

*I can't say it any better than our bishop! Though Christmas Day may be over, the Good News of Christmas, God's YES for YOU comes every day of the year. May you be reminded of that each day of this New Year! – Pastor Megan*

## **A Christmas Message from Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the ELCA**

*"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all." (Titus 2:11)*



Yes... In this world where God created with deep beauty and profound mystery. In this world where so many yearn for God's healing and peace. In this world where some have thought God has forsaken us.

Yes... Here, in this world, the grace of God has appeared. Not just in this world but for you.

Yes... For you, weary from trying to meet the expectations of others. For you, worrying about an uncertain future. For you, wondering if you are worthy.

Yes... For you, the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation. Not just for you but for all.

Yes... For all, salvation has come in the wonder of God in mercy bending low to meet us in our humanity. In the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. In the power and promise of the gospel's proclamation. God's goodness and loving-kindness has appeared in the Savior Jesus.

So with angelic messengers and witnessing shepherds, we raise our voices:

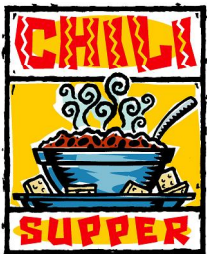
*"Glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace among those whom he favors."*



## **The Annual Meeting of Grace Lutheran Church ...will be held on**

Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> after worship. Please plan on attending to celebrate ministry highlights from 2011 and to look ahead to goals for ministry in 2012 and beyond! We'll watch the annual Grace highlights PowerPoint and a video about ministry across the ELCA, celebrate the giving of the Grace Mission Endowment Fund, review the 2012 budget, elect Mission Board members, and give thanks for all God is doing through the people of Grace Lutheran!

**Mission Board & Mission Teams** – Annual Reports are due in the church office by Wednesday, January 11, 2012 so that we can have the Annual Report available for people to read the weekend before the Annual meeting.

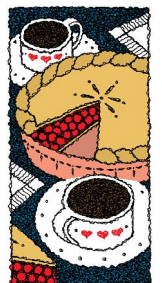


## **The Annual Chili Cook-Off...** Calling all home chefs and closet

cooks! Now's the time to enter your favorite chili recipe in the annual Grace Lutheran Chili Cook-Off on January 29 following the Annual Meeting! What's it involve? Sign up in the Narthex at church, then make a pot of your favorite recipe and bring it on January 29. We'll have taster cups for people to sample it and vote! The prizes are AMAZING! (Well, the satisfaction of knowing you're the best chili cook at Grace will be amazing anyway!) The Youth will make lots of chili and chicken noodle soup to

stave off the hungry crowd so you don't have to make a ton, just a pot.

**...and Pie Auction** Grace 6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth will display their awesome baking skills during the annual pie auction immediately following the Chili Cook-Off on January 29. Save your bucks and buy a pie! Don't miss out on a "piece" of the action at the auction! This fun tradition of the Cook-Off and Pie Auction will help us raise funds for the ELCA's Youth Gathering next summer in New Orleans and Confirmation Youth to attend Confirmation Camp.



# Making Christ Known Through Worship...



**Sunday, January 1 - New Year's Day**

**10:00 a.m. 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas &  
Name of Jesus Day**

*"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in  
peace, according to your word; for my eyes have  
seen your salvation..."-- Luke 2:29-30*

**Isaiah 61:10—62:3**

**Psalm 148**

**Galatians 4:4-7**

**Luke 2:22-40**



**January 7/8 – Baptism of Our Lord**

**+Thanksgiving for Baptism**

**+Mission Sunday Guest = Pr. Tom Wilson,  
Campus Lutheran, UNK**

**+Celebration of Birthdays & Anniversaries**

*In the beginning when God created the heavens  
and the earth, the earth was a formless void and  
darkness covered the face of the deep, while a  
wind from God swept over the face of the waters. –*

**Gen. 1:1-2**

**Genesis 1:1-5**

**Acts 19:1-7**

**Mark 1:4-11**



## EPIPHANY

**January 14/15 –  
2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. after  
Epiphany**

**"God Has a Dream"  
+Giving thanks for  
Dr. King**

*Nathanael said to him,  
"Can anything good  
come out of Nazareth?"  
Philip said to him,  
"Come and see." –*

**John 1:46**

**1 Samuel 3:1-20**

**Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18**

**1 Corinthians 6:12-20**

**John 1:43-51**

**January 21/22 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. after Epiphany  
"Good News is on the phone!"**

**+Healing Prayers**

*...Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good  
news of God,... -- Mark 1:14*

**Jonah 3:1-5, 10**

**Psalm 62:5-12**

**1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

**Mark 1:14-20**

**January 28/29 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sun. after Epiphany  
"Building Together"**

**+Annual Meeting, Sunday, 11:15 a.m.**

**+Chili Cook-off & Pie Auction**

*Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. -- 1 Cor.  
8:1b*

**1 Corinthians 8:1-13**

**Mark 1:21-28**



**Lessons, Laughter,  
Light Munchies & Sheep!**

Explore the Sunday morning  
lessons we read in worship! Get  
more out of worship!

Open to anyone! (Hey, we accept Ed and  
Vance!) Fresh ground coffee and Joni's  
goodies included!



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

We're celebrating the monthly birthdays and anniversaries on the second Sunday (January 8<sup>th</sup>) during fellowship after worship with special goodies and by keeping these people in the prayers that day!

## January

- 1 - Cecelia Gaye, Mia Gaye, Jim Gaye, Capitan Quiah
- 3 - Ashtyn Flynn
- 5- Broedy Amend
- 7 - Joseph Korha
- 12 - Elaine Cox, Joni Bennett
- 18 - Chandler Flynn, Vivian Malone
- 20- Carol Wilken
- 23 - Andrew Hernandez
- 24 - Daniel Carnes, Dorothy Bricker, Dave Hatfield
- 27 - KJ Fischer
- 29 - Adriana Carnes

### *\*Friends and Family in Need of Healing...*

Ray Carr, Staci Cannon, Terri Casper, Mark Dolan, Gary Flint, Phyllis Flynn, Gina Gerken, Pr. Judy Gifford, Nancy Kline, Becky Meredith, Kris Nelson, Dennis Pentz, Joyce Royle, Niels Royle, Kim (Stoll) Smith, Trey Stombaugh, Bruce Stuart, Peg Wirth.

### *\*Our Sympathies...*

+Elaine Cox and family at the death of her brother-in-law.  
 +Arline Miles and family at the death of her sister-in-law.

### *\*Our Grace Family Homebound...*

In Lexington unless otherwise noted.

- +Walter Brockmeier (Plum Creek Care Ctr.)
- +Jeanne Luebbe (510 Centennial Cir, A208, North Platte 69101)
- +Vivian Malone (Park Avenue Estates, Room 20)
- +Alta Meredith (Park Avenue Estates, Room 52)
- +Linda & Dennis Mathes (Park Ave. Est., Rm 11)
- +Nita Mueller (Park Ave Estates, Rm )
- +Elsie Shreves (at home – 1212 N. Taylor)

### *\*Our Service People...*

Jared Bennett, Kevin Bricker, Spencer Burch (Afghanistan), Chad Dachtler (Afghanistan), John Gutschow, Jason Harmony, Daniel R. Wilken, Cody Madura (Afghanistan), Dallas Margritz (Afghanistan), Colby Smets (Afghanistan), Brandon Somerville, Aryka & Alex Van Horn (Kuwait), Nicki Zarate.



# Making Christ Known Through Education...



**Sunday School  
for 3 -yr-olds thru 5<sup>th</sup> Grade  
9:00 a.m.**

No Sunday School on January 1 -  
Happy New Year!

January 8, 15 & 22

Unit IV = Walking on Water

Memory Verse - Matthew 14:27 - *But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."*

January 29, Feb. 5 & 12

Unit V = The Lord's Prayer

Memory Verse - The Lord's Prayer (of course!) and/or 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18  
*<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*



**Wednesdays  
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.  
Kindergarten - 5<sup>th</sup>  
Grade**

Welcome back to Akaloo on Wed., January 4!  
We'll be singing, playing and learning about Jesus walking on the water and the Lord's Prayer this winter! (Hope it wasn't cold when Jesus walked on the water!)



**6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Grade  
Confirmation  
Wednesdays  
6:15-8:15 pm**

This year's our Bible year in Confirmation! Last month we learned about the Exile of the people of Israel into Babylon, and how God was faithful to them even then! God even promised to bring them home and that a new king, a Messiah was coming to save them!

Cooks

January—

1/4 = Souper Bowl Sunday prep & Annual Mtg. dinner prep Sr High  
1/11 = "The Birth of Jesus" G'Schwind/Hanson  
1/18 = "Wilderness Temptations" Hobelman/Gaye  
1/25 = "Jesus Calls the Disciples" Rowe/Gatewach  
Sunday 1/29 = Annual Meeting Dinner, Chili Cook-off & Pie Auction youth fund raiser

February—

2/1 = "Feeding 5,000" Gerken/Benjamin  
Sun. 2/5 = Souper Bowl Sunday for World Hunger



**Wednesday  
Night Senior  
High  
9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Grades  
6:15-8:15 pm**

Welcome back to Sr. High on Wednesday, Jan. 4!  
We'll be planning the Chili Cook-off and Pie Auction, and of course, gabbing about life and faith!



**Our Kids Give!**

Sunday School offering this fall totaled \$248.47 for the Welcome Center!

Children's Sermon kids collected \$17.31 for World Hunger in November/December!



The excitement of Christmas is over and we are settling in to the beginning of another new year at preschool. January of 2012 we will be learning about winter weather, what animals do in winter, and take a break from winter with Beach Day fun. Hopefully we can then leave winter behind!



## book of faith

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

### 2011-2012 Adult Emphasis – “Let’s read the Bible Together!”

Have a hard time making time to dig into God’s Word? Haven’t done it much? Find it hard to read on your own? Let’s read the Bible together!

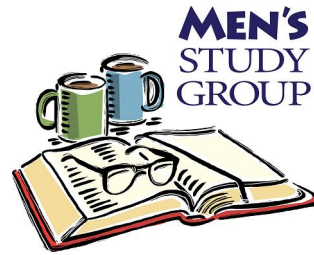
#### ***A Book at a Time – Pastor Megan***

Wednesdays at 5:15 p.m. &  
Noon on Thursdays (brown bag at Grace).

We’ll read through a book of the Bible together and see what God has to say to us using the Book of Faith resources. *The next series will be...*

#### ***Mark’s Gospel: Questions for Jesus, 6 sessions, Jan. 11 - Feb. 15***

Come explore the Gospel that most of our Sunday lessons in 2012 are taken from. Sign up in the Narthex so we know how many books to order!



### Men’s Breakfast Bible Study!

First & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays of the month at 6:30 a.m. at Madeline’s coffee shop downtown. Scott Saunders and Jerry Bergstrom facilitate the discussion. No prep! Just come! January dates are the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 17<sup>h</sup>.

### “One Year To Live” Men’s Retreat

The Lutheran Men in Mission of the Nebraska Synod are sponsoring a One Year To Live Men’s Retreat to be held March 23-25, 2012, at Camp Rivercrest in Fremont.

This not your typical retreat. It’s a “spiritual boot camp” led by lay men and is intended for any/all men looking to find God’s purpose for them in life.

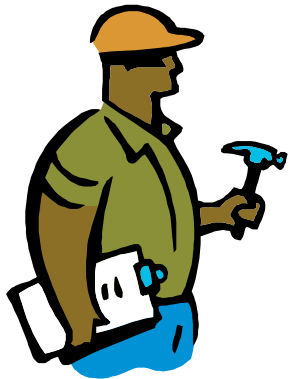
Registration is \$195 per person, which includes two nights lodging, five meals, student materials and the opportunity to “change your life.” Registration deadline is March 9, 2012. A limited number of partial scholarships are available, based on need.

You can access a registration flyer at [lutheranmeninmission.org](http://lutheranmeninmission.org).



**Financial Peace class** will start on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Contact Norm Naylor 325-4462 or register at [www.gracelutheranlex.com](http://www.gracelutheranlex.com) under adult classes.

# Making Christ Known Through Service...



## Building Men For Christ Workshop

The Lutheran Men in Mission of the Nebraska Synod are holding a Building Men For Christ Workshop on

Saturday, Jan. 14, 2012, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in the Wellness Center at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn.

This workshop is designed and presented by Lutheran Men In Mission (LMM) at the national level. The target audience includes pastors (both male and female) and current and potential future lay leaders in the men's ministry field for the purpose of strengthening existing or starting new men's ministry programs.

The registration fee is \$65 per person, which includes two books, student materials and lunch. Pastors (both male and female) are encouraged to attend. The registration fee for pastors will be waived if their registration is accompanied by two paid registrations of lay men from their mission centers.

The registration deadline is Jan. 6. You can access a registration flyer at [lutheranmeninmission.org](http://lutheranmeninmission.org).



## Mission Sunday January 7-8 Campus Ministry across Nebraska

Special Guest: Pr. Tom  
Wilson, Campus  
Lutheran, UNK

# Empyrean Trail 5k Run - Saturday, February 18, 2012



**Presented by Empyrean Brewing Company  
& Lazlo's Brewery and Grill  
Carol Joy Holling Camp, Ashland, NE (map)  
Saturday, February 18 • 11 a.m.  
Check-in begins at 9 a.m.**

Come join the winter fun at Carol Joy Holling Camp. This event is packed with adventurous running, wonderful food and amazing, Empyrean beer! You don't want to miss this one. *Plus, the funds raised from this event support the summer camping programs of Carol Joy Holling Camp.* No child is ever turned away from camp because they can't afford the fee. In 2011, more than \$80,000 was given in camp sponsorships!

### The Run

This 5K fun run will take you through the trails of [Carol Joy Holling Camp](#). Over the hills, through the woods and maybe even through a couple of frozen creek beds. Of course, depending on how much snow is on the ground and the temperature, it could be snowy, muddy or frozen solid - memories waiting to be made!

Winners will be named from each of the following categories:

Ages 21-30 - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, male & female divisions  
Ages 31-40 - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, male & female divisions  
Ages 41-50 - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, male & female divisions  
Ages 50+ - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup>, male & female divisions  
Overall winner, male and female

All runners will get a stocking hat. Prizes will be awarded in each category! Don't miss out on the chance to win Beer for a year!

NOTE: You do not have to be 21 to run. If you are under 21, obviously you can't partake in the beer or win beer products. You are eligible for the overall winner.

### **Food and beer**

After your run, you'll be treated to a sandwich and soup combo from Lazlo's and two beers of your choice — including their special Luther Lager, brewed just for this event! Your lunch and two beers are included in the cost of registration. Of course, you can purchase additional food and drinks too. Be sure to carry your ID on you at all times, so you can get your beer. (Sorry - no ID= no beer.)

### **Cost**

Register before February 1: \$35

Register after February 1: \$41

Full fee is due at registration. Sorry - no refunds.

Register at [www.caroljoyholling.org](http://www.caroljoyholling.org) or call 402-944-2544 for more information.

## **Mission Board Minutes**

### **Treasurer's Report:**

Beginning Balance	\$ 626.76
Income	\$13,911.82
Expense	\$13,100.92
Balance as of 12/23/11	\$1,437.66

### **Mission Board Minutes Thursday, Dec. 15, 2011 6:00-8:30 p.m.**

**Present: Scott Saunders, Pastor Megan Morrow, Craig Gibbons, Jeff Brummet, Jerry Bergstrom, Deb Hatfield, Carol Sheldon, Norm Naylor**

### **I. Gathering in God's Name--Devotions & Prayer**

**II. The Road Before Us -- Our Mission at Grace and what we can see ahead of us in the coming months.**

### **1. Business Tonight that Empowers Our**

**Mission: (Making Christ Known Thru W, E & S)**

**Review the Agenda for tonight**

## **Old & New Business**

### **1) Minutes from Nov. mtg.**

MSA to accept the minutes as printed

### **2) Nov. Financial Reports & updates (Norm)**

MSA to accept the financial report as submitted

### **3) Consecration Weekend Results & 2012 Budget Draft (Richard Johnson)**

+Results from Consecration Weekend

+Mitch McCartney wouldn't take the mileage or speaking fee we offered since he is on the NE Synod staff. Do we want to make a gift of those dollars to a Synod ministry(ies)?

+First draft

+Mission Board will give final approval to a draft at the January meeting in order to have the congregation vote at the Annual Meeting.

MSA to give \$400 to Table Grace Ministries to honor Mitch McCartney's service to Grace Lutheran Church

### **4) Celebration of Finishing our 4-year commitment to the NE Synod "Feed the Roots – Grow the Forest" Capital Campaign!**

+Four years ago (2008), the congregation committed to the NE Synod Campaign in the amount of \$17,600 (\$4,400 per year for 4 years).

+This month, December, we complete our commitment! Woohoo! God is good! We did it through difficult times! We made a difference in mission for developing leaders, youth and outreach across Nebraska! See the attached campaign sheet for the campaign's goals and what we helped accomplish!

### **5) Nominating Team update:**

+ The Nominating Team is proceeding to discern the 3<sup>rd</sup> nominee for Mission Board and 3 people to serve as Voting Members to Synod Assembly and the Cluster meeting (Sat., Feb. 4) to nominate a new Bishop. (Jerry Bergstrom and Scott Saunders and one woman TBA volunteered to serve as Voting Members).

### **6) Cluster "Doing" event report/summary**

+Held at St. John's in Eustis for leaders in mission from congregations in our cluster

+Attending from Grace: Mission Board - Carol Sheldon, Joni Bennett; Caring Cooks – Kathy Neil, Lynn Smith; Youth – Blake Casper, Amber Nelson

+Learned about Prison Ministry across the synod and made care packages for Campus Ministry

### **7) Other Old/New Business?**

## **2. Celebrating God's Work in Progress (Mission Team Reports) –**

-- Remember to e-mail your monthly report/update to the secretary to put in the agenda at Mission Board meeting. (jbergstr@charter.net)

### **Education (Craig Gibbons MB, Nancy Brummet TL) –**

- +Christmas program was great on Dec. 11! There are some, if not all, of the kids wanting to do another program will discuss with Pastor Megan about this after the holidays.
- +Wednesday night youth & adults will take a break the rest of December
- +Confirmation youth delivered 4 Thanksgiving baskets to Housing Authority residents, and are also participating in the Bear Tree with their small groups.
- +Adult Bible Studies will start up again the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in January on the Gospel of Mark.
- +Our attendance for the weekly Akaloo is 19. (More boys than girls it is 6 girls to 13 boys).
- +Sunday school attendance is about 7-10.
- +Akaloo & Sunday School started using the same stories which makes it easier on all involved.

### **Fellowship (Joni MB, Marian Berke & Deb**

**James TL) -** The Fellowship Team prepared soup and desserts on Sunday, November 27th as part of the Church Decorating festivities.

The Team will be meeting to plan Fellowship activities for 2012.

### **Mutual Ministry (Scott MB, Lauren Daberkow)**

+Sharon and Pastor took lunch to Lauren after his back surgery – it's "Mutual" Ministry after all!

**Outreach (Jerry & Deb MB, Lary Bomberger TL) –** New pictures for our sign were presented along with the catalogue providing a description of the construction of the sign.

MSA to take \$2500 from the Memorial Fund to go toward the purchase of the new sign for the church. The remainder of the cost will be brought to the congregation for contributions. The total cost of the sign, including installation and landscaping will run approximately \$,5000.

The Mission Board thanks the Outreach team for their work in getting the planning portion of this project in place.

### **Property (Jeff MB, Tom Wisdom TL) –**

- +In need of operational vacuum cleaners
- +Men's urinal will be repaired...parts are in
- +The fountain near the pre-school has a problem draining...team will work on this
- +Garbage disposal in the kitchen island sink needs to be installed

### **Stewardship/Finance (Dave MB, Richard**

**Johnson TL) –** Richard Johnson presented the proposed budget for 2012. Dave Ramsey simulcast will be held in Lexington on March 17, 2012 (Saturday). Financial Peace University course will be offered again beginning in January.

### **Worship (Pr. Megan MB, John Strackbein TL) –**

- +Worship Team met on Dec. 3 and went over the 2012 budget draft adding some items related to the sound system for upkeep.
- +The lapel microphones need repair and the group authorized John and Pastor to get those fixed or replaced as soon as possible.
- +The Team discussed the need to put together a long-range plan for the audio-visual needs in the sanctuary since technologically things are starting to need upgrading (video camera, for example). We will discuss this in January.
- +There is a need to put together or update our funeral policy. Pastor wasn't aware we had one. She will check into it and if we have one, we'll update it (Linda remembers helping put one together a while ago). If we don't have one or can't find it, we'll put one together to address the sound system needs, funeral luncheon guidelines and worship planning, etc.

**Youth (Carol MB, Cheri Saunders TL) –** The leadership and youth are looking at several ideas for fundraisers for National Youth Gathering.

### **Pastor's Report – Attached**

## **3. Other?**

### **III. Gifted for the Journey –**

Next regular meeting: Thursday, January 12, 2012

### **IV. The Lord's Prayer, Blessing, Passing the Peace**

## Classifieds

Dear Caring Cooks and Grace Lutheran,  
Thank you so much for the goodies in the care package that I received. It is exciting to receive fun things in the mail, especially around Finals time when things seem to be very hectic. I appreciate you thinking of me! I wish all of you a very blessed Christmas and New Year! Thanks again. Melinda Miller

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Thank you so much for your generosity in sending soup and snacks as the semester comes to an end. They will be very useful during these last few weeks of projects, research and tests. Thank you again for thinking of me. Tyanne Mischnick

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Caring Cooks, Thank you so much for the chili, crackers and cookies in honor of Dad. We appreciate your thoughtfulness. Al Meyer family

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Thank you to the congregation for the cards and remembrances over the Christmas season! Your generosity and giving are part of what make serving at Grace a joy! Blessings, Pastor Megan and Sharon

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Thank you to so many members of the congregation who helped to decorate the church inside and out through December! Your labors of love are greatly appreciated and give glory to God!

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Thank you to the Caring Cooks for the delicious chicken soup, tastes so good on these cold winter nights. We so appreciated it. Lauren and Jo Daberkow

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Thank you to the Caring Cooks for the wonderful soup that you gave me. Patsy Loschen

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## **January Ministry Committee**

### **Assisting Minister Schedule**

January 1 – Cheri Saunders  
January 8 - Cheri Saunders  
January 15– Steve Steward  
January 22 - Lary Bomberger  
January 29 – Richard Johnson

### **Altar Guild Chairperson = Joni Bennett**

Dianne Franzen, Amy Hobelman, Neala/Wes Lubberstedt, Arline Miles, Johnnie Rowe

### **January Serving Group Coordinators**

Jo Daberkow      Nancy Kline

### **Serving Group**

Delpha Albus, Marian Berke, Kami Bailey, Susan Bennett, Dorothy Bricker, Elberta Brummet, Betty Davis, Rebecca Funk, Dianne Franzen, Amanda G'Schwind, Carol Hinrich, Amy Hobelman, Mary Ann Kerr, Tracy Naylor, Jan Phillippi, Joyce Royle, Peggy Stenberg, Lisa LeVan Steward, Ruth Strackbein