

# Share your story

## Happy Birthday, Jesus!

The Sunday school class at Grace and Peace Lutheran Church in Peoria, Ill., celebrated Christmas in a very special way last year. They hosted the first annual “Birthday Party for Jesus.” In addition to playing games and eating snacks, they brought presents.

They brought money to “purchase” animals from the God’s Global Barnyard section of the *ELCA Good Gifts* catalog and invited the congregation to join the fun. They distributed bulletin inserts about God’s Global Barnyard and collected donations in a feed bucket. In the end, they collected \$276 in gifts that went on to benefit families living in poverty.

✉ Do you have a story to share? E-mail Krystal at [Krystal.McClinton@elca.org](mailto:Krystal.McClinton@elca.org)



## Lectionary Connection | SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20

**Luke 1:39–45 [46–55]** *Mary Visits Elizabeth*

We know the story well. So well, in fact, that we may fail to notice the wonder of it all: God acting in history through a peasant woman. And what is God’s activity? Filling the hungry with “good things” (v. 53). To this day God continues to act through women across the globe. Consider the following facts:

- When a girl or a woman earns income, she will invest 90 percent of it into her family, compared to 30–40 percent for a man.
- From 1970 to 1995, the education of women accounted for 43 percent of all malnutrition reduction.

This Sunday as we remember a faithful peasant woman who allowed God to act through her, let us also give thanks for all the women in the world who work so hard to nurture their families.

## World AIDS Day is December 1



World AIDS Day is a time to join the global community in increasing awareness of HIV and AIDS and remembering those affected and infected by the virus.

In August, the 2009 Churchwide Assembly voted overwhelmingly to launch a new strategy for ministry with people affected by HIV and AIDS worldwide. World AIDS Day may be an appropriate time to introduce and show support for this new churchwide initiative in your congregation.

Because December 1, 2009, is a Tuesday, your congregation may wish to observe World AIDS Day on Sunday, November 29. Consider observing a moment of silence during worship, praying for people affected by HIV and AIDS, distributing red ribbons, or collecting a special offering. Gifts designated for HIV and AIDS may be sent to ELCA World Hunger (P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694). Please note “HIV and AIDS” on the memo line.

Worship resources and additional ideas for your congregation are available at [www.elca.org/aids](http://www.elca.org/aids).

## Last Call

### CHANGE THE WORLD: 2009 LUTHERAN YOUTH CHALLENGE

Did your youth group collect “change for change” or other funds as part of the 2009 Lutheran Youth Challenge? Be sure to send your gifts by the end of the year. Write “youth challenge” on the memo line of your check so it can be counted toward the goal.

