



# Christian Sisters in Spirit

Newsletter of the Central / Southern Illinois Synod  
Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
Volume 5—Issue 1—January 2008

## From the President

Dear Sisters in Christ,

I am so thankful to God for all of you as we start this new year in hope and prayer.

Our recent biennial convention in Springfield was very successful with a wonderful new board elected to serve for the next two years. I was so elated after our first board meeting in October to have new and old friends gather around the table at St. John's, Springfield, full of fun and gusto and eager to get things going.

I am hoping that many of you have read about the upcoming Triennial Gathering to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July 2008. I also hope you have considered attending the Gathering which is open to all women, and uplifting and inspiring in so many ways. You cannot even contemplate the many blessings you will receive. If you are interested, go to [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org) or get in touch with your conference rep for more information.

As you know the convention portion of the Triennial is separate next year. The delegates from our synod who will be attending with me are Joyce Aggertt, Vice-president Cindi Eidson, Kathy Eckert and Florence Wycoff. Alternates are Marian Shrader, Bonnie Schattschneider, Diane Flesner, Betty Wiechman and Amy Schlabit. Please keep us in prayer as we do the important work of the Women of the ELCA.

Our scholarship fund for Toromare is going well. We have made our second payment and are well on our way to having our third installment completely funded. Thanks to all of you who have so generously given to the future of this fine woman from Madagascar who, I know, will make such a difference in her society and country.

Please note the fliers regarding our Spring Retreats. The Camp Griesheim Retreat is scheduled for Saturday, March 1, and the Dubois Retreat for Saturday, March 29. Both retreat leaders are young women in our church . . . one a pastor and the other the daughter of and married to a pastor. They have both told me how thrilled they are to be a part of our retreats. Plans are also underway for the September Fall Gathering.

Please keep the CSIS board in your prayers as we forge into the coming year with hopes, dreams and dedication to the service of Christ Jesus, our Lord.



*Ms. Mary Plymire*  
President  
C/SIS Women of the  
ELCA

## EAST CENTRAL

*Marilyn Oftedal*

As the new conference rep, I am in transition and trying to learn the conference contacts and what has transpired recently. We uplift in our prayers Coordinator Connie Hart, who recently underwent knee surgery. I have also learned that past conference events have been poorly attended. Hopefully we can change this and create more interest and activity. God willing, and with your prayers, this can happen.

## NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

*Marian Shrader*

The Northwest Conference met at Salem Lutheran, Mendon, IL, co-hosted with St. Peter's, Coatsburg. Pastor Thomas Kamprath presented "Bold Hearts" scripture thoughts. Virgene Gilkerson registered 22 participants.

Mary Plymire, Synod President, brought greetings and announced future events. Our offering was divided between the Toromare Scholarship Fund and the synod.

Mary Turner, Adams County Thrivent Chapter President, showed the DVD "Bold Creativity," followed by discussion with each voicing their personal passion. Mary also gave a progress report on the construction of the new Habitat House located in Mendon.

Sharon Johnson, conference recorder, provided music for singing songs from the Synod Convention Polka Communion Service. She and four others shared memories. Elected as Triennial Alternate Delegates were Marian Shrader and Diane Flesner.

An announcement was made that Rosalie "Ro" Fesser was consecrated as a Diaconal Minister on October 14, 2007, at St. Matthew Lutheran, Fillmore. She will be an Associate Chaplain at a hospital north of Denver, CO. Marian Shrader and Sharon Fryrear were privileged to attend the awesome worship service.

A motion was passed to explore retreat possibilities for our Spring event.

## SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

*Alice Sternberg*

The Fall Gathering of the Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission was held November 4 at St. Paul's, Metropolis. Pastor Howard Ellis led devotions. Guest speaker, Beth Larrison, grew up in the Baptist faith and is the daughter of missionaries to Argentina. She spoke about a Christian organization called Hope Unlimited located in Paducah, KY and Metropolis, IL that helps women and young girls who are in unwanted pregnancies. They provide pregnancy testing, followed by counseling about their choices - keeping the baby, adoption or abortion (which they do not recommend). They also assist with medical, legal, housing, adoption referrals, budgeting, parenting and marriage counseling. The House of Hope Maternity Home houses up to six women at one time.

Following the main presentation, the Women of the ELCA and LLM held their separate business meetings, coming back together for a meal prepared by the women of St. Paul's.

Ms. Cindi Eidson presided and opened the business meeting with prayer. Minutes of the Spring Conference meetings were approved as read. WELCA President, Mary Plymire, greeted the group and answered questions. Three positions on the Southern Conference Planning Committee need to be filled at the Spring Gathering to be held April 29, 2008, at Salem Lutheran, Jonesboro. These positions are Mission Growth Chair, Mission Community Chair and Recorder. Cindi asked for a volunteer to serve as chairman of the Nominating Committee and Patti Singer, Peace Lutheran, Chester, volunteered. Offering received was \$213.35. \$106.67 (50%) will be sent to the synodical treasurer; \$53.34 (25%) was designated for the Toromare Scholarship Fund and the remaining \$53.34 (25%) will be sent to Hope Unlimited in Metropolis.

Kay Rothschild, from LSSI, thanked all who support their programs which help children in foster care and children of parents who are incarcerated. Alice Sternberg reported that the dates for the Spring Retreats have been set. The Camp Griesheim Retreat will be held March 1 with a board meeting the evening before in Springfield. The Dubois Center Retreat will be held March 29. She also reminded everyone to have A ThankOffering Service in November and encouraged all to increase giving if possible.

# Officers for 2007–2009

**President: Mary Plymire**

Mary is a member of Grace Lutheran, Springfield (West Central Conference). She is a retired teacher of English Literature. Her many accomplishments include: Circle Leader, Synodical Mission community Chair, Triennial Convention participant in Philadelphia, Church Council, Choir, Sunday School teacher, Evangelism, Committee, Community Food Pantry volunteer, Illinois Retired Teachers, Right-to-Life organization. Prior to being elected President, Mary served as C/SIS WELCA Vice-president.

**Vice-president: Cindi Eidson**

Cindi is a member of Salem Lutheran, Jonesboro (Southern Conference). She is a college graduate and is employed as a secretary. Her many accomplishments include: serving as Congregational Unit President, Conference Mission Community, Mission Growth, Recorder. She has also served her church as Christian education chair and was involved in community activities with the Girl Scouts and High School Athletic Booster Clubs.

**Secretary: Trish Depperman**

Trish is a member of St. Peter Lutheran, Glasford (Northern Conference). Trish and her husband Rodger are farmers by trade, but both work off the farm to supplement their farming habit—an obsession for John Deere equipment. Trish is employed as an Administrative Assistant at United Presbyterian Church, Peoria. She also is currently Clerk for Trivoli Township. Trish writes that she was raised, baptized, confirmed, and married in her home church. Her accomplishments include being married for twenty-five years and raising three children. She has been a Sunday School teacher and Superintendent, Vacation Bible School Director, past WELCA

Treasurer, president of WELCA Unit and treasurer for the Memorial Fund. She also served as church secretary for almost eight years.

**Treasurer: Alice Steljes**

Alice is a member of Bethany Lutheran, Wenona (Northern Conference). Her accomplishments include holding a BS in business Education, MS in Accounting, and MBS all from Illinois State University. She has taught Accounting at Illinois Valley Community College for the past twenty-two years and currently serves a second term as C/SIS WELCA Treasurer. She has also served as church treasurer and as treasurer for the Thrivent Chapter in her area.



## Board Members for 2007–2009

### Mission Action Program Chair: Rose Moser

Rose is a member of St. John's Lutheran, Springfield (West Central Conference). She retired from the Illinois Department of Public Aid after twenty-eight years of service. She holds a BS in Management and is very active in her church, serving in many areas: communion assistant and lector, member of congregational council, Global Missions Committee chair, synod Global Missions Committee. She has also served as Mission Action Chair for WELCA the past two years. She has been heavily involved with the Toromare Project and served as hostess to Toromare during the 2007 Synod Assembly as well as working to obtain necessary funding and travel arrangements. Rose is also involved in Project Return in the Springfield area.

### Mission Growth Program Chair: Dorothy "Thi" Bowden

This is a member of St. John's Lutheran, Springfield (West Central Conference). Thi is a homemaker, retired from the State of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. She serves as co-chair and vice-president of her church WELCA Unit and as the Mission Action Chair for the West Central Conference. Thi is a worship leader, a technology team member, a communion assistant and reader for the Contemporary Services at St. John's. She has served as co-chair of the LSSI Springfield Spring Fashion Show and currently serves as chair of the ticket committee for the event.

### Mission Community Program Chair: Camille Wissmann

Camille is a member of Immanuel Lutheran, Lincoln (Northern Conference). Camille is a clinical pharmacist, hospital and retail pharmacist as well as a lecturer and consultant in herbals and over-the-counter and prescription medicines. She received her BA in 1969 and her Dr. of Pharmacy Degree in 1998. She has served as prayer Ministry Coordinator, member of Thrivent Board, CU Bible Study participant, former Conference Treasurer, and Mission Action chair. She most recently served as Northern Conference Rep on the WELCA Board for 2005-2007.

### East Central Conference Representative: Marilyn Oftedal

Marilyn is a member of First Lutheran, Decatur (East Central Conference). Currently retired she worked in sales for twenty-one years. She has one son, one daughter and three children. She currently is a Stephen Minister and is responsible for funeral luncheons and serves on various church committees.

### Northern Conference Representative: Betty Wiechman

Betty is a member of St. Mark's Lutheran, Washington (Northern Conference). Betty is an active member of St. Mark's having served as treasurer on Church Council and presently as a member of the Finance Committee. Additionally she is a member of the WELCA Circle and the Kitchen Committee. Betty and her husband live in Metamora and have five children (all married) and eleven grandchildren. They enjoy doing woodworking projects for the family, as example of which was used as table decorations at the recent Biennial Convention held in September of this year. Betty reports she also enjoys doing all sorts of crafts, including knitting and sewing.

### Northeast Conference Representative: Roberta "Bobbi" Thomas

Bobbi reports that she was raised Lutheran at Trinity Evangelical Lutheran in Oak Lawn, and was very active in programs there such as camp, Sunday School, Luther League, Bible study, etc. She received her BS degree in Elementary Education in 1971 and a Masters in Education Administration in 1990 from Illinois State University. She has worked at Illinois State University for almost forty years and is Director of Scheduling. She has been married for over forty years and has two sons and three grandchildren and currently resides in Chenoa. Bobbi has served her church in various capacities and was the first woman to be elected President of the Church Council in over 100 years of the church's existence. She considers herself to be a "people person" and looks forward to assuming her responsibilities as the Northeast Conference Representative.

**Northwest Conference Representative: Marian Shrader**

Marian is a homemaker and member of St. Peter Lutheran, Coatsburg (Northwest Conference). Marian has served as vice-president of WELCA unit; co-chair for many committees. She also served as Mission Growth chair and coordinator of the Northwest WELCA Conference (two terms) and recently served as Northwest Conference Synod Representative. She is active on various church committees and reads lessons for worship.

**Southern Conference Representative: Alice Sternberg**

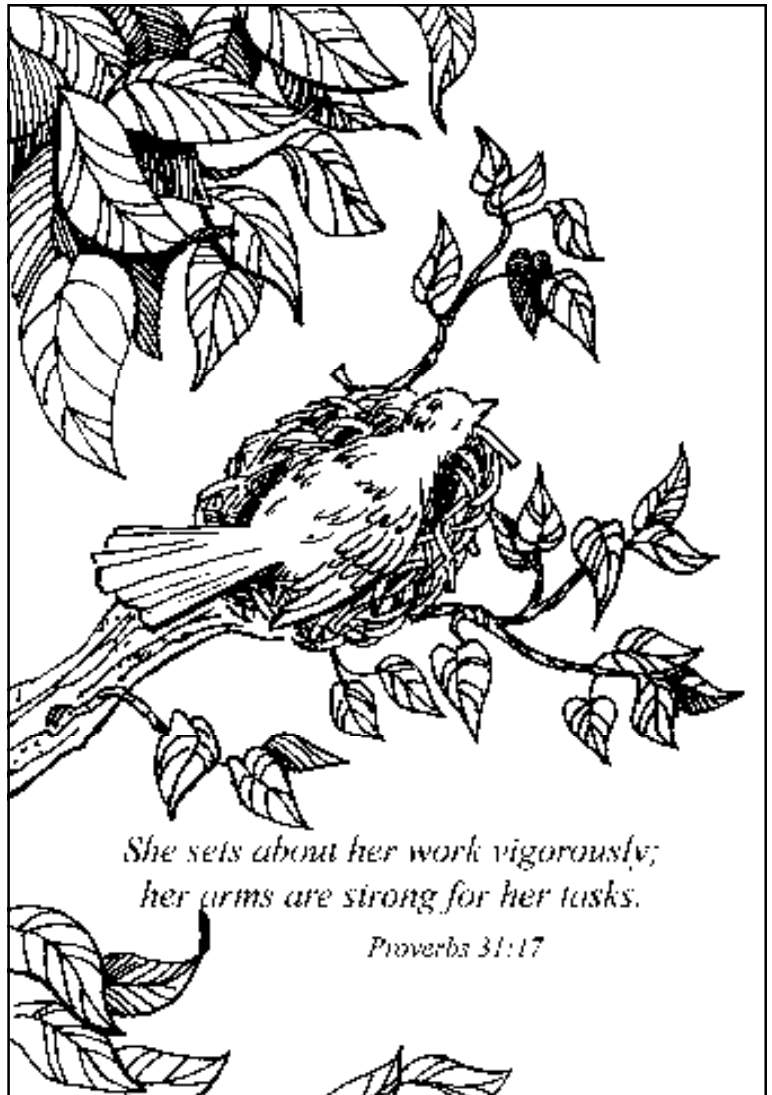
Alice is a member of Peace Lutheran, Steeleville (Southern Conference). Alice is retired with twenty-one years of service with the USDA Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service. She is heavily involved in church activities, including serving on Church Council, Worship and Music Committee, Vacation Bible School, All-Stars After School Mid-week Program, LWR Quilt Committee, Congregational Coordinator for Thrivent. She most recently served as WELCA Southern Conference Representative for 2005-2007.

**West Central Conference Representative: Doris Riecks**

Doris is a long-time member of St. John's Lutheran, Springfield (West Central Conference). She has been a WELCA member for about fifteen years serving as Recorder/Treasurer and Conference Coordinator several times. Doris is retired from Horace Mann Insurance Company (twenty-eight years) as Manager of Word Processing Department. She has two sons and a daughter who blessed her with a granddaughter (currently in Pharmacy School at Southern Illinois University and two grandsons (age 15) who are the highlight of her personal life. Doris is very active in church happenings serving on the Church Council several times, including one term as Secretary. She is a long-time member on the committee of weekly financial counting of offerings, office volunteer, coordinates and recruits members to deliver Meals n Wheels and as a member of the Worship and Music Committee schedules scripture readers/communion assistants for the three sanctuary services each weekend.

**Newsletter Editor: Roberta Hardy**

Roberta is a life-long member of St. John's Lutheran, Springfield (West Central Conference). She has been a member of WELCA since its inception, serving as unit President, Circle leader and a member of the kitchen committee. She also served on the Board a West Central Conference Representative for two terms, was appointed Secretary of the Building Committee for the new addition to the church built in 1974. She currently serves as chairperson for Altar Guild, responsible for ordering supplies, scheduling of members to handle the setup-clean-up responsibilities associated with Communion and also serves as a Scripture reader and communion assistant.





Dear Members of C/SIS WELCA,

Thank you so much for all the embroidery floss that you sent to help the women in Madagascar to make their beautiful embroidered items. As the cost of living continues to rise here and salaries stay the same, it becomes increasingly more difficult for people to have enough money for the necessities of life. A gift of embroidery floss helps them to earn a little more for their work and that little makes a BIG difference for them! We have started distributing the floss to women's groups who do embroidery and they pass their appreciation along to all of you who have donated it!

Thank you for your partnership and generosity!

On behalf of the many Malagasy Women who are receiving your help,

Monica Cox, ELCA Missionary in Madagascar

From  
the  
Editor

Roberta  
Hardy

I believe that many of our members receive the *INTERCHANGE*, a publication by Women of the ELCA, but I feel it is worthwhile to bring to your attention the emphasis that WELCA is placing on recognition of BOLD women. The second annual Bold Women's Day is February 24, 2008, and WELCA is providing materials on its website for your use. The website address is: [www.womenoftheelca.org/boldwomen](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/boldwomen)

A good example of a bold woman, at least in my view, is Karen Wong, director of Project Return of Central Illinois. Karen's program was a recipient of a 2007 grant awarded by Women of the ELCA. The program focus is on women released from prison and the many challenges they face in returning to family and society in general. (See page 10 of the November 2007 issue of the *INTERCHANGE*.) As the article points out "Lutheran women who act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ are everywhere and come from all walks of life." There are no doubt several bold women in your own area who could be recognized and what great programs could be developed using the materials made available through the website!

MISSION  
ACTION

Rose Moser,  
Chair

Toromare has been studying at Wartburg Seminary for the past few months! What a wonderful accomplishment for her and her sisters in Christ in the Central/Southern Illinois Synod! We hear that she is working hard and doing well. She is preparing for finals and then plans to go home to Madagascar to be with her family for the Christmas holidays.

Our scholarship obligations have been met for the years 2006 and 2007, and we have a balance of \$2,777.75 left for the year 2008. Thanks be to God for answering our prayers and thanks to all of our sisters in Christ throughout the synod for generously sharing their resources to enable Toromare to study at Wartburg.

MISSION  
GROWTH

Thi Bowden,  
Chair

Please be sure to take special note of the enclosed notices pertaining to the Spring retreats at Dubois and Camp Griesheim. I am excited about these two programs and hope that you will put them on your 2008 calendar and make plans to attend.

Prayer  
for the  
New  
Year

Eternal God, you have placed us in a world of space and time, and through the events of our lives you bless us with your love. Grant that in the new year we may know your presence, see your love at work, and live in the light of the event that gives us joy forever—the coming of your son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen



THEN I SAW A NEW HEAVEN  
& A NEW EARTH, FOR THE  
FIRST HEAVEN & THE FIRST  
EARTH HAD PASSED AWAY...  
REVELATION 11:1