

**Women's Ministries, RCA**  
Fall E-Network Newsletter



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**Contents:**

Blessing Boxes  
Resource Recommendations  
Fundraising Ideas for Women's Conference  
Regional Synod Coordinators  
Women's Conference '07 News

**Blessing Boxes Are in the Mail!**

Good news! The Blessing Boxes have been sent to you and your congregation. Each church is receiving seven boxes and an order card for additional boxes as needed. Please encourage your church office to let you or your women's ministry coordinator know when they arrive. We ask for your continued prayers for this offering to enable the ministry of women in your region.

**What Is a Blessing Box?**

A Blessing Box is your opportunity to give back after a blessing has occurred in your life. It's a decorative box you can place on your kitchen windowsill, your desk, or your dresser. Each time God gives you a blessing, you can bless someone else by placing an offering in the box. When all the offerings from the Blessing Boxes are collected and combined, we will be able to place a woman in your region to work with other women, guiding them as they provide blessings to others.

**Resource Recommendations**

As the new school year begins for our children, the opportunity for our own spiritual enrichment is once again before us. What will you study? How do you choose the material? We've included a list of several ideas you may find helpful—and if you have something else you're using and really love, share the information with us. We'll pass it along!

**Good resources for group study:**

- The new study guide for the Belhar Confession: *Unity, Reconciliation, and Justice*
- *Discover the Fruit of the Spirit*, by Edith Bajema
- *Living the Good Life on God's Good Earth*, edited by David S. Koetje

**Resources that emphasize faith nurture:**

- *Making a Home for Faith: Nurturing the Spiritual Life of Your Children*, by Elizabeth F. Caldwell
- *Family at Work: Building Strong Relationships at Home*, by James R. Kok

- Active Christian Parenting video-based education programs  
[www.activeparenting.com](http://www.activeparenting.com)

Note: Books listed above can be ordered online at [www.FaithAliveResources.org](http://www.FaithAliveResources.org).

### Resources for parents:

Do you have a nursery school on your campus? One church has developed a parenting class one day a week. Instead of dropping off their children and leaving, parents are greeted and invited to join a class. This is a wonderful opportunity to meet parents from your community and help them understand they are not alone in learning how to parent the little ones. Be certain to make this a sharing time for everyone! Get some starter ideas from these websites:

- Active Parenting  
[www.activeparenting.com](http://www.activeparenting.com)
- Love and Logic  
[www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com)
- Systematic Training for Effective Parenting  
[www.agsglobe.com/group.asp?nGroupInfoID=a16200](http://www.agsglobe.com/group.asp?nGroupInfoID=a16200)
- Parent Effectiveness Training  
[www.gordontraining.com/](http://www.gordontraining.com/)

### Making Sure the Message Is Received

We are looking for volunteers who will take responsibility for sharing Women's Ministries information with each congregation. Prior to a mass mailing to the churches, these volunteers will receive an email alerting them of its arrival. They can then get the materials from the church office and share the information with other women in the congregation. E-network newsletters (like this one) can also be shared with others in your church by forwarding or posting them or by printing them and handing them out. Please prayerfully consider this ministry to the women of your congregation. To sign up, contact Tim Byrnes ([tbyrnes@rcanor.org](mailto:tbyrnes@rcanor.org))

## Raising Funds for the 2007 Women's Conference (Triennial)

Won't it be wonderful if all the women in your congregation who want to go Chicago next summer are able to afford it? Now is the time to make sure that happens! Here are a few ideas that might help you.

**Hold an auction.** Have each woman create a basket that others in your congregation can bid on. Ideas for baskets can be as creative as the women who assemble them. At one auction baskets held a week at a ski resort (during the summer months); the ingredients for an Italian dinner (the cook was included, date to be negotiated); a historic plate with a picture of the church painted on it (this one had the most bid activity); and all the elements for a tea party: a beautiful teapot, cups, tea, extra special cookies, and napkins.

**Sell pumpkins** and homemade pumpkin pies in front of your church as a way to raise money and meet your neighbors.

**Host Christmas gift wrapping sessions.** Set up plenty of tables in the fellowship hall so the gifts don't get mixed up. Buy wrapping paper in bulk rolls and charge according to the size of the gift. Charge extra for bows, cards, and boxes.

**Organize a square dance** for New Year's Eve with an old fashioned cake auction. Participants can also bring a dish to pass and enjoy a potluck supper. Between the ticket sales and the cakes you'll raise money and have a great, family-friendly evening.

**Plan a dinner party** where everyone brings a dish to pass and donates \$25. The hostess opens her home and provides the table service; the guests bring everything else. This is as simple a fund raiser as we've found, and the results were a great evening visiting with old friends and making new ones.

## **Regional Synod Coordinators Begin in 2007**

The first two years of Women's Ministries have given us the opportunity to observe and learn. A lot of ministry (some new, some continuing) is being done for, about, and through women!

With so much happening in congregations, classes, and regional synods, we're very excited to announce that each regional synod will have a women's ministry coordinator soon. These coordinators will work to connect, inspire, inform, and minister to the women of our congregations. They will be working alongside Mary Clark, the denomination-wide coordinator of Women's Ministries.

Blessing Boxes will help fund these new staff positions. In September 2006 Blessing Boxes will arrive in churches with the goal of raising \$50,000 by early spring 2007. Soon after that we will begin the process of finding coordinators for each synod—women who will work 20-plus hours per month connecting women to ministries, resources, events, and each other.

## **A Message from the 2007 Women's Conference Planning Team**

### **Plan to Meet in July in the Windy City!**

We have lots of exciting news to share about next summer's "**Alive With Christ**" **RCA Women's Conference**. All women—and the men who support them—are invited to gather in Chicago July 19-22, 2007, for what promises to be a great weekend of faith-building and fun.

A highlight of our time together will be an evening of **inspirational music with Cynthia Clawson**, the vocalist *Billboard* magazine

calls "the most awesome voice in gospel music." She has recorded 22 albums in styles from adult contemporary to traditional gospel. Her rendition of "Softly and Tenderly" plays over the credits of *The Trip to Bountiful*, the film that won Geraldine Page an Academy Award.

We will also experience a **dinner theater performance of *Sioux Center Sudan***, a beautiful story of God's mysterious work in our lives. This true story of Arlene Schuiteman, an Iowa school teacher turned Africa missionary nurse, was written by Northwestern College's award-winning playwright Jeff Barker. The drama will be performed by members of NWC's outstanding touring company.

**Personal Enrichment Times** will build our faith and teach us new skills. Women will choose from presentations on topics ranging from expressionistic art to multicultural ministries. In addition, **Issue Forums** will explore challenging issues related to Islam, homosexuality, evangelism, sex, and intolerance.

Communion, worship, and Bible study times will renew us and draw us closer to God and each other. A Women's Ministries presentation, mission mall, community mission displays, bookstore, and the Thousand Villages Gift Shop will expand our horizons.

Our Sheraton hotel is right on Michigan Avenue in the world famous Miracle Mile shopping district. Free-time options will also include Chicago River Architectural Tours, the Lake Michigan beach, Navy Pier, and world-class museums and sporting events. We have a special rate of \$150 a night at the Sheraton, so consider coming early and staying later to enjoy Chicago's theater, dance, and symphony performances. To learn more about what's going on around

conference time in the Windy City visit  
[www.choosechicago.com](http://www.choosechicago.com).

**Space for the conference is limited, so we encourage people to register early.** In addition, women who register between November 15, 2006, and January 15, 2007, will save 10 percent on their registration fee. Standard registration is from January 16 through June 15, 2007.

**To learn more or to have a registration brochure mailed to you in November, e-mail [alive@rca.org](mailto:alive@rca.org) or call toll-free (800) 564-**

**1582**—the “Alive With Christ” Message Center. Give your name and address, and you will be mailed a reproducible registration form that includes all the conference details.

Toll-free hotline: (800) 564-1582

E-mail: [alive@rca.org](mailto:alive@rca.org)

Web site: [alive.rca.org](http://alive.rca.org)