

# seeds for the parish

Fall 2013

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.ELCA.org



Rehearsing for mission in worship.

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Check out this new year-round guide to stewardship: Stewards of God's Love.

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## A church with a plan

Caroline and George Mendis have been pastors at Christ Lutheran Church in Millvale, Pa., for 24 years. And, George shares, they are proud that their congregation is one with deep ties to the community and an energetic interest in doing God's work in the world.

"We're always doing something to try and make our ministry fuller, more expansive," George says.

But Christ Lutheran is a congregation that recognizes there is always room for improvement.

And it was with this in mind that they decided to engage in what they called "The Journey of Renewal." With the help of Blair Morgan, the director for evangelical mission in the ELCA Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod, the congregation undertook a year-long process in which the members would develop an intentional mission plan for how

their congregation served God, served each other and served its community.

"They put together a renewal team of about seven people or so, and we worked together over a year and a half to go through a process that looked at Scripture, that looked at the community, and that identified the congregation's strengths and weaknesses," says Blair.

The team also met with key leaders in the community to build relationships and listen to the needs. Then in the winter of 2012, they invited their congregation to join with them for a luncheon and brainstorming session. "It was beyond our wildest dreams," George shares. "We planned for 100 people. 120 showed up. People really embraced it and appreciated the opportunity to contribute to this mission plan."

Members shared their passions and pitched new ways to engage in ministry.

Out of the meeting, one of Christ's members developed a website — something the congregation didn't have before. Others volunteered to begin a youth program for kids in grades three through six. And even more members became deeply rooted to existing ministries.

"It did a lot for the congregation," George says. "I think anybody who does this for long enough knows that if the congregation doesn't see itself from beyond its own doors, it's unhealthy, and it's probably starting to die without even knowing it."

### Creating a plan

The 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly adopted a recommendation by the ELCA's Living into the Future Together task force to make mission planning one of the highest priorities of this church.

The idea is that all ELCA congregations, in collaboration with synods, would begin

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Need help with mission planning? Meet the directors for evangelical mission!

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Young adults and the spiritual discipline of listening.

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## Worship and mission

Worship is at the heart of how Lutherans come together.

But Lutherans are also known around the world as people in mission, who do God's work in the world of restoring and reconciling communities not because God needs us to do so, but because our neighbor does.

### Being flexible

Sarah Isackson, former pastor of Lutheran Church of the Cross in Berkeley, Calif., spent 11 years working with her congregation to cultivate a worship environment that both inspired and reflected the mission of the church.

She'll admit it wasn't easy at first. The community Lutheran Church of the Cross serves is diverse. When the congregation formed in 1967, its membership was comprised of immigrants from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany. The congregation held services in English and in Finnish. Then like many neighborhoods in the United States, the population around the congregation grew to be less European and more multi-ethnic and multiracial. In addition, the congregation's location near Pacific Theological Lutheran Seminary attracted many young students.

When Sarah wanted to create worship environments that spoke to all of these unique groups, it took some convincing.

"I would beg the elders," she says. "I just said, 'If you really love God and you love this church, just give me a chance. I know



you really want to see this church grow."

Eventually, the congregation learned how to plug its worship into its many missional ministries.

For instance, Lutheran Church of the Cross was the first

congregation in northern California to host Narcotics Anonymous meetings and to this day hosts many recovery groups. By beginning to incorporate some of the principles of 12-step programs into worship and the liturgy, people were able to connect their worship with what God was doing in their lives.

And rather than inviting the young people who live in the non-faith-based homeless shelter housed at the congregation to come to worship, they formed an alternate worship service at a local restaurant.

"We set up this different kind of worship service in the back room and invited the youth there," Sarah says. "They would read Scripture and read prayers together and write down their prayers."

They also combined their mission projects with worship experiences, like doing an outdoor worship service with an earth blessing and purchasing a clay pizza oven to provide an opportunity for people to both eat and fellowship. For a time, they also kept the church building open 24 hours a day so that people could come in to pray, worship and meditate on their own, regardless of their faith or religious practice.

- Mission planning is relational and fosters partnerships.
- Every congregation is uniquely gifted by God.
- Mission planning pays attention to context.
- Mission planning is a shared journey.
- Mission planning is ongoing.

All congregations, says the Rev. Stephen Bouman, executive director for ELCA Congregational and Synodical Mission, should start with the "three great listenings": listening to God, listening to each other and listening to the community.

"We always have to stay connected to our community or we lose our focus and turn inward, so mission planning is always listening," Stephen says.

The result was a congregation with ways for people of many different walks of life to connect their separate calls to ministry with worship.

"We are flexible and welcoming," Sarah says. "I just know that God works in all mediums and all places. It's about not being afraid to fail."

### Rehearsing for mission

According to the ELCA's "Worship and Mission" study, "In worship we 'rehearse' the language and practice for our lives as Christians — in worship we rehearse the work of mission. Engaging the whole assembly in worship is vital not only to an effective worship life, but it is also vital to an effective missional life."

"Worship and Mission" provides a foundation for worship that fuels this missional life. This resource can be a great starting point for congregations looking to make this connection.

Broken into both a reading selection and a small group study, complete with leader and participant guides, this study is aimed at centering the worship and mission of the congregation in God's presence in word and sacrament. The Worship Formation Module — a more expanded study session on worship and mission — is also available by request from [worship@elca.org](mailto:worship@elca.org).

The connection of worship and mission will look different in every congregation, but Sarah's advice is simple: "Get out of the way," she says. "Listen to the Spirit. Stay open and expect the unexpected."

For more information or to download "Worship and Mission," visit [www.ELCA.org/missionplanning](http://www.ELCA.org/missionplanning).

### Getting started

Because mission planning is one of the highest priorities of the ELCA, there is a wealth of resources available to congregations looking to dig deeper.

Visit [www.ELCA.org/missionplanning](http://www.ELCA.org/missionplanning) for free downloadable tools, the Guiding Principles of Mission Planning, Bible studies and more that can help with mission planning regardless of where one's congregation is in the process.

Also check out Stephen's new book, "The Mission Table: Renewing Congregation and Community" available at [www.augsburgfortress.com](http://www.augsburgfortress.com).

seeds for the parish

[ELCA.org/seeds](http://ELCA.org/seeds)

[LivingLutheran.com/seeds](http://LivingLutheran.com/seeds)

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to develop, review or redefine their unique mission plans.

So how does one go about creating a mission plan?

"There are two key things that any congregation that wants to see a new vitality has to think about," says Blair. "One is they have to discern what is God's calling for them, what is their mission, what is the purpose for their context."

"And then," Blair continues. "They have to be willing to do whatever it takes to accomplish that mission."

### Guiding principles

The ELCA has six guiding principles for mission planning:

- Mission planning involves the three great listenings.

## Inspiring congregations to share God's love

What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word “stewardship”? Budgets and spreadsheets? Money? Pledge cards?

Instead of thinking of stewardship as facts and figures and annual campaigns, what if we thought of stewardship as an extension of mission? What if we thought about it as a way to help do God's work in the world?

In Matthew 22:37b-39, Jesus says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

It's this love — the love God has for us, the love we have for God and the love we are called to have for one another — that pastors and stewardship leaders across the ELCA are using as a lens to develop a new way of thinking about the ministry of stewardship.

“Relationships are what stewardship is all about,” says Trixie Richter, the congregational life director at Redeemer Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation in Winter Park, Fla. “There are times of scarcity and abundance in all of our lives, and stewardship calls us to creatively use God's gifts to follow Jesus' command to love God and our neighbor.

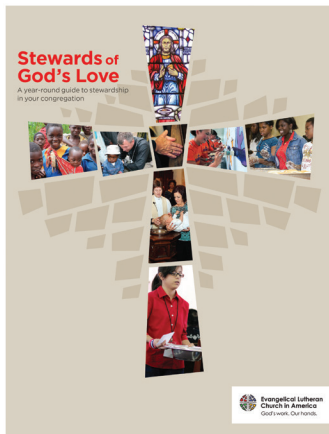
Rather than simply seeing stewardship as a way to raise money, Trixie sees stewardship as a way to give back.

### A new mindset

Grace Duddy, assistant director for the Center for Stewardship Leaders at Luther Seminary, an ELCA seminary in St. Paul, Minn., has been talking with stewardship leaders from across this church about how they are inspiring their congregations to see stewardship through the lens of love.

“It's our goal that people would see stewardship with a wider lens, through our relationship with God, not our relationship with the church,” Grace says. “Stewardship should be a part of our lives as a whole. Our hope is people will see that what they do with their money, their time and all of their life relates to God.”

Grace is the author of a brand new ELCA resource called “Stewards of God's



Love: a year-round guide to stewardship in your congregation.”

“This resource is helpful for not only leaders,” Grace says. “It offers a new perspective that can help people in this church who have a bad taste in their mouth when they hear the word stewardship.”

“This isn't about our money or our relationship with this church,”

Grace continues. “It's about all of our life.”

### A resource for everyone

Whether you're new to stewardship or have been leading a committee for years, whether you lead a large congregation or a small worshiping community in your home, this resource is full of ideas that will change the way your leaders think about their gifts of time, talent and money.

You can use this guide to renew your congregation's stewardship program or simply to find a few new insights.

Broken into sections based on Jesus' first and second commandments, “Stewards of God's Love” provides practical examples for congregations to be faithful stewards in all of the areas of our lives.

“The practice of stewardship invites us to look in three different directions: DOWN, IN and OUT,” Grace writes in the introduction. “We begin by looking at how God has come down to us. We then look in to discover all that God has entrusted to our care. We end by looking out to understand the needs of our neighbors. While these three actions may not always happen in this order, the practice of stewardship always invites all three.” When we practice stewardship in this way we are making the sign of the cross.

The guide also features real-world examples of congregations and leaders from around the country who live out faithful stewardship not only in their worship but in all aspects of their lives.

A print copy of “Stewards of God's Love” was mailed to all congregations earlier this year. To order additional copies or to sign up for a new ELCA email newsletter providing insights to enhance stewardship ministry in your congregation, visit [www.ELCA.org/growingstewards](http://www.ELCA.org/growingstewards).



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# Congregational mission planning with children and youth

By Kristine Stache

Fall is here. Donations of notebooks, markers and rulers fill the basket in the narthex for local school children. Canned goods are stacked neatly as they are dropped off each Sunday morning. Coins clink as children add them to the jar to raise money for purchasing a cow for a family in a country far, far away. What a beautiful sight, children and youth making a difference in the lives of others through mission. But is it enough? Is this really all that mission is about?

It's time to blow the lid off our current working definitions of mission. We have been created by a missionary God to participate in God's mission in the world, with our unique gifts and idiosyncrasies. We are created with purpose as individuals and as communities of faith. One of the biggest gifts we can provide to members of the youngest generation in our congregations is to walk with them as they grow into an understanding of mission as more than what we donate. It is actually one of being and participation.

So, how can we as parents, friends and congregations encourage them to live into that reality? How can we help them see themselves as created and called by God to be God's missionaries in the world? I of-

fer three simple places to start.

1. Teach our youth to listen. I mean to really listen. Not from an obedience, follow the rules standpoint, but from a listen with more than our ears perspective, listen with our hearts and our heads. And by teach, I don't mean instruct, but to learn with them, to walk with them and model deep listening, listening to God, to our neighbor and to ourselves. One of the easiest ways I know to do this is to sit with a person and read a passage of Scripture together. Then spend time wondering together. Ask questions like:

- I wonder why Jesus said that?
- I wonder what I would have done?
- I wonder if there are people today who feel the same way?

Wondering together creates this safe space to think aloud about who



God is and how God acts in the world. Wondering can also help us move from understanding Scripture as something about God and them to something about God and us. Wondering

leaves pat answers at the door. It's about exploring the unknown together.

2. Help our youth understand and live into the reality that they were uniquely created by God with intent and purpose, to participate in God's work in the world. Their participation is not contingent upon what they do or how much they donate, but who they are, or better yet, whose they are, God's chosen one. Provide them with different kinds of models and mentors, who engage them as individuals, not just as a group of teens or a class of preschoolers. Give them opportunities to use their gifts in different ways. Do all confirmands need to be acolytes? Could some be lay readers? Could

adults also serve as acolytes? Can 8-year-olds usher?

3. Make a philosophical (and theological) shift from providing ministries to children, youth and families to that of ministering with children, youth and families. Create opportunities for relationship building. Living in community is for all members of a community. As children of God, we are gifted individually to serve communally. We have as much to learn from those younger than us as we have to teach. We are all teachers, we are all learners. A more mutually beneficial approach to ministry will strengthen the whole community.

God is good. God is at work in the world, in our communities and in our homes. We have been granted the privilege of walking with our children and youth as they discovery ways to live out this call in their own lives. God is already at work, what a privilege that we all get to be a part of it!

*Kristine Stache is an associate professor of Missional Leadership and director of Distributed Learning and Certificate Programs at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa.*

## Directors for evangelical mission: your greatest resource for mission planning

One of the greatest assets all ELCA congregations have when they begin thinking about developing a mission plan is their director for evangelical mission. Each synod has a director whose job it is to accompany congregations in becoming healthy centers for mission.

Here are four directors from across the country describing the work they do.

**Maria Paiva, ELCA Southwest California Synod**

**What do you do?** My role is to facilitate the mission in our synod, whether it is by starting new ministries or by redeveloping ministries, working alongside congregations that are looking at themselves to explore mission opportunities in their communities.

**What does a congregation in mission look like?** It's a congregation that sees its mission field as the whole community; that is well known to the community and always seeking opportunities to serve the people and to share God's love with people.

**What's your favorite thing about being a director for evangelical mission?** Since I'm bilingual — I speak Spanish — I love working with the different ethnic groups and to discover together what we can do to reach out to all populations.

**Jean Devoll-Donaldson, ELCA Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod**

**What do you do?** I think of myself as being a resourcer, equipper, encourager and connector.

**What does a congregation in mission look like?** A missional congregation recognizes that God isn't just at work at church but in the community. They become good neighbors. They also experience God at work in them so that they become Christ in the world.

**What's your favorite thing about being a director for evangelical mission?** I love my job. It's an opportunity to see how God is working through so many people in so many places. I get to see how God is working with congregations outside the

synod and bring back their stories of hope to encourage the synod's congregations.

**Philip Hirsch, ELCA Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod**

**What do you do?** I work to help start new congregations and to help existing ones find pathways to renewal.

**What does a congregation in mission look like?** I would say that a missional congregation is one that understands itself as one that helps others understand the good news of Jesus Christ. It's a group of people who easily build relationships with new people, who talk about the work and the way of Jesus and who naturally connect with others and help them to walk in the way of faith.

**What's your favorite thing about being a director for evangelical mission?** My favorite thing about my job is creating new things in the church, bringing together people and spirit and resources and watching the church grow.

**Nancy Nyland, ELCA Indiana-Kentucky Synod**

**What do you do?** I think one of the important things that I do in this position is connect the three expressions of this church: congregations, synods and the churchwide organization. More specifically I empower, equip and encourage our rostered leaders, lay leaders and congregations.

**What does a congregation in mission look like?** A missional congregation to me has a sense of who they are and who God is calling them to be. It's a congregation that is working on growing their relationship with God and with one another and the world. They know how to have fun, laugh together and fellowship together.

**What's your favorite thing about being a director for evangelical mission?** A real joy for me has been to see these teams of people from congregations come and learn from one another and to see them leave with new hope and new energy. I just enjoy meeting with the people and accompanying them in their ministry.

# God's call and the spiritual discipline of listening

By Kristen Kane Osorto

Gentrification is in overdrive on 14th Street in downtown Washington, D.C. Every morning I walk past cranes whipping around constructing new high-rise condos with sky-high rents. Yet, when I arrive at Luther Place Memorial Church in the heart of the 14th Street neighborhood, where I currently serve as the organizer of community life and justice, I am greeted by a different reality — women, many of whom are life-long district residents, who are experiencing homelessness.

As a young adult moving to the District of Columbia after living in El Salvador, I came with hopes of changing the world — of shifting the oppressive practices of market gain over human dignity that I saw wreak havoc on the lives of Salvadoran people. In the District of Columbia, I quickly became disillusioned with my hopes of changing the world and felt a deep loneliness as I entered work each day. Where is God in all of this mess? Further, like many young Christians, I found myself working in ministry despite carrying distrust and frustration with Christianity.

Over the past three years, I have learned to live in the tension between the world as it is and the world as the Gospel calls it to be; encountering Jesus in the conflicts, surprising moments of grace, and most deeply through relationships, especially with people who the world teaches me to distrust. I realized if I wanted to see a different city, one that was for everyone, not just the rich and wealthy, I would need more power. I joined with a community-organizing network with hopes of building relational power that could shift the injustice in our neighborhood. The key action in broad-based community organizing is the individual relational meeting where one spends 30 to 45 minutes listening to the story and interests of another person. It was in the spiritual discipline of one-to-one meetings that I regained a sense of God. As I began scheduling daily relational meetings and hearing the stories of the women in the shelter, leaders in our congregation and residents of our neighborhood, I began to gain a sense of my calling at Luther Place: to help bring a culture of relationships into our congregation. Soon my inward transformation through encounters with the holy had propelled me outward. I began to form listening

teams, leaders centered on our vision as a congregation, and I trained them to do relational meetings. This internal listening work has transformed our relationships within the congregation and created space for us to move outward and relate to our neighbors in a new kind of way.

A few months ago during my daily walk down 14th Street, I encountered a group of families walking toward the church speaking Spanish. Someone called out my name and I realized that I knew one of the people; it was a community walk from Thompson Elementary, a local public school. I scheduled a relational meeting with one of the parent leaders and discovered that the 14th Street community lacked any affordable summer enrichment program for Latino families. As a result, many of the young people regressed in their English language and reading skills over the summer and returned the following school year behind academically. We began strategizing and after an intensive campaign of relational meetings and listening sessions at the school and in the church, a new ministry was birthed — ArtSmart Summer Camp — which over the last month has provided summer enrichment for 30+ elementary-age youth and families in the neighborhood. Summer camp will end with a 200+ community block-party celebration.

Our growing spiritual discipline of listening to people has transformed and equipped us to hear and discern God's call in our neighborhood. I am excited to see where we are called next.

*Kristen Kane Osorto is the organizer of community life and justice at Luther Place Memorial Church in Washington, D.C. A former volunteer with Lutheran Volunteer Corp, Kristen is dedicated to seeking justice and listening to the narratives of those around her. For more information, visit [www.lutherplace.org/](http://www.lutherplace.org/).*

*For more information about using community-based organizing in your congregation, a resource comic book, "Hope at Work: First Steps in Congregation-based Community Organizing," is available at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources). A free guide to one-to-one conversations is also available at [www.ELCA.org/missionplanning](http://www.ELCA.org/missionplanning) in the Do-It-Yourself Resources tab.*

## Q & A

We asked ELCA pastors, members and resource center directors to share some of their favorite resources and best practices for mission planning. Here's what they had to say:

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**Ronald Weber, Saint James Lutheran Church, Chicago:** We're in the process of developing our parish mission plan to compliment the mission of the Church. We're beginning with a special meeting of the Congregation Council to review Christian history as it relates to important events/highlights of people of faith. This is done on a timeline spread around the room. As we get closer to present time (the past 100 years or so), there's more room allowed on the chart so people can add their personal significant events joined with others, as well as our congregation's significant/memorable events and mission efforts. The timeline will continue into the future. They can add ideas of where they think we might be, could be, or where they believe the Holy Spirit is leading us. This activity will be repeated at a meeting of significant leaders and voices in the parish, and again with an invitation for the whole congregation membership and friends of the parish to participate.

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**Brian Mundt, Cross of Hope Lutheran Church, Ramsey, Minn.:** I've used "Discerning Your Congregation's Future: A Strategic and Spiritual Approach," by Roy Oswald and Robert Friedrich (Alban, 1996) several times now.

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**Luke Bouman, consultant, Valparaiso, Ind.:** I like the quote I heard from an ELCA executive some years ago. To paraphrase, "The church doesn't need to come up with a mission. God's mission has a church." I help many congregations to work on developing mission plans. And we always start with the idea that God has an ongoing mission, globally and locally, and the congregation's job is to plug into it and participate actively in God's mission in a way that is appropriate for their sphere of influence. Any mission plan that doesn't ask first what God is doing in the world won't work.

A second part of the work that I do with congregations is to ask them to develop their local plans with the help of as many people in the congregation as they can muster. We try to "get the whole system in the room" as much as possible.

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**Greg Kaufmann, Northwest Synod of Wisconsin:** Our synod's director for evangelical mission put together a complete planning guide for congregations that wish to do mission planning. It is a free download, PDF form, from our synod website. Here is the URL: [www.nwswi.org/resources/](http://www.nwswi.org/resources/).

## Women “of many generations” to gather in Charlotte

Triennial Gatherings of Women of the ELCA bring together Lutheran women from across the church with life-changing workshops, worship, Bible study and more. The Ninth Triennial Gathering, July 24-27, 2014, will be no exception. Women will gather in Charlotte, N.C., under the theme “of many generations.” All women in the church are invited to attend; one need not be a participant in Women of the ELCA.

Featured speakers, preachers and workshop leaders will bring the gathering theme to life, exploring the theme verse from Isaiah 58:12, “Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in.”

### Featured speakers

Helping attendees explore the gathering theme will be Susan Sparks and Becca Stephens. Susan Sparks, a lawyer, pastor and comedian, hails from North Carolina and currently serves Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York City. Sparks’ book “Laugh Your Way to Grace: Reclaiming the Power of Humor” was named one of the best spiritual books of 2010. She’s also a popular blogger for Good Morning America, Huffington Post and Psychology Today.

Becca Stephens, an Episcopal priest serving as chaplain at St. Augustine’s at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tenn., is founder of Magdalene and Thistle Farms, a community and social enterprise that stands with women recovering from violence, prostitution, addiction and life on the street. Stevens has authored eight books and has been featured on NPR, PBS and CNN, among other media outlets. She was named by the White House as one of 15 Champions of Change.

Diane Jacobson will open up the gathering theme through Bible study. Jacobson, director of the Book of Faith Initiative for the ELCA, is also professor emeritus of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., where she taught from 1982-2010.

Elaine Neuenfeldt will connect the theme exploration to the global church. Neuenfeldt, an ordained pastor from the Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil, is the executive secretary for Women in Church and Society at The Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland.

### Joining the conversation

Through worship, art, films and in multiple learning opportunities, attendees continue exploring the gathering theme with more women lending their voices. Claire Schenot Burkat, bishop of the ELCA Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, will preach at opening worship, and Raquel Rodriguez, director for the Latin America and Caribbean desk of ELCA Global Mission, will preside. The Rev. Linda Norman, ELCA treasurer, will preach at Sunday’s closing worship, and Callista Isabelle, chaplain at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa., will preside.

Stephanie Burke will coordinate an interactive mural project in the exhibit hall. Burke is Artist-In-Residence and Liturgical Drama Director at Christ Lutheran in Charlotte, N.C. Wendy Thompson will lead a post-screening discussion of her film, “Harvest of Empire.” Thompson is the president and CEO of the Onyx Media Group and EVS Communications, Inc. Debra Gonsler Vinik will lead a post-screening discussion of her film, “I Believe You.” She has produced and written 14 documentaries, eight of which have been nominated for Emmy awards and three have won honors for Best Religious Programming.

### Keeping the conversations going

Learning opportunities take multiple forms at “of many generations.” Whether you attend a workshop, view a film or engage in a servant project, learning opportunities allow you to grow your faith, explore new possibilities and connect with other women. Complete information can be found at [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org), and additional opportunities will be posted there as they are confirmed.

### Early-bird registration continues

Registration for the Ninth Triennial Gathering is now open. Early-bird registration, through Jan. 6, 2014, is \$325.00; after that registration will be \$350.00.

Complete information about the Gathering and all its varied offerings can be found at [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org).

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## Celebrate Global Church Sunday

In the past 25 years, the ELCA has sent thousands of missionaries to work hand in hand with our global neighbors to build relationships and grow the church. As a church that believes God is calling us into the world together, we believe the good news of Jesus Christ gives us the courage to wonder, discover and boldly participate in what God is up to in the world.

This fall, congregations are invited to celebrate our church's connection in Christ's global church in conjunction with World Communion Sunday (Oct. 6) or Lutheran World Federation Sunday (Oct. 27).

Here are some ways to get started and host a Global Church Sunday in your congregation:

- **Pick a day to observe Global Church Sunday** and announce it in your church bulletin and newsletter
- **Share inspiring stories from the global church** with your congregation by downloading Hand in Hand bulletin inserts at [www.ELCA.org/handinhand](http://www.ELCA.org/handinhand) or ordering multiple free Hand in Hand newsletters at [www.ELCA.org/GlobalMission-Resources](http://www.ELCA.org/GlobalMission-Resources).
- **Host a global church-themed coffee hour**, complete with themed placemats and other resources available online at [www.ELCA.org/GlobalMission-Resources](http://www.ELCA.org/GlobalMission-Resources).
- **Take a special offering** to support ELCA missionaries, Young Adults

in Global Mission, International Leaders or Global Ministries

- **Plan a global church-inspired worship service.** Find worship resources at [www.ELCA.org/worship](http://www.ELCA.org/worship) or request sample services by contacting [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org)
- **Consider sponsoring an ELCA missionary or a Young Adult in Global Mission.** Or if you already do, invite that person to write a special note to the congregation, arrange for a Skype visit or short video greeting. Learn more about sponsoring a missionary or Young Adult in Global Mission by calling 800-638-3522, ext. 2657, or emailing [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).
- **Know former missionaries or Young Adults in Global Mission volunteers?** Invite them to tell their stories in church.

How will your congregation celebrate Global Church Sunday? Send pictures and stories from your congregation's celebration to [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org), and you may be featured on the ELCA page on Facebook or on [LivingLutheran.com](http://LivingLutheran.com).

*Global Church Sunday is sponsored by the ELCA Global Church Sponsorship program, which gives congregations and individuals the opportunity to support missionaries, Young Adults in Global Mission, International Leaders and Global Ministries. Learn more at [www.ELCA.org/globalchurch](http://www.ELCA.org/globalchurch).*

## New resources available from the ELCA Foundation

The ELCA Foundation has professional gift planning staff throughout the nation, and gift planning tools for every situation. The following resources are now available.

### The Will and Trust Workbook: a helpful guide for planning your estate

This workbook is designed to be a planning resource for members as they prepare for a meeting with their legal advisor. While not a legal document, it is a tool to help members prepare and plan for the distribution of assets.



### Important Notes About My Estate: a helpful guide for my family and friends

This guide is a tool to help members capture the details of their estate plan assets, funeral plans and location of important documents. This guide will allow members to help their family and friends at an important time.

Both guides are available to order or download at <http://resources.ELCA.org/Products-Stewardship.html>. They are also available online at [www.ELCA.org/foundation](http://www.ELCA.org/foundation). All gift planning services are made available to individuals and congregations without obligation. Congregations interested in offering gift planning education opportunities to their members should contact the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522.



## APPSolutely! Get Gather on your tablet

Gather magazine is now available in a digital format at [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org) and on iPad, Android and Kindle Fire. Subscribers can search for "Gather magazine" in Google Play, the iTunes store or Amazon.com to download the app. To view the magazine online or on your tablet, use the subscriber ID number found on your address label.

Gather subscribers can also access the new nine-month Women of the ELCA Bible study which began with the September issue on the tablet devices

listed above. In Good Company: Stories of Biblical Women was written by Kay Ward, the first female Moravian bishop.

A year's subscription to Gather (10 issues) is \$15; two years (20 issues) is \$28. The January/February and July/August issues are combined. Call 800-328-4648 to subscribe or go to [augsbuportress.org](http://augsbuportress.org) and search for Gather magazine.

To learn more about the magazine and the 2013-14 Bible study, visit [www.gathermagazine.org](http://www.gathermagazine.org).

## New issue of Stories of Faith in Action!

The 2014 edition of Stories of Faith in Action is now available!

This issue features the images and stories of people from around the world whose lives have been touched by ELCA ministries in the past year, all made possible with your congregational offering. When you give to your local congregation, a percentage of that money is shared with your synod and with the ELCA church-wide organization. This is called Mission Support. Together we do God's work in



the world in ways that no individual, congregation or synod can do alone.

Learn more about how your offering is put to work throughout the United States and in the world. Order your free copy of Stories of Faith and Action today!

To order free copies call 800-638-3522, ext. 2580, and ask for ELCAMA1198.

Order online at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources) and search for ELCAMA1198. You'll only pay for shipping.

## Human Trafficking Curriculum Series

The Human Trafficking Curriculum Series was created through the ELCA Justice for Women Program and is recommended by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice. The series is designed to raise awareness and encourage thoughtful dialogue and learning so that young people of the church can learn about justice, advocate for change and lead into the future. The sessions can also be adapted for older adults and mixed groups.

The series contains six one-hour learning sessions designed to equip young

people to educate themselves and their peers on the realities of human trafficking and to respond to this devastating problem. The introduction helps the leader to evaluate the group and the space in order to maximize engagement.

The series can be found at [www.ELCA.org/humantraffickingstudy](http://www.ELCA.org/humantraffickingstudy). For more information, contact the Justice for Women program at [justiceforwomen@elca.org](mailto:justiceforwomen@elca.org). To connect with the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice, send an email to [womenandjustice@elca.org](mailto:womenandjustice@elca.org).



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

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**We are a church** that believes God is calling us into the world—together. This issue of Seeds for the Parish focuses on mission planning—the process of discovering how each community is called to live in the world as the body of Christ.



*God is at work in unexpected places.  
And so are our loans.*

**CAMP AGAPE, HICKORY, PENNSYLVANIA**

When Camp Agape needed a building loan, it turned to the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. Thanks to an MIF loan, Agape campers now spend their mornings receiving tutoring in the camp's newly built classroom space and afternoons learning Bible stories and splashing in the camp pool. All of which just goes to show: God's work needs no vacation.

Looking for a building loan with flexible terms and competitive rates? To learn more about borrowing with MIF or refinancing a loan from another lender, call us at 877.886.3522 or go to [mif.elca.org/loanoptions](http://mif.elca.org/loanoptions).



**Mission Investment Fund**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.