



Christian Sisters in Spirit

Newsletter of the Central / Southern Illinois Synod
Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Volume 5—Issue 3—December 2008

From the President

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Greetings and blessings from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

This Fall has been such a blessing. Not only has the weather been beautiful, but also we were privileged to gather on Saturday, September 27, 2008, at First Lutheran Church in Decatur as they hosted our Fall Gathering for the off-convention year. Pastor Juli Guy and Ann Rasmus lead us in worship and words which afforded us food for thought and enlightened our souls. Marilyn Oftedal, a WELCA board member and member of First Lutheran, was the chairwoman of the event which was beautifully organized. She nailed down every detail and engaged Milton Scott to share his musical talents to enrich our worship. Rick Strine, a caterer and also a member of First Lutheran, used his wonderful culinary talents to honor us with a marvelous gourmet luncheon. He knew Pastor Juli from childhood, so they had a bit of a reunion. What a day!



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

On Saturday, November 1, 2008, the board met for its regular Fall business meeting at St. John's Lutheran Church, Springfield. We extended our thanks to Roberta Hardy and David Wheat for the new enlarged and updated website. The Biennial Convention is scheduled for September 18 and 19, 2009, to be held at St. John's Lutheran Church in Springfield. The board has voted to try something a little different in the way our convention schedule is arranged and located. The business meeting will be held on Friday afternoon before the gathering portion on Saturday with the convention to be held at a church to see if we might hold down expenses. In 2007, we broke even and yet many women voiced concern that the event was too costly. Please be patient with us as we continue to offer a meaningful and spirit-filled gathering while striving to be good stewards of your money.

In December our nominating chairperson, Julie Johnson, from Grace Lutheran, Champaign, will be sending out the letter asking for nominations to the board and to the next Triennial. Please consider the request and prayerfully respond in a timely fashion. We need women who are very busy and yet will take the time to serve in this most important way. Look around at those women who serve in your church. See if one of them might serve for the synodical Board of Women of the ELCA, CSIS. You might ask yourself as well.

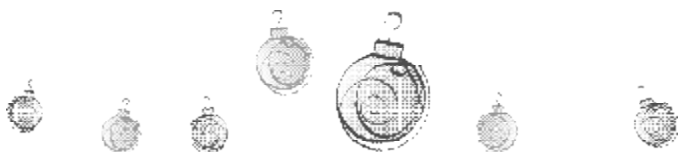
In Christ Jesus, Mary

NORTHWEST CONFERENCE

Marian Shrader

The new Northwest Conference Officers are: Coordinator: Patty Stinson and Mission Growth: Trudy Stubbe, both from St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Arenzville. On August 9, 2008, they met with the Conference Planning Committee to organize the Fall Event.

The Fall event was held Saturday, October 18, 2008 at St. Peter's Fellowship Hall, Coatsburg, IL. Devotions were held in the church sanctuary, centering around the altar window of Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Baptism and this Bible story are featured in the Lutheran Woman Today, Summer 2008, Bible Study. The program included an icebreaker, Bible game, the video *Letter to Katie*, and a Triennial Convention/Gathering Report. Each was asked to bring a picture collage of their activities.



NORTHERN CONFERENCE

Betty Wiechman

The Northern Conference held a Sonshine Brunch on October 25th at St. Mark's in Washington. Diana Burroughs welcomed all the ladies to the event. Jeanne Setterlund led a lively sing-a-long while Kathy Bell played the piano. The New Life Celebration event will be held April 18, 2009. St. Peter and St. Paul of Benson will co-host the event which will be held at St. Peter's, rural Benson.

Karen Wong, AiM, currently working with the Women's Prison Ministry on a program called Project Return gave the devotions and led the program. Her talk was a very informative and helped us to realize how important support programs are for women leaving prison. 80% are in prison for non-violent offenses, mostly addiction and gambling.

We collected underwear for "Brundie's Boutique," 41 bras and 166 undies. Half of the offering went to Project Return. St. John's, Bartonville, was in charge of the registration and St. John's, Toluca, provided the coffee time. St. Mark's served a delicious lunch.

Mission Growth

Dorothy "Thi" Bowden

I have been busy putting together the Spring retreats and am excited about the finished products. Enclosed in this newsletter are information flyers for each event which can be reproduced for posting purposes. Please note: Due to low attendance at the DuBois Center, the board voted to try a new location for the Southern event. Help spread the word and post these flyers in you congregation ... invited friends and neighbors to attend as well!

Don't forget to check out the new web site for updated information on events, copies of the flyers and registration forms. The web site makes a quick and easy way to check on those things that were on a piece of paper somewhere, but where? (At least that's the story with me, LOL) Thanks for your help.

Hope to see you there !

SOUTHERN CONFERENCE

Alice Sternberg

The Southern Conference Women of the ELCA and the Lutheran Men in Mission held their joint Fall Gathering on Sunday, November 2, at Our Redeemer Lutheran Church, Marion. Pastor Marlin Otte welcomed everyone and led devotions with singing of hymns. Pastor Timothy Bean of Mt. Calvary, De Soto, and First Lutheran, Murphysboro, introduced Mr. Rob Arbeiter who did a presentation on *Preparing for Seminary Training*.

Mr. Arbeiter and his wife had thought for some time about preparing for ordained ministry, but found too many reasons why they couldn't. Then they heard Pastor Bean telling of his inspirational experience in attending seminary. After that, all the obstacles seemed to fall away and they decided they too were called to go. The Lutheran Men in Mission are helping with support to make that goal come true.

Pastor Otte did a very interesting presentation with visuals about *Marion Medical Mission: The Water of Life*. The mission consists of a group of dedicated men who build shallow wells in remote areas of Africa where the drinking water is poor causing much illness and loss of life. Funds are raised in America to supply the materials that African natives in the villages do not have, and the men and women who live in and around the villages contribute the labor to dig the wells, making the brick to line them. Five men and five women are also trained in maintaining the wells when completed. Each well costs \$350 to build and supplies clean drinking water for the village and surrounding areas.

The offering will be split between the Marion Medical Mission and the CSIS Women of the ELCA. The women and men held separate business meetings.

Cindi Eidson led the WELCA business meeting as coordinator Amy Schlabitz was unable to attend. Southern Conference Newsletters were available at registration. Mission Chairpersons were asked if they had anything to add to their newsletter article. The need for ladies in the conference to step forward in faith to serve on the board and to say 'yes' when the nominating committee calls them was brought up by Cindi and Alice. Kay Rothschild spoke about the many programs LSSI is involved with and thanks the WELCA for all they do to support those programs.

The men and women reconvened for a delicious supper served by the ladies of our Redeemer.



From
The
Treasurer
Alice
Steljes

I am requesting that all unit and conference treasurers make note of my change of address. I recently moved and my new address is: Alice Steljes
14 Island View Lane
Springfield, IL 62712

I am also pleased to report that we are only \$900 from reaching our final payment amount for the Toromare Scholarship Fund. Please continue to consider this project a priority.

MISSION
ACTION
Rose Moser,
Chair

I am please to report that since the W/ELCA checking account contained a considerable amount of ready cash, the Board decided to donate \$5,000 to worthy causes in the American and Global Mission field. Board members were asked to suggest how the monies should be distributed with the following results:

- \$ 500 A brick was purchased for the Lutheran World Relief Good Samaritan Quilt Plaza in Baltimore, MD. This money will cover the overseas shipping costs of 250 quilts or 500 health kits.
- \$1,000 Donated to Project Return in Springfield. Project Return is an organization that helps re-integrate women released from prison. A group of volunteers accompanies each released woman for a period of one year to 18 months, helping her find employment housing and assisting with general life skills.
- \$ 500 Donated to the CSIS "Waters of Life" project to build deep water wells in Madagascar.
- \$1,000 Donated to Missionary Pat Bentsen's prison ministry in Madagascar. This money is used to buy food for prisoners who do not have relatives to support them as well as for Bibles to be used in the prison ministry.
- \$1,000 Donated to ELCA Global Missions for Madagascar famine relief.
- \$1,000 Donated to Lutheran Social Services of Illinois.



Our ELCA missionary nurse Pat Bentsen visited Illinois in early September. A luncheon was held at the synod office and she shared details about her work in Madagascar. Some of the WELCA board members were present at that luncheon. She also visited several supporting churches, although her time was very limited this year. Please keep Pat in your prayers!

Toromare is back in the United States and studying hard at Wartburg Seminary. The scholarship fund is going well, although about \$900 is still needed for the total of \$5,000 to be paid in 2008.

MISSION
COMMUNITY

Camille Wissmann has resigned as chairperson for the Mission Community Committee. President Plymire has appointed, with Board approval, Evelyn Schuette, Litchfield, to fill the vacancy. Evelyn's address is: 22987 White Park Lane
Litchfield IL 62056
Phone: 217.342.6073