

Come to the Waters: A One-Day Retreat

by Audrey Novak Riley

Many Bible study groups love to gather monthly with *Lutheran Woman Today's* three-session summer Bible study, but for others, vacations and travel plans make it hard to get together. What to do?

Gather for a one-day retreat with the *LWT* summer Bible study, "Come to the Waters" by the Rev. Karen Bockelman.

Who: Invite all the women in your congregation, and women from other congregations in town, too. This study of the Scripture and the sacrament is also the Bible study of the 2008 Triennial Convention and Gathering of Women of the ELCA. The author is leading it herself at those meetings, July 8–10 and 10–13. Enjoying this study together at home will unite you with the delegates at the Convention (including those from your own synodical women's organization) and the participants at the Gathering.

Where: Choose a scenic spot — perhaps the back yard of a first class gardener! Or maybe someone's condo has a nice clubhouse with a patio. Be creative; think of a place that'll let you all enjoy not only the riches of Scripture and the companionship of the group, but also the beauty of summer.

When: Any time after the July/ August issue arrives in about the middle of June — you might consider scheduling your retreat to coincide with the Triennial Gathering. Remind everyone to bring their copies of both the June and July/ August issues to the retreat, or download all three sessions for free from the *LWT* Web site (www.lutheranwomantoday.org) and make copies for everyone — plus a few extras. The leader guide is included, so people don't need to bring anything else but their Bibles.

How: Share the work among several women. Ask someone different to lead each of the three sessions (it's easy; the leader guide appears in the magazine with each session). Ask a few other people to arrange healthful and delicious refreshments, and ask some others to decorate the area with fresh summer flowers and greenery. The study's about baptism, so think wet.

Start the morning with a light breakfast: coffee, bagels or croissants, and fruit (yum, fresh summer fruit). About 9:30, gather the group for the first session, "Water, Water Everywhere" in the June issue. That'll take about an hour, and then it's time for a break.

Stretch your legs, go look at the garden, stroll around the patio, have another strawberry or two. Then call the group back together and enjoy the second session,

“A Matter of Death and Life” in the July/ August issue. When you’ve finished that, it’s time for lunch.

After a healthful lunch, call the group back together to enjoy the third session, “Living Water, Walking Wet.” When the group has completed that, it’s time for a closing devotion. Remember the delegates and participants at the Triennial Convention and Gathering in your prayers together.

Welcome people to linger for another stroll in the garden and a little more conversation before picking up and heading for home. Tell people about the nine-month *LWT* Bible study that starts in September — “The Hidden Hand of God: Wisdom Stories from Ruth, Daniel, and Esther.” Authors Gwen Sayler and Ann Fritschel invite us to see God at work behind the scenes in this study, working through the most unlikely people in the most unlikely places.

And as you wave goodbye until the next time, bask in the joy of sharing friendship, hospitality, and God’s word together in the beauty of a summer day.

Audrey Novak Riley is associate editor of *Lutheran Woman Today*.

Summer Bible studies “Act Boldly for Health,” “Act Boldly for Mission,” and “Come to the Waters” are available for download at www.lutheranwomantoday.org