



CONNECTIONS

EASTERN NORTH DAKOTA WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEWSLETTER

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WELCA Alert!

Do you have partial or whole skeins of yarn tucked away in your sewing room, closet, church, or hidden, that you won't be using or that color didn't look

quite the same as you imagined? Maybe, you thought you'd make a rug or other item that just didn't happen.

Well, Do I have a suggestion for you! Put it into a bag, pack it into your car, and bring it to the EaND SWO convention at Red Willow Bible Camp on September 22, 2018.

Several years ago, Judith Williams (Jamestown Cluster Representative) brought a project to the SWO Board which benefited the inmates at the James River Correctional Center by raising their self-esteem and giving them an opportunity to help others. Known as the "Yarn Project", an appeal for skeins of yarn went out to Women of the ELCA.

Yarn came from all over Eastern North Dakota that was sent to JRCC where men learned to knit and crochet baby caps for Lutheran World Relief layettes; caps, scarves, and mittens for orphans in Central Europe; baby blankets for hospitals; preemie caps for hospitals; and a multitude of other service projects. Most recently, the men have been making afghans for bereaved families of soldiers. The need is immense and these men have stepped up to help fill that need.

This project was opened again when Gloria Halstenson asked about it at the Grand Forks Cluster Gathering this spring.

At the Synod Assembly a sign was put up and your president went home with two garbage bags full of yarn for Chaplain Mark Haines of the James River Correctional Center. These will be delivered in July, but we will also gather yarn at the Fall Convention at Red Willow Bible Camp on September 22.

Your closet will thank you, your family will thank you, and, most of all, the inmates will thank you on behalf of all who will receive caps, mittens, scarves, and all other knitted and crocheted items.

Thanks!!!

6th Annual Women's Retreat

Saturday, August 18, 2018

Maryvale, rural Valley City, ND

Save the date!

Presidents and churches will be receiving information about the Women's Retreat soon. Please be on the lookout for the mailing!

This year's theme is based on Micah 6:8, "Walk Humbly with Your God..." and will feature Keynote speaker, Pr. Tammy Jacobson, "Blessings in Recovery", and guest speaker, Terese Rotenberger, "Humble and Blessed."

Times are 10:00 am-3:00 pm. A noon meal will be served so pre-registration will be encouraged because of limited space.

Hope to see you there!!!!



"Here I am, Lord!" Isaiah 6:8

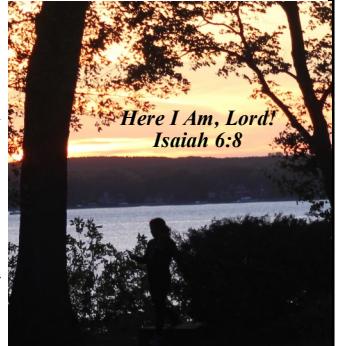
Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization's theme for the 31st annual convention reflects our commitment to use our time and talents in service to others and to the Glory of God. How many times have you answered the call to help out when someone needs a friend, needs a meal, and the list goes on.

The convention speakers will share how they answered God's call. You will be surprised at some of the directions their lives took after answering "Here I am, Lord" when they heard God's call!

You, too, will have the opportunities to answer God's call by listening to God's Word in Bible Study, by sharing yarn for the Prison Yarn Project, by restocking Red Willow Bible Camp's paper products & art supplies, by bringing diapers (Pampers, Huggies, size 3, 4, & 5) for Dakota O'Yate's Spirit Lake Outreach Ministry, and other possibilities that will present themselves during our time together!

Pastor Larry Thiele will share how his congregation has begun a "Bridge Building" project within Spirit Lake Conference that seeks to bring youth of various congregations together and to develop understanding between cultures.

This year's convention will be a time of reflection, refreshment, and renewal. Please join us!!!!



2017-2018 EaND 3-B Synodical Women's Organization Board

Please keep this list for your future reference.

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Connections

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President's Message—I was so moved by the poem written by Mary Hanson that I decided to give the space that is usually for the President's Message for the reprint. I have attended two church closings this month. My emotions ran the gamut of sadness and celebration—sadness for the difficult decision to close and celebration for the many years of proclaiming God's Word to generations of Christians. It seems as though Mary's poem is suited to be spoken at a closing of a church as well. The church is not a building, it is the people who make up the Body of Christ.

On another note, there will be an election at our SWO Convention in September. The offices of President, Vice President, Secretary, Devils Lake Cluster Representative, Grafton Cluster Representative, Mayville Cluster Representative, and Wahpeton Cluster Representative will be on the ballot with Secretary, Vice President, and Mayville Cluster Representative eligible for re-election. Here is an opportunity to say, "Here I am, Lord!" to this call. Request a Vita form from any member of the Board or go to our website to download a form, mail it to our secretary, Pam Neumiller by September 1 to be included in the Convention Book.

We will also be voting on a resolution brought before the last convention concerning Cluster Gatherings. This is the second reading (as printed on the back page of this newsletter) before the official vote. After this vote, it will be presented to the Church-wide Executive Board for action—a three year process.

This spring seven Cluster Gatherings were held with around 40 attending each. Each had a program of interest and each was of varying length. Those who attended came away inspired and enthusiastic! I enjoyed every one that I attended and hope others will attend next year. Be on the look out for mailings from your Cluster Representatives concerning the convention & retreat!

Karen Retzlaff, EaND SWO President

Yes, There is Hope

Written by Mary Hanson, March 2018

Yes, we are mourning now.

Yes, we have great sorrow.

Yes, our hope is in tomorrow, and

Yes, God saw what was to come,
his hand wavered, but did not succumb

He saw the era of a new beginning

From the start to the end,

For all generations to come,

His Spirit He will send.

The sorrow will turn to rejoicing,
To the Glory of God we will sing,

Yes, God will wipe away our tears,
His love for us will quench our fears.

Yes, God will be here,
our Creator and Redeemer will renew;
because He will first go through
to provide and guide the way.

And from His side we will not stray.
For the church lives in our hearts,
and from us God will not depart.

** I wrote "Yes There is Hope" a couple of days after our beloved church of 135 years was struck by lightning and burned to the ground.

There were a lot of tears, prayers and wondering about what the future held for our congregation now. It wasn't a question of "Why, God", but an affirmation of hope and peace from the Lord that in the midst of destruction, He is with us always and will not forsake us.

As Jeremiah 29:11 says; "For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord. Plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.**

Mary Hanson
Skjeberg Lutheran Church
Drayton, ND

EaND SWO Convention Speaker selected



Sue Shirek will share her story of work at the Northlands Rescue Mission in Grand Forks at Red Willow Bible Camp as part of the program on September 22, 2018.

Shirek began her role as executive director of Northlands Rescue Mission on May 1st. Nancy Andrews has been serving as interim executive director and will finish her one year term, help during the initial transition and eventually return to the Board of Directors.

Shirek most recently was executive director at Care and Share of Crookston (Minn.), a homeless shelter. Prior to that time, she was a patrol officer with the Grand Forks Police Department for 26 years. Her assignments also included the Community Resource Bureau as a neighborhood resource officer and as a school resource officer in the Grand Forks middle schools. She retired in 2013.

A resident of Thompson, Shirek serves on the Board of Directors of Prairie Harvest Mental Health and Third Street Clinic, both in Grand Forks. She attended Bemidji State University (Minn.) and the University of North Dakota, Grand Forks. She and her husband, Noel, have five children and five grandchildren. Shirek is a native of Warren, Minnesota.

Since 1942, Northlands Rescue Mission extends a hand to men and women who are homeless and seeking help from their desperate situations. Many lost their livelihoods because of decades of addiction. Others could no longer support themselves when job opportunities dried up. Still more are victims of broken or abusive relationships that forced them from their homes.

The Mission rescues the homeless from the streets, provides food, clothing, and shelter, and offers case management and access to resources they need to rebuild stable lives. The Mission's ministry also includes community meals for the hungry and food programs for struggling families and their children.

We welcome Sue Shirek to our SWO Convention and look forward to hearing about one of the outreach ministries in our Synod which many of our Congregational units support with in-kind and monetary gifts!

Bishop-Elect Vivaine Thomas-Breitfeld to be Churchwide Representative at EaND SWO Convention

When the Churchwide Board Representative to our convention was announced in February, no one expected the turn of events to come in May! Least of all, Pastor Vivaine Thomas-Breitfeld, who was elected May 6 to serve a six-year term as bishop of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Thomas-Breitfeld is the second African American woman to be a bishop in the ELCA.



She earned a Bachelor of Science degree from Cornell University in Ithaca, N.Y., in 1974 and she received her Master of Divinity from McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago in 1979.

Vivaine will be installed on Aug. 18 at First Lutheran Church in Janesville, WI.

She was elected to the executive board of Women of the ELCA in July 2017. She serves on the constitution review committee.

Viviane is an ordained minister in the ELCA and has served several Wisconsin congregations. Those include Cross Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Milwaukee; and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Waukesha. She currently serves in intentional interim ministry to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin.

Viviane has served on several ELCA boards, including the Board of Pensions, the Mission Investment Fund, and the Women of Color Clergy. Presently she is serving as the co-chair of the Task Force on Women and Justice.

Viviane is passionate about anti-racism work and has served on racial justice teams in two synods.

She is married to the Rev. Fred Thomas-Breitfeld. They have two adult children and three grandchildren.

Eastern North Dakota SWO is looking forward to her visit because she has a wide variety of experiences that have made a difference in our church and society across the world.

Registration forms will be sent to presidents and congregations in August since Red Willow Bible Camp staff will need to know how many meals to prepare.

**EaND SWO Convention
September 22, 2018
Red Willow Bible Camp**

"Here I Am, Lord!"

Women of the



Connections

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Please Note: Update your Unit Mailing Address. If you are no longer president, please pass this on to her. If you are a subscriber, your expiration date is coded with your name, e.g., Jane Doe JA/16 (expires January 2016).

Frequency of Publication Information

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Please share the information in this newsletter. Photocopy as needed for your unit members, your bulletin boards, and church newsletters. Don't file this away! It's your message about what is happening in the Eastern North Dakota Synodical Women's Organization!

What's Inside?

- Page 1 Yarn Project, Retreat & Convention info**
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PRSR STD

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

Fordville, ND 58231

Permit No. 8

Return Service Requested

Unit Presidents, Please Note!

This is the resolution brought to last year's convention, please present it to your unit for consideration. Your voting member will be asked to vote on this at the 2018 convention on September 22, 2018. It will be voted on as presented.

RESOLUTION FOR EaND 2017 SYNODICAL CONVENTION

Resolution for Joint Cluster Gatherings

1. Whereas EaND Synodical Women of the ELCA (EaND SWO) currently has eight clusters/conferences;
2. Whereas each EaND SWO cluster/conference has its own EaND SWO representative;
3. Whereas each EaND SWO cluster/conference meets at one meeting each spring in a gathering;
4. Whereas each EaND SWO cluster/conference has normally less than 30 -35 participants;
5. Whereas it can cost each EaND SWO cluster/conference approximately \$400; and
6. Whereas it also costs each EaND SWO cluster/conference mileage at the rate of .50 per mile for board representation; now therefore, be it

Resolved that we

1. recognize that EaND Synodical Women of the ELCA (EaND SWO) has eight cluster/conferences;
2. urges that each EaND SWO cluster/conference representative could come together in groups of four (Grand Forks, Grafton, Devils Lake, Prairie Rose) & (Fargo, Jamestown, Mayville, Wahpeton);
3. urges that two groups of four clusters join together each spring (Grand Forks, Grafton, Devils Lake, Prairie Rose) & (Fargo, Jamestown, Mayville, Wahpeton);
4. recognizes that attendance may increase per event
5. recognizes that what was approximately \$1600 to host would now cap off at approximately \$600 to \$800 and recognizes that mileage for EaND SWO members attending would be lessened with only two events to attend; and
6. urges the consideration to restructure the spring EaND SWO gatherings (Grand Forks, Grafton, Devils Lake, Prairie Rose) & (Fargo, Jamestown, Mayville, Wahpeton) to this format.

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