



RENEW • RESPOND • REJOICE

**North Carolina Women of
the ELCA**

25th Anniversary

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WOMEN OF THE ELCA PURPOSE STATEMENT

AS A COMMUNITY OF WOMEN,

Inter-linked, entwined, interdependent

CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD,

Yes, in the true image of the One who created everything

CALLED TO DISCIPLESHIP

To be helping hands outstretched ---

To be messengers of grace and glory and Good News

IN JESUS CHRIST

Lord, Savior, Redeemer, Friend

AND EMPOWERED

Enlivened, enthused, enabled

BY THE HOLY SPIRIT,

Giver of wisdom, Sanctifier

WE COMMIT OURSELVES

Pledge, promise, vow

TO GROW IN FAITH

To study the Scriptures, to search tradition,

to test the spirits, to pray for discernment

AFFIRM OUR GIFTS

To sing and dance and shout with joy, to worship

and weave and practice hospitality,

to preach and lead and love and care

SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER

Encourage, uplift, enable, uphold

IN OUR CALLINGS

As people of the Word in the world

ENGAGE IN MINISTRY AND ACTION

Whatever the time, wherever the time, now and forever

AND PROMOTE HEALING

First in ourselves, then in others

AND WHOLENESS

Body, mind, soul and spirit

IN THE CHURCH

Local, conferences, synod, churchwide, ecumenical, universal

THE SOCIETY

Home, school, workplace, community, with people of other

colors, with other backgrounds

AND THE WORLD

With those of different beliefs and different customs

whom we may never meet but who are all, as are we,

created in the image of the One who created all.

Arville Finacom

Calvary Lutheran, Millbrae, CA

first appeared in **CrossCurrents**, newsletter
Sierra Pacific Synodical Women's Organization

Now is the time
O Lord to celebrate our
Relationship with you, our Savior.
Thank you, O Lord, for the
Hope you offer to all women.

Cleanse our souls, O Lord,
And energize us to
Respond with
Open arms and
Love to those
In our church who are in
Need of a helping hand, listening ear and kind heart.
Anoint us with your compassion for those among us.

Wake us, O Lord, to the needs
Of our community and the world
Make us mindful of
Every concern in those around us.
Nourish us so that we may serve others.

O Lord, give us the
Faith to do your work.

Teach us
How to show your love.
Empower us to share your love.

Every time we respond to God's call to service
Let it be known that our
Caring and compassion is how we as a group of women
Act on our faith in Jesus Christ.

*Rebecca Garrett
Originally printed in Book of Devotions
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ONWARD, SISTERS CELEBRATE

VERSE 1) Onward, sisters celebrate
Renew, Respond, Rejoice
Uniting together, singing with one voice

God will guide us as we work in community,
reaching out to others to live in harmony

CHORUS: Onward, sisters celebrate
Renew, Respond, Rejoice
Uniting together, singing with one voice

VERSE 2) Let us serve our neighbors, as we do your will
With our arms wide open,
hearts we will fulfill
Grant us peace and mercy, as we act so bold
Engaging in ministry,
We inspire the fold

Onward, sisters celebrate
Renew, Respond, Rejoice
Uniting together, singing with one voice

****Sung to the tune of Onward, Christian Soldiers****

*Karen Overcash
Mission: Action Committee
Mount Moriah Lutheran, China Grove*

TRAVELING TOWARD WHOLENESS

Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong! I Corinthians 16:13

As a professional counselor, I know and understand the many ways a person can react to emotional pain or trauma. The avenue on which the pain travels is different for each of us. Once it reaches our beings, often as an unexpected and unwanted visitor, we react and our journey begins.

My journey began in the spring of 2010, when I discovered my husband's infidelity. It came in waves of shock, disbelief and rejection. We separated about a month later and divorced on August 22, 2011, after 27 years of marriage. I knew I had done nothing to contribute to the infidelity. It wasn't about me. I made the choice to be strong and to not allow this tragic and traumatic situation to affect my faith. Difficult? YES Could I travel this road of pain and embarrassment alone? NO

God has given healing powers to physicians, therapists, acupuncturist, etc. I sought out help! The anxiety and pain was unbearable. I was unable to eat or feel happy and content. My doctor prescribed medications and I sought out a therapist. I even began acupuncture. I had to care for myself if I was going to make the journey. This journey was not expected and I had little preparation for it. Despite all of the shock, God was right there – sending me people who could help.

I lost my family as I knew it, my home and my church; the latter being just as difficult and traumatic. I did not expect to be rejected by my church family in which I took the brunt of their anger and pain. Again, God was with me and provided me with the strength to search for a new community of faith. My family took on a new, smaller look. Our recovery continues. It is difficult to celebrate birthdays and holidays in division.

Through the strength and guidance of God, I found a church home full of people who accepted me and my pain; I renewed my family; bought a house (yes, all by myself!) and I forgave the ones who pushed me onto the desolate road of this journey. I know what I can accomplish. I know who loves me. I know which friends will always be here for me. I know, that desolate road on which I began, is no longer desolate – it is full of compassionate, loving friends. These friends I count as family! They walk with me. They've cried with me. They've said, "You can get through this!" and "look at you now!" My blessings are too numerous to count. Even on the lowest, darkest of days, God gave me and continues to give me blessings!

*Denise Henry White
President, Cabarrus/Stanly Conference
Holy Trinity Lutheran, Mount Pleasant*

God of Love, Prince of Peace, who created from chaos an ordered world and proclaimed it to be “very good,” we grieve to see the chaos we have created. We have polluted the soil with chemicals and trash. Runoff has polluted the streams. Fish are deformed and die off. We have polluted the air with fumes and particulates. Birds produce eggs with shells so soft that they cannot hatch them themselves. Plants are deformed; whole species die off. The children of the world experience health problems. We have mined the earth, and left it bare. Wildlife have no place to go. Soil washes down and clogs streams. Floods destroy homes. We have demanded our own way, built more and more terrible weapons, and waged war against one another. Children are maimed, lose parents and siblings, learn to hate. We feel impotent in the face of so much suffering, yet you have not left us helpless. Your Holy Spirit abides with us and counsels us as to what is right and good. We know that we are to follow in the footsteps of Jesus – bringing love, peace, hope, and help to a hurting world. We ask that you fill us now with holy outrage at the wrongs that we see around us, that you give us courage to stand up for what is right, and that you motivate us to do those things that we can do, in Jesus’ name. Amen

*Judy Springer
Friedens Lutheran, Gibsonville
Originally printed in Devotion Book,
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SNOW

*The snow falls softly
Blanketing the earth
With God’s presence.
Clean, white and pure.
Silence.
Peace.
God is with us.*

*Judy Schlegel
Mission: Growth Committee
St. Paul’s Lutheran, Durham*

Rejoice!

*"These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy will be made full.
Rejoice, rejoice in Me." John 15:11*

Recently, attending a memorial service for a dear cousin who was violently taken from us;
a good woman who had given her life over to Christ;
which somehow made this thing, this murder, harder to understand;
I stood and watched as the people arrived.
As they entered, they became silent as looks of despair,
sadness and some anger flashed over their faces.

They had come for a final farewell.
To say good-bye to my cousin Hope, who was found bloodied
and beaten to death in an isolated field.
To say good-bye to this woman who had been violated.

Each person passed by a photo displayed of her taken on her wedding day, nearly a year ago.
Some put down flowers, others stopped for a brief prayer; many to wipe away tears.

And I wept.
Wept with those who were weeping for my cousin,
for the loss and horror we all felt.

Then something happened to take my very breath away.
It was the sound of these simple folks singing, with their voices raised in sincere praise;
the depth of feeling and genuineness of their worship in this tiny church
was transforming.

Smiles replaced tears,
and it was as if Heaven had come down to meet them.
They *were* in God's presence.

As I recognized the old hymn they were singing,
one that refrains, "Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord, amen.", it began to make sense.

These folks were rejoicing; joy was triumphing over sorrow,
hope over despair--as they rejoiced in their love of our Lord.

I had thought only to weep, but was shown the way to
"rejoice with those who rejoice," as Paul said in Romans 12:15.

But rejoice I did, wondering at the miracle of our God's love,
at being given both the ability to weep and rejoice with the same loving heart.

Rejoice!

*Melanie Oliver Denny
SWO Board Member
Augsburg Lutheran, Winston-Salem*

Prayer for Peace

Lord, send us peace.
Stop the warring of the nations;
Take away the weapons of mass destruction;
Inspire the world's leaders to do good.

Lord, send us peace.
Stop the violence in our cities;
Take away the guns and knives;
Let all know they are your children.

Lord, send us peace.
Stop the abuse in our churches;
Take away our feelings of rightness;
Help us to love one another.

Lord, send me peace.
Stop the violence in my soul;
Take away the strivings for perfection and the pain of failure;
Let me know your forgiveness.

Lord, you have given the answer.
If there is to be peace anywhere,
It must begin with me.
Open my heart that I may be filled with your peace.

Amen

*Judy Schlegel
Mission: Growth Committee
St. Paul's Lutheran, Durham
Published in Devotion Book, NC Women of the ELCA, 2004*

Looking for ... Goo

One afternoon recently I was driving home from school. It had been a pretty long day and I was listening to the radio and considering what to fix for supper when I saw it.

I was just coming into Pembroke, where you can see the water tower, right before you get to the big new hardware store. The water tower is sort of an industrial icky mint green. And spray painted on the side in big bold black letters was what looked for all the world like "LOVE GOO".

Do what? I thought. What was this anyhow? And who had done such a thing anyway, vandalizing public property? They should be arrested, at the very least. It was just like that song someone had out a few years ago...

Billy Bob declared his love for Charlene in John Deere green graffiti high up on the town water tower. The town fathers tried for years to cover his vandalism to no avail, so the message remained as a monument to the deep affection of a good ol' boy for his true love. This wasn't even a real declaration, though. This was just stupid. LOVE GOO indeed.

Well, as I made my way home, I considered going all Julia Sugarbaker and calling the police to complain about the graffiti on the water tower. Julia Sugarbaker is my hero, a character from the *Designing Women* television series. Julia was the one who always spoke her mind, whether anyone around her liked it or not. I have been accused of possessing that trait myself. I prefer not to comment.

Then suddenly, it hit me. Those big black letters did not say LOVE GOO. They really said LOVE GOD.

DUH! Why didn't I get it the first time?

Well let's see. I had lesson plans to finish, e-mails to return, and supper to fix. Then I had laundry to sort, parents to call, and research to do for a unit I was preparing to teach. According to several of my students, I am the source of all that is wrong in the world, and delusional on top of it all, since of course they were doing NOTHING wrong...

I was, in short, too distracted, tired, and just plain irritated, to see GOD in GOO. And I could have used God then.

I travel past that water tower every afternoon as I drive home from school. But now, when I look up at it, I don't see GOO. I see GOD.

God doesn't always come to us in neon. He doesn't usually come to us and announce himself: "Hi there, kid, it's me, God. Boy have I got something to tell you!" He doesn't hit us over the head with a rock. When we ask him for help, sometimes, when he send it, we don't recognize it.

continued

Instead of GOD, we see GOO. Or something.

And I think it's a shame that we are so frazzled and distracted by the intricacies and drama of daily life that, most of the time, we neither see nor hear the presence of God in our lives.

Even on a water tower.

*Julie Arndt
Sandhills Conference Treasurer's Assistant
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Lumberton*

GOD'S FAITHFUL AND GUIDING HAND

WE PRAY FOR GUIDANCE AND WALK THE OTHER WAY.
BUT OUR GOD TAKES HOLD OF OUR HAND AND NOTHING DOES HE SAY.

WE PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS AND CONTINUE TO SIN.
OUR FAITHFUL LORD IS LOVING, FORGIVING AGAIN AND AGAIN.

WE PRAY "THY WILL BE DONE" AND TURN OUR THOUGHTS ASTRAY.
OUR LORD SAYS "FOLLOW ME AND FIND A NEW DAY".

WE PRAY AND GIVE THANKS FOR FINALLY WE WILL KNOW,
OUR FAITHFUL GOD WILL BE WITH US WHEREVER WE MAY GO.

*Kay Lineberger
Gathering Planning Committee
Lutheran Chapel, Gastonia*

**I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Translation	Language
Yo te bautizo en el nombre del padre y del hijo y del Espíritu Santo.	
Ich taufen euch im Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes.	
Je vous ai baptiser au nom du père et du fils et du Saint-Esprit.	
私は父の名前でと、息子と聖霊の洗礼を施します。	
Ja chrzczę was w nazwisku Ojca i Syna i Ducha Świętego.	
Я крещу вас, во имя отца и сына и Святого Духа.	
הקודש רוח של ו הבן, האב בשם אותך מטביל אני.	
Ik dopen u in de naam van de vader, en van de zoon, en van de Heilige Geest.	
Io ti battezzo nel nome del padre e del figlio e dello Spirito Santo.	
Eu te batizo em nome do pai e do filho e do Espírito Santo.	
القدس والروح، والابن، الأب باسم اعمدكم أنا.	
我施你以父亲，和儿子，和圣灵。	
Eđer Father ve oğul ve Kutsal Ruh Vaftiz.	
Křtím tě ve jménu otce a syna a ducha svatého.	
I kastaa voit Isän ja pojan ja Pyhän Hengen.	

Daily Personal Baptismal Affirmation

Light a candle and have a small bowl of water in your sacred space. Use this to begin each day.

Make a sign of the cross on your forehead with the water and say:

“‘your name’, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the Cross of Christ forever.”

Follow with a time of silence, prayer and journal writing.

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ANSWERS TO BAPTISMAL TRANSLATIONS:

(Greek: Σας Βαπτίζω στο όνομα του πατέρα του, και ο γιος, και το Άγιο Πνεύμα;
Latin: in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti)

Yo te bautizo en el nombre del padre y del hijo y del Espíritu Santo. Spanish

Ich taufen euch im Namen des Vaters und des Sohnes und des Heiligen Geistes. German

Je vous ai baptiser au nom du père et du fils et du Saint-Esprit. French

私は父の名前でと、息子と聖霊の洗礼を施します。 Japanese

Ja chrzczę was w nazwisku Ojca i Syna i Ducha Świętego. Polish

Я крещу вас, во имя отца и сына и Святого Духа. Russian

הקודש רוח של ו הבן, האב בשם אותך מטביל אני Hebrew

Ik dopen u in de naam van de vader, en van de zoon, en van de Heilige Geest. Dutch

Io ti battezzo nel nome del padre e del figlio e dello Spirito Santo. Italian

Eu te batizo em nome do pai e do filho e do Espírito Santo. Portuguese

القدس والروح، والابن، الأب باسم اعمدكم أنا Arabic

我施你以父亲，和儿子，和圣灵。 Chinese

Eğer Father ve oğul ve Kutsal Ruh Vaftiz. Turkish

Křtím tě ve jménu otce a syna a ducha svatého. Czech

I kastaa voit Isän ja pojan ja Pyhän Hengen. Finnish

Alice Nelson
Mission: Action Committee
Holy Trinity Evangelical Lutheran, Raleigh

MEETING HOWARD...Or, Breaking Down Barriers

A homeless guy approached me in front of the post office one day, asking for the time, and then for some cash. I told him what time it was, but that didn't have any cash. He told me he had a ride coming to take him somewhere, and wanted to give them a little money for gas. But he thanked me anyway, wished me a good day, and went on his way. I was sorry I couldn't help him, but I had used what money I had on me, and was in a hurry to get home.

And I remember a time when maybe I would have ignored him entirely. But Howard changed that for me.

I met Howard on an I-95 off ramp when we first moved to Lumberton. I had a flat tire, no cell phone, and nobody seemed to have the time to stop and ask if they could help me.

Except Howard.

I had noticed a homeless man on a bicycle on the off-ramp. I busily ignored him for a minute or two, but then he pushed his bike toward the car. "Miss, is there anything I can do to help you?" he asked. He would have changed my tire, but I don't think I had a spare... so he offered to go down the street to a local tire place and send help back. I thanked him graciously and was sure nothing would happen. But a few minutes later he came back, with news that the truck was on its way. And we struck up a conversation.

He told me his name. He had lost his wife to cancer and his home to a fire, and had no insurance. He'd lost a construction job about the same time. He was passing through on his way to South Carolina where he had a daughter, a son-in-law, three grandchildren, and a job waiting. They were meeting him at the South Carolina line to take him home.

I never forgot Howard. He had a nice smile and the kindest blue eyes that crinkled around the edges when he laughed. He wore a silver cross around his neck and I noticed a well-worn leather Bible in the canvas bag in his bike basket. He said to me, "Neither God, my mother, or my late wife would have forgiven me if I had not stopped to help you today."

Until that day, about ten years ago, when I needed help and he was the only person who bothered to offer it, I would never have taken the time to talk with him, let alone laugh with him. Or shake hands with him. The reason? The artificial social barriers we construct to protect us from anyone who does not fit our idea of what a person should be. Darn good thing God doesn't work that way, don't ya think?

Anyway, the truck from the tire place got there. I shook Howard's hand, thanked him, wished him blessings, and offered him money for lunch. Which he did not take at first, but I insisted. He had a ways to travel, he told me, and needed to get on his way. He wished me well, told me to keep the faith, and pedaled away.

continued

The tire guy looked at me as if I were nuts, when I remarked, "There was a true gentleman. And a true person of God."

"He needed a bath," the guy replied.

That made me mad, not that I was exactly in a happy mood right then anyway. I told him I didn't care how dirty he was, that he had been more of a gentleman than anyone else on that ramp that day. And more of a Christian.

I thought about Howard in Sunday school last week, when our lesson was about Jesus and the woman at the well. You remember the one. Jesus asked her for water even though no one in her community talked to her **and** even though it was a major no-no for any single man to speak to a woman without "chaperones" around.

Boy, I bet his disciples went nuts. Like "Dude, have you lost your mind?" That's human nature I guess. When someone steps out of the box, and ignores the conventions that most of society holds dear, I guess it's normal for people to wonder about their sanity.

A kid told me once that he thought Jesus was "like the original rebel, the sort of a rebel. You know, Miss Julie, the kind of guy who still wears a pony tail and a leather jacket whether people like it or not. Sorta like a hippie."

Wow, I thought. The son of our Lord, the Savior of all mankind, wearing a leather jacket and a ponytail. Then he added that the coolest thing about Jesus was that he didn't pay attention to social conventions. If he saw somebody in need, he helped them. No matter what the rules of the day said he could or couldn't do.

Then my young friend went on, "Like, most people won't talk to someone who's homeless because they're dirty or maybe afraid they'll ask you for something. That's just wrong. We ought to treat people better than that. If we can help them, we ought to help them, just because they're God's children too."

Thanks, Howard.

*Julie Arndt
Sandhills Conference Treasurer's Assistant
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Lumberton*

OUR FAMILY TAPESTRY

There are layers of family that make up the tapestry of who we are and who we become as Christians. I have been doing a little family research on some of my relatives who go back to great and great-great in lineage. In my research I have found letters that were written back and forth between other members of the family; in reading those letters I have found certain things that continue to weave into the tapestry of my life.

All the women were faithful to their church, their husbands and their families and all of them reached out beyond to help others. They just did it differently in their days. The great grandmas of yesterday were unable to hold jobs other than as teachers or nurses, but they did serve the people.

They started clubs for women in the areas they lived that reached out to folks in need just like our Women of the ELCA does today. It gave these women who wanted to lead a chance to lead by setting up clothes drives, fixing soup in kitchens at their churches, visiting the sick, taking in things for the needs of those who were suffering, particularly during the Wars and Great Depression.

Tapestries of family make us who we are today. With Women of the ELCA we can reach out to those in need right where we live, we can respond to special needs in places out of our country and we can plan for the future by having things on hand when needs arise. We can set up special funds for those special need times and we can support the very ladies who are a part of our family of Women of the ELCA by being good listeners, open to changes and being prepared for the unexpected that might hit anyone of our group personally. We are a tapestry -- a family -- Christians who go back and move forward. Let us continue to weave the Women of the ELCA family tapestry that is a part of each of our lives. Let us prepare to pass it on to the next generation of our church family. We are indeed a many layered tapestry of Christian women from a great lineage.

Cyndee Brekas
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
Greenville, North Carolina

Paul's Rejoicing

While it is true that Paul wrote Philippians as a joy letter, the epistle is also filled with expressions of rejoicing. As with any letter three elements are important: the sender, the recipients and the content. Paul is the sender, the Philippian Christians are the recipients and the content is laden with rejoicing for the church.

Paul opened with, "I have you in my thoughts, my prayers; I have you in my heart." Paul's close relationship with the Philippians was not diminished by his imprisonment. He professes his love and heartfelt desires for the church. In Philippians 1:8-11 Paul allows us to hear him pray for the church.

Praying transformed Paul's prison into a sanctuary, his burdens into blessings and his grief into rejoicing.

Paul prayed, "that love may abound yet more and more (1:9). In our English language the word "love" is greatly overworked. In Greek, there are differing kinds of love: passion, affection, and fraternal love. They reserve the highest form of love as "Agape Love", or Christian love for one another. The greatest Agape love ever shown was manifested when Jesus gave himself to us.

Picture a fountain in a park, where the water is rolling out, rolling over and over to reach more people. God's love, shed in our hearts, should thus overflow to enrich the church, touch the world around us and give us great reason to rejoice. As we grow in grace we learn to prove, "what it is that is good and acceptable in the will of God," and rejoice for this blessing.

We rejoice that we may be "sincere and without offense til the day of Christ." (1:10) Paul spoke of "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the Glory and praise of God" (1:11). We can all rejoice in the glory of this.

I find it significant that the word "Rejoicing" is encountered 19 times in Philippians. Real and everlasting joy is found in Jesus Christ alone. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy will be made full. Rejoice, rejoice in the Lord." John 15:11

*Melanie Oliver Denny
SWO Board Member
Augsburg Lutheran, Winston-Salem*

Girl Power...

Women rock.

Women always have rocked, and I don't just mean in chairs with a baby in their lap. Although there is very little more soothing than holding a baby and rocking him to sleep. Or with guitars in front of millions of screaming fans. Although that in itself is a pretty cool thing, and a rather bold thing.

I am a big fan of girl power.

I encourage the girls I teach to stand up for themselves, to trust themselves, and to respect themselves. I encourage them to find a dream and work to make it happen, not "even though" they are girls who will become women, but BECAUSE they are becoming women.

In my lifetime, women have come so far... There are women in political offices. Both Carolinas have female governors. Our Secretary of State is a woman. Several women have served as US Supreme Court justices and in both houses of congress. And I fully believe that in my lifetime we will elect a woman to the office of President of the United States.

Women head major corporations, argue lawsuits and perform delicate medical procedures.

Women write novels, produce films and television programs, venture into war zones, and fight crime. Women make us laugh, make us sing, and make us think.

Women go boldly where no one has been, exploring the universe.

Women teach and inspire. Women play sports, fly planes and drive trucks.

And then, they go home, make dinner, supervise homework, do laundry, and get ready for another day. They balance checkbooks and temperamental teenagers, negotiate big deals and schedules complicated enough to choke a horse.

And women pray. Women pray for friends and family. Women pray for the world their children will inherit. Women go out into their daily lives and act on their faith. They work in their churches and communities, daring to make a difference. They sing in choirs, play organs and teach Sunday School. And tend the altar.

They serve on committees and volunteer. They deliver flowers to nursing homes and make quilts. They prepare meals for the homeless and work as tutors in prisons and community centers.

They talk to the people they meet about their faith. They invite people to come to their churches and make others feel welcome and appreciated. They nurture and protect and encourage, not only each other but all those around them.

continued

And bold women are everywhere. Even in our own congregations. Strong, gentle, loving women who act on God's call to feed his sheep, spread his love, and be his hands in the world.

Here's to the bold women who paved the way for us. Here's to the next generation of bold women, for whom we are paving the way. I hope that they are learning what it means to be a woman of faith.

Celebrate them today.

They all make me proud to be a woman.

Girl power rocks!

*Julie Arndt
Sandhills Treasurer's Assistant
St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Lumberton*

Our Heavenly Father,
your Son, our Savior,
the ever present Holy Spirit:

Our triune God,

I come to you with joy and thanksgiving for all of the ways you have come to me in my needs. Without your presence I could not survive. I need your guidance to choose where and how I do your will.

May I listen and obey.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen

*Edna Wagschal
Mission: Growth Committee
St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Burlington*

DATE	COMMEMORATION
JANUARY	
1	<p>The New Year</p> <p>O God of new beginnings, we thank you for this new day and this new year. It is a brilliant light and love that renews our strength to hope and trust in you. Help us to dedicate this new beginning to you. Amen</p>
	<p>Martin Luther King Day Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
FEBRUARY	
First week	<p>World Interfaith Harmony Week ...spread the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world's churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship ... according to individual religious traditions and convictions. Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
4	<p>World Cancer Day</p> <p>Dear Heavenly Father, I pray for this feared disease to be cured soon. Guide the researchers to find both a cure, and a prevention of it soon. I pray this for all who have lost a dear one to any type of cancer, and in remembrance of their dear ones. This I pray in Jesus' name. Amen</p>
20	<p>World Day of Social Justice Social Justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
MARCH	
8	<p>International Women's Day "Equal Access to Education, Training, and Science and Technology: Pathway for Decent Work for Women" Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
21	<p>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>

APRIL	
	<p>National Donate Life Month</p> <p>Lord, you have given the gifts of science and research to us. In so doing, the blessing of life can be shared in so many ways through the selfless donation of vital organs and life-giving blood. Bless those who make the gift and those who receive the gift, so that their lives will be a living testament of Life through Jesus Christ. Amen</p>
22	<p>International Mother Earth Day</p> <p>An acknowledgement that the earth and its ecosystems provide its inhabitants with life and sustenance. It also recognizes a collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity. Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
MAY	
6	<p>Rachel's Day</p> <p>Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
15	<p>International Day of Families</p> <p>Heavenly Father, we are blessed to be children of God. Our earthly families are also blessed, regardless of how they were formed. Whether through birth, adoption, marriage, Christian fellowship, or friendship we share a bond of love. We can rejoice in the comfort of your mercy as well as the companionship of those we hold dear. Amen</p>
22-28	<p>National Hurricane Awareness Week</p> <p>Heavenly Father, the wonder of your creation is so powerful. As we stand in awe of your marvelous works, we must remember to have a healthy respect for the power that can be brought about by storms, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Let us be mindful of how to protect ourselves. Let us show compassion to those whose lives are impacted, whether in our communities or in areas far from us. Amen</p>
JUNE	
5	<p>World Environment Day</p> <p>Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>

8	<p>World Oceans Day</p> <p>Father, your creation is so wonderful! The oceans that grace the earth are such beautiful and powerful reminders of the tides that our lives can experience. Being part of your creation, help us to be good servants and stewards of the mighty oceans that help to renew us and sustain us. Amen</p>
JULY	
30	<p>International Day of Friendship</p> <p>Dear Lord,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Of all of my many blessings, I am especially blessed with dear friends. They are truly "God's Angels on earth"! They are a human reminder of God's love and care for us. They have truly "lifted me up" when I was feeling alone, sad, or disheartened. Thank you Lord for them always.</p> <p style="padding-left: 80px;">In Jesus' name, Amen</p> <p>Lord, Thank you for the gift of friends in our lives! We are blessed to have our brothers and sisters in Christ. We are especially blessed to have the love and sisterhood of women through the work of the Women of the ELCA in our conferences, in North Carolina, across the nation, and around the world. Keep us strong in our faith so that we can continue to support one another in our callings. As children of God, Amen.</p>
AUGUST	
12	<p>International Youth Day</p> <p>Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
SEPTEMBER	
	<p>Whole Grains Month</p> <p>Father Above,</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The world you gave us is bursting with many nutritious whole grains that help sustain us. Grant us the wisdom to learn how to cook and eat these grains so we will further care for the Holy Spirit's temple, our bodies. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen</p>
8	<p>International Literacy Day</p> <p>Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>

21	<p>International Day of Peace Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
OCTOBER	
	<p>National Breast Cancer Awareness Month</p> <p>Dear Heavenly Father, My prayer is that soon there will be a cure for all cancers. For now I pray for early detection to save our dear ones' lives. I pray this for all who have lost a dear one to breast cancer, and in remembrance of their dear ones. In Jesus' name. Amen</p>
First Monday	<p>World Habitat Day</p> <p>Dear Father,</p> <p>You created the amazing world in which we live. You gave us all we needed to have water, food, and shelter. Grant that we learn to be guardians of the many Habitats that fill our world. Help us learn not to destroy these but rather to build them up to your Glory.</p> <p>Amen</p>
5	<p>World Teacher's Day</p> <p>Heavenly Father, you taught us by example through your Son, Jesus Christ. Be with teachers everywhere that they are able to impart skills and knowledge so that students may go into the world to be responsible, productive citizens.</p> <p>Help teachers to be mindful of the impact they have on the lives of others . Let them serve as examples that would be pleasing in your eyes. In your Holy Name, Amen.</p>
16	<p>World Food Day Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
NOVEMBER	
	<p>National Family Caregivers Month</p> <p>Be with caregivers everywhere as they act to minister to the needs of loved ones. Supply them with the physical strength they need and also let them find time for rest. Let them feel the strength of your loving arms and the support of others to be emotionally and spiritually able to serve with love and compassion. Amen.</p>

11-17	<p>International Week of Science and Peace Dear Heavenly Father,</p> <p>During this week when across the globe we focus on Science & Peace, may you grant all people the wisdom to listen in the interest of peace. May we all encourage charity toward everyone we meet and greet this week. In your Holy son's name, we pray. Amen</p>
20	<p>Universal Children's Day</p> <p>Heavenly Father, thank you for the gift of your Son and the blessing of the children in our lives. Let children everywhere know the feeling of being loved and cared for. When children do find themselves in need, speak to the hearts of others so that we may recognize the cries for help and act according to your will. Lead us, O Lord, to attend to the least of these. In your name, Amen.</p>
25	<p>International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
DECEMBER	
1	<p>World AIDS Day Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>
20	<p>International Human Solidarity Day "Let us live our daily lives in solidarity with those less fortunate than us – the poor, the sick and elderly, those enduring abuse, discrimination or violations of their rights – and thereby build a better world for all". Write your own prayer for this special day.</p>