

Bridges

Volume 25
December 2011
Number 4

A communication link between the Synodical Women's Organization & its women

REFLECTIONS

JoAnn Hogenson

Saint Paul Area Synodical Organization

President

Advent is here. A new church year is beginning. We are remembering the birth of Jesus Christ and preparing to receive anew the gift of God's Son, our Savior.

There are many ways to prepare for this holiday time: shopping for gifts, making special foods, hosting parties and traveling to visit friends and relatives. All of these activities, while fun, may become overwhelming at times. That sometimes happens to me. Then it is time to reset priorities.

Even in the hectic times we can claim moments of peace and think of other ways to prepare for this holiday season. Even in the busiest of days there are moments at the beginning or end of the day for prayer, Bible reading, devotions and meditation. Claim those times. Could you pray or meditate while doing mundane housekeeping tasks? Claim those times. During those wakeful moments in the silence of the night there are times for reflection and prayer. Claim those times.

Let's enjoy the excitement and joy of this holiday season, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. AND let's make a sacred space in our hearts and minds and spirits for the greatest gift we will ever receive, Jesus who came as a baby and claims us as His own.

We are children of God and sisters in Christ. My prayer is that at the beginning of this new church year we can make a New *Church* Year's Resolution to claim time for our spiritual nourishment. Bible study, prayer, meditation, devotional reading, worship - these are ways to grow in faith, love and service to others in Christ's name.

Blessings, JoAnn

REJOICE!

Philippians 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always!

25th Anniversary

Convention!

April 20-21

We have not included all the forms you usually find in the December "Bridges". You will find the registration form enclosed, make copies for the women in your church. The scholarship, resolution and nominating forms will be in the packets each church will receive at the end of January. They will be handed out at the Women's Renewal Retreat in Stillwater on Jan.28, 2012. If your church does not have someone there, one will be mailed. They are sent to the leader of your women's group or the church secretary, whoever is on our list. If you are not sure if your information is correctly listed call Lois Berg 763/789-9113. We depend on leaders to keep Lois informed as to changes in leadership in your women's group.

Invite a young woman to attend the convention with you! We have 6 scholarships each year, one for each cluster. The Scholarship form will be in the packet.

REJOICE >10

MISSION COMMUNITY

Goal: To enable each woman to value her and others as disciples created in God's image and redeemed through Jesus Christ; and to build up and celebrate relationships that are global, diverse, and interdependent.

Tricia Niesche (Committee Chair), Michele Bochman

Women are known for taking care of others before taking care of themselves. This causes women to be more vulnerable to depression, disease, and injury. Just recently it was reported that one in four women over 40 are taking antidepressants. Autoimmune diseases like fibromyalgia are much more prevalent in women than in men. It is painfully obvious that women need to learn better ways to take care of themselves. One of the resolutions of the St Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization involves taking care of our ESP (Emotional, Spiritual, and Physical health). To that end, the Soup Supper this fall focused on just that. Women were invited to laugh, learn, and enjoy good food and fellowship provided by the executive board of the St Paul Area SWO.

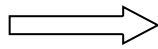
President, JoAnn Hogenson, brought greetings from the board and also gave a big thank you to Charlotte Coan who has been editor for the Bridges newsletter for the past ten years. Thanks again, Charlotte, and welcome to Julie Atkinson as the new editor! "Happy Birthday" was also sung in recognition the 25th anniversary of the Women of the ELCA in 2012. A decorated anniversary cake was served as dessert.

Carol Bidwell spoke about the structure of the organization and how the three parts: congregational units and clusters, Synodical Women's Organizations, and Churchwide, work together. The visual of an inverted triangle gave the largest piece to the congregational units and clusters without which there would be no need for the other two pieces. Julie Atkinson shared information on websites and blogs available to women and groups for information gathering and sharing.

Two short laughter yoga activities transitioned the evening into the program. Imaginary balls were thrown from person to person with a laugh. After this brief warm up, a laughing contest was held between the two sides of the room. Who knew a group of women could laugh so loud?

Guest speaker, Kelly Konopliv, gave a presentation on the benefits of deep breathing and Tai Chi. Kelly is a WaterX and H2O Body Flow instructor at the Chain of Lakes YMCA in Lino Lakes. She addressed the whole group and led some deep breathing exercises and then shared some of the benefits; stress reduction, pain management, getting rid of toxins, etc. She referenced the Lance Armstrong Foundation and the website www.livestrong.com. Kelly was energetic and informative, creating a connection with her audience as evidenced by the number of women who pulled her aside and asked specific questions throughout the rest of the evening.

The evening wound up with three small group activities. Women learned about a Bible study that helps to focus on wellness, made a corn pack that can be frozen or heated in the microwave to relieve pain or relax muscles, and gave and received hand massages. The program provided women with resources to take care of themselves, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. That is something of which all women need to be reminded.



Do you have this banner from the first ELCA convention in your church closet? We'd love to have it on display in April!

THANKS!!



With this issue of *Bridges* we are saying a big THANK YOU to Charlotte Coan who has served our SWO so capably for the past 10 years as editor. Charlotte has used her great skills with technology, editing and formatting to make our newsletter such a good looking and informative piece. She has been attending board meetings for these 10 years (probably has attended more meetings than anyone on our board!) to keep herself well informed and up to date. Charlotte, thank you, and we look forward to your involvement in many of our SWO activities in the future!

SWO Board

October 2011

Women of the Saint Paul Area Synod

Thank you so much for the Wells Fargo Visa Gift Card and lovely thank you card. It has been my pleasure to work with the Women of the Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization and to have met so many wonderful women. I so appreciated the cooperation, great articles and help that were given to me as I did the Bridges. Also, a big thank you for your friendship.

I look forward to seeing all of you at future Women of the ELCA events.

Now I want to wish Julie Atkinson well in her adventure with editing the Bridges. Thanks Julie for offering. I know you will do a great job.

Peace be with each of you.

Charlotte Coan

I appreciate the good wishes of Charlotte, who over ten years ago heard God's call and took a leap of faith to share her gifts with all of us. Now it's my turn to follow where He leads and take my own leap of faith. I assure you I will try my best to be a good Bridges editor (I'm already having fun!), but please don't expect Charlotte's level of expertise just yet! I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve and grow with such a wonderful organization of women. Oh, and by the way—where have you been leaping lately?

In Christ, Julie Atkinson

Women of the ELCA 25th Anniversary

News from the November *Interchange* newsletter tells of plans from the churchwide board for the 25 Anniversary of the Women of the ELCA in 2012. As part of this celebration a special anniversary appeal will be made with 50 percent of the funds going directly to the ELCA Malaria Campaign for work in three areas: medicine, clean water and advocacy. Funds will be available for use in eleven African countries, Tanzania being one of them. The ELCA companion churches and companion organizations will benefit.

The Malaria Campaign has been an interest in our Synodical Women's Organization through a resolution passed a couple of years ago. Our synodical women were privileged to hear Mary Simonson Clark and Nkeiruka Udo "Peace" Okeke speak on the Malaria Campaign at our SWO spring convention in April 2011.

Look for more news about Anniversary plans coming from the churchwide board in the March *Bridges*. This anniversary is an opportunity for units and our SWO board to make a contribution toward easing the misery for people who suffer from this devastating disease of malaria. For more information check the website <www.elca.org/hunger/toolkits>

MISSION ACTION

Goal: To enable women to articulate and act upon their faith as disciples of Christ in all areas of life. Julie Atkinson (Committee Chair), Barb Greaves

** Fall is behind us and Winter is on the way. It is now time to prepare for the highway of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Advent means to arrive, to come. It refers to both past and future as we celebrate the coming of Christ Into or word and look forward to his coming again. With that in mind, you are invited on a journey to claim the best of what Advent is and can be. Perhaps you can find ways to better clear a highway across the desert for our God. In so doing, we can claim the truth of how deeply God loves us, and we can open our hearts to receive that unconditional, expansive and outrageous love.

(This is from a Resource taken off of "womenoftheelca.org" web page. The resource is called "A DIFFERENT KIND OF JOURNEY" "Advent as a Walk, Not a Spirit" You can download this for free from the Website under Resources.

** Remember to take advantage of the Christmas shopping suggestions from last month's Bridges!

** Remember that March 2nd is World Day of Prayer! The theme is "Let Justice Prevail" written by the committee in Malaysia. The USA website doesn't have new information at this point, but check out these sites for background information, posters, Bible studies, children's material, etc. to help you plan your own event: www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org and www.wwdp-natcomm.org

** Do you Blog? Inez Torres Davis (Director of Justice for Women of the ELCA) is blogging about Bread For the World - see www.blog.bread.org. You can also subscribe to the WELCA blog at www.blogs.elca.org. Don't know what blogs are? Ask your daughter, granddaughter, or a young woman at church and fill them in too!

** Please remember as you are enjoying your holiday meals and gatherings, that this is a difficult and hungry year for so many—even in your own community. Donate what you can to your local food shelf.

The Country Kitchen

Robin Kieffer

As I write this article, I'm enjoying this wonderful time of the year and amazed at God's color schemes, even if I have to rake for 4 hours. Sooner or later that cold, white fluffy stuff will fall and cover the ground. That's a great time to start planning for spring and the colors I will want to include in my garden. In fact, if you are looking to add a new garden or revamp an old one, why not make it dual purpose and add a native garden or rain garden.

Many of the cities around the Metro area are encouraging residents to plant rain gardens as a way to protect our ponds and lakes from dirty storm water runoff from streets and rooftops, and filter the runoff of fertilizers from lawns and farms. Native gardens are beautiful and provide wildlife habitat, as well. You can plant a variety of colorful plants such as Milkweed. Milkweed plants are native to Minnesota and there are 15 species of Milkweed. Milkweed is also a butterfly favorite, especially for monarchs. Butterfly Milkweed is a beautiful orange flower that can tolerate some shallow short-term flooding, but likes dry conditions. Marsh Milkweed has bright pink blossoms.

To learn more about planting for cleaner water, Blue Thumb Organization is hosting a variety of workshops around the Metro. Check out their website: www.BlueThumb.org

Guatemala

Congregational Units and individuals in the Saint Paul Area Synod continue to support the two resolutions adopted at the 2011 Women's Convention. One of those resolutions is to provide three dry latrines for communities in Guatemala. Thanks to everyone that goal has been met and will soon be sent on that fund. The second resolution was to support Pastor Amanda Olson de Castillo as our missionary in Guatemala and we have just \$400 to go to meet that resolution. The Guatemala task force of the Saint Paul Area Synod thanks you much for your support of these two resolutions!

The women in Guatemala City continue to have monthly gatherings. They are in need of more fabric for skirts and blouses as well as more patterns. They are looking to expand this ministry to a monthly working business women's breakfast as a form of outreach to women who need support and fellowship.

Following is a letter from Padre Horatio Castillo, the Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Guatemala. His own words explain their situation best.

Guatemala, October 13, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May God in His great abundance and mercy bless you and protect us in these difficult moments that we are facing in Guatemala.

Reading the words of Psalm 74:15-17, "It was you who opened mighty rivers; you dried up the ever flowing rivers. The day is yours, and yours also de night; you established the sun and moon. It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth; you made both summer and winter". It gives us confidence to know that God regulates the rain that we are receiving due to a tropical depression that in its strength is causing much damage. There is flooding in many parts of Guatemala, there are houses that have been completely destroyed by mudslides and towns that are under water, many people have died or are missing. The overflowing rivers are taking anything in their paths including the corn, bean, coco beans and cardamom crops which are the means of living for most of the rural communities.

It is most worry some that such phenomenon is hitting many communities and thousands of people are being affected, especially those who are in poverty. Many are homeless and those who make a living as farmers have their hope is the fruit of the soil for their subsistence that today they have seen it destroyed. In the communities where the ILAG churches are located thanks to God there have not been deaths but they have lost their harvests. This does not mean that our brothers and sisters are not in pain and anguish and we feel that pain and anguish as well. In our conversations with our leaders, they have expressed their concern for how the families in their parishes are going to eat since much of their harvest has been destroyed.

It has been raining for 72 hours so far and according to the forecast of the INSIVUMEH (National Institute of seismology, volcanology, meteorology and hydrology) the rain will continue until Sunday, October 16th.

We are sure that God hears the lament, sees the tears and hears the prayers of His children that cry out asking for compassion. We firmly believe that God will regulate this phenomenon, since He is the only one that is capable to solve the problems that we are living and are going through right now. Psalm 93:4 says: "Yahweh on high is mightier than the roar of the great waters, mightier than the waves of the sea".

We ask you that you pray for us since the prayers of the saints reach God's altar.

In Christ name. Amen.

Padre Horacio Castillo

Bishop and Legal Representative

Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala

TUESDAYS AT TWO



Tuesdays at Two is a prayer reminder for women to pray on Tuesdays for board members, clusters and units. A schedule of concerns is published in each Bridges.

December 6, 2011 Pray for those in need – those who are lonely, depressed, hungry, homeless, uninsured, unemployed, feeling helpless, and for those impacted by natural disasters.

December 13, 2011 Pray for God's gift of peace and that Christ be the center of our lives – not only during the Christmas season – but all year long. Pray for peace in our homes and around the world.

December 20, 2011 Give thanks for all of God's wonderful gifts – especially the gift of a baby, our Savior! Pray for the safety of all travelers during the Christmas holiday and for military families who are separated during this season.

December 27, 2011 Pray that we will be encouraged, guided, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit so that we can spread God's amazing message and be a light to the world.

January 3, 2012 Pray for those feeling the continuing effects of the earthquakes in Japan, tornadoes through out the U.S., bombings and killings in Norway and any other disasters, natural or man made that have hit throughout the world.

January 10, 2012 Pray with thanksgiving for all that we have been given and for those that keep us in their prayers.

January 17, 2012 Pray that people suffering from malaria may be restored to health. Pray that the Lutheran Malaria Initiative will be able to provide nets to provide protection against mosquitoes that carry malaria.

January 24, 2012 Pray for and give thanks for our ELCA pastors, our church staffs, Sunday School teachers and all others who work within the church and spread the Word of God through their ministries.

February 7, 2012 Pray that Pastor Amanda de Castillo's ministry in Guatemala may be a blessing to the people of Guatemala. Pray that she may have the resources that she will need and be filled and guided by the Holy Spirit.

February 14, 2012 Pray for families who are facing job loses and debt problems. Pray that they don't get discouraged and that the church can compassionately help them through these difficult situations.

February 21, 2012 Pray with thanksgiving for the freedoms bestowed upon us; that we may meet together openly to worship and praise you. Pray for those people in countries who are not able to do this.

February 28, 2011 Pray that those blessed with abundance will be filled with the gift of generosity and will help those who need assistance. May all remember that all gifts come from God and that God asks us to give from our abundance not from our leftovers.

+Things to remember every month +

Remind women to use their Thankoffering Boxes & Share information received from SWO and Churchwide . Send offerings to Synodical Treasurer.

MISSION GROWTH

Goal: To provide a variety of learning and growth experiences that strengthen each woman as a disciple, develop her sense of call as a child of God, and equip her for further ministry in God's world. Darla Kimmes (Committee Chair) , Clarice Johnson

Lets look back a little, since September we have begun the To Follow and Serve: The Gospel of Mark Bible Study featured in Gather, been inspired at the Bible Study Enrichment, attended the various Cluster events, attended the Fall Soup Supper, and participated in quilt making at the “Day of Comfort” at Our Savior’s Lutheran Church in Stillwater. It is great to experience the renewing of friendships with our sisters in Christ. At the South Cluster Meeting, we experienced Laughter Yoga Fun, which taught us how to reduce stress, increase our happiness, decrease our blood pressure and improve our posture and abdominal strength. I thank the Mission Community team for organizing the Soup Super that lead us through several activities that help us to care for our Emotional, Spiritual, and Physical health. With better health and mental outlook, we are better able to serve God and spread His Gospel.

As I was beginning to clean out my flowerbeds for winter, I thought about the pesky, itchy mosquito bites I had suffered over the summer. (One nice thing about a Minnesota fall freeze is how it affects the mosquitoes.) It reminded me how in many parts of the world mosquitoes are synonymous with malaria. “More than 500 million people contract malaria each year, and the disease kills more than one million people annually—the vast majority of them children in Africa. Malaria contributes to the deaths of an estimated 10,000 pregnant women and up to 200,000 infants each year in Africa. To put these deaths into context, malaria results in 2,880 deaths a day; 120 deaths an hour; and one death every 30 seconds. Almost half the world’s population—3.3 billion people—is at risk for contracting malaria, and that number grows each year due to war, famine, displacement, deteriorating medical services, and growing poverty.” (from Nothing but Nets) But malaria is preventable, treatable, and a healthier future is possible. We can support the Lutheran Malaria Initiative to supply mosquito nets, spray homes with insecticides, provide anti-malarial medication, support water treatment project to control environments where mosquitoes breed and flourish, and educate and raise awareness to prevent, diagnosis and treat malaria. Some helpful websites are:

<http://www.mpls-synod.org/programs/malaria> <http://www.elca.org/malaria>

<http://www.elca.org/Our-Faith-In-Action/Responding-to-the-World/ELCA-Malaria-Campaign/Health-and-Hope-Handbook.aspx>

<http://nothingbutnets.net/>

Tricia Niesche wrote a skit that was presented at the Soup Supper in 2010 to promote the Malaria Initiative. If you would like a copy of entire skit you can down load a copy by contacting Darla at dakimmes@embarqmail.com

Bible study is the food that nourishes our Christian growth. Those who do the Bible Study on Mark in Gather are already done with several lessons. Recently in another study, Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study, which is being lead by one of the pastors at my church, the point was made that there are different approaches to studying the Bible. Also when we study with faithful Christians, our questions, reflections, and the interaction of our stories with the stories of the Bible may push us into new understandings. It amazing how the Holy Spirit can make something familiar new again. I hope all of you do individual Bible Study and also are members of a group Bible study.

MISSION GROWTH >10

Silent Auction

At our 25th annual SWO convention , April 20-21, 2012, we are planning a silent auction to raise money to provide scholarships for the 2014 Triennial convention in North Carolina.

We are asking for donations of “theme baskets”. Following are a couple of examples to get your creative minds going:

- 1) Italian theme including pasta, sauce, a colander, and a pasta grabber.
- 2) Book lover’s basket that may include a couple of books, a cup, tea, and a book mark.

It would be great if each congregational unit could come with one basket. We are anxious to see what you come up with!



Our Mission

To mobilize women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ

Purpose Statement

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.

Bridges

Bridges is published four times a year. Information for the March 2012 issue **must be submitted by February 1st.**

Bridges accepts articles via e-mail, or typewritten copy may be mailed to: *Julie Atkinson*
1096 Cedarwood Drive, Woodbury, MN 55125 651-730-9737
julieatkinson@comcast.net

To continue your present subscription or to begin receiving ***Bridges*** please send \$5.00/year and this form to: **Lois Berg, 3912 Roosevelt St, St. Anthony, MN 55421.**

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Treasurer's Report

Carol Bidwell



“And God is able to make all grace overflow to you so that because you have enough of everything in every way at all times, you will overflow in every good work” 2 Corinthians 9:8

Do some checkbook theology this month

(This is paraphrase of an article by Linda Post Bushkofsky in Interchange)

The year end of Women of the ELCA, St Paul Area Synod and churchwide is the last day of January 2012. Now is the time of year when women of individual congregational units need to settle up finances for their year end. Take a look at the checkbook and ask yourself some questions:

Are you sitting on a large balance?

Do the books show support of local ministries?

Do they reflect support of Lutheran World Relief or the ELCA Hunger Appeal?

Do they show support of the church wide organization of Women of the ELCA?

How does the record of your year's expenditures jibe with your stated ministry priorities?

Before fiscal year 2010 comes to a close on January 31, I encourage you to prayerfully consider the questions I've offered here. Determine the modest amount that will see your essential ministries forward in the next month or two. Then take what is left in your checking account and return it to God, using that money, that treasure, for the good of the whole.

Your gift to synod and the churchwide enables mission and ministry to continue which, in turn, supports you, the women of this church, and women around the globe.

People are asking how we are doing on the **Guatemala Resolutions** that were passed at the Synod Convention in April. As of October 30th, we have received \$1,000 dollars towards the dry latrine resolution enabling us to support three latrines at a cost of \$330 with a little extra. This fulfills resolution 11-2. For the salary of Pastor Amanda Olson de Castillo, we have taken in \$595.46. Our goal was to give \$1,000. So, another \$404.54 would help us reach our goal for 2011. Prayerfully consider supporting this resolution if your unit has excess funds.

Heads up on Synod treasurer changes: Starting February 1, 2012, the new treasurer Kathleen Nordaune will take over the books. Her address is 30363 Abby Rd. NE. North Branch, MN 55056 at (651) 674-4861. Please give her a few months to get settled into her new position but do send her offerings etc. starting February 1st. Until then, please continue sending offerings to Carol Bidwell at 433 9th Avenue So., South St Paul, MN 55075 at (651) 455-3441. Presidents please inform your treasurer of this change.

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Women of the ELCA

Calendar of Events

2011

December:

2nd Sunday National Children's Memorial Day

www.compassionatefriends.org

(worldwide candle lighting)

25 *Joy to the World!*

2012

January:

28 Women's Renewal Retreat - Our Savior's Lutheran Church / Stillwater

February: Black History Month

March: Women's History Month

Food Shelf Drive

2 World Day of Prayer "Let Justice Prevail"

April: National Child Abuse Prevention Month

20-21 *Saint Paul Area Synod Women's*

Organization 25th Anniversary Convention

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Burnsville

May: First Day of the Month—National Day of Prayer

First Sunday—Rachel's Day

June: National Hunger Awareness

<http://feedingamerica.org> Food shelves have an increased demand for food during the summer months due to children home from school.

MISSION GROWTH continued from 7

Again I'd like to encourage you to support the resolution passed at the Spring 2011 Convention to support Pastor Amanda de Castillo. Perhaps your unit could consider donating a portion of their offering or have an extra offering to contribute to the salary of Pastor Amanda de Castillo. Pastor Amanda de Castillo is a missionary for the St. Paul Synod at Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG).

I hope you will be able to attend the Women's Renewal Retreat on January 28th. The theme is Words Matter: The Power of Language. The presenter, Rev. Ann Tiemeyer, will lead us to explore how words, symbols and pictures can define, motivate and inspire. Using these powerful tools of communication, the church can serve God, change lives and communities.



More Convention News:

A special choir is being formed to sing at the SWO convention worship service in celebration of the 25th anniversary of the ELCA. Robin Kieffer will be directing the choir and will be looking for participants as we get closer to convention time.

REJOICE Continued from 1

Resolutions: If your congregational unit has a special concern, please submit a resolution to the Convention.

A resolution is a main motion presented in written form by a delegate. The Resolution form and more information on writing a resolution is included in the packet.

The Convention Committee is working to have a Wonderful Anniversary Convention for you at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville. Save the date for you and your friends.

Nancy Johnson, Chair

2011-2012 Saint Paul Area Synodical Women's Organization

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<u>Cluster Key:</u>	
(N) North	(NC) North Central
(S) South	(EC) East Central
(SE) South East	(SC) South Central



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Did You Know?

Here are some great sayings from church signs:

- Experts made the Titanic. Amateurs made the Ark.
- Enthusiasm is the spirit of God working with you.
- Example is a language anyone can read.
- God's alphabet has only 4 letters between I and U: L-O-V-E
- Faith is a journey, not a guilt trip.
- Feed your faith and your fears will starve.
- God is at the end of your rope.
- Don't give up. Moses was once a basket case.

When your life needs rebooting, remember Jesus saves.

if you have any items for "Did You Know?" column, send them to Julie Atkinson, Bridges editor.

Log onto www.womenoftheelca.org to get resources for devotions, retreats and other great information to help your women's group grow in the service of the Lord. Help Women of the ELCA produce more resources and offer more scholarships to women by giving generously through Thankofferings, scholarship programs and Katie's Fund. Send offerings to Synodical Treasurer.

[Café](http://www.womenoftheelca.org) is an award-winning Web-based magazine for young women who want to build Community, participate in Advocacy, strengthen Faith, and strive toward Enlightenment (CAFE!). It incorporates a Lutheran perspective for women of Christian faith or simply for any woman who is interested in how faith can relate to the issues that women face today. Sign up at www.womenoftheelca.org to receive email alerts to new issues of [Café](http://www.womenoftheelca.org) today!

Bold Connections is the free monthly e-newsletter of Women of the ELCA. Whether you participate a lot or a little in Women of the ELCA, and no matter what your role, you'll find helpful news and information on our programs and activities, and stories of how together we are living out our purpose and mission. Sign up at www.womenoftheelca.org for **Bold Connections** today!

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