

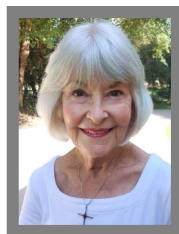


Tapestry

February 2024
Volume 37, Issue 1

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Anne's Advice



Recently, every conversation I have had, every news item I have read, and all the social media I see or hear, have all bombarded me with catastrophe and disaster, death and destruction. It's enough to make a person feel depressed and hopeless. But all I need to do is shift my perspective. In baptism, I was given a new life. I live in this world, but through Jesus's resurrection, I also live in the kingdom of heaven. When I feel angry or hopeless because I wonder how people can believe the things they believe, or think the things they think, or say the things they say, or do the things they do, I need to see them as Jesus sees them. Each of them is created in the image of God - unique and loved. They are caught up in the values of the world and need my prayers and kindness. My job is to love our neighbors, not judge them.

People respond to extreme weather and rising sea levels with anxiety about long term effects on agriculture, migration, housing, and health. We feel powerless to make lifestyle changes to reduce our consumption of fossil fuels, or manufactured goods, or processed food. God has given me the answer to that also. In Luke 12:22-23, Jesus tells his disciples: "...do not worry. . . Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?" I must pray for discernment to manage my own consumption of resources. I can share my abundance to feed the hungry and shelter the poor, but God will control the sun and rain.

You live in the eternal Kingdom of God as well as this chaotic twenty-first century of Earth. Don't let yourself be so distracted by the noise of the world. Be still, have faith, and find the wisdom and peace of God's steadfast love.

My best advice from last year is still the best advice I have: pray, breathe, drink plenty of water, and get a good night's sleep.

Anne Storan, FL-BA SWO President

FB-SWO Board

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tracymoffatt@aol.com

The Breath Prayer

Written by Sheridan Voysey

Lord God, fill me with your Holy Spirit

I receive your love & release my insecurity

I receive your joy & release my unhappiness

I receive your peace & release my anxiety

I receive your patience & release my impulsiveness

I receive your kindness & release my indifference

I receive your goodness & release my ungodliness

I receive your faithfulness & release my disloyalty

I receive your gentleness & release my severity

I receive your self-control & release my self-indulgence

Artwork by @jodie888



Forms, Funds and Finances...

Greetings SWO Sisters,

Since many new Conference Officers and Unit Officers are being elected in these first months of 2024, I thought I would take a minute to review the Offerings Forms and such for all the new “money-handlers” out there!

For Spring Gathering, use **Event Data Collection Form** to remit offerings to me. You will also report Conference Leaders on this form. Please send the Conference Officers Update form even if no changes are made; we want to always be sure we have correct contact information for everyone.

For regular offerings to the SWO, use **Form A** and send directly to me. These would be offerings such as unit offerings, conference offerings, Love Offerings, and Scholarship Fund Contributions. Your Offerings may be sent as often as you collect them or whatever fits your unit’s schedule best. Please remember, each unit is required to make a donation to the SWO annually if you would like to have a voting member attend the Fall Gathering.

For offerings going to Churchwide, Use **Form B** and send directly to Churchwide. These would include offerings such as Katies Fund and Thankofferings. Your SWO forwards 55% of all regular offerings we receive from the Units to the Churchwide Organization to support the ministries of WELCA.

All these forms can be found on the website: <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/tools-for-leaders>

My Address is: **Tracy Moffatt**
1944 Crestview Way
Naples, FL 34119

In an effort to be friendly to our environment, I email donation receipts to the senders. Please be sure to include your email, or a Church email, on your **Form A** and that is where your receipt will be sent. These emails will come from fbswotreasurer@gmail.com so all future Treasurers can use the same email. You may also use this email for questions or to follow up on donations.

For questions and more Information please contact me via email, text or an old-fashioned phone call!

fbswotreasurer@gmail.com or tracymoffatt@aol.com or 239-848-7274

Tracy Moffatt, FL-BA SWO Treasurer

Meet our newest FL-BA SWO Board Member

Raeann Purcell was elected this past November at the Fall Gathering to complete a one year term on the board. She lives in DeLand and is retired but watches her 2 year old grandson three days a week. She previously served on the board as treasurer and president and has a passion for The Women of the ELCA. In September, Raeann completed her term as treasurer of the executive board at the Triennial convention in Phoenix.





Your FL-BA SWO Board and Advisory Member and how they serve



The FL-BA Synodical Women's Organization Officers and Advisory Board Members are honored to serve you. You will find their email addresses on the last page of every issue of Tapestry.

I'm happy to introduce the Board and Advisory Members to you and give you a brief description of their mission.

Stacia Carter, from the Heart of Florida Conference, is your advocacy contact for Justice and Reconciliation. She would like to hear about activities, projects or concerns that your church unit is involved in. Contact her if you have questions or need her guidance to find resources.

Leone Goding, from Heart of Florida Conference, is your source for information about Lutheran World Relief. She also coordinates information on Church Women United.

Sallie Haley, from Pinelands Conference, is the representative to Synod Global Missions. She will have the latest information on current activity in our companion churches in Cuba, Haiti, Guyana, Surinam, and the seminary in Jamaica.

Nina Jageler, from Heart of Florida Conference, is Conference Coordinator. Nina has the very important job of keeping contact information for the leaders of all our conferences and church units. Please send your information to her as soon as you have your Spring Gathering and church unit elections. Nina has added the responsibility of assisting the Planning Co-Chairs by coordinating Workshops for Fall Gathering.

Donna Person, from Broward/Bahamas Conference, is our ELCA Fund for Leaders Scholarship Coordinator as well as Historian. This year she has added the role of Planning Co-Chair to her responsibilities.

Raeann Purcell, from Flagler/Volusia Conference, is our Publications Coordinator. She will bring you highlights from various sources to keep you informed of issues, information and opportunities relating to the Mission and Purpose of WELCA.

Diane Spicer, Advisory Member from Space Coast Conference, is our Love Offering Coordinator. She will share information about the in-kind donation needs and activities of GraceWay Village in Fort Pierce, FL.

When you have questions, you may contact any of our officers or board members. We will always do our best to respond and get the information you need.

LEADER'S meeting

The Florida-Bahamas Synodical Women's Organization executive and advisory board members were joined by the conference leaders at Luther Springs, January 26-28. During our time together we explored our spiritual gifts using *"Gifts for You: opening your spiritual gifts,"* a study resource from Women of the ELCA. We all completed the Spiritual Gifts Assessment and shared ideas about how to use our gifts most effectively. We talked about our diversity and our appreciation for each other.

Our Planning Co-Chairs, **Donna Person** and **Gayle Backiel**, shared details about Fall Gathering to be held at Warren Willis Camp and Conference Center from Friday, November 8 through Sunday, November 10, 2024. The theme, **"He's Got the Whole World in His Hands,"** is based on 2 Chronicles 7:14, ". . . if my people, who are called by my name, humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land." The logo will be a globe, held in God's hands, with the words *"Be Humble, Seek God, Repent, Pray, He will Forgive, He Will Heal"* forming an arch over the globe. The Conference Leaders chose their Fall Gathering responsibilities and a board member was assigned to each.

While Board members held their business meeting, Conference Leaders went to the dining room to discuss plans for Spring Gatherings. They chose the theme: **Peace, Be Not Anxious.** They chose Philippians 4:6-7 as their Bible verse. Proverbs 3:5-6 is another supporting verse.

In response to evaluations turned in at Fall Gathering 2023, **Tracy Moffatt** realized the need to update and streamline procedures for our business meetings. This work has begun and will be reviewed at our Summer Meeting.

There were three applicants for the Fund for Leaders Scholarship. **Boris Camille** from Miami Shores has

been admitted to the TEEM program at California Lutheran University. **Beatrice B. D'Angelo** from Naples is pursuing a Master of Divinity at Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary. **Heather Hedman-DeVaughn** from Parkland is pursuing a Master of Divinity at United Lutheran Seminary. After a lively discussion, the board members chose to designate a portion of available funds to each applicant.

We talked about the need to increase and diversify our communication with all the Women of the Evangelical Church in America, regardless of their active participation in a WELCA circle. If you are a person who spends some time on Facebook, follow *"Florida/Bahamas Women of the ELCA."* Every time you see one of their posts, like and share on your feed. This will send out ripples that will spread information, inspiration, and encouragement.

Once all attendees came together, we looked at the dates and locations of each of the Spring Gatherings that had been determined, and a Board member was assigned to each. This work was accomplished quickly and enthusiastically together.



Saturday afternoon was sunny and warm. We had worked together so effectively that there was time for a break. We all got outside and explored the beautiful surroundings at Luther Springs. Many of us walked down the path to Lake Vause and the labyrinth. We had not met at Luther Springs in several years because of Covid in 2021 and 2022 followed by the need to explore Warren Willis in 2023, It was wonderful to enjoy Luther Springs again.

Depending on the availability of **St. John Lutheran Church in Winter Park**, the Board will hold their Summer Meeting there on **August 3, 2024.**

Anne Storan
FL-BA SWO President



ANSWER THE CALL

You have a passion for the community of women you have found in the Florida-Bahamas Women of the Evangelical Church in America.

You have appreciated the convenient access to *Tapestry*, the availability of links to our Synod, our Church-wide WELCA, the ability to register online for Fall Gathering, and to contact information for Executive Board Members.

You want to have important information sent to you quickly by email, on Facebook, or on Instagram.

All of this service has been possible because of the volunteer work of **Cheryl Semmel**, our **Webmaster**. Cheryl's circumstances have changed and new responsibilities have meant that she can no longer serve in this position.

The Katie's Fund Grant that the FL-BA SWO received will be used to update our Website (flwelca.com). When you become the Webmaster, the website will be ready for you to take over and perform all the required tasks. You'll add new information as needed. You'll have the mailing list to send announcements and new issues of *Tapestry*. You'll work with the Board Members to serve the digital needs of the Synodical WELCA Organization.

If you are interested in getting more information about this valuable volunteer position, email **Tracy Moffatt**, tracymoffatt@aol.com or **Anne Storan**, astoran46@gmail.com.



Don't miss out on this opportunity to act boldly and affirm your gifts.

Need to pray about this; see page 6.

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SOZO KIDS

Sozo Kids was the Love Offering recipient from February 1, 2022 through January 31, 2024. In addition to in-kind gifts and gift cards that were given to them at the Fall Gathering 2023, they received \$5,089.00 for Fiscal Year 2023. We thank you for your generosity in supporting this nonprofit organization that helps families living within the borders of the Ocala National Forest to break the cycle of poverty.



The Love Offering for February 1, 2024, to January 31, 2026, will be **GraceWay**

Village in Ft. Pierce. GraceWay Village serves free hot meals 4 nights a week that are served in a drive-thru fashion. They also have six teams that go out into the more hard-to-reach places in the area.

GraceWay Village also serves the community with their boutique that provides clothing to low-income children and teens in the area.

Land has been purchased to build a Family Restorative Living Facility. The design of the facility is to provide families a working program to propel them to self-sufficiency.

For more information, visit www.gracewayvillage.com

Diane Spicer, Love Offering Coordinator



Courageous Leadership

Creator of All, could you be calling me to be a leader? Do you not see my faults and frailties? Do you not see my trembling legs and sweating palms? Thank you for thinking of me, but could you please find someone else? Perhaps tomorrow I could help, but not today. Yes, tomorrow.

Omnipotent Lord, again, you call and ask me to lead. You are persistent. These are tough times to be a leader in the church. There is so much conflict in our world, country and even the church. It's hard to know which direction to turn, let alone to take the responsibility to lead someone else. There is bound to be another person who wants to lead.

Unrelenting Pursuer, I hear your call. And I say, "Ok." With your guidance, I will *try* to lead. But let me repeat -- my abilities are limited. Sometimes, I cannot find my car keys, and I forget what I'm doing. But here I am. If you can use me to bring your reign, then, Holy One, here I am. Send me.

Redeeming Christ, reach out and find others to walk with me on this journey. Bless me with partners in ministry and mission. Care for us, feeding us with your Word and giving us rest after a long day of labor. Teach us to trust you, know your voice and rely on you for direction. Help us savor with joy and celebrate the opportunities to serve you.

Almighty Savior, there is so much to do and such need. Sometimes I'm not sure of priorities. Remind me to pause for prayer as I serve you in mission and ministry. Renew my spirit and clarify my vision for your will.

Gracious Shepherd, grant me a compassionate, loving spirit to respond to the needs of others, especially on days when I am tired. Give me patience and understanding for those who disagree with me or doubt my leadership. Sometimes their complaints hurt -- deeply. So, grant me patience . . . quickly.

Eternal God, I now understand the privilege to serve as a leader. Forgive me for my hesitation to respond to your call. Indeed, it is an honor to lead your people. Fill me with your passionate and bold spirit. Give me courage to faithfully follow you each day. Amen.

Writer: Robin McCullough-Bade

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E-Tips, Division for Congregational Ministries - Evangelism.

www.elca.org/dcm/evangelism

Be Humble, Seek God, Repent, Pray - He Will Forgive & Heal



HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS



2024 Women of the ELCA Fall Gathering

Warren Willis Conference Center

November 8-10, 2024

The theme of this year's Fall Gathering is *He's Got the Whole World in His Hands*, based on 2 Chronicles 7:14: *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Plans are underway to confirm the speakers, workshops, and activities for this event being held November 8 through 10, 2024, at the Warren Willis Conference Center in Fruitland Park. Please mark your calendar and save the date. Registration and workshop information will be available in May.

Donna Person & Gayle Backiel
2024 Fall Gathering Co-Chairs



WOMEN OF THE ELCA offers SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for 2024 Scholarships to be awarded by Women of the ELCA at churchwide are now available. Applications will only be accepted until April 5, 2024. Recipients will be notified in late June 2024.

Two types of scholarships are available. Scholarships for Lutheran Laywomen provide assistance to women studying for a career other than ordained ministry. Various scholarships are available for Lutheran women providing assistance for those pursu-

ing further education in various administrative and leadership positions and for those pursuing ELCA service abroad. A Scholarship is also available for Lutheran women in their final year at an ELCA seminary.

Visit www.womenoftheelca.org and click on "Ministry & Action." Follow that with a click on "Scholarships" for more information and the applications.



Spring Gatherings Coming Soon!

by Gayle Backiel

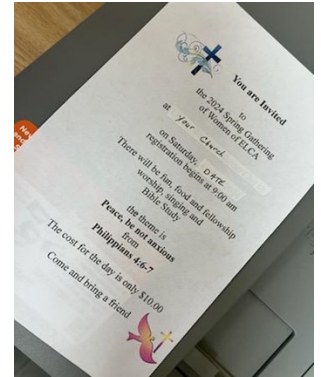
Spring is getting ready to spring. So are the Conferences with their Spring Gatherings.

This year's theme is "**Peace, be not anxious**" from the Bible verse *Philippians 4:6-7: Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

Encourage your members to attend the event. Here are some ideas to help. Some samples are included here.

- Try making a tri-fold or poster about the Gathering with a sign-up sheet. Someone should be nearby to answer questions.
- Print out invitations to be handed to women at the end of a church service.
- Send an email blast to everyone in your congregation, telling about the event.

Be sure to include information about the gathering such as where it will be held and when. Let them know if there will be Bible Study, an offering, worship service, food, and how much will it cost for the day. Be sure it is clear that this is an event intended for the women of the church and they are welcome to bring a friend.



2024 Conference Spring Gatherings

CONFERENCE	DATE	LOCATION	BOARD MEMBER ATTENDING
Broward-Bahamas/ Miami-Dade/Monroe	March 9	Christ Lutheran Ft. Lauderdale	Donna Person
Caloosa	In April To be determined	Gateway Trinity Ft. Myers	Tracy Moffatt
First Coast	To be determined	St. Andrew's Jacksonville Beach	Raeann Purcell
Flagler/Volusia	March or April To be determined		
Gulf Coast	March 9	St. Timothy Tarpon Springs	Anne Storan
Heart of Florida/Lake	April 20	St. Stephen Longwood	Denise Beumer
Mid-Gulf	April 6	Living Waters Port Charlotte	Sallie Haley
Panhandle	To be determined		
Pinelands	May 4	St. Timothy Crystal River	Leone Goding
Space Coast/ Tradewinds	April 13	St. Andrew Port St. Lucie	Anne Storan
Suncoast/Tampa	March 16	Trinity Lutheran St. Petersburg	Laurie Nelson

BOLD WOMEN'S DAY 2024



Did you know the Women of the ELCA celebrate Bold Women's Day on the first Sunday in March?

March was chosen as it is Women's History Month. Women can be bold in quiet encouragement of other's gifts, in a loud voice of advocacy, in education, or in many other ways. Resources and suggestions for celebrating can be found on the website of the Women of the ELCA at <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/bold-womens-day>.

These resources include a litany, a liturgy, certificates to present to Bold Women, and promotional materials. Suggestions for celebrations include a special part of your circle meeting, a pot luck after worship, or include as part of your worship service. We would love to hear how you decide to honor the bold women of your congregation.

In need of a resource? Feel free to call or text me at (386) 212-7933.

Raeann Purcell—FL-BA Board Member

Church Women United World Day of Prayer

The World Day of Prayer is an ecumenical movement inspired by the motto "*Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action.*" Church Women United follows the example of Jesus Christ, who prayed from a place of knowledge and care for the world, and who acted from a place of prayer and connection to God. From Aug 20-27, delegates from Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox traditions met to select the theme and writers for 2024. An ecumenical group of Palestinian Christian women have prayed and reflected together over the past several years to respond to the invitation to write the 2024 program. Their theme is "*I Beg You... Bear With One Another in Love,*" is based on Ephesians 4:1-7. This program calls us to bear with each other in love, despite all difficulties and oppression.

The Worship Service shares stories of three Palestinian Christian women, who witness to the power of bearing together in love. Their stories illuminate the experiences of Palestinian women from three different generations. The symbol of an olive tree is used throughout the worship service. This represents the three generations through the trunk, branches, and leaves of the olive tree. Picture the Palestinian Christian women who wrote this worship service have invited the world to pray for peace, justice and freedom of religion and freedom of movement. Their prayers specifically call us to pray with women, refugees, persons experiencing homelessness, and all who are sick, dying and grieving. They also call us to confess to our collective role in causing the climate crisis, and to commit to repairing what we have destroyed. Finally, they call us, the global church, to be united in treating all with justice and love.

The Bible Study calls us to ask what it means to bear with someone in love. And it asks us to reflect on why community is important for Christians. The Bible study challenges us to lift up others around us, and allow others to lift us up.

The Children's Program invites children to reflect on how standing together in love makes us all feel stronger and less alone. It encourages children to imagine how the world could be more loving.

The Country Background gives information about the history and culture of Palestine. It mentions places that have significance for Christians, being the birthplace of Christianity. It also reflects on the role of women in Palestinian society, and the history of the World Day of Prayer movement in Palestine.

This program was developed entirely in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking on the responsibility of being a writer country is always a rigorous journey, but it was particularly difficult given the changed realities of a world suffering under a global pandemic. We are grateful to our Palestinian Christian sisters for navigating this process with grace and patience.

May God continue to bless the world through our commitment to praying and acting together as a global sisterhood of ecumenical Christian women. For assistance in locating a CWU event near you, please contact:

Leone Goding, FL-BA SWO - CWU representative
352-223 1925 or leonegoding@centurylink.net

**Celebrated
Friday, March 1, 2024**



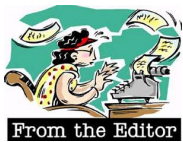


Gather, the magazine of Women of the ELCA, offers a mix of articles, theological reflections, devotions and stories of comfort and challenge that help readers grow in faith and engage in ministry and action.

May 2024 Devotional on Mental Health and Wellness

by Elise Seyfried

As long as humans have existed, there has been mental illness. By some estimates, as many as 20% of all adults live with a mental health issue. In biblical times, mental illness was often misunderstood and thought to be caused by demonic possession. In modern times, we have learned much more about brain chemistry. Although the stigma around mental illnesses has decreased, we still have a long way to go, and our faith communities can help. Looking particularly at biblical people and passages that relate to living with mental illness, the May 2024 devotional reminds us of Jesus’ compassionate care for those who struggle. Together, we’ll learn how congregations can become “stigma-free” zones, welcome and support those with mental health issues and their loved ones, and provide opportunities for all ages to learn more about a topic that affects us all.



Breathe in, Breath out!

From the Editor’s Desk — Linda Greilick

Take time to read “*The Breath Prayer*,” written by Sheridan Yoysey, featured on page one in Anne Storan’s article. Anne reminds us to pray, breathe, drink plenty of water, and get a good night’s sleep. And we reply that it is all easy to do and we will do that. But, do we really? Life piles up on us and we forget to do these simple things in a meaningful manner. Sure, we pray; we breath; we drink some water; and we sleep. But, how deeply do we do these everyday practices, especially breathing.

Do I have a deal for you! A two for one...like a BOGO! Try the breath prayer. As you pray the first pray of the sentence, breathe in deeply. And as you pray the second part of the sentence, exhale deeply.

Breathe in as you pray (inhale): *I receive your love.*

Breathe out as you pray (exhale): *and release my insecurity.*

As you make your way through this prayer, your breathing will certainly improve and your prayer petitions will be raised up to our God.

We begin Lent in February this year. Adding this to your day might improve your health both physically and spiritually.



Florida Bahamas Synodical Women' Organization Directory

Executive Board 2024

<p><u>President</u> Anne Storan astoran46@gmail.com Planning Committee</p>	<p><u>Vice President</u> Denise Beumer dbeumer1000@gmail.com Planning Committee</p>	<p><u>Secretary</u> Laurie Nelson nlsnlaur@yahoo.com</p>	<p><u>Treasurer</u> Tracy Moffatt tracymoffatt@aol.com</p>
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Board Members and Missions**

<p>Stacia Carter staciamlc@gmail.com J-Justice & Reconciliation</p>	<p>Sallie Haley missallie56@gmail.com J-Global Missions</p>	<p>Donna Person dperson7@aol.com S-Fund for Leaders</p>
<p>Leone Goding leonegoding@centurylink.net J-LWR, CWU</p>	<p>Nina Jageler njageler@gmail.com D-Conference Coordinator Fall Gathering Workshops</p>	<p>Raeann Purcell raeannpurcell@hotmail.com D-Publications</p>

Non-Board Members

<p><u>Registrar</u> Diane Cummings sworegistrar1@gmail.com</p>	<p><u>Love Offering Coordinator</u> Diane Spicer dlslc@juno.com</p>
<p><u>Tapestry Editor</u> Linda Greilick lindag65@verizon.net</p>	<p><u>Planning Committee Co-Chairs</u> Donna Person dperson7@aol.com</p>
<p><u>Webmaster/Web Advisor</u> Cheryl Semmel clsemmel@gmail.com</p>	<p>Gayle Backiel rbackiel@verizon.net</p>
<p><u>AV Tech</u> Kris Dines kdines1@comcast.net</p>	

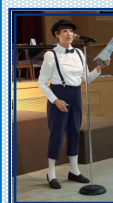


What does our logo mean?

Our logo—with the cross, water and a white lily—identifies women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America as children of God; baptized, forgiven, adopted into God's family, full of grace and hope in eternal life. It is a reminder of the growth, beauty, and vitality that rises out of that life-giving baptismal water. It is also a reminder of the mission of the church to "Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

**Missions

D Discipleship
 J Justice
 S Stewardship



Tapestry

The *Tapestry* is published six times per year. It is available online under the *Tapestry* link of the FL-Bahamas Women of the ELCA website located at www.flwelca.com.

To submit material for publication, contact **Linda Greilick, *Tapestry* Editor**
 lindag65@verizon.net

**Please submit *Tapestry* articles
 By March 15 for the April issue.**