



West Fork communities rally around new food pantry

The West Fork Food Pantry has found a permanent home in a former bowling alley in Sheffield, thanks to the generosity and support from area churches, organizations, businesses and community members.

The pantry started serving families of Franklin County and the West Fork School District at its new location in July 2021 and celebrated its grand opening in August with a mortgage burning. In addition, a \$90,000 capital campaign to fund the pantry started in June and to date has raised \$135,000. Pastor Kim Wills, who serves Zion St. John Lutheran in Sheffield, credits the work of the Holy Spirit.

“During a time when there is so much conflict and disagreement in the world, the community and volunteers came together, united in a common goal, and that appealed

to numerous donors,” Wills says.

FROM MOBILE TO PERMANENT

The pantry began serving families in 2016 as a mobile food pantry through the Food Bank of Iowa. Pre-packed boxes of food were delivered by truck each month to Zion St. John for distribution to families. In 2018, the Food Bank informed the West Fork Pantry Board of Directors that their pantry would need to become a permanent pantry to better serve the growing needs in the area.



Pastors Jane Harris and Kim Wills, members of the West Fork Food Pantry Board of Directors, greet Bishop Kevin Jones, center, during his visit to the food pantry in November.

“Some board members wondered out loud if we could pull off paying for two distributions of food a month and if we would have enough volunteers to sustain the mission,” Wills says. “I remember looking out the window and praying, ‘Lord, this is your ministry. If it is going to succeed, you will need to sustain it.’”

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The West Fork Food Pantry moved to a permanent location in downtown Sheffield this summer to meet growing demand to serve families of Franklin County and the West Fork School District.

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With \$200 in the bank and \$400 in bills due, the permanent West Fork Food Pantry opened in the fall of 2018 at Zion St. John, first in the Narthex and then in the basement.

“Food was stored in every available nook and cranny of the church,” Wills says.

A downtown office offered additional storage space for the food, and five freezers and two refrigerators were added in the church garage, a WELCA storage room, and a Sunday school room.

“Sorting monthly shipments was a real challenge, especially on bitterly cold winter days,” Wills recalls. “Volunteers hauled food downstairs for distribution and back upstairs to people’s cars. It continued that way for two and a half years.”

The Board began considering options for a larger permanent site

and learned that the owners of the saloon located in the former bowling alley were looking to sell. With \$25,000 saved for a down payment, the Board purchased the building in May 2021. The capital campaign kicked off in June to pay down the mortgage, and volunteers worked alongside local electricians and carpenters to begin remodeling the building.

According to Diane Wills, food pantry coordinator, one of the best features of the new location is the walk-in cooler, which fulfilled an immediate need during the pantry’s first week open in July.

“We received an urgent Facebook message from the Food Bank just before the July 4 weekend that a shipment of seven pallets of mushrooms had been refused at a distribution center in Cedar Falls because the truck was two degrees too warm,” Diane says. “If our pantry couldn’t take a significant number of them, the mushrooms were headed to the landfill.”

Four pallets of mushrooms were delivered to Sheffield and placed in the walk-in cooler. By working with other local pantries and the MEANS Database — an online platform that connects non-profit organizations with surplus food — homes were found for all of the mushrooms. Diane adds that another 700 pounds of food headed to landfills was rescued and distributed during August.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Grants and generous donations from congregations, organizations, businesses, families and individuals enabled the \$90,000 capital cam-



Congregation members of St. Peter, Rockwell, and St. Paul, Thornton, filled a canoe with donations of soup cans and crackers as part of the “Pack the Pantry” event to support the West Fork Food Pantry in Sheffield.

campaign to surpass its goal in less than three months. A “Pack the Pantry” event in December helped stock the pantry shelves for the winter months. Service groups, congregation members and others from across the community volunteer to help with food distribution and to keep the pantry running.

“The benefits of the food pantry extend beyond those needing food,” Wills says. “The pantry provides opportunities for church and community members to engage in hands-on service work. Numerous friendships have been formed between members



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Waiting, Celebrating and Enlightening

No one ever mentioned to me that the Bishop (and staff) get to read ALL the congregational newsletters from across the synod. I have been delighted by the diverse reflections by pastors and lay leaders, and the many, many ways our congregations are actively ministering in the world. This month the Lenten theme of “waiting” was on front pages while planned Christmas celebrations were highlighted inside, next to baptisms, confirmations, food pantry appeals, and so much more. Since this newsletter will cover three liturgical seasons, let me reflect a bit on each one.

ADVENT WAITING

Waiting is indeed a part of Advent, but it is not a passive waiting. Advent is a time of active waiting and preparing. Here at the synod office, we are waiting for new staff members to join us. I can assure you this is not at all passive. Interviews for the Assistant to the Bishop for Shared Ministry role have lifted up a gifted candidate. Some final details and approval by the Synod Council should come soon. Interviews are underway for the Synod Administrator position, and we are collecting applications for Director of Evangelical Ministry.

Waiting also has an element of patience. During this time when we are short on staff, I ask for your patience and understanding. It is taking us longer to get back to you in some cases. Calendar spaces for meetings with call committees, councils, or individuals fill up quickly. I am thankful for this dedicated staff who are doing all they can to serve our congregations and leaders. Help is coming, it's just not here yet.

CHRISTMAS CELEBRATING

When anticipation has reached a peak, there is always a little relief mingled with the joy of the Christmas celebration. This December we are celebrating with Linda Hamilton as she transitions to retirement at the end of 2021. Linda has served in the synod office for 30 years,



“I am eager to see how we will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit in 2022.”

working with congregations, pastors, deacons, seminary students, and people across the ELCA. It will be hard to imagine the synod office without Linda, but we wish her well as she takes more time to be with grandchildren and her quilting. Letters and cards of appreciation can be sent to the synod office and we will be sure to pass them along.

EPIPHANY ENLIGHTENING

The season of Epiphany is a revealing of Jesus’ identity to the world. That is what we do in every congregation and ministry of the Northeastern Iowa Synod. In every worship service, sermon, song, Bible study, fellowship activity, Sunday school and confirmation class, emergency shelter, food pantry, hospital and home visit, quilt, kit, council and committee meeting, and prayer, the light of Christ shines in this world. Making an extra gift (according to your ability) to your congregation or to the synod this year can make an incredible impact.

I am eager to see how we will be enlightened by the Holy Spirit in 2022.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Blessed New Year.

— *Bishop Kevin Jones*

Treasurers Meeting

Jan. 22, 2022

Congregation treasurers, pastors, financial committee members, and others are invited to attend the Congregation Treasurers Meeting set for Saturday, Jan. 22, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, via Zoom.

Presenters will be:

- Keith D. Oltrogge, CPA, Denver, on W-2s and related forms, church payrolls, and contributions.
- Pastor Steve Brackett, assistant to the Bishop, with information about the Northeastern Iowa Synod's 2022 *Minimum Compensation Guidelines*.
- Jennifer Prinz, regional representative with Portico Benefit Services, with information about resources to sponsor and understand benefits and retirement through Portico Benefit Services.

There is no charge to attend. Information about how to join the meeting through Zoom or by telephone will be emailed to treasurers in January. Others interested in attending can call the synod office at 319-352-1414 or email Kathy Liddle at liddlek@neiasynod.org.

Synod Position Openings

Applications are currently being accepted for the following positions with the Northeastern Iowa Synod:

Director for Evangelical Mission

The Director for Evangelical Mission is called by the ELCA Churchwide office to serve in the Northeastern Iowa Synod. The DEM will have primary responsibility around congregational vitality and outreach to younger and more diverse populations.

Assistant to the Bishop for Synod Administration

The person serving in this executive role will have primary responsibilities in oversight of the synod budget, office management, support staff coordination, assembly manager, communications, and governance documents. Administrative and supervisory experience is required.

To learn more and to apply, visit <https://neiasynod.org/2021/10/synod-position-openings>.

Liz Albertson joins synod staff

Pastor Liz Albertson has accepted the call to serve as Assistant to the Bishop for Shared Ministry. She is native to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, growing up in Oelwein and attending both Wartburg College and Wartburg Theological Seminary. Pastor Albertson served in a rural congregation in Wisconsin before joining the Arkansas-Oklahoma-Synod staff as Director of Evangelical Ministry and Assistant to the Bishop for five years. She comes to our synod staff after serving as Vice President for Admissions and Student Services at Wartburg Seminary for the past year.



Liz Albertson

Pastor Albertson's primary responsibilities will include mission support and development, clergy renewal, interim and synod authorized ministries, and assisting with call process on occasion. An official start date has not been set but will be sometime in January.

New I.D. Cards Coming

All rostered ministers will receive a new ID card with their name and leader key for the years 2022-2024. These will be mailed in early January with the annual report forms.

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

Bishop Kevin T. Jones – jonesk@neiasynod.org

Assistant to the Bishop

Rev. Steve Brackett – bracketts@neiasynod.org

ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

Rev. Dr. Joelle Colville-Hanson – colville-hansonj@neiasynod.org

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The *Star* is published by the Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th Street SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804; www.neiasynod.org, phone 319-352-1414, FAX 319-352-1416.

Send news for the February 2022 issue to Marcia Hahn by Jan. 10.

Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated for use in synod congregations and organizations, with credit to the *Star* newsletter.

Please notify the synod office with name and address changes. To receive an electronic version of the *Star*, rather than paper, send your request to hahnm@neiasynod.org.



www.neiasynod.org

Linda Hamilton to begin new year as a retiree

After 30 years working in the synod office, Linda Hamilton has been a go-to person to answer just about any synod-related question a rostered minister, congregation member or fellow staff member may have. That changes the end of December when Linda retires as secretary for the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

Linda joined the synod staff as a part-time receptionist in 1991 and soon became the full-time secretary for the Bishop and synod ministries related to the roster, call process and committees connected to the Synod Council. She has been one of the first contacts for rostered ministers new to the synod, helping them with letters of call, transfers, and needed paperwork to send to the churchwide office.

"I have always especially enjoyed meeting the new candidates for ministry and helping to walk them through their process, keep track of things for them, and answer their questions," Linda says.

Linda recalls the first time Pastor Steven Ullestad, who was assistant to Bishop David Brown at the time, introduced her to a group of confir-



mation kids and said her "ministry" was to greet people and make them feel welcome.

"I had never thought about my role here as a ministry before he said that. Over the years, though, I have understood that better as a welcoming person and how to treat people. I always try to be as helpful as possible."

Linda says some of the biggest changes in her work have been going from paper to digital for the call process and rostered and ministry site profiles. This year, the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly

even went digital as an online event, and Linda stepped up to serve as assembly manager.

As a long-time member of Faith Lutheran, Shell Rock, Linda has been involved in mutual ministry for more than 20 years, has served on the church council and call committees, has taught Sunday school and confirmation, and has often served as an assistant minister and lay reader. Linda has also joined others from the synod and her own family members on mission trips to Guatemala and Jamaica.

During retirement, Linda plans to stay closer to home to pursue sewing and quilting and to spend more time with her husband, Will, three daughters and grandchildren.

"I have always been really grateful for this job with the synod," Linda says. "It's been a great place to work. It helped support my family and I have been really thankful for that. I appreciate all the people I have worked with and gotten to know."

Notes of congratulations can be sent to Linda at the Northeastern Iowa Synod, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA, 50677.

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of the various churches involved."

The five founding churches represented on the West Fork Pantry Board of Directors are Zion St. John, Sheffield; St. Peter Lutheran, Rockwell; St. Paul Lutheran, Thornton; First United Methodist,

Sheffield; and West Fork United Methodist, rural Sheffield.

Prior to the pandemic, the food pantry served about 40 to 50 families, or approximately 140 to 150 people each month. Now, the pantry averages 100 families per month, or

nearly 300 individuals. Pantry hours expanded in November to every Thursday from 2 to 5 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

To learn more, visit the West Fork Food Pantry Facebook page.

Updates from Portico Benefits

Being Here Podcast

Three new episodes have been added to the “Being Here” podcast, which explores real world issues and topics for professionals in the faith community, with the Rev. Melissa Pohlman as host:

- Experiences and tips for navigating retirement
- Christian conversations about racial justice
- Creative approaches to innovative ministry.

Visit <https://portico.thebigknow.com/home/audio-series/portico-being-here/overview>.

ELCA Medicare-Primary Transition to the Humana Prescription Drug Program

Steps members should take now:

- Refill current prescriptions
- Watch the mail for a new

Humana ID card

- Look up medication with Humana
- Set up a Humana Pharmacy mail-delivery account by calling 1-800-379-0092
- Ensure local pharmacy is in network

Virtual Workshops on Retirement Readiness

Watch for more information about four new webinars coming in January!

Check in with your Portico Regional Rep

Use the following link to sign up for a video chat or appointment to talk over the phone with Jennifer Prinz, Portico regional rep, <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/9040b4ba4a722a02-check>. Questions can be emailed to Prinz at jprinz@porticobenefits.org.

New Ewalu Executive Director

Ewalu Camp & Retreat Center has selected the Rev. Frank Johnson as the organization’s new executive director. Johnson took over leadership on Dec. 20 of the Lutheran-affiliated ministry, which is transitioning from the retirement of the Rev. Clark Baldwin, who has led the camp and retreat center since 2012.

Johnson most recently served as executive director of Red Willow Ministries in eastern North Dakota and has also served several years in parish ministry in northern Minnesota.

An open house event celebrating Baldwin’s retirement and welcoming Johnson to his new role will take place Saturday, Jan. 22, from 1:30 to 3 p.m., at the Ewalu Creation Center. A special service for the transition in leadership will take place at 2 p.m.

To learn more, visit www.ewalu.org.



Frank Johnson

OBITUARY

The Rev. Dr. Edgar Krentz died Oct. 31, 2021, at the age of 93. He was ordained on Jan. 20, 1957. He taught at Concordia Seminary and at Christ Seminary-Seminex in St. Louis, Mo. He served as assistant pastor at Our Redeemer, Overland Park, and Chapel of the Cross, St. Louis, Mo. He then served as New Testament professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago until his retirement on July 1, 1998.

A memorial service took place Nov. 13 at Augustana Lutheran Church, Chicago. He is survived by his wife, Marion Krentz, and six children. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Marion Krentz, Montgomery Place, 5550 S Shore Dr, Apt 414, Chicago IL 60637-5031.

The complete obituary can be found at www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/22988168/edgar-martin-krentz.

New Study Guide Available

A study guide is now available for the ELCA’s newest social statement, *Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action*.

The guide features six flexible sessions that can be customized for in-person gatherings or virtual meetings. Each session incorporates prayers, videos, engaging activities, Scripture study and invitations to live out the call to gender justice in the world.

Find links to the study sessions — which include leader’s guides, hand-outs, videos and additional resources — at <https://elca.org/fsjstudyguide>.

DECEMBER EVENTS

- 2 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 Youth Ministry Network, St. John, Charles City, 10 a.m.
- 7 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 21 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 24-31 Synod Office Closed, Christmas

JANUARY EVENTS

- 3 Office Closed, New Year's
- 4 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 6 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 6 Youth Ministry Network, Immanuel, Independence, 10 a.m.
- 15 Synodical Women's Organization, Synod Office and Virtual, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 15 Synod Council Meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.-12 noon
- 18 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 22 Congregation Treasurer's Meeting, Zoom, 10 a.m.-12 noon

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 11-14 Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza, Onsite and Online
- 13 Three River Annual Conference, Zion-St. John, Sheffield, 2 p.m.
- 15 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 18-19 Candidacy Retreat (tentative dates)

MARCH EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 Youth Ministry Network, St. Peter, Greene, 10 a.m.
- 10 Lutheran Day on the Hill, Des Moines
- 12 Synodical Women's Organization, Synod Office and Virtual, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 15 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m.
- 19 Synod Council Meeting, Synod Office and Virtual, 9 a.m.-12 noon
- 31 Day of Renewal, Bethlehem, Cedar Falls

INSTALLING

- Rev. Beth Olson, St. John (Bennington), Waterloo, Dec. 12, 2021
- Rev. Matthew Muters, Zion, Dysart, Dec. 19
- Rev. Michael Wilker, First, Decorah, Feb. 5, 2022
- Rev. Melissa Bills, Luther College, Feb. 11, 2022
- Rev. Maureen Howard, Bethany, Iowa Falls, pending

INTERVIEWING

- Allison, St. James, Rev. Norman Bauer, contract interim
- Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
- Grundy Center, American
- Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway Parish)
- Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim
- Shell Rock, Faith
- Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*
- Waterloo, Our Savior's*
- Waterloo, Zion
- West Union, Zion, Rev. Duane Miller, interim

SELF-STUDY

- Carpenter, Deer Creek & Toeterville, St. Peter
- Chester, United*
- Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland, Rev. Waldemar Gies, contract interim
- Decorah, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge
- Denver, St. Peter, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
- Frederika, St. John
- Hawkeye, Trinity*
- Hudson, St. Timothy, Rev. John White, contract interim
- Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim*
- Jewell, Bethesda, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim
- Leland, Our Savior and Garner, Faith (Miller)
- Mason City, St. Paul*
- Mason City, Trinity (staff)
- Waterloo, St. Ansgar, Rev. Erika Breddin, contract interim *
- Waterloo, Trinity*
- Waverly, St. Paul's, Rev. Mark Anderson, interim

ROSTER CHANGES

- Rev. Arthur Bergren, transferred to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
- Rev. Stacey Nalean-Carlson, transferred to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
- Rev. Lance Kittleson, retired
- Rev. Lynn Bergren, transferred to Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
- Rev. Derek Rosenstiel, on leave from call
- Rev. Nicole Woodley, on leave from call
- Rev. Gloria Friedrich, retired
- Rev. Dennis Hanson, retired
- Rev. Stephen P. Brackett, new call as Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Leadership
- Rev. Clark Baldwin, on leave from call

*Part-time Call

PRAYER CALENDAR

DECEMBER 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Rev. Dennis D. Niezwaag, Charles City 1	Trinity American, Waterloo 2	Rev. Amy Eisenmann, Cedar Falls Rev. Cindy S. Krause, Osage Jean M. Swiggum, Cedar Falls 3	Zion Evangelical, Waterloo 4
St. John, Waukon 5	Redeemer, Waverly 6	St. Paul's, Waverly 7	St. Paul, Wellsburg 8	Rev. Lynn J. Noel, Postville 9	Rev. Tracy K. Hinkel, Sumner 10	Rev. Paul N. Amlin, Asbury Rev. Dr. Kristin J. Wendland, Waverly 11
Rev. Gregory L. DeBoer, Independence 12	Linda Hamilton 13	Rev. Dr. Elaine G. Siemsen, Rochester 14	Zion, West Union 15	Lutheran Church of Hope Satellite, Clear Lake 16	Middle East Peace Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Chicago, Ill. 17	ELCA Churchwide Staff 18
Bishop Lorna Halaas and Staff of the Western Iowa Synod 19	Bishop Amy Current and Staff of the Southeastern Iowa Synod 20	Synod Council 21	Rev. James L. Cherry, Waverly 22	Rev. Keith Sievers, Savage 23	Joan Dalen, Mason City Rev. Joan E. Haug, Dubuque 24	Rev. Paul H. Schaedig, Waverly Rev. M. DeWayne Teig, Dubuque 25
Full Communion Partner Congregations 26	Companion Synod-Hungary 27	Margaret Browne, Waterloo Rev. Calvin C. Fick, Allison 28	Companion Synod-Namibia 29	Rev. Lisa A. Dietrich, Cedar Falls Carolyn B. Oppedahl, Dubuque 30	Rev. Joshua J. Martyn, Dubuque Rev. David A. Werges, Decorah 31	

JANUARY 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders EWALU Camp & Retreat Center, Strawberry Point 1
Rev. Todd A. Burrichter, Nashua 2	St. James, Allison 3	Rev. Kathleen J. Graves, Mason City Rev. Robert C. Gremmels, Waverly Mrs. Linda Groe, Waukon 4	Ingham/Okoboji Lutheran Bible Camp, Milford 5	Rev. Michael L. Sherer, Waverly 6	Mrs. Carol A. Koeneman, Tucson, Ariz. Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, Cedar Falls 7	Rev. Gary C. Heidt-Johnson, Waterloo 8
Immanuel (Crane Creek), Lawler 9	Rev. Eugene Ketterling, Waverly 10	Lutheran Lakeside Camp, Spirit Lake 11	Zion, Alta Vista 12	Riverside Bible Camp, Story City 13	St. John, Arlington 14	Camp Shalom, Davenport 15
Lord of Life, Asbury 16	Middle East Peace ISU Lutheran Campus Ministry, Ames 17	Rev. Adam T. Starrett, West Union 18	Rev. Kurt A. Hansen, Dubuque 19	St. Olaf, Belmond 20	Rev. Luther H. Thoresen, Grundy Center 21	Rev. Lois D. Knutson, Little Canada 22
Mrs. Jane Chilson, Rochester 23	U of I Lutheran Campus Ministry, Iowa City 24	Rev. Nancy J. Larson, Waverly 25	Trinity, Belmond 26	UNI Lutheran Campus Ministry, Cedar Falls 27	Calmar, Calmar 28	Christian Crusaders, Cedar Falls 29
Springfield, Decorah 30	Rev. Dr. Sarah A. Nye, Osage 31					



Good News

December 2021
January 2022

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.

From the President

The ends and the beginnings! Our church year ends on Christ the King Sunday, and begins again with Advent and Christmas. The regular calendar will end on December 31 and begin again just as quickly with New Year's Day and new resolutions and goals being set. The fiscal year for Women of the ELCA ends January 31 and the new fiscal year begins February 1. This year we will say our good bye to Bev Sheridan being our SWO Treasurer and welcome to Nancy Poppe as our new SWO Treasurer.

Constitutions! I know everyone's favorite subject, right?!?!? There is an update to the Church-wide Constitution based on the decisions made at the Triennial Convention August 2021. The NE IA SWO board is reviewing and updating our SWO constitution to include the updated information. Ever wonder what the Women of the ELCA is up to or what the purpose is? Check out the constitution, it gives you a wealth of information. The model unit constitution has not been updated since the 2017 Triennial Convention. Please review your unit constitution, update it if needed and then please send a copy of the constitution to me, Anna Jetson. I accept them electronically or hard copy, whichever way is best for you. Looking forward to the new year and goals!

Blessings, Anna Jetson

Offerings

As we near the end of the year, please send your quarterly or convention offerings using Form A to Bev Sheridan. Please send any Thankofferings or other designated offerings to Women of the ELCA churchwide using Form B. Forms A & B are available at womenoftheelca.org/tools for leaders or at our webpage neiasynod.org/download-category/women-of-the-elca/

Thank you!

Save a tree and get your Star by email! Email webadmin@neiasynod.org to request the change!

Introducing

My name is Nancy Poppe, and I will be the new treasurer for the Synod Women's Organization in Northeast Iowa. Starting February 1, 2022, please start sending your communications and offerings to me at:

Nancy Poppe
2775 Durham Ave.
Nashua, IA 50658

Bev Sheridan has faithfully and capably served in this position for our synod women the last four years. Her term has come to an end, so please try to remember to update the information for your congregational treasurers. Thanks, Bev!!

You may remember that I served in this position from 2013 through 2017 and had not planned to return to the job. However, the nominating committee called, and I agreed to be re-elected at the convention last June. My home congregation is St. John, Nashua. My husband and I have farmed all our married lives in the Nashua and Ionia area, and we are now retired. Things we keep busy with are travel, playing cards, and enjoying our five grandchildren. I look forward to serving with other Lutheran women in our NE Iowa synod. I am looking forward to plenty of blessings and friendships in the next few years. I encourage you as churchwomen to be active in this organization – you will be blessed!

Discipleship Committee

Good Bread

It is delicious bread, actually! My grandma always baked bread for us girls and it would be piping hot out of the oven when we came home from school on the bus. With a little butter on top, it wasn't long before the whole loaf was gone. My grandma loved us and this is how she showed it.

Our pastor bakes the bread for communion. The first time he gave us the bread instead of the wafers I was surprised by a flood of emotions. This is really bread and it is really good! I heard the sweet words "This is the body given for you". True body of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread given to me!

I remember what you did for me, Jesus. You loved me so much that you gave up your body so I could live. So, I could be forgiven. You come to me and all believers each time we eat the bread and drink the wine and you give us strength and renew us. Come and see. Taste and see. The Bread is good!

Submitted by Lynda Akers

Justice Committee

Did you know that January 11 is Human Trafficking Awareness Day? Or that January is Human Trafficking Awareness Month? The Women of the ELCA has a history of fighting Human Trafficking. There are resources available at the womenoftheelca.org website. A quick google search of Human Trafficking Prayers gives you over 1,410,000 results. There are different kinds of trafficking, however the one I think of most often, that sees an increase in occurrence with sporting events is sexual trafficking, be it women or children. Often in January there is a list of daily prayers to end human trafficking that ends on the day of the Superbowl. Some of us, may think that it only happens in big cities, or urban areas, but I know it happens in rural areas as well. Traffickers use the interstate to bring victims from one area to another. One thing I have done it put the Human Trafficking Hotline number 888-373-7888 in my phone, in both my personal and my work cell phones. If you see something that makes you wonder, just call and report it. They will investigate. I don't know if you have noticed, but I have, when I stop and use gas station bathrooms, there are posters or cards with phone number or texting options to get help if you are in need. Often times traffickers make sure their victims do not have phones to use so acronyms or something easy to remember is there for when the victim might get access to a phone. What can you do today to help bring an end human trafficking?

Submitted by Anna Jetson

Stewardship Committee

LWR continues to be desperately low on quilts and kits due to a significant shortfall in 2020. Urgent requests are waiting from orphans and the elderly in Tanzania, flooded communities in El Salvador, and struggling school children in the DRC. Thank you for your loving service to help restock our shelves and fulfill these crucial requests.

Submitted by Lea Norlinger

LSI Challenge Update

We are nearing the \$4000 mark, on our way to \$5000. We are almost there!!!! To contribute to the LSI Spiritual Life Challenge, please send donations directly to LSI, 106 16th St SW, PO Box 848, Waverly IA 50677. Please include Spiritual Life Challenge on the memo line. Thank you for all you have done for LSI and the Women of the ELCA.

CALENDAR

Jan 15 SWO Board @ Synod Office, 8:30-4
Mar 12 SWO Board via Zoom, 8:30-noon
May 14 SWO Board via Zoom, 8:30-noon
Jun 17 SWO Board @ Gathering site (TBD)
Jun 18 2022 NE IA SWO Gathering (TBD)
Sept 18 2023 Triennial Convention & Gathering

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Anna Jetson, President

952-240-9569, amjetson@yahoo.com

Alice Greimann, Vice President

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Living Faith @

Dear Faith Shapers,

I pray you all had a joyful Christmas. Christmas may not have been the same as previous years, yet our Savior still comes to us & we find good news of great joy!

The season of Christmas is one I cherish with my family. The thing I love about the season (the season of the Church year, not the day) is that our Christmas events are done and the hustle and bustle is over, yet there is still Christmas. The kids are home on break and we can celebrate together. We love to leave our decorations up, decorate with stars, make more Christmas cookies, save a present to open on Epiphany, watch more Christmas movies, have family dinners and enjoy the season of wonder together. My hope is for you to embrace the season with your loved ones!

May your season of Christmas & Epiphany be filled with wonder & great joy!

Deacon Lisa Kammerer



Did you know that there is Christmas day and also a season of the church year that is Christmas? Many people believe the 12 days of Christmas are before Christmas (the media & stores push it as a holiday sale leading up to Christmas) but that is not the case. The season of Christmas is 12 days. It starts on Christmas day and ends on January 5th. How appropriate that it starts on Christmas day with the best gift— Jesus! The color of the season is white (paraments at church will change from advent blue to white for the season of Christmas). Here's some fun ways to enjoy the season.

- * **12 days of Christmas Kindness.** Do a act of kindness on each day of Christmas. Some popular projects we have done are: candy cane bomb a parking lot, put quarters in machines at the laundromat, shop for our local food pantry (they are low after the holidays), deliver treats or gifts, handout free flowers, bring hot chocolate or coffee to outside workers, shovel sidewalks. Involve the whole family in picking 12 projects.
- * **12 Clever Gifts for the 12 Days of Christmas.** Box of Bread mix (Jesus is the bread of life). Christmas story book (Christ is Emmanuel). Reese's Pieces (Jesus is the Prince of Peace). Soap (Christ is the Redeemer who washes our sin away). Candy cane (Jesus is the good shepherd). Flashlight or glowstick (Christ is the Light). Water (Jesus is the Living Water). Ring Pop candy or Ring (Christ is the Lord of Lords). Blanket or other warm item (Jesus is the Lamb), Prayer beads or prayer gift (Christ is the Mediator), Gift Certificate (Jesus is our Redeemer). King size something (Jesus is the King of Kings).

This information is prepared for you by the Northeastern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network for use by families and local congregations.

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15 WAYS TO CELEBRATE EPIPHANY

EPIPHANY IS JANUARY 6TH (THE TWELFTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS) AND CELEBRATES THE ARRIVAL OF THE MAGI TO SEE JESUS. THEY PRESENT HIM WITH GIFTS OF GOLD (A GIFT FOR A KING), FRANKINCENSE (A GIFT FOR A PRIEST) AND MYRRH (A GIFT FOR A SAVIOR). THE WORD EPIPHANY MEANS "MANIFEST".

1. READ ABOUT THE 1. VISIT OF THE MAGI IN MATTHEW CHAPTER 2
2. MAKE A KING'S CAKE (SEARCH FOR A RECIPE ONLINE)
THE ONE WHO FINDS THE BEAN OR NUT IS SAID TO BE ESPECIALLY BLESSED
3. SURPRISE SOMEONE WITH AN EPIPHANY GIFT
4. DECORATE YOUR HOUSE OR CHRISTMAS TREE WITH STARS
5. READ THE SHORT STORY THE GIFT OF THE MAGI BY O. HENRY
6. MAKE STAR OR CROWN SHAPED COOKIES
7. PLACE YOUR MAGI IN YOUR MANGER SCENE
8. DO A CHALK EPIPHANY BLESSING OF YOUR HOME (BLESSINGS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE)
20 + C + M + B + 22 (THIS MEANS THE YEAR PLUS THE FIRST LETTERS OF THE 3 MAGI- CASPAR, MEL-
CHIOR AND BALTHAZAR AND ALSO THE PHRASE CHRISTUS MANSIONEM BENDICAT WHICH MEANS MAY
CHRIST BLESS THIS HOUSE)
9. MAKE A STAR CRAFTS (3D PAPER STARS ARE ESPECIALLY FUN)
10. HAVE A 12TH NIGHT FAMILY DINNER (WE LOVE USING FANCY DISHES AND CANDLES)
11. MAKE ORANGE POMANDER BALLS (RECIPES ARE ONLINE)
12. WATCH "THE STAR" (LITTLE ONES) OR "THE STAR OF BETHLEHEM" (OLDER KIDS)
13. CALL OR VIDEO CHAT WITH A FAMILY MEMBER ABOUT GIFTS THEY RECEIVED AND WHAT GIFTS
(NON MATERIAL) THEY HOPE TO DISCOVER THIS YEAR
14. TAKE AN EPIPHANY ADVENTURE AND TAKE A DAY TRIP SOMEWHERE YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN
15. GIFT YOUR FAMILY WITH THREE GIFTS. GOLD (A FAMILY ACTIVITY OR GAME), FRANKINCENSE
(A RELIGIOUS ITEM), AND MYRRH (GIFTS FOR THE BODY) ON EPIPHANY