

Seeds for the Parish

Winter 2018

Resource paper for leaders of ELCA congregations

ELCA.org



The ELCA Youth Gathering is where youth meet others who share a spirited love for Christ, grow in faith and serve their neighbor.

The ELCA Youth Gathering: A ministry with youth and resource for congregations

What is the ELCA Youth Gathering? “A monumental experience that just belongs on your faith journey,” explained Meredith Massey from Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston.

Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for a week of faith formation – the ELCA Youth Gathering. Through interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, the hope is that every young person grows in faith and is challenged and inspired to live their faith in daily life. For most, this goal comes to life back home, in their congregations and in the world.

A time of discovery and inspiration

For some, the Gathering helps reveal something new about themselves. “The Gathering sparked something inside me I

didn’t know I had; it made me feel part of something bigger. The Gathering enabled me to grow in my faith, leadership and service, along with providing me with the ways to do so,” said Zoe Clark from Tree of Life Lutheran Church in Harrisburg, Pa.

For others, it reconnects them to their faith. Jake Putala from Mission United Lutheran Church in Pelkie, Mich., said, “Being in a sports stadium with 30,000 other Lutherans was quite possibly the most incredible experience of my life. Singing hymns, listening to inspiring speakers and seeing how energetic the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America could be created a whole new appreciation for my faith and, more importantly, for Jesus Christ.”

As young people desire and struggle to find someone to become, somewhere to belong and something to do, the

Gathering seeks to be a ministry that helps define some of that or at least open pathways of discovery. Ultimately, the ELCA Youth Gathering wants youth to understand the fierce love God has for them – just as they are – and that by grace, through faith, they have been saved. When young people, or people of any age, claim this reality, it changes everything.

So, why have a Gathering? Allison Tice of Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Hickory, N.C., replied with clarity and enthusiasm, “To simply be: Be the church, be the light in the world and be like Jesus with and among God’s people.”

For information and resources for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston June 27-July 1, go to ELCA.org/Gathering.



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

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ELCA Federal Credit Union helps its members save money



It's all about responsible financial stewardship. That's precisely what the ELCA Federal Credit Union is doing for its members. As the newest financial ministry of the ELCA, the credit union offers deposit accounts as well as auto loans, personal loans and credit cards.

Through Oct. 31, not quite a year and a half since it opened its doors, the credit union has provided nearly \$3 million in loans and credit cards to members. Already, it is saving each of its borrowers more than \$1,400 in finance charges over the life of each loan.

"That's a significant savings for each of our borrowers," said Luis Reyes, the credit union's chief operations officer. "Our mission is to help our members do more with their money. As a not-for-profit financial cooperative, the credit union exists to serve our members – not to make a profit. We return earnings to our members through more competitive rates on deposits and loans, fewer fees and enhanced services."

All ELCA members or employees are eligible to join the credit union and realize the advantages of this financial ministry. Family members are eligible to join as well. You can become a member by opening a savings account with a minimum \$25 deposit. Your savings with the credit union allow this financial ministry to make low-cost loans to other Lutherans.

To apply for membership, learn more about the ELCA Federal Credit Union or view a video explaining how it operates, visit elcafcu.org or call 877-715-1111.

'Welcomed & Included' best practices retreat is back!



"Welcomed & Included," a retreat for church leaders, was so well received last September that Carol Joy Holling Camp in Nebraska is offering a similar experience, Feb. 19-21. This retreat will guide church leaders and camp professionals in best practices for ministry with youth, young adults and their families that identify as LGBTQ.

By providing a safe space to educate and create dialogue, church leaders and camp professionals can begin to wrap their heads around what youth, young adults and their families need, and how we can respond with welcome and inclusion.

"Welcomed and Included" is endorsed by Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (lomnetwork.org). For details and to register, go to cjhcenter.org/welcomed or call 402-944-2544.

Valparaiso University to host 69th annual Liturgical Institute

Each year during the second week of Easter, clergy, musicians and other worship leaders meet on Valparaiso (Ind.) University's campus for three days of continuing education, worship, community and renewal. The 2018 Liturgical Institute on April 9-11 will gather around the theme "Washed in Water: How Baptism Forms Us."

In an era in which baptism cannot be taken for granted, when some pathways into communion are changing, as seas rise and storms strengthen, as we seek the full visible unity implied by one baptism and as new generations thirst for mercy, justice and God, how shall we sing and pray around the water? These and other questions will guide worship leaders' days together through presentations, workshops and worship.

Plenary presenters Jessicah Krey Duckworth, Paul Hoffman, Maxwell Johnson and Craig Satterlee will engage participants in these questions of baptismal meaning and renewal for our time. Practical workshops around this theme geared to pastors, musicians and worship leaders will be offered Tuesday and Wednesday.

Monday afternoon seminars offer participants the opportunity to delve



more deeply into a single aspect of worship leadership. This year's seminar topics include preaching, the shape of the catechumenal process, preparing adults for baptismal living, exploring cross-cultural worship and music, and collaborative visual art.

A highlight of the Liturgical Institute, the 69th, is the opportunity to worship in Valparaiso's Chapel of the Resurrection. The liturgies used for worship will offer eucharistic and other prayer offices to help reflect on how we are formed by the gift of baptism.

The Harre Student Union will be the home for the institute's registration, plenary presentations, meals and exhibits. Its proximity to the chapel makes walking distances accessible and convenient.

Registration and event information are available at valpo.edu/ils.

Seeds for the Parish

ELCA.org/seeds
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.

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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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Abundant resources for Lent and Easter

An Easter invitation awaits



Extend a welcoming invitation to your neighbors and community using Holy Week and Easter communication tools created for congregations. Easter Sunday is April 1, and many people will be looking for a place to worship. Make sure your congregation is one they will consider visiting by sharing your worship times and location with your community.

The Easter collection contains five creative concepts in English and three in Spanish. “Journey through Holy Week With Us,” “Jesus Christ is Risen Today,” “This Easter there is a place for you here” and more – all concepts include a welcoming invitation for others to come and experience worship with your congregation.

Each concept includes customizable posters to hang in area coffee shops and businesses. Postcards are available for mailing or distribution at events. Doorhangers can be placed strategically in surrounding neighborhoods. Print items are designed in an 8.5” x 11” format that can be reproduced on a color copier or taken to a quick-print shop. If desired, the postcards and doorhangers are formatted for templated paper available

from online vendors for quick and easy execution (e.g., Blanks/USA). Use these tools and extend your congregation’s invitation today!

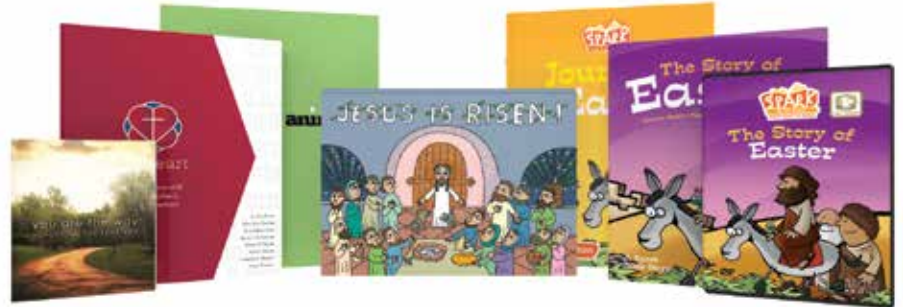
Digital tools for promoting Easter worship and activities

Social media memes offer a digital option for extending your welcome and can be placed on your Facebook site. Two social media resources for congregations, “Social Media and Congregations: Planning and Procedures” and “Social Media and Congregations: Platforms and Content,” are also available to help you plan and execute your overall social strategy.

As part of your communications, don’t forget to update your website and all digital platforms with important information about Holy Week and Easter service times, special parking instructions or anything else a visitor would find useful. This is an excellent time for outreach and to offer a welcoming opportunity for others to experience Christ’s love.

Find these communication tools at ELCA.org/CongTools.

New resources for Lent and Easter from Augsburg Fortress



Children, youth and adults can reflect on the significance of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection throughout their Lenten journey with books and resources from Augsburg Fortress. A stunning new pop-up book and a colorful Lenten devotional, as well as curriculum options for youth and adults, are thoughtful, fresh ways to explore the anticipation and expectation of Lent and the celebration of Easter.

“By Heart: Conversations with Martin Luther’s Small Catechism”

This adult study provides a fresh understanding of how the Small Catechism breaks open its proclamation of the gospel to transform our lives with freeing good news. The seven-session model is ideal for a small group study during Lent. A facilitator’s guide and DVD are also available to guide conversation around Martin Luther’s Small Catechism. Quantity discounts are available for the book.

“You Are the Way: Devotions for Lent 2018”

Many congregations have found the annual pocket-sized Lent devotional a meaningful and accessible way to incorporate a simple Christian observance into their Lenten journey. This beautiful, full-color devotional explores one or

more “I am” sayings of Jesus during each week of Lent. Each reading is accompanied by a photo, a quote to ponder, reflection and prayer. It’s also available in large print and an e-book edition.

“Jesus Is Risen!”

Perfect as a gift, this book brings the Easter story to life in a new way for children. From the empty tomb to Jesus’ appearance to the disciples, the story of his triumph over death is told with vibrant pop-ups by renowned paper artist Agostino Traini. A free single-lesson curriculum with a story time and subsequent teaching activity for kids is available for download.

Lent/Easter download kits

Sparkhouse has crafted three easy-to-use Lent and Easter download kits with everything you need for planning a family event, Sunday school programming, a Lent and Easter pageant, and more.

Lent/Easter curriculum

Curriculum options that have units featuring Lent and Easter content include Frolic, Spark Activate Faith, Whirl, Holy Moly, Connect, Echo the Story and Animate.

Learn more at augsburgfortress.org/lent or call 800-328-4648.

Draft of interreligious policy statement available for comment

In 2016, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton appointed a task force to develop an interreligious policy statement as a complement to “Ecumenism,” the ELCA’s

1991 ecumenical policy statement. The first draft will be available for comment from January through June 2018. The task force will take into consideration

all feedback as it prepares a final draft that will be submitted through the ELCA Church Council for possible action at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

Visit ELCA.org/ecumenical for more information and the document.

MIF's Capital Campaign Services can help with your ministry's fundraising appeal

With its 50th anniversary approaching, St. Luke's Lutheran Church in Waukesha, Wis., decided that a renovation of its sanctuary was in order. The congregation hoped the renovation would achieve a stronger sense of community while preserving the integrity of its lovely stone building. To draw the community in, they planned to move the altar platform outward, closer to worshippers.

To bring this and other sanctuary plans to life, the congregation needed funding via a capital campaign and loan. The Mission Investment Fund, the ELCA's lending ministry, was able to provide both for St. Luke's.

MIF's Capital Campaign Services consultants help congregations plan and implement fundraising campaigns for building projects, debt reduction or expanding ministry. "Our experienced consultants use a program rooted in biblical stewardship principles," said Paula Kitt, director of MIF Capital Campaign Services. "We teach that there is great joy in sharing and giving."

MIF's consultants work closely with pastors and lay leaders to plan a customized campaign to support the congregation's vision for ministry. The consultant introduces the campaign to the congregation and trains congregational leaders



The newly renovated sanctuary of St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Waukesha, Wis.

to continue sharing the campaign message. The effort culminates with Commitment Sunday, when members share their personal financial commitment to the campaign.

Exceeding expectations

At St. Luke's, Commitment Sunday was a special day. Members made their pledges during worship, which were tabulated after each service. "We served cake and coffee, congregation members stayed, and we announced the pledges made during the previous service," said the Rev. Kathy Boadwine, pastor of St. Luke's. "Following our last service that Sunday morning, many members returned to church to hear the grand total.

Our pledges surpassed our expectations."

St. Luke's followed up this successful capital campaign with a loan from MIF. As a result, in addition to revitalizing its sanctuary, St. Luke's created a new hospitality and fellowship center, adding space for expanded training and study.

MIF loans are available to ELCA congregations and ministries for a variety of building projects as well as refinancing. As a ministry of the church, MIF understands the needs and

goals of congregations and ministries and helps create plans that focus on mission – and vision for the future. MIF church building consultants can guide ministries through the building process, from evaluating existing facilities to recommending effective design to suggesting environmentally sound building options. MIF also offers competitive rates and terms.

"We were delighted to work with the Mission Investment Fund – pleased that we are in partnership with the church," Boadwine said.

To learn more about MIF loans, specialty services and investments, visit mif.ELCA.org or call 877-886-3522.

3 Ps of supporting the ELCA's global mission

Our world is becoming increasingly interconnected; the global is becoming local. New neighbors worldwide are bringing to the table their vitality of faith and the opportunity for renewal of communities. In our own neighborhoods, we see opportunities for a flourishing of the global church as we become increasingly aware of and connected to the many diverse parts that comprise the body of Christ around the world.

The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of ELCA Global Mission, describes the three Ps of mission support: "We are all called to witness to God's love for God's people in the world. Scripture challenges us to be ready to give an account of our faith. The ELCA program through the Global Mission unit offers us the opportunity to engage in ministry by praying for this work and that of our global companions, participating by growing and learning as missional congregations, and by providing the financial support that enables us to do this work."

Here are three resources your congregation can access to engage more fully in the global mission work of the ELCA:

- **PRAY** – the Global Church Sunday worship resource helps congregations and worshipping communities celebrate our connections and common mission in Christ's global church (bit.ly/gcs1nday).
- **PARTICIPATE** – the "Glocal" resource digital binder has 10 components that can be used in your congregation or ministry on global mission-related topics such as immigration, accompaniment and becoming a missional congregation (bit.ly/glocalb1nder).
- **PROVIDE** – the Missionary Covenant Sponsors Guide walks congregations and others through the possibilities of entering into a covenant relationship with a missionary to provide financial support from their budget, endowment funds or through special fundraising (bit.ly/covenantponsor).

Prepare for Earth Day Sunday

Each year, Creation Justice Ministries provides a toolkit to celebrate Earth Day Sunday. The Bible is full of beautiful language and theology for celebrating God's creation, yet, in the busy rhythm of the liturgical year, it can be challenging to find time to focus on the theme of creation as a congregation. Earth Day Sunday provides just such an opportunity.

This year, Earth Day conveniently falls on Sunday, April 22, with the theme "Sense of Place." The resource will provide reflection material about living in harmony with local ecosystems and watersheds,

rightly sharing places with a diversity of people and respecting the history of your place. The resource is written to be useful year-round. Also consider planning for the World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation on Sept. 1.

Find the "Sense of Place" resource at creationjustice.org/place and other materials at creationjustice.org/earth-day-Sunday.



Get your bold on for Bold Women's Day, Feb. 25

Bold Women's Day – observed annually on the fourth Sunday of February – celebrates all Lutheran women who have acted or are acting boldly on their faith in Jesus Christ. Sunday, Feb. 25, is set aside this year to observe Bold Women's Day, but you can plan it for any day that works for you and your congregation. Bold Women's Day is an initiative of Women of the ELCA.

To plan your Bold Women's Day, visit welca.org/bwd and download updated resources. The “Celebrate Bold Women's Day” resource, available in English and Spanish, offers a starting point

for planning. The “When you gather in community” section offers ideas for congregational events. If you want to celebrate in quiet contemplation and study, look at “Ways to celebrate on your own.”

Women of the ELCA also offers resources at welca.org/resources for promoting and observing Bold Women's Day, including “Finding Your Bold: An Icebreaker,” “A Bold Life of Faith: Katharina von Bora Luther” and two,



three-session Bible studies: “Act Boldly for Mission” and “Act Boldly for Health.”

Outdoor ministry curriculum parallels ELCA Youth Gathering theme

Lutheran Outdoor Ministries (LOM) has released its 2018 curriculum, “This Changes Everything” (available for purchase and download at lomnetwork.org/curriculum). LOM produces a curriculum each year for Lutheran camps, camps of other denominations, congregations and other organizations. This



year it partnered with the ELCA Youth Gathering to develop a parallel, complementary theme.

At the heart of “This Changes Everything” is Martin Luther's assertion

that in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God has delivered a broken and sinful humanity from sin, death and the power of evil. This redemption was completed once and for all in Christ – an act of God that's sheer grace and an undeserved gift for the world. Participants will learn how this gift changes our hearts,

identity, purpose and community.

The curriculum package includes five-day Bible study sessions for preschool, elementary, junior and senior high youth, and adults. There are also age-specific

games, crafts, environmental activities and team-building activities. “This Changes Everything” is also available in small bundles designed for youth ministry and vacation Bible school settings.

The vacation Bible school bundles from previous curriculums are available for free to ELCA congregations – yes, free! The bundles include biblical and theme background information for leaders, Bible study activities, and crafts and games for preschoolers and upper and lower elementary youth.

Learn about LOM, locate camps and retreat centers, discover camp programs for all ages and find other ministry resources at lomnetwork.org.

Youth ministry in the age of science



“Exploding Stars, Dead Dinosaurs, and Zombies”

By Andrew Root

Science may seem like the biggest threat to teenage faith today, but Andrew Root demonstrates that the two are not incompatible.

Root, a renowned expert on adolescent spirituality and the Olson Baalson Associate Professor of Youth and Family Ministry at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., shows how science overstates its claims on truth, while faith often understates its own claims. Both faith and science frame the experience and reality of teenagers, and both have something valuable to offer as adolescents develop.

Drawing on a fictional account of a youth pastor and the various students he encounters, Root paints a compelling picture of how faith can flourish, even in our scientific age.

Order at augsbuportress.org/explodingstars.

“Thankfully, we can finally kill the false rivalry and instead put faith and science in dialogue. Now, instead of fearing these conversations with young people, I can't wait to start them!”

– Brad M. Griffin, youth pastor, director of the Fuller Youth Institute at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, Calif., and coauthor of *Growing Young*

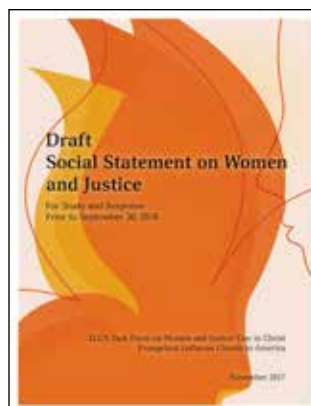
Women and justice: Join the conversation

The ELCA Task Force on Women and Justice: One in Christ has released “Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice.” Your voice and response are needed!

The draft is in two sections: basic theses and fuller explanations, which speak about how sexism harms us all in church and society. The task force wants to hear from you and your community about the content of the draft and this innovative format. Find the draft, supplementary materials, information

on ordering a paper copy and the response form at ELCA.org/womenandjustice. Respond to the draft on your own, study it with a group or attend a synod hearing (email womenandjustice@elca.org to find a hearing in your area).

Our church believes the Spirit speaks through a community of moral

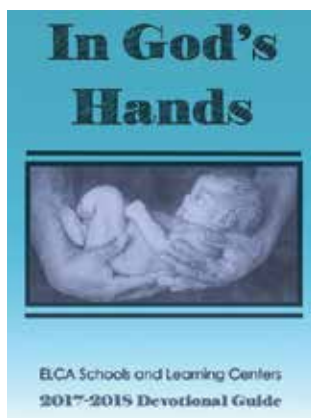


discernment. What are we being called to say? “We recognize patriarchy and sexism are ‘a mix of power, privilege, and prejudice.’ They prevent all human beings from living into the abundant life for which God created them,” the social statement draft says.

Devotion guide for Christian educators

Welcome to “In God’s Hands,” the 2017-18 devotional guide for use by educators in Christian settings. This resource is in its 18th year, funded by the ELCA in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA).

The guide began as a devotional tool for learn-



ing center directors and school principals to use during weekly staff meetings, but its use has spread to include congregational staff meetings, council meetings, school board meetings, Christian education gatherings and more.

Download “In God’s Hands” at elcaschools.org (click the “Resources” tab). Enjoy the guide,

use it as you wish and let us know your thoughts on how it might serve you better. Also consider becoming a contributor – ELEA is always looking for new writers for this and other projects. To learn how you can support the work of ELCA schools and learning centers, call 800-500-7644 or visit elcaschools.org.

The ELEA has been the premier source of support, advocacy and connections for ELCA and other faith-based schools and early learning centers since 1988.

Lifting up the gift of water

God’s incredible, powerful gift of water sustains all creation. Water also holds a sacred place in our relationship with God: “In holy baptism, the triune God delivers us from the forces of evil, puts our sinful self to death, gives us new birth, adopts us as children, and makes us members of the body of Christ, the church. ... Water connected to the Word – God’s saving promise in Jesus Christ – is at the center of the baptismal celebration” (ELW, page 225).

We are called by God to be stewards of all creation, including protection of water. But environmental degradation resulting from human activity demonstrates that we often have been poor stewards. Human activity, in many cases, results in water contamination, waste of water and disasters caused or intensified by severe weather patterns such as droughts, floods and hurricanes in a changing climate. These condi-

tions significantly impact the quality and access to clean water necessary for every aspect of daily life.

It is everyone’s responsibility to protect the quality of our water. In 1972, the U.S. government enacted the Clean Water Act (CWA), which provides regulatory protection of our water. The 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed the “Resolution Urging Stewardship of the Gift of Water,” which calls for the development of resources to enable each congregation to identify and name its watershed and for the provision of resources to congregations and individual members

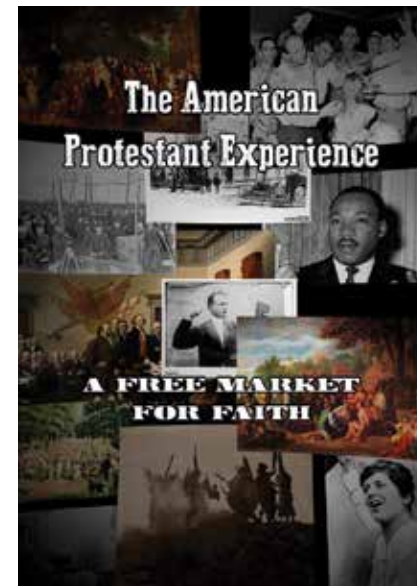


to encourage and support conservation and prayerful stewardship of water resources. It acknowledges that the effects of disasters caused by environmental degradation disproportionately impact the ability

of vulnerable and marginalized people and communities to have access to clean water.

The resources called for in the resolution can be found in the ELCA clean water factsheet “Caring for God’s creation: Stewarding the gift of water” (ELCA.org/Resources/Advocacy; click on the “Environmental & Energy Policy” tab).

After the celebration ...



In 2017, Lutherans hosted many wonderful celebrations and learning opportunities for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Where do we now direct our attention as we enter a new year? Select Learning has a dynamic resource, “The American Protestant Experience,” that follows what happened after the Reformation in the newly forming United States.

It’s no accident that the United States is home to a wide range of religious expressions. Immigrants from around the world brought their faith with them and established churches and denominations. But one of the most unique qualities of American religious life is the innovation and experimentation that takes place here.

“The American Protestant Experience” series documents the ongoing deliberation about the relationship between the church and civil authority. The country’s founders, seeing the intolerance of the early immigrants, wisely sought to create a republic where faith could be practiced freely and where a theocracy would be avoided.

Twenty-five church historians, including Martin Marty, Grant Wacker, Amanda Porterfield and Mark Granquist, tell this amazing story with support from photos, films and music of the era. There are 10 sessions each averaging 22 minutes and a congregational study guide available at selectlearning.org.

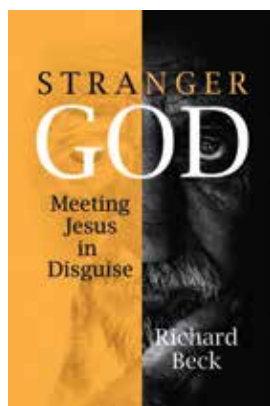
Meeting God in people unlike us

“Stranger God: Meeting Jesus in Disguise”

By Richard Beck

When Richard Beck first led a Bible study at a maximum-security prison, he went to meet God, and meet God he did.

With Beck’s signature combination of biblical reflection, theological reasoning and psycho-



logical insight, he shows how God always meets us in the marginalized, the oppressed and the refugee. Stories from Beck’s life illustrate this truth – God comes to him in the poor, the crippled, the smelly. Although we are predisposed to like those who are similar to us and avoid those who are unlike us, the call of the gospel is

to override those impulses with compassion, to “widen the circle of our affection.”

In the end, Beck turns to the “Little Way” of St. Thérèse of Lisieux for guidance in doing even the smallest acts with kindness, and he lays out a path that any of us can follow.

Order at augsborgfortress.org/strangergod.

Meeting children at the intersection of daily life and the Bible



timeline with pictures representing specific Bible stories. From then on, she could visually point out that “Moses is way back there” and “Jesus is up here.”

The timeline worked wonderfully, and eventually an artist created images to tell 36 Bible stories, from creation through

Pentecost. Corresponding student engagement pages for each image were also written. The result was “Picture the Bible.”

“Picture the Bible” is a new approach to biblical study for children that occupies the intersection of daily life and the Bible. The goal is not to tell learners what to think but to provide “conversation centerpieces,” engaging learners and leaders in conversation about the Bible, their lives and the world.

Talking with her Sunday school students about Zacchaeus, Stacy Johnson Myers, an ELCA pastor serving a United Church of Christ congregation, asked, “Why do you think people were surprised Jesus wanted to go to Zacchaeus’ house?” A child answered, “Because they thought Jesus would go to Moses’ house.” Myers paused, then remembered that the lectionary-based curriculum featured Moses in the previous lesson. The following morning, she made a

Enriching biblical literacy and interpretive skills

The impact of “Picture the Bible” can be dramatic and far-reaching for the entire congregation. The engaging images portray details of stories but aren’t overly laden with symbolism, so they can be quickly embedded in a child’s imagination. Displayed together as a timeline, students gain a perspective of time and the progression of the overarching biblical story.

Student engagement pages connect Bible stories with their cultural contexts and the children’s lives. The colorful pages can be an effective intergenerational tool for faith formation among young children, youth and adults, connecting people’s lives and the Bible.

Congregations can purchase a set of images, downloadable student engagement pages, books featuring the art and other resources at picturethebible.org, [Facebook.com/picturethebible](https://www.facebook.com/picturethebible) or by contacting stacy@firstchurchrf.org.

An online timeline and conversation of Lutheran history



Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, where Martin Luther posted the Ninety-five Theses in 1517. Photo: Martin Lohrmann

In Lutheran Quarterly’s “Timeline of Global Lutheranism,” 10 topics for each of the five centuries since Martin Luther’s posting of the 95 theses help tell the story of the Lutheran church. Different subjects highlight Lutheran experiences in various times and places. The list invites readers to consider what they think is missing and what they would suggest adding – making the timeline an open conversation.

This timeline highlights the diverse, global nature of the church that Protestant reformers envisioned when they presented the Augsburg Confession in 1530. Even so, there remains a need to keep sharing, hearing and learning histories, and the timeline helps encourage faith communities to share new and old stories of life in the body of Christ.

Each timeline subject has a paragraph describing its significance for Lutheran history, helping connect individual moments with larger movements. Lutheran Quarterly essays accompany the topics, adding opportunities for deeper study and introducing readers to existing historical work. Images and weblinks add media elements for further exploration.

Lutheran Quarterly and Johns Hopkins University Press have made this timeline available for free. View the timeline at timeline.press.jhu.edu/lut_reformation by clicking on the time periods at the top of the page.

New Guardian Angel programs being organized in Omaha, Atlanta and Denver

The courtroom was packed with mothers and children of all ages. Jeni, a young mother who fled gang violence in El Salvador, appeared that day with her children, ages 2 and 5. “When I met Jeni before court, she was nervous about what might happen even though she had found a lawyer after asking the judge for more time to do so. But her lawyer wasn’t with her and she was nervous. We talked in the waiting room. She explained everything to me and then accepted my offer of a short prayer as she waited for her name to be called. Then I accompanied her in court,” said Mary Campbell, a Guardian Angel volunteer and program director for the ELCA AMMPARO program.

AMMPARO is the ELCA’s strategy for Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities, which includes the Guardian Angel program. The program is the physical presence of the church in court. We bring our faith with us wherever we go, but this is the intentional presence of the church in courtrooms to accompany migrant children and families during their



hearings and legal processes.

To glimpse what it is like to accompany migrant children and families through the Guardian Angel program, watch a video at [Vimeo.com/157458987](https://vimeo.com/157458987).

Present, prayerful support in confusing and difficult circumstances

Volunteers in Los Angeles and Chicago attend court wearing either Guardian Angel T-shirts or buttons. They talk with families and children before hearings, help them understand what to expect in the courtroom, answer questions and offer to pray with them. Margie Rivera, a Guardian Angel in Chicago, said, “The experience is exhilarating! I saw their faces change from serious concern to almost a smile of relief as I explained that help is here to accompany them in court.”

And Hellen Rios Carrillo, a volunteer in Chicago, said, “Our warm presence,

accompanying and praying is very important. For most, their rights are being denied and finding friendly faces of people who respect them and are willing to show support in those moments are vital.”

New Guardian Angel programs are being organized in Omaha, Atlanta and Denver. The Omaha program is a collaborative program of the Nebraska and Western Iowa synods. Contact the Rev. Rebecca Sheridan at rebecca@nebraskasynod.org for information. To sign up for the programs in Atlanta or Denver, contact Barbara Tedlow (Atlanta) at nanbarbarasnead@icloud.com or the Rev. Alena Lamirato (Denver) at pastoralena@yahoo.com.

For information about AMMPARO and the Guardian Angel program, go to ELCA.org/ammparo or contact Campbell at mary.campbell@elca.org.



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**LUTHERAN CHURCH OF CHRIST THE REDEEMER
IN MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA**, used an MIF loan to remodel the low-income apartments the church rents to Togolese refugees, thus making their new homes a whole lot homier.



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