

seeds for the parish

Spring 2014

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.ELCA.org



The Campaign for the ELCA is underway and invites your support.

Page 3



New on-the-go tools for youth in their journeys of faith.

Page 4

Let's get ready to serve!

“What more can we be doing?” is a question Leslie Price, senior pastor of Christ Lutheran Church in San Antonio, asked in anticipation of the 2013 “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday. “We take seriously Christ’s call to action to serve those in need and work for justice always,” she says.

Price’s question, “What more can we be doing?” is being asked among many ELCA congregations, as they are encouraged to join together once again Sept. 7, 2014, for “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday — a day of service, using our hands to do God’s work and make a difference. Just ask ELCA Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, who says that ELCA members are constantly being “called to make the world a better place.”

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday reminds us that we are church together for the sake of the world. Our lives have

been changed by our relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and it’s that encounter with Jesus that frees us to make a difference,” she said.

“When one congregation or a group of congregations gather for service in their local communities, they are the church in that place, taking care of that part of God’s vineyard. But this is all work that we do together. When one congregation works to feed people who are hungry, that is also the entire church coming together,” Eaton says.

As part of the first-ever “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday in 2013, Price who, along with members of Christ Lutheran Church, volunteered at a local food bank, visited nursing homes to share music, cleaned up parks and more.

“As a local community of faith, we are constantly challenging ourselves to do

more hands-on service in the community,” says Price. “We never settle in and say, ‘It’s enough.’ Instead we strive to say, ‘What more can we be doing?’”

To make the most of “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday, start your planning early. Visit www.ELCA.org/dayofservice to download a toolkit that will walk you through planning your day from start to finish. The toolkit includes ideas for service projects, discussion questions, a checklist and tips for how to publicize your congregation’s activities with your local news media.

“As you participate Sept. 7, 2014, in the dedicated day of service,” says Eaton, “may you witness the love of God, who knows and loves each one of us.”



Lutheran men gather in Nashville this summer.

Page 5



How to save energy and direct more money to ministry.

Page 7



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

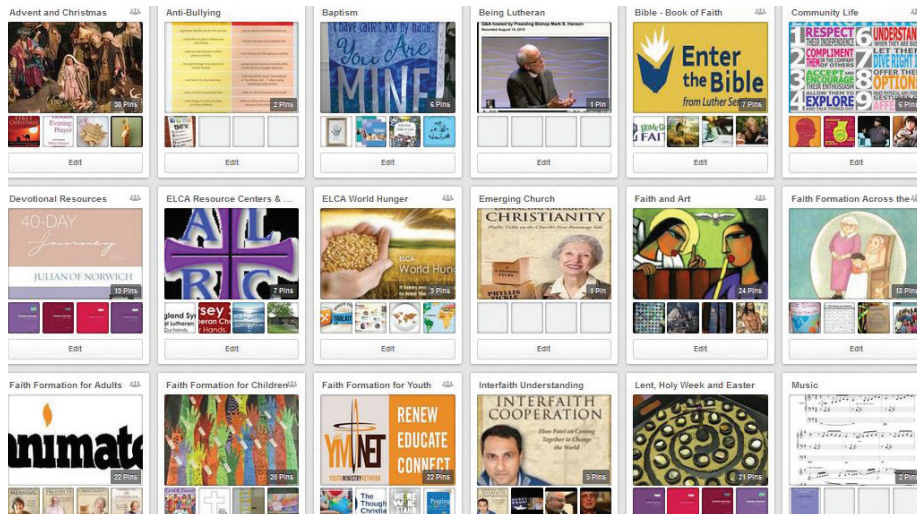
God's work. Our hands.

CONTACT US

Submit a story..... 773-380-2958
Delivery questions... 773-380-2950
Subscriptions..... 773-380-2950

Curating for ministry

By Irene Flynn and Karen Matthias-Long



Looking for a good Bible study to use during Lent? You could Google it of course. And you would come up with thousands of resources. How will you plow through all these to make sure it's engaging, reflects a Lutheran lens and fits your context? Or, you could take a short cut. Call an ELCA Resource Center!

Resource Center directors see themselves as curators, managers and keepers of our Lutheran heritage, responsible for pointing people in the direction of theologically sound materials that will fit a group's personality and context. They are knowledgeable and up-to-date not only on Bible studies but evangelism, stewardship, leadership, youth ministry and more.

Yes, resource ministry has changed over the past 20 years since the formation of the Association of Lutheran Resource Centers. Resource Centers still are "go to" place for providing leaders a place to see and explore resources and talk to someone knowledgeable

about the resource. Directors still consult in person, by phone or email and check out and mail out resources.

The ways we search are expanding

Whether through traditional means or evolving media platforms, the purpose of Association of Lutheran Resource Centers remains to "build up the body of Christ" by offering access to ministry resources through resource centers, social media networks and Web pages.

- **Facebook** www.facebook.com/groups/ELCA.ALRC or "ELCA Resource Curators & Friends"
This is an open group where questions are asked about resources and great discussions take place.
- **Pinterest** www.pinterest.com/kmatthiaslong
Topic boards include: Advent and Christmas, Anti-Bullying, Baptism,

Community Life, Faith and Art, Faith Formation, Music, Parenting, Sermon Preparation, Social Media, Spiritual Practices and Youth Ministry. Users will find links to books, curriculum, ideas, workshops and videos. Content to each board is always being updated and new topic boards are added as needed. These boards are open to all — you don't need a Pinterest account to access these boards.

- **Center for Spiritual Resources**
Website <http://thecsr.org>
Original Bible studies, children's sermons, a communications audit toolbox, confirmation resources, job descriptions, film study guides, skits and chancel dramas, prayers and pastoral care helps are just a few of the resources that are located on this Web page. To look specifically for Lutheran resources, users can click on "advanced search" and in the author column, click on "NC Evangelical Lutheran Church."

To find an ELCA Resource Center near you, click on the "Interactive Map" link at www.ELCA.org and then click on "Resource Centers" under "Filter results to show."

Irene Flynn serves as the president of the Association for Lutheran Resource Centers and is also the Resource Center director for the Florida-Bahamas Synod of the ELCA. Karen Matthias-Long is coordinator of ELCA Resource Centers and the Resource Center director for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA.

seeds for the parish

ELCA.org/seeds

LivingLutheran.com/seeds

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

Contact Us

Subscriptions – 773-380-2950
Content – rod.boriack@elca.org

Mission Advancement

Christina Jackson-Skelton – Executive Director
Forrest Meyer – Director, Marketing Communication
Melissa Ramirez Cooper – Manager, Public Relations

Editorial Staff

Rod Boriack – Editor
Connie Sletto – Copy Editor
Karen Dersnah – Designer

Credit: Page 2 photo, John O'Hara

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

Permission is granted for ELCA congregations to reproduce excerpts from **Seeds for the Parish** provided that copies are for local use only and that each copy carries the following notice: "Reprinted from **Seeds for the Parish**."

POSTMASTER, send address changes to:
Richard Millett
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631
Email: richard.millett@elca.org

Celebrating the Reformation

In 2017, ELCA members will join Lutherans and other Christians around the world in observing the 500th anniversary of a spiritual reformation that began when Martin Luther posted his "Ninety-five Theses" on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517.

Why was Luther's action so significant then and what importance does it have today? Even Luther did not expect what followed his call for a conversation about indulgences. Evangelical reforms in Christian teaching and practice followed that affected every dimension of Christian life. A renewed trust in God's forgiving mercy in Christ replaced a reliance on teachings

and practices that, like the sale of indulgences, were vulnerable to abuse and corruption.

Preaching a few years later, Luther said, "I opposed indulgences ... but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. I did nothing; the Word did everything." When he began to propose reforms in worship, he wrote similar words. "This is the sum of the matter: let everything be done so that the Word may have free course."

Nearly 500 years later, the results of this evangelical confidence in God's for-



giving and liberating word are evident today in Christian communities of all types. In the years leading to 2017, ELCA members, congregations and synods will observe the anniversary of this evangelical reformation in a variety of ways with numerous partners. Watch www.ELCA.org and future issues of Seeds for the Parish for more information about opportunities and resources for observing this milestone in the church's ongoing life.

Getting started: *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*

Share the gospel. Break the cycle of hunger and poverty. Equip leaders. Invest in the future of the ELCA.

It's not often that the opportunity to make a real and lasting difference comes along, but through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, we can.

Feb. 1, 2014, marks the start of the first-ever comprehensive Campaign for the ELCA. The nearly \$200 million goal represents a 64 percent overall increase in designated funding for ELCA churchwide ministries over the next five years.

What now?

We are a church of abundance, and we are called to do God's work in the world. This campaign calls on all of us — members and congregations alike — to do our part in the expansion of ministries that serve our neighbors and communities in the United States and around the world. Here are some ways to get your congregation started.

- **Watch and share a special campaign video.** What does the ELCA mean to you? Watch and share the video to see how ELCA members and neighbors from around the world respond to that question and challenge us to do more. Watch and download at www.youtube.com/elca.
- **Include a link on your website and social media pages.** Make it easy for members to find information and make donations. Include "donate" and "learn more" links on your website, in newsletters and other communication. Use this URL to get there: www.ELCA.org/campaign.



Youn Mom of Toap Ta Lat, Cambodia, shows off a record-breaking rice harvest. Her village benefits from agricultural programs supported by your gifts to ELCA World Hunger.

- **Invite initial gifts.** Invite members to make an initial gift to support campaign ministries today and to prayerfully consider how they might go above and beyond with increased levels of giving over the next five years. If you or someone you know is interested in a personal visit or conversation with campaign staff, please contact us at CampaignforELCA@elca.org or 800-638-3522, ext. 2612.
- **Download the bulletin insert.** Find the bulletin insert and other materials at www.ELCA.org/campaign.
- **Stay tuned.** Continue to check Seeds for the Parish and www.ELCA.org for additional resources as they are made available.

This work isn't possible without your support. Thank you for your prayers and your partnership in doing God's work.



Connecting faith & finances for good.™

FAITH

We're a membership organization of Christians who want to be wise with money and live generously.

FINANCES

Backed by 100 years of experience, we can help guide you to your financial goals.



GENEROSITY

We can help you strengthen the community where you live, work and worship.

LET'S START A NEW CONVERSATION ABOUT MONEY

At Thrivent Financial, we view money differently.

It's about guiding you to feel comfort and confidence in your finances. And helping you be a good steward of the gifts God has given you.

Find out how you can connect your faith and finances for good at Thrivent.com/confidence.



Ratings reflect Thrivent Financial's overall financial strength and claims-paying ability, but do not apply to the investment performance of investment products.

Ready to get involved? Have some questions?

Contact us anytime at 800-638-3522, ext. 2612, or CampaignforELCA@elca.org.

A music planning tool for church musicians

Planning music for worship with enough variety and continuity can be both exciting and, at times, overwhelming. Enter Prelude Music Planner. Prelude is an online tool from Augsburg Fortress that makes worship planning easy and efficient, leaving church musicians more time to do what they do best — make music.

Discover music from your favorite publishers

Prelude's music library is full of church music from renowned publishers, including Augsburg Fortress, Choristers Guild, EC Schirmer, GIA, Hope and MorningStar. The music is all ready to fully preview and download. Designed to make finding music for church services easy, the library allows you to search by keyword, lectionary date, Bible readings or themes, music type or genre, voicing or instrumentation, musician skill level, composer and more. You can even catalog music you already own into your Prelude library to see all of your options at once.



Make your budget last longer

Prelude takes all the worry and hassle out of buying music. You'll make decisions confidently when you can preview entire pieces and audio clips before you purchase. Once you've made a purchase, you can download entire pieces of music instantly. This includes hymns, songs, service music, descants, and alternate accompaniments, and you receive 125 Prelude points annually that you can use to buy anthems, instrumental works and more. With your Prelude subscription, you also save 20 percent on print music from Augsburg Fortress (this discount

does not apply to hymnals and other core worship resources).

A solution to a problem

Eric Vollen is a part-time, volunteer music director at Grace University Lutheran Church in Minneapolis. Planning music for his youth choir was a challenge, until he started using Prelude. "My youth choir is a new, startup choir of seven girls, ranging from sixth to twelfth grade, so finding music for a treble choir in this age range was a challenge. Our music library is small, our budget is limited — if I wanted to go to a music store to browse and search for church music, where would I even go?"

Vollen's challenge is not uncommon. As both the publishing industry and music retail industry continue to change, Prelude is a solution to a problem. "As a volunteer music leader who works a full-time day job away from my church, I don't have a lot of time to search for and purchase music. Prelude allows me to do this from my home or office, while also sharing music plans with my pastor and music leader colleagues, as well as sending electronic copies of music to my church secretary for photocopying and to my accompanist for practicing in advance of rehearsal."

Visit preludemusicplanner.org to learn more, sign up for a free trial or to subscribe. You can also sign up for a free webinar and view Prelude YouTube tutorials. To read more about how musicians like Vollen use Prelude in their worship and music planning, visit the Prelude blog at preludemusicplanner.org/prelude-blog.

Youth faith formation in fun, different places

By Paul Amlin

As we journey through Lent and prepare for Easter and the celebration of the resurrection, many ELCA members look for new ways to engage in their faith journey. I'd like to suggest a few of the better tools I've discovered. Some you probably know, and some you may not.

David Lose, a faculty member at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., offers a daily email and blog called "...in the Meantime." He typically offers insights on current culture with a devotion based on the daily lectionary. You can sign up at www.davidlose.net.

Since just about everyone has a smart phone or tablet these days, here are some apps to look for in your favorite app store. 66 People of the Bible is a flashcard based, Bible knowledge app that both youth and adults will find easy to use. What about Bibles? Check out the Glo Bible. It works great on a tablet because of the wealth of media embedded with the text. Other good Bible options include the YouVer-

sion Bible and Bible App for Kids by Lifechurch.tv. And be sure to go to www.womenoftheelca.org for Women of the ELCA's Daily Grace blog. The app delivers daily readings, reflections, prayers and more that comfort, challenge, inspire, console and confront.

If you're involved in youth ministry as a leader, check out the ELCA Youth Ministry Network app at www.elcaym-net.org. It's a very helpful and supportive resource for leaders and includes a Bible, an interactive prayer wall, youth ministry information and events.

Youth and young adult ministries on social media

If you reside in the social media world, you may want to follow @ELCAYouth and @ELCAYoungAdults on Twitter for regular prayer opportunities and updates on youth and young adult ministries, helpful links to thought-provoking articles and more. A quick search on Twitter will reveal any num-

ber of inspirational, motivational, devotional and all other things ending in "al" accounts by some of your favorite writers and thinkers. You can do a similar search on Instagram (photos and comments) or on Google+.

Online Bible studies

And here's a plug for a weekly, lectionary-based reflection that can be used in a group or read by the individual. Faith Lens has been published online by the ELCA for many years. Writers from around the church tackle weekly lectionary texts and current events with the goal of providing new insights and ways of reading Scripture. You can find and subscribe to Faith Lens at <http://blogs.elca.org/faithlens>.



That's just a start. Check out publishers of your favorite curriculum for more online tools and apps for faith formation. May God bless you and keep you as we make this journey of faith — together.

The Rev. Paul Amlin is the program director for youth ministry, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

New Lenten resources address hunger issues

ELCA World Hunger has released several new Lenten resources for congregations. “Into the Wild: A Lenten Liturgy and Intergenerational Study on Hunger!” is especially exciting. This five-part program follows the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness and explores what it means to live our baptismal faith in a world filled with hunger, suffering and hope.

Each session is divided into small- and large-group settings and can be adapted to fit your congregation’s educational forums, workshops and mid-week gatherings. The program also includes a conversation guide for families called “40 Days of Wonderings” to use at home during the Lenten season.

If you are looking for other Lenten resources, the ELCA Upper Susquehanna Synod’s World Hunger Task Force enlisted the contributions of leaders in their synod to produce a five-week Lenten series called “A Matter of the Heart.” All materials, including sermons, worship resources, Bible studies, family devotions and children’s sermons, are available for free download from www.uss-elca.org/for-congregations/world-hunger.

A lock-in for youth

ELCA World Hunger has also developed “Act 2Day 4Tomorrow,” a lock-in



Into the Wild:
A LENTEN LITURGY AND INTERGENERATIONAL STUDY ON HUNGER



program for youth. This resource brings youth together to learn about the role they can play in eradicating hunger and poverty in the world. As the group takes part in the spiritual practice of fasting during the event, they will go through activities and times of reflection centered on seven faith practices. Each activity is designed for “in the moment” learning and reflection to help youth apply what they discover in their own congregations and communities.

“Food for a Week,” a hunger simulation activity, will give your congregation or youth group a very personal, interactive experience about hunger in the United States that they won’t soon forget. What would you do if you lost your job and ran out of savings; or if you had to make a choice between a doctor’s visit and groceries? Participants in this simulation encounter realistic issues and make difficult choices as they assume different profiles of people who face food insecurity on a daily basis. The activity is designed for youth and adults and can be used in a variety of settings.

All of ELCA World Hunger’s resources are available online at www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources. You can also contact ELCA World Hunger at hunger@elca.org.

A study Bible designed for men

“Master Builders Bible for Men” is the perfect study Bible for men of all ages. This New International Version Bible features a Men’s Ministry Leader’s Supplement and study questions written into the text that assist small group participants in getting to know to know one another other as they get to know God. It also features six courses for men, each with six beginner and six advanced sessions.

A Spanish language version of the New Testament is also available -- El Nuevo Testamento. Individual or multiple copies for groups can be ordered online at Lutheran Men in Mission’s website www.lutheranmeninmission.org, the ELCA online resource catalogue <http://resources.elca.org/Products-Men.html>, or by calling 800-638-3522.

The 2014 Lutheran Men’s Gathering: What happens in Nashville WON’T stay in Nashville

This July, in the heart of mid-town Nashville, something will happen — the 2014 Lutheran Men’s Gathering. Will it be worth talking about? Will it end up on Twitter? Or YouTube? You bet!

In recent years, Nashville, Tenn., has earned a reputation as a town full of hopes and dreams, with a social scene that has a bit

of a wild side. “Hollywood with a touch of twang” is what country artist Jason Aldean calls Nashville in his song “Crazy Town.” For many young adults, Nashville has earned the moniker “Nash Vegas” as it lives into the cliché of “what happens there, stays there.”

But does everything that happens in Nashville need to stay in Nashville? Lutheran Men in Mission says “No!” The hundreds of men who will gather at the Loews Vanderbilt Hotel this summer will be challenged to take all they experience home to change their family, their communities and their congregations.

Lutheran Men in Mission is committed to making men bold, daring followers of Jesus Christ. Inside of the framework of what appears to be a traditional national men’s gathering, men of all ages will encounter a passion for discipleship, a hunger for the word, and opportunities to be taught and equipped by men who have a desire to see the men of our congregations transformed through drawing closer to Jesus.

Guys, Guts & God’s Glory

Built on the foundation of 1 Corinthians 16:13 that challenges believers to “Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong,” Lutheran Men in Mission is inviting men to join them in Nashville on July 18-20 for Guys, Guts, & God’s Glory.

Guys — In our culture, the term “guy” is a great equalizing term with no shine.

It’s what we are without the titles or social standings. We are on a journey with each other to the foot of the cross. We gather

MARK YOUR CALENDARS / SAVE THE DATE

Guys, Guts & God’s Glory
LUTHERAN MEN’S GATHERING

Nashville - July 18-20, 2014 - Loews Vanderbilt Hotel

Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.
1 Corinthians 16:13- (NRSV)

www.lutheranmeninmission.org - (800) 638-3522 ext. 2566

as guys, to hear the word in guy language, hear about guy issues, and to learn what it means to disciple other guys, and let ourselves be disciplined.

Guts — It takes intestinal fortitude to lay ourselves before the Lord and surrender our lives so that God can mold us as God desires. It takes courage to surrender and say to God, “not my will, but your will be done.”

God’s Glory — American media is full of stuff about what it means to be a man. We hear about the five or 10 things that men should do to get the relationship, the job, the chiseled physique. Much of Christian culture is full of similar lists for what men should do to be “better” men of God. But that’s not where it starts; it’s not about righteous rules to keep or simple steps to follow, which gives us glory. It has everything to do with bringing God glory by daring to experience and share God’s love, and letting God use us as men to change the world — one heart at a time.

In a town full of hopes and dreams, the goal of Guys, Guts & God’s Glory is to help men encounter the life-changing hope of a relationship with Jesus Christ, and the dream of how God will use them to change the world.

Consider this your personal invitation to join Lutheran Men in Mission in Nashville this July!

You can register or find more information on Guys, Guts & God’s Glory at www.lutheranmeninmission.org.

Sunday school is a lively experience with Whirl

Sparkhouse is at it again, this time with a new line of children's Sunday school curriculum based on the Revised Common Lectionary, called Whirl. sparkhouse, the ecumenical division of Augsburg Fortress, has pulled out all the stops to develop a curriculum that connects kids to the life of the church and the liturgical seasons and rituals in a fresh, new way.

Filled with color, symbols and lively activities, Whirl is a curriculum you'll not want to miss. Kids will be immersed in the church year seasons and lectionary readings as their Sunday school experience mirrors what happens during worship. sparkhouse has taken a complex system of readings and turned it into a simple-to-understand scope and sequence. Whirl continues the sparkhouse tradition of including

playful, high quality animated videos that bring the themes and Bible stories to life. Kids will see animated kids in a church setting learning to live out their



Whirl

LECTIONARY SUNDAY SCHOOL

faith as they struggle with challenges and celebrate the joys of ordinary life.

Taking children deeper in faith

The leaflets provide a lively way for kids to go deeper into the reading of the day and discover what it means to live for

Jesus. Kids in Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 2 will enter the Bible story in an illustrated Story Bible with graphic novel-style illustrations. This vibrant Story Bible makes it easy to teach the sometimes difficult texts from the Revised Common Lectionary in a kid-friendly way. Older kids, grades 3 to 6, have the chance to read the text in a four-color NRSV Bible developed especially for them. Each reading for Sundays in the Revised Common Lectionary is highlighted in a color that corresponds to the church season. Each lesson comes with an activity embedded

in the scripture text to help kids get ready to read.

Whirl doesn't stop in the classroom. Whirl includes material for a large group opening, children's bulletins, and children's messages. The leaflet kids receive in class also includes a Family Square to continue their faith formation at home. It contains activity ideas for every day of the week for the whole family to enjoy doing together.

Whirl is perfect for congregations looking for a way to make church more relevant to kids. The traditions and rituals that organize congregational life can have meaning and relevance for our youngest church members, too. For more information about Whirl and to view sample videos and curriculum materials, visit the sparkhouse website: <http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/whirl>.

Learn about 'Our Global Church'

As members of the ELCA, we nurture relationships with our brothers and sisters in more than 80 companion churches around the world. They invite us to send missionaries and support while we gratefully receive their gifts of faith, hospitality and zeal.

Our Global Church, the annual directory highlighting ELCA missionaries, scholarships and ministries, provides a wonderful overview of our church's global engagement, including new projects that will be funded through *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*.

Order the 2014 edition of this directory and:

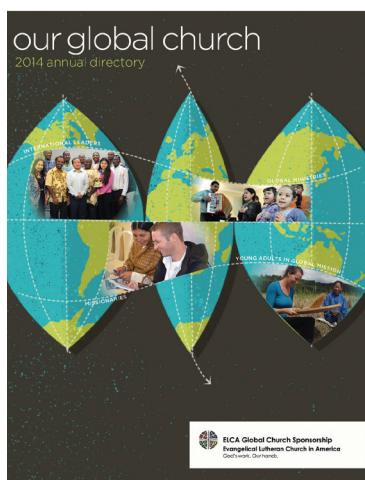
- **Discover** how the ELCA is engaged with the global church in each continent.
- **Get to know** many of our 240+ missionaries, including over 60 Young Adults in Global Mission, through pictures and descriptions of their assignments.
- **Learn about** International Leaders who have received scholarships

through your past Mission Support dollars, and how you can make a campaign gift to expand opportunities for more women.

- **Discover** new evangelism projects in Africa, Asia and Latin America, that will be made possible through gifts to the *Campaign for the ELCA*.
- **Make an initial gift** to ELCA Global Church Sponsorship.
- **Start a covenant** commitment of prayer and support with a missionary or Young Adult in Global Mission.

Request one free copy (no shipping or handling) at 800-638-3522 or RIS@elca.org. Order two or more free copies at www.ELCA.org/globalmission-resources and pay only shipping and handling.

For more information, visit www.ELCA.org/resources/globalchurch or contact globalchurch@elca.org.



Request one free copy (no shipping or handling) at 800-638-3522 or RIS@elca.org. Order two or more free copies at www.ELCA.org/globalmission-resources and pay only shipping and handling.

World Malaria Day 2014

Every year, millions of people around the world observe World Malaria Day on April 25. The ELCA Malaria Campaign is turning this day into a special week, inviting you and your congregation to observe World Malaria Day on Sunday, April 27. Our

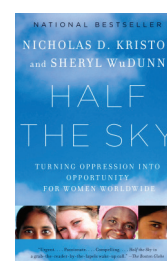


goal is to raise \$250,000 — enough to start malaria programming in Namibia. We need you! Save the date, join the movement and observe World Malaria Day on April 27. Find a special World Malaria Day congregation toolkit and more at www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources.

'Half the Sky' study guide from a faith perspective

"When a prominent dissident was arrested in China, we would write a front-page article; when 100,000 girls were routinely kidnapped and trafficked into brothels, we didn't even consider it news," writes Nick Kristoff and Sheryl WuDunn in their book "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide."

"Half the Sky" has been expanded into a film and a social movement, creating an excellent focus on problems women and girls face worldwide that have too



often been ignored, such as physical and economic violence as well as human trafficking.

The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ has created a discussion guide on "Half the Sky" to explore the strengths and limitations of Kristoff and WuDunn's message from a faith perspective and to encourage readers to think about what they can do to effect change in their own communities.

Learn more about the work of the task force and download the study resource for "Half the Sky" at www.ELCA.org/womenandjustice.

Making disciples in the 21st century

The vast majority of mainline Protestant congregations in North America (92 percent) do not set aside time for newcomers to learn how to be a disciple of Jesus Christ, because most congregations still assume the predominance of a Christian culture and generally expect newcomers to know what it means to be Christian.

This is the claim of Jessica Duckworth, author of the new book “Wide Welcome: How the Unsettling Presence of Newcomers Can Save the Church,” (Augsburg Fortress, 2013). She argues for a more rigorous and intentional faith formation process for both newcomers and members such as the Catechumenate.

Using the church’s ancient faith formation practice known as the Catechumenate, congregations invite people into a deeper walk with Jesus and with each other in a way that helps them live out their baptismal calling and that can ultimately transform their faith communities.

Unlike typical newcomer welcome programs such as a pastor’s class or a three-hour welcome session, the Catechumenate gathers newcomers and established members (serving as sponsors and catechists) together to practice discipleship through Bible study, prayer, worship and service. Newcomers and members alike learn to be disciples through actual participation in Christian practices.

By teaching people how to live out their baptism in daily life, congregations can move from a membership culture to one of discipleship and mission.

Catechumenate?

The Catechumenate is a process of faith formation and spiritual development leading to baptism or affirmation of baptism. It is ideal for 21st-century people who may have little or no previous association with the Christian faith. The Catechumenate helps people develop the disciplines of faith in their lives: corporate worship, the study of Scripture, prayer and baptismal living. It is process-oriented rather than program-oriented,

lay-led rather than clergy-dependent, and focused on formation in Christ rather than information about Christ. Through the Catechumenate, adults on a spiritual quest are offered an apprenticeship in the life of faith, and those already baptized are aided in the deepening of their faith and commitment.

The North American Association for the Catechumenate is an ecumenical organization serving the mainline Protestant churches of

the United States and Canada. This group provides printed and video resources, training events, educational conferences, online forums and other sources of support for those seeking to cultivate and promote a culture of discipleship.

Upcoming opportunities for gathering and training

“Reclaiming our Baptismal Calling: Discipleship in a Post-Christian Culture” is the theme of the upcoming North American Association for the Catechumenate gathering and training event to be held Aug. 5-8, 2014, at the Vancouver School of Theology in British Columbia.

This event features Will Willimon from Duke University as keynote speaker and Susan Johnson, national bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC), as preacher.

A Regional Discipleship Training Event is also being offered next fall for both those new to the Catechumenate as well as experienced practitioners. The event will be held at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Portsmouth, Va., Sept. 25-27, 2014.

For more information about the annual gathering and other Catechumenate training opportunities, visit the association’s website at www.catechumenate.org.

For scholarships and other details for either event, contact registrar Devra Betts at devrabetts@gmail.com.



Resources for faith and science in today’s world

The Lutheran Alliance for Faith, Science, and Technology has a new website at www.luthscitech.org. The Alliance provides resources for Lutherans — and all Christians — living in a scientific world. That means all of us!

Check out the website, its resources and the monthly bulletin newsletter Covalence. Each month Covalence provides news, a calendar of activities and reflections about the intersection

of faith and science. Lutheran Alliance for Faith, Science, and Technology is an Independent Lutheran Organization affiliated with the ELCA, and welcomes participation by pastors, theologians, scientists, science educators and lay members interested in the faith-science dialogue and action.

Energy Stewards Initiative: Save dollars and reduce pollution

Energy Stewards Initiative is a one- to two-year program for ELCA congregations and Lutheran outdoor ministry sites. It is designed to help camps and congregations:

- Reduce energy use
- Shrink carbon footprints
- Save money to use for mission and ministry

Energy Stewards

Initiative is a nationwide program of Lutherans Restoring Creation, carried out in cooperation with Rapid Improvement Associates of Madison, Wis. Congregations and camps track their energy and water use online, follow an action plan, engage in bi-monthly webinars, and benefit from the wisdom of program leaders and other participants.

Each congregation or camp appoints an Energy Steward to be the point person in the program and to work with its property team to make changes. Over the first two years of the program, active congregations have reduced their energy use and related costs by 10 percent on average. To date, six Energy Stewards Initiative congregations qualify for ENERGY STAR certification as a house of worship and three have received the ENERGY STAR label, showing their nationwide leadership to their members and communities.

The Initiative is “an example for denominations and other faith-based groups who really want to



make a difference in congregational cash-flow back to the ministry from energy costs and to preventing pollution that threatens human life and health,” says Jerry Lawson, national manager for EPA’s ENERGY STAR for Congregations. “It is one of the few energy stewardship programs in the country that actually facilitates and

documents concrete achievements in saving energy, saving money and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.”

Ken Westlake of Our Saviour’s Lutheran Church in Arlington Heights, Ill., says that “Energy Stewards Initiative has helped our congregation focus on energy and water use in a systematic, organized way. We’ve long been concerned about being good stewards of God’s creation. It gives us some important tools to quantify how we are doing and where we can improve.”

The fee is \$120 per year to cover the online services. Scholarships are available if needed. Applications for the next class are due by May 1, 2014, for the program beginning in June.

To learn more about Energy Stewards Initiative and to apply as a congregation or outdoor ministry site, visit the Lutherans Restoring Creation at www.lutheransrestoringcreation.org, or send an email to Peter Bakken at pwbakken@gmail.com or Warren Gaskill at wgaskill@rapid-improvement.com.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

seeds for the parish

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Shakopee, MN
Permit No. 38



We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. “Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing,” said Martin Luther. We continually strive for a deeper understanding of what the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ means for the world. Doing so puts us right where God wants us to be: in the thick of life.



How many kids stayed off the street today because of your investment?

HOLY TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
EPHRATA, PENNSYLVANIA

Every week, children gather to play basketball after school in the brand-new multipurpose room that Holy Trinity Lutheran Church built with a Mission Investment Fund loan. When you invest with MIF, you grow your savings and help finance loans to congregations like Holy Trinity. A multipurpose room with a higher purpose? That's what your loans help to build.

Ready to grow your finances and your faith? To learn more about the competitive interest rates and flexible terms we offer on a wide range of investments and ministry loans, visit our financial services center at mif.elca.org. Or call us at 877.886.3522.



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