



Seeds for the Parish

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RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

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Congregation sows seeds of health and balance

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Household chores, deadlines at work, fast food for lunch, running kids to Scouts and hockey practice, too much TV, meetings, meetings, meetings. Sound familiar? Many of us find ourselves rushing from one thing to the next. All that juggling makes it hard to relax, and harder still to stay connected with God.

To help its members reorient themselves, Transfiguration Lutheran Church, a congregation of 2,100 in suburban Bloomington, Minn., focused its midweek Lenten series in 2004 on Searching for Balance. The series centered on the ELCA's new model of a balanced life—the wholeness wheel (www.elca.org/dml/health/index.html). The wheel represents how the different facets of life—social/interpersonal well-being, emotional well-being, physical well-being, vocational well-being, intellectual well-being—are grounded in Baptism and surrounded by spiritual well-being. If we tend to each of these areas in our own lives, the theory goes, we are more likely to discover and use our gifts, and experience a full, abundant life as God intended it to be.

The series—which had strong support from Sue Ann Glusenkamp, Transfiguration's parish nurse, and members of the congregation's Health and Wellness Cabinet—grounded each week's message in the sermon and music of Wednesday evening worship. Then, to help members go deeper, they hosted a number of workshops after worship, exploring different areas of the week's topic. The workshops were designed to be interactive and always included at least one class that would appeal to children and teenagers. For those who couldn't stay for the workshop, a few "take-home ideas" were given to suggest practical ways to make changes.

Transfiguration's Wednesday Lenten services typically draw about 200 people and last about 35 minutes. The staff didn't know how many people would be willing to stay an additional half-hour to attend a workshop—the goal was 60 per week. But the series' relevance and the quality of the

presentations drew, on average, more than 100 people per week to the workshop sessions.

"I remember many a Lent in which the only things we ever talked about were the seven last words of Christ," said the Rev. Vern Christopherson, Transfiguration's senior pastor. "This stretched us. It certainly hit home for people. Who knew eating carrots and talking about cleaning up clutter would catch people's attention in this way?"

Success was due in part to plenty of support from different ministries of the congregation. Confirmation students took part in the series in place of class during Lent, then filled out a weekly "balance sheet" that tracked what they learned from the sermon and workshop and how it applies to their lives.

In addition, many of the workshops were led by members of the congregation who were delighted to share their gifts: A campus police officer led a workshop on safety and self-defense tips as part of protecting physical well-being. A high school music teacher shared how different kinds of music improve brain activity and improve intellectual well-being. A financial planner offered advice on preparing for the future by using what we have today through vocational well-being.

The most well-attended workshop was on "Laughter: The Best Medicine," given by a local humor and mental health expert. He warmed up the crowd with an interactive storytelling session. His presentation made a serious point, too: When we laugh, we share God's joy, so we should laugh often. But, he said, we also share our faith when our laughter comes at our own expense, not the expense of others. "Learning to laugh at yourself gives you a never-ending source of amusement."



Seventh-grade confirmation students get ready to snack on some heart-healthy pretzels during Transfiguration's Lenten series on searching for balance.

Another popular offering: "Eat Smart/Stay Healthy." A local market donated a wide variety of fruits and vegetables for tasting tables to promote eating Five-A-Day, as well as loads of literature and display posters. Baskets of bananas and apples were quickly emptied—as were bowls filled with slices of pineapple, cubes of kiwi fruit, and chunks of avocado. At least one junk-food-lover was converted: "I learned that papaya and mango taste pretty good. I'm going to have to get my mom to buy some," one eighth-grader wrote. In the kitchen, seventh-grade girls kneaded pretzel dough and twisted it into "praying arms" shapes.

"We are bombarded in the media with advertising about being fit and healthy. How fabulous for our congregation to enter this arena by putting wellness and wholeness in a spiritual perspective by balancing our lives centered in baptismal promise," Glusenkamp said. "I'm very proud of our staff for supporting and challenging our faith community on this journey. It was most rewarding to see people of all ages coming together in a search for balance, and they kept coming back."

—The Rev. Shelley Cunningham is a pastor at Transfiguration Lutheran in Bloomington, Minn. E-mail: sharber@tlcmn.com.

Resources for health, wellness, and balance

The ELCA Division for Ministry and Board of Pensions have collaborated on a health and wellness initiative to provide online and print resources specifically for pastors,



Healthy Leaders
Enhance Lives

rostered laypeople, and other church employees and their family members.

- The site www.elcaforwellness.org brings the news, information, interactive tools and support needed for our leaders to take charge of their health. Whether it's wellness and nutrition, parenting issues, or disease-specific information, leaders will find information they need from a trusted health care brand, Mayo Clinic.

- The Division for Ministry publishes information and links on ministerial health and wellness at www.elca.org/dml/health/index.html including the wholeness wheel (a guide to balancing all aspects of health and wellness).

- Mayo Clinic HealthQuest provides

easy-to-read and practical information on a variety of important health topics, and is mailed to ELCA pastors and other employees monthly. HealthQuest also includes important news on ELCA health benefits and resources each month.

- Contact the Board of Pensions' Kami Lund at klund@elcabop.org if your congregation has a health and wellness story to share, whether it's a program or personal accomplishment.

From Augsburg Fortress

- Dr. Gwen Halaas' latest book, *The Right Road: Life Choices for Clergy*, has been compared to "mapquest" for anyone who wants to be a healthy leader who enhances lives. If you are thinking about having a more balanced life-style, *The Right Road* provides great directions for you. Receive a 40 percent discount on the purchase price for *The Right Road* by calling Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 and mentioning Promotional Code H10C (ISBN 0-8006-3657-0; \$16 plus shipping).

- *Healing Bodies and Souls: A Practical Guide for Congregations* by W. Daniel Hale, Ph.D., and Harold G. Koenig, M.D. offers a practical primer on developing health ministries. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8006-3629-5; \$15 plus shipping).

- Augsburg Fortress has a special section on their Web site that features products on health, health care, and healing at www.augsburgfortress.org/healingoftheworld

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Reach out to college students—coming and going

Every fall brings a massive movement of students. Many congregations send students off to college, while other congregations, located close to campuses, receive an influx of young adults with whom they may minister. Here are some suggestions if you are sending or receiving students.

If you are sending

- **Bless Students on Their Way**—Recognize students leaving for college with a service of Godspeed.
- **Keep in Touch**—Put your students on the mailing list for the congregation. Set up a “pen pal” system which connects congregation members and students. Send “care packages” of goodies periodically. Send an e-mail from the pastor or other staff member, inviting students to share their reactions to college life; sometimes it is helpful to process experiences online.
- **Refer**—Most campus ministries and campus congregations have no way to know a student is on campus unless a congregation, parent, or the student lets them know. Referrals can be made for many schools by going to www.elca.org/campusministry/studentref.html and sending an e-mail directly to a campus minister.
- **Visit**—Go to campus, take your students out to lunch, and check in on how things are going. They will appreciate the concern and the break from dining hall food.
- **Give Some Bread for the Journey**—A gift book of devotions, prayers, or reflections serves as a reminder of the congregation’s ongoing care. These are particularly meaningful when they reflect the giver’s own spiritual journey and are personally inscribed to the student. Some suitable items may be ordered at www.elca.org/campusministry/resources/augsfort.html

If you are receiving

- **Be Sure They Can Find You**—It is hard for new students to find their classes, much less the nearest congregation. Put ads in the student newspaper, fliers on campus bulletin boards, and signs out in front of the building that say you are eager to include new students in your community of worship.
- **Welcome Students at Worship**—During the first few weeks of classes, include an explicit welcome to students in the bulletin, set up a welcome table in the narthex with information on what is offered for students, and lift up students and faculty beginning a new academic year during the prayers of the church.
- **Include Them**—Nothing communicates inclusion to students like seeing peers involved in the congregation as lectors, Communion assistants, and ushers. Students can be a source of fresh energy in a congregation; look for ways to tap that spring of enthusiasm in every part of the community life.
- **Acknowledge Their World**—If a college is nearby, keep the academic and liturgical calendars next to one another; it may be Advent to you, but it’s finals week to them. Offer exam survival kits. Use sermon illustrations drawn from academic life and the stresses of being a student. Know the hot issues on campus and what resources are available on campus and in the community for students in crisis.
- **Feed Them**—Offering a meal before a midweek program or after Sunday worship is a great way to communicate care. It is equally important to feed the spirit by offering Bible study, service opportunities, and discussions that integrate all the pieces

of an expanding worldview and an evolving Christian identity.

For other ideas on how to welcome students, go to www.elca.org/campusministry/resources/#partner

—The Rev. Bill King is a Lutheran campus pastor at Virginia Tech., Blacksburg.



Care package for students

You can remind students you’re thinking of them and introduce them to a pan-Lutheran organization for students by sending them a Care Package. Sent by Lutheran Student Movement–USA, each Care Package contains a travel mug, a copy of worship booklet *Oremus III+*, school supplies, and some snacks. It will also include information about Lutheran Student Movement–USA. The cost of each package is \$15. For order forms, check the LSM Web site at www.lsm-usa.org. All orders will be mailed after September 1.

Resource for new college students

Orientation is an annual ecumenical magazine for graduating high-school seniors and first-year college students and their parents. The 2004 issue features tips for surviving on campus the first year, prayers, the Bible as a resource for daily life, and discussion questions for individual reflection or group conversation. Cost is \$3 per copy (plus \$1 shipping), but there are discounts for multiple copies. Go to www.gbhem.org/orientation or call 615/340-7561 to order or learn more.

Resources for worship planning

Although the church year officially begins with Advent, in-depth planning for the next year often occurs during the summer months when the schedule is a bit lighter. Annual resources to support worship planning are now available for next year. All of these are available from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648 or at www.augsburgfortress.org

Resources to help with planning

- **Sundays and Seasons, 2005 Year A** (ISBN 0-8066-4674-8; \$35 plus shipping) The invaluable guide for creative worship planning, *Sundays & Seasons* presents the propers, prayers, introductions to the day, alternative texts, images for preaching, worship helps, and suggestions for involving children in worship, to make preparing for Sunday morning a snap! Included are week-by-week musical suggestions, as well as lists of worship music for adult and children’s choirs, keyboard, handbell choirs, and praise ensembles.
- **Worship Planning Calendar, 2005 Year A** (ISBN 0-8066-4673-X; \$20 plus shipping) This is an indispensable complement to *Sundays and Seasons*. Use this worship planning guide, daily devotional, and appointment calendar as your workbook. Each two-page spread includes propers, hymns, liturgical colors, and general rubrics for the Sunday, principal festivals, lesser festivals, and commemorations that occur during the week.
- **Church Year Calendar, Year A, 2005** (ISBN 0-8066-4672-1; \$1.95 plus shipping) This full-color worship planning and devotional resource gives specific dates, Bible readings, hymn of the day, and liturgical color for each Sunday and festivals of the church year. Two sides, full-color.

Other resources to help organize your worship planning team include:

- **Preparing the Assembly for Worship** by Craig M. Mueller (ISBN 0-8066-4291-2; \$10 plus shipping), and the entire *Worship Handbook* series (see Augsburg Fortress catalog or Web site at www.augsburgfortress.org for a complete listing).
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** on worship committees at www.elca.org/dcm/worship/faq/planning/committees.html

New Renewing Worship musical items

There are several new musical items from the Renewing Worship project that are now available on the Web site at www.renewingworship.org

- **Proper Prefaces** (called Initial Thanksgivings in the provisional resources) In the print volume of *Holy Communion and Related Rites*, you will notice that the new translations for these texts are given for each season. However, only the “Sundays” option is provided with music. The additional seasonal texts are provided with music on the Web site in both the traditional chant form and a simpler method. Both musical versions will work with either of the provisional settings.

• Psalms

Especially for those congregations that already sing the Psalms regularly, the ELCA worship staff invite your participation in testing several different translations, systems of chant, and methods of pointing. The proper Psalm for each Sunday and festival from September through December is provided with text, chant tone, an optional refrain, and brief comments about what is being tested. These can be used with or without the refrain by soloist, choir, and/or congregation. The worship staff would love to hear how you used these materials creatively. Most importantly, they are interested in how the translations, melodies, and formatting work in your setting.

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/co/seeds

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ELCA World Hunger celebrates 30 years of caring

ELCA World Hunger celebrates 30 years of caring and sharing in 2004. In June, congregations received the Spring/Summer World Hunger Resource Packet with the latest resources to help mark this important anniversary. The anniversary theme is "Go and do likewise," from Luke 10:37. All the resources listed here are free (including shipping). Order what you'll need to throw a World Hunger 30th anniversary party or mount a World Hunger emphasis month.



- A **poster** featuring the "stained glass" ELCA World Hunger logo is framed by faces of "around the corner and around the world" neighbors. The poster is based on a clear-glass church window at Kashura Lutheran in Bukoba, Tanzania. Hang this in your narthex or adult-forum room, and display it during World Hunger special events. Call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1154-6; free, limit five).

- **"Go and Do Likewise" A 30-day Devotional Journey**, celebrates the anniversary year with Scripture, prayers, reflections, and action prompts. The checkbook format is a reminder that giving to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal is one good way to "Go and do likewise." This devotional booklet is ideal for use during a 30-day month: November, September,

June, or April. Request as many as will be used—one for yourself or one for every member household of your congregation! To order, call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1206-2; free).

- "Good Samaritan" **bookmarks** feature the "stained glass" World Hunger logo on the front and the Parable of the Good Samaritan on the back. You can hand out these on a special Sunday, such as Rally Day, or use the bookmark as a favor for an ELCA World

Hunger 30th anniversary celebration. Call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1175-9; free, in packages of 30).

- **World Hunger Reproducible Stories and Clip Art** tells seven new stories of real people being helped by your gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. To request a free copy, e-mail hunger@elca.org or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2764. Find online at www.elca.org/hunger/stories.html

- The **Top 30 ELCA World Hunger Resources Catalog** describes the new pieces featured in the Spring/Summer 2004 World Hunger Resource Packet, along with other useful World Hunger resources. To request a free copy, e-mail hunger@elca.org

or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2764. Find online at www.elca.org/hunger/resources

- The new yellow ELCA World Hunger **pew envelope** incorporates the theme, "Go and do likewise." Call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1173-2; free, order in multiples of 50).

- "Go and do likewise" World Hunger Appeal **magnet** sports the 30th anniversary World Hunger logo, making it an ideal 30th anniversary celebration favor. Call 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-1211-9; free, in packages of 30).

- The **Basics 2004–2005 bulletin insert** is updated and includes a summary of the ELCA World Hunger (including designated gifts to Stand With Africa and the ELCA International and Domestic Disaster Response) and works well as a bulletin insert or stand-alone brochure. Call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1152-X; free, in packages of 50).

- The **2004 Spring/Summer ELCA World Hunger Packet** features samples of all the items listed here, along with the 2004 World Hunger budget page, an invitation to join the ELCA Advocacy Network, a Lutheran World Relief/Women of the ELCA 90-ton Challenge (Fair Trade Coffee) flyer, and an LWR Parish Projects Brochure. Call 800/328-4648 or order online at www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 6-0002-1153-8; free, limit one). For more about ELCA World Hunger and its resources, visit the Web site at www.elca.org/hunger

Join with Lutheran Woman Today to study the Parables

Lutheran Woman Today, the award-winning magazine of Women of the ELCA, is offering an online preview of its next



nine-month Bible study, *Everyday Surprises: The Parables of Jesus*, by Audrey West. West is assistant professor of

New Testament at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. All of session one—both what will appear in the magazine and the leader guide—can be viewed at www.lutheranwomantoday.org and a print-friendly version is available.

This easy-to-follow study makes Jesus' 2,000-year-old parables lessons for our daily lives. West takes familiar passages, such as "The Parable of the Yeast," and first teaches the context for the parable at the time; then she guides study participants through the ways in which the parable's lessons can be relevant to our lives and spiritual journeys today.

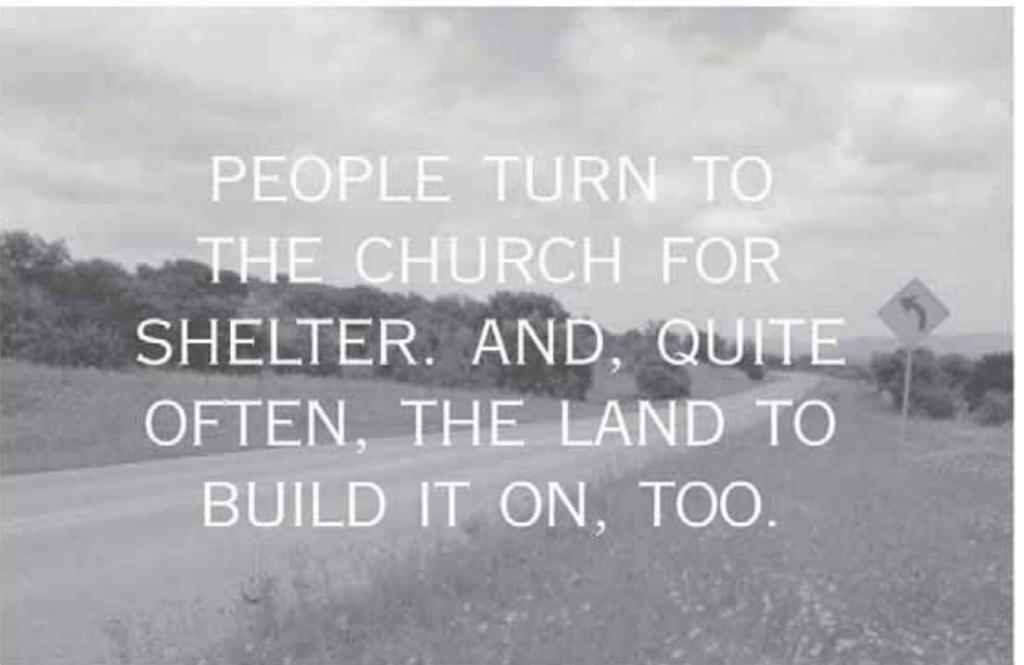
West says: "What if we read the old familiar stories of the Bible with the expectation of being surprised? Might we hear something new? Jesus spoke to his followers in parables: ordinary stories with extraordinary twists, designed to astound (and even confound!) their

hearers while they conveyed truths about God and God's reign. Many of these stories are so well known to us that we miss their surprising twists and turns."

The entire study will appear within the pages of *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine, beginning in September. For only \$11 a year, subscribers receive not only West's

study but also an entire magazine filled with articles that inspire and strengthen faith. Additionally, a three-session Bible study, written specifically for the summer months, is included.

You can subscribe online at www.augsburgfortress.org or call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.



New mission congregations don't need a bank for startup funds. All they need is the church - and the Mission Investment Fund. As a ministry of the ELCA, we provide loans to congregations in the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. So, if you're interested in buying land, or building or expanding your church, we have the financing you need. At a rate you'll find very competitive. Talk to us today. And watch your plans come together.

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www.elca.org/mif

Looking for a resource?

Looking for resource ideas? 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 Resource Finder magnifying glass. This feature can quickly search the items in the ELCA resource database and help you get what you need.

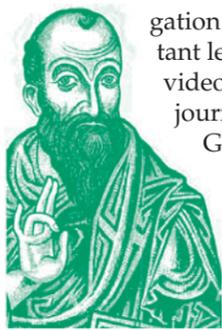
Newsletter on outreach

Want to know more about new congregations and outreach in the ELCA? The *Mission Partners Focus* newsletter—published three times each year—provides:

- statistics and stories about new and renewing congregations,
- anecdotes of individuals and congregations that have discovered the joys and advantages of supportive relationships,
- vignettes regarding the lives and work of the ELCA Mission Builders, and
- opportunities for involvement.

Each issue looks at a particular aspect of outreach. The spring issue featured “unique partnerships.” The fall issue will highlight “transformation” and give examples of congregations that have refocused on mission. This resource, which may be copied for use in congregational forums or publications, is available online at www.elca.org/outreach/missionpartners/newsletter.html. To be added to the mailing list to receive print copies, call 800/638-3522, ext. 5072.

New video on Apostle Paul



The Life of Apostle Paul is a new video that can help your congregation learn about this important leader in Christianity. The video gives you the chance to journey to Jerusalem,

Greece, and Turkey with noted public television host Rick Steves.

The 45-minute program from Mosaic Television introduces Apostle Paul, the foremost theologian

and missionary of the early church. It features insights from Craig Koester of Luther Seminary, and authors Susan Briehl and Walt Wangerin Jr. You can use this in adult education settings, women’s circles, and youth groups. Order an individual copy on DVD or VHS video for \$19.95 from Mosaic Television.

Call 800/638-3522, ext. 6009, or go to www.elca.org/mosaic

Web-based advocacy

The ELCA Web site now offers new, state-of-the-art tools that empower Lutherans to witness boldly to God’s love, and speak publicly to the values and deliberative issues set forth in ELCA social statements and messages. Web visitors can now find listings of their elected officials in federal, state, and local government. In-depth background articles explain why current issues are important to Lutherans. Easy-to-use letter-writing tools give you and your congregation a voice in Washington, D.C. and your state capital.

Joining the e-Advocacy network will keep you updated when your voice is needed to change the landscape of national and state legislation. If you give your e-mail address and some areas of interest,

you will receive information about any changing legislation around that topic.

In addition, the ELCA’s new online advocacy resources include congregational study and leadership guides, voter registration tools and information, and news about upcoming events. Find it all at www.elca.org/advocacy

Spanish guide for stewardship

The new *Cómo mejorar la administración de recursos: Un Manual congregacional* (How to improve financial stewardship: A guide for congregations) outlines six financial response models that can be used by ELCA Latino congregations. A single copy of this manual was mailed to each Latino ELCA ministry in February. Additional copies of the easy-to-follow guide for stewardship leaders are available from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-7742-9; \$4.95 plus shipping).

Resource on social ministry

A new resource from the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries can help you develop social ministry programs in your congregation. *Serving as Jesus Served: A Planning Guide for Social Ministry in Congregations* contains information, stories, biblical passages, hymn and prayer suggestions, questions and activities that guide leaders through a planning process to develop social ministries. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-9154-5; \$9.99 plus shipping).

Message on terrorism

Terrorism has intensified in our time. The struggle against it is bound to be long-term. A new ELCA message offers a faith perspective for “Living in a Time of Terrorism.”

The message is a resource for congregations and other ministries to talk about what guidance our faith provides us for this uncertain time. It gives a framework for people who may differ about how to respond to terrorism to talk together.

The message, adopted by the ELCA Church Council in April 2004, draws upon the social statement “For Peace in God’s World.” That social statement reminds us that also in these times God calls us “to proclaim the Gospel of God’s final peace and to work for earthly peace.” For a free copy of “Living in a Time of Terror,” call the ELCA Division for Church in Society’s Resource Request Line: 800/638-3552, ext. 2996. Multiple copies may be ordered for 10 cents each plus shipping from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-1224-0). The message is also found online at www.elca.org/socialstatements/terrorism

Lutheran World Federation

Through the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) your congregation is in ministry around the world. New figures released from LWF show that there are almost 66 million Lutherans in the world and over 62 million of them belong to LWF!

Together Lutherans are in mission and ministry around the world. They are present with water projects, evangelism training, farming techniques, ecumenical relationships, refugee resettlement camps, theological education, HIV/AIDS workers, Bible schools, advocacy for human rights, and countless other ways. Together Lutherans work and pray for the healing of the world.

Celebrate our ministry together with others around the world this October on LWF Sunday, Oct. 3. Visit the LWF North America Web site www.elca.org/lwf for worship resources that will assist you in planning. Further information is available from the LWF North America Office by calling 800/638-3522 ext 2636, or e-mail kmagnus@elca.org.

Lutheran-Catholic text

Members of the Lutheran-Roman Catholic Dialogue, Round X, concluded their work in April by adopting a statement titled “The Church as Koinonia of Salvation: Its Structures and Ministries.” The text makes “modest recommendations about a deeper recognition of ministries between the two churches,” said the Rev. Randall R. Lee, director of the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs. The statement is available on the ELCA Web page at www.elca.org/leal/ecumenical/romancatholic/koinonia.pdf. A published version of the statement, along with a number of supporting essays, will be released in late fall by Augsburg Fortress and the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the signing of the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification* between the Lutheran World Federation and the Vatican.

Environmental audit

Take concrete steps to care for God’s creation. Start by conducting a baseline environmental



audit of your congregation using the ELCA’s new Environmental Audit guide.

The guide includes a check-off list that you can use over time to measure your progress in making your congregation a model of environmental stewardship. For a print copy, contact the ELCA’s Division for Church in Society at 800/638-3522, ext. 2996, or download a copy in PDF from the Web at www.elca.org/environment

Organ donation resolution

Organ, tissue, and blood donation can be God's gift to save lives. Yet there is a shortage of donors. Your congregation can help by building awareness and discussing this issue. A new ELCA social policy resolution encourages members to consider donating as an act of stewardship and love.

The 11-point resolution, adopted by the ELCA Church Council at its April 2004 meeting, urges members to make arrangements to donate those precious gifts of life.

The resolution, "The Donation of Organs, Tissue, and Whole Blood," is a good beginning point for discussion of this important topic. It can also be used as a bulletin insert. You can get to the resolution by going to www.elca.org/dcs/elca_actions.html. A free single copy may be ordered from the ELCA Division for Church in Society's Resource Request Line by calling 800/638-3552, ext 2996. Multiple copies may be ordered from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-1225-9; pay only shipping).

Zamzam story on video

Vision Video offers a video on VHS or DVD of one of the most fascinating, yet overlooked, stories from the saga of World War II. It is the story of the civilian ship *Zamzam*, carrying 144 missionaries to Africa, that was sunk by a Nazi gunboat. After being mistakenly shelled, the passengers abandoned ship and their plight was filmed by two photographers who happened to be on



board. *Zamzam: A Missionary Odyssey* is the eyewitness account of a true story of faith, hope, and adventure on the high seas from the time of World War II. This program is available on VHS (catalog # 4686, \$19.99). The DVD (catalog # 4778D, \$19.99) contains additional features such as maps, more photos, original film footage, and book excerpts. To order, call Vision Video at 800/523-0226 or go to their Web site at www.visionvideo.com

Book on clergy sexual ethics

Beyond the Scandals, A Guide to Healthy Sexuality for Clergy offers a comprehensive and authoritative account of clergy sexuality and sexual ethics in the profession. Author G. Lloyd Rediger includes up-to-date information on the social and legal context, helpful research on the relevant ethnic, gender, and denominational factors, a religious and moral framework for understanding clergy sexuality, and a comprehensive analysis of the sexual problems encountered by clergy. This book could be a professional resource for clergy, seminarians, and those who supervise them in a

new era of increased accountability and moral reflection. Rediger, ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), is a consultant to denominations, chaplains, and seminaries on issues of clergy health, self-care, and sexual malfeasance. He is the author of *Coping with Clergy Burnout*, *Clergy Killers*, and *Fit to Be a Pastor*. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8006-3613-9; \$18 plus shipping).

Foundation Web site for pastors

While shepherds watch their flocks... sometimes it's hard to take the time to think about family and self. Sometimes pastors wonder how they can help their congregations think about their mission. The ELCA Foundation has new Web materials that can help. Go to www.elca.org/for/pastors.html to check out the Foundation's personal services and services for congregations. Pastors can learn how their ELCA retirement accounts can be used for families and to leave a legacy for ministry, as well as how to have gift planners do free seminars in congregations.

Health and Hope grants

Wheat Ridge Ministries invites Lutheran congregations to submit applications for its Congregation Health and Hope Grant program. The purpose of these grants is to facilitate the development of congregation-based health and wellness ministries.

All Lutheran congregations—individually or in partnership with other congregations—are eligible for these grants. The maximum amount per grant is \$2,000 for a single congregation and \$6,000 for collaborative efforts involving two or more congregations. The amount granted by Wheat Ridge must be matched dollar for dollar by the congregations. Approximately 25 grants will be awarded for congregational projects in November. Projects must support and promote the health and well-being of people in the congregation and local community.

Go to www.wheatridge.org to download a complete list of guidelines, see the proposal format, and learn more about the program, or call the Wheat Ridge office at 800/762-6748. Deadline for submitting applications is September 30, 2004.

New Christian Ed planner

Proclaiming the Story is the theme for the annual ELCA Christian Education Planning Guide, designed to help you plan and prepare for the 2004-2005 education year. Highlights of the planner include a Bible study supporting the theme and suitable for teacher training; programmatic and planning tools, including the teacher affirmation bulletin insert; introduction to an online

intergenerational program titled *The Proclamation Station* that may be used on Rally Day; and information regarding the debut of *Grand Central Proclamation Station*, a new interactive resource for parents and other Christian educators to acquaint children and youth with people throughout history who proclaimed their faith. The planning guide will be included in the "Faithful, Welcoming, Generous" packet coming to congregations in July. It will also be available on line at www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education/resources/2004CEProgramPlanner

Youth prayer resource

Heart Ignite from the Youth & Family Institute is a prayer resource for use by youth ministers, confirmation leaders, small group leaders, camp counselors, Sunday school teachers, families, and pastors. The book is a compilation of engaging, interactive and creative ways to enter into prayer as a group or as a family. These ideas can be used in every setting, with any curriculum, and with all ages. Cost is \$10.75; for orders of 20-49, \$8.60 each, and orders of 50 or more, \$7.50 each. To order, call 877/239-2492 or go to www.youthandfamilyinstitute.org

Retreat center on urban issues

Ever wonder what life is like in an urban neighborhood? For some folks, it conjures up grand images of loft apartments, and brand-name coffee shops.

For other folks, it is less glamorous—two jobs at minimum wage and constantly worrying about the kids, wishing the schools were in better repair and the streets were safer.



UrbanSpirit is a retreat center in Louisville, Ky., determined to help folks see the difference. "We found a gap between the good intentions of most faith communities and the specific awareness of a life of poverty," said the Rev. Deb Conrad, director of the center. Conrad is a former ELCA Mission Director.

Located in one of Louisville's most distressed neighborhoods, UrbanSpirit occupies the facilities of a 110-year-old congregation that closed in 2001 and was donated by the ELCA Indiana-Kentucky Synod.

Youth and adults—individually or in groups—come from across the country to study and serve, balancing community involvement with activities that demonstrate what poverty means to families. This independent, nonprofit center is supported by retreat fees and gifts from individuals, faith communities, and corporations. Retreats are tailored to each group. Find out how your congregation or social ministry committee can book a retreat at www.urbanspirit.org or call 502/550-1236 or e-mail raudeb@urbanspirit.org

See what's new and helpful on the World Wide Web

Tools for ministry on the Web

Need help launching or sprucing up your congregation's Web site? An updated "Guide to developing your congregation Web ministry" is now available at the www.elca.org/webministry site.

This page provides tips and resources for the first time user as well as the seasoned Web steward, including: recommendations for places to host your site; links to free, dynamic content (news feeds, daily Scripture verses and prayers, etc.); tips on how to drive traffic to your site from the ELCA congregation lookup system; where to get great deals on software for Web design and maintenance; and how to connect with other Web stewards from across the ELCA. Serve your members and reach out to others by ensuring that your Web site reflects the vital ministries of your congregation. For help in this important task, check out the resources and links at www.elca.org/webministry

Augsburg Fortress site redesign

In response to customer feedback, Augsburg Fortress has redesigned and expanded its Web site. Go to www.augsburgfortress.org to check it out! The site now offers a wide range of free

tools and in-depth information to meet your worship and education planning needs. Augsburg Fortress also now offers content feeds to help congregations enhance their Web sites with regularly updated content, including daily Bible verses, weekly lectionary readings, festivals of the church, and more. The new VBS Community Discussion Forums give you a chance to ask questions, share insights, and learn what others are doing for their VBS program. The new site features enhanced navigation menus and a powerful new site search to allow you to quickly find the information you need.

Learn about new congregations

Have you wondered where the ELCA is starting new congregations? Are you going to be traveling and hoping to visit a congregation under development? Would you like to pray for new ministries and their leaders? Go to www.elca.org/outreach/new/ See a list of congregations-under development, the locations of 2003 starts, and a map of future possibilities.



Foundations of Lutheran education

Lutherans are proud of their theological heritage—a heritage that firmly places education in the church and the church in education. Lutherans have always understood education as a vital expression of their faith and their

calling as Christians. To learn more about the foundations of Lutheran education, education as a human right, and more insights from Martin Luther, visit www.elca.org/education/foundations Get ready now for September book discussion

In September, Authors Online will be discussing *Public Church: For the Life of the World* by Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda. Moe-Lobeda explores what it means for the ELCA to play a role in public life today. Sections focus on what it means to be a public church, obstacles to being a public church in public life, power for being public church, and providing public leadership. For the followers of Jesus, the "way of living" in public is a gift of God to the church. Go to www.lutherlink.org/books to learn more.

Notice about Prayer Ventures

Beginning with the September/October issues, Prayer Ventures will be offered online only at www.elca.org/prayerventures It will no longer be mailed in the Action Packet. Prayer Ventures will still be in several formats: the traditional layout, in print-ready pdf format; and in word-processing formats, allowing for incorporation into other uses, such as newsletters or bulletins. For those without Internet access, the ELCA Division for Global Mission will print copies and mail them out. If you wish to receive printed copies on a regular basis, please contact Mia Cortez at 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

New hunger and poverty resource on Web site

The ELCA has recently updated its Web site to include a comprehensive and current *Hunger and Poverty in America* fact booklet. This document contains facts about a broad range of hunger and poverty issues, including: health care, child care, housing, Federal Food Programs, transportation, immigration, and many other areas. The ills of hunger and poverty continue to plague the United States. Over 35 million Americans suffer from food insecurity, meaning they often don't know where their next meal will come from.

As people of faith, it is our responsibility to be concerned with the least of those among us ... and what better place to begin than in our communities of worship? Use this fact booklet to begin generating conversations around these issues in your

congregation:

- Devote a corner of the congregation newsletter to facts on hunger and poverty
- Include a weekly bulletin insert using several of the facts
- Host coffee-hour forums on these issues and bring in speakers from the community
- Organize parish volunteer opportunities around these issues

"Raising awareness of the issue and engaging in dialogue is an important step towards ensuring a sufficient and sustainable community for all God's people." ("Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood for All" social statement, adopted in 1999). The *Hunger and Poverty in America* fact booklet can be found at www.elca.org/advocacy or e-mail Jackie_Maddox@elca.org for a copy.

Resource centers look at new-member education

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're looking for resources we can use to discuss the Lutheran church, including catechism, with our new members. What materials would you recommend?

A Dan Erlander's *Baptized We Live: Lutheranism as a Way of Life* (Augsburg Fortress, www.augsburgfortress.org 800/328-4648) is a great tool for introducing Lutheran doctrine. The illustrations reinforce the theology in an easy-to-understand way. Also, *Lutheran Basics* (Augsburg Fortress—available in 11 different languages!) is a concise resource designed to provide a clear overview by exploring key concepts of what it means to be Lutheran today. Both of these are priced so congregations can provide a copy for each student.

—Susan Schlitter, director, Lutheran Resource Center, Clear Lake, Iowa, serving Iowa and Illinois synods

A I recommend Ginny Wheeler's *Vital Christianity* (Augsburg Fortress). It is designed for eight weeks of study and encourages newcomers to build friendships, discover their gifts, and become active participants in the life of the church family.

—Dolores Wright, director, Sierra Pacific Synod Resource Center, Fresno, Calif.

A The video *Who are the Lutherans?* is designed to help Lutherans understand themselves. It is available from your

local resource center or the ELCA Department for Ecumenical Affairs (800/638-3522, ext. 2610; www.elca.org/ea). It's always good to use some type of spiritual gifts inventory with new members. I recommend the inventory shared by King of Kings in Shelby Township, Michigan (www.koklc.org/filingcabinet/) or *Finding Your Spiritual Gifts* (www.elca.org/dcm/evangelism/assessment/assess4_spirit_gifts.html), which can either be taken interactively online or downloaded.

—Irene Flynn, director, Florida-Bahamas Synod Resource Center, Tampa

A Kelly Fryer's *Reclaiming the 'L' Word: Renewing the Church from Its Lutheran Core* (Augsburg Fortress) is absolutely delightful—easy to read, to the point, sort of earthy and human, a breath of fresh air. It is ideal for people to read on their own—new members, old members, young people disillusioned with the church, council members, etc. Actually, I'd recommend it for every Lutheran!

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

A *Welcome to Christ: Preparing Adults for Baptism and Discipleship* (Augsburg Fortress) materials—video and curricula—are great Lutheran materials to use with the adult catechumenate process. Also, quality material from Faith & Life Press (www.mph.org/flr 724/887-8500) titled *Welcoming New Christians: A Guide for the*

Christian Initiation of Adults. This video and resource book detail a four-stage process toward adult baptism. Another new, user-friendly resource is *New Beginnings* (www.nbontheweb.com 910/815-0695).

The three-week program helps "the person in the pew" find ways to channel God-given gifts and interests into real ministry!

—Celie Addy, director, South Carolina Synod Resource Center, Columbia

A Another good Dan Erlander resource is the fold-out, *It's All about Love: The Christian Journey: A Lutheran Perspective* (Augsburg Fortress). It includes discussion questions for new members, youth—

anyone who wants to celebrate God's grace.

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

A *The Lutheran Story from Mosaic* Television offers five ways to celebrate Lutheran heritage and identity. This DVD includes "Opening the Door to Luther," "Morning Star of Wittenberg: The Life of Katie Luther," "Lutheran Roots in America," "Glory to God Alone: The Life of J.S. Bach," and "The Story of the ELCA." Go to www.elca.org/mosaic to learn more.

Also, *Come and Grow with Us* (Augsburg Fortress) introduces new and prospective church members to the Christian faith and Lutheran practices in a nonthreatening, user-friendly format. It has five sessions.

—Catherine Fink, director, Helig Resource Center, North Carolina Synod, Salisbury, N.C.

Woman has a 'financial ministry' in Papua New Guinea

Of the ELCA's 300 mission personnel, only a handful are called to the ministry of money.

Cristel Churchill is one. She serves as the assistant to the Internal Auditor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea (ELC-PNG).

Her skills fill a critical need in Papua New Guinea, where very few citizens have been trained as auditors and some communities still operate on a cashless economy.

Churchill, a certified public accountant, travels the country helping ELC-PNG ministries like the Madang Guest House and Martin Luther Seminary update their financial records, produce financial statements, and perform audits.

Churchill's work helps church financial leaders polish their skills in bookkeeping and accounting. Sometimes her work



Cristel Churchill

yields pleasant surprises, especially when an institution discovers it has more money than it thought!

Of course, Churchill's work is about more than money. Like all ELCA mission personnel, she witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ through her presence, and participates fully in the life of the ELC-PNG.

"I am the last person in the world I would have expected to be a missionary, given that I am not a pastor, doctor, or teacher, and I'm Quaker, not Lutheran!" Churchill says. "But God seemed to want me in PNG, so here I am."

Her path to global mission began at Northern Arizona University, where she studied accounting and was active in Lutheran Campus Ministry. Before she graduated in 2000, she visited Papua New Guinea on a mission trip. When she

learned that the ELCA Division for Global Mission was looking for an internal auditor in Lae, Papua New Guinea, her mission trip took on new significance.

"I had never had any leaning toward mission work, but I applied for the position because I didn't want to have to tell God someday why I thought He'd had a bad idea," she recalls. "I figured that the process could stop anywhere along the way if this wasn't what God wanted me to do, and it never did."

Churchill began her work in 2002, and will serve in Papua New Guinea until 2007. This summer she is on home leave, visiting sponsoring congregations and attending the ELCA Global Mission Event in Bozeman, Mont.

Churchill is featured on August 26 in the Prayer Ventures daily prayer guide (see it online at www.elca.org/prayerventures). Please pray for Churchill, her unique gifts and ministry, and for the ongoing ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea.

New Stewardship Resource Guide, enhanced Web site

The new ELCA Stewardship Resource Guide for Congregations is geared to new stewardship leaders as well as long-time veterans.

The latest stewardship resources are organized in helpful categories:

- "Stewardship is new to me. I don't know where to start."
- "How do I choose a financial response method?" includes response methods conducted with worship, visitations, meals and small groups.
- "I'm ready to dig a little deeper" features the new "Whys and Hows of Money Leadership" and "The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations."
- "Help me tell the story of the whole church—all that we do in ministry together" highlights "Making Christ Known."
- "What stewardship resources do you have in Spanish?" offers stewardship resources written for Spanish-speaking members.
- "Got ideas for preaching about steward-

ship?" points to weekly sermon starters on the Web (www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship) that find stewardship in the texts.

One copy of the Stewardship Resource Guide will be sent to each congregation in the late summer. A single free copy is available now from the ELCA Resource Information Service at 800/638-3522.

To order free multiple copies for your stewardship planning team, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-1148-1).

Stewardship resources on the Web

The Great Permission just got greater. "It's not just a field guide anymore!" With these



words, ELCA Stewardship Team members announce that the highly regarded field book, *The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations*, is now surrounded and supported by a family of resources.

Each of the resources will extend and enrich your understanding and practice of asset-based approaches to congregational life that can add energy and excitement to your relationships and shared ministry.

Featured on a new Web page: workshops, the new leader's guide for *The Great Permission*, an online quiz, sermon starter suggestions and a description of the Spanish asset-based field guide, *Donnes de Gracia*.

To see a description of these new Web-based and print resources, visit www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/gp-resources.html

To order the book *The Great Permission*, call 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-6960-4; \$6 plus shipping).

Learn about ways you can support global mission

Hands-on support for global mission is a longtime tradition in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod.

The synod's relationships with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Colombia and the Central Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania are strong. Almost three dozen Minnesota churches have

sister congregations in the two countries. And 61 of the synod's 183 congregations participate in the Missionary Sponsorship program, raising \$165,799 in direct missionary sponsorship in 2002.

Watch for that number to increase in the wake of a recent synod assembly resolution that calls for the synod to develop a plan to invite additional congregations to participate and raise \$200,000 for missionaries in 2005.

"This is a very mission-minded synod, with strong connections to the ministries of our companions," said the Rev. Meg Sander of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Wells, Minn. A member of the synod's global mission/companion synod committee that sponsored the resolution, she says it "will help heighten awareness



Kathy Bolin at a booth at the Southeastern Minnesota Synod Global Mission Fair.

of our partnerships with ELCA missionaries."

In 2003, more than 2000 congregations and individuals contributed \$4.1 million to the Missionary Sponsorship program

which pairs participants with a missionary or missionary family. After signing a covenant, congregations receive a photograph, address, and other information about the missionaries. Regular newsletters and occasional personal visits help build relationships between missionaries and their sponsoring congregations, who consider "their" missionary an extension of their ministry, and feel directly involved with God's global mission.

"Strong support for missionaries keeps the ELCA a strong partner in God's global mission," says the Rev. Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the ELCA Division for Global Mission. "While economic and political uncertainties have caused other denominations to call missionaries home, the Missionary Sponsor-

ship program is a key reason why 300 ELCA mission personnel continue to serve our companion churches." For more information on how you can become a Missionary Sponsor, contact the Rev. David Lerseth at 800/638-3522, ext. 2641, or e-mail Dlerseth@elca.org.

Three ways to support global mission

1. Missionary Covenant and Missionary-for-a-Day Programs. Support an individual missionary through a covenant sponsorship of \$1,000 to \$50,000 a year, or contribute a smaller sum to support a missionary for one day, one week, one month, or longer through the Missionary-for-a-Day program.

2. Scholarships. You can help develop leaders in companion churches by subsidizing an ELCA scholarship for international pastors, teachers, and medical personnel. Since 1988, some 500 students have received a degree. Currently 60 students are involved in the program.

3. South-South Mission Personnel. The Rev. Joseph Andriamihanta, who serves a French-speaking African congregation in Moscow, Russia, is a missionary of the Malagasy Lutheran Church. Your gifts to the South-South Mission Personnel Sponsorship program will help support more "South-South" missionaries like Pastor Andriamihanta.

Ways to support those with mental illness



* Excerpted with permission from the poem "The Hush of Mental Illness" by Louise Fisher

"Hush! Say the families
We'd be embarrassed for others to know...
Hush! Says the minister.
Someone might feel uncomfortable, you know...
Pray for the mentally ill, my Lord did say.
I died for them, too, you know....
Love the mentally ill, my Lord did say...
My faith is sufficient for the task, you know."
—Louise Gladden Fisher*

The fact is one out of five families deals with the realities of ongoing mental illness. It transcends culture, race, age, gender, religious beliefs, and economic status. Mental illness has nothing to do with attitudes or haphazard self-control. It has everything to do with the reality that the brain is part of a biological organism, and along with any other body part, it is vulnerable to temporary or permanent sickness. Those with mental illness long to be healthy, whole, and able to embrace all that life has to offer—just like anyone else. But left untreated, the illnesses can be devastating to the person, and very stressful and frustrating for their loved ones.

Even as the church often willingly embraces and supports people with many forms of ill health, it has a responsibility to welcome and uphold those who deal with mental illness. Struggling with mental illness is a common challenge, deserving greater understanding and awareness. Be

open and willing to inform people about what it is and isn't. There are many good books and Web sites that can be helpful.

Resources and suggestions

- The ELCA Division for Church in Society has information and support available at www.elca.org/dcs/lepr/disability/mentalillness.html. A planning guide for observing an All-Lutheran Candlelighting for Mental Illness event is available at the same Web site. Contact Pastor Lisa Cleaver 800/638-3522, ext. 2692, or e-mail lclever@elca.org for information about the Lutheran Network on Mental Illness.
- Our full-communion partners, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and the Episcopal Church, have a variety of resources. To incorporate concerns related to mental illness during worship, check out www.pcusa.org/health/usalresources/mental-illness.htm. For a guide to help begin a ministry for supporting people who are mentally ill, check out www.eminnews.org/form_a_committee.htm
- Call the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill help line at 800/950-6264 for information and support or go to www.nami.org. They also provide research and educational material.
- Encourage those who deal with specific illnesses. Contact community organiza-

tions to provide education, such as in an adult forum. Also consider offering your facilities for small group meetings.

- Provide ready references for learning about early warning signs. Search for resources in your library, such as the video *Stranger in Our Midst: The Church and People with Mental Illness*, available through Seraphim Communications (800/733-3413), and the book, *Souls are Made of Endurance: Surviving Mental Illness in the Family* by Stewart Govig, (Westminster John Knox Press, ISBN 1-5791-0892-X, www.wjkbooks.com).
- Augsburg Fortress has two titles in its "Difficult Times" series that can be helpful. *When Your Family is Living with Mental Illness* (ISBN 0-8066-4423-0) and *When You Are Depressed* (ISBN 0-8066-4420-6) can be ordered by calling 800/328-4648 (\$4.99 each, plus shipping).
- Most of all, pray for openness and genuine care for those who deal with heartaches related to mental illnesses. Pray for the Spirit's guidance as to how you might support them, remembering that those who deal with mental illness could be any one of us.

—Mim Campbell, associate director for Christian education, children and family ministries, and Diane Monroe, associate director for Christian education in the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries, in consultation with Lisa Cleaver, director for disabilities ministries in the ELCA Division for Church in Society.

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New tool kit for congregations

"Claimed, gathered, and sent by God's grace for the sake of the world, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in and through its churchwide expression, will: Support congregations in their call to be faithful, welcoming, and generous, sharing the mind of Christ."

—from the ELCA's strategic directions

Coming to congregations in July! Watch for *Faithful, Welcoming, and Generous: Tools for a Healthy Congregation*. This packet will contain helpful information and practical resources from each of DCM's 10 work teams. Highlights include the *Proclaiming: An Evangelism Bible Study*; the annual Christian Education Program Planner: *Claiming the Story*; two Bible studies: *Give* and *Encourage* that complete the Living Faith Bible Study Series; notification and announcements of several new resources, online support, upcoming events, and other helpful information to support congregations.

Most of the tool kit contents will be available in September on the *Faithful, Welcoming and Generous* Web page. To access that page, go to www.elca.org/dcm/healthychurch

Note about the Action Packet

www.elca.org/colactionpacket

In July-August we did not have enough material to merit the postage costs of mailing an Action Packet. We expect the September-October packet to mail as regularly scheduled, in mid-August.