOME AN INDIVIDUAL PARTNER

Here is a new way to connect important women in your life with the Women of the ELCA and to give them the opportunity to experience the fellowship, friendship and support that mean so much to you. **For \$20.00 a year** you can **give them a one-year subscription to *Lutheran Women Today and Café***. They will have access to Bible studies, global networks, advocacy efforts and other resources. To make someone an individual partner visit www.womenoftheelca and download the Individual Partner flyer, complete the form and send it to the designated address. You can order copies of the full color brochure which also includes a reply envelope by calling 800-638-3522, ext 2737 or emailing your request to Women.ELCA@elca.org.

JOIN THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA'S CHURCHWIDE BOOK DISCUSSION

The Women of the ELCA will host a discussion from January through May 2009 for exploring organizational and personal growth using the book ***Radical Welcome: Embracing God, the Other, and the Spirit of Transformation*** by Rev. Stephanie Spellers. Two chapters of the book will be discussed each month. **You are invited to participate in an online live chat every second Tuesday of each month**, an online discussion and the blog which will be refreshed at the beginning of each month by seven women designated to blog their responses to the chapter questions. You can also hold local discussions at your church. The books are available at a discount through Church Publishing's website www.churchpublishing.org or by phone at 800-242-1918.



PROMOTE THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA WITH FREE DVD

Created in the Image of God: A Community of Women is a promotional tool showcasing Women of the ELCA groups across the country who are living out the mission of the organization, who are participating in its activities and ministries. The DVD may be ordered by calling 800-638-3522, ext 2737 or by e-mailing Women.ELCA@elca.org. The DVD is available for previewing at www.womenoftheelca.org.



A NEW RESOURCE FROM THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Lessons for Today's Disciples: Seven Marks of Discipleship is seven one hour, interactive lessons. Each lesson includes Biblical text, and exercises for reflecting and responding to a call of discipleship. This resource which was developed by Valora Starr, Women of the ELCA, is suitable for self-study or group study in a weekly meeting or retreat setting. The free materials are available from the Women of the ELCA. Please contact Laura Barkenquast at laura.barkenquast@elca.org or by calling 800-638-2737.

ACT BOLDLY THROUGH STEWARDSHIP

Check out The Women of the ELCA *Stewardship Planning Guide 2008-09* at www.womenoftheelca.org by clicking on *Engage in Action* and then on *Stewardship*, which is in blue print within the text on that page. The guide includes a Women of the ELCA offerings report, information on ways to give, and designated gifts options for ELCA and Women of the ELCA ministries. For treasurers, it features a Bible study reflection, task list, and offerings transmittal information. It also includes two bulletin inserts, details on partnerships (the Good Deed Foundation and the Lutheran World Relief Chocolate Project), and a guide to additional stewardship resources. A Thankoffering Service and a booklet of monthly offering devotions are also available. If you don't have access to the Internet, you can order the free guide by calling Laura Barkenquast, Women of the ELCA, at 1-800-638-3522, Ext 2737.

PROJECT BOOMERANG

Send your junk mail, new and used cards, magazines and stickers to WRAP, Women's Renewal At Peace, Peace Lutheran, 6362 Lincolnia Road, Alexandria, VA 22312. The women will use the materials to



create blank greeting cards which will be delivered to the deployed on three Air Force bases in Iraq. Our troops can then add their own messages and send those cards to their loved ones back home. Donations of ink pads, glue and glue sticks are also welcome donations. For more information contact Vicki Haugen at vicki.haugen2@gmail.com, 703-914-3993.

BOLD WOMEN'S DAY

is the Women of the ELCA celebration designated for the last Sunday in February. Your congregation is invited to celebrate Bold Women's Day and all Lutheran women and the many diverse ways in which they act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ on February 22, 2009. Please visit www.womenoftheelca.org for promotional materials, a list of ideas for celebrating Bold Women's Day, litanies for worship, e-cards to send to the bold women in your life, and stories of bold women.



notes from around the synod



The women of Holy Trinity, Leesburg, Virginia, celebrated the life of their departed sister Lucy Witul by creating a WELCA quilt in honor of her 100 years of life and her bold devotion to their congregation. The quilt will hang in the new gathering area at Holy Trinity. The All Saints Sunday dedication ceremony and luncheon was attended by members of the congregation and members of Lucy's family.

