



Goats, chicks, bees or school supplies may seem like modest gifts, but these ELCA Good Gifts can be life-changing for others.

## Holiday shopping can change lives

After her husband died of AIDS, Kenyoyozi was left to take care of her three young children alone. Living with HIV herself, most of her modest income from selling bananas went to her antiretroviral treatments. When those became too expensive in her Ugandan village, she had no choice but to go without. Too tired and weak to work, her children had to drop out of school, and many days they all would go hungry.

Things changed the day Kenyoyozi received a special gift—four goats. After a short time, and agricultural and animal training, four goats became 12. By selling the milk and a few of the offspring, she was able to provide a steady income and proper nutrition for her family, her children could go back to school, and she was able to continue her treatments.

For Kenyoyozi, this gift of four goats was life-changing. And with ELCA Good

Gifts, you can be a part of her story. Select from more than 50 gifts, such as goats, water wells, school uniforms and food for refugees, each with the ability to make a life-changing difference in the lives of people like Kenyoyozi. The gifts provide direct support to ELCA ministries that are already at work in nearly 100 countries.

### Preparing for Christmas

As Christmas nears, ELCA Good Gifts can be a useful tool for your holiday shopping. All gifts can be given in honor of friends and loved ones, and each gift comes with a free card for you to share the news. The 2017 catalog features a handful of new additions: water filters (\$30), solar powered lanterns (\$30) and sending a young person with disabilities to the ELCA Youth Gathering (\$300), to name a few.

Getting your whole congregation involved is easier than ever. The ELCA offers a host of free tools such as posters, bulletin inserts, planning guides, Advent calendars, ornaments and coloring sheets to help with promotion and fundraising.

St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Park Ridge, Ill., takes advantage of these resources during Advent when they hold their annual Good Gifts fair. For two Sundays, they deck out their atrium with information and images on all the potential gifts, as well as cards and ornaments to take home to wrap after a purchase.

"Every year, I give my wife a couple of water wells," said the Rev. Richard Johnson, pastor of St. Luke's. "With so many different gift options, there really is something for everyone, and people can gravitate toward gifts that are reflective of themselves."

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Strategies, guidelines and best practices for social media.

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Gift of free VBS resources from Lutheran Outdoor Ministries.

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Creative ways to celebrate Advent and Christmas at home.

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### CONTACT US

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### What we buy and give matters

Americans spend over \$300 billion on Christmas shopping each year.



At St. Luke's they emphasize that substituting one traditional gift with one from the ELCA Good Gifts catalog will redirect a significant amount of funds toward the fight against hunger and poverty.

"ELCA Good Gifts are an excellent way to make us realize we have so many things," Johnson said. "In an abundant culture, it is nice to be reminded that we don't need things ourselves, but, instead, we can spread generosity to others, all while honoring our loved ones."

Last year, over \$5.4 million was raised through ELCA Good Gifts with supporting work in 83 countries. Help us continue to grow the church, fight hunger and transform lives by getting started today at [ELCA.org/goodgifts](http://ELCA.org/goodgifts).

By Amy Devitt

### Advent tree

Decorate a tree with ornaments that represent ELCA Good Gifts—pigs, honeybees or microloans, for example—and invite families to select ornaments representing the gifts they would like to give. Participants can take their ornaments home as a reminder of their giving, and when the tree is empty, you'll know you've met your goal.

Visit [resources.ELCA.org](http://resources.ELCA.org)

to order a free pack of assorted ornaments, or opt for a matching package and decorate a whole tree with bees, chicks, pigs or goats.



## ELCA Reformation event in Washington, D.C.

All are invited to join via livestream the ELCA's commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation on Tuesday, Oct. 31.

"Looking Back & Called Forward" will be co-hosted by Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton, Bishop Bill Gafkjen of the Indiana-Kentucky Synod and chair of the Conference of Bishops, ELCA Vice President Bill Horne and Bishop Dick Graham of the Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synod.

We will gather to be a public witness to Christ, who frees us to love and serve our neighbor, and to look to the future to which God is calling us.

As the first centennial of the ecumenical era, we will look back on 500 years of the Reformation through the lens of more than 50 years of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue and look to the future as we are called forward together in Christ. The all-day event

**Freed & RENEWED in Christ**  
500 YEARS OF GOD'S GRACE IN ACTION

will include speakers, fellowship, music and worship and is hosted by Lutheran Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

Congregations and communities are welcome to gather and watch any or all of the events via the livestream. Simply log on to [ELCA.org/livestream](http://ELCA.org/livestream). More information about the event can be found at [bit.ly/2vKdC7R](http://bit.ly/2vKdC7R).

## Worship at the Center events planned for 2018

Worship at the Center events provide opportunities to deeply explore topics and rites of worship and the church. These events include worship, presentations and workshops geared for pastors, deacons, musicians, worship teams and anyone interested in vibrant worship in their communities.

### Journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter

- Jan. 18-20  
St. John's Lutheran Church, Winter Park, Fla.
- Feb. 1-3  
St. Martin's Lutheran Church, Austin, Texas

Evangelical Lutheran Worship invites us to keep Ash Wednesday through Easter in a new-old way. During these days together in Florida and Texas, we will worship using the services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Vigil of Easter and join in reflection, study



and discussion of the cross and empty tomb, baptism and the Bible—the meaning of this journey for ourselves and the world. Presenters include Robert Farlee, John Morris, Gail Ramshaw, Leslie Scanlon and Miriam Schmidt.

Registration for the event is \$50 for individuals and \$120 for multiple participants from a congregation (up to six people). Registration opens late September. The fee includes lunch on Thursday and Friday.

Beginning Sept. 15, you can find more information about the schedule, local hotels and restaurants at [ELCA.org/worship](http://ELCA.org/worship). Click on the link to "Worship at the Center."

*Seeds for the Parish*

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

**Seeds for the Parish** (ISSN 0897-5663) is published four times a year (January, April, July and October). It is distributed without charge to congregations, rostered clergy and lay leaders, retired resource centers of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Current and past issues of *Seeds for the Parish* are available for download at [ELCA.org/Resources/Seeds-for-the-Parish](http://ELCA.org/Resources/Seeds-for-the-Parish).

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**Note:** Not all resources and program ideas listed in *Seeds for the Parish* have received official ELCA review or endorsement.

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## Further exploring the Small Catechism and Luther's teachings

Martin Luther's Small Catechism is a rich treasure for communicating the faith from generation to generation. Whether read once in confirmation class or as ongoing lifelong learning, there are many ways to read and interpret it.

We're all invited to get to know the Small Catechism again and hear it from a new voice by joining Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton in her "With New Voices" video series. Born out of her initial invitation in fall 2016, this series of three- to four-minute videos provides clarity and contemporary contextual understanding of most aspects of the Small Catechism.

In each video, Eaton reviews Luther's teaching and provides additional perspective on its relevance today, including references to modern day concepts and applicable situations.

The videos are encouraged for use in small-group, family or congregational discussions. A leaders' guide is available and offers suggestions for using the videos in worship, Christian education programs, youth ministry and other small-group settings.

Together, the videos and guide are a tool for helping us reconnect with the common language for talking about our

### *First Commandment*

With New Voices  
Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

relationship with God and neighbors and for making sense of our callings in daily life and being a witness of Christ in the world.

Watch the videos and download the leaders guide at [ELCA500.org/with-new-voices](http://ELCA500.org/with-new-voices).

## Resources for congregational social media

Social media is a tool for ministry. Engaging with your congregation's members through social media extends the community that gathers for worship into the rest of the week and integrates "church life" into daily life. Through platforms like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, you can share your congregation's announcements, photos, videos and prayers in a relevant and timely way. It's a way to listen to your members and build community. Above all, social media is another way to be the church—by sharing the good news of God's love and grace through Jesus Christ.

The ELCA offers strategies, guidelines and best practices regarding congregational social media use. "Social Media and Congregations: Planning and Procedures" will help you get started with developing a strategy for your site. It's

important to create a plan for posting content and monitoring comments. In this resource, you'll find links to "how to" articles by ELCA members who have found value in engaging with their fellow church members online.

"Social Media and Congregations: Platforms and Content" provides tips and ideas for sharing content on different social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and more. Every social media site is different, and this document can help you determine which is most useful for your congregation.



Both of these resources are available at [ELCA.org/resources](http://ELCA.org/resources) under the "Congregational Communications Tools" tab.

If you are a social media user, be sure to follow the ELCA to keep

up-to-date with church news, events, photos and video across many platforms. We're on Facebook at [Facebook.com/Lutherans](https://www.facebook.com/Lutherans), @ELCA on Twitter, @ELCA on Instagram and at [YouTube.com/ELCA](https://www.youtube.com/ELCA).

Posts from the ELCA are easy to share on your congregation's social media outlets so your members can learn more about the work we do together. Join this online community of Lutherans!

## Helping teach kids about Martin Luther

Introduce the basics of Martin Luther's reforming movement to children with Sparkhouse Family's "The Life of Martin Luther: A Pop-Up Book." The vibrant illustrations and intricate pop-ups will have readers of all ages coming back



again and again to explore this fascinating chapter in the history of the Chris-

tian faith. Find sliding scale prices for bulk purchases so congregations can purchase one for each child at [augsburgfortress.com](http://augsburgfortress.com).

And now you can download a free curriculum to accompany this book to help teach kids about the life of Luther and the Protestant Reformation. The lesson ends with a fun activ-

ity to help children (and those who love them) see themselves in this continuing story of God's grace-filled love. There are two versions of the activity: a simple version for younger kids and a more complex version for older kids.

Download your free lesson by finding "The Life of Martin Luther" at [augsburgfortress.com](http://augsburgfortress.com). Scroll down to the samples section and click on "Curriculum Download." Enjoy!

## Part of our Lutheran heritage: A commitment to education, educators and schools



Did you know that over 1,400 ELCA congregations operate a week-day school or early childhood center that collectively serve over 150,000 families with high-quality education and sharing the gospel, and that they employ over 18,000 staff members? If your congregation is one of these or if you are thinking of opening a school or center, plan now to attend the IGNITE conference Feb. 28-March 2, 2018, at the Hyatt Regency Downtown, Minneapolis.

The IGNITE annual conference provides professional education for principals, directors, pastors and others serving ELCA schools and centers. Sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) and in partnership with the Association of Lutheran Development Executives (ALDE), the conference is a "must attend." With keynote speakers John Busacker and Jen McDonough, this conference will provide you with the skills and knowledge you need to lead your Lutheran school or center and take it to the next level in both quality and faith development.

Learn more, view curriculum offerings and register now at [ignitespark.org/elea](http://ignitespark.org/elea). If you'd like more information about ELEA, the organization providing services for schools and centers in partnership with ELCA Domestic Mission, visit [elcaschools.org](http://elcaschools.org) or call 800-500-7644.

## Preparing for Veterans Day

Veterans Day, Nov. 11, is fast approaching and presents opportunities for congregations to support, care for and honor veterans and their families. Check out [ELCAchaps.com](http://ELCAchaps.com) for ready-for-use, practical, digital worship resources for congregations: litanies, prayers, children's messages, ready-to-print bulletin inserts, a Veterans Day fact sheet and quiz, Scripture and hymn suggestions, worship openings, ways to honor veterans and much more. There is a listing of Veterans Day resources under the "Congregations Resources" tab.

This site also includes an album of photos, videos and a list of websites that lead to even more resources. Permission is granted for free use of all resources on this website.

Another Veterans Day highlight is the "Prayer Book for the Armed Services." This popular resource is in its seventh printing

and is available from Augsburg Fortress Publishing/1517 Media at [augsburgfortress.org](http://augsburgfortress.org). Go to the ELCA website for ideas for creative use and promotion of this book.

Be sure to check with your synod staff for resources and assistance as you plan for Veterans Day and think about ministry with veterans and their families. Twenty-eight synods have now identified a contact for the ELCA Centurion Connections initiative. If your synod needs a point of contact for military and veterans' ministries, you can volunteer and assist your synod by joining this ELCA network. Centurion Connections coordinates efforts for all federal



The presence of Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton and retired Brig. Gen. Jan Haigler draws attention to the sacrifice and service of veterans as they render honors at Arlington National Cemetery as a caisson with another hero passes by.

chaplancies. Names and phone numbers for the contact in your area can be found at [ELCAchaps.com](http://ELCAchaps.com).

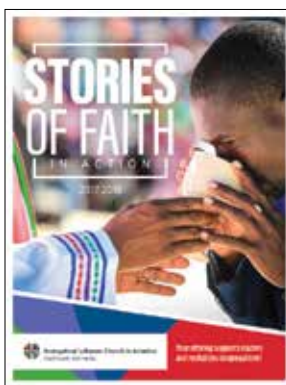
## Stories of Faith in Action, our impact through Mission Support dollars

Stories of Faith in Action is a free, annual publication that highlights the impact we make together through sharing Mission Support.

Each year ELCA congregations share a portion of their regular offerings as Mission Support with their synods. Synods then share a portion of that with the churchwide organization.

Members may wonder how Mission Support dollars are being used by the wider church. Through stories, photographs and video, Stories of Faith in Action shows the impact of our shared ministry as the ELCA.

Here are a few ways to use Stories of Faith in Action to share the impact



your congregation makes through Mission Support:

- **As part of your stewardship messaging:** Order free copies of Stories of Faith in Action (pay only shipping) and have a leader in your congregation introduce the resource, letting members know that it is available in their stewardship packets or near your stewardship

bulletin board or display. Let members know their giving in 2016 made these stories possible.

- **On social media or multimedia sharing:** Some of the stories in Stories of Faith in Action have a corresponding video. Share these videos on your social

media platforms or with your congregation as a video mission moment.

- **In weekly bulletins and newsletters:** Selected stories are available as bulletin inserts to complement your existing communications.

Visit [ELCA.org/SOFIA](http://ELCA.org/SOFIA) now to:

- Order free copies of Stories of Faith in Action.
- Download videos
- Download bulletin insert designs containing selected stories.
- Download a Mission Support FAQ sheet for council, finance or congregational meetings.
- Download an electronic copy of Stories of Faith in Action.
- Share Mission Support stories.

## A perfect gift for kids and grandkids: 'Maybe God Is Like That Too'



Sometimes God's presence is a difficult concept for children to grasp. They can't see God the way they can see a friend or interact with God in concrete, tangible ways like they do their parents.

In "Maybe God Is Like That Too," a young boy wonders where to find God in the city. His grandma reminds him that he just needs to know where to look. As he goes through his day, he notices the kindness of a doorman, the generosity of a neighbor, the patience of his teacher, the faithfulness of his grandma and realizes that he saw God over and over again that day. Whenever he saw love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control, he was seeing God's Spirit at work. An ordinary day in his city opens his eyes to God's presence all around him.

Written by Jennifer Grant and illustrated by Benjamin Schipper, this moving story points young readers to a God who is always at work and who loves them deeply.

This past spring, "Maybe God Is Like That Too" was included in Christianity Today's list of favorite new releases for kids. Visit [sparkhouse.org](http://sparkhouse.org) to learn more or purchase this picture book.

## A prayer for every day, all year long

When it comes to prayer, there is no shortage of people and situations to include in our prayerful conversations with God. Sometimes it helps to have a little prompting though—reminders of special concerns of the church and world, prompts related to the church

calendar or ideas for ministries to remember in prayer that might otherwise slip by us. ELCA Prayer Ventures offers such prayer suggestions for every day of the year.

Prayer Ventures can be used for personal prayer, adapted for use in worship,

posted online or shared with members. They are posted for download a month in advance at [ELCA.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures](http://ELCA.org/en/Resources/Prayer-Ventures), and posted daily at [livinglutheran.org](http://livinglutheran.org). It's free and fresh each month!



## Peace and justice resources for Christmas and throughout the year



How can God's gift of Christmas peace become a reality throughout the year? Imagine a community of peacemakers exploring shalom and its potential to transform our world today. That's been Lutheran Peace Fellowship's (LPF) mission for decades. LPF's treasure house of resources is open to you—as is our invitation to join us in lifting up Jesus' way of peace.

For instance, "Reclaim the Season" is one of LPF's compact and practical PeacePoints discussion guides. It's often not simple to live and work for simplicity

and sustainability, especially when holiday consumerism is working overtime. Making suggestions for change while respecting holiday traditions can be a balancing act. Here you'll discover alternative ideas for the gifts we give, the time we share and our preparation for the birth of the Prince of Peace.

**Other LPF PeacePoints guides include:**

- **"What is Christian Peacemaking?"** The biblical Hebrew word "shalom" that we translate as "peace," used so often by Jesus, the prophets and the early church, means more than our contemporary word "peace." Shalom includes concepts of justice, welcoming community and wholeness. LPF seeks to foster shalom through worship, education, fellowship and action, and to explore how it can help us oppose war, violence and injustice.
- **"Hosting a Hunger Awareness Meal"** Hunger is a peace topic, as poverty and

hunger are leading causes and consequences of conflict and violence. This group activity for youth and adults brings home in a personal way the reality and impact of hunger and poverty in our world.

- **"Conflict Transformation"** How do we develop skills so that conflict can lead to constructive growth and change? Fostering safety, respect, honesty and cooperation are key. This resource offers practical tips and inspiration to make a difference. It helps leaders, congregations and organizations gain insights from creative conflict education programs and learn how to encourage others through congregational forums.

Find out why more than a million people have benefited from LPF's widely praised resources. Search LPF's website by topic at [lutheranpeace.org](http://lutheranpeace.org).

## Lutheran Outdoor Ministries has a gift for your congregation

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) is comprised of the 128 camps and retreat centers affiliated with the ELCA. Every year, LOM develops and publishes a Bible-based curriculum for summer camps, day camps and similar ministries. A portion of the curriculum, in support of congregations with vacation Bible school (VBS) programs, is designated as its VBS Package.

In 2018 the theme of the LOM curriculum, including the VBS Package, will be "This Changes Everything." This theme will also be used for the ELCA Youth Gathering and throughout the church's outdoor ministry organizations. Starting in October 2017, congregations can

purchase the rights to download the VBS Package of "This Changes Everything" for \$150.

Once again, LOM is making the VBS Packages from previous years available to congregations at no charge. That's right—free! Starting in October, congregations can obtain the 2016 VBS Package ("The Water of Life") or from any prior year as a gift from LOM.

For more information and to obtain this gift, go to [lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum](http://lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum).

And did you know that most of LOM camps will work with your congregation to have their summer camp counselors come to your church and provide



leadership for your VBS program? To find and contact the LOM camp nearest you, go to [lomnetwork.org/resources/find\\_a\\_camp.html](http://lomnetwork.org/resources/find_a_camp.html).

For more information about LOM, go to [lomnetwork.org](http://lomnetwork.org). Specific questions can be directed to Don Johnson, executive director of LOM, [director@lomnetwork.org](mailto:director@lomnetwork.org).

## Draft of social statement on women and justice available soon

Keep an eye out for the draft of the social statement on women and justice coming out this November. Each congregation will receive a copy of the draft, and it will be available online at

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

Everyone is encouraged to submit their feedback on the draft to the task force through September 2018. The task force will take into consideration all of

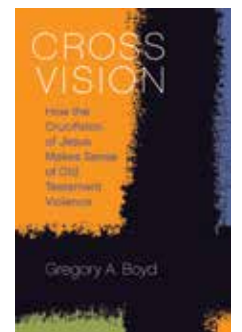
the comments as they prepare to submit a final draft to the 2019 Churchwide Assembly for adoption.

## Renowned pastor-theologian tackles Bible's biggest dilemma

**"Cross Vision: How the Crucifixion of Jesus Makes Sense of Old Testament Violence"**

By Gregory A. Boyd

The Old Testament God of wrath and violence versus the New Testament God of love and peace—it's a difference that has troubled Christians since the first century.



Now, with the sensitivity of a pastor and the intellect of a theologian, Gregory A. Boyd proposes the "cruciform hermeneutic," a way to read the Old Testament portraits of God through the lens of Jesus' crucifixion.

In "Cross Vision," Boyd follows up on his epic and groundbreaking study, "The Crucifixion of the Warrior God." He shows how the death and resurrection of Jesus reframes the troubling violence of the Old Testament, how all of Scripture reveals God's self-sacrificial love and, most importantly, how we can follow Jesus' example of peace.

Available at [augstburgfortress.org/crossvision](http://augstburgfortress.org/crossvision).

*"If you object to biblical stories that depict God as violent and tribal, ordering ethnic cleansing against men, women and children, there are two things you should know: (1) you're not alone, and (2) this book is for you."*

—Rachel Held Evans, author of "Searching for Sunday" and "A Year of Biblical Womanhood"

## Planning a building project? Consider the Mission Investment Fund

When cracks began appearing in the nave at Houston's Christ the King Lutheran Church, congregational leaders knew it was time for action. Reinforcing the church's concrete block walls became a priority, and the congregation turned to the Mission Investment Fund (MIF), the ELCA's lending ministry, for financing.

MIF provided a loan upfront so reconstruction could begin immediately. At the same time, the congregation started a capital campaign for additional funding. Shoring up the structure was the centerpiece of the project, and MIF's loan enabled the congregation to substantially rebuild the nave. Walls were reinforced with steel supports to match the church's magnificent wooden beams. A low archway at the back of the church was removed and dramatically opened up the interior space.

"MIF was very supportive all along the way," recalled Carolyn Phillips, congregational council president.

Is a new or revitalized church build-

ing in your plans? Does refinancing your existing loan make good financial sense?

An MIF loan can help. MIF offers loans to ELCA congregations and ministries for a variety of building projects and refinancing. It goes beyond lending to offer professional expertise in church building and fundraising.

As a ministry of the church, MIF understands the needs and goals of congregations and ministries.

- MIF can help you create a plan that focuses on your mission—and your vision for the future.
- MIF church building consultants can guide you through the building process—from evaluating existing facilities to recommending effective design to suggesting environmentally sound building options.
- MIF capital campaign services experts can help plan and implement effective



fundraising campaigns for your building project.

- MIF offers competitive rates and terms. The money you save working with MIF can be used for your important ministry work.

The MIF also offers investment opportunities to ELCA members, congregations and ministries.

To learn more, visit [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org) or call 877-886-3522.

## A personal quest for God

**"Bitten by a Camel: Leaving Church, Finding God"**

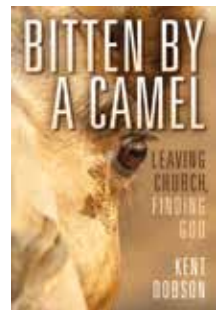
By Kent Dobson

Dobson was climbing the ladder of Christianity too: a worship leader, teacher and ultimately senior pastor of one of the largest and most prominent churches in America. But he was growing disillusioned with the faith, at least inside the shell of organized religion.

One Sunday morning, he preached to his congregation, "I don't know what the word God even means anymore." He soon left the church, but his quest for God became more intense than ever.

In "Bitten by a Camel," Dobson deconstructs much of what passes as Christianity. Then, on the foundation of Jesus and the Bible, he reconstructs a faith that is fulfilling, life-giving and true—true to himself and true to God. Dobson's message is funny, poignant and winsome. And it is ultimately, like the message of Jesus, hopeful.

Available at [augsborgfortress.org/bittenbyacamel](http://augsborgfortress.org/bittenbyacamel).



## What does the Bible mean to you?

What do Bible stories mean to you? How do other people understand the Bible—people who are of a different gender, ethnicity or nationality? Here's your chance to take part in a different kind of Bible study—and have fun exploring how and why Bible stories mean different things to different people.



Mark Allan Powell leads a workshop on his new Bible study at the 10<sup>th</sup> Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA in July.

"If you have a Bible study group that doesn't like to talk to each other, this is the time we break through

that," said Mark Allan Powell, author of "Multiple Meanings: Learning from Other Interpretations," the winter 2018 Gather magazine Bible study. "[This Gather Bible study] is going to engender a lot of discussion."

Powell, a professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, has taught at seminaries in Estonia, Russia and Tanzania. He edited the "HarperCollins Bible Dictionary" and has written

more than 100 articles and 25 books on the Bible and religion.

Subscribe now to Gather ([gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org)) to get on board for Powell's four-session Bible study, appearing in the January 2018 through April 2018 issues. It is intended for use by groups and individuals.

If you're not familiar with Gather, this newly redesigned, award-winning magazine offers a mix of articles, theological reflections, devotions and stories of comfort and challenge. Gather is published 10 times a year with combined issues in January/February and July/August. A print subscription is \$19.95 a year and includes digital access (computer, iPad, Android).

## Creation justice resources for Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day

Creation Justice Ministries, an ecumenical Christian organization working in cooperation with the ELCA, has Christian education resources for year-round use by congregations—resources concerned with protecting, restoring and rightly sharing God's creation. You can find these re-

sources at [creationjustice.org/resources](http://creationjustice.org/resources).

Each year, Creation Justice Ministries releases a new Christian education resource in advance of Earth Day Sunday. The 2017 resource, "Environmental Justice with Indigenous Peoples," is a good tool for recognizing Columbus Day/Indig-

enous Peoples Day in October. Download it at [creationjustice.org/indigenous](http://creationjustice.org/indigenous).

And, please mark your calendar for Earth Day Sunday 2018 on April 22. The theme will be "Sense of Place," and the curriculum landing page will be [creationjustice.org/place](http://creationjustice.org/place).

*"And that's the brilliance of this book: Kent has done the hard work of becoming a particular kind of person—honest, open, following the questions wherever they lead. This book comes out of that pursuit—out of that kind of life—and it's really, really inspiring. Kent has been this kind of friend and teacher to me for almost 20 years."*

—Rob Bell, author of "What is the Bible?" and "Love Wins"



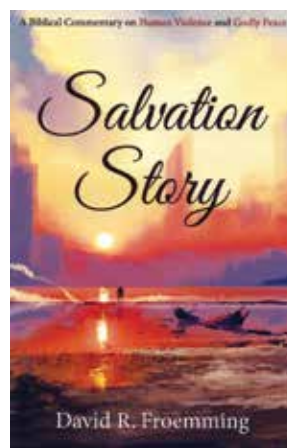
## ‘Salvation Story’ examines violence, Scripture and our new life in Christ

David Froemming’s book, “Salvation Story,” sets out as a biblical commentary with its basis set in the mimetic theory of René Girard. In the preface, Froemming says Christianity “marks the end of religion as a system that condones and conceals human violence.” These guidelines form a powerful scope through which Scripture is examined and engages contemporary culture.

“Salvation Story” represents a masterful approach at unmasking the human inclination toward violence. It exposes the perpetuation of violence that has been carried out in the name of religion. At the center of this approach is the recontextualization of the Scripture used for each commentary. One of the most impressive examples is the chapter dedicated to Romans 1-2, which

discusses ancient and modern attitudes on same-sex relationships. Throughout, Froemming employs the contexts of the biblical authors as well as the modern reader to interpret it against the “*homo en curvatus*” (our being turned inward), thus creating interesting access points for consideration of Richard Dawkins and his writings on religion and evolution in the conversation.

It is here that the book truly shines—the author forces the reader to consider the ongoing scapegoating within their modern setting. However, Froemming stops short of telling the



reader what to do. It is engaging in that he points out the violence and leaves the audience asking themselves, “How do we go forward?” It seems commonsense to say that violence is not ended with further violence, yet the world continues this model. “Salvation Story” sees the end of this cycle and the beginning of new life revealed in Jesus Christ.

“Salvation Story” is available at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com) and [wipfandstock.com](http://wipfandstock.com).

## ‘Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas’

To inspire family time, worship and play during the Advent and Christmas seasons, Augsburg Fortress has released a deck of celebration cards. “Families Celebrate Advent & Christmas” offers families with kids ages 3-12 friendly and engaging ways to celebrate at home each day, from the first Sunday of Advent (Dec. 3, 2017) to the Day of Epiphany (Jan. 6, 2018).

“Families Celebrate” is a deck of 56 durable cards, dated for each day of the Advent and Christmas seasons, with additional cards for Sundays and special topics. Each card contains a colorful

illustration and a simple ritual, prayer, reflection or activity. This deck invites families to explore the messages and mysteries of Advent and Christmas through Scripture, symbols, hymns and worship practices.

Suggestions for using the cards during family time are included with the deck. The cards can be kept in a bowl or basket on the table and used whenever the family finds time to gather together. They can also be punched for hanging as tree ornaments.

The illustrations were created by Laura Watson, a Canadian artist whose

work sparks whimsy and imagination in children.

Quantity discounts are available. Order now as supplies are limited. “Families Celebrate: Advent & Christmas” is available at [augsburgfortress.org](http://augsburgfortress.org).



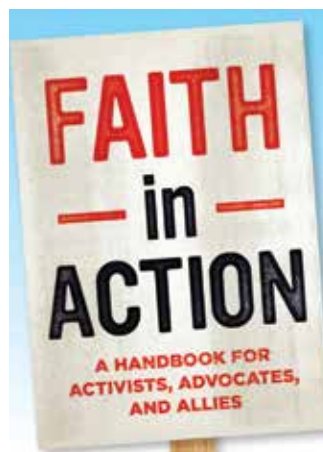
## More than 100 ways to make a difference in your community

### ‘Faith in Action: A Handbook for Activists, Advocates, and Allies’

By 1517 Media  
December 2017

“Faith in Action” offers quick dives into a range of topics, such as racial justice, environmental concerns, LGBTQIA equality, native people’s rights, women’s equality, disability rights, mass incarceration and immigration. Each topic includes informative visuals and data as well as practical suggestions for what you can do to make a difference in your community.

Created by contributors with varied experiences in activism, faith, policy and social change, “Faith in Action” will deepen your perspectives on important issues. This book will give you the knowledge, tools and confidence to make a real impact—to step out into the world and be an activist, advocate and ally.



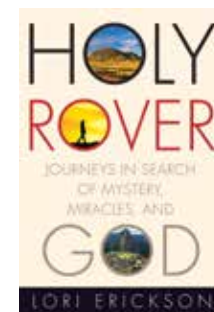
“Faith in Action” is the book for you if you are ready to make a real difference and it is perfect for use with your congregation. Available in quantity discounts. Preorder at [augsburgfortress.org](http://augsburgfortress.org).

## A good read and inspiration for your spiritual journey

### ‘Holy Rover: Journeys in Search of Mystery, Miracles, and God’

By Lori Erickson

If you’ve ever been curious about the ancient spiritual practice of pilgrimage, come along and take the spiritual journey of a lifetime with



Lori Erickson as she explores a dozen holy sites around the world.

Travel writer, Episcopal deacon and author of the “Holy Rover” blog at [patheos.com](http://patheos.com), Erickson is an engaging guide for pilgrims eager to take a spiritual journey.

Both irreverent and devout, “Holy Rover” describes travels that changed her life—and can change yours too. Available at [augsburgfortress.org/holyrover](http://augsburgfortress.org/holyrover).

*“Reading ‘Holy Rover’ is like hitting the lotto of a road trip with Anne Lamott, Barbara Brown Taylor and Elizabeth Gilbert, one filled with intoxicating conversation, exciting discoveries and plenty of spiritual rule-breaking.”*

—River Jordan, author of “Praying for Strangers”



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**The ELCA has five goals for the future of our church.** These are based on a shared trust and hope that the future is in God's hands. They express what this church has collectively said is important into the future: being a thriving church, an equipping church, a welcoming church, a deeply committed church and a well-governed connected church. **ELCA.org/future.** *Photo by Jess and Jason Felici: St. John Lutheran Church, Moyers, W.Va.*

***FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH IN LAVALLETTE, NEW JERSEY,***

*financed a major renovation with a loan from the Mission Investment Fund. When Superstorm Sandy severely damaged the new addition, MIF deferred Faith's loan payments until the congregation got back on its feet.*



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