



Putting ministry in the hands of the people

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Lay Disciple training began at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Charlotte, N.C., began, as so many good things start in congregations, because of burn-out and necessity. From its beginning it was the dream of this new congregation to have ministry solidly in the hands of the people, not just the pastor or staff. However, as things seem to go, the pastor assumed most of the care ministries.

Christ the King had attracted a number of people who had not previously connected to a church. This led to an increasing struggle to train, mentor and help these new members into a relationship with Jesus. There were not enough teachers and trainers, and the need for pastoral care among these new believers was huge.

The pastor and congregation council decided to place a primary emphasis on developing leaders. They realized there were key mindsets that had to change over the next two years:

- People would need to see themselves as ministers and welcome ministry from each other as authentic.
- The pastor would need to step up in a role of equipper, trainer and vision leader instead of caretaker.
- All teaching would need to be life-changing, not solely for giving and getting information.
- Prayer needed to be widely taught and raised as a priority.

The first step was to help members learn about spiritual gifts and discernment. The second step was to train lay caregivers. The process for this group was: Train, Equip, Release and Account. The first training began with five people. After a six-session course, these "lay care givers" were commissioned at each service and anointed in the ministry of care giving. Training continues each month with the Lay Care Group, which also provides accountability. Since its start, the team has doubled in numbers each year.

Strategic Planning recommendations

How does God call the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) into God's mission in this time and place? What would God have us be and do? These are questions that call this church to undertake strategic thinking and planning for mission. Conversations about this church's mission and future were held at synod assemblies and in many other groups across the ELCA over the past year.

Information from those conversations has been gathered and analyzed. In April, the recommendations for ELCA Strategic Planning will be presented at the meeting of the ELCA Church Council.

In late February, these recommendations will be posted for review and comment on the ELCA planning Web site, www.elca.org/planning. At the site there will be an opportunity to give feedback. Make a note to check out www.elca.org/planning and share your thoughts at this important time in the life of this church.

The third step was to have people teach classes and small groups, share in intercessory prayer and mentor a new believer into a relationship with Jesus. This team is the Lay Disciples. They are trained for six months, meeting once a week for three hours with the pastor.

The focus of the training is to equip lay people in teaching, intercessory prayer and mentoring. Once a Lay Disciple is trained, he or she is commissioned and anointed publicly at each worship service.

How they do it

The Lay Disciple class has several components.

- **Prayer.** The class learns how to pray and how to pray for others.
- **Teaching.** A person's comfort zone increases as he or she has a familiar curriculum to teach. As the class works through the course, time is spent during each session to discuss how the pastor is drawing the group together, balancing teaching, questions, and discussion among the more vocal or quiet members of the group. As they learn, they are being mentored on how to lead a group. There is a "time out" section during which they review the process of learning. The curriculum is secondary to teaching the process for teaching and leading a group.
- **Witness.** Lay Disciples learn how to



Lay Disciple leader Jana Furgeson (second from left) leads group study.

draw others into a relationship with Jesus. • Other components of teaching that are a part of the six-month study are the life of Jesus, faith, Baptism and Holy Communion, "Power Life," Christian leadership, and the Trinity.

Typically, the curriculum study does not begin until about the fifth week. More time is spent in the beginning on building a foundation of commitment, expectations, prayer and group process. The group covenants to be in attendance every session. If they miss, they must call the pastor so a tape of the session can be prepared. Lay Disciples commit to: 1) teaching a class or small group for six months each year; 2) being a prayer partner for the congregation and particularly for individuals during and after worship; 3) mentoring new members into a relationship with Jesus. They continue to gather quarterly for study, growth, assignments and support.

—The Rev. Craig Bollinger is the pastor at Christ the King in Charlotte, N.C.

Help to build effective men's ministries

On a given Sunday, less than 38 percent of adults worshipping in ELCA congregations are men. When men encounter Christ through an effective men's ministry, every area of congregational life benefits.

Lutheran Men in Mission is committed to assisting up to 15 congregations through each synod of the ELCA in starting or re-starting an effective men's ministry by supplying up to six leaders in those congregations with the *Master Builders Bible for Men*.

"We intend to assist in starting or re-starting ministries that will connect men with Christ and reach into every area of the congregation and beyond," said Doug Haugen, LMM director.

Lutheran Men in Mission encourages four to six men to form a men's ministry leadership team in a congregation.

The *Men's Ministry Leadership Supplement* is a 32-page section of the *Master Builders Bible for Men* that walks leaders through each step of building an effective congregational men's ministry.

The *Master Builders Bibles for Men* and the *Men's Ministry Leadership Supplement* are being distributed by synods' Lutheran Men in Mission leaders. It is expected that the synodical and churchwide expressions of Lutheran

Men in Mission will maintain a relationship with those receiving the resource for the purpose of support.

Synods' Lutheran Men in Mission leaders currently are identifying congregations to receive the resource. Interested congregations should contact their synod's Lutheran Men in Mission leader or call 800/638-

3522, ext. 2595, or e-mail Kimberley_Moseley@elca.org to find out who that leader is.

This program is made possible through donations from individual men and congregational and synods' men's ministries. This offer is open to the first 15 congregations identified in each synod and will conclude March 31, 2003.



In this issue ...

- Churchwide Assembly in 2003, p. 3
- Consider This worship column, p. 2
- Korean outreach in Atlanta area, p. 7
- Lenten fast from violence p. 3
- Resource centers 'Q&A' on hunger, p. 6
- Reach out to inactive members, p. 8
- Ripe for the Picking, pp. 4-5
- Ubuntu theme in resources, p. 8
- World Wide Web column, p. 6
- Worship planning resources, p. 2

If you plan or lead worship, things to check out

Check out these new resources and events for worship planners and leaders.

Worship Handbook Series

In recent generations there has been a growing trend toward a greater participation in a variety of leadership ministries in preparation for and within worship. This reinforces the vision that all the baptized have an important part to play in any liturgy. The Worship Handbook Series replaces a number of older Lutheran resources and is intended to prepare worshipers and leaders for participation in the liturgy. Currently available from Augsburg Fortress (800/328-4648):

- *Altar Guild and Sacristy Handbook* by S. Anita Stauffer, ISBN 0-8066-3896-6; \$16.95 plus shipping
- *Marriage: A Worship Handbook* by Karen Bockelman; ISBN 0-8066-4281-5; \$5 plus shipping
- *Ministers of Communion from the Assembly: A Worship Handbook* by Donald Luther; ISBN 0-8066-4280-7; \$5 plus shipping
- *Musicians in the Assembly: A Worship Handbook* by Robert Buckley Farlee; ISBN 0-8066-4279-3; \$7.50 plus shipping
- *Assisting Ministers and Readers: A Worship Handbook* by Gerald Spice; ISBN 0-8066-4290-4; \$5 plus shipping
- *Preparing the Assembly's Worship: A Worship Handbook* by Craig Mueller; ISBN 0-8066-4291-2, \$10 plus shipping
- *Welcome to Worship* by Karen Bockelman (leaflet form for pew or tract rack); ISBN 0-8066-4292-0, \$3.50 pkg/12, plus shipping
- *Acolytes and Servers: A Worship Handbook* by Gerald Spice; ISBN 0-8066-4293-9; \$7.50 plus shipping
- *Christian Burial: A Worship Handbook* by Karen Bockelman; 0-8066-4294-7; \$5 plus shipping
- *Sponsors and Baptism: A Worship Handbook*

by Elaine Ramshaw; ISBN 0-8066-4295-5 \$5 plus shipping

• *Ushers and Greeters: A Worship Handbook* by Gerald Spice; 0-8066-4297-1; \$5 plus shipping

Renewing Worship Liturgical Music Competition

As part of the *Renewing Worship* project leading to new primary worship resources, there is a call for composition of new musical settings of the Communion liturgy. Melodies should be flexible and durable enough to cross a variety of cultural traditions and musical styles, and must be able to be accompanied by keyboard or instrumental group or be sung unaccompanied. Composers must be able to demonstrate how the melodies might be adapted to a variety of musical styles. Previously received unsolicited manuscripts must be re-submitted in accord with the posted guidelines to be considered.

Initial submissions are due no later than May 1. Composers whose compositions are selected will be expected to complete additional parts of the communion liturgy by August 31, 2003. Up to two prizes of \$5,000 may be offered for each selected complete composition. For guidelines, texts and submission form, go to www.renewingworship.org or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2798.

Association of Lutheran Church Musician conference

The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians is hosting its biennial conference "Living Stones 2003: Icons in Sight and Sound" in San Diego, June 28-July 3. If you lead worship, mark your calendar. The conference will be highlighted by worship opportunities in Southern California's most stunning churches and cathedrals, 40 practical workshops for pastors and

musicians, keynotes by Bishop Stephen Bouman, and former Iranian hostage Kathryn Koob, as well as music

by the National Lutheran Choir, the Holy Trinity Bach Choir and on San Diego's world famous outdoor Spreckels Pipe Organ. Day events include musicians' workshops for all levels of experience in choral, organ, contemporary, piano, children/youth and handbells. Bach expert Karl Hochreither will lead a track of Bach performance practice workshops. Registrants will experience the mighty organ at the Crystal Cathedral. Vacation opportunities abound in Southern California and the conference resort is tailored for families tagging along to relax and have fun during conference activities.

Visit www.alcm.org and click on the "Living Stones 2003" icon to learn more and get registration material, or call ALCM at 800/624-2526.

Explore Images in the Lectionary

In *Treasures Old and New*, Gail Ramshaw brings new life to 40 primary images from the readings of the three-year lectionary. Ramshaw explores each image in light of its biblical context, extra biblical connections, place in the church's tradition, relationships to the liturgical year, related images, poetic nuances, and contemporary usefulness. This is an excellent resource for preaching. Ramshaw is professor of religion at LaSalle University in Philadelphia and currently serves as an editorial consultant to *Worship* magazine. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8006-3189-7; \$35 plus shipping).



Consider This looks at new beginnings

Consider This is a regular column in *Seeds* that lifts up ideas and suggestions for worship planners. The column looks at practices for various days in the church year.

The Transfiguration of Our Lord, this year on March 2, stands as a bridge between the Christmas and Easter cycles of the church year. On this day we encounter the paradox of the divinity of the human Christ. It is a festival of light recalling the lights often associated with Christ's nativity and giving a foretaste of the great light to be experienced at the Vigil of Easter.

Ash Wednesday and Lent. Many congregations follow the ancient practice of not speaking or singing "Alleluia" during the days of Lent. At the last liturgy before Ash Wednesday (usually Transfiguration), consider "burying the Alleluia" in a visible way. One idea is for a banner bearing the word "Alleluia" to be lowered from its place and hidden away during Lent and reappearing at Easter. Sometimes, a simple "coffin" is prepared and the Alleluia is actually buried. This physical activity provides an excellent opportunity to talk about Lent with children. An appropriate text to accompany this action comes from the ancient church, "Alleluia, Song of Gladness" and appears in *With One Voice* (#654) to a familiar hymn tune.

If your congregation does not use real ashes on Ash Wednesday, consider introducing this powerful symbol. Some congregations burn their palm branches from the year before, carefully mix in olive oil, and create their own ash mixture. This can be a complicated procedure. Do not wait until the day before Ash Wednesday

to attempt this. You can purchase prepared ashes at many church supply stores. For more information about this practice and how to prepare your own ashes, consult

online at www.elca.org/dcm/worship/faq/display.asp?article=church_year/ashes.html



The season of Lent originated as a period of preparation for those being baptized at Easter and renewal for the entire community. Over the centuries, the emphasis shifted in many places to anticipating Good Friday and the death of Jesus.

Although Lent often carries with it these themes of penitence and confession, the baptismal emphasis is being rediscovered. Consider using texts for Confession and Forgiveness and Remembrance of Baptism from Holy Baptism and Related Rites (provisional rites from the *Renewing Worship* series; ISBN 0-8066-7002-9) to help your congregation connect these themes of Lent. They are also available online at www.renewingworship.org/publications/holy_baptism/

Lent is a simpler time in the church year. Consider simplifying music and ceremony during these weeks, such as omitting postludes, silencing bells, making entrance processions shorter, perhaps from a side entrance, or removing or veiling festive artwork. The goal is simplicity. Consider what may work in your worship space. Visit the Worship Web site for a listing of worship space resources:

www.elca.org/dcm/worship/worship/worship_space.html

For more ideas about Lent and Holy Week, check out the Web site at www.elca.org/dcm/worship/church_year/articles.html

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/co/seeds

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What you should know about the Churchwide Assembly

More than 1,000 people will gather in Milwaukee, Wis., this summer for the Eighth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The assembly will be held August 11 - 17, 2003, under the theme "Making Christ Known: For the Healing of the World." Because the assembly falls soon after the Lutheran World Federation Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada, in July, and shares the "For the Healing of the World" theme, a global mission celebration is planned as part of the event.



What's on the agenda?

The agenda includes several significant items:

- Election of a vice president. The assembly will elect the successor to Dr. Addie Butler, the ELCA's current vice president, who has indicated she will not stand for re-election to this important volunteer position.
- Election of the editor of *The Lutheran* magazine. The Rev. David Miller has been nominated for a second four-year term in this position.
- Action on an evangelism vision for the ELCA. This work was set in motion by the 2001 Churchwide Assembly. The most current draft can be found at www.elca.org/visionevangelism.
- Action on an ELCA social statement on

Health and Health care. More information can be found at www.elca.org/dcs/healthcare.html.

- A progress report on ELCA Sexuality Studies. The 2001 Churchwide Assembly mandated these studies and a full report to the 2005 assembly. Read more about the studies at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney.
- Reports from the officers of the ELCA: Presiding Bishop Mark

Hanson, Vice President Addie Butler, Secretary Lowell Almen, and Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton.

- Consideration of constitutional amendments.
- Approval of the biennial ELCA churchwide budget.
- Memorials (resolutions) forwarded to the churchwide assembly from 2002 and 2003 synod assemblies.
- Resolutions from voting members.
- The results of the strategic planning process currently underway will provide a framework for the actions of the churchwide assembly. Consult the ELCA's planning Web site for updates on the process at www.elca.org/planning

The work of the assembly flows from and is inspired by daily worship. Bible studies will be presented by leaders from around the world. The assembly will receive greetings from many partners, including the host Greater Milwaukee Synod, full communion partner churches

and other partner churches the Lutheran World Federation and the National and World Councils of Churches.

For the first time, congregations are invited to register a Congregation Observer for the assembly. Visitors are also welcome for the full assembly or for individual days. For more information about the assembly, go to www.elca.org/assembly03

Congregation observers at the 2003 Churchwide Assembly

Each ELCA congregation may register with the secretary of the ELCA one congregation observer for the churchwide assembly. These observers will have reserved seating in the plenary hall and will receive a copy of the report of recommendations for assembly action and materials distributed on the plenary floor. The observers will have neither voice nor vote in assembly plenary sessions.

There is a registration fee (to cover meals and materials) and transportation and housing costs are the responsibility of the observer or the sending congregation. Registrations must be made before May 31. To learn more, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2807, go to the Web site at www.elca.org/assembly03 or e-mail escott@elca.org

Hold a Lenten fast from violence—and focus on peace

For Lent this year, consider having your congregation focus on peace in our world. As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the ELCA Peace Statement, revisiting God's peace is especially relevant in these times. In addition to the public debate on Iraq and the aftermath of September 11, many people are turning to faith to evaluate the best response to current events.

The Lenten season provides a perfect opportunity to combine the traditional themes of reflection, prayer and fasting in the church year with current events.

The ELCA Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence is participating in a Lenten Fast From Violence with the World Council of Churches project on the Decade to Overcome Violence (go to www.elca.org/collentfast.html for more).

The focus of the Decade

The Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence has committed the ELCA to focus on:

- the harm and suffering experienced by children through different forms of violence;
- the promotion of respect for life and dignity of every human being
- the critical role of education at every level of society to build a culture of peace and nonviolence;
- the importance of children and youth learning the skills to live together in peace and harmony;
- the ways a culture of peace and nonviolence would strengthen international peace and cooperation.

What you can do

Three things you can do right now: pray the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi daily; fast from violence on TV and in movies; give to organizations that fight violence in your community, the nation and the world.

Resources

The ELCA Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence has a brochure and worship guide available online at www.elca.org/dcs/worship3.html

The Lutheran Peace Fellowship (www.Lutheranpeace.org) has a worship

litany on peace and other resources.

The ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries has a resource called "Living Faithfully in a Violent World," available from Augsburg Fortress (800/328-4648). The Division for Higher Education and Schools has resources for dealing with violence in schools at www.elca.org/dhes/

schools/violenceres.html

The World Council of Churches has peace resources at www.wcc-coe.org/wccldovl/documents.html

For more information about participating in the Decade for Nonviolence, call the ELCA churchwide offices at 800/638-3522, ext. 6477.

INVEST AN EGG OR TWO IN THE MISSION INVESTMENT FUND



Are your financial "eggs" in one basket? As you consider a contribution to an **Individual Retirement Account (IRA)** this year, think of the Mission Investment Fund. The Fund offers adjustable- and fixed-rate MissionTerm investments that can be held as **Traditional** or **Roth IRAs** or as **Coverdell Education Savings Accounts**.

Your nest egg will earn interest while you help to build the ELCA. Call today for more information!

(800) 638-3522, ext. 2943



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Souper Bowl resources

Mark your calendars for the 14th annual Souper Bowl of Caring on January 26! Help support this youth-led movement in your congregation by raising money to help feed people who are hungry in the United States and around the world. After worship that Sunday, youth will try to collect \$1 or more from each member leaving the service. All money raised by your congregation will go to the hunger organization(s) chosen by the youth. In November, your congregation received a youth packet from the World Hunger Appeal with a Souper Bowl promotional poster and ideas on how to creatively collect and designate recipients of donations. The Souper Bowl movement hopes to raise \$4 million this year, and the national total will be reported online at www.souperbowl.org

For an additional packet or poster, contact Stephen Taylor at 800/638-3522, ext. 2764.

New video on J.S. Bach



Introduce J. S. Bach to a new generation of Lutherans on video or DVD from MOSAIC, the video magazine of the ELCA. *Glory to God Alone: The Life of J.S. Bach* traces Bach's life story and focuses on the relationship between his faith and his work.

Glory to God Alone features scenes from Eisenach,

Ohrdruf, Weimar, Kothen, Muhlhausen and, of course, Leipzig. The video also showcases insights from noted J. S. Bach scholars Christoph Wolff and Robin Leaver, and guitar virtuoso Christopher Parkening.

VHS or DVD copies are available from MOSAIC for \$19.95 each, including shipping and handling. The video comes with a study guide for use in adult forums and small group discussions. Order by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 6009, or go to www.elca.org/mosaic or send an e-mail to mosaic@elca.org

Video-making for youth

This summer youth can be a part of Evergreen Youth TV's Camp VIBE (Video Instruction & Basic Education) that is sweeping the nation and changing lives. Students from across the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico gather together in Seattle to learn how to make videos from conception to completion from a "faith and values perspective." EYTV also runs camps and workshops around the country for churches, ministries, community centers and other non-profit organizations.

Do you know anyone who would want to experience a life-

changing event by attending a 12-day intensive summer video camp? The next camp is July 23 - Aug. 3 on the Trinity Lutheran College campus in Issaquah, Wash. (near Seattle). This camp is open to all youth entering grades 10-12 in the fall of 2003. The cost is \$500, which includes room, board and tuition. Scholarships are available. Travel arrangements are the responsibility of the participant. Applications are due March 31, and notification of acceptance will occur mid-April.

Congregations can get training on professional video production from conception to completion from Evergreen Youth TV or can have a video produced from a faith and values perspective. To learn more, contact EYTV at info@evergreentv.com or go to www.evergreentv.com or call 800/878-7280.

TV series on genetics

"Our Genes, Our Choices," an upcoming PBS Series on genetic issues, will be helpful to people who are looking for more information and insights, living with situations in which they have to make choices, or offering counsel in such cases. The series is scheduled to run in January and February on PBS-TV. Check your local station's schedules for times and dates. Congregations may want to form small groups to watch the series together, or encourage people to watch it in their homes and come together for discussion of the issues from a faith perspective. To assist with such conversations, the ELCA has a resource titled *Genetics! Where Do We Stand as Christians?* It can be downloaded for free at www.elca.org/dcslgenetics.study.html. Print copies may be ordered from 800/638-3522, ext. 2996. Single copies are free. Order multiple copies (\$3 each, plus shipping) from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-3164-X). Another ELCA resource, *Genetic Testing and Screening: Critical Engagement at the Intersection of Faith and Science* is also available from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 1-8865-1311-2; \$10 plus shipping). For other information and activities on science in the ELCA, check www.elca.org/faithandscience.

New Lenten devotions

New from Augsburg Fortress, *Follow Me—Devotions for Lent 2003*. Written by author Gabe Huck, these 64-page devotional books tie together the worship experienced on Sunday with the issues we face during the week. How can we deepen our relationship with God and with each other? How can we be more faithful as we follow Christ?

There are three items in this series: The pocket edition of *Follow Me* includes Bible selections, meditations and prayers (ISBN 0-8066-3408-1; \$1.50 plus shipping). The household edition also includes thought-provoking discussion suggestions for use by families or small groups (ISBN 0-8066-

3407-3; \$2.50 plus shipping).

A matching Lenten Quarter Collector helps encourage daily giving during the season (ISBN 6-0001-6503-X; \$64 for 100 plus shipping). These can be ordered by calling Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

Writing for the church event

An advanced "Writing for the Church" workshop will be held June 14-18 in the Chicago area. The advanced workshop is for those who are working at written communication in the church, those working on a church-related writing project, those who have attended a previous writing workshop, or those who are considering writing as an avocation/vocation. Enrollment is limited. Total cost of the subsidized four-day workshop is \$150, not including travel expenses.

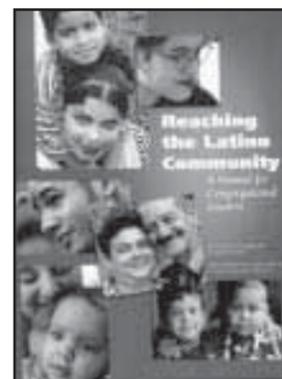
The workshop will offer a variety of presentations and conversations, along with time for writing and time for individual feedback on a writing project. Participants will also connect with the Chicago literary experience.

Congregations, synods and regions are encouraged to nominate or send participants. Questions about the workshop, including a list of the leaders, can be directed to Maria Maldonado (800/638-3522, ext. 2574 or Maria_Maldonado@elca.org).

To enroll, send name, address, phone number, congregation, a sample of something you have written (not necessarily for publication) to Maria Maldonado—DCM, ELCA, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631. Deadline for enrollment is March 14.

Reach out to Latino people

Reaching the Latino Community: A Manual for Congregational Leaders by Dr. Hector Carrasquillo and Dr. Giacomo Cassese, is a new resource from the Division for Congregational Ministries designed to help congregations reach out effectively to the Latinos in their communities. The 80-page



manual offers insights from a large number of the Latino leaders in the ELCA, including pastors, professors and church-wide staff. Congregational leaders considering outreach among Latinos will want to use this resource to

help understand Lutheran theology from a Latino perspective, become familiar with some of the important cultural issues that affect Latino outreach, and learn about various models for ministry that have worked among Latinos. The manual (ISBN 6-0001-6747-4; \$7.99 plus shipping) is available from Augsburg Fortress (800/328-4648) or at www.augsburgfortress.org/store

New catalog on gift-giving

Response: The Gift-Giving Catalog of the ELCA is a 16-page full-color catalog that lists 27 hands-on ministries that meet specific needs of people in specific places. These projects make perfect recipients for Sunday school offerings.



This catalog makes it easy for you to find projects that match the interests of your friends and family, and support your church's outreach ministries at the same time. You may request a gift card to be sent in

the recipient's honor.

You decide where your gift will make the most difference in the lives of: high-schoolers in Namibia, AIDS orphans in Africa, hospital patients in Liberia, landmine survivors from Afghanistan to Angola, U.S. Lutherans building their first church building, Native people in Alaska, congregations reaching out to prisons, or other projects and ministries.

Discover more specific giving opportunities beyond your regular offering. View *Response* as part of the ELCA's "Giving Basket" at www.elca.org/giving. Request one free copy of *Response* from the ELCA Resource Information Service at 800/638-3522. For multiple copies, call ext. 2555.

Brochure on parish nurses

The ELCA Divisions for Ministry, Church in Society and Congregational Ministries have published a brochure that explains the basic concepts of parish nurse ministry. It includes a bit about the history of the movement, the background of and preparation for parish nurses, and the roles that parish nurses currently play in congregations. It is a useful introduction to this important ministry. For information and copies of the brochure, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2886, or send e-mail to dbernier@elca.org

Learn about teaching

The Valparaiso University program designed to put teachers in undersourced Lutheran elementary and high schools is seeking applicants for the class beginning in fall 2003. The Lutheran Educational Alliance with Parochial Schools, (LEAPS), is open to people with bachelor's degrees in areas other than education who want to explore the vocation of teaching. In this two-year program, students gain teaching experience as they work toward a master's degree and teacher certification while providing Lutheran schools with needed teachers.

The focus of the program is on making a difference in the lives of at-risk children and adolescents in urban areas.

LEAPS participants are given full tuition benefits and a stipend while they complete the master's degree course work during two summers and online during the school year. After they finish their two-year teaching responsibility and complete their degree and certification requirements, students are free to pursue whatever employment they choose.

For more information about the program and admission requirements, contact the Office of Graduate Studies at Valparaiso University at 888/GO VALPO (option 4) or visit the Web site at www.valpo.edu/lcelgraduate

Summer class in Germany

This summer there are two learning opportunities in Germany. Dr. Mary Jane Haemig, Reformation scholar and professor, will lead the German travel seminar, "Martin Luther: Reformer in His Own Time and Today," June 1-14 at the Wittenberg continuing education center of the ELCA.

This travel seminar, in addition to offering seven expert lectures by Dr. Haemig and five presentations by German specialists, will include visits to Berlin, Wittenberg, Eisleben, Halle, Torgau, Leipzig, Buchenwald, Erfurt, Weimar, Eisenach, Marburg, Mainz and Worms. This is an excellent opportunity to earn continuing education units (CEUs). The cost is \$1960 per person, plus airfare. For information, contact Marlene DeWulf at 800/638-3522, ext. 6551, or visit www.elca.org/lewb

Participants may wish to arrive a few days earlier to participate in the Ecumenical Kirchentag in Berlin from May 28 to June 1. This event will bring Christians from throughout the world to worship, learn, share and enjoy Christian community with one another. For more information, go to www.oekt.de and click on the "International Versions" link.

Official CCM commentary

This official resource, adopted by the Lutheran-Episcopal Coordinating Committee in February of 2002, will help you understand the implications of *Called to Common Mission*. The *Commentary* includes the full text of *Called to Common Mission*, along with a running explanation and interpretation of the text. The document describes the ELCA's Full Communion relationship with the Episcopal Church, including the actions of the ELCA 1999 Churchwide Assembly and the 2000 General Convention of the Episcopal Church. It also has a brief history of the final document, the full text of the Tucson Resolution adopted by the ELCA's Conference of Bishops.

For single copies of the *Commentary*, contact the Department for Ecumenical Affairs at 800/638-3522, ext. 2610, or eainfo@elca.org, or call Augsburg Fortress for multiple copies at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-6453-X; 35 cents each, plus shipping).

Youth video on being Jewish

How much do your confirmation students know about the religion that gave birth to Christianity? In "What's it like to grow up Jewish?" a 14-minute videotape, they'll meet two Jewish teenagers who explain what they believe and admit that they, like Christian teens, find it's not always easy to follow the teachings of their faith. The video comes with a brochure that offers conversation starters, definitions of Jewish terms, and suggestions for activities to promote a better understanding of Judaism. The cost of the tape is \$19.95 plus \$5 for shipping. Order from Mindful Productions by calling 952/401-0701 or e-mail josatre@aol.com.

Resources from Appalachia

The Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia (ELCMA) has several resources that you can use in your ministry setting:

- *The Handbook for Small Churches* offers ways to strengthen and celebrate small membership churches by offering sections on evangelism, administration, education, worship, and many other areas of parish life. This notebook was developed by practitioners in congregations. Cost is \$9 (plus \$3.50 for postage).
- *2001 Supplement to Handbook for Small Churches* contains more practical and useful ideas plus an annotated bibliography. A copy is \$3.50 (plus \$1.75 postage). Or purchase both the handbook and supplement for \$12.50 plus \$4.50 shipping.
- *Appalachian Heritage Sunday Packets* offer models for an Appalachian Heritage Sunday Celebration. Included are hymn suggestions, litanies, liturgies, facts and advocacy issues, and festival ideas. Connect with brothers and sisters who are sharing the Gospel in the Appalachian Mountains.

To learn more, contact ELCMA at P.O. Box 338, Indiana, PA 15701; or call 724/463-8422; e-mail elcma@twd.net



Program for clergywomen

"Women Touched By Grace," an ecumenical spiritual renewal program for women pastors serving congregations, will be hosted by the Benedict Inn Retreat & Conference Center in Indianapolis. Funded by the Lilly Endowment, 30 women pastors from across the country will be invited to convene for six 10-day sessions focusing on building community, parish leadership, spiritual direction and prayer disciplines. A seventh 10-day session will take place in Italy. Clergywomen may request information and an application by calling 317/788-7581 or logging on to the Benedict Inn Web site at www.benedictinn.org. The application deadline is March 15, 2003.

What to check out today on the World Wide Web

ELCA PDA Channels

Receive daily Bible readings, daily Prayer Ventures prayers, weekly Stewardship Sermon Starters, or current ELCA News headlines and stories on your Palm or PocketPC! Simply point your Web browser to www.elca.org/lpdafeeds and select the Avantgo channel you'd like to set up. After setting up your channel(s) (most Personal Digital Assistants use Avantgo), you'll receive any updated ELCA content each time you synchronize. For more information on this free service, go to www.elca.org/lpdafeeds

Sale at Augsburg Books OnLine store

Augsburg Books will offer a post-Christmas Web sale during the month of January at www.augsburgbooks.com. Many items will be discounted at least 40 percent. Some discounts will be as much as 80 percent. This is a great time to stock up on books for the church library, nursery and adult forums.

Learn about Hein-Fry Lectures

The annual Hein-Fry Lecture Series identifies lively, pressing theological issues

facing the church and offers free and open-to-the-public lectures that stimulate intellectual inquiry and discussion of those issues throughout the church.

This year's series will address the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr. Go to www.elca.org/dml/hfl to find out the date and location of the lectures nearest to you. The lectures are held at ELCA seminaries across the country.

Redesigned Worship Web site

The worship team of the Division for Congregational Ministries has recently completed a redesign of its Web site.

Check out the new site at www.elca.org/dcm/worship/. The site now features a growing collection of frequently asked questions about worship and a page dedicated to Spanish-language resources. Comments, questions, and suggestions are welcomed at worship@elca.org.



Get meeting devotions and Voices on the ELCA Web site

Need a short devotion to start your committee meeting? Go to www.elca.org/co/2003dev/2003DevotionalGuide.pdf to find prayers, Bible verses, and short meditations around the theme of 'Making Christ Known: For the Healing of the World.'

Have you seen the new design for VOICES of Congregational Life? If you missed it, check out the Web site www.elca.org/dcm/VOICES where you will find both the current issue and back issues.

The ELCA art collection online

"The Word Made Visible," the ELCA's permanent art collection, can be viewed at www.elca.org/artwork/. This new Web page represents a wide variety of art processes, with over 650 pieces housed at the Lutheran Center, the churchwide office of the ELCA. The collection consists of artwork from previous Lutheran Church bodies as well as individual gifts to the ELCA. Come and take a look.

Looking for workplace stories

Most people spend over 60 percent of their waking hours in the workplace. ELCA churchwide staff are searching for stories of how people and institutions are receiving or giving spiritual care, case studies of corporate chaplains and consultants working to engage people in reflecting on the faithfulness of the work they are doing, the spirituality of work, and providing spiritual care. These stories will become a resource to suggest possibilities for workplace ministries.

E-mail your stories to Don Stiger at dstiger@elca.org or Sally Simmel at ssimmel@elca.org.

New resource center for women

Women of the ELCA has created a specialized resource center at the Lutheran Center in Chicago in order to help women's groups connect to the resources they need.

Any woman in the ELCA, regardless of whether or not she is involved in a Women of the ELCA group, is invited to use the center—as are male leaders in the ELCA.

The center provides the following services:

- loan of printed resources and videos (by mail or in person)
- on-site usage (for browsing and study)
- consultation about resources by

phone, e-mail, or in person

- presentation of workshops or resource-sharing opportunities

There are no fees to use the center; however, users who return resources by mail or UPS are responsible for the return postage or shipping costs.

Contact Laura Barkenquast, resource specialist, if you have questions, or if you would like to volunteer for the center or donate resources to the collection. (You don't have to live in the Chicago area to be a volunteer.)

Reach Laura by phone at 800/638-3522, ext. 2737, or by e-mail at LBarkenq@elca.org



Resource Centers 'Q&A' looks at world hunger

In every issue of *Seeds*, ELCA Resource Center staff pull together a "Q&A" on topics that they discuss in their meeting on LutherLink. To find the resource center near you, go to www.elca.org/co/centers.html

Q We want to educate our congregation about world hunger—and inspire them to act. Any ideas?

A The ELCA's World Hunger Web site at www.elca.org/hunger is a super resource. You'll find information on what our church is doing, as well as resources, ideas for action and links to other sites. You can distribute bulletin inserts and World Hunger envelopes to provide an immediate way for people to do what Jesus asks. Inserts and envelopes are available free in any quantity by calling Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648. Other Lutheran organizations that fight hunger: Lutheran World Relief (www.lwr.org), Lutheran World Federation (www.lwfanworld.org), and the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs (www.log.org).
—Julie Aageson, Director, Eastern North Dakota Resource Center, Fargo

A Several hunger resources from the ELCA are quite good: "The Real Meal Deal" for youth, "The Giving Market" for young children, and the annual World Hunger children's project packets, *Open A World of Possibility*. Check out the Web site for more. And don't forget the wonderful resources in the Fall 2002 ELCA World Hunger Resources Packet that was mailed to every congregation.
—Ruth Miller, Director of Ministry Resources, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Wescosville

A *The Flame* and *The Promise* are two short videos from Heifer Project International (www.heifer.org) that highlight the importance of livestock

to families in developing countries. The book, *Grace at the Table: Ending Hunger in God's World*, by David Beckmann and Arthur Simon (both Lutheran pastors) offers lots of information in a question-and-answer format, with a few graphs and charts. It could be used for a series of bulletin inserts.

—Sara Johnson, Resource Service Center, Southwestern Minnesota Synod, Redwood Falls, Minn.

A My favorite video on hunger is *Extremes* by Compassion International (www.compassion.com). It tells the story of American teens who go to visit their "adopted" families in Ecuador. While there, they help a boy who is dying of hunger. I would recommend it for youth and adults.

—Irene Flynn, Director, Florida-Bahamas Resource Center, Tampa

A Habitat for Humanity's "Shanty Town" resources (www.shantytown.org) are very good. Although the primary focus is on homelessness, there is good discussion about folks who need to decide between purchasing food or medicine or paying rent or utilities. *The 30 Hour Famine* is another good set of resources (www.30hourfamine.org). Participants in the "famine" live 30 hours on what many people in the world live on—a cup of rice.
—Kay Richter, Pastor, Calvary Lutheran, Two Rivers, Wis.

A I think people do take seriously the "faces of hunger." Getting to know the poor is a big piece of hunger education, whether it's helping

contribute to and stock food pantries, working in a soup kitchen, or serving meals at a homeless shelter. Maybe the best hunger education takes place when we as worshiping communities use our hands to actually provide help.

—Pam Drenner, Director, Lower Susquehanna Synod Resource Network, Harrisburg, Pa.

A I work in a number of countries in Africa and particularly like to link the "Stand With Africa" resources (www.standwithafrica.org) to the concept of world hunger from the point of view of our brothers and sisters in Africa. I use a Web site to find out what Africans themselves are saying about these and other issues: www.allafrica.com. You can choose the country you want to know about—it's a great site.

—Diane Kaufman, Staff, NW Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center, Eau Claire

A Check out the great resources from Bread for the World (www.bread.org). I point people toward their annual hunger statistics from around the globe—it's staggering! Also, children, youth and adults will enjoy "Hungry Decisions" (Discipleship Resources, www.discipleshipresources.org) a book which allows the readers to make decisions based on life circumstances and see the consequences. Simulation games are helpful and there's an interactive Web site at www.churchworldservice.org/decisions/index.html

—Catherine Fink, Director, Heilig Resource Center, North Carolina Synod, Salisbury, N.C.

Growing congregation teaches Korean culture

"As part of my ministry I get to teach Culture 101," says Pastor Min Chan Park. He's speaking of his own culture and a program developed by Messiah Korean Lutheran Church to help reach out to the fast-growing Korean community in the Atlanta area.

Park is a mission developer. He's also a teacher, translator, chauffeur and advisor. He is pastor of Messiah Church and director of the church's ESL (English as a second language) program and Korean Cultural School.

Many of the adults in Atlanta's Korean community (which now numbers over 40,000) are first-generation Koreans attracted to Atlanta's thriving economy and warm climate. Few of them speak English. For these people the ESL program is critical. Each semester 100 people are



Students at the Korean Cultural School

enrolled in the program at Messiah. Many of them take the church's job training and computer classes as well. Unlike their parents, children of these families—Koreans of the last one-and-a-half and two generations—generally don't speak Korean and often lose touch with their cultural heritage as they absorb American culture. The Korean Cultural School offers classes in Korean language and culture, both of which help create a communication bridge between young people and their parents.

Messiah holds its worship services and classes at Christ the King Lutheran Church

in Norcross, a suburb of Atlanta. Each Sunday 30 to 40 people attend Messiah's classes in Lutheran catechism, followed by worship. Then, the people enjoy a festive meal together.

According to Park, the congregation is growing, but it is slow hard work. In addition to his announcements on Korean radio and knocking on doors, Park credits Messiah's educational and cultural programs with helping to acquaint Koreans with the congregation and the Lutheran faith.

Messiah Korean Lutheran Church receives support from the ELCA's Division for Outreach (DO) as a congregation under development. A grant from DO's "In the City for Good" program helps support its job training and ESL work.

Please include Pastor Park and Messiah Korean Lutheran Church in your prayers on Feb. 20 as you continue to use Prayer Ventures in your daily devotions.

Learn about the ELCA in China at Global Mission Villages

What is the ELCA doing in China? Junior- and senior-high youth groups can find out at the Global Mission Village, a weekend immersion program held at Concordia Language Villages in Bemidji, Minn. After a stop at "customs" on Friday evening, youth and leaders experience *taijíquán* (Tai Chi), learn Chinese greetings, play *qíyì huódòng* (a traditional board game), try out Chinese arts and crafts, and celebrate a Chinese *yànhuì* (banquet). The weekend concludes with Sunday worship in English and Chinese.

Throughout the weekend, youth discover the work carried out in education, health care and ministry through the

ELCA's partnership with the China Christian Council, hear stories of people making a difference as they respond to God's call to serve, and ask questions of native Chinese about their experiences as Christians in China and the United States. It's an opportunity for youth to expand cultural awareness and religious sensitivity, and think about where their faith journeys may lead them.

The 2003 Global Mission Villages are scheduled for January 24-26, February 21-23, March 7-9, and March 28-30. The



2002 China Global Mission Village

program is a partnership between Concordia Language Villages, Concordia College, and the ELCA Division for Global Mission. Full and partial scholarships, provided by Thrivent Financial for

Lutherans, are available to Lutheran church youth groups. For more information or to make reservations, contact Concordia Language Villages at 800/222-4750, e-mail at gmv@cord.edu, or go to www.ConcordiaLanguageVillages.org

You will discover 'ministry in action' at these 2003 events

"Come, See, Discover Ministry in Action" weekend experiences, designed for young adults interested in sampling ELCA mission-development ministry waters, will be introduced across the ELCA in 2003. Co-sponsored by the Divisions for Outreach and Ministry, and hosted by several ELCA regions, these weekends will offer first- and second-career people a look at exciting ministry opportunities.

At the weekends, participants will get an in-depth look at mission and ministry directed to unchurched and marginalized communities. These events will include time for corporate prayer, sharing faith and ministry stories, and engaging aspects of ministry development with successful ELCA mission developers.

"Come, See, Discover Ministry in

Action" hopes to provide participants with an experience that can clarify connections between their vocational choices and opportunities in mission development ministry. Another aim of the program is to further address the ELCA's need to increase its number of leaders among people of color.

Information regarding these regional weekend events will be posted on the Web at www.elca.org/dolleadership.html as it becomes available.

Weekend housing and meals will be provided. Some travel scholarships will be available for participants who demonstrate financial need.

To learn more

To learn more about these events, contact the person in your region:

Region 2 Ms. Maria Paiva
818/507-9591 mpaiva@socialsynod.org

Region 3 Pr. Richard Mork
651/649-0454 morkrm@aol.com

Region 4 Pr. Len Dale
816/861-4755 len_dale@ecunet.org

Region 5 Pr. Jose Diaz-Rodriguez
773/248-0021 jrodriguez@mscalca.org

Region 6 Pr. Dennis Mims
216/541-1376

Region 7 Pr. Claire Burkat
267/468-0352 clairebur@aol.com

Region 8 Ms. Helen Harms
304/243-1114 domdharms@aol.com

Region 9 Pr. Gary Christensen
404/589-1977 gchristensen@elca-ses.org

For more information, contact the Division for Outreach at 800/638-3522, ext. 2669, or e-mail do_leader_ship@elca.org

Prayers requested

The Young Adults in Global Mission program, offered by the ELCA Division for Global Mission, provides opportunities for young men and women to engage in service ministries in several countries around the globe. The Feb. 27 Prayer Ventures petition invites you pray for four who are among those serving in the United Kingdom. At other times of the year, you will note other young adults serving in various countries: Argentina, Germany and Thailand.

Please lift up in prayer these young adults who volunteer one year of their lives in service to others through teaching, social service, youth and elderly care and other church-based ministries. Also pray for all young people who are considering the call to serve God through global mission.

'Faith and Praise' Lutheran Vespers rally in March

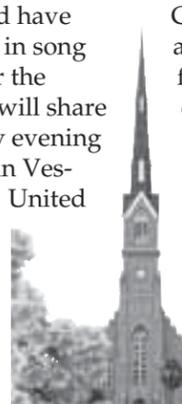
Lutheran Vespers invites readers to join Walt Wangerin Jr. March 28-30 at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina, for Faith and Praise: A Lutheran Vespers Rally. This rally will draw listeners from all over the country for a weekend of celebrating the ministry of Lutheran Vespers. Wangerin has three themes for the weekend: 1) to meet listeners and supporters of LV and have good conversation; 2) to worship in song and praise, and to give thanks for the ministry (musician Ken Medema will share his musical talents at the Saturday evening banquet); 3) to organize. Lutheran Vespers is heard in many areas of the United States and in several other countries, and needs to organize a cadre of local volunteers in every area to undergird this radio ministry.

Lutheran Vespers is a positive and proven (LV has aired

continuously since 1947) resource for outreach and evangelism ministries, as well as a help to those who are ill or who are no longer able to attend church. Listeners say that they use the program as a preparation for worship in their own church or find it a peaceful and fitting way to end their Sunday, depending on the hour of the broadcast in their area.

Charleston in March is a treat—azaleas at their peak, warm weather, the fellowship of Lutheran Vespers listeners, the inspirational stories of Walt Wangerin, Jr., and the music of Ken Medema. History buffs can visit Fort Sumter, where the Civil War began. The many plantations and gardens, shops and excellent restaurants will make the trip memorable.

Registration information is available at www.elca.org/lv or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2967, for more information. Registration is limited.



Find ways to build bridges to your inactive members

Some 35 percent of ELCA confirmed members are "seriously" inactive. —ELCA Research and Evaluation Dept.

"Maria used to belong to our church. For many years she would attend worship fairly regularly and be involved in things off and on. Then something happened a couple years ago, and she just stopped coming. Now, I just heard the other day from a friend of hers that she missed being a part of a community of faith, but was feeling a little leery about 'knocking at our door' again."

There are probably similar stories to tell all over the ELCA. The question is: How do you provide invitations and occasions for those who might be considering re-entry into the life of your congregation? What entry-points do you provide to help them ease their resolve that they have "been there and done that" and encourage a sense of confidence that our congregations will welcome people of all ages and stages, just as they are?

Outreach and *Inreach* are evangelism words used to describe our responsibility to care for both members and non-members. *Inreach* evangelism is focused on caring for one another within the Body of Christ. Jesus spent time with people, listening to them, trying to understand their concerns. Jesus helped people listen

to their hearts as they struggled for answers and responded to his love. We, too, as Martin Luther pointed out, can be "Little Christs" to those around us. As congregation members-disciples, our responsibility is to make Christ-like connections with people at every stage of their lives.

Only a little over 30 percent of our ELCA members attend worship on any given Sunday, which broadens the task of maintaining members' involvement as they continue their quest for meaning in life. Ministries can reach out and spark a relationship with someone who continues the journey. The following suggestions may be helpful as you ponder the reality of the Marias in your congregation.

Ways for congregations to help

- Identify factors that combat inactivity in your congregation. For example, leaders can provide opportunities for everyone to take part in ministry as members express their spiritual gifts, talents or abilities.
- Train visitors as a care team to reach out specifically to inactive members, or develop a network of concerned members who ask, "Where is Bob Smith?" and "What is going on in his life?" Consider ways to nurture realistic relationships

among individuals in your faith community. Initiate caring conversations, emails or brief notes encouraging them in their daily journeys.

- Nurture skills for affirming friends and encouraging them in loving, caring and faithful ways. This is often more effective than more direct statements of witness and invitations to participate in worship or other programs.
- Use pew notepads during worship to follow the attendance patterns of members. Weekly the evangelism team can develop a list of those who need to be contacted.
- Pray for members on a regular basis and send a card with a handwritten note of caring to members from time to time.
- Learn active listening skills. Be accepting and non-judgmental when seeking to reach out to inactive members, so that their issues are a higher priority than where we think they ought to be.
- Establish small groups focused on practical needs for nurture and support, such as dealing with job loss or divorce. These create an atmosphere of warmth and openness to honest discussion about real life issues.
- Offer an *Alpha* course or other adult study opportunity for members, inactive members, or nonmembers to discover new depths in their faith. For more information contact Alpha North America, FDR Station, P.O. Box 5209, New York, NY 10150-5209 or call 888/949-2574 or go to their Web site at www.alphaana.org

—Carl L. Johnson, is a retired pastor working part-time as interim associate director for evangelism in the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries



Youth Gathering theme weaves through resources

The year 2003 looks to be a busy year for youth, but in fact it is a year filled with opportunities for congregations and people of all ages. It is a time to explore the idea of *Ubuntu* in everyday life as we strive to live as followers of Christ in a very large and diverse world... and the tools and resources to do so are all around you.

Do Life! Ubuntu

This is more than just the theme for the 2003 ELCA Youth Gathering in Atlanta—it's a concept of faith and life that is being woven into congregational resources for children and youth. This makes it a great year to create programs for children and youth that center around a common concept—*Ubuntu*.

Ubuntu is an African term and concept relatively new to Western cultures. It offers a hope-filled perspective of faith and community in a time of fear, hunger for security and individualism. *Ubuntu* presumes that all people are created by God and, therefore, are called into mutual relationships.

The 2003 ELCA Youth Gathering, ELCA Outdoor Ministries and Augsburg Fortress Publishers have been working together to offer congregations and camps a variety of educational resources that teach the importance of mutual respect, service, community, reconciliation and witness as gifted children of God.

Resources

- **Spiritlife: Outdoor Ministries Curriculum** offers a week's worth of Bible studies, day camp resources and program activities for many age groups from young children to young adults. This year's theme, *Spiritlife*, explores how the Holy Spirit calls, gathers and enables us for a life of service and ministry in the world. Through an understanding of *Ubuntu*, all of this happens in community with others.
- **Zoom Zone**, the new Vacation Bible School program from Augsburg Fortress, also weaves the idea of *Ubuntu* throughout its curriculum. Five biblical stories parallel the daily themes of the ELCA Youth Gathering, and ultimately look at who we are as children of God and how we can "do life" with others.

In *Zoom Zone* youth are encouraged to serve as volunteers, mentors and leaders in

the VBS experience through a "Youth Learning and Leading Guide." Every adult and parent can also be engaged in reflection through a photocopiable take-home study guide. Throw in the Gathering theme song on the music CD and songbook and you've got an exciting summer ministry experience for everyone!

- In the area of stewardship,

there are education and giving resources dealing with world hunger available through the **Stand With Africa Campaign**. The ELCA Youth Gathering and ELCA World Hunger Appeal have joined forces with the Stand With Africa Campaign to fight against hunger, AIDS, conflict and poverty in Africa.

As part of the Gathering preparation and program, youth are working to raise over a million dollars for this effort in addition to other offerings being collected.

To learn more

Spiritlife: Outdoor Ministries Curriculum, (ISBN 6-0001-6428-9; \$275 plus shipping) Available from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/348-4648; www.augsburgfortress.org

Zoom Zone: Discover Jesus is Forever Vacation Bible School Curriculum, ("Starter Kit" ISBN 0-8066-4959-3; \$49.99 plus shipping) To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/348-4648.

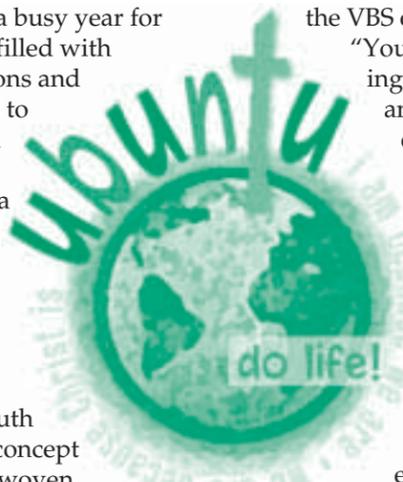
Stand With Africa Campaign

Call the ELCA World Hunger Appeal at 800/638-3522, ext. 2764, or visit www.elca.org/hunger or Stand With Africa Web site at www.standwithafrica.org

About the 2003 Youth Gathering

Over 2,000 congregations have already decided to make the Gathering part of their summer 2003 youth ministry. There's still time to register and be a part of this life-giving, life-changing event.

Youth Gathering registration for both weeks is open until May 3. The registration cost goes up to \$274 after February 3. Everyone is welcome. For more information, go to the ELCA Youth Gathering Web site at www.elca.org/gathering or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2432.



Giving through Qualified Retirement Plans

Did you know you and your members can give to ministries of the church through your qualified retirement plan (QRP)? If you or members of your congregation have sizable amounts of tax-sheltered funds in qualified retirement plans, it may make sense to consider distributing the assets to family and to ministries of the ELCA after death. While money withdrawn from these funds during retirement is taxed as current, ordinary income, the real tax consequence may come with the death of the plan holder in the form of federal, state and, in some cases, city taxes. With proper planning, you can maximize your QRP to benefit your family and the church through a beneficiary designation.

For more information, contact the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, or visit www.elca.org/fo for the name of the Regional Gift Planner nearest you.



Did you see the Action Packet?

www.elca.org/colactionpacket

The contents of the January-February Action Packet included:

- *Prayer Ventures*
- Augsburg Fortress Lent and Easter resource sheet
- *MissionFuture* brochure
- Mission Investment Fund bulletin insert
- 2003 International Personnel Directory