



The Communicator

Southwestern Minnesota



Winter 2017 - January, February, March



A Word From Your President

Happy Epiphany! I am always a bit amused that the season of light comes when our days are so dark and long. God knows what we need and God has a sense of humor. Studying light in darkness!

I thoroughly enjoyed attending 8 Fall Gatherings last fall. You all are doing wonderful work and provide uplifting and thought provoking programs. Thank you so much! I believe over 625 women attended a conference Fall Gathering. Nice number. Hope to see many of you this spring at your Spring Gatherings.

Your synodical board is busy planning our 30th SW MN SWO Women of the ELCA Convention. It will be Saturday, May 6, 2017 at Gloria Dei Lutheran in Redwood Falls, MN. Our theme is “Gathered In Grace.” Theme verse is Ephesians 2:8-9, “For by grace you have been saved by faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast.” Theme hymn is “Oh Day Full of Grace” ELW 627. In-Kind Offering: Baby Care Kits and School Kits (all other kits and quilts will be accepted, too). You may bring Christian Literature and Cans for Katie’s Fund will be available. Registration for this one day event is \$50.00. The Publicity Packet will be coming to you electronically in early February. We are still finalizing speakers, workshops, pastors, etc. But I can tell you, it is going to be GOOD!

I hope you are registered for the 10th Triennial Gathering in Minneapolis, “All Anew” this July 13-16. The fee goes up in early January. The one day fee remains the same. I have yet to learn when Lehmah Gbowee is speaking. Many of you have questions about buses. We would like to provide that opportunity, but we need to know who is going from where. Let Rhonda Hermanson know you plan to go. There is a bus from South Dakota that will have to travel through our synod. They are an option, if they have room. I plan to visit with their president soon. Contact Maria Lokensgard, Triennial Promoter, with questions. She is the expert.

Christina Nelson, a new board member, will be traveling to South Africa in February. Pray for her and the others in this important journey with our Companion Synod.

Sara Larson and I will be leading a workshop entitled, “Women of the ELCA: Not Your Mama’s Ladies’ Aid” at the Equipping Congregations Day in Willmar on Saturday, February 25. Mention this to those in your congregation who think the 1950’s model is still used in the 21st Century-NOT! It is 2017 already! Other leaders in your congregations attend the Equipping Day that don’t often attend your unit events, so this would be educational. We make it fun!!

That’s all I have for now. I hope this first electronic “Communicator” has been a success. The board knows there will be some bumps, so hang on with us as we make this switch.

Stay warm these winter months with some fun winter activities—quilting, puzzles, books, Bible reading, a great cup of coffee or cocoa! See you in the spring.

Blessings to You Always!

Kristy Henriksen, President

Prayers for Tuesdays @ Two

Jan. 3 ~ pray for Gwendolyn King, Philadelphia in the loss of her mother, Rosalie. Gwendolyn is the churchwide board member who celebrated with us at our synodical convention in Willmar last June. Give us a share of her enthusiasm.

Jan. 10 ~ pray for a new year of continued blessings for Women of the ELCA; churchwide, synodical, conference and local units.

Jan. 17 ~ pray that the Holy Spirit would lead and guide this organization in 2017, as plans for the triennial are happening.

Jan. 24 ~ pray for president-elect Donald Trump and cabinet appointees; give them wisdom to keep the peace.

Jan. 31 ~ pray for abused women and children; help them find a haven of safety.

Feb. 7 ~ pray for autistic children and their families; give them patience and understanding.

Feb. 14 ~ pray that we will remember God is love; God loves you and me ~ all of us sinners, and don't forget John 3:16.

Feb. 21 ~ pray for policemen/women as they work to protect their communities; keep them safe from senseless crimes.

Feb. 28 ~ pray for all military organizations at home and abroad.

Mar. 7 ~ pray for college students as they prepare their studies for a life-long vocation.

Mar. 14 ~ pray for families who don't get along; brothers, sisters, husbands, wives.

Mar. 21 ~ pray that racial tensions in our country will subside and peace will reign.

Mar. 28 ~ pray that more young people will have a desire to become pastors.

In Jesus' name, Amen

Ruth Ann Anderson, Vice President

Glad Tidings of Joy for Phebe Hospital

On Jan. 15, 2017 a shipping container of solar panels and related materials will leave Global Health Ministries in Fridley bound for Phebe Hospital, Bong County, Liberia! During February and March, Phebe Hospital's masons and laborers will be conducting site preparation work to prepare for the actual installation. A team of RREAL engineers and technicians plan to spend several weeks from March through mid-April working with Liberians to set up and install the solar system.

Although the PV for Phebe team is excited and grateful to finally be able to bring solar energy to the hospital, this effort still needs your support. First, energy efficiency upgrades are still needed, and a back-up power supply needs to be added in case of emergency.

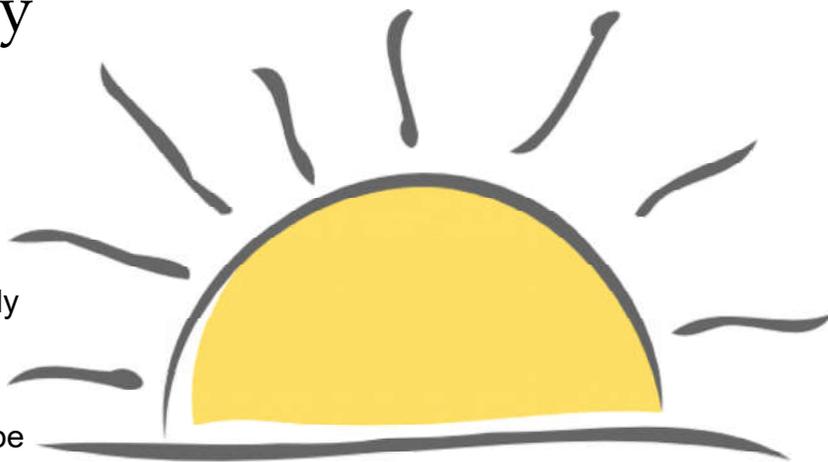
So during this Christmas season as you share your bountiful gifts, please consider making a difference and a financial donation, <https://my.rreal.org/phebe100>, for an exciting gift of light and life to the people of Liberia.

Mission Community

“Here comes the sun...”

I heard this song playing on my car radio this morning, and wondered, where is the sun?! Its presence is surely missed when it is absent for days on end!

January days in Minnesota, can often be cloudy and overcast. We find ourselves longing for the energy of the sun, returning life to our weary bodies and minds during a long cold winter.



The sun can do amazing things for us besides warming our bodies and lightening up our spirits. Generating power is exactly what is being planned and prayed for by the doctors, nurses, workers and patients at Phebe Hospital in Liberia, West Africa.

Presently, Phebe Hospital is powered solely by diesel generators. They face day-to-day challenges of blackouts due to equipment failure and/or fuel disruption. 450,000 Liberians rely on the Phebe Hospital for life-saving medical care. There is one natural solution to their struggles—SOLAR POWER!

Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, of Northeastern Minnesota has already begun preliminary phases of constructing a solar micro-grid for Phebe Hospital, but additional funds are needed now.

Churchwide ELCA and Churchwide Women of the ELCA have endorsed the Phebe Hospital Mission. An ELCA Congregational Christmas Challenge took place in December. At the time of submitting this article, this writer is unaware of just what funds they collected from the \$100 Congregational Challenge. February is the deadline to match a National Geographic Challenge Grant of \$624,000!

Through the cross of Christ, God calls each one of us to serve the needs of others. Please prayerfully consider a donation, it's a gift that will light Phebe Hospital for generations to come.

Credit card donations can be made by visiting: www.skipthegrid.org

Individuals can also send checks directly to: Northeastern Minnesota Synod, 1105 East Superior Street, Duluth, Mn 55802. Please add the word Phebe on the memo line.

Here comes the sun...and “they” say it’s all right!

Mission Community

Coral Ackman, Kim Christianson, Sande Mathison

Mission Growth

THE PASSING OF A GENERATION

My Aunt Esther Pedersen died this summer, July 25, 2016, with her passing, it was the death of the oldest generation in my Pedersen family. My father's family of 13 children, the oldest generation who helped shape and lead our family had passed to my generation.

What does it mean to be the oldest generation?

There are now only 15 first cousins who will be the "Oldest Generation" to help carry on the family traditions, history and guidance and support the family. Another 25 of my first cousins have already died. There is a spread of about 50 years between the oldest (about 100) and youngest (about 50) first cousin.

What is the short history of this family coming to the United States?

The grandparents immigrated legally into the United States, where their first five children were born in New York State and SW Minnesota. Grandmother inherited the family farm in Denmark, they moved back to Denmark. Grandfather farmed the family farm and they had 5 more children. Grandfather sold the family farm. Grandparents moved back to the United States living in SW MN, Mississippi, Arizona, Iowa and finally back to SW MN. During this time they had the remaining three children, four of the children had malaria, and one died.

It was never a thought in my younger years that I would ever be the oldest generation in my family. All of a sudden, with the death of my last aunt, it was a sudden stop in my life that my remaining 14 first cousins and I were now the Old generation.

What was accomplished by that generation?

All were raised as Christians, most of which were Lutheran. Many of my 24 aunts and uncles were pillars in the church. They were lay ministers, church board/council members, musicians, bible school and Sunday school leaders, confirmation leaders and mentors, "ladies aid leaders" and participants as "church basement women", fundraisers for building new churches and developing programs for youth and adults. Praise the Lord!! I am a product of this Christian oriented family.

All my aunts and uncles were proud to be U.S.A. citizens including those born in Denmark who became naturalized citizens on a Fourth of July. One became a MN State Senator, others were active in church, schools, the military, civic, community, farm, and banking organizations.

Why are we put on this Earth?

To do God's work, to go out and share God's Love, follow the 10 Commandments, and the words of the Bible. Yes, there is much more that we do on this Earth.

Each of us will have our own story to write. What will each of our generations leave as a legacy? Will God like what we have done?

May each and every one of you have a blessed new year.

Discipleship/Mission Growth committee

Betty Brandt, Marcella Chapman, Bonnie Jaeger

Mission Action

Are you Missing your call to Action?

Last issue- Mission Action was missing. Did you miss it? I missed it. There was a miscommunication about who was doing the article and surprise surprise no one did it!

Is that how it goes in your church? community organization and home? We all discuss something, think it is a good idea but never really get around to assigning and accepting who will actually do what to get the task or mission accomplished.

The Lord never puts us on the back burner or the end of the to do list, but sometimes we find many other things to "BUSY" ourselves and our minds with things do not bring glory to God or display our Christian ideals.

Mission Action is just that: making an action with purpose and intent towards a goal to help or improve someone else's quality of life. There are so many worthy causes locally and globally. It is really hard to decide where to put your effort. It does not matter what choice you make, as long as you CHOOSE and ACT.

Our next collection site for Lutheran World Relief kits and quilts and Christian Literature will be on Saturday, May 6th at Gloria Dei in Redwood Falls, MN. We will be collecting all items, but our designated focus is on Baby Care Kits and School Kits. There is a great need for both. Some of our planning ladies have suggested that your ladies plan a "baby shower" and celebrate all the new births in your church and bring items to create baby kits. Be creative, Be fun and Just Be!

Thank you for your ACTION!

SW MN Mission Action Committee

Sara Larson, Joanna Rustad, Christina Nelson



Tenth Triennial Gathering
July 13-16, 2017
Minneapolis Convention Center
Registration Still Open!

Join the conversation as we explore the triennial gathering theme "All Anew". Listen to inspiring speakers; participate in worship & praise; learn by attending workshops, viewing films and engaging in servant events. Visit the exhibit hall where you can gather, shop and connect.

Maria Lokensgard,
Triennial Promoter
37980 State Highway 22
St. Peter, MN 56082
507-246-5828

Faith Talk with Kristy

Pastor Lauri Boysen said, "Will the children please come forward for the children's sermon!" My two grandsons, Jorgen-5 and LeRoy-2 eagerly approached the altar area. LeRoy was especially excited about it and trotted forward as 2 year olds do with a smile on his dimpled face and his blue eyes twinkling. He knew good stuff was in store for him there. The good stuff was a mini Reese's peanut butter cup. For him it was and is a real treat. What we more mature Christians receive at the altar is, of course, the body and blood of our Lord and Savior during Holy Communion. We don't get a treat, we get a real meal! Someday he will understand that, too.

I've been thinking about approaching the altar since that Sunday in October and how many times we come before it in so many different situations- happy and sad-normal and extraordinary. Daily life can be a challenge. We come for Holy Communion, Holy Baptism, Affirmation of Baptism, weddings, funerals, Christmas program practice, choir numbers, etc. We come to be forgiven, fed, and renewed. It is a holy place.

After the children's sermon, LeRoy skipped back to our pew after tripping and toppling over on his way. But, he came up smiling! Something we should remember when we leave the altar and find ourselves "tripping" on something in life---we have received the body and blood of Jesus Christ, we can come up smiling, too.

We are all God's blessed children! Thanks Be to God!

Questions of the Month

January

What do you do as a woman of faith in the dark days of winter?

February

Where and when have you confronted racism? What did you do? Would you do anything differently today?

March

What would you like to see or hear at a synod convention? Tell you conference liaison! 2017 is planned.

*Use these questions any way you find helpful – devotions at circle, discuss with a friend, discuss around the dinner table.

Save the Date!

30th Southwest Minnesota Synod Women of the ELCA Convention

Saturday, May 6, 2017

**Gloria Dei Lutheran Church,
Redwood Falls, MN
"Gathered in Grace"**

Theme verse: *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not of your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast."* – Ephesians 2:8 & 9



Daily Prayers for a Time of Prayer to End Human Trafficking January 11 through Super Bowl Weekend 2017

*“Give justice to the weak and fatherless;
maintain the right of the afflicted and the
destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”
(Psalm 82:3-4)*

Note: These prayers and reflections were written by people of Northeast Wisconsin. Permission is granted to adapt them and share them as you wish.

January 11 – On this National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness, I pray for an end to human trafficking of every kind right here in our area and around the world. Help me learn about human trafficking and then see how I can help put an end to this crime that enslaves millions of girls, boys, women, and men and is the second largest and fastest growing illegal trade in the world.

January 12 - Holy Lord and Father in Heaven: I pray that you will wrap your loving arms around each and every girl, boy, man, and woman who is enslaved right now. Jesus, break the hideous chain of human trafficking. Deliver its victims into freedom.

January 13 - Transform the spirit of the traffickers and abusers, let them see the sheer horror of their ways, and lead them to true freedom from the bondage of their sin.

January 14 - Lord, show yourself to all who are trapped in this vicious cycle, allow them to glimpse the beauty and freedom of your love, your unconditional love. Father, shine your light into this dark world. Shine it on each and every one of your children, created in your image and for your glory.

January 15 - Lord, I pray you will hear our cries to end slavery, bondage, and trafficking of every kind. I beg you to touch each victim, each survivor, each perpetrator with your love and peace.

January 16 - I pray for law enforcement officers who deal compassionately with victims and elected officials to enact legislation that is effective in putting an end to human trafficking.

January 17 – I pray for children who are stolen for the purpose of selling them to buyers of sex and for their parents who cry for their missing children.

January 18 – I pray for men who love and value their wives and children and for more families to know the kind of love that provides security and confidence to their children.

January 19 – I pray for writers, musicians, artists, and filmmakers who create educational and thought provoking images that move us to act.

January 20 – I pray for advocacy groups like the Lutheran Office of Public Policy, Cherish All Children, Shared Hope International, 5 Stones, Truckers Against Trafficking, and the Wisconsin Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force. I pray for organizations such as Voices of Men who teach boys to respect women and girls. I pray for Eye Heart World as they prepare an aftercare facility to serve trafficking victims in Northeast Wisconsin and Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan as they work through their Transitions Program to help young victims rebuild their lives.

January 21 – I pray for those responsible in churches, government, and in our economy to stand up for the dignity of all persons, especially females.

January 22 – I pray for survivors who are so brave to tell their stories in order to prevent others from becoming victims. I pray for healing and a return to wholeness in their lives.

January 23 – I pray for the cooperation of hotels, massage parlors, and beauty salons to help stop this crime.

January 25 – I pray for teachers, counselors, and other school personnel to recognize signs that a child might be being trafficked and to have the courage to act to protect them.

January 26 - I pray for HOPE. This may be the only thing that victims of human trafficking are holding on to. I pray for them to keep hope in their hearts and know that there is a Heavenly Father who loves them no matter what.

January 27 - I pray for LIGHTS TO SHINE. Lord I pray for everyone who knows about human trafficking to keep their lights shining through prayer, education, and awareness. Without this commitment, we can't find the people who are in desperate need of our rescue. I pray that this leads to a desire to do something, to act in some way to help end human trafficking.

January 28 - I pray for us to be UNASHAMED. Lord give us confidence to speak up and make some noise about the epidemic problem of human trafficking. Help us feel compelled to be preachers about this problem as we may be the only voice for people being trafficked.

January 29 - I pray to be a CHAINBREAKER. Lord, there is a better life for young people trapped in trafficking. They deserve to feel the love of the Lord, they deserve to feel worthy, and to be given a chance to start a new life. Lord, help us break the chains of the horrible crime of human trafficking.

January 30 - I pray for LOVE. I pray that your love will break through the obstacles that all of these girls, boys, men, and women face every day. I pray that your love will overpower it all and shine down and rescue each person being trafficked, even it is only one person at a time. Help us to be your hands doing your work here on earth.

January 31 - I pray for CONSCIENCE. Lord, I pray for the buyers of human trafficking. May you always be on their hearts and souls to help them understand what they are doing to their victims.

February 1 – I pray for BOLD ACTION. I pray that we can act boldly to learn about human trafficking including the signs that someone

might be being trafficked, find out what is being done or needs to be done in our communities, and then act to help in some way. Help us not be discouraged by the enormity of the problem but remember the words attributed to Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing ever has.”

February 2 - I pray for COURAGE. Help anyone who sees something suspicious to have the courage to call the Human Trafficking hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or 911 to report it. That one call may lead to someone being rescued from trafficking.

February 3 - I pray for DISCERNMENT. Help us see how you are calling us to use the gifts and talents that you have given us to help end human trafficking whether that is through sharing what we have learned with neighbors or friends or family members, writing letters to legislators, volunteering with local groups that serve victims, donating money or goods to service providers, organizing adult or youth forums or arranging a conference or speaker, providing hospitality for awareness events, or praying every day for the victims of human trafficking and those who provide rescue and healing to them.

February 4 - I pray for MIRACLES. Lord, you show us miracles each and every day somewhere. I pray for a miracle to work in the hearts of those people who are trafficking other human beings and buying other human beings. Create a situation or put someone into their lives that can help them see that what they are doing is not just making money or buying a brief moment of pleasure but rather horribly abusing a fellow human being.

February 5 – Heavenly Father, on this Super Bowl Sunday and at every other large sporting or music event where so much human trafficking takes place, I pray that people will celebrate and enjoy themselves without treating others with thoughtless disrespect and cruelty. I pray that the better angels of our natures will acknowledge the dignity of all of our sisters and brothers and treat them as fellow deserving recipients of your great love. All these things we ask in your Holy Name. Amen.

Spotlight on...Fall Gatherings!



Pictured above are the joyous results of Glacial Ridge's Fall Gathering. Their speaker was Pastor Jennifer Thul of Danebod Lutheran Church and certified Laughter Yoga Instructor.

Thank you for sharing Glacial Ridge!

Spring Gatherings Up Ahead

Conference	Date	Location	Theme/Speaker
Crow River	April 29	Gethsemane Lutheran Dassel, MN	Larry Strenge as Martin Luther
Glacial Ridge	April 24	Glenwood Lutheran Glenwood, MN	
Great River	April 1	Gustavus Adolphus Lutheran Foley, MN	
Lac Qui Parle	April 18	Big Ben Lutheran Milan, MN	
Lakeland	April 1	Faith Lutheran Spicer, MN	Decluttering: Spring Cleaning Mind, Body and Spirit with Amy Larson
Minnesota Valley	April 18	Bernadotte Lutheran Bernadotte, MN	
Prairie	April 22	First English Lutheran Tyler, MN	
Scenic Valley	April 20	English Lutheran Walnut Grove, MN	
Shetek	April 22	Grace Lutheran Westbrook, MN	
Watonwan River	April 1	Trinity Lutheran Truman, MN	

Have some photos or news you would like to share in the next issue of the Communicator?

Send your information to Christina Nelson at swmnwelca@gmail.com

April Communicator Deadline: March 1