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Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

Lutherans get Excited about Evangelism

To see evangelism in action consider what happens when faithful people encourage others to share their faith story.

When members of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Mason City, Iowa, shared their personal stories of faith during worship something extraordinary happened. As the Rev. Joel Dahlen, pastor of Our Savior said, "When people share their faith stories, there is a double benefit. First, the one who shares their story, gets to remember how active God is in their life, which in turn strengthens their faith. Second, their faith story becomes a witness to others so that those who hear may become bolder in sharing how God has touched their lives." Our Savior is one example of an evangelizing congregation. Do you and your congregation embrace your evangelical identity?

Being an evangelical church means that ELCA congregations have the wonderful opportunity to welcome and receive the rich gifts and passions of diverse people. As a result of the commitment by Latino communities of the ELCA to grow in a deeper understanding of God's Word, the series *Conozca su Biblia* was developed. The project is a joint partnership of the Association of Hispanic Theologians and Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission (EOCM) unit. This unique new Bible commentary series is written by leading Latino/Hispanic scholars and theologians for both pastors and lay people. For more information about evangelism and outreach with and among Latinos, contact the Rev. Ivis LaRiviere-Mestre, assistant director for evangelism (Ivis.LaRiviere-Mestre@elca.org).

Leaders interested in evangelism

may also want to investigate the congregational health process called Natural Church Development (NCD). NCD research indicates that 50 percent of participating congregations can be characterized by their embrace of "passionate spirituality," a key concept for many Lutherans today, especially those who wish to affirm their evangelical identity by strengthening spiritual practices such as prayer, worship, and the study of scripture.

The ELCA's NCD training team, coordinated by the Rev. Dave Daubert, director for renewal of congregations, trains synodical coaches. For more information about NCD, contact your synod office or e-mail Dave.Daubert@elca.org

Three Illinois congregations—Joyful Spirit Lutheran Church, Bolingbrook, Bethel Lutheran Church, Chicago, and Iglesia Lutherana de la Trinidad, Chicago—realized a unique evangelism experience through a series of revival services.

On consecutive evenings the three congregations, one White, one African-American, and one Latino, worshipped together, gathering at each others' church.

Numerous participants testified to the powerful impact of their personal faith and the faith of their congregation. These events were conducted in the traditional Lutheran manner as the participants affirmed their baptism, celebrated Communion, proclaimed the Word of



STAFF PHOTO

God, testified to the activity of God, and experienced healing prayer.

More information on revival services may be found in: *Renewing the Passion: a guide to spiritual revival*, which lists resources for spiritual refreshment and renewal. Use this guide with the *Seasons of Renewal* DVD, both resources are available from Augsburg Fortress, call 800/328-4648, cost: shipping only.

If you need assistance in preparing a revival service, contact the Rev. Kathryn Love, assistant director for evangelism, at Kathryn.Love@elca.org or call 800/638-3522.

There are a number of outstanding resources available for congregations interested in evangelism.

Making Christ Known: A Guide to Evangelism for Congregations is a 64-page guide focused on comprehensive congregational evangelism. To order call 800/328-4648, ISBN 0-8066-3334-4.

For a listing of books and videos that explore evangelism in depth from a variety of approaches visit www.elca.org/evangelism/resources.html

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A Congregation Makes a Difference

In a small community along the Oregon coast, Faith Lutheran Church is making big waves. Although North Bend, Ore. has seen its share of economic hardships (The percentage of unemployed is almost double the national rate), the close-knit ELCA congregation of 61 members is a vibrant hub of activity and outreach.

In 1994, an anonymous donor established a \$10 million life insurance policy naming Faith Lutheran Church as the beneficiary. In 2002, the donor's life took an unexpected turn and he was unable to make the premium payments. Although Faith Lutheran was struggling financially, they took a risk and voted to pay the six-figure premium. One year later, the congregation decided to cash in the policy early when it was worth almost \$935,000. The sum was added to the congregation's previously established Trust Fund.

Rather than making much-needed building improvements, the congregation decided to look beyond its walls. The members provided partial startup costs for a preschool and scholarships for those unable to afford the enrollment fees. They offer scholarships for college and trade school education programs and provide food baskets, a van for the local Habitat for Humanity, and donations to Bay Area Extended Housing and the Seaman's Center. The congregation also



Downtown North Bend, Oregon

makes annual grants to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and Lutheran World Relief (LWR). Their latest outreach effort provides transportation to and from church for elderly and disabled individuals.

Members of the revitalized congregation are excited about the outreach made possible by donations from the Faith Lutheran Church Trust Fund. For example, a group of fourteen Crazy Kwilters, ranging in ages from 60 to 98, produced 312 quilts for LWR alone.

They have found incredible joy and renewal in sharing their gifts with others.

There are many free resources available to assist you and your congregation in establishing or growing an endowment fund. Many individuals have found the *How to Create a Mission Endowment Fund* guidebook invaluable.

To request your complimentary copy, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, or visit the ELCA Foundation's Web site at www.elca.org/fo to download this resource. The ELCA Foundation staff, along with a vast network of regional gift planners provide free guidance to you and your congregation. For a complete listing of ELCA Foundation regional gift planners, go to www.elca.org/fo/giftplanners.html

In This Issue ...

Articles

Chinese Lutheran Book of Worship Available.....	2
Online Worship Course.....	2
ONE Campaign.....	3
World Wide Web.....	6

Departments

Ripe for Picking.....	4-5
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New Online Course Spotlights Worship

The timing could not be better. As the ELCA prepares to receive new worship materials, lay people have an opportunity to study worship via a new online course, *Lutheran Worship: Renewing and Evangelical*.

This study is part of the Online Theological Study for Laity series from The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP). The instructor will be seminary musician Mark Mummert, organist at Christ Ascension Lutheran Church and one of those involved in the development of the new ELCA worship resources.

One of the requirements for worship renewal in the ELCA is the empowerment of lay leadership in local congregations, because worship in Word and Sacrament belongs to all of the baptized.

Mummert says that in this course, "We will struggle with what it might mean when we say our worship is 'contemporary' or 'traditional.'" Thus, participants will look at the ways that *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and other resources serve to continue tradition, point to the future, and, most importantly, consider how faithful Lutheran worship is rooted in God's mysterious plan.

The ELCA is a diverse church. Therefore, this study course will provide an opportunity, for lay people from across the country, to discuss how the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments unites us. Participants will also discuss practical matters, such as worship planning and the introduction of new materials and music.

Mummert adds that we will be challenged to imagine how the inherited patterns of Christian worship can become alive for us today. Not out

of a romantic notion that a previous time was better or more faithful than our time, but out of the knowledge that the church exists beyond time and space and that we stand in a long line of Christians who have received God's grace in these primary ways. Should some parts of the past worship tradition be discontinued, given the way the actions, words, or symbols contribute to confusing theology or practice?

George E. Keck, who manages the online programs for LTSP, reports that this course will be online during October–November 2006. During those two months, participants may log on as often as they want at any time. The course has six areas of focus.

- Worship: Shape and Pattern
- Word: Audible Mercy
- Table: Edible Grace
- Bath: Walking Wet
- Prayer: Honest Speech
- Worship: Style and Purpose

Class size for the eight-week course is limited. Registration will be open August–September 2006 via the seminary Web site (www.ltsp.edu) under the "Theological Education for Laity" menu. The tuition is \$125.00 and the required reading text is *Central Things: Worship in Word and Sacrament*, by Gordon Lathrop; Augsburg Fortress, 2005.

For more information, contact George E. Keck (gkeck@ltsp.edu).

If you are interested in taking *Lutheran Worship: Renewing and Evangelical* you should have some computer skills, e-mail, and access to the World Wide Web.

恩具的使用 Chinese Lutheran Book of Worship Available



The *Chinese Lutheran Book of Worship* with CD-ROM is a new comprehensive bilingual worship resource for pastors and worship leaders. Contents include services of Holy Communion, Holy Baptism, Affirmation of Baptism, Marriage, Funeral, Prayers for Various Occasions, Seasonal Prayers, and the Revised Common Lectionary. Additional essays provide theological background and practical information on the services and various worship topics.

The book was developed by ELCA Chinese pastors and worship leaders in collaboration with staff from ELCA Worship and Liturgical Resources, Multicultural Ministries, and Taosheng Publishers (the publishing house of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong). The book espouses the kind of flexibility that embodies a common yet diverse core of worship and prayer. The text is printed in traditional Chinese and English on facing pages. The CD-ROM contains the entire contents of the book in both languages plus Simplified Chinese text files, from which you can produce bulletins or projections to help the congregation worship.

The *Chinese Book of Worship* with CD-ROM (ISBN 0-8006-3566-3) is available for \$50 from Augsburg Fortress. Order by calling 800/328-4648 or visit www.augsburgfortress.org

Tips for Choir Directors

Here are suggestions that may help establish a long lasting and better sounding choir.



Establish a consistent rehearsal time. Before deciding on a rehearsal time, do some research. Find out the best time when singers can attend. Once the best rehearsal time is determined, stick with it. You may lose a few members initially, but both director and choir will benefit from a regular rehearsal time.

Select your repertoire with care. Selecting music is perhaps the most creative and rewarding part of leading a choir. It is also a challenging task because you must know, and take into consideration, the technical limits of the singers. Taxing those limits with too much difficult music can be just as demoralizing as singing the simplest hymn arrangements week after week.

Expect a great deal from your choir. Challenge your choir through the repertoire and establish a strict schedule of rehearsals and vocal numbers to be sung between mid-September and Christmas.

Recognize that your choir members are volunteers. Choir members generously donate their time, so encourage them as much as possible. Emphasize the value of their contribution to worship and the spiritual life of the congregation.

Make rehearsals as pleasant as possible. Perhaps you could provide a nursery and serve coffee. Ensure that the church temperature is set at a comfortable level.

Offer choir members time off. Do not hold regular rehearsals from June through August. Instead, meet briefly before the service to rehearse simple hymns or selections learned and performed previously. During the regular choir season, provide relief by occasionally scheduling women's or men's chorus rehearsals.

Be prepared. At the beginning of a rehearsal, let the choir know what you are going to rehearse and what you expect to accomplish.

Set high standards. Through careful planning and a realistic assessment of the strengths of choir members, the director can lead the choir to perform to its optimal ability. Establish a consistent high standard for quality. This will be appreciated by the worshipers and lead to a fruitful and meaningful relationship between the choir and the congregation.

"Be Still, and Know that I am God!" Psalm 46:10

Silence teaches us that prayer is not only conversational, involving words, but is also a stance of openness and listening for the voice of God. When our worship is wall-to-wall words and music it does not give the worshiper the impression that in addition to the Word, God also comes in silence and stillness.

The gathering before the liturgy is a natural time for silence and helps set the tone for worship. Greeting one another and sharing conversation are valid ways to build community and many congregations have a difficult time quieting parishioners before the liturgy for prayer or listening to the prelude. Notes in the bulletin and newsletter are not always effective, and scolding the assembly sends a negative energy. One congregation rings a meditation

bowl periodically during the fifteen minutes before the service begins. The simple bell-like sound is a positive reminder that it is time for the congregation to gather in silence, centering and prayer.

Two natural times for an extended minute or so of silence are the periods following the sermon and distribution of communion. Silence following the sermon provides a time for personal reflection. After the distribution is complete the ministers may be seated for the assembly to savor the presence of Christ received in the eucharist and present in the community.

For answers to questions regarding liturgy go to www.elca.org/worship/faq/liturgy.html

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/seeds

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Join the ONE Campaign

The ONE Campaign is an effort to rally Americans, one at a time, to ending poverty and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The campaign's specific goal is to direct an additional one percent of the U.S. budget toward developmental aid in the world's poorest countries.

Currently, less than one percent of the U.S. budget is spent on nonmilitary foreign assistance. Increasing development assistance by just ONE percent of the U.S. national budget would allow major progress to be made toward meeting the MDGs.

Theoretically, it is possible to provide what it takes in medicine, education, and infrastructure to break the cycle of poverty. This could be a life-saving effort, as over 8 million people are estimated to die each year because they lack even the most basic resources.

The Millennium Development Goals

The MDGs are eight interrelated objectives aimed at eliminating extreme poverty by 2015. More than 180 countries, including the United States, have endorsed these goals, which include:

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. Achieve universal primary education.
3. Promote gender equality and empowerment of women.
4. Reduce child mortality.
5. Improve maternal health.
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. Ensure environmental sustainability.
8. Create a global partnership for development.

Become a ONE Lutheran

ONE Lutheran is the ELCA's effort to promote the ONE Campaign. Lutherans can assist this social justice movement in five ways:

1. Sign the ONE Declaration.
 2. Join the ELCA e-Advocacy Network.
 3. Tell a friend about the campaign.
 4. Wear a white ONE wristband.
 5. Learn more about the campaign.
- (For more information about the campaign and to join, visit www.elca.org/advocacy/one)



Become a ONE Lutheran Congregation

The ONE Lutheran campaign challenges your congregation to become a ONE Lutheran Congregation by selecting a Sunday to emphasize the ONE Campaign and to achieve at least three of the following five goals:

1. Refer to the Millennium Development Goals in a sermon.
2. Organize a Bread for the World "Offering of Letters" and have participants sign the ONE Declaration. (Send letters and signed declarations to the ELCA Washington

Office, 122 C St. NW, Washington, DC 20001)

3. Use ONE resources in Christian education classes for youth and adults.
 4. Collect an offering for the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.
 5. Meet with your federal legislators to advocate for the Millennium Development Goals.
- All ONE Congregations will receive a ONE Lutheran banner to display at their place of worship. Please contact onelutheran@elca.org or 202/626-7942 for more information.

New ONE Resources Ready to Help

Several new resources are available to promote the ONE Campaign in your congregation and synod, including:

- ONE Lutheran brochures (ISBN 6-0002-0935-5); 25 per pkg., free with free shipping
- ONE Lutheran/Millennium Development Goals cards (ISBN 6-0002-0936-3); 25 per pkg., free with free shipping
- ONE PowerPoint® presentation
- ONE Lutheran display kit
- Graphics for your Web site
- *For Such a Time as This* DVD (ISBN 6-0002-0877-4) Free with free shipping
- *Basics* bulletin insert (ISBN 6-0002-0710-7) 50 per pkg., free with free shipping

To download or request these resources, and for more information, visit elca.org/advocacy/one/

Journal of Lutheran Ethics Online Five Years



Five years is a blink in church history, but five years on the World Wide Web is an age. Since its first issue in September 2001, *Journal of Lutheran Ethics* (JLE) has published scholarly articles, editorials, and articles of

historic import in print and online (www.elca.org/jle).

JLE has a history of diving into controversies. When All Saints Lutheran Church, Pasadena, Calif., was faced with discipline from the Internal Revenue Service because of an election-eve sermon, JLE published various perspectives in "Preaching and Politics." Before the churchwide assembly

voted on the report and recommendations of the Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality, JLE published a portfolio of articles entitled "Sexuality: Law and Gospel." For a range of perspectives and arguments, readers can always count on JLE.

How Can I Use JLE?

JLE's editorial-length articles are perfect discussion starters for adult education time. Want to begin reflecting on current events from foreign policy to taxation? Select a portfolio from the collection and choose some articles to print out.

JLE can inspire your preaching with articles about preaching in the Lutheran tradition, articles about preaching in context, and sermon samples. JLE can undergird your

education with scholarly articles on Lutheran themes, collected into portfolios to aid you in your research. The section on book reviews, wherein books are almost always given several reviews, will help you form your reading list. The entire database of 600 articles is always available, and can be shared with friends via e-mail or printed off in a print-friendly version.

Whatever the topic, JLE will always work to present it in a way that is relevant, rigorous, and thoughtful. Readers can expect to be challenged by JLE articles, no matter what their perspectives going in. Visit www.elca.org/jle and experience The Journal of Lutheran Ethics at its finest and most accessible.

For further information, contact the Rev. Kaari Reiersen, at Kaari.Reiersen@elca.org

Web Newsletter

The entire collection of Tuck Aaker's stewardship articles is now available online.

Aaker, who writes the *Stewardship Now* newsletter, is a retired businessman who has his finger on the pulse of continuing changes in our society and our church.

Before he retired Aaker was a "turnaround specialist" who worked with troubled businesses. He brought clarity of purpose and worked to build positive attitudes. He emphasized the value of honest manager-employee relationships. He taught the importance of integrity, transparency, and the necessity for genuine partnerships. He pointed to present assets instead of needs.

After he retired, Aaker worked in the ELCA Florida/Bahamas Synod where he assisted pastors and congregations in developing plans for whole-life stewardship. Whole-life stewardship pays attention to cultural changes, business realities, and religious commitments.

For an archive of Aaker's articles go to www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/



Tuck Aaker



THE IDEA TO FORM A CHURCH CAME FROM THE GOOD PEOPLE OF SUN PRAIRIE, WISCONSIN.

THE LOAN TO BUILD IT CAME FROM US.

Along with the inspiration for beginning Living Water Lutheran Church came some hard financial realities. Such as where to get the funding to start a new congregation. Local banks were only willing to offer small loan packages, which would mean building a smaller church. Luckily, that's when the members had a big idea: they contacted us. We provided the exact financing package they needed, at a competitive interest rate. Which ensured that Living Water Lutheran Church didn't just meet expectations, it exceeded them. To find out how we can help your congregation or ELCA-related ministry, call 877.886.3522 or visit us at www.missioninvestmentfund.org.

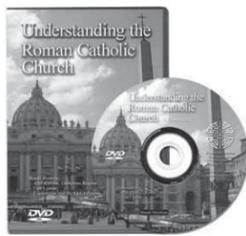




877.886.3522
www.missioninvestmentfund.org

Ripe for Picking

Mosaic Television Video



The Roman Catholic Church is the largest Christian denomination, yet many people understand very little about it. *Understanding the Roman Catholic Church* is Mosaic's latest video documentary, now available on DVD and

VHS. Recorded on location in Italy and the United States, this resource is a great way to build ecumenism in your congregation. Hear Roman Catholic theologians, scholars, pastors, and lay people talk about their faith, their church, and their theology.

View the video online or order your copy of *Understanding the Roman Catholic Church* at www.elca.org/mosaic

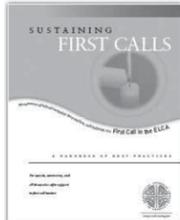
For more information call 800/638-3522, ext. 6009, or send your check for \$19.95 including shipping to:

Mosaic
ELCA
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, Illinois 60631-4101

Sustaining First Calls

This resource is a collection of discoveries and insights for effectively navigating the transitions and challenges of a "first call" in the ELCA. *Sustaining First Calls* describes some of the best practices in synods, regions, congregations, and seminaries that help to establish healthy and effective ministries. It also describes research highlights from two surveys of all newly rostered clergy and lay leaders in the ELCA, as well as highlights from focus groups. Issues covered in this body of research include: 1) the assignment and call process, 2) seminary preparation for public ministry, 3) career stage differences, 4) challenges for ethnic leadership, 5) lay rostered leaders, 6) women in ministry, 7) first call theological education programs. The reader will get a sense of the emerging issues for the church today related to supporting and sustaining those who are the newest leaders in our church.

This 24-page booklet is available online at www.elca.org/firstcall/resources.html and by ordering copies from Augsburg Fortress 800/328-4648 (ISBN#6-0002-0906-1) for \$1.00 each.



Free Material



Mosaic, an affiliated social ministry organization of the church, provides free children's educational materials for congregational use.

Materials include a four-week children's Bible study suitable for Sunday school use, a 20-day disabilities awareness activities calendar, a coloring and activity book, a collection bank, and a DVD starring Duncan the Duck, Mosaic's lovable children's mascot. These are available free to congregations. For information call 877/366-7242, ext. 1204 or visit www.mosaicinfo.org/duncan/

New Middle East Peace Resource Available

A new, free resource for congregations, the *Church Toolkit for Israeli-Palestinian Peacemaking*, is now available from Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP), an ecumenical partnership, of which the ELCA is a sponsor. The tool kit is designed to provide resources and guidance on how to approach the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a congregational setting. Perfect for adult forums, synod and church committees, and global mission gatherings, this tool kit will equip congregations to engage in peacemaking efforts in their communities.

The tool kit is arranged into three topic areas, around which activities can be planned, including awareness building, education, and advocacy. It is suitable for both augmenting current activities and beginning new initiatives.

"When the 2005 Churchwide Assembly adopted the Churchwide Strategy for Engagement in Israel and Palestine, our church committed itself to advocacy for political solutions that address the rights to security and peace with justice for both Palestinians and Israelis," said the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, ELCA Presiding Bishop. "This resource gives our congregations a tremendous opportunity for raising awareness, educating their members, and using their voices to speak out for peace in the Holy Land."

This free tool kit is available as a PDF file at www.cmep.org/Toolkit/Toolkit_home.htm



Join Women of the ELCA in Germany Next April

Women of the ELCA is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a trip to Germany that will focus on the lives of Martin Luther, Katharina von Bora, and noted women of the Reformation. Developed in partnership with the ELCA Wittenberg Center, the trip is scheduled for April 16-30, 2007.

Plan now for an all-inclusive trip that features guided tours of Berlin, Wittenberg, Torgau, Leipzig, Dresden, Eisleben, Erfurt, and Eisenach. Trip highlights include visits to:

- the city where Martin Luther lived and taught for 36 years
- the ruins of Kloster Nimbschen, the convent where Katharina von Bora was a nun prior to marrying Martin Luther
- the church where Bach served as a music director.

You'll also be treated to a unique

Reformation-era musical performance by local Wittenberg women, and much more.

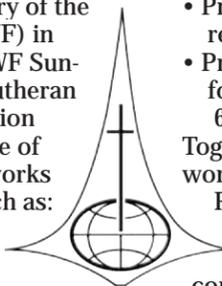
Overnight accommodations feature some of the areas' finest hotels as well as an Augustinian monastery. Transportation throughout the trip will be aboard a four-star motor coach with climate control, reclining seats, and other amenities. Cost of the tour also includes many meals. Participants must be at least 18 years of age and physically able to walk up to one mile. Wear leisure attire and your favorite pair of walking shoes. There will be plenty to see and do!

Registration begins July 1. Space is limited. Price is based on double occupancy (single rooms available at additional cost). Find a more detailed trip itinerary and cost schedule at www.womenoftheelca.org or call Linda McKinsey at 800/638-3522, ext. 2497.

Celebrate LWF Sunday This October 1

Celebrate the mission and ministry of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) in your congregation on October 1, LWF Sunday. The LWF is an international Lutheran organization that represents 66 million Christians who share God's message of amazing grace. The LWF ministry works on our behalf in countless ways such as:

- Training lay evangelists to share the Good News
- Rebuilding after natural disasters
- Caring for AIDS victims
- Bringing safe water to communities
- Advocating for human rights



- Providing food, shelter, and hope for refugees
 - Providing a spiritual gathering place for Lutherans worldwide
- 66 million Lutherans do make a difference! Together we make a difference for healing the world!

Resources about LWF and for LWF Sunday are available at www.elca.org/lwf. For free LWF bulletin inserts and maps, contact lwf@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2636 (or ext. 5040).

EcuFilm Catalog Available

Church leaders looking for VHS and DVD resources for children, youth, and adults can order a free copy of EcuFilm's 2005 catalog or view it online at EcuFilm's Web site. Featuring products in categories such as Bible study, faith, theology, Christian living, children, youth, and health, EcuFilm offers public performance rights.

"The vast majority of EcuFilm products," said Cindy Solomon, EcuFilm coordinator, "come with public performance rights. This allows the resources to be used in churches and other noncommercial religious settings with the assurance that no additional permission or license is required."

The few products requiring a Church Video

License, such as *VeggieTales* titles, are clearly marked in the catalog and on the Web site. This license is available at a small annual charge by calling CVLI Inc., at 888/771-2854.

To order a copy of the EcuFilm catalog, call 888/346-3862 or visit www.ecufilm.org

If you would like to learn more about EcuFilm and other roads toward Christian unity in the world, see the ELCA Ecumenical Life online e-newsletter at www.elca.org/ecumenical



Ripe for Picking

Vote on *The Lutheran's* 2007 Topics



In each issue of *The Lutheran* magazine, an in-depth report highlights important topics facing Lutherans. The primary focus is on how the topic makes a difference to ELCA members by providing multiple views and research.

The 2006 topics resulted from a "top-10" selection by readers. Some of these already published include "The future of denominations," "How does faith change?" and "Lutheranism 101."

The remaining calendar of in-depth features include:

- August – "Busy-ness: Pressures of modern life"
- September – "Thinking biblically: Reading Paul's letters today"
- October – "Intelligent design"
- November – "Greed: Is our society possessed?"
- December – "Nurturing prayer life"

These in-depth cover stories frequently include study guides, which are now a monthly feature of the print magazine.

In August, *The Lutheran* will begin the process of selecting the topics for 2007 publication, with its second annual reader survey. Members will be able to vote online at www.thelutheran.org or with the in-magazine survey.

Conference on Accessibility to be Held in October

A conference to help congregations, leaders, volunteer teachers, and parents learn how to include people with disabilities into the heart of their ministry is being offered in St. Louis, October 23–25, 2006. Under the theme "One God, One Call," the conference will focus on inclusion, accessibility, outreach, and education for individuals with developmental disabilities. Sponsors of the conference include thirteen Lutheran social ministry organizations that have a rich history of service to people with developmental disabilities. For registration and program details, call the National Christian Resource Center of Bethesda Lutheran Home and Services in Watertown, Wisconsin, at 800/369-4636, or visit www.blhs.org

Congregational Staff Events

The Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA annually sponsors the **Head of Staff** event and **Ministry Staff** event. These events will be held again in 2007 at the Duncan Conference and Retreat Center in Delray Beach, Florida.

The Head of Staff event is designed for those who are serving as head of staff/senior pastors. It will be held February 1–4, 2007. Presenters at the event include Roy Oswald, Senior Consultant for the Alban Institute, and Beth Lewis, CEO of Augsburg Fortress Publishers.

The Ministry Staff event is designed for those who serve on congregational staffs including pastors and staff members in the areas of music, youth, education, volunteer work, senior ministry, parish nursing, and other programmatic areas. It will be held January 27–30, 2007.

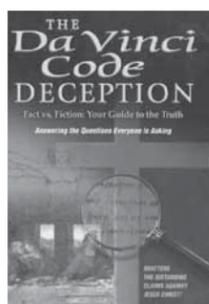


Chapel at Duncan Center

For more information about these two events and to register, go to www.elca.org/leadership/events/ or call 800/638-3522, ext 2885 to request a brochure.

Da Vinci Code Deception Available

Sony Pictures' *The Da Vinci Code*, a movie depicting Dan Brown's bestselling fiction thriller by the same name, stirred up debate and conversation once again about the story's accuracy and claims. Based on three best-selling scholarly books: *The Da Vinci Deception*, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* and *Cracking Da Vinci's Code*, this video addresses a 2,000-year-old mystery and seeks to restore viewers' faith in Christianity. Through interviews with book authors and leading experts in theology, archaeology, art history, philosophy and science, *The Da Vinci Code Deception* answers lingering questions and



exposes deceptions in Dan Brown's novel. Extra bonus features include additional expert interviews, scientific analysis of "The Last Supper" painting and a Bible study for preteens, older youth, and adults.

Suggested settings: Bible study, Sunday school classes, youth gatherings and retreats, small-groups.

Available from EcuFilm at: www.ecufilm.org

Online Discussion

ELCA members are invited to participate this September in an online discussion of *Our Calling in Education: First Draft of a Social Statement*. Members of the ELCA Task Force on Education that drafted the statement will join the discussion. It is anticipated that this discussion will help the task force write the final draft, which will be presented for adoption at the 2007 Churchwide Assembly in Chicago. The online discussion can be accessed on the Web through a link at www.elca.org/socialstatements/education. A copy of the statement in English or Spanish can be obtained from the same Web site or by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2996. A Spanish translation is also available from Eliza Alvarez at 800/638-3522, ext. 2457.

Tune in to *Grace Matters*

Find out what makes grace so amazing. Tune in to *Grace Matters*, the 30-minute weekly radio ministry of the ELCA. Listen online, download a podcast, or check for your local broadcast.



Grace Matters most recently won a DeRose-Hinkhouse Award of Merit from the Religion Communicators Council for the program "The Rhythm of the Word." Host Peter Marty interviews youth leader Leslie Hunter, who reaches inner city Chicago youth through spell-binding poetry, creative group time, and his own supply of God's overflowing grace. Tune in to "The Rhythm of the Word" at www.gracematters.org or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2967, to request a CD or transcript.

Seeds Mailing List

Do you have a colleague who should be receiving *Seeds for the Parish*? Do you know of a congregational leader who would benefit from reading *Seeds*? Do you want to be in the information loop?

Put yourself or a colleague on the *Seeds* mailing list by having your pastor or church secretary fill out "Form B" to update the congregational leadership directory. The form can be found online by going to www.elca.org/formb

Candlelighting

The Lutheran Network for Mental Illness/Brain Disorders (LNMI) will again sponsor the annual All-Lutheran Candlelighting for Mental Illness during October, which is Mental Illness Awareness Month throughout the United States. LNMI is a joint effort of the ELCA and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Its mission is to educate congregations about mental illness and brain disorders so they can support families living with these illnesses. The Candlelighting resources include a call to worship and prayers for people living with mental illness. A free bulletin insert is available at www.elca.org/disability/candlelighting/ or by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2692, or Jon.Vehar@elca.org.



What's New on the World Wide Web



Participate in the Global Mission Event on the Web

Enjoy clips from the plenary sessions of this summer's ELCA Global Mission Event (GME) in the comfort of your home by viewing video highlights on the Web.

Posted a few hours after each plenary, the clips will include music and featured speakers.

On Thursday night, July 27, enjoy remarks by ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson and

Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church. He Qi, China's most internationally sought-after contemporary Christian artist, is featured Friday morning.

Friday evening, enjoy the gifts of The Al-Raja (Hope) Folkloric Dance Troupe, whose members are Palestinian Christian and Muslim students from the Lutheran School of Hope in Ramallah.

Rev. Lisandro Orlov of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Argentina is part of Saturday morning's panel on ministry, faith, and challenge in the Latin American context. Enjoy cultural gifts from around the world presented during Saturday evening's Global Fest.

Tune in Sunday for clips from the final worship, when Wahu M. Kaara of Kenya—a Nobel Peace Prize nominee and coordinator of the Millennium Development Goals campaign at the All Africa Council of Churches—preaches the sermon.

To access the clips, go to www.elca.org/gme and click on "video." Online registration is open until July 11, or register in person on arrival.

Mission Investment Fund Online Banking

Investors in the Mission Investment Fund (MIF) can now keep tabs on their investments with MIF Online. Use this Web site any time of the day or night to check balances, view statements, transfer funds, and much more. You can sign up right now for this convenient service at www.adasylum.com/mif/website/

Pay bills electronically with MIF's Online Bill Pay, a simple, fast and convenient way to pay bills from MissionPlus accounts. You can schedule recurring payments for your regular bills or make a one-time payment.

Through the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA, congregations, members, and ELCA-related organizations can invest in the growth of the Lutheran church and earn interest on their investments. From MIF investments, loans are granted to new mission congregations for purchases of land and construction of initial church buildings. MIF funds are also available to ELCA congregations for expansion, renovation, and relocation.

Ten Commandments for Kids Online

Parents who take their responsibility seriously would never allow their young children to wander the streets of a strange city alone. Yet these same parents may allow their children to surf the unpredictable and unregulated Internet alone.

Computer guru Kim Komando, the host of a top-10-rated radio talk show, has created a manifesto called *10 Commandments for Kids Online* as a guideline for children's online behavior. Teachers, youth ministers, and pastors may also want to pass these points on to children in their schools and congregations.

10 Commandments for Kids Online

1. My parents and I will decide when I am allowed to use the computer and the Internet. I promise not to ask or fight for more computer time. I will only do things and visit places that they say I can.
2. I will never tell anyone online or post online that I am home alone. I won't give out my last name, my home address or telephone number, the name of my school or teachers, I won't say where my parents work or give out their telephone numbers without getting my parents' permission. I will never give out my friends' screen

names, e-mail addresses, names, addresses and telephone numbers, and I will remind them to keep mine a secret.

3. If anyone online does anything that bothers me, I will tell my parents. I will never use bad language, say bad things about other people, or send mean messages in an e-mail, text or instant message, chat room, blog, or on a Web site. I will tell my parents if someone does that to me. If I use "secret" or "code" words online, I will tell my parents what they mean.
4. When I use instant messaging, e-mail, chat rooms, or Web sites where people put information about themselves, I will never send or post a picture of my family or me. If I set up a blog or an online profile, I will tell my parents where it is and how they can read it.
5. **I WILL NEVER, EVER MEET WITH ANYONE I'VE TALKED TO ONLINE WITHOUT FIRST TALKING WITH MY PARENTS.**
6. If my parents ask me for my password, I will give it to them. I will NEVER give out my passwords or any of our family's passwords to anyone, not even my friends or other family members.

7. If I want to download any games, movies, music, or programs, I will ask for permission. I know I must pay for most of these things. If I take them, that is stealing.
8. I will not try to win free things or buy things on the Internet without my parents' permission. If I get a message that I won something, I will show it to my parents. If I get an e-mail asking for passwords or other secret stuff, I will ask my parents.
9. I will not open any of my parents' files. I will not change any settings or install any new software without my parents' permission.
10. I give my parents permission to look on the computer to see where I have gone on the Internet, the e-mail and text messages I have sent and received, or what I do in a chat room. If my parents install the programs that track what I do on the computer or limit where I go online, I promise not to turn those programs off.

These *10 Commandments for Kids Online* are used with permission and are available at: www.komando.com/kids/commandments.aspx



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/communication/resourcecenters.htm

Q Which resources would you recommend for families interested in Internet safety?

A We like MediaWise (www.mediafamily.org), which offers a four-part series on Internet safety for kids, dealing with pornography, cyberbullying, addiction, and predators.

—Paul Edison-Swift
ELCA Communication Services
Chicago

A Neil MacQueen's "Youth, Email, Instant Messaging, and the Web" (www.sundaysoftware.com/youthemail.htm). It has some great safety tips as well as general communication suggestions for parents.

—Jane Schuyler
Congregational Support Specialist
Reformed Church in America

A This really is a timely topic! Our local news recommended two Web sites to look at for monitoring children's surfing. One offers tracking software: www.spectorsoft.com. The other offers free software for filtering words or blocking links to specific Web sites: www.weblocker.fameleads.com

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

A I found a set of rules at www.safekids.com taken from Larry Magid's *Child Safety on the Information Highway*. Thanks for asking this important question. We could all stand to learn more about this issue!

—Julie Aageson, director
Eastern North Dakota Resource Center
Fargo

A While you're making everything safe at home, don't forget the church. We have

an Internet and Web Use Policy put together by one of our congregations, which we would be happy to share. I also recommend *Family Friendly Web Sites for Kids* (Paulist Press, www.paulistpress.com). It's a helpful resource for families who want to know where to safely surf!

—Catherine Fink, director
Heilig Resource Center
Salisbury, NC

A One that I would recommend is the *Wise as Serpents* kit (A-STOP, Minneapolis). It's a great series for young people and parents on the topic of safety in general. Viewers will learn how to be street-smart in six sessions using the video segments and reproducible worksheets.

—Bonnie Weber, director
NW Synod of Wisconsin Resource Center
Eau Claire

Perssons Retire After 35 Years of Mission Service

Transitions, even the exciting ones, are always challenging. That's why on July 18 you are invited to pray for the Rev. Lennart and Carin Persson, who are retiring after more than 35 years of service with the ELCA and its predecessor, the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). Lennart's family has been involved in global mission since 1901, when his great aunt opened a school for girls in Bijori, Central India, for the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Sweden. Lennart's own parents married in India and, in 1944, were transferred to Bijori, where Lennart lived until he was 12 years old.

"My earliest memory is of my father being called upon to shoot a leopard that had been wounded by a hail-gun," Lennart remembers. "The dead leopard was lying in the missionary bungalow with towels wrapped around its head. I was too scared to come near."

After meeting Carin in Uppsala, Sweden, where they were students, Lennart began studying theology in 1963 at Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Madras. Carin moved to India the next year to teach at the Swedish school in Kodaikanal. In December, 1965 they were married in Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh.

The couple linked up with the Lutheran Church in America after Lennart was ordained as a pastor in the Church of Sweden in 1969. "LCA South Asia Secretary Dr. Fred

Neudoerffer came to Sweden to search for someone to teach New Testament and Greek in the theological faculty of the Batak churches in North Sumatra," Lennart remembers. "In 1970 we became LCA missionaries. Two years later we moved to Bangalore, India, where I served as a lecturer at the United Theological College."

After 20 years in various assignments in India, the Perssons moved to Chiang Mai, Thailand, where Lennart taught New Testament at the McGilvary Faculty of Theology of Payap University and Carin was engaged in development projects with churches and non-governmental organizations.

As Asian churches have grown, the Perssons have been privileged to see jobs formerly held by missionaries filled by well-trained local leaders. "In Thailand, where missionaries started schools, hospitals, and seminaries, all local churches with the main Protestant ecumenical church now have Thai leadership," says Lennart. "At Payap, two-thirds of our faculty are Thai. The remaining third include two Americans, two Europeans and two Asians from the Philippines and South Korea. I think that it is a very good expression of the global character of the church."

Carin has seen the same trend. "Women in Asia are becoming more aware of their roles within church and society. There are Asian women in high positions in the Lutheran World

Federation and the Christian Council of Asia. Over the years, the expatriate staff in many projects has decreased and local staff have been engaged."

"We are looking forward to being close to children and grandchildren in Sweden and Finland," say the Perssons, who recently completed their move from Thailand to Uppsala, Sweden.



Lennart and Carin Persson

On July 18, *Prayer Ventures*, the guide to daily prayer for the ELCA's global and outreach ministries, invites you to thank God for the Perssons' many years of service. *Prayer Ventures* may be downloaded from www.elca.org/prayerventures. A print version may be requested by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.

Needed: Current Addresses of Former Missionaries

Where are they today?

About 2,500 people have served as missionaries since the ELCA began in 1988; thousands more served predecessor Lutheran bodies. While the ELCA Archives has extensive records on former missionaries from 1842 to 2000 (www.elca.org/archives/missionaries/elcamissionaries.html), where they are today is less certain.

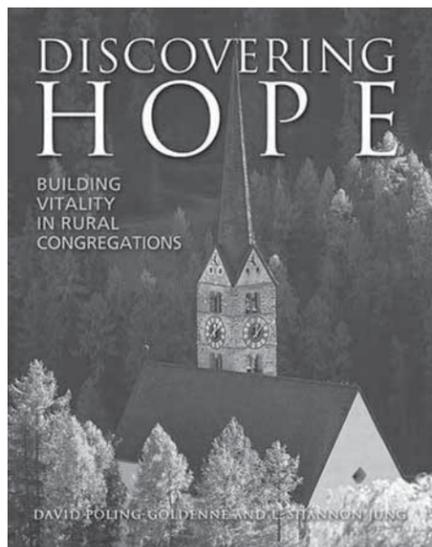
"We have current addresses for about half our former ELCA missionaries," says the Rev. Stephen Nelson, Director for International Personnel, ELCA Global Mission, "but we would like to find the other half to reconnect with them and make better use of their gifts in recruitment and interpreting global mission in congregations."

Can you help update ELCA Global Mission's records? If you know any former missionaries, encourage them to contact Marie Cortez at Marie.Cortez@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2642. ELCA Global Mission is especially interested in reaching coordinators of missionary networks from a particular country. Your help in identifying these people would be greatly appreciated.



General Council Missionaries, Rajahmundry Mission Field, India, Tadepalligudem Station, November 29, 1903

Building Hope Looks at Discovering Hope



God is still here! God hasn't gone anywhere! proclaimed the Rev. Kathleen Keuhl at the 2005 ELCA Rural Alliance Gathering in Atchison, Kansas. This is the theme for *Building Hope*, a video that explores the impact of another video, 1999's *Discovering Hope*, on ministry practices in small town and rural congregations.

Pastor Keuhl serves the Horner/Zion Hoffman Lutheran Parish in Laurel Highlands, an agricultural and mining area nine miles north of Somerset, Penn. She and many others eagerly anticipate congregational renewal in rural America. Barry Frerichs, an electrical contractor in Bassett, Neb., agrees. "It's all between the ears," says Barry. "It's all attitude, you know, positive attitude. When people say there is nothing to do in the small towns, well, they just didn't look."

All across the rural regions of the ELCA,

congregational leaders have turned to *Discovering Hope's* core values to enhance their ministries and communities. "What I see time and time again in congregations that have used *Discovering Hope* is that lay leaders find that God has gifted them for mission—then they have so much fun being leaders in their congregations," says the Rev. Mark Nelson, assistant to the bishop in the Eastern Washington-Idaho Synod.

Anchored by Ecumenical Outreach and Congregational Ministries' the Rev. Bob Vaage and *Discovering Hope* veteran the Rev. Nancy Nyland, *Building Hope* reviews the applications of the earlier video in a variety of settings. Twenty-eight minutes long and accompanied by a discussion guide, *Building Hope* is available in either VHS (ISBN 6-0002-1604-1) or DVD (ISBN 6-0002-0870-7) from the Augsburg Fortress for \$9.95 (800/328-4648).

Care for Families of Deployed Military

We express our deep concern, love, and care for our troops in many different ways. We send them care packages, letters, Bibles, pictures, and e-mails. We tell them that they are missed and that we pray for them.

But what about the families and friends who wait at home? Throughout the ELCA there are mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, spouses, children, extended families, and close friends of the troops.

One ELCA pastor relates that, "It was a difficult time when our son was in Baghdad for 16 months. Being a pastor who is supposed to have it all together in terms of faith, it was hard to ask for help and to tell people that I struggled daily with fear for my son."

Another parent, whose child was in the Vietnam conflict, felt that her congregation did not support her or her family, "I cannot remember any great support from my church – friends, yes – but somehow one got the idea that in the church's eyes the military was frowned upon."

With waiting and worrying, anxiety is high. There is uneasiness during the day, and emptiness that haunts at night. A parent remembers the anxiety she felt during Desert Storm, "There was never any mail from him. I didn't know where he was—was he okay? I saw the Desert Storm news every day, every newscast, but where was my son? I needed someone to help me cope with my nearly debilitating fear."

For some there is greater responsibility and more work, which adds to the feelings of anxiousness. All the child rearing, bill paying, housework, and problem solving, now fall on



their shoulders. Finances are tight, on top of the stabbing worry, the throbbing headaches, the addiction to the television, and the weight loss (or gain) that results from a spouse, child or

grandchild having gone to war. All this while the children of soldiers act out in school, suffer from anxiety attacks, and cry themselves to sleep.

One spouse regrets not asking for help, "I wish I had asked for a Stephen Minister to comfort me. I needed someone I could call when I was really afraid, someone who would just listen. And it would have been great if someone had called and offered to stay with the kids so I could have a day out."

How can we as individuals and as congregations help the families and friends of our deployed military? The following are a few suggestions for consideration.

- "It would have helped so much if someone would have invited us to dinner in their home, or to go to a movie with them. We felt very isolated during that time."
- "It would have been great if someone had said to me, 'I sent a letter to your daughter today.' I would have felt easier knowing she was getting a note from home."

- "I silently said 'Tim,' when in the Prayers of the Day we prayed for "all those who serve in the military." How meaningful it would have been to our family, and other families in our church, to hear our soldier prayed for by name.

Fortunately, there are ELCA congregations helping families of deployed soldiers:

- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Wytheville, Va., provides calling cards to troops deployed in war zones.
- Members of San Marcos Lutheran Church, San Marcos, Calif., have developed a "Prayer Wall," filled with pictures of soldiers and of their families, a visual reminder to the congregation to care for the families of deployed soldiers.
- In Austin, Minn., churches joined together and held a dinner for all the military families.
- At St. John Lutheran Church in Mendota, Ill., the names of military personnel are listed in the bulletin every week.
- At Central Lutheran Church, Anchorage, Alaska, congregational members write letters to soldiers and befriend their families. For at least one soldier and his family, the congregation sponsored a Welcome Home party.

Within our ELCA congregations, the retired military members have special empathy. One man wrote, "It is my duty and honor to help however I can. I support Ron whose son is in Iraq—I've been there, I know what it's like, and I can listen to his concerns."

Resources available to help the families of deployed troops:

At www.elca.org/peaceandwar/families there are "tried and true" suggestions for congregations and individuals.

At www.deploymentlink.osd.mil/employ/famil/family_support.shtml the military has listed all the ways you can help regardless of branch of service.

Federal chaplains can help, too. Go to www.elca.org/federalchaplains and read the journal entries from chaplains who serve beside our troops, and learn how to support their families back home.

Yet another Web site (www.elca.org/peaceandwar/help) has tips for supporting military families.

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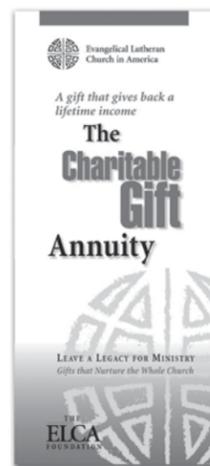
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Giving a Gift That Gives Back



A charitable gift annuity is a wonderful way to support your local congregation or favorite ministry. How does a charitable gift annuity work? You donate cash or stock through the ELCA Foundation and, in return, you receive a guaranteed annual income for the rest of your life. Your gift is deductible and a portion of your annuity payment is tax-free. And as you age, the tax-free portion grows. Upon your death, the balance of your account goes to the

ELCA-related ministry of your choice. There are multiple benefits of charitable gift annuities, but the greatest benefit might very well be the satisfaction in knowing your gift will continue to support your favorite ministry, even after you pass on.

Setting up a gift annuity is easy. For more information, call the ELCA Foundation at 800/638.3522, ext.2970. Or visit www.elca.org/fo for the regional gift planner nearest you.