

# seeds for the parish

Winter 2014

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.ELCA.org



Our faith practices have changed over the past 50 years.

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Congregation in Maui expands with the help of Mission Investment Fund.

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## Always being made new

In a public exhibition of the kind of faith that Martin Luther called a “living, daring confidence in God’s grace,” voting members of the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly held in Pittsburgh overwhelmingly approved this church’s first comprehensive fundraising campaign, with a five-year goal of \$198 million. With a launch date of Feb. 1, 2014, “Always Being Made New: The Campaign for the ELCA” seeks to raise funds for existing local and global churchwide ministries and for new initiatives.

Approved in the 25th anniversary year of the forming of the ELCA, the campaign also is the church’s moment to look forward to the next 25 years and boldly respond to the needs of God’s creation.

“It’s not often that the opportunity to make a real and lasting difference comes along — to start or renew a congregation,

to save a child’s life, to develop leaders in our church and in our global companion churches, to feed the hungry people and equip them to break out of the cycle of hunger and poverty,” said the Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA. “That’s what this campaign can do. That’s what we can do. And we get to do this in Jesus’ name.”

Among the campaign’s featured priorities are to:

- Increase this church’s capacity to support congregational renewal and the planting of new congregations;
- Form new lay, ordained and global leaders for mission;
- Support this church’s disability ministry;
- Bolster the ELCA’s commitment to walk with global companion churches in shared witness; and

- Expand efforts to address poverty and hunger.

“We feel called to serve in a leadership role for this campaign because of the tremendous moment it offers for all of us in the ELCA to deepen and expand the mission and ministries of this church,” said Loren Anderson of Minneapolis, who with his wife, MaryAnn Waalen Anderson, co-chairs the campaign’s steering committee.

Voting members at the Churchwide Assembly thanked the 4 million members of the ELCA for their ongoing stewardship and generosity through regular offerings that support ministries across the church. The assembly action also invited every congregation, synod, related ministry and individual member to make a contribution toward the campaign.

“We are a church of abundance, using our hearts and hands to make a

*continued on page 2*



Newer generations of women re-defining women’s ministries.

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Activities for fighting hunger during Lent.

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## Faith practices: a lot has changed in 50 years

If you can, remember what the practice of Baptism was like 50 years ago in Lutheran congregations. If you cannot, ask someone who was there. It was a very different time.

Baptism was normally a private matter 50 years ago in most Lutheran churches. Baptisms were conducted after a Sunday service concluded as a private ceremony for the immediate family and friends of the infant being baptized. Baptisms sometimes even took place in homes instead of the church. Some congregations didn't even have a baptismal font.

Teaching about the significance of baptism was also significantly different from today. Fifty years ago, baptism was commonly understood as an entrance into the Christian life but few saw it as a continuing marker of Christian living. Even though the Small Catechism was honored and used as the primary textbook for confirmation instruction, the Small Catechism's admonition to understand Christian life and discipleship as the daily living out of one's baptism into Christ received no attention.

Many historians believe that baptism lost its place as the defining marker of the Christian life in the Lutheran community because of the overwhelming influence of the non-sacramental practices and piety of the general Protestant community in the United States.

### Being made new

Beginning with the Lutheran Book of Worship in 1978 and continuing with the release of Evangelical Lutheran Worship in 2006, ELCA congregations have been reclaiming the historic Lutheran practices and piety related to the Sacrament of Baptism. Baptisms today (except in emergencies or other extraordinary circumstances) occur in the context of congregational worship.

We have restored Martin Luther's scriptural teaching that the hallmark of



the Christian life is the practice of daily living out our baptismal covenant. Luther taught that each morning we are to rise and say, "I am baptized into Christ" and then go about our daily affairs living in the covenant God made with us in our Baptism. "Walking wet" is now a widely recognized metaphor for being a disciple. And we now frequently celebrate our congregations' various occasions in the Christian journey through life by using the liturgy for Affirmation of Baptism (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, p. 236).

With the introduction of the liturgy for the Affirmation of Baptism, our congregations have been regularly reciting a baptismal covenant or promise contained within that liturgy. The liturgy challenges the baptized people of God to affirm that we will:

- Live among God's faithful people;
- Hear the Word of God and share in the Lord's Supper;
- Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed;
- Serve all people following the example of Jesus; and,
- Strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

This short statement describes the five central faith practices that grow out of our Baptism in Christ. These practices outline the expectations of the life of a Christian who takes his or her Christianity seriously. They are the marks of a disciple.

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. We are committed to nurturing discipleship through the Faith Practices initiative, which is managed by a team at the ELCA churchwide organization.

To help the members of this church live the faith practices named in the Affirmation of Baptism, the Faith Practices Team has developed a brief guide, "Faith Practices in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Living Our Baptismal Cov-

enant." This guide may be found at [www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Faith-Practices](http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Faith-Practices).

"As Lutherans, we are called to continually grow in faith, love and obedience to the will of God. 'Living Our Baptismal Covenant' offers ideas for congregations to personalize how they want to demonstrate this growth," says Brenda Smith, program director for ELCA Faith Practices and Missionary Leadership. "'Living Our Baptismal Covenant' is just one of many free Faith Practices resources that are available on the new [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org) website."

### Hearing the word of God

The Faith Practices Team has created a supporting resource, "Story Matters," to help congregations hear the word of God. "Story Matters" invites a congregation to identify a biblical story that fits with its congregational story. The purpose is to then explore that biblical story to better understand the mission to which God might be calling the congregation.

"'Story Matters' put a process in place that our congregation put our own stamp on. It has helped us focus on how we teach Scripture; how we help people understand the biblical narrative and find a biblical story that tells our story. People are starting to put the pieces together," said Peter Reuss, pastor at Peace Lutheran Church, Eyota, Minn., and now director for evangelical mission, ELCA Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

"Story Matters" can be found at [www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Faith-Practices](http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Faith-Practices). Both "Living Our Baptismal Covenant" and "Story Matters" are available as downloadable files at no cost.

Fifty years ago, only parents and sponsors made vows when a person was baptized. Now all of us make those vows in the Affirmation of Baptism liturgy. The words of the baptismal promise contained in that liturgy name the practices that should guide all of us as we daily remember our promise to live out our faith, emerging from our Baptism into Christ. Congregations are encouraged to use these resources to strengthen the foundation for their mission.

**seeds** for the **parish**

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

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**Caption for cover photo:** Cathedral in the Night in North Hampton, Mass., is a worshipping community on track to becoming an ELCA congregation.

**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.

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difference in this world," said MaryAnn. "This campaign gives us all the chance to expand our vision, and to reach out

locally and globally in new ways that will make a difference not only today but well into the future."

For more information, visit [www.ELCA.org/campaign](http://www.ELCA.org/campaign) or call 800-638-3522.

## Expanding a sanctuary in Maui

White sand beaches. Palm trees. A sanctuary for humpback whales.

This is Kihei, on the southern coast of the Hawaiian island of Maui. In the midst of this tropical setting sits another sanctuary — the sanctuary of Kihei Lutheran Church, now slated for expansion, with the help of generous member contributions and a loan from the Mission Investment Fund, a financial ministry of the ELCA.

Kihei Lutheran Church celebrated its 25th anniversary in November 2013. For the congregation's initial 18 years, the "church without walls" worshipped in a local elementary school cafeteria. In 1997, members made the decision to put down spiritual roots and turned to the Mission

Investment Fund for a loan to purchase land. By 2005, the congregation was ready to build, and the Mission Investment Fund provided a second loan to construct



the congregation's first building, encompassing a worship space as well as offices and classrooms. Vigorous capital campaigns supplemented the loans.

This year, the Mission Investment Fund is financing the congregation's expansion. "We turned to the Mission Investment Fund again as our financing source because of the positive experience we had seven years ago when we first built our worship space and education and office areas," says David Krueger, pastor of Kihei Lutheran Church. "We have been especially thankful for the personal attention we received this time around that has allowed us to receive approval for our loan in a very timely manner." Kihei Lutheran Church also invests in the Fund's Term and Demand Investments.

Congregations and ministries considering a land purchase or a building project — construction of a first church building, a renovation or expansion, for instance — may apply for a low-interest loan provided by the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA. Funding these loans is an array of Term and Demand Investments that the Mission Investment Fund offers to ELCA congregations, ELCA-related ministries and members.

### A simple design and sustainability

Kihei's original worship space was planned as a multipurpose room "for worship as well as for doing ministry, because both are important to this congregation," says David. "The design is simple, and that's the beauty of it."

There are no pews, only chairs that can be moved in and out. There are no stained glass windows, but sliding glass doors that open to the lanai for expanded worship and hospitality. The simplicity of the building is in sync with the laid-back Maui lifestyle.

Sustainability is also valued in the isolated Hawaiian Islands, and Kihei Lutheran Church incorporated an array of solar panels above the worship space

— a green addition that supplies nearly all the power the site requires.

Weekly attendance averages 100 to 150 worshippers, and the number can swell to 300

when snowbirds arrive each winter.

Now is the time for expansion at Kihei. The congregation broke ground in September for an expanded space, and the new sanctuary will welcome worshippers in March 2014.

Kihei's original multipurpose space will grow larger and allow the congregation to continue pursuing important community outreach efforts. Dedicated members collect and distribute food to those in need, provide assistance to a growing homeless population, guide high school youth in making sound life choices, and support global relief efforts. "We are always pleased that the loans the Mission Investment Fund provides allow congregations to grow and expand the important ministry work they do," says Eva Roby, president and CEO of the Mission Investment Fund.

For more information on the loans and investments offered by the Mission Investment Fund, visit [mif.elca.org](http://mif.elca.org) or call 877-886-3522.

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## Real women talking about faith

The Women of the ELCA Ninth Triennial Gathering is focused on bringing together Lutheran women to uplift and empower each other through worship, workshops, service, fellowship and speakers. All women are invited to come, whether or not they regularly participate in Women of the ELCA groups in their congregations.

Women will gather in Charlotte, N.C., July 24-27, 2014, under the theme “of many generations” based on the verse Isaiah 58:12. Together women will explore how women are redefining women’s ministries to live out the mission of Women of the ELCA, “mobilizing women to act boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ.” Women across many generations will talk about their doubts and challenges, joys and inspiration.

“We’re very happy that the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, has recently agreed to speak at the triennial

JULY 24-27, 2014  
Ninth Triennial  
Gathering



of many  
generations

gathering,” said Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA. “She’ll inspire all who gather as she encourages each woman to live as a disciple of Jesus.”

### Learning opportunities abound

Whether they attend a workshop, view a film or engage in a servant project, women will grow their faith, explore new possibilities and connect with other women through varied learning opportunities. Here are some examples:

Workshops will explore the gathering theme with leaders such as the Rev. Nancy Neal, Bread for the World’s associate for denominational women’s organization relations. She will conduct a workshop, “1,000 Days: the foundation for life,” focusing on improving nutrition for women and children in the critical 1,000 days between a woman’s pregnancy through the child’s second birthday.

Award-winning author of “Moving Forward on Your Own: A Financial Guidebook for Widows,” Kathleen will address how grief impacts a widow’s decision-making and what financial steps to take.

My Haley, well-known author and widow of Alex Haley, author of “Roots: The Saga of an American Family,” will lead a workshop to help participants connect their past and their future so they can tell their life stories.

### Film screenings and discussions

Three films will be shown at the gathering, offering different ways to explore the organization’s commitment to promoting healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world. Each is followed with a facilitated discussion session.

“I BELIEVE YOU: Faiths’ Response to Intimate Partner Violence” is an hour-long interfaith documentary that explores the stories of survivors of abuse and the response of faith groups to address their needs. The documentary was nominated for an 2012 Emmy Award for Best Religious Programming.

“Harvest of Empire: A History of Latinos in the United States” features family portraits of real-life immigrants from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Cuba, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala and Nicaragua along with sketches of the political events and social conditions that compelled them to leave their homeland. In addition, it gives a fascinating look at how these Latino pioneers have transformed the cultural landscape of the United States.

“Miss Representation,” by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, explores how the media’s images of women have led to the underrepresentation of women in positions of power and influence.

### You won’t want to miss it!

Registration for the Ninth Triennial Gathering is now open. Registration is \$350. Complete information about the Gathering and all it has to offer can be found at [www.welcatg.org](http://www.welcatg.org).



It’s time to do something for yourself. No excuses allowed.

You need time away for rest and renewal. You need time with women of bold faith and courage. You need time to dance and sing and praise God. You need time with women of many generations.

REGISTRATION IS NOW OPEN. REDUCED RATES AVAILABLE THROUGH JANUARY 6, 2014.

of many generations

Ninth Triennial Gathering

Charlotte, North Carolina, July 24-27, 2014

FEATURED SPEAKERS INCLUDE



Women of the  
ELCA

For more information visit [welcatg.org](http://welcatg.org)

or call 1-800-638-3522 ext. 2730

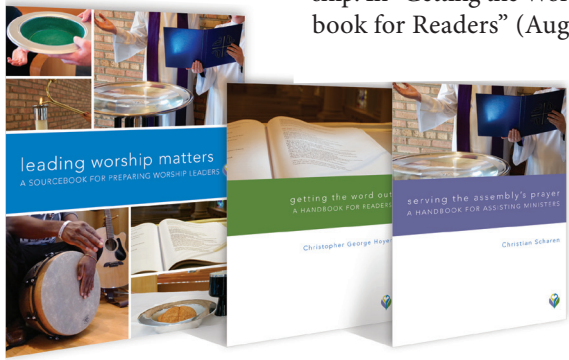
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JULY 24-27, 2014  
Ninth Triennial  
Gathering

of many  
generations

## Three new resources for worship leaders

Looking for ways to engage more lay people in your congregation's worship? The Worship Matters series from Augsburg Fortress invites your congregation to grow into a richer understanding of the foundations and practices of Lutheran worship. With a focus on the principal weekly gathering around word and sacrament, Worship Matters explores the foundational questions about why we gather, how we encounter God in worship, and how that encounter shapes our response in both our communities and our world.



In his foreword to "Why Worship Matters" (Augsburg Fortress, 2004), Mark S. Hanson, former presiding bishop of the ELCA, writes: "Worship is central to the Christian life. The crucified and risen Christ is present at the center of the assembly gathered around the means of grace. Through the word proclaimed and sacraments celebrated, the Holy Spirit is at work. Lives are changed. Sins are forgiven. The alienated are reconciled. Strangers are welcomed. Unbelief gives way to faith. God is praised. Worship matters!"

"Leading Worship Matters: A Sourcebook for Preparing Worship Leaders" (Augsburg Fortress, 2013) is filled with practical, succinct, easy-to-use tools and resources to plan, execute and evaluate worship leadership training. More than 30 contributors have provided helps and training materials for assisting ministers, readers, intercessors, acolytes, ushers, greeters, communion ministers, altar guild, tech ministers, musicians and cantors, and children's sermon ministers.

The sourcebook also includes a section of brief helpful topics for a variety of worship leaders and those who care for the worship space, including "Why Be a Worship Leader?" "Processions 101," "Hospitality in All Things," and "Microphones: Possibilities and Pitfalls."

The accompanying CD-ROM contains sourcebook materials intended for group use in editable, customizable text

files, and the companion DVD contains short video segments featuring real lay worship leaders reflecting on why they serve in particular roles.

### Help for reading Scripture during worship

To strike the heart of the hearer with the power and peace of the word of God is the goal of reading Scripture in worship. In "Getting the Word Out: A Handbook for Readers" (Augsburg Fortress, 2013), author Christopher George Hoyer provides practical helps, preparation exercises and spiritual wisdom for

readers. The handbook also includes a pronunciation guide for the lectionary readings. "Getting the Word Out" invites readers to approach this role not just as a task, but as a ministry to the whole assembly. Whether a beginning or seasoned reader of Scripture, readers of this handbook will find help and encouragement for preparing to read in worship.

### The role of assisting minister

The assisting minister provides, alongside the presiding minister, a consistent presence guiding the assembly's worship, from Gathering to Sending. Christian Scharen, author of "Serving the Assembly's Worship: A Handbook for Assisting Ministers" (Augsburg Fortress, 2013), provides a brief history of assisting ministers in Christian worship, answers what makes an effective assisting minister, and takes readers on a step-by-step walk through the role with lots of tips and encouragement. Leadership as an assisting minister is a significant role, and will only improve by knowing some history and theology of the liturgy alongside practice with competent teachers.

Increase the comfort level of volunteers and those you invite to participate in worship. Download samples, watch videos and learn more about the full Worship Matters series by visiting [www.AugsburgFortress.org](http://www.AugsburgFortress.org).

## Human Trafficking Curriculum for youth — and adults

January is Human Trafficking Awareness month, but the need and opportunity to develop awareness among youth and adults in your congregation continues throughout the year. The Human Trafficking Curriculum Series was created through the ELCA Justice for Women Program and is recommended by the ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice. It is designed to raise awareness and encourage thoughtful dialogue and learning so that young people of the church can learn about justice, advocate for change and lead into the future. The sessions can also be adapted for older adults and mixed groups.

The series contains six one-hour learning sessions designed to equip young people to educate themselves and their peers on the realities of human trafficking and to respond to this devastating problem. The introduction helps the leader to evaluate the group and the space in order to maximize engagement.

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

## Introducing "StewardNet for Church Leaders"

"For I am longing to see you so that I may share with you some spiritual gift to strengthen you -- or rather so that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Romans 1:11-12).

We know that stewardship themes are interwoven throughout much of the Bible and were one of Jesus' favorite topics. Generosity of spirit though is an idea that spans many times and cultures. Our thoughts and attitudes about stewardship are shaped by all these encounters and more.

What are your ideas about stewardship, and what difference do they make? How do those ideas help you to be more confident in your stewardship ministry?

"StewardNet for Church Leaders" is a new e-resource from the ELCA, delivered to your inbox quarterly. In it you'll find

links and ideas that can be useful to you in your life and ministry as a stewardship leader, and serve as a source of inspiration to you as you encourage others to faithfully steward God's rich blessings.

You can subscribe to "StewardNet for Church Leaders" by visiting [www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Stewardship/Growing-Stewards](http://www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Stewardship/Growing-Stewards) and following the instructions there. If you know of others that might benefit from this resource, please help them get connected, too.

Stewardship ministry is crucial to our spiritual lives and to the life of our church. We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. Thank you for doing God's work with a faithful, generous heart, and for your passion, energy and commitment to stewardship ministry!

## 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering

Be sure to put the 2015 ELCA Youth Gathering in your calendar, and watch for upcoming information and resources.

"Rise Up Together"  
2015 ELCA Youth Gathering  
Detroit, Michigan  
July 15-19, 2015

Multicultural Youth Leadership Event and  
Definitely-Abled Youth Leadership Event  
July 12-15, 2015

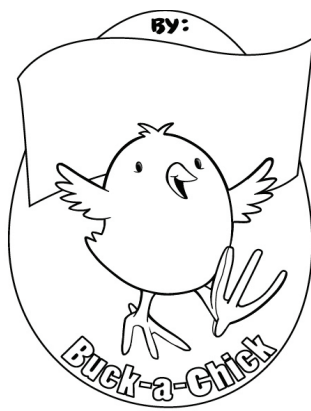
[www.ELCA.org/YouthGathering](http://www.ELCA.org/YouthGathering)  
[www.facebook.com/youthgathering](http://www.facebook.com/youthgathering)



## Lenten activities that help fight hunger

More than 800 million people — that's 1 in 8 people in our world today — are hungry. This Lent, ELCA World Hunger invites your congregation to participate in our church's response to hunger and poverty.

Try ELCA World Hunger's Lenten Meal Series in place of traditional Lenten suppers and engage your congregation in global issues related to hunger and poverty, and how our gifts are making a difference. The series provides complete,



Your gift of a chick makes a world of difference! It provides a family in need with eggs to eat and sell at the market. With this gift you can help a family escape hunger for good.

easy instructions for 18 different meals, each complete with different global recipes, table prayers, printable placemats, table tents, discussion starters and more. Consider taking an offering for ELCA World Hunger for each participant, in place of the cost of the meal. Visit [www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger) for these

downloadable online resources and more.

Little chicks make a big difference!  
Join congregations from across the nation

by hosting a "Buck-a-Chick" sale. Sunday school children and other members can purchase and decorate a paper chick for themselves or in honor of friends and loved ones. Hang the colorful chicks in a prominent spot — like the sanctuary or narthex — to highlight your success. The funds raised will benefit ELCA World Hunger and help provide families in need with chickens, other animals, and the resources they need to escape hunger and poverty for good. Download the coloring sheet at [www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger).

Order brochures, offering envelopes and other materials for your Lenten offerings at [www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger](http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger).

## Did you know?

- In 2012, your support of ELCA World Hunger totaled \$18.6 million.
- ELCA World Hunger supports projects and programs in 43 U.S. states and more than 50 countries around the world.
- More than 388 food pantries, homeless shelters and community organizations in the United States receive funding from ELCA World Hunger. Many of these programs are organized by ELCA congregations.

## Earth Day Sunday 2014: "Water, Holy Water"

Earth Day Sunday falls on April 27, 2014, the weekend after Easter Sunday. While this feels far away, starting the planning process now will ensure that your congregation will take time to celebrate the beauty and bounty of God's creation and our call as people of faith to care for the Earth.

For the past 10 years, Creation Justice Ministries (formerly the National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Program) has developed Earth Day resources that provide educational information, worship resources, sermon starters, stories and activities that highlight various aspects of God's creation.

"Water, Holy Water" is the theme for this year's Earth Day Sunday.

This Earth Day resource will examine the various ways that we connect with water on a daily basis, and the challenges that our communities face with both deteriorating water quality and declining water availability. In addition, the resource will highlight steps that individuals,



congregations and communities can take to protect this precious and life-giving gift — water.

"Water, Holy Water" will include stories from Alaska to Florida and reveal how people around the country

are working to protect and restore water resources. It will also reveal the challenges we will face if we fail to be better stewards of the water we have.

To request a copy of the 2014 Earth Day resource "Water, Holy Water," send an email to [info@creationjustice.org](mailto:info@creationjustice.org) with "Earth Day 2014" written in the subject line, or call 202-827-3975 and request a copy. Go to [www.creationjustice.org](http://www.creationjustice.org) to learn about the ecumenical work and resources of Creation Justice Ministries.

ELCA resources on advocacy, justice and water can also be found at [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org).

## Refugee Sunday resources for June 22, 2014

World Refugee Day 2014 will be very different than past observances. Not only is 2014 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's 75th year of walking with migrants and refugees, but at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, this church boldly declared Sunday, June 22, as "Refugee Sunday."

All congregations are invited to celebrate this day and recognize the struggles of migrants — from displaced Lutherans after WWII to youth fleeing gang violence in Central America today. To facilitate this, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has



created a Refugee Sunday kit as a resource for worship and celebration planning.

The kit has a variety of resources for an engaging, exciting and productive service or discussion. Included is a ministry leader guide to help congregational leaders build a sermon or lead an adult forum. The guide has facts and statistics on refugees. For example, few

realize that when refugees are welcomed by a congregation, they learn English more quickly, get better jobs and become more productive members of the community. The kit also comes with a bulletin insert, ready

to be photocopied, which features a litany and ways to be personally involved with migrants and refugees. Access is provided to a short video about refugees to play during a worship service or another activity.

The Refugee Sunday kit is free and will be available in February. Sign up for a kit at <http://lirs.org/wrdsunday/>.

There's one more thing enclosed in the kit: a reply form. With the support of Lutherans, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service has come far in the past 75 years. To honor past journeys and those to come, it is challenging Lutherans to step up through opportunities to support migrants and refugees in practical ways, so that they can start their new lives here in the United States.

The kit truly encourages the participation of all congregational

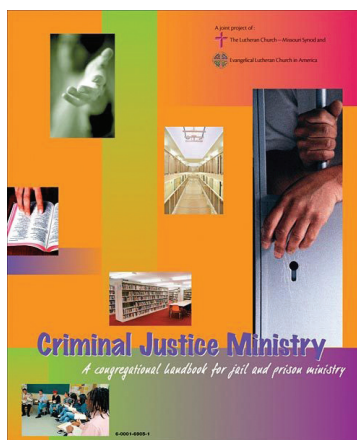
members. R. Mark Taylor, pastor at Plentywood Lutheran Church in Montana, used the 2013 Refugee Sunday kit last year and recognized the walk of all those who seek freedom and security, whether they are a next-door neighbor, a Central American migrant or a refugee. He said, "We are still a nation of refugees and immigrants ... the question is, what will our response be to those who seek freedom and security?"

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and thousands more are answering that question on Refugee Sunday by walking with migrants and stepping up to welcome the stranger. Start planning now to take part in Refugee Sunday 2014!

## Starting a jail or prison ministry?

Who better understands the challenges and hopes of being made new than someone who is in jail, prison or transitioning back to family, home and community? If you have the opportunity to work with families, prisons or jails in your area, and your congregation has considered developing a prison ministry, “Criminal Justice Ministry” may be just the practical guide to help you get started with this critical work.

“Criminal Justice Ministry: a Congregational Handbook for Jail and Prison



Ministry” is an 80-page notebook (three-hole punched) with a section devoted to preparing the congregation for criminal justice ministry. Also included are a biblical reflection, two sessions of volunteer training, a dozen essays on criminal justice topics, and web, print and video resources. The resource

was developed as a joint project of the ELCA and the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod. You can order the handbook from the resource section of [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org) for \$6.00+ shipping/handling.

## Journal of Lutheran Ethics searching for writers

The Journal of Lutheran Ethics is switching from a bi-monthly to a monthly publication schedule and is seeking writers. The Journal aspires to be a bridge between the academic

study of Christianity and the contemporary life of the church, and both lay and clergy writers are welcomed. Upcoming topics include biblical ethics, the role of government, Eucharist and morality, poverty in America and the ethics of entitlement reform. If you or someone you know are interested in writing an



article on one of these topics, please contact the editor-in-chief at [james.echols@elca.org](mailto:james.echols@elca.org).

Managed by the ELCA Theological Discernment

Team, the Journal is a free online publication that reflects the Lutheran tradition of addressing social issues theologically, using the resources of historical, theological and ethical traditions; biblical interpretation and social sciences. Learn more about the Journal at [www.ELCA.org/jle](http://www.ELCA.org/jle).

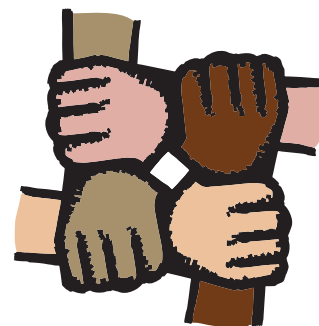
## The impact of health care reform on Lutheran Services in America organizations

Implementation of the Affordable Care Act has begun, and health reform will affect Lutheran Services in America member organizations and congregations in multiple ways: as health care providers, employers and organizations that serve and minister to people who are in need and uninsured.

Lutheran Services in America is committed to offering all the resources it can as members prepare and make changes. To help organizations through this transition, Lutheran Services in America has created an online resource to share the latest updates and resources. The page includes resources for members as well as resources that can be shared with congregations. Please visit [www.lutheranservices.org/healthreform](http://www.lutheranservices.org/healthreform) for more information.

## Help for talking about race and ethnicity

Conversations about race and ethnicity were critical discussion topics at the 2013 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. For those seeking to continue this important conversation, the ELCA provides a web-based study guide for the social statement “Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture.” This useful guide includes four sessions, handouts and discussion questions that



cultivate meaningful and constructive conversations. Leaders can tweak the discussions for adult, youth or multi-generational groups.

The study guide can be downloaded from [www.ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture](http://www.ELCA.org/Faith/Faith-and-Society/Social-Statements/Race-Ethnicity-and-Culture). The social statement (1993) can be found at [www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Theological-Discernment](http://www.ELCA.org/en/Resources/Theological-Discernment).

## “Living in God’s Time” outdoor ministry curriculum

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries has released its 2014 curriculum titled “Living in God’s Time.” Each year a curriculum is produced for use not only by Lutheran camps, but also by camps affiliated with other denominations, congregations and other organizations.

“Living in God’s Time” will explore how Jesus is among us in the different “seasons” of our lives by exploring the Church Year. Participants will discuss how Jesus is revealed in Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter and Pentecost and what that means for daily life. The theme will challenge participants to contrast the normal structure of contemporary life, characterized by busyness and status, with God’s kingdom of “now but not yet” which is characterized by love, grace, compassion and hope in what is yet to be revealed.

### Curriculum “bundles” to meet your needs

New this year, in addition to purchasing the entire curriculum, is the ability to purchase the curriculum in different bundles at a discounted price. The Curriculum Development Bundle contains theme overview and theological background material, but does not include any of the activities. The Vacation Bible School Bundle provides a quality theme at an affordable price for congregations. This bundle includes Bible study activities, crafts and games for lower elementary-aged youth. Individual sections of the

curriculum are also available for à la carte purchasing.

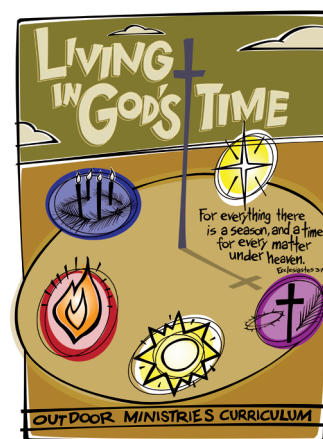
### Access related web-based resources

Also new this year is the “Living in God’s Time” website. Those who purchase the curriculum will have access to the website, which is designed as a resource for curriculum development. The website contains a discussion forum where users can ask questions, share ideas and post other related resources they may have found. The website will also host monthly webinars that will help those developing the curriculum to dive more deeply into the material.

Each webinar will host a presentation on the theological background of theme material and new ideas about engaging youth in the material.

The “Living in God’s Time” curriculum can be purchased on the Lutheran Outdoor Ministries website at [www.lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum](http://www.lomnetwork.org/resources/omcurriculum). More info can also be found on Facebook by searching: “Living in God’s Time Outdoor Ministry Curriculum.”

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries is an association of outdoor ministry organizations dedicated to encouraging, equipping, educating and empowering bold and faithful outdoor ministry leaders for service in the church and in the world. Explore what resources and opportunities Lutheran Outdoor Ministries offers your congregation at [www.lomnetwork.org](http://www.lomnetwork.org).





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