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A time of celebration - Rev. Dinah Dutta

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I hear many people say where did the month of January go? And now we are already into the season of Lent. A friend said the other day that God has replaced some activities in 2018. Ash Wednesday this year was on Valentine's Day and Easter is on April Fool's Day.

Not everyone loves or looks forward to Lent because of how it has been observed in some time periods and places. Most of us think of Lent as repentance or giving things up or a focus on the cross. For me, it brings to mind a heavy-handed season of inward focus that feels dark.

Our practices should change such negative attitudes so that Lent may be a high point of the church year for the faithful. I look at Lent as a time of celebration. That may sound strange to you and unexpected. It is a celebration because I am looking forward to celebrating with exuberant joy the paschal mystery at Easter. Lent for me is a season of fasting, and fasting is about a discipline of restraint so that I may celebrate more deeply and extravagantly something wonderful later.

Sundays in Lent are feast days and not fast days. The celebration of the Eucharist is the perfect time to express a sense of restrained



celebration and anticipatory joy.

My dear sisters in Christ, I encourage you to think, how can we make this season of Lent as an encounter with Christ. Too often, we drift away from whom we are called to be. "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9)

What could be more joyful than to prepare our lives to be transformed into a new and renewed life in Christ? Through the disciplines and rituals we choose individually or collectively, as children of God, God is about to do something wonderful in us through the death and resurrection of Christ.

May the peace of the Lord be with you!

May my prayer be set before you like incense, may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice.

Psalms 141:2, NIV

Spring Forward

Daylight Saving

Time

March 11, 2018

Spiritual spring cleaning — Rev. Dinah Dutta



Spring clean our spirit

While we are cleaning out our closets and sweeping under the furniture, let us think about this: spring cleaning only lasts for a season, but, spiritual cleaning could have an eternal influence. As we enter into the season of Lent let us not only dust behind our bookshelves, but also dust off our favorite

Bible and get ready for a spiritual spring cleansing.

Cleanse your heart — get spiritually healthy

The Bible encourages us to draw close to God and allow our hearts and bodies to be cleansed. This is the first step in our cleaning project. We cannot clean by ourselves. Instead we must draw near to God and ask him to do the cleansing.

Create in me a clean heart, O God; renew your right spirit within me ... Psalm 52:10

Clean out our mouth — deep clean inside and out

Spiritual cleansing requires deep cleansing. It is a cleansing from within—inside and out. As our heart goes clean, our language should follow. It is not about bad language but more about negative talk and pessimistic thoughts that destroy the word of God and faith. A challenge is also to stop complaining.

A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart ... Luke 6:45

Renew your mind — take out the garbage

This is one the biggest areas of struggle for most of us—removing the garbage from our minds. We must feed our minds and spirits with the word of God instead of the garbage of this world.

Do not confirm any longer to the pattern of this world. But be transformed by the renewing of your mind ... Romans 12:2

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ ... 2 Corinthians 10:5

Repent from hidden sin—clean out spiritual closets

Hidden sin will destroy our life. Anger, bitterness,

resentment, envy, jealousy, unforgiveness, all will destroy our peace and our health. The Bible says to confess our sin. Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit ... Psalm 32:1-2

Invite Jesus into you daily life—Let Him shine in

Let Jesus live from within you ... John 14:16-18

God wants to be involved in the big and small moments of our lives. Let us open our lives and let the light of God's presence shine in to every part of life. Experience daily moments-to-moments refreshing of our spirit.

God is the one who invited you into this wonderful friendship with his son, Jesus Christ our Lord ... 1 Corinthians 1:9

For you have delivered me from death and my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before God in the light of life ... Psalm 56:13

Live and enjoy the Christ centered life. Learn to laugh at ourselves and at life.

God wants us to enjoy and live our life with JOY.

The Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart trusts in him and he helps me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise him ... Psalm 28:7

Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy ... Psalm 126:2

Spiritual cleansing is a combined result of all the above

*Reading God's words according to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

*Mixing our faith with the words so that we believe it will change us, and that the promises of God will gradually actualize in our life.

*Rejoice! Joy from the Lord is our strength. Without joy, it is very easy to fall into sin.



Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, Rejoice!

A time for reflection — *Alice Burnett, president*

It is the season of Lent and a time for reflection. As I think about being the president of this organization, I wonder why did I accept the nomination and “what was God thinking?” to call me to this position. Yet, it is a calling and I think of the words I repeated when church-wide W/ELCA president Linda Plorin installed the board. “Yes, and I ask God to help me.”



Well, ladies, you also have the responsibility to pray and I covet those prayers. Thank you for your encouragement and willingness to help me along. I have learned I have many mentors in the W/ELCA. All I need to do is ask.

It is with heavy heart that I and the board accepted the resignation of Kim Frederking as board member. It saddens me to see her leave her position, but what a joy

to see her accept the call into the ministry and go to seminary!

There now is an opening on the board to fill the one year remaining of Kim’s two-year term. You may, like me, wonder why God would think you are qualified and thus encourage you to apply for this opening. Please let me or a board member know if you hear God’s call.

We are going to Windermere! I am grateful for the women who have agreed to be part of the planning of the convention. I am learning that many women have fond memories of being there for previous conventions. Talk to them about this beautiful location.

I challenge individuals, units, clusters and the board to consider a resolution for consideration at our 31st convention. I know there are women who have a passion regarding our purpose, and what we as CSS W/ELCA stand for in this “church, the society and the world”.

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Love and encourage one another

Dawn Lessiack, board member

While reading an article, “Kitchen Table Philanthropy”, on the W/ELCA website, I thought of my family and how our giving has progressed since Christmas Eve 2017.

I consider myself a church widow since my husband doesn’t come to church with me, and both of my kids quit coming to church after they were confirmed.

For the last couple years, I have volunteered the fourth Sunday of each month at our ministry called, “Loaves and Fishes”. It is a soup kitchen in Columbia, MO, supported by area churches. Last year, that date fell on Christmas Eve, which undoubtedly affected the number of volunteers who signed up. I asked my family if they would help serve adding that we would have our Christmas dinner the next day as planned. They jumped at the idea. It warmed my heart to have my husband, daughter and son altogether in the soup kitchen.

My daughter and her roommate now volunteer every month at “Loaves and Fishes”. I am truly thankful that my children may have experienced something “special” on that cold night.

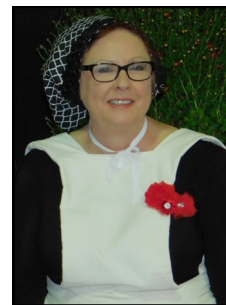
And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching ... Hebrews 10:24-25

dr. lessiack@gmail.com

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert. Isaiah 43:19

Resignation letter — *Kim Frederking*

It seems that if you let God work in His time, answers come our way. I have struggled with what to do but upcoming events make clear my decision. With the news of my husband’s surgery scheduled the week of the [CSS W/ELCA] board meeting, and in addition to not being able to attend [2018] convention due to class at Wartburg, my decision is made.



Yes, I have decided to resign from the W/ELCA board. It is with a feeling of regret and disappointment that I must back away, but I know it is the right thing to do.

It is true my TEEM seminary classes are very intense and time consuming. But they also are very rewarding. Add them to my work load and I find I have moments of being quite overwhelmed. But, you know how it is, one day at a time. I live by the scripture, “God is faithful”. Amen.

Peace and blessings to all my Sisters in Christ.

kimmigo@rural.net

Kim Frederking

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The Road to feeling needed — Carolyn Olson, secretary

As we prepare to attend this summer's CSS W/ELCA convention, I thought this devotion might expand our thinking about where our road might lead us.



Members of a local congregation agreed to work together to change some of their "bad habits". They decided to re-evaluate some of their traditional practices as they attempted to assure their place in this organization for generations to come. One bad habit they had was that of turning to the "old reliable". That is, relying on the people who always have come through to help in the past.

They often discussed why it matters on how they invite people to W/ELCA meetings and events. They thought that each person invited also should be assigned a task, i.e., give devotions, bring a refreshment, etc. This would make those invited feel as a part of the organization. They agreed that they would rather have someone tell them "no", than to make those persons feel unneeded. Most of us enjoy feeling needed, right?

The question is — Did you feel welcome, celebrated, or appreciated as a vital, cherished sister at the first W/ELCA meeting or event you attended? Or did you feel invisible?

Share the Good News — Mary Liby, editor

WITW is published quarterly. The next issue will be June 2018.

Please let me or a board member know if you did not receive the December 2017 issue.

Those who would like to receive the newsletter by email or by U.S. postal service, please fill out the form on page 8. There is no charge to receive the newsletter.

We welcome input from all for our WITW newsletter: exciting news about your unit; special prayer concerns; testimonials of God's blessings; cluster meetings; and any other good news you would like to share!

You may send to: lmlfarms@embarqmail.com



We must remember we are all daughters of God, precious in his sight. We all bring different perspectives to the table. So, we learn from each other. We should be receptive to new and various ideas. We need to honor the entire community of women.

What does it mean to you to participate as part of W/ELCA? The choice is yours, but you are needed! COME PARTICIPATE!

(This message is part is an excerpt of a Women of the ELCA blog by Angela Bell.)

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Check out Facebook —

Anna Prockish, board member

I hope you are enjoying the Facebook posts I have been submitting. I have tried to include a variety of inspirations, stories, justice issues, W/ELCA information and other items. I get a weekly report that says we currently have 86 Facebook members. If you aren't on Facebook, have someone help you get registered!



I would like to share an upcoming conference sponsored in part by the CSS. It is Faith Summit at Camp Joy Holling, Ashland, NE to be held April 27-28.

We invite you to join with other faith formation leaders ad the Vibrant Faith team as we spend two days living the how-to's of generating and sustaining a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ for today's world.

We believe effective, transformational ministry will happen by focusing on two key areas: Transforming Relationships, and, Digital Engagement.

Costs are \$155 for one person; \$125 for two; \$110 for three; and, \$100 for four persons to a room. Housing and meals are included in this price.

Please let me know if I may assist you in finding resources, publicizing events, or praying for you and your loved ones.

So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us ... 2 Corinthians 5:20

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785-212-0685 (cell)

Plant seeds of grace — Kathy Steinke, board member

Reaching Out and Stretching Up

When thinking of discipleship in its purest, most genuine form, it means intentionally planting small seeds of kindness in the world. Recently a pastor at worship shared a list of 20 ways to plant seeds of grace so that God can work through each of us to reach more of His children.



- Gift something without expectation of anything in return.
- Serve where you **are**. Fix up, clean up.
- Tip generously.
- Volunteer- coach, provide transportation
- Pray- be specific!
- Give someone a break- forgive and **move on**.
- See a need-meet a need.
- Deliver food or a care package if you are able.
- Listen to **understand**.
- Share your real story.
- Share a good word about someone who is being gossiped about.
- Stand with someone being bullied.

- Encourage in **every** conversation.
- Compliment freely.
- Write your congressmen- take a stand.
- **Know** your neighbor- learn their name.
- Diversify yourself- engage with others.
- Write a note, make a call, send an email.
- Extend a hand- reach out.
- Say hello to perfect strangers.

I hope to see you at the Central States Synodical Women of the ELCA convention in July at Windermere Conference Center near Camden, Missouri!

*“Any fool can count the number of seeds in an apple; only God can count the number of apples in a seed.”
Old Proverb*

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31st CSS WELCA Convention
July 13—15, 2018
Windermere Retreat Center
Roach, MO
Website: WindermereUSA.org

“The Road To...” - 2018 CSS W/ELCA convention

The 31st CSS W/ELCA convention will be held July 13-15, 2018 at Windermere Conference Center in Roach, MO. The theme is “The Road To...” based on Luke 9:57. “As they were going along the road, someone said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’”

For more information: csswomenoftheelca.com

2018 CSS W/ELCA convention cluster assignments

Program/in kind gifts.....Mid Missouri
 Worship and music.....Mid Missouri
 Logo Sunflower
 BannerGod’s Sunflowers
 T-shirts.....Prairie Angels
 Friday evening table grace Amazing Women
 Saturday noon table grace Disciples of the Plains
 Saturday banquet table grace Ark River Valley

Barbara Nelson Scholarship
 Auction/Mini Raffle Ozark Mountain
 Prayer Partner exchange Northern Lights
 In Kind gifts Post Rock

Prayer List

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Ark River Valley.....	Alice Burnett	Post Rock.....	Kathy Regehr
Disciples of the Plains.....	Kim Frederking	Prairie Angels	Kim Frederking
God’s Sunflowers.....	Anna Prockish	Smoky Valley.....	Kathy Regehr/Anna Prockish
Heartland.....	Carolyn Olson	SE KC Metro	Dawn Lessiack
Mid-Missouri	Dawn Lessiack/Ann Hoover	SE Missouri.....	Kathy Steinke
Northern Lights.....	Anna Prockish	Sunflower.....	Carolyn Olson

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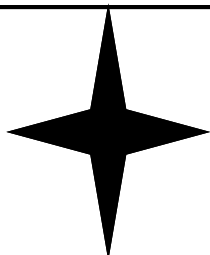
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*No eye has seen, no ear has heard,
 no mind has conceived what
 God has prepared for those who love him.*

1 Corinthians 2:9



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The Newsletter written and published by the Central States Synod Women of the ELCA.

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