



Discover **God** in the Details

LutheranWoman
TODAY



Inside every issue of *Lutheran Woman Today* you will discover articles that renew and enrich your faith, stories of encouragement and challenge, and Bible studies to help you learn and grow. Don't miss a single detail.



Bold thoughtful women read *Lutheran Woman Today*

We surveyed our readers and found that they love to travel, exercise, study the Bible together, and work to make the world a better place. Each issue offers stories 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.

enjoy
share
think
reflect
pray
love
give

September 2008

Living Conversation

By the power of the Spirit, the Bible is a living conversation in which the texts talk to each other. How do we enter into the conversation? How will we find ourselves transformed?

Bible study

Ruth: The Journey Begins

Theme verse: Ruth 1:16b–17

Focus on Health

Ouch!

Bad backs. Stiff shoulders. And aching arches. Nearly 60 percent of Americans suffer from chronic pain—often in several body parts at once. During Pain Awareness Month, we offer expert tips for coping with—and beating—all the aches that afflict you.

October

Beyond Loyalty

Hesed is a Hebrew word that means loving loyalty—extravagant loyalty that goes beyond what we would ask or expect. How do we practice *hesed* in our daily lives?

Bible study

Ruth: The Plan for Security

Theme verse: Ruth 2:12

Focus on Health

Aging Gracefully

Feet flatten. Waists widen. Then come the gray hairs. As we age, we change. But that doesn't mean we can't stay healthy. Decade by decade, here's what to expect from your body—and how you can make the most of your autumn years.

March

Hidden Power

There are many kinds of power. Some are obvious, but some are subtle and expressed behind the scenes. The question is: How do we exercise power wisely?

Bible study

Esther: Two Queens in Persia

Theme verse: Esther 2:17a

Focus on Health

The Scoop

Omega-3s for asthma. Whole grains for heart health. Fruits and veggies that lower your cancer risk. From antioxidants to zinc, here's a guide to the nutrients that can make every plate of food a prescription for good health. During National Nutrition Month, eat up!

April

Faithful Disobedience

Sometimes to be faithful to God is to be disobedient to other authorities. In the messiness and ambiguity of life, we ask for God's help in discerning the right thing to do.

Bible study

Esther: For Such a Time as This

Theme verse: Esther 4:14

Focus on Health

Are You at Risk for Colon Cancer?

Yes, and so is everyone else with a colon, four to five feet of intestine where nutrients are absorbed and where small growths called polyps can become cancerous. Ninety percent of colon cancers strike after age 50, which is why you and your doctor must start screening then.

November

Challenging Community

Sometimes situations or people challenge our communities by asking us to decide who's in and who's out. Sometimes our communities challenge us.

Bible study

Ruth: A Place in Community

Theme verse: Ruth 4:11

Focus on Health

Caregiver Burnout

Fifty million Americans care for ailing loved ones. And though they offer \$257 billion in services each year, their reward is often little more than an increased risk of depression and disease. During National Family Caregivers Month, learn how caregivers can cope.

May

Unexpected Heroes

Some people in the Bible turn out to be unlikely heroes. That's good news for us—we may be unlikely heroes of faith too.

Bible study

Esther: Reversal of Fortune

Theme verse: Esther 9:1b

Focus on Health

Guide to Stroke Safety

Numbness. Weakness. Blurred vision. Sudden dizziness. Would you recognize these signs of a stroke? During American Stroke Month, learn how to guard against—and respond to—this leading cause of disability and number three killer of U.S. women.

December

True Identity

Through baptism, our true identity is “child of God.” We are part of God's family. How do we live out our identity faithfully and joyfully?

Bible study

Daniel: Keeping the Faith

Theme verse: Daniel 2:20

Focus on Health

The Power of Prayer

In Jeremiah 30:17, God pledges “I will restore health to you.” New research backs up this promise. The majority of U.S. patients rely on prayer, and 80 percent feel better after “spiritual healing.” Here's how asking for spiritual help can boost your physical health.

June-July/August

Seasons in the Light of Faith

The seasons of our lives—from girlhood to womanhood to old age—bring both joys and challenges. One thing we can count on is that God's love for us never changes.

2009 summer Bible study

Mary: A Woman for All Seasons

This study will explore three seasons in the life of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Sessions will include the study of:

- Youthful spirituality, examining Mary's encounter with the angel when she was a teenager,
- Life-giving friendships, as seen in the relationship of Elizabeth and Mary, and
- Mary's (presumed) widowhood and role as an older woman leader in the early church.

January-February 2009

Fiery Faith

In Daniel we read about the three men thrown into the fiery furnace—their faithfulness and God's presence with them in their ordeal. Have you ever found yourself in a “fiery furnace”? God was there with you.

Bible study

Daniel: Trial by Fire

Theme verse: Daniel 3:17-18

Bible study

Daniel: Thrown to the Lions

Theme verse: Daniel 6:26b

Focus on Health

Free from Addiction in 2009

Every New Year, we resolve to kick our bad habits. Here's your sure-fire plan for conquering them with the right kind of support and self-care.

ELCA pastor, author, wife, and mother, Christa von Zychlin guides readers through the rich biblical and historical traditions that support an understanding of Mary as a role model and mentor for women today.

June: Focus on Health

Shingles: The Chickenpox Comeback

It can hide in your nerves for decades before it erupts in a painful, red rash. The virus that causes shingles can plague anyone who's had chickenpox. Learn how to protect yourself.

July/August: Focus on Health

Listen Up!

What's that? Come again? When speech becomes softened, music sounds muffled, and you find yourself turning up the TV volume, it's time to get tested for hearing loss.

2008–2009 Bible Study

The Hidden Hand of God: Wisdom Stories from Ruth, Daniel, and Esther

The wisdom stories of Ruth, Daniel 1–6, and Esther help us think about our call to discipleship in the complexity of today's world. You will see three recurring "H" themes throughout the study.

Hesed is a Hebrew word meaning extravagant loving loyalty that goes beyond the expected. Exploring it in these books will help us to examine how God is calling us to express *hesed* in our lives.

Heroic actions involve great risks to the one performing them. They are brave actions for the sake of others. Studying the leading characters in these stories will challenge us as we think about the risks God calls us to take as a part of faithful discipleship.

Hidden hand refers to the often-unseen presence of God in all three books. Discovering how God works in these stories allows us to reflect on how God sometimes seems hidden in our lives or in the lives of those we love—and how we are called to live through such times.

As we study these books together, we pray that we grow in confidence of God's never-ending love for us and that we gain courage to take the risks God may be calling us to.

2008 Summer Bible Study

Come to the Waters

This three-session Bible study expands on the theme of the 2008 Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering, "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.

Session 1: Water, Water Everywhere

Session 2: It's a Matter of Death and Life

Session 3: Living Water, Walking Wet

About the 2008–09 Bible study authors

The Rev. Gwen Saylor is a professor of Hebrew Bible at Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa. She is a deaconess in the Valparaiso Lutheran deaconess community and an ELCA pastor. Saylor served as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Watertown, Wis., before joining Wartburg in 1991. She has doctorates in Jewish and Christian History and Literature from the Bible to the Mishnah from the University of Iowa, a master's degree from Concordia Seminary in Exile in Chicago, and a bachelor's degree from Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Ind.

The Rev. Ann Fritschel is associate professor of Hebrew Bible at Wartburg Seminary. She served churches in Dickinson, Mohall, and Hamerly, N.D. She is also the director of the Center for Global Theologies at the seminary. She has a doctorate in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament from Emory University, Atlanta, a master of divinity degree from Wartburg, and a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Gwen and Ann may be available to introduce the Bible study to your group or synodical convention. If you are interested in hosting an event with them, contact Laura Barkenquast by e-mail (laura.barkenquast@elca.org) or phone 800-638-3522, ext. 2737. Locations and dates are based on schedule availability. Bible study intro events are posted at www.lutheranwomantoday.org.



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Study resources

The only piece essential for the “The Hidden Hand of God” is a subscription to *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine; however, the following companion pieces add depth and meaning to the study. See order information 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. It also provides participants with space to jot notes, underline, or highlight.

Bookmark

“The Hidden Hand of God” 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.

Call **1-800-328-4648** or order online at **www.augsburgfortress.org**

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