



Let's get cooking: Souper Bowl of Caring is Feb. 6

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

ELCA youth are encouraged to lead their congregation's participation in "Souper Bowl of Caring," on February 6. The idea is simple: Youth collect one dollar or one can of food in soup kettles from congregation members on the Sunday that the Super Bowl football game is played. All those dollar bills add up. Nearly 2,000 Lutheran congregations participated last year, and reported raising more than half a million dollars. Collectively, this youth-led ecumenical and grassroots movement raised \$4.25 million last year in the fight against hunger.

The youth decide how the food and money is distributed, often giving a percentage to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal (www.elca.org/hunger) for neighbors around the world and a percentage to local food banks and charities for neighbors around the corner. Youth are also encouraged to donate service hours as part of their participation.

The youth of Christ the King Lutheran (Great Falls, Va.) put two soup kettles out to receive donations, one labeled for each Super Bowl team; the kettle with the most

donations "wins." Their Souper Bowl "prognosticator" is predictably wrong: the team that wins the Souper Bowl always loses the Super Bowl.

The three youth groups of St. Luke in Fort Smith, Ark., entered into a friendly competition to see which group could raise the most for Souper Bowl of Caring. Instead of the usual collection of \$100 and 100 cans, the 2004 St. Luke totals were \$630 and 800 cans! "They wanted to defeat the other youth groups," notes the Rev. Don Brewer, "but all together wanted to defeat hunger!"

At Zion Lutheran Church in Appleton, Wis., the middle school students stood at the church doors on Super Bowl Sunday and collected cash donations for ELCA World Hunger. The high school students collected the ingredients to make chili and cooked enough to serve all of the shelters in the Appleton area—serving chili and cornbread to nearly 400 people in need.

The youth at First Lutheran in Manitowoc, Wis., have participated in Souper Bowl for eight years. They bang on pots, wear chefs' hats and make submarine sandwiches. They raised \$425 for ELCA World Hunger last year.

There are wonderful ideas for "souping up" your Souper Bowl collection: asking for donations equivalent to what



Youth from Zion Lutheran, Appleton, Wis., deliver chili to shelters.

you'd spend on Super Bowl snacks, and asking local businesses if you can collect dollars one afternoon during Super Bowl weekend.

The Souper Bowl of Caring organization collects only the reports of the totals (money, canned goods, and service hours). Be sure your congregation's participation is included by registering and reporting your totals at www.souperbowl.org

Find the Souper Bowl of Caring informational poster in the Fall/Winter ELCA World Hunger Resource Packet, received in congregations in November 2004. See p. 5 of the latest Hunger Guide for Congregations for more ideas. Contact the ELCA World Hunger Appeal office (hunger@elca.org, 800/638-3522, ext. 2764) for a copy of the packet, poster and congregational guide.

Add the joy of giving and serving to the fun of the Super Bowl game. The goal for 2005 is to raise \$5 million for designated hunger charities, and to mobilize 20,000 young people in a service blitz on Service Blitz Saturday (February 5).



Youth from First Lutheran, Manitowoc, Wis., wear their chefs' hats and bang on pots to promote the SouperBowl.

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Two new resources to help teach about world hunger

Check out these new resources that can help your congregation learn about issues related to hunger.

Opening a World of Possibilities: Nicaragua

Biodesters. Coffee beans. Fire-fighting. *Open a World of Possibilities: Nicaragua*, the latest edition of the favorite hunger education tool for congregations, explores these and other unique relief and development efforts in Nicaragua.

Targeted for third through eighth graders and multi-generational events, *OWP: Nicaragua* offers seven 90-minute sessions that contain a variety of easy-to-use activities. The curriculum is supplemented by leader and children's resources at www.openaworld.org

Also included in *OWP: Nicaragua* is a program for collecting funds for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, prayer-centered devotions, projects, Bible conversations, crafts, a "travel journal," a drama, small group follow-up, simulations and storytelling. Worksheets suggest at-home family activities.

Because *OWP: Nicaragua* is a modular curriculum, each of the seven learning events stands on its own, as



well as fitting together in sequence. Perfect for Sunday school or vacation Bible school settings, the activity suggestions allow you to custom fit *OWP: Nicaragua* into your setting or expand the curriculum into day

camp, family retreats, and youth events.

The *OWP: Nicaragua* curriculum is available in three formats (all free): DVD-ROM (ISBN 6-0002-0043-9), DVD-ROM with printed leader's guide (ISBN 6-0002-0042-0), and VHS with printed leader's guide (ISBN 6-0001-9750-0). Request one of these formats for your congregation by calling Augsburg Fortress (800/328-4648), or go to www.augsburgfortress.org/store or send an e-mail to hunger@elca.org.

Living Simply With God

"Living Simply With God" is an invitation for individuals and families to enter into a 40-day discipline of lifestyle discernment. When formed into a four-sided, stand-alone box, the 40-day calendar can surround a plant, candle, cross, or other devotional item.

"Living Simply With God" can be the start of your congregation's program for

lifestyle change, an essential element in your overall work to combat hunger and injustice. The calendar is supplemented by a Web page, www.elca.org/hunger/resources/40days.html. This is the place to find hints on using the calendar, as well as further insights about simple living.

Order quantities of "Living Simply With God" for Lenten emphases, or begin your planning now for a wider congregational program of lifestyle change for this fall. Request your copies of "Living Simply With God" (ISBN 6-0002-0188-5; one package = 25 calendars, free) by calling Augsburg Fortress (800/328-4648) or sending an e-mail to hunger@elca.org

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Check out worship and music events for all ages

There are several events and educational opportunities that you should know about if you do worship planning. Mark your calendars and save the dates!

Young Lutherans Sing

Many Lutheran adults can recall faithful pastors, teachers, and musicians who introduced them to the treasures of the Christian faith, especially in the area of worship and music. Having a love for these treasures instilled in each of us provides valuable assistance in nurturing our spiritual journey.

The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) and Lutheran Music Program (LMP) have designed a new cooperative program to help mold and shape the lives of young Lutherans in their formation of choral music, liturgy, and hymnody.

This new program, *Young Lutherans Sing*, will debut July 4-10, 2005, on the campus of Concordia University, Bronxville, N.Y. Children from fourth to eighth grades will have the unique experience of developing their musical skills and increasing the awareness of their ability to share those gifts in worship. Michael Burkhardt will bring his numerous abilities and talents to the week as he serves as primary clinician. These young Lutherans will serve as musical leaders at the opening worship for the ALCM national convention on July 10.

There is no better way to keep the song of the church alive than to form our children in the treasures of the faith. All congregations are encouraged to consider sending some of their young singers, either as a group or as individuals, to this unique program. Efforts are under way to help provide scholarships as needed. Even if you may not have students to recommend, you can support this program by spreading the word, offering a financial gift, and most certainly with your prayers.



More information about this exciting new program is on the ALCM Web site at www.alcm.org

Lutheran Summer Music

In addition to the new offering described above, Lutheran Music Program continues to offer the Lutheran Summer Music

Academy & Festival. This excellent program, now in its 24th year of providing a month-long musical experience for gifted high school and college students, will be held on the campus of Luther College in Decorah, Iowa from June 26-July 24. For complete information, go to www.lutheransummertime.org

Association of Lutheran Church Musicians Conference

The Association of Lutheran Church Musicians will hold its biennial conference in New York City, July 10-14, 2005, under the theme, "Seeds of Song: Sowing in the City." The conference headquarters is the Hilton New York. The children's choir from "Young Lutherans Sing" will participate in the opening Eucharist, and the final day of the conference will feature a "stational Eucharist." Other special events include a plenary presentation by Paul Westermeyer, a concert by Ensemble Amarcord, a Hymn Festival by Lorraine Brugh, an organ recital by Paul Jacobs, and a gala closing banquet. Workshop subjects include Children and Youth Choirs, Adult Choirs, Organ Performance Practice, Hymn Text Writing, Handbells, Taize, Composition, Worship and Theology, Jazz, Orff, Gospel Piano, and Global Music. For a registration brochure, contact the ALCM office at 800/624-2526, or check out the ALCM Web site at www.alcm.org

The "early bird" registration deadline is March 31.

Leadership Program for Musicians

"Tradition and Innovation: Quality Church Music in a New Age," a conference on music in the church for musicians and clergy serving congregations of all sizes is being offered by the Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations (LPM). The conference is on the campus of Texas Lutheran University, Seguin, Texas, from June 28-July 1.

Enrichment areas will include: choir music for the small choir, organ practice technique, contemporary worship and music, involving children in worship, sound and media systems, Taize worship and more. Diverse worship opportunities and a chance for networking, socializing, and learning from one another will be provided. For more information contact the conference chair, John Marsh, at jmarsh@kinsmenlutheran.org or visit the LPM Web site at www.lpm-online.org

The heart of the Leadership Program for Musicians continues to be the two-year program, sponsored by synods, providing education, support, and encouragement for music leaders in congregations, especially those that are smaller or have modest musical resources. Many programs currently being offered in synods across this church continue to nurture hundreds of ELCA musicians and, thereby, strengthen the music and worship lives of their congregations. It is a valuable program.

As a part of the LPM conference (described above), those desiring to coordinate a program in their synod will be trained. For more information about starting an LPM program in your synod, visit the LPM Web site (www.lpm-online.org) or contact Scott Weidler, ELCA associate director for Worship and Music at scott.weidler@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2554.

Keeping up with Renewing Worship

The churchwide project, Renewing Worship, continues to evolve. A major proposal for the future, including a new book of worship, will be presented to the churchwide assembly this coming August.

Although all the major volumes of provisional materials to be used and evaluated by congregations have been out for some time, additional resources continue to be added to the Web site (www.renewingworship.org) to assist you in exploring, and evaluating the materials.

Recent additions to the Web site

- Downloadable worship folders and leader materials for services of Evening Prayer and Holy Communion during Lent.

- Musical resources and suggestions for the provisional Holy Week services.



If your congregation is just getting involved with Renewing Worship, there is a wealth of valuable information on the Web site. At whatever point you get on board with this project, it is important to use the *Renewing Worship Principles for Worship* as starting points to engage your congregation in conversation about the issues surrounding renewal of worship in this church. As with all Renewing Worship resources, *Principles for Worship* can be purchased from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648 (ISBN 0-8066-7003-7; \$15 plus shipping) or downloaded for free from www.renewingworship.org

Seminary to offer pilgrimage to Celtic sites

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S.C., invites you to join in a spiritual pilgrimage to Celtic Christianity sites in England May 17-26. Included in the pilgrimage:

- Three days on the "Holy Island" of Lindisfarne, a place of pilgrimage for nearly 1,400 years
- Four nights in Durham, a historic university town with a dramatic cathedral
- Day trips to Jarrow, Whitby, Mount Grace Priory, Ripon, and Fountains Abbey

A spiritual pilgrimage is a journey of devotion to a holy place. It is not a "study tour," although learning about the culture and history is an integral part. It is not a

"mission trip," although one's sense of God's mission in the world is strengthened. It is not a "tourist's vacation," although rest and renewal are benefits. A pilgrimage is a journey with oneself, with other pilgrims, and with God in Christ through the Spirit. A spiritual pilgrimage is an outward journey reflecting an inner journey.

The cost will be \$2,875 and includes airfare, double-occupancy housing, meals. To learn more, contact Dr. Marty Stevens, director of Continuing Education, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary at 803/461-3253 or e-mail mstevens@Ltss.edu.

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/co/seeds

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What's in store for the 2005 Churchwide Assembly?

More than 1,000 people representing the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will gather in Orlando, Florida, this summer for the Ninth Churchwide Assembly of the ELCA. The assembly will be held August 8–14, under the theme “Marked with the Cross of Christ Forever.”

What's on the Agenda?

This year the agenda includes several significant items:

- Proposals related to governance and the restructuring of the churchwide organization. In addition to the proposals, the assembly will consider related changes to the ELCA's governing documents. The documents are available on the ELCA Web site at www.elca.org/planning/. Click on “Faithful Yet Changing: Design for Mission of the Churchwide Organization of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America” and “Governance in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.”
- Recommendations related to Renewing Worship. This process, originally called the Next Generation of Worship Resources, was set in motion by the ELCA Church Council in November 2000. The most current information is available at www.renewingworship.org/
- Proposal for an interim Eucharistic sharing agreement with the United Methodist Church. More information will be available after the April 2005 meeting of the ELCA Church Council.
- “Report and Recommendations” from the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality related to the blessing of same-

gender unions and the ordination of gay and lesbian people in committed relationships. This work was set in motion by the 2001 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. The ELCA Church Council, at its April 2005 meeting, will prepare a resolution for churchwide assembly consideration, based on the task force's “Report and Recommendations.” Read more about the studies at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/

- Two ethnic ministry strategies. At its April 2005 meeting, the ELCA Church Council will transmit:
 - Arab and Middle Eastern Ministry Strategy: “Bridges Across History, Lands, and Culture” and
 - Plan of Action for Ministry in African Descent Communities: “Many Voices—Tell the Story—Create the Vision: Build our Future”
- Reports from the officers of the ELCA: Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, Vice President Carlos Peña, Secretary Lowell Almen, and Treasurer Christina Jackson-Skelton.
- Discussion of memorials (resolutions) forwarded to the churchwide assembly from the 2004 and 2005 synod assemblies.
- Consideration of routine constitutional and bylaw amendments.
- Approval of the biennial ELCA churchwide budget.
- Resolutions from voting members.

The work of the assembly is grounded in and inspired by daily worship. Partner synods will gather in small groups for Bible study and discussion of issues before the assembly. The assembly will receive

greetings from many partners, including the host Florida-Bahamas Synod, full-communion partner churches, and other ecumenical partners including the Lutheran World Federation and the World Council of Churches.

Once again, congregations are invited to register a Congregation Observer for the assembly. Visitors are also welcome for the full assembly or for individual days. For more information, go to www.elca.org/assembly/05



2005 Churchwide Assembly

Congregation observers at the 2005 Churchwide Assembly

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

There is a registration fee of \$400 (to cover meals that are provided at the assembly and administrative costs and materials). Transportation and housing costs are the responsibility of the observer or the sending congregation. Registrations must be made before May 31. To learn more, e-mail emilie.scott@elca.org or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2807.

New study guide to help Lutherans discuss education

What should we as Lutherans be saying and doing about education in this church and society in light of our faith in God? The 2007 Churchwide Assembly will consider a social statement that addresses that question.

The first publication in the development of this social statement is now available. *Our Calling in Education: A Lutheran Study* invites ELCA members to talk about education and to contribute to an eventual social statement. The study provides a basis for us to reflect together on our calling to educate in the Christian faith and to work for good educational institutions and just educational policies in our society.

The study is intended for congregations, groups of pastors, educators in ELCA early childhood education centers and elementary and secondary schools, public school educators, parents and older youth, professors, students, and boards in seminaries and colleges, campus ministries, and other groups in our church.

The six parts of the study are: Introducing the Study; Education in Light of Our Faith in God; Educating in the Faith for Vocation; Educating Children and Youth in the Faith; Educating Young People in Public Schools; and Our Church in Higher

Education. Groups may study the whole of *Our Calling in Education* or select parts of it. A response form with questions is provided to encourage readers to share their ideas with the task force. Based on comments submitted by readers of the study, the task force will prepare a first draft of the proposed social statement for distribution throughout the ELCA at the beginning of 2006. To download the study and to get

more information on the social statement on education and its development go to www.elca.org/socialstatements/education

To get a single complimentary copy of *Our Calling in Education*, call the ELCA Division for Church in Society resource request line at 800/638-3522, ext. 2996. For multiple copies, call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-0196-6; \$3 plus shipping).

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.

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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.

877.886.3522



www.elca.org/mif

Resources on ecumenism

Two new resources are available to help your congregation talk about Christian unity. *Your Guide to Ecumenical Life in the ELCA* is an easy-to-read, four-color “road-map” intended to help people learn about the ELCA’s vision and important work in the area of ecumenism. It would be an attractive poster on a congregation’s bulletin board and a discussion starter for an adult forum.

Also new, *Talking Points: The Amazing Gift of Your Baptism* is a collection of reflections and discussion questions written by contributors from the ELCA and some of its ecumenical partners. The resource is a handy folder with each reflection printed on an easy-to-reproduce page. It comes with a user’s guide. This resource could be used for a Lenten series, or anytime during the year, as a youth or adult education program. It could also be used for a new-member orientation.

For one free copy of either resource, call the ELCA Resource Information Service at 800/638-3522. For multiple copies, call the Department for Ecumenical Affairs at 800/638-3522, ext. 2610, or e-mail eainfo@elca.org. To learn more, go to www.elca.org/ecumenical

Women in the early church

Who were the women of the early church? What was their role in the formation of the faith? Why do we know so little about them? Recorded on location in Rome, the Winter 2004 edition of Mosaic Television brings a wealth of modern scholarship to your congregation as we tell the story of women in the first three centuries



of Christianity. You will learn about Mary Magdalene, Perpetua, Thecla and Helena, the mother of Constantine.

The video is available on VHS and DVD and features scholars from Luther College, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Lutheran School of Theology at Philadelphia and Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago.

Use this Mosaic Television offering in your adult forum or women’s gathering as a great way to highlight the gifts and ministry of women in the church. Order Mosaic by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 6009, or go to www.elca.org/mosaic. Cost is \$19.95 (includes shipping).

Advocacy Days in Washington

The 2004 election highlighted the intersection of faith and public policy in ways rarely seen in American political life. Here is your chance to make your voice heard in Washington. Save the dates of March 11–14 for the third annual Ecumenical Advocacy Days for Global Peace with Justice

Conference, sponsored by a host of communions and faith-based organizations, including the ELCA.

The theme this year will be “Make All Things New,” and will address both global and U.S. domestic issues. There will be challenging speakers, issue briefings and training in advocacy. Comprehensive briefings will precede visits with members of Congress or their key staff people.

The cost of the event is \$135 (not including room and board). CEU credits will be available for Lutheran participants through the Lutheran Office for Governmental Affairs. Register for the event at www.advocacydays.org. For further information, contact the ELCA liaison for the event, the Rev. James Vigen at jim.vigen@elca.org or call 202/626-7936. Watch for further information on the ELCA Advocacy Web page at www.elca.org/advocacy

See Lutheran Quarterly

Do you know about *Lutheran Quarterly*, a journal covering Lutheran history and theology? This publication is a forum for the discussion of Christian faith and life on the basis of the Lutheran confessions; the application of the principles of the Lutheran church to the changing problems of religion and society; the fostering of world Lutheranism, and the promotion of understanding between Lutherans and other Christians. Go to www.lutheranquarterly.com to read past issues, to subscribe, and to learn about a new book series based on the journal published by W.B. Eerdmans.

Talking together cross-culturally

“Talking Together as Christians Cross-culturally” (ISBN 6-0002-0162-1; \$9.50 plus shipping) is a new guide from the ELCA Division for Church in Society for cross-cultural conversation about ministry matters. Written after extensive conversation with people of diverse backgrounds, it is designed to be used as a cross-cultural companion to other moral deliberation resources, including “Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues,” “Growing Healthier Congregations,” “Dialogando en Conjunto como Cristianos,” and “Called to Deal with Difficult Issues,” all of which are available from Augsburg Fortress by calling 800/328-4648.

For spiritual formation

The third Spiritual Formation Program of Grace Institute for Spiritual Formation will begin August 12-14 at Sinsinawa Mound Center near Dubuque, Iowa. This in-depth spiritual formation program has a Lutheran center and ecumenical breadth. Participants come together four times a year for two years. Each session includes presentations, silent reflection and

discussion, worship, and small groups that stay together for the whole program. The eight session themes are Grace-centered Spirituality, Attending to the Word, Symbols and Sacraments, Worship, Contemplative Prayer, Discernment, Spirituality and Daily life, and prayer ministries. For information, contact Lori Ostlie at 563/387-1271 or e-mail ostlielo@luther.edu.

End hunger with letters

Your congregation can help Bread for the World, a Christian citizens’ advocacy organization, to work to achieve a long-desired goal: ending hunger in the United States.



Make Hunger History

Millions of people believe that a hunger-free America should be a high priority. For three decades the percentage of hungry people in the U.S. has remained largely unchanged, and in recent years the number of hungry people has increased steadily from 31 to nearly 35 million.

In 2005, Bread for the World will join with America’s Second Harvest: The Nation’s Food Bank Network; MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger; the End Hunger Network, and other organizations, to mobilize leadership at every level, from the grass roots to the nation’s lawmakers, in order to step up our efforts to fight U.S. hunger.

Bread for the World’s “Make Hunger History” campaign will call on Congress and the president to develop specific plans for ending hunger. It will also seek to deepen anti-hunger advocacy, expand research on hunger, and take steps to strengthen and improve our national nutrition programs. Your congregation can help with an “offering of letters.” Order an “Offering of Letters” kit for your congregation to help you get started. Go to the Bread for the World Web site (www.bread.org) or call 800-82-BREAD.

Training in peacemaking

“Equipping for Peacemaking” is an exciting new process in the ELCA for greatly enhancing the understanding of God’s peace and the biblical foundations for justice and nonviolence. “Equipping for Peacemaking” will be launched at an event April 1–3 at the Dominican University Institute for Adult Learning in River Forest, Ill. (near Chicago). Participants will be inspired in their daily calling as peacemakers, as well as equipped to provide training and information in their region about current issues of peace, justice, and nonviolence—from media violence to ethnic conflict to domestic violence to international conflict. This event will have a limited number of participants. Visit www.elca.org/nonviolence for more information and an application form. Applications for participation are due January 14, so act quickly.

Gift giving catalog

Start the new year right with *Response: The Gift Giving Catalog of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*. In this colorful catalog you will find stories of 29 specific ministries of the ELCA and opportunities to make choices to bring hope.



Looking for a giving opportunity outside your church doors or outside your community? The *Response* catalog provides the chance to respond and support ministry right here in the United States and around the world. It's a wonderful way to honor friends and support the church's outreach ministries at the same time. You may request that a gift or memorial card be sent in the recipient's honor.

Request one free copy of *Response* from ELCA Resource Information Service at 800/638-3522. To order (in packages of 10), call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-2027-8; pay shipping only).

Resource to build community

From Here to Community: Enhancing Christian Community in Today's Society is a new 12-session adult-education curriculum written by Richard and Judith Reuning. The resource explores the roots of Christian community, how it is affected by modern society, and how Christian communities can be unique gifts to the world today.

The sessions are designed to move congregation members from being a gathering of individuals to being a community working toward God's vision of peace and justice for humanity. Encouraging participants through reading Scripture, drama, readings, case studies, and discussion questions, the material tackles issues that require human choices in the midst of ambiguity. A leader guide is available to help facilitate class planning.

Order from LifeCrossings at www.lifecrossings.com or call 614/451-0519 (\$12 plus shipping; leader's guide \$6).

Online courses for Spring

The Center for Theology and Land—a program of the University of Dubuque Seminary and Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa—is offering several online courses this spring. Courses begin February 15. Cost is \$200 plus materials. To learn more about these educational opportunities, go to www.ruralministry.com or call the center at 563/589-0273.

- "Martin Luther and the Reformation," will be taught by Dr. Elizabeth Leeper, associate professor of church history at Wartburg Theological Seminary.
- "Outsiders and Insiders: Congre-

gations Growing in Multicultural Mission" will be taught by Dr. Faye Schott, professor of systematic theology, Lutheran Seminary Program in the Southwest.

- "Caring for the Sick: An Introduction to Pastoral Care" will be taught by Dr. Elaine Ramshaw, pastoral care coordinator, Tabor Lutheran Church.

Also a Certificate Residency III program on "Evangelism and Preaching in Town and Country Congregations" will be offered June 6-10 in Dubuque. Go to www.ruralministry.com to learn more.

Prison ministry 'kite' pins

Inside prisons, inmates send "kites" (memos) to communicate with their institutions or make a request. Prison Congregations of America is selling small lapel pins to raise awareness of the 2.1 million people incarcerated in the United States and to support prison ministry. Four-color clay lapel pins are \$5 each (\$3 each if purchased in quantities of 20 or more) and enamel lapel pins are \$10 each (\$5 each in quantities of 20 or more). To order, write to Prison Congregations of America, Box 415, Vermillion, SD 57069. To learn more about their work, go to www.prisoncongregations.org

Resources to help with grief

Journeying through Grief is a set of four short books that pastors, individuals, or congregations can send to grieving people at four specific times after a loved one has died. Written by the Rev. Kenneth Haugk, an ELCA pastor and founder and executive director of Stephen Ministries, the four books are a blend of sound psychology and biblical theology. There is also a *Giver's Guide* that provides ideas for using the books, a simple tracking system for sending the books at the right time in the grief process, and sample letters to adapt to send with each book. The set is \$9.95 plus shipping, with discounts for ordering multiple sets. To learn more, call Stephen Ministries at 314/428-2600, or go to www.grief-books.org

Women of the Reformation

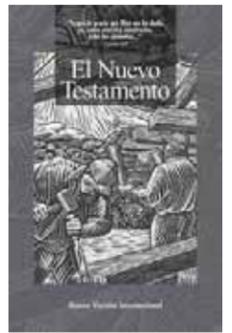
Have you ever wondered what role women played in the Protestant Reformation and what role women continue to play in this historic part of the world? Would you like to see and experience the land where the Reformation began, with an emphasis on the work of important women such as Katharina von Bora—the famous wife of Dr. Martin Luther and manager of the family business—Elizabeth of Braunschweig, Walpurga Bugenhagen, Katharina Melancthon? If so, the ELCA Wittenberg Center, the ELCA's continuing education center in Wittenberg, Germany, offers you a

wonderful opportunity in the spring of 2005.

"Women of the Reformation: Then and Now" will take place from March 30 to April 14, and will include visits to places such as Berlin, Wittenberg, Torgau, Eisleben, Dresden, Meissen, Leipzig, Buchenwald, Weimar, Erfurt, Eisenach, and Darmstadt. Presentations by local experts will be a part of this seminar. For registration information, contact Marlene DeWulf at 800/638-3522, ext. 6551, or e-mail Marlene.DeWulf@elca.org. More detailed information, including costs and registration forms to download, are also available at www.elca.org/wittenberg. Continuing education units (CEU's) are available for all Wittenberg Center programs.

New Testament in Spanish

With 25,000 copies of the *Master Builders Bible for Men* in circulation in the United States, Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) is expanding its Bible ministry with Spanish-language New Testaments (New International Version). Lutheran Men in Mission will make the New Testaments available at no charge to congregations and individuals involved in short-term mission trips to Spanish-speaking cultures. The New Testaments will be offered at cost to those involved in domestic missions.



If you or your congregation is planning a mission trip, you can receive your New Testaments by contacting the LMM office at 800/638-3522, ext. 2595, or sending an e-mail message to Kimberley.Moseley@elca.org.

If you wish to order copies for domestic mission please call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 (ISBN 6-0002-0174-5; \$1.50 plus shipping).

To make a donation toward this effort, please go to www.elca.org/lmm and click "Gift Basket."

Q&A on Fund for Leaders

"Is it true that there is a critical shortage of pastors and other rostered leaders in the ELCA?" The ELCA Fund for Leaders in Mission has a resource that clearly presents the answer to this and other important questions related to leadership needs in the church, the costs related to seminary education, and the availability of financial assistance through this growing scholarship resource. *Seminary scholarships for faithful leaders* is a Question & Answer resource now available. The 8 1/2 x 11 tri-fold is recommended for use with individuals and groups who have an interest in this churchwide seminary scholarship program. Excellent for use with congregation endowment committees, congregation councils, and other leadership groups. Additional resources are also available. Go to www.elca.org/fofundforleaders or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2970.

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

ELCA World Hunger Web Makeover

Have you visited www.elca.org/hunger lately? Are you planning to hold a World Hunger emphasis on a Sunday, for a month, or during a special time of year? Don't know where to start? Check out the new and improved home page of ELCA World Hunger! There you'll find "Hunger Highlights"—current events, resources, and links; "Hunger Sermon Starters"—material for pastors; "Fast Facts"—regularly updated tidbits good for newsletters and bulletins; brand new World Hunger e-cards; a host of print, video, and electronic resources; games and resources for children and youth; stories of how your gifts are being used, and much more.

Evangelism Resources

Visit www.elca.org/dcm/evangelism/resources.html to find a brand-new set of resources—"E-tips for Evangelism." These articles are available for download and distribution in full-page or bulletin-insert format. Topics include: launching evangelism in your congregation, dealing with

conflict, courageous leadership, from disciples into apostles, inviting others, creating an evangelism team, advancing evangelism in your congregation. Use these resources to prompt discussion at committee and council meetings. Or copy, duplicate and distribute the bulletin inserts to the whole congregation or in your parish newsletter.

Young Adult Ministries Site

Whether you are a young adult or someone who is interested in doing ministry with young adults, www.elca.org/youngadults/ will be helpful to you.

There you'll find resources on spirituality, culture, community, devotions written by and for young adults, and a link to a young-adults Web board.

Synodical Relations—A Way Together

Did you know that the word "synod" translates to "a way together" or "walking together?" The Department for Synodical Relations has a new Web site that highlights the interconnectedness between



synods and the churchwide organization as we "walk together" in our faith. The site has resources for synod leaders, the Conference of Bishops, first call applicants, synod assemblies, federal

chaplains, and rostered ordained and lay leaders, as well as forms and information for congregations seeking a new pastor or lay leader. Of course, you can still use the regions and synods map to locate your synod and find out more information about your companion and partner synods. Go to www.elca.org/sr

New Site on Rural Ministry

Check out the newly redesigned site on rural ministry at www.elca.org/rural. There you can find resources, liturgies, an article by Presiding Bishop Hanson on "Our Rural Strength," information about rural advocacy issues and the STaR Alliance, and learn about the ELCA Rural Ministry Desk.

Rural ministry events to check out in 2005

There are two important conferences on rural ministry this year. If you work in rural ministry, save these dates!

Building Community in the Church

From Wartburg Theological Seminary and University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, the Rural Ministry Conference 2005, March 13-15, will investigate the process of "Building Community in the Church." The conference addresses the way in which community can be built within the congregation and in the area surrounding the congregation.

Featured speakers this year include ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson; Dr. Lyle Vander Broek, professor of New Testament at University of Dubuque Theological Seminary; Luther Snow,

author of the best-selling book, *The Power of Asset Mapping*; Mary Hendrickson, co-director of the Food Circles Networking Project; and Karen Murray, director of the community resource division of the Office of Community Development in the USDA's Rural Development programs.

The conference will be held in Dubuque, Iowa. For more information, go to www.ruralministry.com or call 563/589-0273, or e-mail ruralmin@wartburgseminary.edu

Celebrating Rural Life

The Great Plains Coalition and ELCA Central States Synod are hosting a conference July 28-30 with the theme of "Celebrating Rural Life." Featured speakers include Martin and Micah Marty. The conference will take place at Bethany

College in Lindsborg, Kansas, (transportation will be provided from the Wichita Airport). There will be workshops on rural ministry and tours of the local area. Bethany College will provide locally grown food and menus typical of Great Plains cooking.

Registration cost (including meals and conference materials) is \$200. Housing rates are \$20 per day for a single room on campus, and \$12.50 for a double room. There will be scholarships available and special rates for seminarians and those enrolled in lay ministry programs. Child care and a "youth track" are being planned. To learn more go to www.elca.org/rural/star or call the ELCA Rural Ministry Desk at 800/638-3522, ext. 6556.



Resource centers discuss Middle East resources

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 What resources could best help congregations explore issues related to the Middle East and the conflicts between Jews, Christians, Muslims, and others?

A The video *A Glimpse of the Spirit of Islam* (www.elca.org/glimpse/resource/glimpse.html) is super to use for congregational study. *A Time for Speaking, A Time for Peace* (ELCA) is an older video but offers background for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the need for a peaceful and just solution to that struggle, and the roles of the Gospel and the Christian church in the work for peace.

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

A The Mosaic video *Understanding Islam* (ELCA, www.elca.org/mosaic) is often what we recommend. Young adults will enjoy *Through My Eyes* (ELCA), which follows a college-age American Lutheran as she visits a Christian family in Palestine. Her host, Louna, shows her life in Palestine: college classes, shopping, a worship service, even a basketball game in Old Jerusalem. The book we suggest is *Water from the Rock: Lutheran Voices from Palestine* (Augsburg Fortress, www.augsburgfortress.org), which can be used by individuals or in congregational study.

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

A Karen Armstrong (author and lecturer on world religions) has written a riveting new book, *Spiral Staircase* (Knopf), which is easy to read. A few

books from Augsburg Fortress are not to be missed: *I Am a Palestinian Christian* by Mitri Raheb, *Witnessing for Peace: In Jerusalem and the World* by Munib Younan, and *O, Jerusalem: the Contested Future of the Jewish Covenant* by Marc Ellis (www.augsburgfortress.org). I definitely recommend *Caught in the Crossfire* (PBS) about Arab Americans, including Lutherans, which has a study guide on the ELCA Web site (www.elca.org/cocrossfire.html). In addition, I would suggest the videos *Voices from the Holy Land* and *Christianity and Terrorism* from the Episcopal Media Center.

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

A Don't forget *Ending Occupation: Voices for a Just Peace* (World Council of Churches) as well as two great older videos with life left in them: *Holy Land, Palestine* (Mosaic Fall 1999, ELCA, www.elca.org/mosaic) and *Jordan's Stormy Banks* (Presbyterian Church). Find these in your local resource center. We know the struggle has been long when we realize the age of some of these resources!

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

A Augsburg Fortress has three more important books to add to this conversation. The newest is Mitri Raheb's *Bethlehem Besieged* with heart-rending stories of his family and others in the midst of violence. John Kaltner's *Islam: What Non-Muslims Should Know* is a brief, but important, primer for all. Youth and adults will appreciate *Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith* which has basic information on a wide range of faiths. It can be used individually

or as a curriculum for a small group. —Beth Lewis, chief executive officer, Augsburg Fortress, Publishers

A We have a number of videos to educate people about Islam, including: *Islam: The Faith and the People* (EcuFilm, www.ecufilm.org) and *Islam: Empire of Faith* (PBS, www.pbs.org). To learn about Judaism, the video *Judaism: The Religion of a People* (EcuFilm) is sure to provide discussion. Youth will especially enjoy the curriculum *Which Way to God?* on various world religions. It includes a video interview with youth in America who are growing up in different faiths.

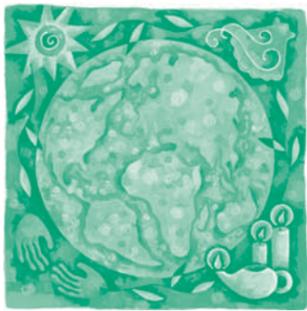
—Darlene Kalfahs, director, East Central Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center, Appleton

A *Fundamentalism and Violence* (Trinity Church) is an engaging video discussion of violence in all three Abrahamic faith traditions. Best-selling author Karen Armstrong moderates a panel discussion between Imam Feisal Abdul Bauf, Dr. Susannah Heschel and the Rev. Jim Watts. Call an ELCA resource center to borrow it. —Irene Flynn, director, Florida-Bahamas Synod Resource Center, Tampa

A The ELCA Web site has a special page, "Middle East Connections," with all kinds of resources and news, information about ecumenical prayer vigils for peace in the Middle East, how congregations can help, and how you can join a listserv to receive regular bulletins by e-mail. Go to www.elca.org/middleeast —Catherine Fink, director, Helig Resource Center, North Carolina Synod, Salisbury, N.C.

Learn about the latest from global mission

The ELCA is committed to “deepen and extend our global, ecumenical, and interfaith relationships for the sake of God’s mission” (ELCA Strategic Directions). Learn about the ways you and your congregation can participate in this important work for the sake of the world.



Come to a 2005 Global Mission Event

“Gathered by God’s grace for the sake of the world” is the theme of the 2005 Global Mission Events (GMEs). The first will take place July 14-17 on the North Dakota State University campus in Fargo, N.D. The second GME is scheduled for August 25-28 at the Baltimore Convention Center in Baltimore, Md.

Global Mission Events gather missionaries, international church leaders, and ELCA members to celebrate God’s global mission. Through plenary and teaching sessions, worship, devotions, art activities, and fellowship, GME participants explore the world together.

The multi-generational Global Mission Events include programming for people of all ages. Child care is provided for children

through age two. The children’s program will offer a creative mix of learning experiences for kids ages 3 to 10. Special programming for junior and senior high-school youth is also planned.

To find out more about GME speakers, international guests, and program opportunities, visit the GME Web site, www.elca.org/gme

GME posters and registration forms will be sent to every congregation in January. For additional materials, more information, or to register, contact the Division for Global Mission at 800/638-3522, ext. 2642 or 2645, or visit www.elca.org/gme

2005 Global Lenten Series explores “Gathered”

Want ideas for Sundays in Lent or midweek services? The Division for Global Mission home page at www.elca.org/globalmission offers everything you need for a six-week Lenten series: worship outlines, sermons from ELCA missionaries, even menus for global Lenten suppers! This year’s series explores the theme, “Gathered by God’s Grace,” in stories from mission work around the world.

Users of last year’s Lenten series said

good things about it. “Saved me lots of time in preparing for the Lenten season,” wrote a pastor from Texas. “The recipes were very good and the members quickly volunteered to prepare the meals. We learned much about other parts of the world.” A pastor from Washington state said, “Members appreciated the real-life perspective of doing ministry around the globe.”

Download elements (after January 15) from www.elca.org/globalmission or contact the Rev. David Lerseth for information at David.Lerseth@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2641.

Learn about global mission in January mailing

Watch your mailbox for the annual ELCA global mission mailing in January. Inside you’ll find:

- The ELCA’s annual directory of global mission personnel and companion churches.
- A poster and registration materials for the 2005 Global Mission Events in Fargo, N.D., and Baltimore, Md.
- A helpful guide to current ELCA resources on global mission.

For additional copies of the mailing or for pieces of its contents, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

Young adults needed to serve in global mission

Mikey Powell cast his vote for president from a rubber-tree farm outside Mallappally in the Indian state of Kerala.

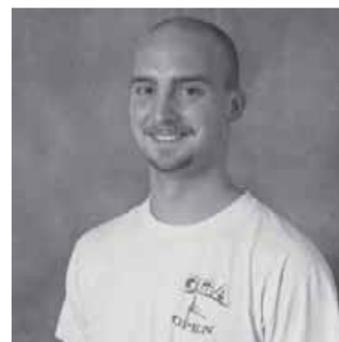
“My ballot amazed people here,” wrote the 22-year-old from Westerville, Ohio, who works at a mission hospital whose clients include India’s ‘untouchables,’ the Dalit. “They asked repeatedly to see it and bragged that an American vote was coming from Mallappally. They wanted to call the news crews.”

In discussing American politics with his new neighbors, Mikey has learned much about power and influence. “Up until my plane landed, I had no intention of putting much effort into learning the local language, Malayalam,” he recalled. “I honestly viewed it as a waste of time. Why learn to speak a language used by only a handful of people in a small Indian state when I could get by with English anyway? The answer hit me pretty quickly—to show them that I care. I wish you could see the

surprise in peoples’ eyes when they hear that a ‘powerful’ American has come to learn their language. Many here are poor and powerless, so few have shown them the love and care they deserve.” As you read this, Mikey and his 40 colleagues—all participants in the one-year Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program—have been living, working, and learning in a new environment for four months.

Until they come home this summer, they will grapple with global social, political, and theological realities as they tackle their responsibilities.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2005-2006 Young Adults in Global Mission program. The program is open to



Mikey Powell

ELCA members ages 19-30 who are active in their congregation or campus ministry. Young adults raise a minimum of \$3,000 toward their support. A wide range of ministry opportunities is available in eight countries: Argentina, Egypt, Germany, Hungary/Ukraine, India, Kenya, Thailand, and the United Kingdom.

Applications submitted by February 15 will get priority attention. The deadline for applications is March 1.

Details about countries and assignments, plus Web sites of some YAGM participants, can be found at www.elca.org/globalseveryoungadults. For more information, contact the ELCA Division for Global Mission at 800/638-3522, ext. 2520, or by e-mail at dgmserve@elca.org.

Come to the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering

Women of the ELCA invites women across the church to dedicate a few days this summer to becoming bold in faith.

Join thousands of Lutheran women in San Antonio, Texas, to take part in Women of the ELCA’s Sixth Triennial Gathering, July 5-10.

Affinity groups to meet

The Gathering will open with a reception on Tuesday evening, July 5. Wednesday, July 6, there will be meetings of many different affinity groups, including Way-making Women, parish nurses, young women, differently-abled, women clergy, newsletter editors and communicators, raising bold girls, and more.

The Dwelling Place

The Dwelling Place (the gathering exhibit hall) will offer a global shopping experience, a variety of interesting exhibits, fellowship, entertainment, and food.

Servant events

Servant events will provide hands-on volunteer opportunities. Make your presence felt for women in need in San Antonio. Bring an in-kind gift that will help strengthen and enable. The conven-

tion business sessions begin Wednesday afternoon and continue through the week with morning and afternoon sessions.

Workshops and speakers

Participants will expand their horizons in one of the many workshops offered Friday and Saturday. You can dive into a subject even further by attending a mini-university: These educational opportunities, offered Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, offer greater in-depth study and exploration than a typical 60-minute workshop can provide. Thursday evening, keynote speaker Barbara Ehrenreich, well-known essayist and writer of the national bestseller *Nickel and Dimed* (2002) will address the Gathering.

Worship opportunities

Women will have opportunities to worship and praise God with Lutheran sisters from across the country. On Wednesday there will be an opening Eucharist. The gathering closes with Eucharist on Sunday morning, July 10. Thursday and Friday, morning inspiration time offers Bible study, song, dance, and more. There is a ticketed banquet on Saturday evening to celebrate the bold

faith of Lutheran women.

San Antonio offers a lot to see and do. Attendees can take advantage of optional day trips on Tuesday and Sunday. Registration opens February 1.

To learn more

There are two ways to register: by mail and online (credit card only).

Visit Women of the ELCA online at

www.womenoftheelca.org for regular updates. Full registration, which includes all materials, programs, and activities for the week, is \$295.

Take advantage of early-bird registration February 1 through March 30 and pay only \$275. (Hotel and travel are additional, but there are discounted rates at several hotels if you book through Women of the ELCA; see the registration booklet for details.)

To receive a registration booklet in the mail, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2737.



Act boldly.

Supporting families formed through adoption

Throughout the 1990s (the most current statistics), there were approximately 120,000 adoptions per year in the United States. Adoption.com

Families not only come in all shapes and sizes, families are formed in a variety of ways. One way to become a family is through adoption. Some children are adopted as infants or toddlers, while others are adopted when they are older. Some children are born in another country. Children are sometimes adopted by an extended family member when their birth parents are no longer able to care for them. Regardless of how or why it happens, adoption can be a positive way to create a family.

Attitudes that non-adoptive families have about adoption can play an important role in the support, or lack thereof, that adoptive families experience. The Evan B. Donaldson Adoption Institute conducted a survey about the opinions people in the U.S. have about adoption. The results show that about 50 percent feel that adopting a child is preferable to remaining childless. Some 25 percent think that it is sometimes harder to love an adopted child because the child is not their flesh and blood. Most feel that adoption serves a very useful purpose in our society. What attitudes does your congregation have about adoption and adoptive families?

Ways to support adoptive families

Here are some ways to foster understanding of the adoption process and

support families who have chosen adoption as a way to create or add to their existing family.

- Recognize that adoption is a viable way to form a family. It can be a blessing to both the parent(s) and the child. Books such as *One Wonderful You: A Unique Book for Adopted People of All Ages*, available through the Children's Home Society in Greensboro, N.C., and Web sites such as www.adoptshoppebooks.com provide a variety of books and articles.

- Infertility is one reason people choose adoption. Remember that infertility can be an emotionally charged experience. Seeking medical treatment for infertility may include peaks and valleys of hope and disappointment. It can be a high stress experience. Offer support, a listening ear, and a compassionate heart throughout the entire process. Consider adding the following title to your library: *When You are Coping with Infertility* by Vera Snow, Augsburg Fortress, (ISBN 0-8066-4360-9; \$4.99 plus shipping, 800/328-4648).

- Some people choose to adopt a child from another country. Dealing with the adoption requirements of another country, which could change at any time throughout the process, contributes to an emotional roller coaster ride for the parent(s). Patience and understanding by others

helps them get through the journey.

- Realize that there can be a lot of time spent waiting during the adoption process, and we all know that waiting can be difficult. A normal pregnancy takes about nine months. An adoption could happen quickly or take several years. *Weaving God's Love Across Cultures* has some excellent resources for blessing the family throughout an adoptive process, along with a wealth of other support for families planning cross-cultural adoptions. Call Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648, (ISBN 6-0001-7505-1; \$14 plus shipping).

- Recognize that some families will become biracial through adoption. Nurture your congregation to be a safe haven from bias and racism. See *"Let's Talk about Racism"* (kindergarten through fourth grade) from Gloucester Press and *Under Our Skin: Kids Talk About Racism* (ages 9-12) from Holiday House.

- Make sure that nursery and education leaders have policies and practices in place for handling children with critical health issues. Some adopted children are very healthy and others may have chronic or infectious health issues. Check with a local day care or nursery school for advice.

- Include adoption issues in parenting support classes and groups. Adoption includes issues of loss and grief, for example. Help adoptive parents be prepared for this fact. Consult *Weaving God's Love Across Cultures* (above) or check out www.adopting.org

- Include stories of adoption in sermons, prayers, and education experiences.

—Mary Ingram Zentner is an adoptive parent and Christian education writer.



The fact is, choices are never easy. Very often, our choices in life are dictated not only by our resources, but also by our values. At Thrivent Financial for Lutherans we understand, because we share your values. We can help you build enough financial resources to do the things you need to do, as well as things you'd like to do. To contact one of our financial representatives, call 800-THRIVENT, or visit www.thrivent.com

 Thrivent Financial for Lutherans®

Where Values Thrive.™

Find out about 'Legacy' seminars

The ELCA Foundation offers several free resources to congregations regarding estate planning and planned giving. One such resource is expertise—invite a Foundation Gift Planner to your congregation for an estate planning "legacy" seminar. Every seminar provides helpful information regarding estate planning needs, as well as charitable gift options that benefit both family and ministry. There is no cost or obligation to the congregation or your members.

Following a seminar, Foundation staff are available to meet privately with those who request a confidential visit. For more information, call the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext.2970, or visit www.elca.org/lfo for the Regional Gift Planner nearest you.

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Notice about the Action Packet

www.elca.org/colactionpacket

In January-February, we did not have enough material to merit the postage costs of mailing an Action Packet. We expect the March-April packet to go out as regularly scheduled in mid-February.