



## How we work together – for the sake of the world

*“Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we are claimed, gathered, and sent for the sake of the world.”*

—ELCA mission statement

All over the country Lutherans and other Christians express their baptismal callings by working together to help people in difficult situations and need.

In Mississippi, where ELCA congregations are few and far between, they are especially adept at working with other Christian congregations—some full-communication partners and some just good neighbors—for the sake of the world. Here are two illustrations of how these ministries are lived out.

### Disaster response ministry

In 2001 tornadoes battered the tiny Mississippi Delta community of Isola (population 750). Nearly every building in town was damaged or destroyed. At about the same time a new organization was being formed by the Lutheran and Episcopalian Christians in the state. The organization came about when several people, most notably the Rev. Bob Hartenfeld, a member of Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Ocean Springs, Miss., and then volunteer director of Lutheran Social Ministries of Mississippi, was trying to figure out how Lutherans—few in number in that state—could address some of the Mississippi Delta’s overwhelming problems. Hartenfeld started e-mailing congregations and found some people who had experience with disaster relief—people like Hal Shope and Marianne Zotti, a Lutheran husband and wife team who were victims of a natural disaster themselves and felt called to help others. Shope and Zotti formed an organization, All Things New Disaster Ministry, to assist congregation members in learning about how to serve in disaster situations.

At the same time Lutheran/Episcopal Disaster Response (LEDR) was born. With some advice from other disaster response groups and guidance from Lutheran

Disaster Response, LEDR headed for Isola and other communities hard-hit by storms.

When LEDR got to Isola, they found a town whose people were defeated and near despair. There had not been much in Isola to start with and now most of it was in ruins. FEMA and the Red Cross had done some initial emergency work, but were now gone. Things were still a mess and no one had the will or the money to rebuild.

Shope and the Rev. Horace Choate, an Episcopal priest, invited repair teams from churches across the country to come at their own expense and help rebuild the little town. Lutherans and Episcopalians came from Indiana, Georgia, California, and other states. A group of 100 Presbyterians came in two buses from Houston. The visitors stayed in the dormitory of a small college that was closed for the summer. These volunteers cleaned up, rebuilt, painted, insulated, roofed, and repaired one home after another.

At first the town’s people were a bit skeptical. Why would strangers be doing this? The volunteers brought their own food and paid their own expenses. They even bought the supplies they used on the houses. The Presbyterians from Houston brought \$5,000 worth of building supplies,

which they charged to LEDR. Then, when they returned to Houston, they had a fund-raiser and paid it back.

Gradually, things began to take shape. The folks of Isola began to hope again.

One evening the mayor of Isola, William Tanner, met with the city leaders and decided that they would feed the 100 Houston Presbyterians before they returned to Texas. The townspeople took a collection and went to a

catfish processing plant, the only industry in town, and bought fresh fish. They didn’t want to use frozen catfish for these guests who had now become trusted friends.

After the Presbyterians left, some of the people in town formed their own disaster response group to help restore the destroyed homes of their neighbors in need. One of them said of the volunteers from around the country, “If church people from California and Texas can help, we can too.”

In the summer of 2002 a group of Episcopalians came from San Francisco to help rebuild. At this time the college dorm was no longer available for housing. Mayor Tanner offered to put them up in the newly restored Baptist church where he is a member—the Strangers’ Home Missionary Baptist Church. There was no facility for showering, though, and in the late summer heat in Isola, a shower after working all day is a necessity.

So the mayor had an idea. The congregation had just installed a new fiberglass baptistry. Why not outfit it with a shower head, and the folks from California could bathe in the baptistry? Shope questioned the propriety of showering in the baptistry. Mayor Tanner responded, “Well, if that’s not what baptism is about, I don’t know what is.” And so, the Episcopalians slept in the church and showered in the baptistry. Not one bit of that powerful baptismal imagery was lost on them.

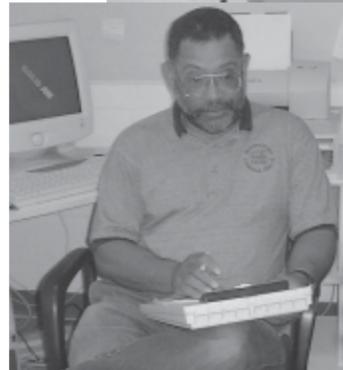
These strangers who have volunteered for LEDR have helped transform Isola—and not just physically. Now, says the mayor, the churches and the people work together and feel real hope.

But ecumenical work in Mississippi is not limited to disaster ministry.

### Ongoing cooperative ministry

Samaritan Ministry of Jackson County is a cooperative effort of Christian congregations in Ocean Springs and Gautier, Miss., to meet emergency needs of people in those communities. The ministry provides emergency assistance with food, utilities, housing, transportation, and medical care, as well as helping people with financial and budget planning.

Samaritan Ministry began with four congregations and currently has eight supporting congregations from six denominations: Lutheran, Presbyterian, United Methodist, Episcopalian, Pentecostal, and Baptist. Because of the cooperative



Henry Harris is the caseworker for Samaritan Ministry of Jackson County, Miss.

Lutheran/Episcopal Disaster Response has two fully outfitted trailers paid for by Lutheran and Episcopal congregations in Mississippi.

nature of the program, they are able to provide more assistance more efficiently to those who need it and make a clear witness to the gospel as they cooperate in meeting human need.

Henry Harris is the Samaritan Ministry case worker. His office is at Christus Victor Lutheran Church in Ocean Springs. He receives referrals from the participating congregations and from area social service agencies. Judy Eaton, a Benedictine oblate, is the coordinator of volunteers. In addition to providing the funds for Samaritan Ministry, each participating congregation provides volunteers who greet clients, keep the food pantry stocked and distribute food. Each congregation provides volunteers on a rotating basis. Congregations also rotate months in providing food for the pantry. Samaritan Ministry is a recipient of an ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant. The contributions and support of the members of the supporting churches make Samaritan Ministry work for the entire community.

### To learn more

If your congregation would like to learn more about ways in which it can work with others, check out these resources:

- ELCA Domestic Disaster Response at [www.elca.org/dcs/disaster/index.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs/disaster/index.html) This work is especially important in the aftermath of the recent hurricanes in the Southeast. Go to [www.lsfnet.org/Volunteers/volunteer-disaster.asp](http://www.lsfnet.org/Volunteers/volunteer-disaster.asp) to learn about volunteer needs in Florida.
- All Things New Disaster Ministry has information about its work and programs at [www.allthingsnewministry.org](http://www.allthingsnewministry.org)
- Learn about the ELCA Domestic Hunger Grants process and recipients at [www.elca.org/grantinghope/](http://www.elca.org/grantinghope/)
- Find out about the ELCA’s ecumenical discussions, commitments, and work at [www.elca.org/ecumenical](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical)

—The Rev. Julian Gordy is the pastor of Christus Victor Lutheran Church, Ocean Springs, Miss.

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To learn about the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and ideas about ways to work together, see page 3.

### In this issue ...

- Christian Unity, Week of Prayer, p. 3
- Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, p. 8
- Global mission, p. 6
- Lutheran Woman Today on peace, p.3
- Real estate gifts, p 6
- Resource centers Q&A on Bible literacy, p. 6
- Ripe for the Picking, pp. 4-5
- Stewardship Key Leaders program, p. 7
- World Wide Web column, p. 6
- Worship resources, p. 2

# Resources that can help in worship planning

If you're involved in worship planning, you'll want to know about these resources.

## Evening prayer in Advent

While the weekly Sunday celebration of Holy Communion is the norm for ELCA congregations, the possibility of additional services throughout the week is also encouraged. The four weeks of Advent are a time when many congregations offer an additional service of prayer, scripture, and song, often on Sunday or Wednesday evenings. The service of Evening Prayer in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (pages 142-153) continues to be one of the most popular liturgies in this church's worship book. A service of Evening Prayer, as well as rites for Morning and Night Prayer, are included for provisional use in *Renewing Worship Volume 7, Daily Prayer*. In addition to the new rites, a diverse collection of music is also provided. As with all *Renewing Worship* materials, this volume can be purchased from Augsburg Fortress (ISBN 0-8066-7007) or downloaded from [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org)

In order to make it simple for congregations to try some of these resources, several ready-to-use worship folders have been prepared and are available for free download from the *Renewing Worship* Web site. When learning new liturgical music, it is wise to use the same music for the entire four weeks, along with familiar hymns. Several examples have been prepared, each presented four times with specific readings, psalms, and hymns suggested for the particular week. A copy of the print volume will still need to be purchased for accompaniments. As with all *Renewing Worship* materials, your feedback is a critical part of the process.

To learn more about the *Renewing Worship* process leading to a proposal at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly for a new worship book, other print and electronic resources, and strategies for ongoing renewal, see [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org)

## Visual images for Sundays

*Icon Two: Visual Images for Every Sunday* by Lucinda Naylor contains over 300 visual images on CD-ROM that match those used in the next three-year cycle of *Sundays and Seasons, Worship Planning Calendar*, and *Lectionary Inserts*.

The images are perfect for bulletins, newsletters, flyers, reports, and more. These unique images help bring to life the church year and the biblical readings used every Sunday. *Icon Two* is available by calling 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8066-4803-1; \$39.99 plus shipping).

## Issues related to copyrights

In recent years there has been a trend in many congregations to print out much of the liturgy in worship folders rather than using the *Lutheran Book of Worship* in hand. Some congregations even print out all the hymns and songs. While this may be a hospitable gesture, it can take a lot of time and, sometimes, money to obtain the appropriate copyrights for such a publishing venture. Unfortunately, some congregations are still stealing from poets and composers by not following copyright laws and reprinting whatever they want without permission. The good news is that, increasingly, more congregations are learning about copyright laws, procedures for using materials legally, and budgeting appropriately. In many cases, the purchase of an annual copyright license has proven to be helpful. Various individual publishers, such as Augsburg Fortress and GIA, have offered their own licenses. Others are

provided by multiple publishers, such as CCLI and LicenSing.

OneLicense.net is a new copyright venture for churches that was launched August 2004. Complete information can be readily found at the Web site at

[www.onelicense.net](http://www.onelicense.net)

OneLicense.net is completely Internet based and includes publisher members who have never been previously associated with a joint licensing venture, as well as many who are represented elsewhere. The current list of publishers represented by OneLicense includes Augsburg Fortress, Concordia, Morningstar, GIA, Hope, Oxford University Press, Church Publishing (Episcopal), Pilgrim Press (UCC), and Abingdon Press (United Methodist) with new publishers coming on board weekly. This is an exciting new venture that will be extremely helpful for many ELCA congregations in providing diverse worship in a format that is user-friendly for worshippers.

Congregations wanting to learn about copyrights and worship, may find these Web sites helpful:

- from the ELCA Division for Congregational Ministries, [www.elca.org/dcm/worship/faq/music/copyright/licenses.html](http://www.elca.org/dcm/worship/faq/music/copyright/licenses.html)
- from Augsburg Fortress, [www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights/index.asp?PageID=671](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/copyrights/index.asp?PageID=671), and
- from the U.S. Government, [www.copyright.gov/](http://www.copyright.gov/)



The art for the First Sunday in Advent icon for Year A from *Icon Two*.

## Tools for congregations on new Web site

Ready to help your faith community grow? Need a place to start?



You can find all sorts of resources for congregations and tools for ministry at [www.elca.org/healthychurch](http://www.elca.org/healthychurch)

"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...**" is one of the strategic directions of the ELCA.

The Division for Congregational Ministries takes this call seriously and has launched a new Web site to support you and your congregation as you seek to become more faithful in your life together, more welcoming to all in your community, and more generous in your use and sharing of your gifts.

## Resources to check out

Visit [www.elca.org/healthychurch](http://www.elca.org/healthychurch) where you'll find:

- 'Ask Grace', ELCA's version of 'Dear Abby' that includes frequently asked questions from congregations seeking to

become vital communities of faith

- An online opportunity to be guided in quiet meditation and prayer
- Friendly self-quizzes to help you assess how your congregation can become more faithful, welcoming, and generous, with links to the best resources that point you in the right direction
- Stories of congregations that have been faithful, welcoming, or generous in unique ways
- A place to share your own congregation's stories of its journey to be faithful, welcoming, and generous
- Online access to many of the latest print materials sent to congregations last summer in the *Tools for a Healthy Congregation* packet.

## Ways to use these resources

Consider using this site as a full-service provider for ...

- congregation council or committee reflection and planning
- materials for leadership retreats
- sharing news of exciting programs happening in your congregation
- starting points for adult forum discussions
- links to Bible studies and other resources

## ELCA Strategic Directions

To learn more about the ELCA's strategic directions, planning for mission, and vision statement, go to [www.elca.org/planning/directions.html](http://www.elca.org/planning/directions.html)



## Seeds for the Parish

[www.elca.org/co/seeds](http://www.elca.org/co/seeds)

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# Ideas for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 18-25, 2005. This year's theme will be "All things are yours ... you belong to Christ ... and Christ, the unique foundation, belongs to God" (1 Cor. 3:1-23).

Now is the time to start planning what your congregation will do to mark this important observance. Consider enhancing your congregation's prayer for Christian unity with some additional activity or project. While particularly appropriate for this designated week, these ideas could also work for a Lenten program or a way to celebrate Pentecost.

## How to get started

If your congregation hasn't yet experienced the satisfaction of working cooperatively with other congregations, or if you haven't done it in a while, here are practical ways to get started.

- Look around your community: Is there a need that you can work with others to fill? Some ideas: a battered women's shelter that needs support; a food pantry that needs an influx of provisions; a park that needs to be cleaned up; a neighborhood that needs an after-school program for kids; a one-time project such as a used-book fair to raise money for a social services organization and to help promote reading. Ask around. Think about how you can work together with other congregations to help.
- Invite other pastors from nearby congregations to have coffee with the express

purpose of talking about this need. Start with full communion partner churches (Presbyterian, Episcopal, Moravian, Reformed Church in America, and the United Church of Christ) but don't be limited to those.

- Pull together key people from the congregations who might have energy around the issue. Form a short-term inter-congregational committee to plan the event.
- Assign someone to promote the project in each congregation and someone to contact the local media—community newspapers and television stations. Take photos and write about the event so that you can tell the larger community about it. From the point of view of the media, this is a "feel good" story—churches working together to meet a need.
- The project can be simple and doesn't have to be long-term (such as a used-book fair or clean-up day).
- Whatever you do, make it meaningful and fun—work and worship, with a time for social interaction. Ask a local grocery store to donate food (like ice cream or hot dogs) for a social gathering as part of the event. Make the point that it's not just for one congregation.
- Make the project as inter-generational as possible. Include youth.



- Tell the ELCA Department of Ecumenical Affairs about it. E-mail [melanie.gibbons@elca.org](mailto:melanie.gibbons@elca.org). Send along digital photos if you have them. There may be opportunities to share your story with the wider church to help serve as a model for other congregations.

- After the project, pull together participants to evaluate it. What went right? What would you do differently next time? Maybe there

will be a sense that there are other projects the congregations would want to do together in the future.

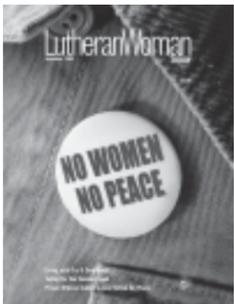
If there is ever a crisis or disaster in your community, you will have established relationships to respond quickly.

## Resources

- A flyer about resources for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity was in the November-December Action Packet sent to each congregation. You can also find information about the 2005 observance at [www.geii.org](http://www.geii.org)
- Check out the newly redesigned Ecumenical Affairs Web site at [www.elca.org/ecumenical](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical). The new site offers opportunities for you to publicize your ecumenical events and to see what others are doing. It also has links to full-communion partners.
- Contact your synod office for local project ideas and resources.

# Lutheran Woman Today 'acts boldly' for peace

*Lutheran Woman Today* (LWT) is getting a head start on the "Act Boldly" theme adopted for the Women of the ELCA's sixth triennial gathering in San Antonio, July 5-10, 2005. The November issue of LWT features an article on peace, co-written by a United Nations representative and editors of two women's magazines, LWT and *Horizons*, a publication for Presbyterian Women.



The November article, which seeks to help women better understand current issues about peace, is only a foretaste of what's to come in July-August 2005. In an unprecedented ecumenical move, four women's magazines will jointly publish about five major articles on peace.

The magazines involved are: *Glad Tidings*, published by the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, *Horizons*, published by Presbyterian Women in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Lutheran Woman Today*, published by Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and *Response*, published by United Methodist Women of the United Methodist Church.

In a truly collaborative spirit, the editors of these magazines shared these thoughts: "The exciting part is knowing that our

combined readership of nearly 200,000 women will be touched by the same stories and inspired by the same ideas, just as we're all moved by the same Spirit regardless of where and how we worship."

The editors suggest women's groups coordinate ecumenical dialogues on peace. "We ask that you not only pray for all who are involved in bringing these publications to you, but also for all those who do not live in peace."

To view the November LWT article and other related stories about peace, visit [www.lutheranwomantoday.org](http://www.lutheranwomantoday.org). To subscribe to *Lutheran Woman Today*, call 800/328-4648. To learn about the other magazines, visit their Web sites at [www.pcusa.org/pcusalhorizons](http://www.pcusa.org/pcusalhorizons); <http://gbgm-umc.org/response>; and <http://presbyterian.ca/wms>. To learn more about the triennial gathering, go to [www.womenoftheelca.org/news/events/tg05/index.html](http://www.womenoftheelca.org/news/events/tg05/index.html)

## 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](http://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.

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For nearly a century, the Mission Investment Fund has helped congregations in financial need. In fact, as a ministry of the ELCA, we've provided more than \$500 million in loans to congregations throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. In the process, we've funded the construction of new churches, the renovation of old ones, and a myriad of other projects. So if your congregation needs a little help, give us a call today. And very soon you'll be experiencing a financial miracle of your own.

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[www.elca.org/mif](http://www.elca.org/mif)

## Transracial adoption

*Weaving God's Love Across Cultures: Transracial Adoption and Faith* is a new resource book about transracial adoption. Thousands of children are adopted transracially in the United States every year.

Transracial adoption blesses and challenges adoptive families, as well as their faith communities, as they experience cultural diversity at home and see God's immanence embodied through this particular gift.

Adopted people, adoptive parents, and church leaders planned this resource to support this growing community within the church. This book includes moving stories and spiritual reflections by adopted people and adoptive parents; valuable insights about the call to live across cultures; and a wealth of resources (prayers, welcoming rituals, Web sites, organizations, biblical references) for adoptive families and their congregations. To order call 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0001-7505-1; \$14 plus shipping).

## Online resource for parents

The Grand Central Proclamation Station is a new online resource for parents and other Christian educators to download



and/or submit stories that characterize faith proclaimers today and throughout history. The

resources include discussion questions and activities that may be used to enrich your ongoing children and family program ministries. You may want to use an electronic inter-generational program titled the Proclamation Station to introduce this resource in your congregation. Go to [www.elca.org/dcm/christian\\_education](http://www.elca.org/dcm/christian_education) to learn more.

## Young men's ministry DVD

Where have all the young men gone? And how do we get them back? A new DVD begins to answer those questions. In *Men's Ministry: Generation to Generation*, Dr. Roland Martinson leads a panel in a discussion divided into three sessions:

- The results of a "Young Men's Spirituality Study,"
- Interviews dealing with the faith and lives of young men, and
- Implications for men's ministry.

Information shared on this DVD is the result of research done by Lutheran Men in Mission and Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., on young adult male spirituality. More than 100 men ages 18-34 from six geographical areas of the United States were interviewed. This resource is perfect for congregational men's ministry leadership

training or as a discussion starter for inter-generational men's programs. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-001-9598-2; \$2 plus shipping).

## CD helps ELCA World Hunger

Their first CD, *Take A Breath*, has raised over \$50,000 over the last 18 months for the ELCA World Hunger Program. "A Bunch of Guys" are friends from Calumet, New England's Lutheran Camp and Conference Center. They started to play music together several years ago and are trying to raise money for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. Their second CD, *Enough*, is a Christmas record with more than 20 musicians. "A Bunch of Guys" will do a "30 In 30 Tour" — \$30,000 in the 30 days leading up to Christmas. Sixteen partner congregations provided the production costs for the CDs, so that every penny goes directly to the fight against hunger. To order the Christmas CD, or to learn more about "A Bunch of Guys," go to [www.takeabreath.org](http://www.takeabreath.org)

## Reflections for church leaders

*Called by God To Serve: Reflections for Church Leaders* is a new book in the Lutheran Voices series from Augsburg Fortress by the Rev. Robert F. Holley and the Rev. Paul E. Walters, both ELCA pastors. Congregation councils and other leaders will discover 10 helpful devotional reflections and discussion-starters for a three-year cycle, focusing on the task of *servicing* from a biblical and theological perspective. Insights from family-systems theory provide a framework for the reflections.

Through discussion of theory and by encountering and responding to real-life situations, readers will ponder aspects of what they are called to do together. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8066-5172-5; \$9.99 plus shipping).

## Lectures on Christian life

What wisdom does faith offer to individuals and communities facing the perennial problems of the human situation? Can theological ideas such as creation, sin, redemption—and particularly Lutheran themes such as law/gospel, the hiddenness of God, the



theology of the cross, and simultaneously saint and sinner—be appropriated helpfully for Christian living today? The 2005 Hein-Fry Lectures will explore these questions

under the theme of "Practical Theology in the Life of the Christian." Lecturers are Herbert Anderson, visiting professor of pastoral care at Yale University Divinity School, and Bonnie McLemore-Miller, professor of

pastoral and practical theology at Vanderbilt University Divinity School. Anderson will speak at Southern Seminary, Feb. 3; Pacific Lutheran Seminary, Feb. 25; Gettysburg Seminary, March 10; and Luther Seminary, April 29.

McLemore-Miller will speak at Philadelphia Seminary, Feb. 22; Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, March 4; Wartburg Seminary, March 31; and Trinity Seminary, May 5.

The Hein-Fry Lectures are free and open to the public. These endowed lectures are coordinated annually by the ELCA Division for Ministry in cooperation with the eight seminaries of the ELCA.

For information, contact any seminary, or visit [www.elca.org/dmlhf](http://www.elca.org/dmlhf) or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2885.

## LSM student gathering

Do you know where your college, university, graduate, and seminary students will be ringing in the New Year 2005? Be



sure they know of this exciting event. Lutheran Student Movement – USA (LSM) will host its annual National Gathering in the Houston area from Dec. 29, 2004 – Jan. 2,

2005. The theme of the event is "Houston, we have a problem: Endeavoring to more fully discover our mission as young adults of faith...and challenging the church from within."

Highlights of the week include enlightening speakers, enriching Bible study, and excellent music provided by Dakota Road. On top of that, participants will spend an evening with NASA as well.

LSM is a national movement of students striving to better understand and advance the gospel of Jesus Christ through the exploration of social and spiritual concerns. See their Web site at [www.lsm-usa.org](http://www.lsm-usa.org) or call the LSM intern at 800/638-3522, ext. 2852, for updates on cost, speakers, and registration information. Discounted early registration ends Nov. 12, but they will accept registrations for a couple of weeks after that, so act now.

## Leading on Purpose book

In his new book, *Leading on Purpose: Intentionality and Teaming in Congregational Life*, Eric Burtness explores the Purpose-Driven Church phenomena. He provides pastors and church leaders with a Lutheran view of what it means to lead on purpose and integrates the purpose-driven philosophy into the context of Lutheran congregational life.

Burtness tells the stories of ELCA congregations, large and small, rural and urban, that have used this structure and ministry emphasis for health, growth, and revitalization. Burtness is senior pastor at St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Beaverton, Ore.

To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8066-5174-1; \$9.99 plus shipping).

## Shareholder network

Are you interested in hearing how the values of your faith can inform all aspects of your life? Sign up for the shareholder network sponsored by the ELCA's Corporate Social Responsibility Program. Approximately every two weeks you will receive an e-mail containing updates of shareholder resolutions, corporate information, and new resources for investing guided by your faith. To sign up, go to [www.elca.org/advocacy/corporate](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/corporate)

Corporate Social Responsibility, an advocacy ministry conducted by the ELCA Division for Church in Society, seeks to influence the private sector based upon ELCA social policy.

## E-newsletter on leadership

Looking for practical, easy to use information on ministry and leadership topics? Each issue



of *The RevWriter Resource* supplies timely materials for busy congregational leaders for use either individually or with groups. By e-mail readers receive a devotion, article on a leadership topic, and suggested additional sources. Past topics have included: Tools for Spiritual Growth, Creatively Celebrating Your Life in Christ, Faithfully Dealing with Criticism, Teacher Empowerment, and Tending to Self-Care. There's a new section on Practical Wisdom: Sharing Ministry Ideas That Work. If you have a ministry practice that worked in your congregation, you can share it with others by sending an e-mail to [editor@revwriter.com](mailto:editor@revwriter.com).

*The RevWriter Resource* is published electronically by the Rev. Susan M. Lang, author of *Our Community: Dealing with Conflict in Our Congregation* (Augsburg Fortress, 2002). Lang currently serves as a synodical consultant in Leadership and Congregational Support in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA. To subscribe to the e-mail newsletter, visit [www.revwriter.com/congregationalresource.html](http://www.revwriter.com/congregationalresource.html). For additional information, contact Lang at [editor@revwriter.com](mailto:editor@revwriter.com).

## Bible study on HIV/AIDS

Looking for a way to observe World AIDS Day on December 1? *Time to Talk in Church About HIV and AIDS* is a Bible study discussion guide written by Andrea Bakke and Corean Bakke that draws parallels between leprosy in Bible times—a disease that created an enormous social stigma—and a modern counterpart.

Each of the 10 lessons is based on a biblical story. Questions invite people to reflect on the ancient story and its relevance to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This discussion is for those grieving the loss of loved ones, those watching as this pandemic unfolds, and those whose lives have not yet been touched by HIV and AIDS.

The authors hope that congregations will use this study to begin talking about the disease in the context of small groups. The lessons are appropriate for teens and all subsequent ages. To order, go to [www.bakkenbooks.com](http://www.bakkenbooks.com) or e-mail [andrea@bakkenbooks.com](mailto:andrea@bakkenbooks.com) (\$10.50 plus shipping; sales tax applies in Washington State; discounts are available for 10 or more copies).

## ELCA Vision for Mission

Does your congregation want to be a part of a church actively engaged in God's mission in the world? Of course it does! Once a year it is important to provide your members the opportunity to give directly to those ministries we do best together.

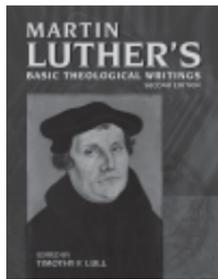
Perhaps your congregation has already taken part in the offering. If so, thank you for providing them with the opportunity. If not, encourage your congregation to support this offering to help undergird the vital global and domestic ministries of the ELCA.

Last spring your congregation received a box of Vision for Mission offering materials. It included a letter from ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and a copy of the May issue of *The Lutheran* magazine. In addition, hymns, prayer petitions, sermon starters, suggestions on how to celebrate the offering, reproducible stories, and a colorful poster were included.

If you cannot locate these items you can download them from [www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/vision.html](http://www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/vision.html) or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2536. To receive bulletin inserts with envelopes in packages of 50, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-1149-X; free).

## Luther reader with CD-ROM

*Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, Second Edition, edited by Timothy Lull, now comes with a



CD-ROM. The best one-volume reader of Martin Luther's writings, this work has become the gold standard for use in seminary and college environments. It not only offers all of Luther's most influential, noted,

and important writings in the modern translations from the American edition of *Luther's Works*, but also includes excerpts of his sermons and letters that shed light on Luther's own religious and theological development. This would be a helpful addition for libraries of pastors and congregations. This new edition includes a CD-ROM featuring a biography of Luther, a historical timeline, links to Reformation-era graphics, links to biographies and pictures of key Reformation figures, and a glossary of key theological terms. To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8006-3680-5; \$39 plus shipping).

## Help military families

During this time of conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan, does your congregation have members who may be serving in the military or who have loved ones serving in areas of danger? Is your congregation located near a military base? The ELCA Web site has resources that can help your congregation's ministry to these families. Go to [www.elca.org/peaceandwar/help.html](http://www.elca.org/peaceandwar/help.html) to find a list of resources such as readings for Christians in times of war, articles relating to Iraq and the Middle East, links to ecumenical partners and their resources, and more. To read about how your congregation can support military families and to submit your own ministry suggestions, go to [www.elca.org/peaceandwar/families.html](http://www.elca.org/peaceandwar/families.html)

To read messages from ELCA Chaplain Mike Lembke, stationed in Tikrit, Iraq, go to the Web site of the ELCA Federal Chaplaincy Ministries at [www.elca.org/federalchaplains/](http://www.elca.org/federalchaplains/)

Also, check out an article in *The Lutheran* (March 2003) on practical ways to support loved ones in the military at [www.thelutheran.org/0303/page49b.html](http://www.thelutheran.org/0303/page49b.html)

## Authors Online book discussion

Don't miss out on unique opportunities to interact with authors of new books, online!



These month-long book studies are scheduled every other month in 2005. Invite your whole congregation to these virtual book clubs, or join yourself and then lead a face-to-face group with confidence. Participate on the Web or via your regular e-mail address. Authors for the first part of 2005 include: Eric G. Burtness, *Leading on Purpose: Intentionality and Teaming in Congregational Life* (January); Bruce B. Roberts, *Where in the World is Integrity? The Challenge of Doing What is Right* (March); and Mark Allan Powell, *Loving Jesus* (May). To find out more information and to order the books, go to [www.lutherlink.org/](http://www.lutherlink.org/)

## Devotional Guide for 2005

Ever wonder how to begin your council meeting—without asking the pastor to do the opening prayer again? Here's a resource for you: The *2005 ELCA Devotional Guide for Congregation Councils and Committees* provides biblical texts, meditations, reflections, and prayers that will help focus your work together. It also includes artwork that congregations can use in bulletins, newsletters, other print pieces, or electronic presentations.

The *Devotional Guide* was sent to all ELCA congregations in the November-December Action Packet, and is also available online. Go to [www.elca.org/co/2005dev](http://www.elca.org/co/2005dev) for free download of meditations, questions for reflection, prayers, and artwork.

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

## Health and wellness site

A new ELCA Web page called "ELCA Health & Wellness" is found at [www.elca.org/healthcare/](http://www.elca.org/healthcare/). This page features the new social statement, "Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor," and several health and wellness resources, as well as links to other health-related Web sites. Through this site you can see Augsburg Fortress resources ("For the Healing of the World"), find a Lutheran health-care facility, discover resources for congregational health ministry, learn about health and wellness for all individuals (including those with disabilities), connect to the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs for health-care advocacy, or find resources or information about reducing violence, international health, public and environmental health, and domestic health-care issues.

## Give a gift of hope this season

Wrap your gift-giving in hope this Advent and Christmas season through tax deductible charitable giving to ELCA and ELCA-related ministries, and through charitable shopping. Start your shopping (or point others who are looking for the perfect gift for you), by going to

[www.elca.org/gifts/](http://www.elca.org/gifts/) to give a gift of life and hope for others. Monetary gifts, given online or otherwise, can be given in honor or memory of a loved one or friend. A new feature this year is a series of gift e-cards that allow you to send an attractive e-mail card to the recipient. Some opportunities provide a paper card acknowledging the gift. Check [www.elca.org/lecards](http://www.elca.org/lecards) for a listing of some of the options.



continue to grow rapidly over the next few months, and gradually after that, as e-mail questions keep pouring in to [info@elca.org](mailto:info@elca.org). It also provides links to other areas in ELCA Web sites where questions are answered, such as the very popular worship resource "Frequently Asked Questions." Bookmark this new Web page as a resource for your congregation's staff and members.

## End nuclear danger

Join the growing chorus of Lutherans calling for an end to nuclear danger. At the Churchwide Assembly in 2003, the ELCA endorsed "For People of Faith: An Urgent Call to End the Nuclear Danger." The declaration is an effort to make the United States take seriously its responsibilities in permanently eliminating the threat posed by nuclear weapons and nuclear material. Now, you can add your voice to this important declaration. Go to [www.elca.org/advocacy/nuclear\\_disarmament](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/nuclear_disarmament) and follow the instructions to add your endorsement. For more information about the ELCA's online advocacy efforts, visit [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy)

## Telling the Lutheran Story

To make it easier for ELCA Web site visitors to find answers to their frequently asked questions, a new section has been added to ELCA.org: [www.elca.org/questions](http://www.elca.org/questions). Thanks to a grant from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the new database includes in-depth answers to some of the questions about faith, Lutheranism and the Bible, such as "What is the Holy Spirit?" and "What do Lutherans teach about angels?" In addition, some very pragmatic subjects are addressed, like "What is the meaning of Martin Luther's seal?"

This section of the ELCA Web site will

# What you should know about gifts of real estate

Many people have fallen in love with their homes or land that have been in their families for generations. It's tough to let go, what has meant so much for so long.

Sometimes people come to local congregations, synods, ministries, and the ELCA Foundation seeking to have their memorable land saved as it is in perpetuity. Sometimes these dreams work, but often it's the congregations that find themselves with a gift that has become a headache.

Congregations need to look to the future before accepting any gift of real property and how it will fit into their plans for ministry and needs. Regardless, there are certain steps that must be followed in accepting gifts of real property.

- In order to establish a gift value for the

property a qualified appraisal must be made. This is an expense and responsibility of the donor. Reputable real estate agents in your area will know someone who is a qualified appraiser registered with your state.

- A qualified appraisal must include the value of the gift property, along with comparisons of comparable sales in the area. IRS publication 561 is the place to look for the qualified appraisal requirements. It includes a statement that the appraisal was prepared for the express purpose of making a gift to your ministry and for income tax purposes.
- All qualified appraisals must be current, within 60 days of the date the deed is recorded with the county clerk.

- The qualified appraiser must fill out IRS Form 8283 and send it to the charity for them to fill out their section and return it to the donor for inclusion with the donor's current income tax report.
- If the property is sold within two years, the charity will need to file IRS Form 8282.

The ELCA Foundation uses an environmental questionnaire form for the donor to fill out before it accepts any real estate and a representative of the Foundation also visits the property with the prospective donor.

A free copy of the environmental questionnaire and other information about accepting real estate as a charitable gift is at [www.elca.org/fofrealstate.html](http://www.elca.org/fofrealstate.html)



# Resource centers discuss Bible literacy ideas

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](http://www.elca.org/co/centers.html)

**Q** We are concerned about the lack of biblical literacy in our congregation. Are there guidelines or a 'master content list' that can guide us?

**A** I'm aware of the concern that people may feel they have 'graduated' if they have covered specific content ... which is why a 'master content list' has not been developed. Is our passing on of the faith weak because we are not able to relate specific Bible stories to today? I refer people to a program developed by Parma Lutheran Church, Parma, Ohio, called *The Ladder*. This memorization program includes the Lord's Prayer, Creed, Ten Commandments, books of the Bible, etc. Check it out at [http://synodresourcecenter.org/edu/sunday\\_school/ideas/0009/ladder\\_program.html](http://synodresourcecenter.org/edu/sunday_school/ideas/0009/ladder_program.html). Also identify a good Bible storybook and encourage families to use it as part of the bedtime ritual. A great start for a children's Bible is *The Beginner's Bible*, available from Augsburg Fortress ([www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org))

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

**A** Our congregations who use activity center-based Sunday school (rotation model) make sure the important biblical stories and lessons are taught and understood. Congregations that have done this for six or more years are pleased with the knowledge and retention the confirmation-age kids have.

Those doing lectionary-based Sunday

school are incorporating the Old Testament stories or Bible basics into their vacation Bible school programs or special Wednesday evening intergenerational gatherings where all ages learn together.

—Susan Schlitter, director, Lutheran Resource Center, Clear Lake, Iowa

**A** This concern is important because this is an age-old lament. How can we do better—a basic list of the most foundational stories? Is there a "magic curriculum" that makes learners absorb all the necessary biblical truths? I'm uneasy about reducing faith formation and Christian education to "knowing the stories." Teaching the Bible stories and learning the catechism are important baptismal promises, but when religious education becomes too goal-oriented and curriculum-conscious, we easily lose sight of the larger goal—hearing, seeing, being, tasting, and touching God's presence, as in worship.

So to the parade of pastors and leaders asking these questions, I ask them: What are you hoping for? What matters most? What is it that we are "handing down?" This goes for Bible study, adult education, Sunday school, confirmation, and all the rest. The ELCA Web site has helpful planning tools at [www.elca.org/dcn/christian\\_education/](http://www.elca.org/dcn/christian_education/)

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

**A** In the church, when we talk about successful educational programs, we often equate success with how much

biblical knowledge we have. Perhaps we need to spend more time working with our teachers so they can help their students experience sharing the faith by telling their stories and talking about their faith experiences. We can't stop with just learning the stories. We need to encourage each other to talk about what the stories mean for us.

—Ruth Miller, director of ministry resources, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, Wescosville

**A** In addition to fostering faith formation at home, it is so important that we incorporate children into the life of the church. We tend to separate ourselves into groups—Sunday school, youth, adults—with not much togetherness. Some congregations have children shadow adults in their service areas of the congregation (ushers, altar guild, greeters, etc.). Children begin to understand what it means to "be" the church and stay involved.

—Darlene Kalfahs, director, East Central Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center, Appleton

**A** Maybe congregations need to give out Bible storybooks at baptism or as their children reach the toddler stage. Congregations can help parents by providing their families with *ReadyClickGrow Your Family*, a Web-based ministry tool from Augsburg Fortress that provides practical and fun ways to talk about faith at home ([www.readyclickgrow.com/](http://www.readyclickgrow.com/)).

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

# Stewardship Key Leader program makes a difference

A few years ago Hope Lutheran Church in Fergus Falls, Minn., had a problem. In a sense, it was a good problem because the congregation had more than doubled its membership in just a few years. "We simply didn't have enough space," said 20-year member Darrell Strand. "Our education program was particularly squeezed. We tried room dividers, and that didn't work well. Our youth group was meeting in the pastor's office, but they were packed in like sardines."

In short, Strand said, the church was getting by, but not very well.

In 2000 the congregation assessed its needs for space and the possibility of expansion. "We knew we had to do something," said Pastor Jon Olson. "We met with three professional stewardship organizations; one was the ELCA's Stewardship Key Leader program. We met with a representative of that program a second time and concluded that it would give us what we needed at a fraction of the cost."

The congregation's response to the capital campaign, which began in 2002 over a five-week period, "was very enthusiastic," Olson said. "The program involved all the members working together."

The congregation worked with ELCA Key Leader consultant Harris Lee. "He helped us through the entire process, putting together educational material, overseeing the pledge weekend, preaching and being available during the entire process."

Olson said he was a bit hesitant at first with the financial goal of \$250,000. "I thought it was unrealistic. We didn't have

a lot of money in reserve and Hope didn't have a tradition of pledging. Thankfully, Harris knew we were capable of reaching that goal and inspired us to a higher level."

"The congregation was enthusiastic about the program," Strand added. Olson added that Stewardship Key Leader is a biblically based Lutheran program. "There were no high-pressure or overbearing sales talks. It was a good education on what expansion would mean to us."

The result of using the Stewardship Key Leader program paid off: The congregation pledged \$248,000 for the expansion project.

In June 2002, the congregation held a groundbreaking ceremony for new space, which includes new classrooms, youth room, new sanctuary, offices, multi-purpose room, bathrooms, enlarged kitchen and expanded parking. "We didn't have to hire an architect for the building project," Olson said. "We worked with an ELCA building consultant, Phil Rowe, who was very helpful through the entire process."

The congregation's contributions to the project didn't end with dollars—they volunteered their time as well. "During construction people got together and helped with various tasks," Strand said. "It was a tremendous effort. I'd say we got twice the value for our money because of



The new sanctuary at Hope Lutheran Church

the volunteer time."

By June 2003, Hope was using its new space. "It was a great thrill for us," Olson said. "We voted to pursue some ministries we previously didn't have room for,

such as a pre-school program."

Today, Hope Lutheran is meeting its financial obligations for the project. "We've also been able to get ahead on money owed," Olson said. "It's been a very positive experience for us. Our members continue to be very supportive."

Olson stressed how badly the new space was needed by pointing out that seven years ago, there were under 200 members, compared to 425 members today.

Olson concluded that he highly recommends the Stewardship Key Leader program to other congregations seeking to raise funds. "Our key leader was very organized, professional, personal and productive. This program, which has strengthened our congregation in many ways, is a great resource for the church." To learn more

For more information about the ELCA's Stewardship Key Leader program, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2606, or e-mail [skl@elca.org](mailto:skl@elca.org).

—Michael Stein is the communications director for the Northwestern Minnesota Synod.

## Missionary tackles new challenge in Namibia

"One is always a little anxious in starting a new job—anywhere," wrote Lynn Naumann shortly after arriving in Windhoek, Namibia, where she will serve



Lynn Naumann

as administrative assistant for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia (ELCRN). In her first note home, Lynn expressed her eagerness to learn about Namibia, meet new colleagues, and tackle new challenges. Because she served as a Lutheran Church in America (LCA) missionary in Peru and Uruguay in the 1960s, she

felt prepared for some of the cultural adjustments that new missionaries face.

"I have also been blessed that my colleagues are open and friendly, and want to make my arrival and adjustment most pleasant," she wrote. "They have been very willing to introduce me to the workings of the ELCRN."

Founded by German missionaries and fully autonomous since 1972, the ELCRN ministers to 300,000 members who worship in four languages. The church played a vital role in Namibia's struggle for independence, realized in 1990.

For the general secretary and bishop, Lynn will help manage the office, supervise training, and handle the church's international correspondence—all skills she honed during her Seattle-based career in international business and export.

"My hope is to promote a positive and constructive interchange of ideas between the churches of Namibia and the U.S., and to build an even greater awareness that the body of Christ includes all believers," Lynn wrote of her new position. "I ask for prayers for the continued strength of ministers who serve; for people in need,

pain, and poverty; for those facing the effects of HIV/AIDS; and that we can all serve Christ to the fullest to bring God's Word of salvation to all. What a blessing to be a partner in this Gospel of love and fellowship!"

On December 27, you are asked to pray for Lynn Naumann as part of the Prayer Ventures daily prayer guide. Pray for her, the ELCRN, and the companion synod relationship between the ELRCN and the ELCA Northeastern Iowa, New Jersey, and Metropolitan Washington, D.C., Synods.

### Automatic alerts about online Prayer Ventures

Don't miss a single issue of Prayer Ventures! Now a service will contact you whenever a new issue of Prayer Ventures is posted on the Web. Visit [www.elca.org/](http://www.elca.org/)

[prayerventures](#) for instructions on how to sign up for automatic notification. You can also request printed copies by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

### Celebrate new missionaries with new sponsorships

If you're considering sponsoring a missionary, there's good news: This year, 141 new ELCA missionaries have been called to serve with our companion churches around the globe. Through the Missionary Sponsorship program, you or your congregation can sponsor a missionary or missionary family, and make their ministry an extension of yours. For more information on how to sponsor a new ELCA missionary, contact the Rev. David Lerseth at 800/638-3522, ext. 2641 or e-mail [David.Lerseth@elca.org](mailto:David.Lerseth@elca.org)

## Learn about the ELCA Wittenberg Center

The ELCA Wittenberg Center is a resource that can help your congregation connect to its Lutheran heritage. The center supports congregational groups who wish to deepen their understanding of their Lutheran roots, travel in the footsteps of Luther and his colleagues, and be renewed and transformed by a journey on which one encounters God's presence in people and historic places. Wittenberg Center programs can help your congregation strengthen and renew its mission.

The ministry of the Wittenberg Center is:

- **Historical.** On a Wittenberg Center program, you can celebrate Holy Communion in the Castle Church, where Luther posted his 95 theses.
- **Contemporary.** The focus of the Center's ministry lies not only in the Sixteenth Century. Crucial to their ministry are today's stories, the ways in which our Reformation heritage forms

our contemporary identity.

- **Intergenerational.** Congregations can strengthen the commitment of their high school students by creating a Wittenberg Center program for youth.
- **Flexible.** In cooperation with its ground agents and with input from you, the Wittenberg Center staff can plan the entire journey for your group.
- **Committed and faithful.** The Wittenberg Center is not a tourist agency; it is a ministry of the ELCA whose primary objectives are to facilitate programs of faithful inquiry, help people deepen their sense of Lutheran identity, and equip them to participate thoughtfully in theological conversations.

For help in planning your congregational program or for a sample program, contact the ELCA Wittenberg Center at [ELCAWittenbergCenter@t-online.de](mailto:ELCAWittenbergCenter@t-online.de) or call Marlene DeWulf at 800/638-3522, ext. 6551.

# Ways to support those living with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Based on a study conducted by researchers at DePaul University as many as 800,000 people nationwide suffer from CFIDS.

Although the name implies people with Chronic Fatigue and Immune Dysfunction Syndrome (CFIDS) are simply tired, they are suffering from a devastating illness that brings myriad symptoms. CFIDS is a complex and debilitating chronic illness that affects the brain and multiple body systems.

CFIDS is like having a flu that never goes away—headaches, fevers, sore throats, muscle and joint pain, difficulty with memory and concentration, and a level of fatigue described as profound exhaustion, especially following mental or physical exertion. For many that means a trip to the store can lead to days in bed, too sick to function. There is no cure for CFIDS—it is a chronic, long-term illness.

The physical toll of CFIDS is immense, but the emotional effects can be even more challenging. There is a great sense of isolation and loneliness when spending days, months or years confined to bed or house. Relationships fall away as friends doubt the severity of invisible symptoms or tire of canceled plans. Because people with CFIDS have limited energy, numerous choices must be made every day on how to spend it. There is constant loss ... choosing one thing inevitably means losing many others. The grieving for daily losses and the loss of future dreams seems

endless. Becoming severely and chronically ill also strips away self-identity. People with CFIDS struggle with finding a new sense of purpose and worth when what they can do changes drastically.

Ways congregation members can be supportive

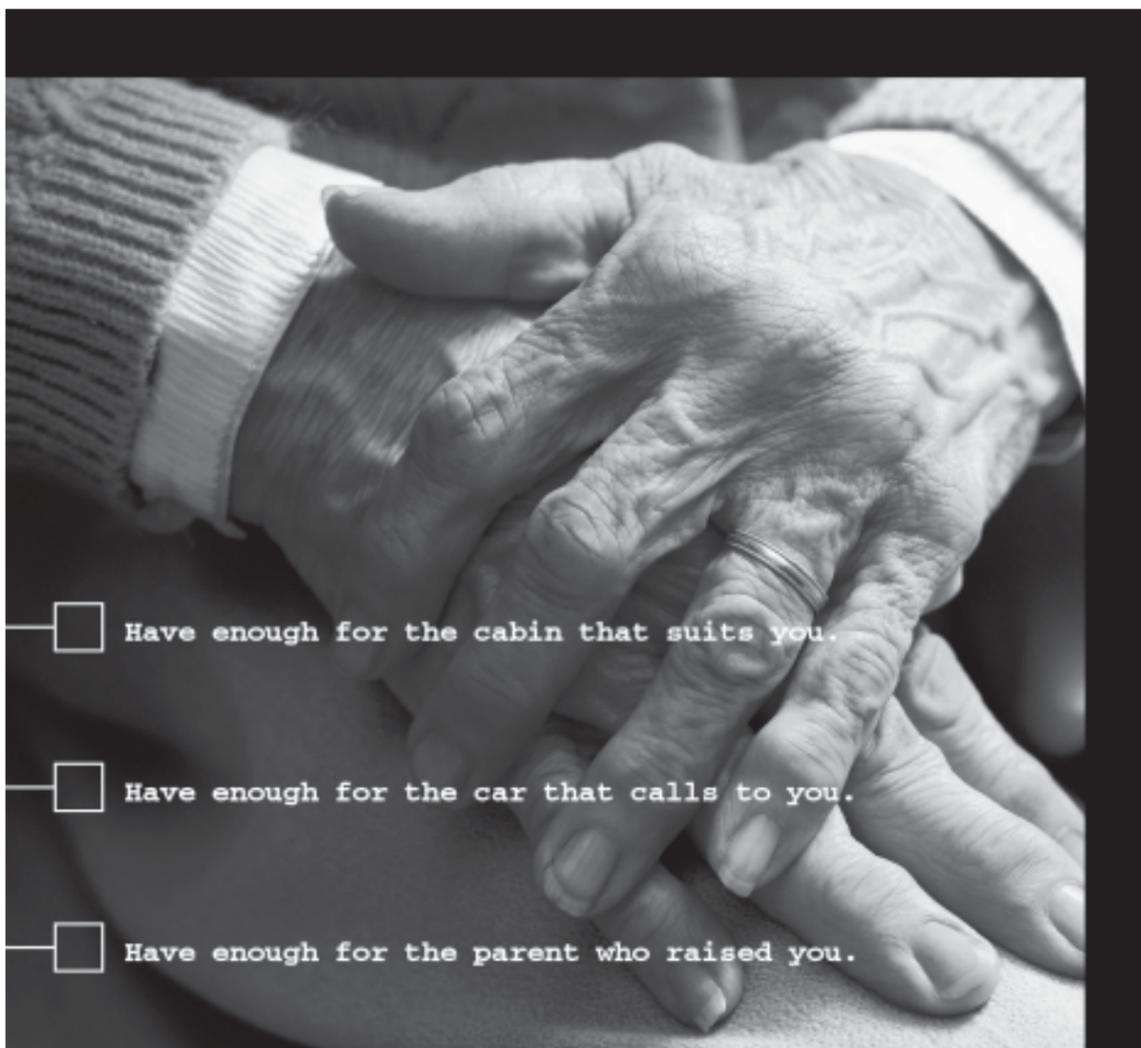
- Understand that CFIDS is a real, physical illness. Telling people to stay positive or to get more rest is not the cure. It is not a psychiatric illness or caused by depression or spiritual weakness.
- A person with CFIDS has limited energy. Often the choice to attend worship means giving up everything else for that weekend, then paying for it by spending days in bed. Understand without judging that making that choice every Sunday may not be possible. Celebrate when people with CFIDS are able to be there, knowing that even though they may look “great” they have sacrificed to be there and most likely aren’t feeling great.
- CFIDS lasts forever. Sometimes this means keeping a member on the prayer list for many years, coordinating weekly meals, or sending cheerful notes regularly.
- Because of the isolation, congregation members can be a huge support just by offering quick visits. Bringing a cup of coffee one afternoon, or stopping by with a hug can make all the difference.

- The limitations of CFIDS make it difficult for sufferers to perform daily tasks. Organize volunteers for picking up medications, driving children to lessons, or cleaning the house.



- Make physical accommodations to help people with CFIDS attend church functions more easily: offer parking spots close to the building, encourage them to sit throughout services, provide seating in areas like the narthex for visiting, allow them to go through buffet lines or to Communion first so they don’t have to stand for long periods.
- Pastors can facilitate an atmosphere of finding identity through Christ, rather than the world’s view of value based on what we do, or things we have.
- You can learn more at the CFIDS Association of America Web site at [www.cfids.org](http://www.cfids.org)

— Karen Sansgaard, Tacoma, Wash., is a full-time mom married to a Lutheran pastor. She has been ill with CFIDS for eight years.



Have enough for the cabin that suits you.

Have enough for the car that calls to you.

Have enough for the parent who raised you.

*Choices. We all make them. The only question is, will you have the assets you need to make the choices that are right for you? At Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, we understand your dilemma because we share your values. We can help you build enough financial resources to do the things you need to do, as well as the things you'd like to do. To contact one of our financial representatives, call 800-THRIVENT, or visit [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com)*

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Where Values Thrive.™

## Mayo Clinic resources for healthy leaders

Are you looking for practical information on today’s most common health questions? The *Mayo Clinic Guide to Self-Care* is an easy-to-understand, authoritative guide featuring instant access to the facts you need. The book addresses questions like these: What are the pros and cons of home medical tests? How often do I need a tetanus shot? How do I find a health care provider?

Many rostered leaders, seminar-ians, and other ELCA employees have already received this book by completing a Health Risk Assessment earlier this year. First-time registrants to [www.elcaforwellness.org](http://www.elcaforwellness.org) can now receive a free copy of this great resource—follow the registration steps at [www.elcaforwellness.org](http://www.elcaforwellness.org) and complete the form to receive your complimentary copy of the guide to self-care.

After registering, visit the *ELCA Resources* section for articles and links compiled specifically for you, and try *Housecall*—an online newsletter from [www.elcaforwellness.org](http://www.elcaforwellness.org)

## Have you seen the Action Packet?

[www.elca.org/colactionpacket](http://www.elca.org/colactionpacket)

The contents of the November-December Action Packet included:

- ELCA 2005 Devotional Guide for Congregations
- ELCA Mission Investment Fund loan flyer
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity resource order form
- *Alternative Giving Ideas* catalog
- World Hunger Christmas Card enclosures
- *Jesus Said ‘Go and Do Likewise’* 30-Day Devotional booklet
- *Procession* newsletter
- *Prayer Web site* bookmark sheet
- *Mission Partners Focus* newsletter summary page