



Multimedia Sunday school? Use a laptop!

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Looking for a way to energize both your Sunday School students and their teachers? Try using a laptop computer in class. That's what Corey Smith and Craig Borders did; they team-teach a 7th and 8th grade class at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Ridgefield, Conn.

It started a couple of years ago, when Corey began bringing a laptop to class. "I thought it would be more interesting, both for the students and me, if the laptop were available to supplement our 'paper-based' curriculum," Corey recalled. "My hope was that the laptop's graphic and Internet capabilities would give us more to talk about in class and that we could better relate lesson information to current events." Craig, who teaches during alternate months, soon followed suit. "Corey kept telling me how much the kids liked it, and our superintendent gave us a CD-ROM of the Bible to consider using," he said. "So I thought I'd give it a try."

Having a laptop in class definitely grabbed the kids' attention. But the challenge was to make it a real learning tool and not just a gimmick.

The CD-ROM (Compton's New Interactive Bible, New International Version, Version 1.0, 1996) became a foundation for the class. The search capabilities of the CD-ROM offer a quick way to look up verses, maps, pictures and vocabulary terms, compare verses, or develop an entire class around a concept, like "What are parables?" or "What does the Bible say about war?" And the CD-ROM helps the class answer questions their teacher can't!

An important factor in keeping the kids engaged is that *they* get to use the laptop. "At first I did all the searches, and I'd show the kids what I found," Craig noted, "but then I realized that was becoming too much like a lecture. So now I ask the kids to take turns doing searches, which keeps them on their toes."



Students in the 7th and 8th grade class at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Ridgefield, Conn., work on an outline for this article. Pictured are (left to right) students Teresa Borders, Alison Burke, Erin Sheridan, Alissa Bauer, Rebecca Brooks, Michael Buzzard, Carolyn Baker, and Allison Knopf. Team teacher Corey Smith assists.

There are also resources on the Internet to use in class, and Corey patched in a phone line from the choir room next door. With it the class has accessed study guides on *The Lutheran Web* site and checked out different Bible translations, even in other languages. And when the class raised money to buy food for a local food bank, they visited the Web site of a nearby grocery store to find out what was on sale.

However, surfing the Web might not be the best approach to use in class. "Waiting for Web pages to download can be a bit tedious during class, and it's best to stick with Web sites that the teacher knows," Corey pointed out.

Even a class that doesn't have a phone line—and most don't—can have indirect access to the Internet. When preparing the

lesson at home, the teacher can save Web sites for off-line use. This makes the sites available during class, and if relevant links are saved, it's almost like being online.

What do the students think about using a laptop in class? Their first response is that it "saves time." They also like the ability to read the same version of the Bible. They like the fact that the computer shows pictures, and they think that kids are more interested in looking at a computer screen than at a book. Most important, they believe that the laptop helps make biblical concepts easier to understand. They realize that not every Sunday School class will have access to a laptop, but as one student put it, "If you have one, why not use it?"

How to get started

What you'll need if you're considering using a laptop in class:

- A laptop computer; any make or model will do, but the bigger the screen the better
- A CD-ROM of the Bible is good;
- A 17" or larger computer monitor—optional, but helpful if the class is large;
- Computer speakers—also optional;
- Table space;
- Access to a telephone line—if you want to tap into the Internet during class;
- Enthusiastic teachers and students—highly recommended.

— Craig Borders has taught Sunday School at St. Andrew's for about 10 years. He team-teaches the 7th and 8th grade class with Corey Smith. Corey and Craig can be reached via e-mail at standrews@unidial.com.

ELCA called to prayer at noon

When the hands on the clock come together at noon, let them remind us of the call to pray for evangelism in the ELCA. Right now an evangelism strategy is being formed by a task force, with hopes of approval by the 2003 Churchwide Assembly. The Rev. Gary M. Wollersheim, bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod and chair of the evangelism task force, has asked that the ELCA pray for this work daily at noon. From small children to the oldest member of congregations, everyone is invited to participate.

Martin Luther Lutheran Church in Mobile, Ala., was the first congregation known to have committed to praying for the evangelism strategy in the ELCA, when Pastor Kathryn Bradley-Love lit a designated candle in worship and prayed for the guidance and blessing of God on the strategy's development. Prayer for evangelism and for the strategy has been a weekly part of their worship.

Are you willing to participate in this prayer adventure? Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson has referred to the ELCA

as a praying church—and one that is becoming a praying church. The idea is simple. Think of an effective way to remind yourself to pray: set the alarm on your watch to go off at noon; put a sticker on your watch-face; decorate an index card with a phrase like "it's time to pray for evangelism in the ELCA," and put it in an obvious place in your home or office.

What should you pray about? Pray for wisdom and inspiration for the Evangelism Strategy Task Force as they seek the mind of Christ for the ELCA. Also pray for the heart for evangelism in your own congregation.

Finally, think of one to three people whom God is bringing to your mind who are not worshipping at any congregation, and pray for them specifically—that they may have open hearts to hear the Gospel and that an opportunity may arise for a person to give witness to Jesus in their hearing.

For tools to focus your prayer, visit www.prayingchurch.org. To learn about the Evangelism Strategy, go to www.elca.org/visionevangelism.



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Consider This looks at Rally day and other days in September

In this column, those who are responsible for planning worship are invited to consider some alternatives to their current practice in an effort to heighten the experience of liturgy for their worshipers. For further information, contact Scott Weidler, ELCA associate director for worship and music, via e-mail at sweidler@elca.org.

Are you starting to plan for your fall worship? In this issue's Consider This column, we look at some significant days in the month of September.

Rally Day

Many congregations kick off the congregational programmatic year (along with the school year) early in September with Rally Day.

This year's Gospel reading for September 8, from Matthew 18, ends with the words, "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." What a great theme on which to build Rally Day: a particular community, returning from months of vacation and varied schedules, renews their baptismal covenant as they gather together in the presence of God to be the people of God, receiving God in Word and sacrament, and being sent to do God's work in the world.

Rally Day often is focused on children, especially the start of new Sunday School classes. However, if the Church really is God's people of all ages, an intergenerational focus would be appropriate.

Since choirs may not have begun to rehearse yet, consider a "choir" of children and adults together, rehearsed briefly before the liturgy, singing a simple song about God's presence. One such song could be "In the presence of your people" (*With One Voice* #720). The other hymns in the "gathering" section of *With One Voice* would also be appropriate: "Here in this place" (*WOV* #718) and "God is here!" (*WOV* #719).

It would be a great witness to train people of all ages to serve together as readers, ushers, assisting ministers, acolytes, altar guild and coffee servers. Acolytes need not be only children and the altar guild need not be only women. Use

gifts from all ages as they are available on Rally Day and throughout the year.

Rally Day also includes the idea of starting again — getting a fresh start. Themes of reconciliation are evident here and can be made tangible by an extended and intentional time of sharing God's peace. Teach the assembly to share more than a friendly hello, and that the action is a real expression of God's peace.

Rally Day is mostly about mission. Consider an extended sending rite that emphasizes the ministry of every Christian on every day in every place. The Rite of Affirmation of the Vocation of the Baptized in the World (a brief version is in *Occasional Services*, page 146; a fuller, more evocative rite is "Welcome to Christ: Lutheran Rites for the Catechumenate" page 59).

Rally Day is also about ministry within the congregation. It would be a good day to recognize various ministries within your faith community. The rite on page 143 in *Occasional Services* includes specific prayers for worship, education, witness, service and stewardship. Adapt the rite as needed to recognize other ministries, too.

Holy Cross

The church celebrates Holy Cross Day each year on September 14. Even if it does not fall directly on a Sunday this year, "rallying around the cross" is an exceptional focus for congregations. Appropriate hymns, such as "Lift high the cross" (*LBW* #377) or "O praise the gracious power" (*WOV* #750 with its refrain "your cross has made us one") can be sung. Art projects could use the image of the cross boldly and at a parish picnic, you might literally gather around or under a huge cross, singing songs of faith and praying. Giving the cross a prominent and positive place in the celebration can add a needed balance to many images of Good Friday.

St. Michael and All Angels

A festival of the church that actually falls on a Sunday this year comes on Sept. 29, St. Michael and All Angels. Angels are

really "cool" in our culture, especially at Christmas. You see them on greeting cards, pins, plaques, and as figurines. They are usually cute, cherubic, calm, comforting and often musical. This, however, is not the dominant image of angels in the Bible. Michael was a warrior, fighting a battle in heaven. Commemorating St. Michael and All Angels at the Sunday liturgy can help provide a balanced view of these ministers of God. Consult *Sundays and Seasons* or *Indexes for Worship Planning* for the readings and prayers for that day, along with other ideas, hymns and music for celebrating this festival.

There are several traditions at work in the ELCA concerning lesser festivals when they fall on a Sunday. One tradition states that if the festival falls on a Sunday when the color is green (that is, Sundays after Epiphany or Pentecost), the lesser festival takes precedence, replacing the readings assigned for that Sunday. This practice encourages a festive respite in the midst of the long ordinary season after Pentecost. Some congregations, while moving to a more frequent celebration of Holy Communion, cherish the extra festival day.

Another tradition suggests that the Sunday readings, when taken in continuity with the readings of the whole season, ought never be displaced, thereby keeping the integrity of the lectionary intact. The festival would then be transferred to the next day. Unfortunately, most congregations do not have worship on Monday, so the lesser festivals rarely get any attention. Perhaps a special celebration later on that Sunday with Evening Prayer and a dinner focusing on St. Michael and All Angels would be appropriate. In some communities, this could function like Rally Day,

only a few weeks later in the month.

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/co/seeds

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Weddings as Worship video from MOSAIC

Everyone loves a wedding... well, almost. What happens when the church's expectation of this important rite differs from the couple's perception?

The Summer 2002 issue of MOSAIC, the video magazine of the ELCA, looks at the wedding in today's culture.

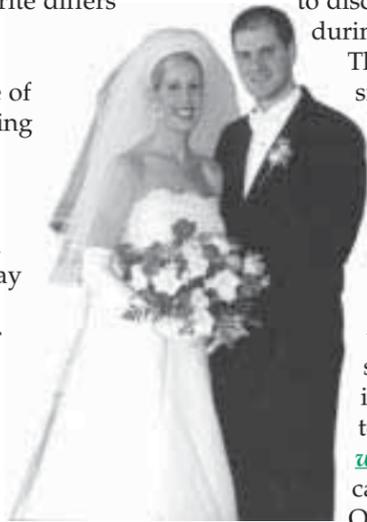
Why do pastors, church musicians and mothers of the bride often find themselves in conflict? Should the church say no to couples who want the sanctuary only as a setting for their ceremony? What is the role of the wedding in the life of the church? These questions and more are posed in this episode of MOSAIC.

Pastors can use this video to help couples learn what a wedding is

really about. Give it to a couple and ask them to watch it and meet with you later to discuss. Or watch it together during premarital counseling.

The cost is \$19.95 for this single video, or you can order a subscription to MOSAIC and use it for your congregation's adult education classes or forums. Upcoming topics include a look at Baptism, J.S. Bach, and the birth of the ELCA. A subscription (four issues) is \$50. To learn more, go to the MOSAIC Web site at www.elca.org/mosaic or call 800/638-3522 ext. 6009. On the Web site you can

also view past videos.



Looking for a resource? This can help

Need a resource to plan a special worship service, or to prepare for Sunday school classes?

Maybe you want to pull together an adult forum on the proposed ELCA health-care statement. Or do a children's program on world hunger.

There's a treasure-trove of resources on the ELCA Web site, but you may need

help in finding the exact ones you're looking for. So where do you begin?

Go to www.elca.org/resources.html

and click on the ELCA ResourceFinder

magnifying glass. This feature can

quickly search the items in the

ELCA resource database. If a

resource has been reviewed in

Seeds, the Finder will show you that review. It also has links to Augsburg Fortress if the resource is for sale there.



How your congregation can help hungry people

Your congregation can make a difference in helping hungry people. Now's the time to get involved in national hunger-related issues, as well as deal with hunger locally. Here are some resources.

Helping Hungry People in the U.S. by Improving TANF

There are several ways to help your congregation get involved in asking Congress to revise the current welfare law, known as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, in a way that will provide adequate assistance to American families. Play an active role in this campaign by contacting the following:

- **The Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA).** Call Kay Bengston, assistant director, at 202/626-7942; e-mail: K_Bengston@elca.org

- **Bread for the World** has produced "Hunger No More, Decisions 2002," a six-session study with a Leader's Guide for adults and youth, children's resource and fact sheets. Order one free copy from the ELCA World Hunger Program (800/638-3522, ext. 2764).

You may also order "Working from Poverty to Promise," Bread for the World's 2002 Offering of Letters Kit for congregations, \$7. Call 800-82-BREAD or fax 202/639-9401; e-mail publications@bread.org

In 1996 Congress dramatically changed the face of welfare in the United States. TANF continues to support low-income families where one or both parents are

seeking employment but are unable to pay bills or adequately care for their children.

The 1996 TANF law significantly reduced the number of families on welfare during a booming economy, but this has not necessarily meant that children are doing better. Some 2.1 million families in the United States continue to suffer hunger and poverty and live on welfare. Adults in families living on welfare need child-care assistance, education and job training, a source of higher wages, and in some cases, counseling for mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence.

The TANF law is up for its first revision by September 30, 2002. LOGA, a program of the ELCA Division for Church in Society, and partner Bread for the World are working together on recommending that Congress make the following improvements in the law:

1. Provide state incentives to reduce poverty;
2. Make it easier to include training as part of work responsibilities;
3. Allow states to supplement low-wage work without counting it against a recipient's lifetime limit;
4. Increase the TANF block grant for inflation and expand child care funding;
5. Provide counseling for people with mental-health or substance-abuse problems, or who are victims of domestic violence.

Set Your Table brochure

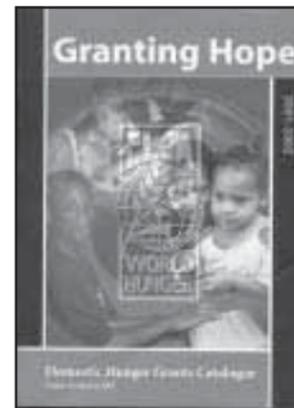
"Set Your Table: that the hungry might

eat" is a brochure highlighting three model partnerships that seek to meet the needs of hungry people. Included are projects where congregations and social ministry organizations cooperated to start an urban garden in Washington, D.C., extend a hot meal program for families in Saginaw, Mich., and offer a mobile food pantry in Wilmington, Del.

The goal of the brochure, published jointly by the ELCA Division for Church in Society and Lutheran Services in America, is to encourage you to launch a similar project in your community. To get a copy, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2996, or call Lutheran Services in America at 410/230-2703.

ELCA grants can help

Have you wondered what is being done to help poor and hungry people in the United States? Every year, the ELCA gives Domestic Hunger Grants to help hundreds of congregations and community groups that provide food, clothing, shelter and community organizing in low-income communities. Learn what is being done by reading the Domestic Hunger Grants catalog *Granting Hope 2001-2002*. See the catalog online at www.elca.org/dcs/GH2002/index.html, or call the ELCA Division for Church in Society to order one free copy at 800/638-3522, ext. 2996.



Why Lutheran colleges? Preparation!

Do you know what employers are looking for in college graduates? Today, the skills and traits companies value most include communication skills, motivation and initiative, teamwork and leadership skills, and academic achievement (according to the National Association of Colleges and Employers). And when the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America's research firm asked college graduates about their educational and life experiences, the graduates of Lutheran colleges were more likely than public university alumni to say they were well prepared for their careers, with better training in writing, speaking, teamwork and leadership.

Surprising? Not when you stop to consider important distinctions in what goes on in the classrooms of different kinds of colleges. Compared with their state school peers, Lutheran college alumni benefited more often from many classes with less than 20 students, exten-

sive classroom discussions, and professors who challenged them academically, but helped them meet those challenges.

In these small discussion-oriented classes, students learn to form arguments and articulate ideas, work together in groups to solve problems, integrate morals and ethics into decision making, and meet high standards like the ones they'll encounter every day in the workplace.

According to what they told researchers, Lutheran college graduates are better prepared for life in all kinds of ways. To learn how and why, request your free copy of "The Lutheran College Advantage," by logging on to www.elcacolleges.org and clicking on FREE STUFF. To order multiple copies, contact Suzanne Veenis at 605/782-4003. The Fall Lutheran College Fair Schedule will be online at www.lutherancolleges.org along with a host of college planning tools to assist your congregation's young people with their college search.



Church Building Consultants provide valuable help

The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) does more than provide loans to ELCA congregations. The MIF's church building consultants are available to work with ELCA congregations that are considering a building program or want to determine how an existing facility can be used more effectively.

Each synod is served by an MIF Church Building Consultant who can advise congregational leaders on how they can plan a building or renovation project from inception to completion. The consultants are also the primary contacts for loans from the Mission Investment Fund.

Want to get connected with the church building consultant who serves your synod? Call the Mission Investment Fund at 800/638-3522, ext. 2943, or go to www.elca.org/lot/mif

Learn about books that encourage in 'difficult times'

Augsburg Books is offering new titles in their series of helpful books for adults facing difficult times.

When a parishioner is going through a tough time, daily issues can become overwhelming and the future can feel uncertain. Each book in the new Difficult Times series addresses a specific life situation, and offers encouragement and advice for coping, in a concise and easy-to-read format.

These are great resources that pastors, Stephen Ministers and other lay leaders can share with people in these situations.

- **When You Are Diagnosed with a Life-Threatening Illness** addresses issues faced by everyone in such a situation. Author



Jan Jovaag Ansonge speaks from her own experience, and suggests ways to cope with the emotions, spiritual questions, and practical matters that come with such a diagnosis—throughout all phases of illness treatment and life beyond treatment. Ansonge has taught journaling classes to support groups for women with cancer. She lives in St. Paul, Minn. (ISBN 0-8066-4359-5)

- **When You Are Coping with Infertility** guides readers through the rocky terrain of infertility.

Author Vera Snow encourages readers to recognize what they can and cannot control in their situations, and suggests ways to find balance and live with these challenges. Snow is a speaker and author of *Seeking God in Infertility*. She lives in Golden Valley, Minn. (ISBN 0-8066-4360-9)

- **When You Are Facing a Divorce**, also by Jan Jovaag Ansonge, offers encouragement to work through the emotional, spiritual and financial struggles that accompany divorce, and to find a way to make it through another day. Drawing from her own experience, Ansonge relates what may be most helpful to those in this situation. (ISBN 0-8066-4361-7)

- **When You Lose Your Job** provides a brief guide to getting through the first days and weeks of a job loss, as well as suggestions for starting off well in the next position. Author Donna Bennett focuses on the practical aspects of job search and deeper emotional and spiritual factors involved. She is a licensed psychologist specializing in work and family life issues. Bennett lives in Plymouth, Minn. (ISBN 0-8066-4362-5) Each book is \$4.99, plus shipping and handling. You can order by calling Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

Help children deal with fear

"I am with you always" is a 30-minute program hosted by the Rev. Dr. Martin E. Marty. Marty talks with children about how they can use their faith in times of fear and uncertainty, from acts of terrorism in the world to dealing with the bully down the street. The children also discuss ways to pursue God's peace and understanding of others. The candid responses from children as they express their fears will be very affirming for young viewers. The children will learn to use prayer, song, Bible verses and stories to face everyday life events.

The program is in four segments that can be used to promote dialogue in Sunday School or children's ministry: What frightens you? Who helps you in times of fear? We are God's Peacemakers. God is with you.

If you're using the video in a class setting, you might

- ask the children to answer the same questions
- make big posters, highlighting the four segments and invite kids to turn their verbal responses into graffiti

You could also use it at a teacher training event to help teachers relate to children around the topic of fear. The video sells for \$19.95 plus \$5 shipping and handling, and is available by calling Production Craft, Inc. at 312/829-0272 or e-mail dawn@productioncraft.com.

Get estate planning video

Global Health Ministries has prepared a video called "Creating a Legacy," in which several people tell in their own words why and how they have arranged to support charitable work after their deaths. The video refers specifically to Global Health Ministries, but can be used to promote estate planning for any congregation or charity. It is available on request from Global Health Ministries, phone 763/586-9590; e-mail ghm@compuserve.com. Or go to www.ghm.org Global Health Ministries is a grass-roots volunteer organization that supports Lutheran health-care work overseas by funding specific projects, collecting and shipping requested medical supplies and equipment, and helping to recruit health-care providers to serve overseas on behalf of the ELCA and World Mission Prayer League.



Study about economic life

Study the ELCA statement on economic life, "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" using a newly developed resource from the Division for Church in Society and Division for Congregational Ministries. Study leaders can download the introduction and eight accompanying sessions from the Division for Church in Society Web site at www.elca.org/dcs/

[receivewiththanksgiving.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs/receivewiththanksgiving.html).

Readers can work their way through the whole statement using "Receive with Thanksgiving!" or choose subjects from the table of contents: Poverty, Profession and Vocation, The Fruits of



Our Labors, Dignity in the Workplace, Sufficiency, and Sustainability. Each session includes an opportunity to focus on the text of the statement and exercises to study some of its scriptural and confessional sources. Stories from the life of the church and a section titled "Taking It Home" will give participants ample opportunity for discussion and inspiration. For more information, and to download the study, visit the "Receive with Thanksgiving!" Web site at www.elca.org/dcs/receivewiththanksgiving.html

Students learn about China

Junior and senior high school students can experience Christian mission in China through the 2002-03 Global Mission Village sessions. Held in Bemidji, Minn., the Global Mission Village introduces China through a unique blend of food, language, culture, and contact with mission personnel who have lived and worked in China.

The three-day immersion experience is a collaboration between Concordia College (Moorhead, Minn.), Concordia Language Villages, the ELCA Division for Global Mission, Division for Higher Education and Schools, and Division for Congregational Ministries with a grant from AAL/LB. The 2002-2003 sessions are scheduled for Oct. 25-27 and Nov. 15-17, 2002, and Jan. 24-26, Feb. 21-23, March 7-9 and March 28-30, 2003. For more information, contact the Rev. David P. Lerseth, Division for Global Mission, at 800/638-3522, ext. 2641, or see the Web site at www.cord.edu/dept/clv

Protestant Hour goes on TV

Just as it celebrates its 57th anniversary of weekly radio broadcasts, the ecumenical program, "The Protestant Hour," is changing in order to reach a wider audience and build a stronger multi-media presence. Beginning July 7, the radio ministry launches a television version, adopts a new program name, and welcomes a fifth denomination—the United Church of Christ—to a production partnership that includes the ELCA, Episcopal Media Center, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and the United Methodist Church.

The new "Day 1" television program will air at 10 a.m. as a



segment of "America at Worship," a morning of preaching, music and worship from great congregations across the nation. "America at Worship" airs on the Hallmark Channel on Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon, Eastern Time.

Produced in association with Faith & Values Media, "Day 1" will feature highlights from the sermon presented on the radio program and Web site each week, as well as a panel discussion by representatives from the five participating denominations examining the sermon's Scripture passages. The half-hour Protestant Hour radio program is heard weekly across North America on more than 150 radio stations, on the American Forces Radio Network broadcast to service men and women in 175 countries around the world, and via streaming audio at www.protestanthour.com and www.day1.net. To learn more, go to www.protestanthour.com

Seeking stories about crafts

Luther College (Decorah, Iowa) faculty members Harley Refsal and Rachel Faldet are seeking true, firsthand accounts of how involvement in handcraft—woodworking, quilting, basketry, jewelry making, painting—provides a vital ingredient in your life or has served to sustain you through a difficult period or circumstance. The personal accounts will be the basis for "The Healing Art of Craft," an anthology of essays, poetry and journal entries. The book will be introduced and edited by Refsal and Faldet. "In more than 20 years of teaching carving courses at various art centers," Refsal states, "I have heard countless inspiring stories and testimonials about the importance of crafts in peoples' lives."

Those interested in submitting a piece to be considered for the anthology may send it to Harley Refsal, Luther College, 700 College Drive, Decorah, IA 52101. Submissions are due Sept. 1, and should include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Learn spiritual formation

The second Spiritual Formation Program of Grace Institute for Spiritual Formation will begin Aug. 17-19, 2003, at Sinsinawa Mound Center near Dubuque, Iowa. This in-depth spiritual formation program has a Lutheran center and ecumenical breadth. Participants come together four times a year for two years.

Each session includes presentations, silent reflection and discussion, worship, and small groups that stay together for the duration. The eight-session themes are grace-centered spirituality, attending to the Word, sacraments and symbols, worship, prayer, discernment, daily life as prayer, and evangelism and prayer.

Enrollment is limited to 54. For information contact Bradley Hanson at Luther College, 563/387-1184 or e-mail hansonbr@luther.edu.

Open a World looks at Africa

Take your Sunday school class on a journey to Africa! *Open a World of Possibility: "Stand With Africa"* pairs this annual hunger project for children the ELCA World Hunger Program with current Stand With Africa campaign. This project for 2002-2003 helps kids get involved with God's worldwide family, learn about Africa, and share their abundance with children who have fewer resources.

"Open a World of Possibility" is also ideal for use in Vacation Bible Schools and Lutheran elementary schools. The project centers around a packet of print materials that includes information and age-appropriate learning activities, bulletin inserts and offering envelopes. You can enhance your congregation's participation in the project with a children's video of Lutheran-supported development work in Africa and a kid-friendly, interactive Web site. The packet of print materials will be mailed free to all ELCA congregations in July. Order additional copies by calling Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648; ISBN 6-0001-6481-5.

New book on church issues

Why is it so difficult to be church today? Christian community can be marked by ennobling worship, mutual care and joyful celebration. But just as often it can be marred by staid routine, disagreement over leadership, budgets and ethical stances. Alienation, blame and power struggles ensue. Is church worth it? The faculty of Wartburg Theological Seminary



addresses this issue in *The Difficult But Indispensable Church*. In this volume, 21 theologians strongly attest to Christ-centered community, offering new views of the church as the indispensable site of radical Christian commitment and an essential healer to a hurting world. Authors show how the church can model an alternative vision of community and how Christ-inspired openness can reveal new perspectives on tough issues of public policy, race and class, and ordination of gays and lesbians. ISBN 0-8006-3478-0 (\$18 plus shipping and handling) To order *The Difficult But Indispensable Church*, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 or visit their Web site at www.fortresspress.com

Audiotapes on parenthood

"And so it is that we raise our children, not only by training them, not only by offering them morals and understandings and food at the table, we do indeed also raise them to life—to this

deep awareness of who they are within this world: what they must be, what they may be, what joyful actions of their spirit may shed blessings all around them."

These reflections on parenthood were originally aired on Lutheran Vespers in 1995. The six-session resource by Walt Wangerin is especially relevant today. Each tape is 30 minutes and comes with a print transcription – perfect for adult Sunday School or family listening. Suggested donation is \$20. Order audiotapes at www.elca.org/lv or by e-mail at bengelby@elca.org or by calling Lutheran Vespers, 773/380-2967.

Keeping kids safe in church

Church safety begins with the congregation. You can help institute programs and policies that will help keep children and adults safe. Some church insurance agencies even offer reduced rates when you participate in safe practices. Christian communities are based on the Great Commandment to love one another. One characteristic of that love is trust. Our human nature continually challenges that trust. Out of respect for our love for one another and our sinfulness, it makes sense to provide screening and guidelines to assist in keeping our relationships safe. Here are resources on this topic:

- *Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Child Abuse in the Church* by Joy Thornburg Melton, \$15.95, Discipleship Resources, ISBN 0-88177-220-8, Phone 800/685-4370, www.discipleshipresources.org. This resource provides guidance for congregations in developing policies and procedures to reduce the risk of child abuse in the church. It contains suggestions, sample forms, and a training session plan for all church workers dealing with children and youth.
- *Safe Connections: What Parishioners Can Do to Understand and Prevent Clergy Sexual Abuse*, by Jan Erickson-Pearson, \$2 plus shipping and handling. Call Augsburg Fortress to order at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0000-5815-2). An adult educational resource for understanding and maintaining safe boundaries between pastors and parishioners. It can be used as an educational series for prevention or in the context of congregational recovery events.
- The ELCA Division for Ministry has a Program for the Prevention of Clergy Sexual Abuse. To learn more, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2455.

Promote your endowment

The ELCA Foundation can help you with creative ways to promote your congregation's Mission Endowment Fund and to encourage additional gifts. Call the Foundation for these helpful tools and more:

- Ideas for a regular column in your parish newsletter focused on your Mission Endowment Fund.



- An anonymous poll you can use during a temple talk to raise awareness of your Mission Endowment Fund and to learn if members have included the fund in their estate plan.
- Fun ways for members to become involved by contributing ideas about where mission distributions from the endowment fund might be made.
- Events for the whole congregation to celebrate successes of your Mission Endowment Fund, such as reaching a dollar goal, an anniversary of the endowment fund's distributions, or receiving a large bequest.

For more information on these and other ideas, call the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, for the name of your Regional Gift Planner or visit our Web site at www.elca.org/lfo

Multicultural Mission event

Interested in multicultural evangelism? Plan now to come to Atlanta in November!

The ELCA Multicultural Mission Institute will be held Nov. 1-3 at the Westin Peachtree Plaza Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. The theme is "Breaking the Barriers —Evangelism: Building a Beloved Community." For 12 years, the ELCA's Multicultural Mission Institute has been the gateway for congregations seeking to transform their ministry by reaching out to neighbors of a different race, culture, ethnic group, or language other than English. Learn specific ways of inviting and keeping new members from cultures other than yours. Meet people from congregations that have successfully invited and retained new members by transforming their congregation into a multicultural membership. Workshops include outreach in transitional communities, how other church bodies support ethnic-specific ministries, and the challenges facing people of color. The registraton fee before Sept. 15 is \$65; after Sept 15 it will be \$85. To learn more go to www.elca.org/cmml/mml/index.html



Ways to 'Stand With Africa'

Have you asked your congregation's members to Stand With Africa yet? There are many resources available to help you support this "Campaign of Hope": videos, Web pages, and print materials. A resource supporting the Stand With Africa campaign is "Africa Advocacy," a public policy newsletter published by the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (LOGA) and Lutheran World Relief. If you would like to receive this newsletter, contact Mark Brown at LOGA on the Web site at www.loga.org Also find a list of Stand With Africa resources at www.elca.org/hunger/resources/AfricaRES.html or by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2764.

What to check out on the World Wide Web

New Web site survey

Here's your chance to help the ELCA Web site to better serve your ministries. From June 24 - July 22, www.elca.org will be conducting an online user survey.

This survey is similar to the one conducted in 2001. Those results led to a redesign of the site, which was launched at the beginning of this year. All you need to do to participate is point your Web browser to www.elca.org after June 24 and follow the survey link. Thanks for helping us improve this important resource.

Outreach in the US/Caribbean

Are you wondering where the next ELCA congregations will be started? Looking for a way to refocus your congregation toward mission? Need resources for your urban—or rural—congregation? Looking for ways to volunteer?

Go to www.elca.org/do. The redesigned Web site of the ELCA Division for Outreach offers answers to those questions, and provides materials to download such as items for congregational transformation, the "Congregational Hospitality to Gay and Lesbian People" study, "In the City for Good" grant applications and more.

Totally new is a list of congregations seeking Mission Partners, a ListServ to advertise free items available to other churches, and a place to learn about volunteer opportunities in mission congregations.

Resources for Evangelism

The 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly took action to reaffirm our commitment to the centrality of evangelism in the life of this church. The adopted resolution, "Toward a Vision for Evangelism in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America," includes an invitation and encouragement for all parts of the ELCA to commit to working toward a vision for evangelism.

To find resources to help your congregation do this, go to www.elca.org/visionevangelism/index.html. There you'll find an evangelism assessment tool, evangelism tool kit and other resources to help your congregation get started.

Practicingourfaith.org

This Web site is sponsored by the Valparaiso Project on the Education and



Formation of People in Faith, a project whose purpose is to develop resources to help contemporary people live the Christian faith with vitality and integrity in changing times.

The project is ecumenical and sponsors a series of seminars, books, conferences, videos, and this Web site for adults and youth. The Valparaiso Project is funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., a private family foundation in Indianapolis. The project is based at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Ind.

On the site you'll find a list of Christian practices—such as hospitality, discernment, keeping Sabbath, household economics, healing, forgiveness, dying well, and others—and when you click on each, you can read about the practice and then click on links to resources for that practice. You'll find sermons about each practice, worship resources, and suggestions on how to keep each practice. There are also youth connections and a grants program. Go to www.practicingourfaith.org

Resource Centers 'Q&A' looks at teaching peace

This is the second in a series of "Question and Answer" columns put together by the ELCA Resource Centers. Thanks to Catherine Fink, director of the Heilig Resource Center in the North Carolina Synod, for coordinating this ongoing column.

Resource centers link congregational leaders with all types of resources including video, software, curriculum, books, Web sites and more. Resource center staff share their ideas with each other across the miles via LutherLink. Join the ELCA RESOURCE CENTERS open meeting (go to www.ecunet.org) and participate.

To find the ELCA resource center in your area, go to www.elca.org/centers.html. Here is the question for July-August—along with some great answers.

Q What are some good resources for teaching peace to kids?

An excellent resource is *A Guide To Peacemaking* (2nd edition) by Madeleine Glynn Trichel & Jo Dee Davis (Interfaith Center for Peace, 1994). This resource has a Vacation Bible School program, peace school, Advent program and was geared for children. Contact the Interfaith Center for Peace online at www.peace-center.org

—Karen Kaufman, Director, NE Ohio Synod Resource Center, Cuyahoga Falls

We have a lot of good material from many different sources. Check out Lutheran Peace Fellowship (206/720-0313

or www.lutheranpeace.org). *Young Peacemakers Project Book and Peace Works* (Brethren Press, 800/441-3712, www.brethrenpress.com).

About Peace is a little book that is very basic, beginning with peace in personal relationships and in families (Channing Bete, www.channing-bete.com). *The ABCs of Peacemaking* is a collection of resources for parents, teachers and kids, and is available from resource centers.

—Julie Aageson, Director, Eastern North Dakota Resource Center, Fargo

"Rhythms of Peace" video series for ages 8–11 helps children discuss ways to solve conflict peacefully (Mennonite Media, www.thirdway.com/resources). *Peanut Butter and Jelly for Kids: Helping Elementary Children Be Kids for Peace and Justice* by Julie Sevig is a great resource (Youth & Family Institute, Augsburg College, www.youthfamilyinstitute.com).

Peace Education for Young Children is a manual to help educators create an environment where all children feel valued and safe (Evangelical Lutheran Education Association, www.elca.org/dhes/schools/peace). *Peacemaking through the Arts* by Phyllis Vos Wezeman (Educational Ministries, Inc., www.educationalministries.com) *Kids Creating Circles of Peace* and many other resources are available from the Institute for Peace & Justice (www.ipj-ppj.org).

—Judy Evans, Ecumenical Parish Resource Center, Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago

Visit the peaceCENTER in San Antonio, Texas. Their site is www.salsa.net/peace. Several people from the Center were partners in writing *Walking Jesus' Path of Peace* (new from Augsburg Fortress—for adults).

Building on Jesus, Tools for Peacemaking is an old Outdoor Education Curriculum from Augsburg Fortress (www.augsburgfortress.org) that was good. Check your local resource center to preview.

—Sister Noreen Stevens, Eastern Minnesota Resource Center, St Paul

Be sure to look at the ELCA Web site for the Decade for a Culture of Nonviolence resources (www.elca.org/decade.html). Go to www.elca.org/decade.html to find links to organizations that do peace work with children, and don't forget the Fellowship of Reconciliation resources. You can find them at www.forusa.org.

—Catherine Fink, Director, Heilig Resource Center, North Carolina Synod

I was reminded of the video "Starting Out Right: Peace In the Preschools." It's a resource from the ELCA Division for Church in Society, but is no longer available. Call your local resource center to borrow it.

—Fran Dieter, South Conference Resource Center, Viroqua, Wisconsin

How to determine a pastor's Social Security taxes properly

Imagine this...

The pastor walked into the office ready to fill out her tax return. "Here is my W-2 from the church," she said. It had figures in box 1, box 2, box 16, and box 17. "I see you had taxes withheld." "Yes," she said, "including enough to cover my Social Security taxes. I told the treasurer to withhold it all so I would not have to worry about it."

We proceeded to complete her tax return. Unfortunately, she ended up owing quite a bit of money. What went wrong?

This pastor lives in a parsonage. The treasurer of the congregation knew that the parsonage was not included in income for income tax purposes, and therefore assumed that it was completely non-taxable. The treasurer correctly withheld income

tax, but incorrectly determined the Social Security tax. The treasurer withheld only enough tax to cover the Social Security tax on the wages subject to income tax. He did not take the fair rental value of the parsonage into consideration when determining the amount to withhold to cover the Social Security tax. The fair rental value of the parsonage must be included when determining a pastor's Social Security tax obligation. This is a common mistake for congregations whose pastor stays in a parsonage.

To estimate the Social Security obligation properly, one needs to add salary, housing allowance or fair rental value of the parsonage, and any furnishings/utility allowance for those in parsonages, plus any Social Security allowance

included in the pastor's compensation. Since the Social Security allowance is included in the formula, it is obviously a circular formula. Nevertheless, the estimate of the Social Security obligation can be determined by multiplying the total of the above (salary + housing allowance or fair rental value of a church-provided parsonage + Social Security allowance) by 15.3 percent. Most churches with pastors who have a housing allowance remember to include the housing allowance in determining Social Security. However, forgetting to include the fair rental value of the parsonage is a common error for congregations with a parsonage.

—Richard H. Goodlin is pastor at St. Stephen Lutheran Church in Baltimore and a tax preparer for Jackson-Hewitt.

Mission personnel help rebuild the church in Lithuania

As international mission personnel in Lithuania, Janna and Pastor Arden Haug have met many people who suffered greatly for their faith.

As a child, one Lithuanian Lutheran pastor spent six years underground in a bunker because his father was a pastor. Another was arrested, charged and imprisoned in the 1980s for purchasing a tape recorder to copy Christian music.

While Lutheran roots in Lithuania go back to 1550, nearly 50 years of Soviet occupation greatly affected the country and its churches. Many historical churches were seized, including the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Vilnius, which was converted into a carpentry workshop and a basketball hall. During the height of the Soviet era, the Lutheran church was reduced to a single pastor and a handful of congregations.

In November 2001, the reconstituted Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania (ELCL) celebrated its 11th anniversary. Pastor Haug has helped strengthen the ELCL by pursuing a two-fold mission.

"The most visible side of our ministry is to the international community on behalf of the Lithuanian Church," he says. "Our English-speaking congregation serves the

needs of the foreign community and 'models' a typical congregation and its daily life for the Lithuanian church."

The job has not been easy. While most international congregations experience high turnover, the Haugs have seen as many as two-thirds of their members leave each summer. Still, new members arrive to worship faithfully and to carry out social ministry projects.

The second thrust of Pastor Haug's ministry is training young Lithuanian Lutheran pastors who have very little practical experience in congregational life. As soon as they enroll at the theological facility, they are assigned to serve two or three parishes. To support their continuing education, Pastor Haug leads seminars on sermon preparation, pastoral care, evangelization, and other topics. Pastor Haug has also taught homiletics at the seminary in Latvia,



The Haug family

where most theological students are new to the Christian faith and have seen very few pastors in action.

Through their experiences the Haugs have learned that the Western churches don't always have the answers to solve the problems of a church with such a difficult history.

"We can only walk beside them and help them find their own solutions," says Pastor Haug.

On July 29 Prayer Ventures invites you to pray for the Haugs and their children as they complete their mission service in Lithuania and return to the United States. Pray that God continues to strengthen the Companion Synod relationship between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Lithuania and the Grand Canyon Synod.

Your congregation and the Lutheran World Federation

Your congregation and the Lutheran World Federation—together we make a difference!

When your congregation receives the ELCA Division for Global Mission Tool Kit this summer, you'll find a resource packet on the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) inside. The resources in it are ready to use. Here's what to look for:

Map poster

A four-color, glossy 17- x 24-inch map with accompanying study guides for youth and adults. It will look great on your bulletin board and can be taken down for a study session! The map shows the 73 countries that are members of LWF, as well as countries where LWF has projects.

Worship materials

LWF stories for use in sermons, a global hymn, and a worship outline that you can use on LWF Sunday, October 6.

Children's activities

Developed for the elementary-school-age children in your congregation, this

activity sheet is ready to be photocopied and used as a resource to encourage interest in global issues.

Bulletin insert on the Joint Declaration on Justification

The Joint Declaration on Justification between Lutherans and the Roman Catholic Church is explained in readable language and lists resources for understanding the declaration and how it can encourage conversation between your congregation and your local Catholic parish.

Other Bulletin inserts

ELCA World Hunger stories, three of which highlight our work together as the LWF in Cambodia, Mauritania and India.

Mission minute on advocacy

When we participate in advocacy activities with our global Lutheran Communion members, we can make a difference! This brief dialog among four global voices sheds light on the complexities of globalization and its effects on people

across the globe.

Advocacy for women

Produced by Women of the ELCA, this resource is a call to read, reflect, and act with and for women everywhere.

LWF Assembly

The Tenth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation will be held in Winnipeg, Canada, July 21-31, 2003.

As we move toward this international gathering in North America, it is a great time to emphasize our shared mission and ministry, and to keep LWF

in our prayers. Remember that wherever in the world LWF is at work, the ELCA is there as well. For more information about the Lutheran World Federation, visit www.lutheranworld.org. You can contact the LWF Regional Office for North America at 800/638-3522, ext. 2636, or send an e-mail to kmagnus@elca.org.



New global Tool kit

Since 1999 the Global Mission Tool Kit has provided colorful and exciting, easy-to-use resources congregations can use to lift up global mission. The 2002 Tool Kit continues the tradition. Its theme, "Receiving the Gifts," reminds us that we receive as much as we give to our global companions. When it arrives in congregations in late

summer, the Tool Kit will contain, among other things:

- Worship planning outlines and story starters for sermons
- Global mission Sunday bulletin insert of activities for young children and
- Colorful bulletin-board border illustrating the theme
- A Web-based scavenger hunt that introduces youth to global mission

Watch for your Tool Kit before Labor Day! For more information, call the ELCA Division for Global Mission at 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

Get renewed energy for ministry and mission

Want renewed energy for ministry and mission? Consider attending a Vital Congregations Seminar this fall!

Each year vital congregations, known for their effective evangelism and discipleship practices, are selected to equip others with the skills that have helped them proclaim God's love in a world hungry for a "faith that works." For registration information, call Bernice Griffin at 800/638-3522, ext. 2597, or e-mail bgriffin@elca.org.

The cost is \$60 per person. Limited financial assistance to help with travel and event costs is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information go to www.elca.org/leteam or contact Barbara Holzhauser at 800/638-3522 ext. 2582; e-mail Barbara_Holzhauser@elca.org.

Seminars this fall

Come experience a "Grace-Station" that serves people thirsting for God's love at **Christus Evangelical Lutheran Church, Camden, N.J.**

Christus Evangelical Lutheran Church is a dynamic multicultural ministry in the heart of Camden, N.J. The congregation

reflects the rich cultural heritage of the community where "all are welcome, all the time." While serving the nation's second-poorest city, Christus strives to be a "grace-station" for people who hunger and thirst for God's love.

Seminar Dates: **Oct. 10-13**, registration deadline: Sept. 25. For more information on this seminar, call Pastor Lee Miller at 856/966-0153.

"Love Grows Here" is more than a song ... it's a way of life at **Faith Lutheran Church, Flower Mound, Texas.**

From its very beginning, the people of Faith Lutheran Church focused their ministry together on one thing — sharing the love of Jesus with everyone who walked through the door. Twenty years later the congregation has grown from 30 to over 700 in worship. Why? Because of the congregation's commitment to live out Jesus' vision to "love one another as I have loved you."

Seminar dates: **Oct. 17-20**, registration deadline: Oct. 2. For more information on this seminar, call Pastor Phil Geleske at 972/539-1031.

How to mark the anniversary of a disaster with healing

The November 2001 issue of *The Lutheran* magazine had comprehensive coverage of the Sept. 11th tragedy. You can still get copies of this issue by calling 800/426-0115 ext. 639 (\$2 each, no shipping and handling cost) or go to their Web site at www.thelutheran.org/terrorism/index.html. Use it as a resource for an adult forum or special program.

There are many anniversaries in the life of the gathered people of the body of Christ. Some of them are joyous—birthdays, wedding anniversaries, class reunions—and some are anniversaries of loss and grief. Commemorating these events and sharing them is a gift of our life together. Just as we remember the events of a wedding and celebrate the happy memories and the years spent together, anniversaries of loss also replay themselves in our lives. The emotions at the time a loss—fear, sadness, anger, loss of control, and others—normally surface again later around the anniversary. Bringing these unconscious reactions into our shared consciousness is the beginning of healing ministry.

This year Sept. 11 will be an anniversary not just for the survivors, families and communities hit by last year's terrorist attacks, but for the nation as a whole. Whether or not we choose to commemorate this event, most of us will be affected by it, so the question is, "How can we respond as a community of faith?" What can your congregation do on this anniversary or other anniversaries of painful disasters, or during a disaster itself?

The first thing to recognize is that these reactions are normal. We should plan our responses to include grief and thanksgiving, recognizing that we will each respond differently.

- In newsletters/bulletins put articles that talk about reactions: fear, sadness, sense of powerlessness, hopelessness, anger, restlessness, tenseness, body aches, susceptibility to illness, nightmares, need for comfort (food or alcohol for adults, blankets or cuddlies for children).
- One of the things we can count on happening is another media blitz. Expect

that replays of the attacks will be shown over and over. Each viewing can trigger more responses. It may be best to take a break from television. Create peaceful environments at home and in church for prayer and play, time together and space to be alone.

- Plan a worship service of prayer and commemoration, of grief and hope, such as a candlelight vigil on Sept. 11. Use the litany written for this occasion; it will be mailed to all ELCA congregations in August.

- Use *Pericope Partners* (sent in the Action Packet) for Sept. 8 (written by the Rev. Gilbert Furst, director for Lutheran Disaster Response).

- Include prayers for victims and survivors of the disaster, those who responded—EMTs, firefighters, police, harbor patrol, disaster-response volunteers, pastors and caregivers, and armed-services personnel; our elected leaders; and others.
- Hymn suggestions include...

from the *Lutheran Book of Worship*: Built on a Rock (365), The Church's One foundation (369), Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow (355), O God, Our Help in Ages Past (320), When in the Hour of Deepest Needs (303), My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less (293), Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service (423);

from *With One Voice*: Precious Lord, Take My Hand (731), God! When Human Bonds Are Broken (735), Healer of Our Every Ill (738), Thy Holy Wings (741); The Earth May Move, a Lutheran Disaster Response hymn (a single copy that you can reproduce is available by calling the



Remains of the World Trade Centers, Dec. 2001. Photo by Eric C. Shafer, ELCA News and Information

ELCA Resource Information Service at 800/638-3522 or at www.elca.org/dcs/disaster/sept11-worship.html, where you can find other disaster-related worship and prayer resources).

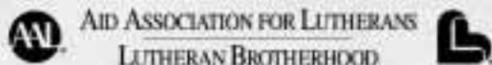
- Have a special offering for ELCA Disaster Response. This church responds immediately and for the long term to both domestic and international disasters. Undesignated funds allow the ELCA to respond when a disaster occurs before a special appeal can be made.
- Give an expression of thanks to local fire, police and emergency personnel (who have all been on alert this year). Suggestions: Deliver homemade cookies, have a thank-you dinner that is also a fundraiser for needed equipment, invite them to come in uniform and recognize them, and pray for their work during worship.
- Learn about disasters as a congregation and work on individual and congregational preparedness. (Call ELCA Domestic Disaster Response at 800/638-3522, ext. 2822, or your local Lutheran social service agency, or click on "Being Prepared" on the ELCA Domestic Disaster Response Web site at www.elca.org/dcs/disaster).
- Distribute copies of these books by authors who have worked with Lutheran Disaster Response in providing pastoral care: *Making Sense Out of Sorrow* by Foster McCurley and Alan Weitzman, published by Trinity Press International; *Act of God/Active God: Recovering from Natural Disasters* by Gary Harbaugh, published by Fortress Press. Use the books for study.
- Encourage people to watch their nutrition, sleep, and spiritual needs at this time.
- Remember those with special needs: children, shut-ins (whose only companions may be the TV, which will cause them to relive the event over and over) and armed services personnel.

In times of disaster, the ELCA is there. Visit the Web site of ELCA Disaster Response at www.elca.org/disaster for up-to-the-minute reports of how the ELCA is responding to domestic and international disasters, for updates on long-term responses and for more resources.

—For the past nine years, the Rev. Christine Iverson has served Lutheran Disaster Response through Lutheran Social Services of Kansas-Oklahoma and is the director of disaster response for Kansas, Oklahoma and Arkansas.

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Did you see the Action Packet?

The contents of the July-August Action Packet include:

- *Prayer Ventures*
- Augsburg Fortress annual report
- Fund for Leaders in Mission flyer
- *Journey together* bulletin insert on the ELCA Studies on Sexuality
- *Here I Study* booklet about Lutheran colleges and universities
- *Investing in Value* Lutheran education brochure
- *Great Commission Congregations*