

# Seeds for the Parish

Spring 2017

Resource paper for leaders of ELCA congregations

ELCA.org



The Joyful Noise service engages the senses and diverse abilities of children and adults with special needs.

## Joy-filled worship draws in families with special needs

It starts with a parachute in the sanctuary. Children and adults of all abilities hold its edges and lift multicolored sheets up and down while singing “Jesus Loves Me.” Jayden Clarke, 4, is often the first to go into the center, where he is surrounded by billowing fabric, smiling faces, and love and acceptance. This is Joyful Noise.

Jayden was diagnosed with autism before his third birthday. Since he can’t sit still or stay quiet for long, it’s hard for his family to attend worship without fear of bothering others. But Jayden and his family find solace at Joyful Noise, a monthly service for children and adults with special needs at Faith Lutheran Church, Hillsborough, N.J. ([faithlutherannj.org](http://faithlutherannj.org)) “This was a way for us to go as a family to church without any type of looks and everyone can just be themselves,” said his mother, Jessica Clarke. “When we’re at the Joyful Noise service, we’re all in the same boat.”

Clarke learned about Joyful Noise from her friend Tori Wargo, a special education teacher. Wargo and Allyson Williams, another member of Faith and a special education teacher, launched the service in 2015.

They got the idea from Faith’s pastor, Bill Zimmermann. “I had read an article about a church doing something similar and was moved by the comments of families who had been touched by the service,” he said.

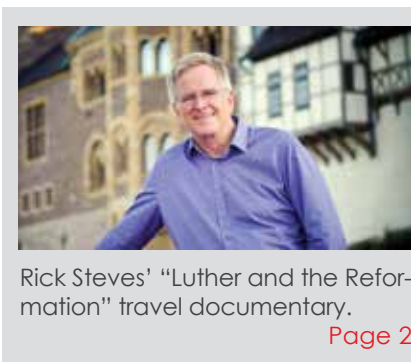
Services last about 30 minutes and are filled with music, movement and special moments for guests of varying abilities. There is the “joyful noise hymn,” during which each participant receives an instrument to play. Zimmermann also delivers a message and administers communion. The service ends with a hymn and jubilant cross parade.

Drawing people from varied denominations, the service averages 30

attendees each month. And it’s growing, including reaching out to residents of group homes for adults with special needs.

As the organizers of Joyful Noise consider its future, they hope to sustain the service into the next 10 to 20 years. Wargo dreams of partnering with other congregations so the service could be offered to families more than once a month in rotating places. Whatever the future holds, one thing is clear, the ministry is helping more families with special-needs children know they matter to the church and that they matter to God, Zimmermann said.

- Read the full story at [livinglutheran.org/2017/01/joy-filled-service-just](http://livinglutheran.org/2017/01/joy-filled-service-just).
- Find ELCA resources for disability ministries at [ELCA.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Disability-Ministry](http://ELCA.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Disability-Ministry).



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## Rick Steves' 'Luther and the Reformation' travel documentary available to congregations

For years, Rick Steves has had his sights on 2017. As the 500th anniversary of the Reformation approached, the travel guide knew he wanted to create for his popular PBS series a special devoted to Martin Luther and the ways in which his tumultuous time helped lead to the Modern Age.

With "Luther and the Reformation," Steves set about crafting a documentary that highlighted the historic, economic and social context of the Reformation. His goal was to produce a special that could be used as a resource for congregations and have wider appeal for TV audiences. "I hoped to contribute to community within the Lutheran family," said Steves, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Lynnwood, Wash. He also sought to "find a way to witness in the secular world through the teaching and media platform I've been blessed with."

Steves' "Luther and the Reformation" is airing throughout 2017. It's available



Travel guide and Lutheran Rick Steves is helping Lutherans explore the Reformation, our church history and faith.

to watch online at [ELCA.org/ricksteves](http://ELCA.org/ricksteves), along with resources for hosting congregational screenings of the film, including ELCA discussion points and study questions, a special introductory video

from Steves, and art and video clips to promote your event. DVD copies of the special have also been sent to every ELCA congregation.

## Resources and ideas for observing the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation

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

The Reformation anniversary, Oct. 31, is quickly approaching. Synods and congregations across the country are preparing for or are already hosting events and activities that bear witness to the hope and joy we have through Jesus Christ.

For some, however, there's a chance that with everything else going on, it is not at the top of the list. Don't worry! There is still plenty of time to plan, promote and participate.

There are opportunities to be involved at many levels. Here are a few useful resources for anyone interested in learning more about and participating

in the ELCA's Reformation anniversary observance:

**Planning:** [Elca500.org](http://Elca500.org) hosts an extensive resource list for anyone planning activities, from worship to ecumenical outreach to service in the community. Also, consider using Augsburg Fortress Press' "Reformation 500 Sourcebook" as well as the new "Reformation Ideas for Congregations" for those who have not yet started planning. See what's available at [elca500.org/Resources/More](http://elca500.org/Resources/More).

**Promotion:** A new how-to guide is available for planning teams. This supplement to the ideas list, "Reformation Ideas for Congregations," offers suggestions for

promoting events within a congregation and engaging with community partners. A communications guide for media relations is also available. These tools are at [elca500.org/Resources/More](http://elca500.org/Resources/More).

**Participate:** Attending an event or activity is easy, with information available in multiple locations. Start with your congregation or synod website, newsletter, Facebook and Twitter pages. Then, "like" or "follow" the ELCA 500 Facebook page and Twitter (@ELCA500), both of which have twice-daily posts. Lastly, check the ELCA's Reformation website [elca500.org](http://elca500.org) for regional and national events, and Germany tours.

A wealth of information, resources and opportunities are available to everyone—individuals, congregations, schools and synods. Now is a good time to find the information you need and identify how this historic milestone can engage you as a Lutheran.

*Seeds for the Parish*

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

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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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## This Pentecost Sunday, lift up our Global Ministries



This Pentecost Sunday, as we commemorate the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, congregations across the ELCA will pause to reflect on the global community of which we are a part—a community of people living out our faith, serving our neighbors and sharing God's love with the world.

2017 also marks the Global Church annual theme year within *Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA*, through which we are supporting life-

changing ministries with our global companions around the world. Celebrate these ministries with us on Pentecost Sunday, June 4!

Later this month, your congregation or synod will receive a Pentecost Sunday

packet filled with activities, worship ideas and more to help you lift up and support our Global Ministries, with a focus on building the global Lutheran church. For a sneak peak of these resources, please visit [ELCA.org/Resources/Campaign-for-the-ELCA](http://ELCA.org/Resources/Campaign-for-the-ELCA) and click on the "Annual Themes" tab.

Have questions or looking for other ways to get involved? Contact the Global Church Sponsorship team at 800-638-3522 ext. 2820 or [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org).

## Are you ready for renewal?

This summer, you can take part in a three-session Bible study written by Kelly Fryer, published in *Gather*, the magazine of Women of the ELCA. In "All Anew: Ready or Not," Fryer challenges us to consider what we're really asking for when we plead with God for renewal. Renewal is a process much like giving birth—beautiful and essential for life but not "nice." Like giving birth, renewal "produces pain, requires sacrifice and makes a really big mess," Fryer says.

### Three Bible study sessions

#### Session 1: Say goodbye to nice

For the heroes and "sheroes" of the biblical story, being part of the "new" thing God was doing often meant having to do and say things that were unpopular with family, friends and neighbors. What if being part of God's renewal today means not just wading into the messiness yourself, but being willing to create discomfort for those you love? What truths need to be told in the places where you live, work, worship and play? Are you ready?



#### Session 2: Stand with the least of these

The biblical story tells us that whenever God does a new thing, it happens in, through and with people who live on the margins. With whom is God asking you to align yourself? In whose corner are you being called to stand? Are you ready?

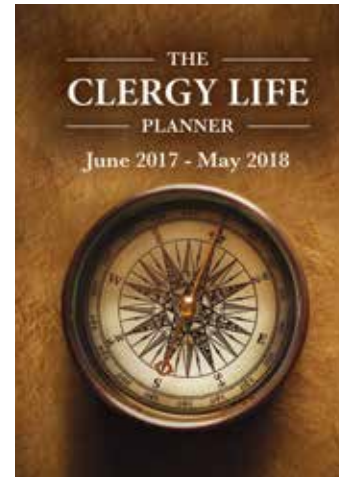
#### Session 3: Upend the tables

The biblical story is filled with characters who challenged unjust systems, took action that turned societal norms upside down and spoke truth to power. What systems are you a part of that need to be challenged? What counter-cultural, justice-making actions are you being called to take? Are you ready?

Those attending the 2017 triennial gathering in Minneapolis ([welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org)) will receive free copies of the June and July/August issues of *Gather* magazine that include the Bible study. Learn more about *Gather* Bible studies and subscribe at [gathermagazine.org](http://gathermagazine.org).

## A new time-management, personal-care and planning tool for pastors

Self-care, balance, taking sabbath, realistic expectations, time management and burn-out are among the top concerns indicated by clergy in a 2016 survey. In response, professional Christian life coach Barbara Solsaa, a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Menomonie, Wis., created "The Clergy Life Planner." Developed specifically for pastors, this tool includes sections for goal setting, sabbath and vacation planning, monthly and weekly pages and a guided system to reach one's goals. The monthly layout includes space to capture personal and ministry endeavors. The weekly layout has space for short-term tasks, prayer concerns, a sabbath plan and reflection on ministry moments and "God sightings."



Additional tools include a section for planning for church seasons and a visitation log.

The current "Clergy Life Planner" is laid out uniquely on a June 2017-May 2018 time frame with fall ministry planning in mind.

"Tackling a busy schedule requires good organization and appropriate tools," says Greg Kaufmann, assistant to the bishop, ELCA

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. "I rely on a planner daily and appreciate one that offers space for everyday tasks as well as future planning and spiritual growth. 'The Clergy Life Planner' has been this resource for me."

Order your "The Clergy Life Planner" at [ClergyLifeBooks.com](http://ClergyLifeBooks.com). Use the code "SEEDS" for a limited-time \$5 discount.



Subscribe Today for as little as \$1.17/issue

## LivingLutheran

Living Lutheran is your complete source for news, reflection and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and its local and global companions.

Visit [LivingLutheran.org/subscribe](http://LivingLutheran.org/subscribe) or call 800-328-4648.

## Community gardens in the spring: Top-10 tips

After a long winter of colder weather, gray skies and hopefully sufficient rain and snow to replenish the earth, many of us are looking forward to longer days and our next gardening season! Here are some tips for a bountiful, healthy, community garden:

### 1. Start planning early.

When snow still covers the ground and spring seems so far away, it's great time to plan your first or next community garden! Aim to be ready before your first sowing date. Visit [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://ELCA.org/hunger/resources) and download ELCA World Hunger's Community Gardens How-To Guide, filled with tips from community gardeners across the ELCA. Click on the "Hunger Ed" tab to download or order the guide.

### 2. Has your community garden vision changed?

Were you able to accomplish what was planned? By matching your communities' needs with your resources, the gardeners and the community will be energized. Not too small a garden that may not keep everyone engaged and not too large a garden that may be frustrating, but just right!

### 3. Get the word out!

Notify all your gardeners that the planting season is coming and they can help prepare. Form a team to review last year's garden, decide what to continue and what to change. Last season's planting



Faith in Place, Chicago.

map will help you rotate crops effectively. Maybe you want to build or repair raised beds, trellises or compost bins. Another team can assess the soil's fertility and add soil amendments and fertilizer as needed.

### 4. Extend invitations

Recruit new gardeners and new partners for the coming season. More hands make lighter work, expand what the garden can produce and grow enduring friendships.

### 5. What new vegetables are you longing to try?

Seed companies introduce new varieties every year. Explore online and

see what's new or request a catalog to enjoy the photos and descriptions. Did you know that there are seed exchange libraries and seed swaps? A seed library is a place where community members can get seeds for free or for a nominal fee and is run for the public benefit. Seed swaps are events where gardeners meet

to exchange seeds. Maybe there's one in your area and you can find just the variety you want.

### 6. What to plant really early?

Use hot caps, row covers or mulch to expand your planting window. These products hold heat from the sun and enable germination and growth to occur even when it is otherwise too cold to plant outside.

### 7. Ask an expert

Remember to tap other resources. Local cooperative extension services and master gardeners can provide advice on soil fertility, plant varieties adapted to

your area and pest control. Garden-supply stores might donate tools or supplies, if you ask them.

### 8. Expand your planting ideas

What about flowers? They bring color to a garden and, when picked, they brighten homes and places of worship.

### 9. Is your garden space committed for the long haul?

If your community garden space will be available for years to come, consider planting fruit trees and berry bushes. They do require space to grow, maintenance such as pruning and it may be a few years until they bear fruit. However, once established, they will produce for many seasons.

### 10. Is there a quiet place in your garden?

A comfortable bench set in a quiet spot in the garden can be a perfect place for meditation and prayer. Gardeners can rest from their labors and visit with others while neighbors may discover it offers a welcome place for reflection and calm. Installing a trellis with climbing plants can provide some shade.

For more information, get a copy of ELCA World Hunger's Community Gardens How-To Guide at [ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://ELCA.org/hunger/resources). Now that you have everything ready, it's time to plant!

## 'Coming Home to Earth' helps cultivate love and care for creation

The resource "Coming Home to Earth" has the potential for transforming our commitments—and yes, our best intentions—to earth care and ecological justice. In a fervent plea for treasuring and cherishing our earth home, the Rev. Mark Brocker's beautiful new book, "Coming Home to Earth," makes compelling and challenging arguments for understanding our planet as a sacred gift desperately in need of resurrection and new life. Brocker's ability to make the case that there is no salvation apart from the earth and that God's home is here among us is a radical call to Christians who for too long have focused on "getting to heaven" rather than cultivating a deep love for the whole of creation. Loss of love

for our earth home has resulted in an ecological and environmental crisis that threatens our very existence.

This ode to the beauty of creation reads like the love song it is, a passionate wake-up call to make hard choices and difficult changes in the ways we live on and care for our beloved planet. "God is here," Brocker reminds readers, and with pastoral grace and insight, he makes clear that we are at a critical turning point for rescuing ourselves from ecological disaster.



"Coming Home to Earth" can serve as a powerful conversation-starter for congregations. Small groups can discuss each of the seven chapters as a way for individuals and congregations to begin, or continue, making serious changes in lifestyle and earth care. Combined with the six-session DVD course, "EarthBound: Created and Called to Care for Creation," available from Select Learning ([selectlearning.org/store/all/earthbound-created-and-called-care-](http://selectlearning.org/store/all/earthbound-created-and-called-care-)

[creation-dvd](http://creation-dvd)), "Coming Home to Earth" could have a significant impact on our earth home and influence the way we live. "Coming Home to Earth" is available from [wipfandstock.com/coming-home-to-earth.html](http://wipfandstock.com/coming-home-to-earth.html).

Mark Brocker is lead pastor of St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Beaverton, Ore., chaired the Environmental Ministries Committee of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) from 2009 to 2012 and currently serves on the executive committee of the EMO board. Brocker has also been an adjunct professor in theology and ethics for Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (1998 to 2014).



## New Spanish language resources support worship and faith formation

Several new Spanish language resources have recently become available to support congregations with their ministries of worship and faith formation.

In keeping with the ELCA's emphasis on the Small Catechism during 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, a free bilingual Small Catechism app can now be downloaded from the Apple and Google Play app stores. A bilingual print edition is also available, *El Catecismo Menor de Lutero / Luther's Small Catechism*.

A new teaching recording has been produced to help leaders become familiar with the musical treasures in "Libro de Liturgia y Cántico," the ELCA's "book of liturgy and song" in the Spanish lan-

guage. "Libro de Liturgia y Cántico: Himnos y Cánticos Grabación Educativa" includes 110 tracks on two audio CDs, sung and accompanied with guitar by Guillermo Cuéllar and Silvestre Padron.

Within the Evangelical Lutheran Worship family, the Holy Communion service has been translated into Spanish and is available in a bilingual version, "Santa Comunión" (assembly and leader editions). This version includes the music from Setting Seven, which features a bilingual text. Also, "Ensemble Setting of Holy Communion: Setting Seven" offers an enhanced instrumental arrangement



of this music by Juan Cortez that is true to its Hispanic roots. And the pew edition of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* includes 24 hymns with texts in Spanish and English.

"Conozca su Biblia" is a unique Bible commentary series written in Spanish by leading Hispanic theologians and Bible educators. Distinguished biblical scholar Justo L. González is the general editor for the series.

To order these and other Spanish language resources, call 800-328-4648 or visit [augsborgfortress.org](http://augsborgfortress.org).

## Water, water everywhere!

While last year marked a success for the ELCA's World Hunger Walk for Water campaign, raising more than \$1 million dollars to share safe water around the world, there is still much to be done.

Noting the many biblical themes of renewal and liberation that water affords, and the importance of watersheds for environmental justice and creation care, the 2016 Churchwide Assembly resolved to promote awareness, appreciation and stewardship of watersheds and water. This resolution and dozens of free resources on ways to utilize, integrate and protect water as a part of congregational life are available at [mpls-synod.org/outreach/ecofaith-network](http://mpls-synod.org/outreach/ecofaith-network).

Two resources to be aware of are "Watershed Moment" and "The Water of Life." The EcoFaith Network of the Minneapo-

lis Synod is sharing a "Watershed Moment" toolkit for congregations to better understand what a watershed is and how it can bring together a community. And, this year's Lutheran Outdoor Ministry curriculum, "The Water of Life," is centered around the Isaiah 43:2 verse "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you." The curriculum is available for use in congregational settings and can be purchased at the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries website [lomnetwork.org/resources/om-curriculum](http://lomnetwork.org/resources/om-curriculum).

As part of the continuing water education and stewardship efforts, Creation



those in communities like Flint, Mich., equip their communities to protect and serve public health, treat water as sacred and prevent future tragedies of environmental injustice.

Discover ways your congregation can connect to local waters and, in so doing, satisfy our ongoing thirst for justice. Learn more at [mpls-synod.org/outreach/ecofaith-network](http://mpls-synod.org/outreach/ecofaith-network).

## New Spanish resources on women and justice

Several recent resources stemming from the work of the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ are now available in Spanish. The 2016 social message on



gender-based violence, "Un mensaje social sobre ... Violencia de género," is now available both online and in printed

form. The message can be easily used in educational settings and is supplemented by foundational documentation that goes deeper. The task force's study "Faith, Sexism, Justice" is also now available online as "Fe, Sexismo y Justicia: Conversaciones para elaborar un pronunciamiento social." The study

is designed in a modular way for use in variety of settings from three-session overviews to college classrooms. It also provides response forms as a means for users to share thoughts and concerns with the task force.

The task force wants to hear from you! Access to the online versions and information about how to order the print version are available at [ELCA.org/womenandjustice](http://ELCA.org/womenandjustice).

## Perfect book for groups and individuals exploring women of the Bible

**'Fierce: Women of the Bible and Their Stories of Violence, Mercy, Bravery, Wisdom, Sex, and Salvation,' by Alice Connor (February 2017)**

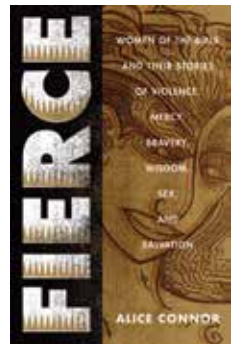
Women in the Bible aren't shy or retiring; they're fierce and funny and demanding and relevant to 21st-century people.

Women in the Bible—some of their names we know, others we've only heard and others are tragically unnamed or forgotten.

In "Fierce," pastor and provocateur Alice Connor introduces these women and invites us to see them not as players in a man's story—as victims or tempters—nor as morality archetypes, teaching us to be better wives and mothers, but as fierce foremothers of the faith.

These women's stories are messy, challenging and beautiful. When we read their stories, we can see not only their particular, fearsome lives but also our own.

Visit [augsborgfortress.org/fierce](http://augsborgfortress.org/fierce) to order the book and download the free reading guide.



*"Hip, funny, and substantive, 'Fierce' demands that we take a second—and a third and a fourth—look at some of the Bible's strongest women. I loved this book."*

— Jana Riess, author of "Flunking Sainthood" and "The Twible"

## EVENTS AND GATHERINGS

### Still time to register for ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering in Atlanta



This summer, there is a unique opportunity to gather for the first ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering, Aug. 7-10. Participants will come together under the theme of “On the Way – Together,” using

the road to Emmaus story found in Luke 24:13-25 to guide the time together.

This gathering provides a wonderful opportunity for rostered ministers to be nourished in worship, song, Bible study,

a wide variety of topical workshops, service learning opportunities and keynote speakers. This gathering also provides an opportunity to meet colleagues for fellowship and sharing ideas. It is a time to be refreshed and renewed for serving the church.

Make your plans now for Aug. 7-10 in Atlanta, where rostered ministers from across the ELCA will gather with hearts burning within in the name of Jesus, the crucified and risen Christ.

Registration opened March 1 at [ELCA.org/RMG](http://ELCA.org/RMG). Early registration with a reduced fee is available until May 31.

### Rise, Remember Well the Future conference for Lutheran church musicians

2017 finds Lutherans giving thanks for their Reformation heritage. The biennial conference of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM), Rise, Remember Well the Future, July 10-13 in Minneapolis will simultaneously celebrate the treasures of the last 500 years and look to the future and God’s covenant of faithfulness in all that is yet to be. Opening worship will be at St. Olaf College, site of the constituting ALCM convention in 1986. In plenaries led by Chad Fothergill, Daniel Schwandt and Mary Louise Bringle, participants will reflect on the changing role of the cantor—the leader of the church’s song—as we move confidently into a future

blessed by our heritage and full of many changes in the church and its music.

A highlight of the conference will be a journey to St. John’s Abbey in Collegeville, Minn., with its rich history of liturgical renewal and ecumenism. Everyone gathered will share Evening Prayer with the monks, mindful of reforms and hoped-for reconciliation among Lutherans and Roman Catholics since Vatican II. The conference will also feature a hymn festival by David Cherwien and the National Lutheran Choir, a gala opening dinner and business meeting giving thanks for the first 30 years of ALCM,



and closing worship at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

The mission of ALCM is to nurture and equip those who lead the church’s song by offering practical education programs and diverse resources through conferences, publications and fellowship to serve musicians of all types—from paid professionals to volunteers. Visit the ALCM website at [alcm.org](http://alcm.org) for additional information about the conference and the organization.

### Worship event explores marking occasions in life through word and sacrament



It’s not too late to register for the exciting Worship at the Center event at Bethesda

Lutheran Church in New Haven, Conn., April 30-May 2.

The worship of the Christian assembly extends beyond the primary gatherings around word and sacrament to mark occasions in human life and in the life of the church. The dimensions of pastoral care and assembly song will be included as this

event unpacks these important rites in the life of the church.

Presenters include pastors Susan Briehl, Delmer Chilton, Mark Hanson, Margaret Payne and Craig Mueller.

For more information and to register, go to [ELCA.org/worship](http://ELCA.org/worship) and click on “Worship at the Center.”

### Leadership development for schools and early-learning centers



The Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA) is expanding its leadership development opportunities by now offering an Academy for School Principals and Administrators concurrent with the fifth-annual Early Childhood Director Boot Camp. ELEA will be in Chicago, June 25-27, 2017, for Part 1 and Minneapolis, Feb. 28-March 2, 2018, for Part 2. Registration is open now at [eleanational.org](http://eleanational.org).

ELEA Director Boot Camp combines training in leadership, business management, curriculum development and human resources with a mentoring/coaching program using experienced facilitators. Many past participants have benefited from the content and developed personal relationships with peers that continue to be a support network in their career and work.

ELEA Principals Academy provides elementary, middle and high school administrators, principals and up-and-coming leaders, training and skills needed to face the challenges of the Lutheran schools they lead. The curriculum emphasizes facilitating and implementing change, staffing and observations, retention, recruiting and marketing.

These programs endeavor to serve both new and seasoned leaders by providing a dynamic and diverse selection of workshops and networking opportunities. Both programs involve spending time in a large group and in smaller groups to focus on the specific school or center dynamics of participants. For more information or to register, go to [eleanational.org](http://eleanational.org) or contact Cory Newman at [elcaschools@gmail.com](mailto:elcaschools@gmail.com).



## Deepening connections at catechumenate gathering and training

Are you and your Christian community longing for a deeper connection to God and the counter-cultural values of God's reign? If so, please join Journey to Baptismal Living: North American Association for the Catechumenate for its annual gathering and training event June 27-29 at Mercy Center in Burlingame, Calif., near San Francisco.

The gathering is for those with catechumenate experience, and its theme is "Turning hearts toward God: The Lenten practice of baptismal preparation." In baptism, we die to self-centered ways of living and are ushered into a life where trust in God and love for others transforms us and our communities. Participants will explore how faith communities, through the Spirit, support those preparing for baptism in this turning.

Keynote speakers include Nick Wagner and Diana Macalintal, from TeamRCIA ([teamrcia.com](http://teamrcia.com)), an organization that provides accessible and effective Rite of Christian Initiation resources that help congregations initiate and form disciples for Christ's mission. A third keynoter is Paul Galbreath ([upsem.edu/about/faculty/paul-galbreath](http://upsem.edu/about/faculty/paul-galbreath)), a professor of theology at Union Presbyterian Seminary whose research explores the connections between worship and daily life.

The gathering will also include worship, workshops, small groups and ample time for connecting with other participants. There will be an academic convocation on "Lenten renewal" the morning of June 27 and is free to those attend the gathering.

The program cost is \$280; room and board is additional.

A concurrent intensive training for the adult catechumenate will also be held at Mercy Center during the gathering. The event, "Experience and Reflection: Learning the Way of the Adult Catechumenate," is geared for congregational teams new to the catechumenate or for new team members. The cost for the training is \$200; room and board is additional.

The catechumenate is an enlivening journey of spiritual formation for people exploring Christianity or seeking to renew their faith. Based on ancient practices, it goes beyond the traditional study of what Christians believe. Through worship, prayer, small groups, biblical reflec-



tion, sponsors and ministry in daily life, it creates a transformative journey toward baptismal living rooted in revitalized faith communities.

For more information and to register for these events, visit [journeytobaptism.org](http://journeytobaptism.org).

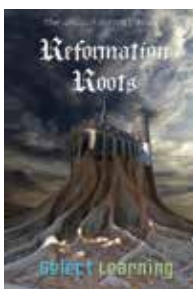
## Digging into our Lutheran roots and history in America

As we near the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and wonder what our mission as Lutherans is in our current culture, it's helpful to see how God has shaped the Lutheran church over time. Select Learning has two dynamic resources to help congregations understand where we have come from and to support our life of faith and service in the world today. Both DVD resources feature Martin Marty, who developed the scope and sequence for this series.

### 'Reformation Roots' (DVD)

Do you ever wonder why we have so many Christian denominations and if there is really much difference between them? The answers to these questions lie in the dramatic and turbulent times of the Reformation. "Reformation Roots," a high-definition DVD series, brings to life the stories and struggles that still impact us today. Each of the 12 sessions is 20-30 minutes long and is accompanied by a study guide designed for 50-60 minutes of class time and discussion.

"Reformation Roots" can be purchased at [selectlearning.org/store/all/reformation-roots-dvd](http://selectlearning.org/store/all/reformation-roots-dvd).



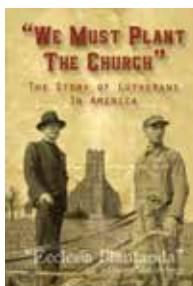
### 'We Must Plant the Church: The Story of Lutherans in America' (DVD)

When Lutherans came to America, they brought with them Martin Luther's belief that people of faith engage the big questions of the day.

This story is characterized by the tension between honoring the European roots of the church and adapting to the new realities of life in America. The Lutheran church, from its earliest days, faced religious pluralism, intolerance, racism, war, lack of state support and diversity of languages and traditions. It wasn't easy then, and it isn't easy now. Understanding American Lutheran history can change the way we see ourselves and our future.

Each session of "We Must Plant the Church: The Story of Lutherans in America" is 20-25 minutes long and is accompanied by a study guide designed for 50-60 minutes of class time and discussion. The DVD series is available at [selectlearning.org/store/all/we-must-plant-church-story-lutherans-america-dvd](http://selectlearning.org/store/all/we-must-plant-church-story-lutherans-america-dvd).

These and other resources can be found at [selectlearning.org](http://selectlearning.org).



## 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation resources for 2017

Now that the Reformation's 500th anniversary year is well underway, you may be looking ahead to how you will mark this milestone during the fall season. The ELCA churchwide organization and Augsburg Fortress have developed the following resources for congregations to use in the coming months.

### 'Reformation 500 Sourcebook'

The "Sourcebook" is an essential guide that contains a treasury of ideas for planning worship services, education events, music festivals, service projects and connections with other Christians. It includes a CD-ROM with reproducible and customizable content.

### 'Papa Luther' graphic novel

"Papa Luther" is an 88-page, full-color graphic novel—or comic book—for children ages 8 to 12. It's also suitable for older youth and adults. "Papa Luther" tells the story of Martin Luther and the Reformation as seen through the eyes of his children Hans and Magda. This resource is accompanied by a free, downloadable leader guide to help educators engage kids in exploring this exciting story in a new way.



### 'Together by Grace' adult study

This colorful resource offers a lively introduction to who Lutherans are, what they teach, where they come from, and where they are today. Editor Kathryn Kleinhans of Wartburg College is joined by more than 30 contributors—teachers, pastors, bishops, activists, and global Lutherans—in bringing the Lutheran story to life. A free, downloadable leader guide is also available.



### Luther's Small Catechism

"With New Voices" is the ELCA's invitation to "open, rediscover, and be renewed" by the treasure of Martin Luther's Small Catechism. Several formats of Luther's Small Catechism have been released to support congregations as they take up this invitation. New versions include an Enlarged Print Edition and a free, bilingual, mobile app, alongside the refreshed Study Edition and the handy Pocket Edition.

### How can I learn more?

Keep up to date with the latest news on Reformation 500 resources by signing up for e-newsletters at [reformation500.in-stapage.com](http://reformation500.in-stapage.com). Visit [augsburgfortress.org/reformation500](http://augsburgfortress.org/reformation500) for more information and samples of these anniversary resources—plus many more.



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**We are a church rooted in the Reformation and teachings of Martin Luther.** The ELCA is observing the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation through a variety of events, activities and resources. Some will acknowledge what Luther did to spark the Reformation, revisiting the roots of our Lutheran beliefs and what they mean for us today. In every activity, we will seek to be confident, joyful witnesses of our life and freedom in Jesus Christ. *Photo: Tim Frakes*



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