



March-April  
2006

Volume 19

Number 2

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

Augsburg Fortress Publishers  
Seeds for the Parish  
Box 1209  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209

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# Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

## Federal Chaplains Minister in Difficult Places

Chaplains are the visible presence of the Holy in what may seem like unlikely places. ELCA federal chaplains serve in federal prisons, Veterans Administration hospitals, and the Armed Services of the United States. The Rev. Darrell Morton, assistant to the presiding bishop for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries of the ELCA explains, "Chaplains live and work every day with the people they minister to."

Although the venue may be different, federal chaplains have many of the same responsibilities as any other ELCA pastor. They preach the gospel, lead worship, administer the sacraments, perform weddings, counsel, teach, and bury the dead. Alike but not alike, for there are many more memorial services for younger adults. Grief counseling is also proportionally more frequent for the federal chaplain.

### What is the mission of the Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries?

"To support the chaplaincies of the church in federal agencies, institutions, and armed forces, and to provide for the pastoral care of those called to these ministries." (From ELCA Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Mission Statement.)

### Resources for becoming a chaplain

Military chaplaincy is a specialized ministry. It demands physical fitness as well as mental and spiritual fitness. Chaplains must also complete a six-week officers' training program. The chaplain is then commissioned as a First Lieutenant with a three-year special call.

Unlike other ministry programs there is an age factor in qualifying for military chaplaincy. Although the average age of a civilian pastor today is approximately 44, the upper age limit for clergy entering the military is 42. Training usually occurs very early in a pastor's career. Obviously, this requirement holds back many second-career pastors.

An applicant for chaplaincy must have earned a Master's of Divinity degree and have completed an additional two years of professional service. Chaplains are the only military personnel who do not carry firearms and are not required to qualify in their use.



Chaplain Mike Lembke (far right) joins in prayer with soldiers in Iraq during a memorial service

Those interested in military chaplaincy are encouraged to visit the chaplaincy Web sites for the different branches of the U.S. Armed forces:

**The Air Force Chaplaincy,**  
[www.usafhc.af.mil/](http://www.usafhc.af.mil/)

**The Army Chaplaincy,**  
[www.goarmy.com/](http://www.goarmy.com/)

**The Navy Chaplaincy** (also covers the Marine Corps and Coast Guard),  
[www.chaplain.navy.mil/](http://www.chaplain.navy.mil/)

ELCA clergy also serve and minister in the Bureau of Prisons and the Veterans Administration system. To serve as a chaplain in one of these specialized ministries requires a special call or endorsement from this church. For more information about requirements and procedures, contact the Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries at 202/408-8403 or [ELCACHAP@aol.com](mailto:ELCACHAP@aol.com)

Above all else keep the ELCA chaplains in your prayers and the prayers of your congregation. If you are interested in praying for ELCA chaplains by name on a rotating basis, call the ELCA Office for Federal Chaplains at 202/408-8403.

### How can congregations and individuals support those in the military overseas?

Orchestrated drives to collect and send gifts to our military are discouraged. The most helpful thing a congregation can do is to write letters to those deployed. Purchasing calling cards, enabling military personnel to call home, is most appreciated.

Members can also give generously to the ELCA, which supports the work of the Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries. The Bureau for Federal Chaplaincy Ministries also gratefully receives gifts designated for specific ministries. From these gifts come kits for military field worship, education opportunities for chaplains, and other ministry enhancements.

For more information on the Bureau of Federal Chaplaincy, visit [www.elca.org/federalchaplains/](http://www.elca.org/federalchaplains/) This site features a blog written by Chaplain Mike called *Greetings from Tikrit*. The site also contains FAQs, information on chaplain seminars, and a chaplain look-up system.

## ELCA Emblem Builds Identity

Professional-quality ELCA emblems are available on the Web site ([www.elca.org/emblem](http://www.elca.org/emblem)). They can be used for stationery, e-mail, sign boards and bulletin artwork that will identify your congregation as ELCA.

emblem may be ordered from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

The emblem effectively represents an easily recognizable brand identity for the ELCA and its display is a great way for congregations to expand their



### Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*Living in God's amazing grace*

The ELCA emblem was officially adopted in 1998, and since then it has been displayed on church buildings in cities, towns, and rural areas all over the United States. It is also used to direct worshippers to local churches. Street signs bearing the

reach into the community. The display of the emblem is also used on locally and regionally distributed advertising materials and in mass media market venues such as billboards, TV spots, newspapers, and magazines.

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# Gearing up for New Book of Worship

Leading a congregation in worship requires skill, preparation, intuition, and attitude.

Skill and preparation are obvious requirements for music ministry. Technique and performance practice were learned during piano lessons, high school and college classes, and rehearsals. Unfortunately, some were taught that in church, if the Spirit is to be free to move, too much preparation can be inhibiting. This just isn't right. The Holy Spirit works in planning and rehearsals, as well as during liturgies.

Worship leaders and musicians also need to rely on intuition. Meeting the challenge posed by a new melody and leading it in a helpful way requires intuitive thinking. The congregation may be confused by a new procedure. Leaders must think ahead about the new text in the liturgy and practice it.

At this moment in our church's life, the most important attribute is attitude. There are two distinct ways to approach the unknown. One is to be anxious and nervous. The other is to be excited, even exhilarated. As the publication date of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* nears, the event is anxiously anticipated. Communicating that positive excitement to our congregations is definitely a good thing to do.

Waiting can be tough. New hymns must be learned and new musical settings of the liturgy must be taught. It may be best, however, to wait patiently. Perhaps this is the time to sing some of the hymns that are not to be included in the core volume.

On the other hand, it may be time to stir up anticipation for the new text. This can be done with short liturgical texts while waiting for the complete services and music to arrive next fall. Presiding ministers might begin saying, "The peace of Christ be with you," or using one of the optional blessings.

Lectors could introduce the new alternate conclusion to the readings, "Word of God, word of life," with the response, "Thanks be to God."

Assisting ministers may try some of the options for the dismissal, such as, "Go in peace. Share the good news."

Just as musicians rehearse, congregations might practice the new translations of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The changes are minimal, but they can be misread if not prepared and rehearsed.

At this point, congregations should not focus on the provisional materials that have been available and tested over the last five years. While these are rich in content, a great deal of the text has been changed in response to input from congregations all across the ELCA. Currently, complete texts in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* are available at [www.renewingworship.org](http://www.renewingworship.org). Exploring these texts and sharing a few excerpts may be a helpful way to prepare your congregation for this exciting new resource.



Young Lutherans Sing

## Young Lutherans Sing 2006

Young Lutherans Sing! (YLS), a residential program for upper elementary and middle school singers, will be held for the second time this summer, June 20 – 25 at Lenoir-Rhyne College

in Hickory, N.C. The program culminates in the opening service of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) Region 2 Conference. YLS will be jointly sponsored this year by ALCM and Lenoir-Rhyne College's Sacred Music Program. The first program, held on the campus of Concordia College in Bronxville, N.Y., with Michael Burkhardt as clinician and director, was highly successful. Over 30 singers enjoyed a week of choral music and other musical activities. This year's choral clinician and director is Florence Jowers, conductor of the Lenoir-Rhyne Youth Chorus. Other musicians will lead small group sessions. The program is for treble voices in grades 3-8. Liturgical dance, drama, and art will be new features of this year's Young Lutherans Sing.

Because worship leaders should be trained as early as possible, this choral and worship experience is designed to provide children with the knowledge and appreciation of the church's song.

Lenoir-Rhyne, a college of the ELCA, is located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, in the western part of North Carolina. Facilities include an indoor pool, air-conditioned residence halls, a music building with a state-of-the-art computer lab, a piano lab, a new health-care facility, and a newly renovated dining hall. The area has much to offer families who may want to vacation in the mountains before or after the camp.

The tuition fee includes room and board, all music and art costs, and an outing to the mountains featuring a real North Carolina BBQ and hoedown! More information is available at [www.alcm.org](http://www.alcm.org). Contact Dr. Paul Weber, director of the Sacred Music Program at Lenoir-Rhyne, at [weberpd@lrc.edu](mailto:weberpd@lrc.edu) or 828/328-7149.

# Paradox Lies in Easter Sermon Themes

Most worshippers are familiar with and believe the truth of Christ's resurrection, so what are appropriate sermon topics during the Easter season? Consider two paradoxical themes related to Easter discussed in Mark Allan Powell's book, *Loving Jesus*.

The first, and more obvious, theme is the continuing presence of Jesus, found in most Easter readings. We encounter this idea as the risen Jesus appears to the disciples in Jerusalem (John 20:19-31) and on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-48). The command to abide in his love (John 15:9-17) only makes sense if he is still living and active in the world.

The second, and less obvious, theme articulated in Powell's book is the absence of Jesus. "The Bible teaches that, while Jesus may remain present with us in all of the ways we have described, he is no longer with us as he once was, and he is not now with us as he will be."

We can find the absence of Jesus expressed in Scripture. In John 17:11 we have Jesus' words: "Now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you." This theme can also be found in the accounts of the Ascension of Our Lord.

We find this paradox in our celebration of Holy Communion. While we proclaim Christ's presence in the sacrament, we also proclaim his absence in words like, "we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

While the Easter season is a time to proclaim "He is risen," it is also a time to recognize that we often feel his absence. We celebrate his presence, yet we anxiously await his return.

—Pastor Brian Stoffregen  
Marysville, Calif.

For more sermon ideas visit Pastor Stoffregen's *Exegetical Notes* at: [www.crossmarks.com/brian/](http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/)

# The Lutheran Offers Sermon Ideas Online

Are you looking for stories or new takes on the Lectionary that you can use in a sermon or in an adult forum you are preparing? *The Lutheran* online can help.



The magazine offers a free weekly e-newsletter with special content, such as short inspirational stories, book excerpts, meditations on the Sunday texts, news bulletins, and reflections on a variety of current religious and social topics. To acquire this service, visit [www.thelutheran.org](http://www.thelutheran.org)

*The Lutheran* now has a daily news blog ([www.thelutheran.org/news/](http://www.thelutheran.org/news/)) and a staff blog ("our blog"), as well as a number of inexpensive study guides, which can be reviewed online.

# Seeds for the Parish

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

*Seeds for the Parish* (ISSN 0897-5663) is published six times a year, bimonthly. It is distributed without charge to the professional staff and lay leaders of the congregations, synods, and regions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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*Seeds for the Parish*

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Note: Not all the resources and program ideas listed in *Seeds for the Parish* have received official ELCA review or endorsement.

*Seeds for the Parish* is a member of the Associated Church Press.

## Publication Office

(Circulation and Production)

Augsburg Fortress  
100 S. Fifth St., Suite 600  
Minneapolis, MN 55402  
800/426-0115

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**POSTMASTER**, send address changes to:  
*Seeds for the Parish*  
Circulation, Box 1209  
Minneapolis, MN 55440-1209  
or e-mail: [Lufis@augstburgfortress.org](mailto:Lufis@augstburgfortress.org)

# Grace Matters Radio Program Boosted for 2006

**G**race Matters, the ELCA radio ministry, is now available to more Americans than ever, having added 17 new radio stations and translator stations. Seven of these stations are in the top 35 U.S. broadcast markets.

In most markets the acquisitions were made possible by support from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, according to Barbara J. Andrews, associate director for marketing, ELCA Communication Services.

A partner organization with the ELCA in expanding *Grace Matters*' reach is Salem Communications, Camarillo, Calif. The seven stations at the top-35 are Salem stations.

The ELCA churchwide budget provided \$50,000 in contingency funds, designated for outreach from the 2005-2006 fiscal year, to help make the national broadcast buys. In Eau Claire, Wis. and Milwaukee, local funding made the broadcasts possible.

*Grace Matters* airs on some 190 radio stations in the United States and other countries. In most markets it airs on Sunday mornings. Listeners can hear the program at [www.gracematters.org](http://www.gracematters.org) and Podcasts are also available on the Web.

An integrated marketing campaign to promote *Grace Matters* in the new markets is under way, including direct mail, posters, radio promotions, and resources on the Web site.



Peter Marty host of Grace Matters

## New top-35 market stations

Cleveland (#25), WHK 1420 AM, 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Milwaukee (#33), WRRD 540 AM, noon Sunday  
 Philadelphia (#6), WNTP 990 AM, 7 a.m. Sunday  
 Phoenix (#15), KKNT 960 AM, 6:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Portland, Ore. (#24), KPDQ 93.7 FM, 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 San Antonio (#30), KLUP 930 AM, 7 a.m. Sunday;  
 Seattle-Tacoma, Wash. (#14), KKOL 1300 AM, 7:30 a.m. Sunday.

## Other new "Grace Matters" affiliates are:

**Oregon**  
 Astoria, KPDQ 100.9 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Cannon Beach, KPDQ 104.9 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Hood River, KPDQ 107.7 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Maupin, KPDQ 104.9 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Seaside, KPDQ 107.1 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday

**Pennsylvania**  
 Bedford, WHJB, 1600 AM, 12:30 p.m. Sunday

**Washington:**  
 Aberdeen, KPDQ 107.1 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Packwood, KPDQ 97.7 FM (translator), 7:30 a.m. Sunday  
 Port Angeles, KIKN 1290 AM, 7:30 a.m. Sunday

**Wisconsin**  
 Eau Claire, WEAQ 1150 AM, 8 a.m. Sunday

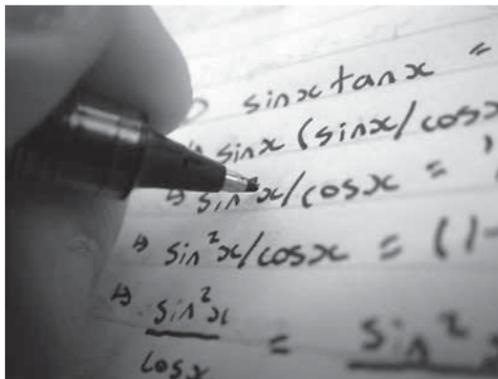
# Task Force Readies Statement on Education

**M**artin Luther wrote, "A city's best and greatest welfare, safety, and strength consist rather in its having many able, learned, wise, honorable, and well-educated citizens."

Luther sought the reform of education and trumpeted its importance for both church and society. We have received the legacy of being a teaching and learning church. What today is our calling in education?

2006 is a good year to talk about education in your congregation and neighborhood. During the year your congregation will have opportunity to study and respond to the first draft of an ELCA social statement on education. Your comments will help the ELCA Task Force on Education to shape the eventual social statement. Plan now to discuss the draft.

*Our Calling in Education: A First Draft of a Social Statement*, will be in the March Action Packet. It will be online by mid-February ([www.elca.org/socialstatements/education](http://www.elca.org/socialstatements/education)). Congregations will have until October 15 to respond.



The first draft considers the challenges we face in education in both church and society. Its five parts deal with a theological perspective on education, passing on the faith to a new generation, equitable access to high quality education for all young people, our church's educational institutions (from early childhood

education centers through college), and public higher education.

Hearings on the first draft will be held in various synods during 2006. Hearings make it possible for those who have read or studied the first draft to make comments and engage in conversation with representatives of the task force so that the best thinking of the church is represented in the final version. Contact your synod office for hearing dates or consult the task force's Web site.

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly is scheduled to consider the proposed social statement on education. In light of responses to the first draft, the ELCA Task Force on Education will prepare the proposed social statement in early 2007.

Prepare now to talk about education and to respond to *Our Calling in Education*. For information, contact the Rev. John Stumme, director for studies, Church in Society Program Unit, 800/638-3522, ext. 2704; [John.Stumme@elca.org](mailto:John.Stumme@elca.org)

# Select Grant

**S**elect, a multimedia leadership development program of the Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA, has a new name--*Select Multimedia Resources: Lutheran Voices for Leadership Formation*.



For more than 20 years, Select has produced multimedia programs for theological education, church groups, Associates in Ministry (AIM) candidates, lay worship leaders, and synod-authorized ministers. Pastor Ward

(Skip) Cornett is the director of Select and of continuing education at Trinity Lutheran Seminary. Order fulfillment operation is handled by Seraphim Communications, St. Paul, Minn.

A grant from Thrivent Foundation makes possible the funding of these new features:

- a Web site with online ordering capability
- courses in DVD rather than VHS format
- redevelopment of some core courses
- equipping certain courses with online components

Jodi Hanson, South Dakota Synod staff member, is the director of online courses for Select. Three courses were hosted in early 2006 and six are slated for the fall.

For more information about Select Multimedia Resources, visit [www.elca.org/select/](http://www.elca.org/select/) or [www.selectlearning.org/](http://www.selectlearning.org/) You may also contact Skip Cornett at 614/235-4136 or [wcornett@trinitylutheranseminary.edu](mailto:wcornett@trinitylutheranseminary.edu)



WHY ARE WE SO DEDICATED TO HELPING CONGREGATIONS EXPAND THEIR CHURCHES?

SIMPLE: WE'RE A MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH.

No one knows the needs of your congregation – and how to help it – better than we do. We have a one-of-a-kind insight into the challenges that your congregation faces. As well as unrivaled motivation to help find a solution. And for nearly a century, that's just what we've been doing. In fact, today we have more than 600 loans totaling over \$300 million at work throughout ELCA congregations and ELCA-related ministries in the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Helping with everything from building new churches to renovating existing ones. And we stand ready to help your congregation or ELCA-related ministry, too. To find out how, call 877.886.3522 or visit us at [www.elca.org/mif](http://www.elca.org/mif).

877.886.3522



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

# Ripe for Picking

## OUTDOOR MINISTRY

In our fast-paced world, there are countless distractions that pull our attention in many directions. Often we feel alone or left behind. We need to hear words of hope.

Fortunately, Jesus will meet us anywhere. God's grace, through Jesus Christ, is available to all people, in every place.

*La Frontera: Where Jesus Meets Us* is an outdoor ministry curriculum. *La Frontera* packet includes age-appropriate Bible studies, worship topics, games, and activities. The curriculum may be used in a camp or retreat setting, or by congregations interested in outdoor ministries such as day camp.

The program is available through Augsburg Fortress 800/328-4648, for: \$315.



## New Bible Study

The Bible study for *Lutheran Woman Today*, "Hope in God in Times of Suffering," will begin in September 2006. Join women across the church as they explore the spiritual aspect of suffering. In each session, Bible passages are cited to respond to probing questions. The purpose of these sessions is to spark reflection, conversation, and prayer.

Authors Faith and Terence Fretheim claim many use the word suffering too freely. "We use it to refer to everything from a headache to the holocaust." Suffering can be personal, as in a serious illness or accident, or it can be communal, such as the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina or the attacks of September 11. Accordingly, the Bible study makes distinctions among types of suffering, causes of suffering, and the ways we can respond to it.

Faith is retired from Women of the ELCA, where she served in the program area. Terry is the Elva B. Lovell Professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. He teaches several courses on God and suffering.

The Fretheims will present an introduction to the Bible study in six locations this spring: May 18-19, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa; June 1-2, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn.; June 24, Good Earth Village, Spring Valley, Minn.; June 25-29, Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, Minn.;

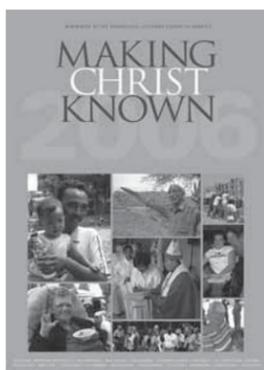
August 19, Oregon Synod Assembly; August 26 at Southwestern Washington Synod Assembly.

For more information or for reservations, contact Ceciley Boykin at 800/638-3522, ext. 2744, or [ceciley.boykin@elca.org](mailto:ceciley.boykin@elca.org)

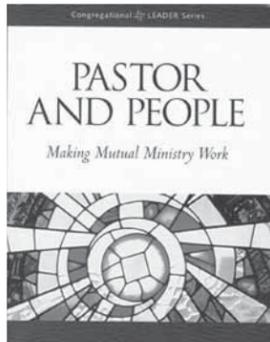
## Making Christ Known

*Making Christ Known 2006* features a number of stories that highlight the unique identity of the ELCA, its special ministry, and how the church is funded. At [www.elca.org/stewardhip/makingchristknown.html](http://www.elca.org/stewardhip/makingchristknown.html) you can download individual articles and photos, and reproduce them for local use.

*Making Christ Known 2006* (ISBN 6-0002-1547-9) is available from Augsburg Fortress for shipping charges only. Call 800/328-4648.



## Ministry Review and Performance Evaluation



Many congregations are finding that it makes good sense to regularly assess their ministries. *Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work*, one of the volumes in the *Congregational Leader Series*, features a model for annual ministry review and performance evaluation. In it congregations are encouraged to ensure that:

- leadership and staff establish mutually agreed-on goals
- achievement of these goals directs the work of the congregation
- the degree of success in pursuing these goals forms the basis for annual review and evaluation

*Pastor and People: Making Mutual Ministry Work* (ISBN 0-8066-4651-9) and the other volumes in the *Congregational Leader Series* are available from Augsburg Fortress. Call 800/328-4648 or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org/cls/](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/cls/)

## Wittenberg Center Sponsors Two New Tours

The ELCA Wittenberg Center invites you to take part in two upcoming travel seminars.

June 25 - July 9, 2006: *Roots of Lutheran Spirituality* will not be a typical European tour. The emphasis will be more on pilgrimage than on tourism. The group will take time at the visited sites to consider their spiritual significance.

*Roots of Lutheran Spirituality* will explore vital centers of renewal linked with the Lutheran Reformation, with time set aside for daily worship and periodic reflection. Augmenting the contributions of tour leaders Pastor Dick Bruesehoff and Dr. Bradley Hanson (who have extensive backgrounds in Lutheran studies and spiritual formation), local experts will offer presentations based on their unique perspective. Become a true pilgrim!



Luther Statue at Wittenberg Center

July 25 - August 15, 2006: *Voices and Visions of Reformation*. Participants in this trip will follow the tracks of Luther and other visionaries and reformers in late medieval and early modern Germany. They will visit sites important to Luther—Eisleben, Erfurt, Eisenach, Wittenberg, and Torgau—and other places with rich traditions in architecture, art, music, and texts, such as Marburg, Leipzig, Worms, Buchenwald, and Berlin. Local experts and tour leader Dr. Kirsi Stjerna, will help them study Luther in depth. Reviewed will be his "conversation partners" (friends and foes) and prophetic voices. They will also examine women's roles in the new church, changes wrought by the Reformation to all aspects of life, and the tenacity of the Lutheran church in Germany.

For registration and other information, visit [www.elca.org/wittenberg](http://www.elca.org/wittenberg) or contact [ELCAWittenbergCenter@t-online.de](mailto:ELCAWittenbergCenter@t-online.de)

## Save for Youth Gathering with MIF Accounts

Youth groups throughout the ELCA are raising funds to cover their expenses for the 2006 Youth Gathering in San Antonio. One way congregations can help is to establish a Youth Gathering MissionPlus account from the Mission Investment Fund.

A congregation has access to the funds in the account before, during and after the gathering. Participating congregations can also register for the "Friends-Asking-Friends" online fund-raising tool. With this unique tool, young folks can design Web pages and send e-mails that promote the gathering.

The Mission Investment Fund will be accessible at the Youth Gathering, so funds for meals and other expenses can be acquired from a congregation's Youth Gathering MissionPlus account.

For more information about the Youth Gathering MissionPlus account and "Friends-Asking-Friends," contact the Mission Investment Fund at 877/886-3522 or [mif@elca.org](mailto:mif@elca.org). Download the Youth Gathering MissionPlus application at [www.elca.org/mif/MPlus\\_Youth\\_Gathering.html](http://www.elca.org/mif/MPlus_Youth_Gathering.html)

## The Time for Volunteers is NOW

As March begins, many of us face at least another month of winter winds and snowstorms, making us long for one thing—Spring break! What better way to have some fun in the sun than by volunteering for a week in one of the areas affected by the 2005 hurricane season? The high temperature along the Gulf Coast averages around 70° this time of year. Sounds nice, right?

Volunteers of all skill and experience levels are needed to aid in the long-term recovery efforts in these locales. The work may not always be glamorous, but it is certainly what God's people are called to do. Volunteering means rewarding work, being outdoors in the warm weather, and sharing fellowship with others.

Visit [www.ldr.org/volunteers](http://www.ldr.org/volunteers) for more information about Lutheran Disaster Response and to register online for your volunteer experience.

Please remember that the volunteer effort requires ongoing financial donations. Through your generous support the ministry of long-term



recovery will continue to bring new life and hope. Visit [www.elca.org/scriptlib/dcm/giving/ddisaster.asp](http://www.elca.org/scriptlib/dcm/giving/ddisaster.asp) to make a donation. Bulletins regarding disaster are available at [www.elca.org/disaster/resources](http://www.elca.org/disaster/resources)

You may also contact Mike Nevergall at 800/638-3522, ext. 2863, or [michael.nevergall@elca.org](mailto:michael.nevergall@elca.org)

# Ripe for Picking

## Walk to Wellness Through *Here I Step*

Live prayerfully this Lenten season and boost your physical activity through the *Here I Step* walking program.

To participate, walk two miles a day during the 40 days of Lent. The total mileage is symbolic of the distance from Nazareth to Jerusalem (80 miles).

"The Board of Pensions' roadmap for wellness in 2006 is to increase physical activity, decrease caloric intake, and live prayerfully," said Tammy Devine, ELCA wellness coordinator. "Taking the *Here I Step* challenge is a great way to continue your journey to wellness while nurturing your relationship with God. Be a healthy leader who enhances the lives of God's people."

The Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod designed the *Here I Step* campaign and received the first Healthy Leaders Enhance Lives Award in recognition of its creative efforts to develop healthy ELCA leaders. The walking program is now being made available through the ELCA Board of Pensions to all congregations, synods, seminaries, and others who want to live well in Christ.

Walk to wellness on your own, or organize a group. For helpful resources, visit [www.elcabop.org](http://www.elcabop.org)



## Speakers Provided

Are you interested in finding speakers for your various Sunday forums? The Lutheran Volunteer Corps (LVC) will gladly help you fill those vacant spots! Current Lutheran Volunteers and LVC Alumni are available to congregations across the country to speak about their remarkable experiences. Over 1,500 men and women have committed a year of their lives to work for justice, live in intentional communities, simplify their lifestyles and explore spirituality. They work at more than 80 nonprofit agencies in ten cities from coast to coast. Lutheran Volunteers and LVC Alumni provide excellent programming for a variety of events such as adult forums, Bible studies and youth groups. Please contact LVC's Lauren Cummings to schedule a church visit at 202/387-3222 or [lauren@lutheranvolunteercorps.org](mailto:lauren@lutheranvolunteercorps.org). For more information about LVC, please visit [www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org](http://www.lutheranvolunteercorps.org)

## Going Once, Giving Twice, Expressing Thanks

Lutheran Services in America would like to thank all of its member organizations, volunteers, buyers, and everyone involved, for making its first annual online auction a success. "I personally want to take this opportunity to thank each and every person for participating in the auction," said John Carter, Trading Graces Online Auction Manager. "I was touched by the generous spirit of those involved both by the donations that were provided and also by the time and effort given to this project."

The auction featured hundreds of items including signed sports memorabilia from Troy Aikman, a set of one million collectible baseball cards, hand-carved African candle holders, a Hmong needlework bedspread, and a one-week getaway to Celebrity Resorts in Honolulu. The

revenue generated by the auction is still being calculated. All proceeds will go directly to participating Lutheran health and human service organizations.

Even though the first auction is officially over on March 8, 2006, planning for next year is well under way. Everyone is encouraged to get involved. Organizations can sign up, donations can be given, and volunteers are always needed.

For information on how to participate, volunteer or make a donation, contact Trading Graces Online Auction Manager, John Carter, at 410/230-3548, ([jcarter@lutheranservices.org](mailto:jcarter@lutheranservices.org)), or Trading Graces Online Auction Facilitator, Sarah Gawlitta at 410/230-4546, ([sgawlitta@lutheranservices.org](mailto:sgawlitta@lutheranservices.org)).

## Video Encourages Dialog on Controversial Issues

How would the world appear if people could honestly discuss their different viewpoints and values? What would our church look like if congregations became safe places for this kind of dialogue? The video, *Dealing with Tough Issues as Christians*, asserts that congregations can indulge in such a dialogue with God's help.

To make this argument, the video encourages sharing experiences, seeking understanding, discerning biblical guidelines and acting accordingly. It presents candid discussions in congregations on such divisive issues as homosexuality, corporate farming and abortion. A video/leader guide sug-

gests multiple uses for this resource and tips for achieving dialogue.

Related materials can be found in various resources from the ELCA, including *Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues* (in English and Spanish) and *Talking Together as Christians Cross-culturally*. These can be accessed at [www.elca.org/dcs/moral.html](http://www.elca.org/dcs/moral.html)

Produced by the Division for Ministry (now Vocation and Education) with help from Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, the Video/Leader Guide is available from Augsburg Fortress - 800/328-4648, ISBN#6-0001-3219-0, for \$19.95, plus shipping.

## RevWriter is Looking for Practical Wisdom Ideas

The RevWriter is looking for more Practical Wisdom (ideas that have worked in churches)!

We'd like to devote an entire future issue of the RevWriter Resource (ISSN 1545-939X) to this theme. To do this, we need your help!

All are encouraged to submit Practical Wisdom ideas to [practicalwisdom@revwriter.com](mailto:practicalwisdom@revwriter.com) by July 1, 2006. The top three winners will be awarded prizes and announced in the September issue.

First prize is free registration (transferable to anyone) for the 2006 RevWriter Writers Conference scheduled for Saturday, October 14,



2006 at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Sellersville, Penn. The RevWriter Writers Conference was

created to support those who write for local congregations or the wider Christian market.

Second prize is a copy of *The Leader's Guide to Self-Care* by Rochelle Melander and Harold Eppley (Alban Institute, 2002).

Third prize is a copy of *Walking on Water: Reflections on Faith and Art* by Madeleine L'Engle (Shaw Book, 2001).

Entries will be judged on creativity and writing skill.

For more information contact [practicalwisdom@revwriter.com](mailto:practicalwisdom@revwriter.com) or visit [www.revwriter.com](http://www.revwriter.com)

## God is There?

In *Act of God/Active God*, author Dr. Gary Harbaugh explores faith-related questions raised by the victims/survivors of natural disasters. Is the disaster an "act of God"? Did God cause the disaster? If God is all-powerful, why did God allow it to happen?

Harbaugh offers seven ways people of faith can transform disasters into times of blessings, and he provides helpful spiritual and biblical resources to strengthen Christians in times of disaster. A final chapter for caregivers provides help for the emotional and spiritual health of those who assist others in times of disaster. Appendices provide practical, close-to-the-ground tools.

To order *Act of God/Active God* please call Fortress Press at 800/328-4648 or visit [www.fortresspress.com](http://www.fortresspress.com)

## For Lectionary Wrestlers



Are you the kind of preacher who grapples with biblical texts before preparing your sermon? And are you concerned with the text's relevance to justice or hunger?

If so, here's a quick reminder: Visit the ELCA Hunger Program Web site at [www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger) and click on the "Hunger Sermon Starters" link in the upper left-hand corner. You'll then find sermon helps for the coming Sunday based on the Revised

Common Lectionary. They're just "starters," but perhaps they'll help you!

## How's Your Food Pantry?

If your answer is somewhere between "OK" and "not too good," you might want to look at *Charity Food Programs That Can End Hunger in America*, a free online manual and evaluation tool. You can access the manual at [www.endhungerinamerica.org](http://www.endhungerinamerica.org). To acquire a free brochure by the same name, call Hunger Education at 800/638-3522, ext. 2708, or e-mail [bob.sitze@elca.org](mailto:bob.sitze@elca.org)

# What's New on the World Wide Web

We need to update our congregation's constitution; where can we find a copy of the current Model Constitution for Congregations?

- Our secretary keeps everything on the computer. Is that OK?
- Can you direct me to the congregation where my grandparents were married?
- What did the ELCA Church Council members decide at their last meeting?
- Can you help us find insurance for our congregation?
- How do we apply to be tax exempt, and why do we need to do this?
- We want to clean the roll of members; is there a proper procedure for doing this?
- Should we do background checks on all employees? How would we do this?
- May I check out a book from the Lutheran Center Library?
- Where do I fill out the congregational report forms for my congregation?
- We would like to use our building for an adult day care center. What issues should we consider?

- How do we make our congregation safe for children and those who work with them?

You can find the answers to these and a host of other questions and concerns related to congregation administration on the newly redesigned Web site of the ELCA Office of the Secretary [www.elca.org/secretary](http://www.elca.org/secretary)

The Office of the Secretary Web site is rich with useful information and guidelines on a variety of topics related to congregation administration, and presented on the Web site in a manner that is readily accessible and easy to use.

## ELCA NEWS BLOG

In December 2005 the ELCA News Service started the "ELCA News Blog." What's this? Blog is shorthand for Weblog. The ELCA news staff is using this Web-based service to post brief news updates about the church and related institutional ministries. The blog is intended as a supplement to regular, more detailed news releases about the ELCA that are available through the ELCA Web site and by e-mail subscription.



As with regular news releases, ELCA News Blog items can be printed right from the Web. The ELCA News Blog is at [www.elca.org/news/blog](http://www.elca.org/news/blog) on the ELCA Web site. ELCA News Releases are at [www.elca.org/news](http://www.elca.org/news)

The news staff welcomes your feedback.



In every issue of *Seeds*, ELCA resource center staff pull together a "Q&A" on topics they discuss in their meeting on LutherLink. To find the resource center near you, go to [www.elca.org/communication/resourcecenters.htm](http://www.elca.org/communication/resourcecenters.htm)

**Q** What are the leading resources for youth ministry—theory and practice—in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

**A** Anyone involved in youth ministry in the ELCA should start with the ELCA Web site, in my opinion. Not only does [www.elca.org/youth](http://www.elca.org/youth) point to classic and new resources for use in youth ministry, like Faith Lens (weekly Bible study based on current events and the lectionary), the Help Sheets (articles on youth ministry topics and concerns) and Reel World (movie discussion guides), it also links to programs such as ELCA Servant Events and High Adventure Camps, which are offered across the United States throughout the year, but especially in the summer and Lutheran College Fairs, which offer youth and parents the opportunity to speak to admissions representatives from a variety of Lutheran colleges and universities.

There are also plenty of links to places for people involved in youth ministry to get training, continuing education and certification in youth ministry in ELCA and ELCA-related institutions.

Perhaps the most important link of all is that pointing to the ELCA Youth Ministry Network! This professional association of youth ministers lends support to all in youth ministry and gives everyone an opportunity to support others in their ministries. Supporting one another also supports the greater vision and lends a louder voice for Youth and Family Ministries throughout the ELCA. It's a place to access ministry placement resources online. The annual conference and continuing education, "Extravaganza" is invaluable sharing time for anyone involved in ministering with young people. See [www.elcaymnet.org/](http://www.elcaymnet.org/) for more information.

—Catherine Fink, director  
Heilig Resource Center  
Salisbury, N.C.

**A** One of the more recent and exciting resources for youth ministry is an ecumenical research study titled *Congregations with Youth of Vital Faith*. Funded through Lilly Foundation, seven Christian denominations were involved: Assemblies of God, Evangelical Covenant, ELCA, Presbyterian Church (USA), Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, and United Methodist. I attended the Spirit of Youth Ministry National Conference in August where the study results were presented. The study revealed key "faith assets™" (similar to the Search Institute's *40 Developmental Assets for Youth*). The study found there were 34 characteristics of mature Christian youth. For details, visit [www.exemplarym.com/SpiritConf.htm](http://www.exemplarym.com/SpiritConf.htm)

Also see my article, "Growing in the Body,"

published in the May/June, 2005, issue of *Lutheran Partners*, at [www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/facets/past/0505\\_09.html](http://www.elca.org/lutheranpartners/facets/past/0505_09.html)

—Karen Matthias-Long, director  
Ministry Resources  
Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod  
Wescosville

**A** Rich Melheim, of Faith Inkubators, also has a high school youth ministry system based on the popular small-group-style confirmation programs. For a summary, visit [www.faithink.blogs.com/rich/](http://www.faithink.blogs.com/rich/) and click on "Head to the Heart: Sr. High Apologetics," then scroll down to the August 15, 2004, entry.

—Mike Woods, pastor,  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church,  
LaCrescent, Minn.

**A** I recommend Mark DeVries' book, *Family-Based Youth Ministry* (Youth Ministry Architects, [www.ymarchitects.com](http://www.ymarchitects.com)). It is described as being "...about adults discipling teens one-on-one and in groups. It is about involving not just the nuclear family but the whole church family. It's about incorporating youth into the life of your church." Full of warmth and humor, and possessing keen insight, Mark will be our keynote speaker for synod assembly this year.

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

**A** The six synods of Wisconsin, funded by the Siebert Foundation, are in the midst of a three-year experiment in developing future church leaders. We have acquired resources

from Paul Hill, David Anderson, and Rollie Martinson ([www.exemplarym.com](http://www.exemplarym.com)), and the Center for Youth Ministries of Wartburg Seminary ([www.wartburgseminary.edu](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu)). We would also recommend *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*, by Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton (Oxford University Press, [www.oup.com/us](http://www.oup.com/us)), *Effective Dynamic Youth Ministry Practices* by Thomas East (St. Mary's Press, [www.smp.org](http://www.smp.org)), *Practicing Passion: Youth and the Quest for a Passionate Church* by Kenda Creasy Dean (Eerdmans, [www.eerdmans.com](http://www.eerdmans.com)), and *Godly Play: An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education* by Jerome Berryman (Augsburg Fortress, [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org)).

—Greg Kaufman, director  
NW Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center  
Eau Claire

**A** "Youth Ministry Comes in All Sizes" and "Youth or Consequences" are two

articles from *The Lutheran* about changing youth ministry. Visit [www.thelutheran.org/feature/september](http://www.thelutheran.org/feature/september) for a study guide on this theme.

Recurring themes in current youth ministry are faith formation, faith practices, and "soul-tending." Notable resources devoted to these themes are *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster (Upper Room Books, [www.upperroom.org/bookstore](http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore)) and *Practicing Our Faith: A Way of Life for a Searching People* by Dorothy Bass (Jossey-Bass, [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)). *The Godbearing Life* is a lively and practical guide to youth ministry. It reaffirms that the relationships shared by youth with families, mentors and the whole congregation are the "holy ground" of authentic youth ministry. *Practicing Our Faith* explores 12 central Christian practices that relate to ideas in most of the books described here. The excellent accompanying study guide is an additional resource.

—Julie Ageson, director  
Eastern North Dakota Resource Center  
Fargo

**A** I would recommend *Passing on the Faith: A Radical New Model for Youth and Family Ministry* by Merton Strommen and Dick Hardel (St. Mary's Press). This book makes a credible case for partnership between families and their churches in the faith formation of young people. It's filled with great research, practical models, and ideas for the home and congregation.

—Susan Schlitter, director  
Lutheran Resource Center  
Clear Lake Iowa

**A** Kenda Creasy Dean edited, *Starting Right: Thinking Theologically about Youth Ministry* (Zondervan, [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com)), which examines youth ministry from a theological perspective.

I would also recommend *Four Views of Youth Ministry and the Church*, Mark Senter, editor (Zondervan). Senter and three others present four distinctive views of youth ministry, and then invite conversation/discussion/dialogue among readers as to their particular view or perspective. The language can be a bit academic, but it is still a worthwhile book.

—Mark J. Jackson, Faculty and Director  
Youth & Family Resource Center  
Trinity Lutheran College  
Issaquah, Wash.

# March Prayer Ventures Lifts up Two “Fools for Christ”



Rev. Cliff and Mitesaida Lewis

*“We are fools for Christ, living out the gospel in these many places that God has called us to serve”*

Around the world in 80 days? How about 18 years?

The Rev. Cliff and Mitesaida Lewis, now based in Cairo, Egypt, have served as ELCA missionaries in four countries since 1987. “When we were growing up in the Caribbean, we would have laughed at the idea that God would call us to this

ministry,” Cliff says. “But as we were planning our lives, God was laughing all the time.”

The Lewises’ first assignment was in Papua New Guinea, where Cliff served as chaplain to Lutheran boarding students, and the couple worked with youth ministry.

After a three-year call in Freeport, Bahamas, the Lewises again felt God’s call to global mission and moved to Cameroon to serve the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Cameroon (ELCC). In 2002, they moved to Dakar, Senegal where Cliff served as the ELCA Regional Representative for West and Central Africa. And just a year ago, they were asked to consider service with the St. Andrew’s United Church of Cairo, Egypt. Their answer? Yes, of course!

“We are fools for Christ, living out the gospel in these many places that God has called us to serve,” says Cliff, now pastor at St. Andrew’s.

Multiple assignments have challenged the Lewises to live in new cultures, adapt to new traditions, and learn four languages: Pidgin, in Papua New Guinea, French and Fulfulde, in Cameroon and Senegal, and now Arabic. “I made a vow after Seminary Greek never to learn another foreign

language,” Cliff remembers, “but God continues to laugh at us.”

Along the way, the Lewises have made deep friendships that continue even when their address changes. “We have laughed and cried with so many friends, and been present for weddings, births, baptisms, and confirmations,” says Cliff. “And in everything, we have been blessed by God’s gracious keeping.”

The Lewises note that their sons Alex and Nawi have lived in six different cultures: American, Bahamian, Turks Island, Cameroonian, Senegalese, and now Egyptian. “They will certainly be citizens of the world after this!” says Saida.

In Cairo, the Lewis family is enjoying being in the region where, as their son Alex says, “God started it all.”

You can pray for the Lewis family on March 31, when their ministry is lifted up in *Prayer Ventures*, the guide to daily prayer for the ELCA’s global and outreach ministries. *Prayer Ventures* may be downloaded from [www.elca.org/prayerventures](http://www.elca.org/prayerventures). A print version may be requested by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

## Nurturing Prayer in the Congregation

Perhaps the best way to nurture prayer in the congregation is to simply stop and pray. Call an official “Time Out!” Interrupt business as usual. Stop talking about prayer and begin praying at every opportunity.

Actually, Lent is the season of the year when the church traditionally calls people to change their ways, shift their priorities and center on Christ. Lent is a time for prayer.

### Consider these possibilities:

- When someone asks for prayer in the hallway, at a meeting or on the phone – immediately stop and pray with him or her.
- Put three names of members of your congregation on a card and place the card in a sealed envelope. Distribute these envelopes and invite prayer for those listed in the envelope. (If the names are unfamiliar, encourage people to seek out each other and determine if there are particular prayer

requests.) Pray daily for each person listed in the envelope for 40 days. You may also include names of visitors, community social service agencies, and others with special needs.

- Here’s a challenge for young and old. Encourage everyone in your congregation to stop and pray when the hands of the clock point to heaven (at noon and midnight).
- Add a list of ongoing prayer petitions in your Sunday bulletin. Encourage worshippers to keep that list during the week and pray these petitions every day during the coming week. (If you currently include prayers in the bulletin, add a text box or special font to draw attention to them.)
- Show the ELCA seven-minute DVD: *With Hands Uplifted—A Call to Prayer* available free through Augsburg Fortress 800-328-4648.
- Gather a prayer group and register to be part of the ELCA Prayer Network. Receive prayer requests submitted to the ELCA Web site and commit to praying for these needs for 30 days. See

Prayer Requests on: [www.elca.org/prayer](http://www.elca.org/prayer)

### Additional prayer resources:

Many more resources such as “Ways to Introduce and Advance Prayer Ministry in Your Congregation,” “Bible Studies on Prayers” and “Luther’s Way of Praying” are available on the ELCA Prayer Web site at [www.elca.org/prayer](http://www.elca.org/prayer)

Keep in mind the ELCA prayer Web site is designed not just to provide prayer resources but also to invite prayer. Encourage those who spend their days (or nights) at computers to bookmark Meditation, praying with a rich variety of scripture and images. The Prayer for Healing is accessible at all hours for those who are in need.

Publicize the Web address [www.elca.org/prayer](http://www.elca.org/prayer) in your newsletter and bulletin.

Go on a prayer journey across the church with the fall 2005 Mosaic Television DVD. For more information go to [www.elca.org/mosaic](http://www.elca.org/mosaic)

## 2006 ELCA Global Mission Event Takes Place in New England



He Qi, China’s most internationally sought-after contemporary Christian artist, will participate in the 2006 ELCA Global Mission Event, scheduled for July 27-30, 2006. This year’s event will be hosted by the ELCA New England Synod in Amherst, Mass., an area bursting with vacation possibilities and very close to significant historical sites.

He Qi is a professor at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and a tutor for master candidate students in the Philosophy Department of Nanjing University. At the GME he will be joined by ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and a number of missionaries, presenters, international guests, ELCA members, musicians, and artists.

- Participants of all ages can:
- Experience God’s mission in the world
- Learn global music and dance

- Encounter international presenters and participants
- Partake in an immersion program into another culture
- Savor Bible study with a global twist

GME participants can also enroll in multi-session seminars focused on cross-cultural relationships, sustainable development, asset mapping, and global hunger issues.

This year’s theme, “Sent by God’s grace for the sake of the world,” calls participants to examine what “sent” means as the number of Christians in the southern hemisphere countries surpasses that of northern countries, traditional senders of missionaries. On hand to engage that question with ELCA members will be dozens of global participants, members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and, for the first time, globally minded Episcopalians, who have been invited to participate in this year’s GME.

If members of your congregation have never attended a Global Mission Event, consider requesting a copy of this year’s promotional DVD.



Doctors Tim and Holly Nelson, who serve Cameroon, were among the ELCA missionaries who participated in the 2005 GME

**2006  
ELCA  
Global Mission Event  
July 27-30, 2006  
University of  
Massachusetts  
Amherst,  
Massachusetts**

Through five-minute segments of global music, the Global Fest, Bible study, and sessions led by international guests and missionaries, the 25-minute DVD offers an exciting preview of a typical GME program.

To order a DVD or GME promotional materials, or for free registration, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2642, or visit [www.elca.org/gme](http://www.elca.org/gme)

# Including People with Autism

Behavior associated with autism presents difficult challenges for a congregation. Yet Christ's example of "agape," or unconditional love, implies that one of the most important roles of the church is acceptance of the individual regardless of his or her physiological condition. After all, if not in church, then where can an individual be accepted exactly as he or she is with unlimited love and inclusion? By integrating a person with autism into the congregation, the church becomes accessible to a whole family, which is then strengthened through shared faith experiences.

## How to Support Inclusion

**Initiate contact.** Parents of an autistic child may want to contact the pastor and Sunday school teacher to prepare them to provide an appropriate reception.

**Discuss expectations.** It would be wise for the worship leader to talk with the parents and find out what they might expect.

**Offer support.** The worship leader should offer support to the family, such as enlisting a volunteer to stay with siblings should the parents need to accompany the individual with autism to a more comfortable place.

The availability of certain objects of concentration, such as pictures or books, particularly those with religious significance, can be very helpful. Items that provide comfort and security at home might also be taken to church.

**Encourage acclimation.** Because many individuals with autism experience things holistically, an autistic child should be exposed in advance to the sights, sounds, and even smells of the sanctuary or classroom. Such a visit might give the

individual a unique opportunity to adapt to the new environment.

**Teach by example.** The worship leader's acceptance is very important. In the event of any distracting behavior, the worship leader may say gently, "So glad you could join our worship today, Tom," after which he or she continues as if Tom's participation is perfectly natural. Sensitivity and planning for such eventualities are critical.

**Develop peer partners.** Peer partners, who rotate responsibility for assistance, can help create a wide base of support for the individual while fostering a truer atmosphere of inclusion. Several adults or children should greet the individual with eye contact, a "Hi, Tom," a high-five, or a pat on the shoulder. This kind of "underground" effort of greeting creates a wonderful atmosphere of acceptance.

## Sunday School

To promote inclusion for children in Sunday school, the following ideas have been successful:

**Use the Bible.** Encourage the child to hold the Bible open to the appropriate page. Use a bookmark or guide the child's hand to follow as others read aloud.

**Ensure participation.** Pass a ball or talking stick while sharing or learning parts of a memory verse. The child with autism is thus assured of a chance to participate.

**Encourage imitation.** Adopt different body postures, such as bowing one's head, clasping hands for prayer, standing to sing, and looking toward the person who is speaking.

**Rotate buddies.** Encourage multiple friendships by rotating peer escorts and buddies.



STOCK PHOTO

## Older Youth and Participation

Older youth and adults with autism can participate partially or fully in different ways, just like anyone else. Encouraging participation and service to others is important for the individual as well as the community.

Following are just a few of the ways an individual with autism can participate:

- greeting people while handing out bulletins
- gathering papers left in the pews after service
- carrying offering plates to the safe after service
- delivering snacks to preschool classes

## Community Responsibility

Ultimately, responsibility for inclusion of individuals with autism should not rest on the shoulders of one or even a few volunteers who are "trained" or "assigned." Every congregation member should be comfortable with the shared responsibility.

# Foundation of the ELCA Helps Congregations

When members are asked to remember their congregations in their wills, they are asked not only for a financial contribution, but for an investment in the future. Just imagine expanding a ministry with annual bequests of \$50,000; \$100,000; \$500,000; or more!

The Foundation of the ELCA can help your members leave a legacy for ministry. We assist congregations to encourage the granting of bequests and to establish a Mission Endowment Fund that will facilitate receiving and distributing those gifts. Regional gift planners throughout the United States are ready to help your congregation meet its specific goals. The Foundation can also provide your congregation with free publications about estate planning. These include:

- Why Do I Need a Will?
- Take the Test: What Will Your Legacy Be?
- Will & Trust Workbook
- How to Create a Mission Endowment Fund: A Guide for Congregations



For more information, contact the Foundation of the ELCA at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, or visit [www.elca.org/fo](http://www.elca.org/fo) to locate the nearest ELCA regional gift planner.

## About the Action Packet

*The last mailing of the Action Packet will be in mid-March 2006. The decision to discontinue this service was based upon research findings.*

*Seeds for the Parish will continue to feature resources. Be sure to check out the resource finder online at [www.elca.org/resources.html](http://www.elca.org/resources.html)*

Help 300 families open the door to a new life.



John Stewart/HFHI

Join us in building a better future.

In 2006, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, its members and other volunteers will build more than 300 homes nationwide. This is just part of our \$105 million commitment through our Thrivent Builds with Habitat for Humanity program. To see how you can help make a difference, visit [www.thriventbuilds.com](http://www.thriventbuilds.com).





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