



# LutheranWoman TODAY



# Issue Overview

## 2007

### September

#### BLESS YOUR HEART

Jesus' first big sermon begins with a blessing. What does it mean to be blessed? What does it mean to bless someone else? We learn that blessing others can bless us in return.

#### BIBLE STUDY

**Count Your Blessings, Hold Fast to the Promise**

*Theme verses: Matthew 5:3-12*

#### Focus on Health: Don't Be Duped by Drug Ads

More than 8.5 million Americans take prescription drugs that they learned about through commercials. Experts say some ads are medically misleading—and a hazard to your health.

### October

#### OPEN HANDS

Jesus knew the power of possessions to enthrall. That's why he opens his sermon with "Blessed are the poor in spirit." How do we live without being possessed by our possessions?

#### BIBLE STUDY

**Poor in Spirit, Rich in Blessing**

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:3*

#### Focus on Health: The Body at War with Itself

More than 1.5 million Americans (90 percent women) live with lupus, an autoimmune disorder. During Lupus Awareness Month, get tips on how people with lupus can live a normal, active life.

### November

#### HOLY COMFORT

Comfort comes, but not always in ways we expect. In the wilderness of mourning, we see God—and live. Is it possible to be blessed by our losses?

#### BIBLE STUDY

**Blessing in the Country of Mourning**

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:4*

#### Focus on Health: Fend Off the Flu

One sneeze from a friend can pass on a stubborn virus that triggers coughing, congestion, body aches, and fever. Protect yourself from severe flu.

## 2007 SUMMER BIBLE STUDY: ACT BOLDLY FOR MISSION

The three-session 2007 summer Bible study in the June and July/August issues of *Lutheran Woman Today* encourages us to "Act Boldly for Mission." Written by Kelly Fryer, a teacher, author, and motivational speaker, the study explores how women can boldly take part in God's mission to love and bless and save the world. To be the church, she says, is to participate in that mission by sharing the good news about Jesus Christ in word and deed. Her study tells us we are sent out (1) With the Message of Jesus, (2) Like the First Evangelists, and (3) In the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Fryer, who holds master of divinity and master of theology degrees, is author of the best-selling *Reclaiming the L Word: Renewing the Church from Its Lutheran Core* and writer for the *No Experience Necessary* Bible study series (both from Augsburg Fortress). She is a member of the faculty at Spertus College in Chicago, Illinois, where she teaches leadership and organization in the Nonprofit Management Graduate Program. She has also taught on the faculty of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota.



# 2008

## December

### MEEK AND MIGHTY

Jesus is the meekness of God made flesh—power held in check. We learn from Jesus how to take the “wimp factor” out of being meek.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### Following with Tempered Strength

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:5*

### Focus on Health: The Secrets of Centenarians

Since 1970, life expectancy in the United States has jumped from 71 to 78 years, and people over 100 are the fastest-growing age group in the nation. Learn the secrets to extending—and enjoying—your own December years.

## January/February

### TABLE MANNERS

Before his crucifixion, Jesus shares a last supper with his disciples. After his resurrection, he cooks them breakfast. See how eating and drinking together constitute the kingdom—a foretaste of the feast to come.

### BIBLE STUDIES

#### Follow Your Heart—and Find the Heart of God

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:6*

#### Mercy Made Real—Disciples as Forgiven Forgivers

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:7*

### Focus on Health: Check Out These Checkups

A great New Year's resolution is to get regular medical checkups. From Pap smears starting at age 21 to bone-density scans starting at 65, here's a decade-by-decade rundown of the tests you'll need over your lifetime.

## March

### SEEING IS BELIEVING

Jesus comes to show us God's face. He also comes to restore our vision. Seeing is a gift not to be taken lightly.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### Pure in Heart, Rich in Vision

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:8*

### Focus on Health: Yes, It Is the Best Medicine

Laughter not only uses fewer muscles than frowning, it can revitalize your health by lowering blood pressure, reducing stress, boosting the immune system, minimizing pain—and even warding off heart disease. Scientists call it “internal jogging.”



## April

### PEACE FULL

Peace is Jesus' deepest desire for his disciples. Peace is not a process or a place or a plea, but a Person. Jesus is the Prince of Peace.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### Making Peace and Being Peace

*Theme verse: Matthew 5:9*

#### Focus on Health: Stress, the Silent Killer

Squabbling kids, a nagging boss, and looming taxes can all cause stress. Stress raises heart rates, fogs memory, and boosts our risk for obesity, diabetes, insomnia, and more. Learn the danger signs—and strategies for coping.

## May

### GOOD COMPANY

The Beatitudes don't bless us so we look good—they bless us so we *do* good. When we do good, we're in fine company as we bear the face of Christ to our neighbor and each other.

### BIBLE STUDY

#### Blessings in the Midst of Suffering

*Theme verses: Matthew 5:10-12*

#### Focus on Health: Overcoming Arthritis

Can I open a jar? Navigate the stairs? Arthritis sufferers—the majority of them women—face these questions daily. May is National Arthritis Month, and a good time to examine ways to battle various types of arthritis.

## June/July/August

### BIBLE STUDY: COME TO THE WATERS

This three-session Bible study expands on the theme of the 2008 Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering in Salt Lake City, Utah, "Come to the Waters." The Rev. Karen Bockelman, assistant to the bishop in the Northeastern Minnesota Synod of the ELCA, will guide readers through the rich images and meanings of baptism and how that sacrament shapes our lives and vocations. *Come to the Waters* is an invitation to "walk wet"—to remember, affirm, and celebrate baptism throughout life. These sessions will look at the waters of baptism through the lenses of Scripture, Lutheran tradition, personal experience, and the call to act boldly in and for justice.

#### June

#### Focus on Health: The Price of Perfection

Teens afraid to "look fat" in their summer clothes are beginning to starve themselves about now. Studies show that anorexia carries a 6 percent death rate—and 40 percent of college students say they would sacrifice a year of their lives to remain thin forever.

#### July/August

#### Focus on Health: Treat Your Feet


Your feet have 26 bones, 33 joints, 19 muscles, and 107 ligaments. Women, who have four times as many foot problems as men, must exercise extra care.



## *Nourish Your Faith*

Do you find yourself juggling family, work, friends, health, finances? Do you want to make time to nurture your relationship with God and grow in faith? *Lutheran Woman Today* can help. Whether you are working two jobs or freshly retired, a long-time member or new to the church, our magazine will help you nourish your faith in daily life.

Every issue serves up articles that inform, challenge, comfort, and encourage. Our award-winning Bible study brings together women of all ages and ways of life to explore God's Word. Regular columns on prayer, health, the church calendar, and useful resources supplement the Bible study and faith-in-action articles.

Women <sup>of the</sup> **ELCA**   
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Women of all ages can nourish their spiritual health.  
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# Bible Study

## BLESSED TO FOLLOW: THE BEATITUDES AS A COMPASS FOR DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus, in his first public appearance in the Gospel of Matthew (5:3-12), climbs a hill and gives his followers a sermon that might have left them perplexed, Martha E. Stortz writes in her 2007-2008 Bible study. We are most blessed when we're at our lowest.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Or, as it is written in *The Message*: "You're more blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you, there is more of God. . . ." That makes some sense. When

we humble ourselves, we can pay more attention to God and to others.

Jesus' words give us direction on how we should live as Christians; they are a compass as we continue our journey of discipleship. Just as God blessed all creation in Genesis, so does Jesus bless us and turn us around to be blessings for others.

We hope these Bible study sessions will spark reflection, conversation, and prayer. Join in the journey as we explore the lessons of blessings.

### STUDY RESOURCES

The only piece essential for the "Blessed to Follow" study is a subscription to *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine; however, the following companion pieces add depth and meaning to the study. See order information below for prices.

### LEADER GUIDE

The Leader Guide provides the Bible study leader with additional background information not found in *Lutheran Woman Today* and makes the experience of leading the group easier and more enjoyable. Included in this resource are tips on how to lead the discussion, instructions for activities, ideas on prayers, and more.

### COMPANION BIBLE

This handy volume puts the study texts in one convenient place. Printed in an easy-to-read size, it offers biblical texts for every session.

### BLESSINGS JOURNAL

This blank booklet offers you space to write your reflections and thoughts as you ponder the "Blessed to Follow" Bible study.

### BOOKMARK

The "Blessed to Follow" bookmark is a terrific way to promote the Bible study and makes a great gift for group members. It is sold in packs of 12.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Martha E. Stortz** is professor of historical theology and ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, California, and the author of *A World According to God*. She earned her bachelor of arts from Carleton College in Northfield, Minn., and her master of arts and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. Her long list of lay ministries for the ELCA and the Lutheran Church in America includes serving on the ELCA Task Force on Theological Education (1989-1995). Martha was a monthly contributor to *The Lutheran* magazine's "Our Faith" column.

Martha may be available to introduce the Bible study to your group or synodical convention. If you are interested in hosting an event with her, contact Laura Barkenquast by e-mail ([laura.barkenquast@elca.org](mailto:laura.barkenquast@elca.org)) or phone: 800-638-3522, ext. 2737. Locations and dates are based on schedule availability. Her speaking engagement dates and locations are posted at [www.lutheranwomantoday.org](http://www.lutheranwomantoday.org).

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### LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY SUBSCRIPTION

1 year/10 issues	\$12
2 years/20 issues	\$22
3 years/30 issues	\$33

Applicable sales tax and shipping charges will be included when an order is placed. Call for rates.

### BIBLE STUDY COMPANION PIECES INFORMATION

LEADER GUIDE .....	978-6-0002-1942-0	\$6.95
COMPANION BIBLE.....	978-6-0002-1943-7	\$3.95
BOOKMARK .....	978-6-0002-1945-1	\$3.75
JOURNAL .....	978-6-0002-1944-4	\$2.95 < <b>NEW!</b>