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# Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

## Natural Church Development

A healthy congregation is a growing congregation. Natural Church Development (NCD), developed by German researchers, found that congregations with “healthy” ministries were more likely to grow than congregations with sub-standard ministries. Surprisingly, the results also showed that focused efforts on simply getting more people into the pews did not necessarily ensure the growth of a congregation. Instead, it was improving the quality of the ministry that led to a stronger congregation.

How can the health of a congregation be measured? How can the health of a congregation be improved? Over 20,000 congregations from various denominations throughout the world have used NCD as a tool to analyze the health of their ministry.

An NCD assessment is somewhat like an annual medical checkup. A good checkup will include the collection of various data like weight, blood pressure, cholesterol, etc. and a subsequent assessment of a person’s overall health. If any test results point to particular health concerns, such as high cholesterol, the doctor and patient work together to implement a regimen to deal with the issue. If the regimen is successful, then health is likely to improve.

In the same way, an NCD assessment checks up on a congregation based on feedback from the pastor(s) and 30 active members. The resulting data is then used to assess the health of eight characteristics within the congregation.

These characteristics are:

- empowering leadership
- gift-oriented ministry
- passionate spirituality
- effective structures
- inspiring worship
- holistic small groups
- need-oriented (contextual) evangelism
- loving relationships

As a result of the assessment, congregations achieve a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their ministry. Optimally they should focus on one characteristic at a time because trying to do too much often results in nothing getting the necessary attention. With the participation of NCD, prioritizing and then focusing in turn on the key areas of ministry that need improvement often leads to the enhancement of the general health of the congregation.

Based on the work of a congregation with a trained NCD coach, strategies are developed, then implemented, and an assessment is taken to evaluate progress and determine areas for future work. The cost for the cycle is \$300 and includes an initial assessment, a final assessment, and a Web support tool. Additional costs for other services may apply.

Hundreds of ELCA congregations have already started to use the NCD process. From the results of their assessments a pattern is developing. The three most



STAFF PHOTO

common areas needing attention in the ELCA are passionate spirituality, need-oriented (contextual) evangelism and holistic small groups. Each of these areas has one thing in common: intentional relationship building.

The booklet, *The ABCs of Natural Church Development* (available for \$1.20 per copy), articulates the basic principles of the NCD mission. For information contact [maryann.peterson@elca.org](mailto:maryann.peterson@elca.org)

Many synods have trained NCD coaches in place to guide congregations through the process. Other synods are establishing networks of NCD coaches. Mission directors or synod offices can provide more information. For more about Natural Church Development contact the Rev. Dave Daubert at [Dave.Daubert@elca.org](mailto:Dave.Daubert@elca.org) or visit [www.elca.org/outreach/ncd](http://www.elca.org/outreach/ncd)

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## Series Provides Resources for Planning and Leadership



The *Congregational LEADER Series*, published by Augsburg Fortress, provides resources for effective planning and leadership development. This series of 10 books is intended to help congregations, congregational leaders, and pastors collaborate in moving forward in mission. *Our Context*, by Mark D. Johns, is a guide to analyzing the relationship between the congregation and its community.

*Our Mission* by Robin and John McCullough-Bade, assists congregations in developing mission statements and establishing and fulfilling goals.

*Our Stewardship*, by John L. Golv, con-

siders ways to build up the assets needed for a congregation’s mission and ministry.

*Our Structure*, by Brian H. Hughes, discusses organizing the congregation from a number of perspectives.

*Our Gifts*, by David P. Mayer, helps pastors develop leadership among congregation members.

*Our Staff*, by Trish Holford, guides congregations in their various relationships with church employees.

*Our Community*, by Susan M. Lang, articulates approaches to conflict resolution, especially regarding the congregation’s relationship with the community.

*Called to Lead*, by Mark D. Johns,

suggests ways for council members and committee chairs to effectively carry out their leadership roles.

*Growing Together*, by Harold Eppley and Rochelle Melander, is a discussion of spiritual growth, with individual and group exercises for pastors and congregation members.

*Pastor and People*, by Richard Bruesehoff and others, contains insights on the relationship between a pastor and his or her flock.

The 10 books of the *Congregational LEADER Series* can be ordered from Augsburg Fortress or online at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) In Canada visit [www.afcanada.com](http://www.afcanada.com)

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# Exploring *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

It depends on your perspective. For some, the new *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) will look and feel very familiar. Others will approach the new resource with some skepticism, wondering why so much had to change.

The fundamental shape and primary texts of the liturgy do not change radically from generation to generation. With each new book of worship, new ways of thinking are apparent. As the world changes and language evolves, the expression of worship also progresses.

Don't use this new resource in the same way as before. Study the new features and discuss them. Use the materials in the *ELW Introductory Kit* that each ELCA congregation received earlier this fall. Attend a synod sponsored introductory event.

As ELCA assemblies receive and introduce the new book of worship, space in each issue of *Seeds for the Parish* will be dedicated to discussing the new resource.

## Introducing *ELW*

Given the unique nature of each assembly, worship planners must consider the skill levels and attitudes of their members. *ELW* contains familiar music and prayers, but there is also plenty of new material. Deciding exactly when and how much new material should be introduced is an important decision to be made by each assembly's pastors and key members.

## *ELW* Terminology

Note that the word "assembly" is used, rather than "congregation," to denote a gathering of worshipers. Although it is the 11,000 ELCA congregations that constitute the majority of worshipping communities in the church, there are other entities as well. Worship also occurs in a number of places that include schools, hospitals, military chapels, and synodical and churchwide assemblies.

## Layout

Leadership roles are no longer designated in the pew book with small Ps, As, and Cs. These shorthand symbols were often a mystery to some visitors. Instead, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* indicates parts to be sung or spoken in bold type, provides direction given in italics (rubrics), or gives a simple designation when appropriate.

## Hymn Spotlight

There are many new hymns and songs in *ELW*, which should keep most assemblies engaged for years. In each issue of *Seeds*, a hymn or song that may be new to your assembly will be reviewed.

*ELW* #247, "Come Now, O Prince of Peace," comes into our church's repertoire from Korea. This musical plea for reconciliation and peace is especially appropriate during Advent, as the church prepares to receive Jesus, the reconciler. It may be sung as a gathering song or as we prepare to gather at Christ's table for Holy Communion. Many Asian hymns are meant to be sung in unison. This is an exception. If your assembly cannot sing multiple parts, perhaps the choir could sing in harmony while the assembly sings the melody, or the organ alone could provide the harmony.

## Patterns for Worship

An important component of *ELW* is the inclusion of an annotated Pattern for Worship prior to each section of the liturgical materials. An example can be found on pages 91-93, before the Holy Communion service. These patterns help planners and worshipers understand the liturgy and may inspire those who want to explore creative options. They are also helpful in educational settings.

## Gathering

The gathering portion of Holy Communion may progress in different ways. It may begin simply with the Prayer of the Day and proceed immediately with the Scripture readings. It could also begin with confession and forgiveness (pp. 94-96) or thanksgiving for Baptism (p. 97).

## Word

On page 102, under "First Reading," it is recommended that Scripture readings be introduced by saying "A reading from \_\_\_\_." It is not necessary to announce the entire biblical reference. The readings may be concluded in a variety of ways, either "The word of the Lord" or "Word of God, word of life." When finished, readers should look up and proclaim these phrases clearly to elicit a bold, "Thanks be to God," from the assembly.



## Meal

No specific music is provided for the offering. Rather, there is a rubric stating, "During this time the table is set. Assembly song or other music may accompany or follow the offering." The intent here is to acknowledge the wide variety of practice in our church. A number of types of instrumental or vocal music may be heard at this time. Ideally, the text of anything sung at this point will express the idea of ourselves as an offering to God, or the gift of God's grace to be received in the Sacrament to follow.

## Sending

The sending sentences under "Dismissal" are more varied than before, and there is an emphatic rhythmic signal to the congregation for a robust response of "Thanks be to God." While similar words might be used for sending, those in the new hymnal were selected with great care and attention. "Serve the Lord" is very familiar while "Share the good news," recalls the great commission. "Remember the poor," reflects the admonition from Galatians, and "Christ is with you," is a powerful reminder that we are not alone.

## Seeds for the Parish

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

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## Worship E-Newsletter Debuts

A new worship e-newsletter from the Worship and Liturgical Resources staff is now available. Get up-to-date information for pastors, musicians, worship leaders and planners delivered right to your inbox. Subscribe to the worship e-newsletter by visiting [www.elca.org/worship](http://www.elca.org/worship)

## Jubilee 2007: Thanks be to God

A party is one great way to celebrate a significant event such as a wedding, funeral, birthday, confirmation, anniversary, and the Fourth of July. The church also hosts parties on occasions such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. Next summer, the ELCA is celebrating an event that occurs rarely and we hope you'll come.

Everyone who has a passion for worship is invited to WORSHIP JUBILEE 2007 on Navy Pier in Chicago August 3-6, 2007, immediately prior to the churchwide assembly. There will be plentiful and varied worship, lots of music, major presentations, workshops on nearly 100 topics, a chance to experience this vibrant



city, service opportunities, exhibits, and, of course, the party, with food, fireworks, and more.

This event will celebrate the publication of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and how Lutheran worship can take shape in various ways in different settings. The publication of a new worship book is a major milestone and we will celebrate that heartily. But we also need to continue exploring possibilities that will carry us into a future of ongoing renewal.

Visit [www.elca.org/worship/jubilee](http://www.elca.org/worship/jubilee) for information.

# Stewardship Key Leader Helps Fulfill Another Dream

Challenging a congregation to increase stewardship can often be a daunting task, but when members of St. John's Lutheran in Highland, Pennsylvania, near Pittsburgh, were asked to "step forward in faith," they came through. As a result, groundbreaking for a new multi-purpose facility is set to occur in 2007.

The engine that ran this capital campaign was the ELCA's Stewardship Key Leader program, according to St. John's senior pastor Bill Diehm. "Our first three-year capital campaign started in 2001," he recalled. "But we needed to do another campaign. We had used an outside resource, which was effective; but we found that the Stewardship Key Leader resource could be just as effective and more affordable."

The goal is to transform the church's aging building into a multi-purpose facility for offices, worship, fellowship, classrooms, and an activity center. "I was called as pastor two years ago," Diehm said. "Part of my call was to renew the interest in a capital campaign and bring us back to full staffing. The Stewardship Key Leader program was an important step in putting the necessary budget in place."

The problem that the St. John's leadership faced was how to do another capital campaign along with their regular stewardship effort. "One side of the pledge card addressed our work for ongoing mission," Pastor Diehm said. "The other side spelled out the member's plan for giving to a three-year 'Step Forward in Faith' program. One is an annual campaign, the other is a three-year campaign."

Pastor Diehm said the net result of using Stewardship Key Leader (SKL) was about a 10 percent increase in their previous year's commitment. "We were told to expect \$600,000

to \$800,000," he said. "Using Stewardship Key Leader, we pledged \$634,000, which means we came on target for a realistic goal. We're still hopeful for more as we step forward in faith."

SKL is a very effective program, according to the Rev. Donald McCoid, bishop of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and member of St. John's Lutheran. "Sometimes a stewardship campaign comes down to, 'This is



want we want to do. This is what we need. Now what will you give?' Stewardship Key Leader is a more personal, faith-based approach. The campaign shared the personal stories of people and the needs and opportunities of the congregation. It identified with people in the daily life and ministry of the church. It was highly relational and always faith-based."

The momentum and enthusiasm is growing at St. John's. The congregation hopes to break ground for the new building late in 2007, and Pastor Diehm said they hope to start a debt reduction plan in 2008. "I'm absolutely thrilled that a congregation that has 250 people in the

pews on Sunday can create such a commitment to grow and move forward. It's a tribute to the ability of our people."

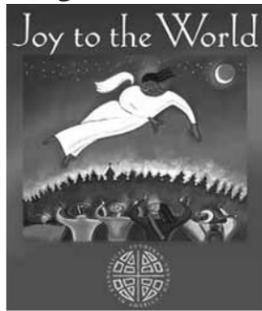
Pastor Richard Stough Sr., the stewardship key leader who headed up the program for St. John's, found the congregation's leadership very responsive and skilled. "I met with them on a Saturday morning," he said. "We defined the things that needed to happen. They followed up right away, and called when they had questions. It was a very good match of people and leadership. I expect good things to happen for them."

Bishop McCoid, who served the congregation as an associate pastor 30 years ago, added that stewardship often results in grumbling and resistance. "I heard none of that this time. The attitude of the congregation is that we're building for the future. It's very significant when people have a vision for the current ministry as well as for the future."

"I'm very grateful that there is such a program available," Pastor Diehm said. "It's a way of doing a stewardship campaign without a lot of overhead. We've struggled to determine how much risk to take in this journey, but we're moving forward optimistically. The good thing is that we've made decisions just as a family would. We've tried to address people's concerns and we've tried to stay faithful to our gospel traditions."

For further information about Stewardship Key Leader, contact Pastor Charles Lane, director for Stewardship Key Leader, [skl@elca.org](mailto:skl@elca.org) or 218/639-3521 or 800/638-3522, ext. 2606.

## Joy to the World Airing on Hallmark Channel for Christmas



*Joy to the World*, a one-hour television special produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and presented by Faith & Values Media, is scheduled to air this Christmas season on Hallmark Channel.

This Christmas worship service includes a joyful mix of music and praise from ELCA African-American, Asian, American Indian, Arab and Middle Eastern,

and Latino congregations. This rich and diverse cultural blend begins with a Santa Lucia celebration in the Swedish Lutheran tradition.

The featured congregations include:

- Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Chicago
- Salam Arabic Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- Thai Lutheran Community Church, Forest Park, Illinois
- St. James Lutheran Church, East Cleveland
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Cleveland
- San Marcos Lutheran Church, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

- Eben Ezer Lutheran Church, Oaks, Okla.

This program is available on DVD (with a holiday window cling while supplies last) for a cost of \$14.95 (including shipping).

This program is produced by the ELCA for the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. and the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission.

For more information, visit us on the Web at [www.elca.org/joytotheworld](http://www.elca.org/joytotheworld)

## Tips for Interviews

A religion reporter for *USA Today* told the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Religion Communications Council (RCC) that there are three kinds of news: change, good news, and bad news. The bottom line is that with the first two types you call the reporter, the last type the reporter calls you.

What do you do when the reporter calls? Here are six tips suggested by the RCC.

1. **Practice.** Don't wait for a reporter to call with a list of questions you would like to be asked. Write out your answers and practice interviews.
2. **Research.** Know your audience and the reporter's interests and beat. Craft your messages and adjust your style accordingly.
3. **Plan three main points.** State these points early in the interview, and reinforce them throughout.
4. **Be friendly.** A reporter's job is to find news. Yours is to share information and answer objectively.
5. **Never say "no comment."** If you don't know the answer to a question, say so and offer to find out the information and get back to them later.
6. **Nothing is off the record.** Whatever you say is fair game for the reporter.



As a ministry of the ELCA, we have more than 600 loans totaling over \$300 million at work today helping ELCA congregations and ministries throughout the U.S., Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Some loans help new congregations get started. Others help existing congregations refinance debt or renovate fellowship halls. But the reason these ELCA ministries come to us is simple: to get the financing they need at a competitive rate. Which, should the need arise, is the same reason your congregation or ELCA-related ministry should come to us. To find out how we can help, call 877.886.3522 or visit us at [www.missioninvestmentfund.org](http://www.missioninvestmentfund.org).



877.886.3522

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

# Ripe for Picking

## Studies on Sexuality

The third study from the Task Force for ELCA Studies on Sexuality will be available December 4, 2006. It invites participation of congregations and other ministry communities to reflect on a range of social concerns related to human sexuality. Marriage, the commercialization of sexuality, sexual activities among youth, and the "sex industry" will be explored in a moral and theological context. Acknowledging that these issues are divisive in society, families, and Christian communities, the study provides a forum for thoughtful discussion about what Christian faith and Lutheran heritage can contribute to understanding the differing points of view.

The study has multiple features and provides a variety of options for individual and group use. Consisting mainly of eight study sessions relating to human sexuality, the supplementary materials, including introductions to the book of Galatians and Martin Luther's essay "On Christian Liberty," could be used for Bible or theological study.

For more information and to obtain copies of the study, visit [www.elca.org/faithfuljourney](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney)

## New Dramas



**Hunger & Hope: Dramas about Poverty, Hunger and Mission**, a collection of 11 original dramas, is now available online and from Augsburg Fortress Publishers. Written by the Rev. Carl Billings, pastor and dramatist from Atascadero, California, these easily-staged plays are intended to spur congregations to examine the emotional and practical foundations for global mission, poverty, and hunger ministries. Carl uses whimsy, parable, puppets, and soliloquies to direct audiences toward thought and action.

To obtain *Hunger & Hope* (ISBN 6-0002-0902-9; \$8.00 plus shipping), call 800/328-4648 or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org/store](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store)

## Disaster Curricula

ELCA Domestic Disaster Response is proud to unveil two new curricula for young people affected by disaster, now available through Augsburg Fortress.

*God's Can-Do Kids* is a two- to three-day program, specifically aimed at children in kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. *Gearing Up-RenewU!* is a one-day retreat program, designed for adolescents in grades 9-12.

Both programs have similar goals:

- to deal with fears through music, art, and games
- to relieve stress through crafts and recreation
- to connect with God through relevant Bible stories

The programs can be offered by all local communities, whether or not they have been affected by disaster. In those that have not been stricken, young people can become prepared and feel less vulnerable.

The programs are packaged together, as a set. For ordering information, visit [www.elca.org/disaster](http://www.elca.org/disaster) or [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org)

## Making Personal Confirmation Stoles

This year the quilting group of St. Paul Lutheran, Grosse Pointe, Mich., teamed up with confirmands to make stoles, which the students wore on Pentecost Sunday for confirmation. The quilters scoured fabric stores for cotton fabrics with designs representing the social interests of youth (sports, music, reading, favorite colleges, etc.) and their spiritual life (crosses, doves, candles, stars, etc.). The fabrics were cut into strips of 2.5 x 7 inches. Each student selected three strips representing his or her social interests for one side of the stole and three strips representing his or her spiritual life for the other side. The "interest" fabrics were stitched with four alternating strips of various red fabrics of the same size, forming two 14" panels. Using a pattern copied from one of the favorite stoles of our pastor, these panels were set into a longer strip of red fabric. A lining was cut; the front of the stole and the lining were stitched together into a tube; the tube was turned right side out, pressed, and trimmed with red fringe. The stole was a wonderful memento of this important day in the confirmand's faith development—and each student also had memories of getting to know a quilter whom he or she otherwise might never have met!



*Note: In the ELCA, stoles have traditionally been reserved for pastors and bishops as a symbol of ordination and the office of the ministry of Word and Sacrament. Talk with your pastor(s) about how a confirmation stole may be received in your ministry context.*

## ELCA Advantage Program Available

All ELCA congregations and affiliates are eligible to continue saving on all types of quality office supplies, equipment, and furniture provided by Office Depot Business Services Division (ODBSD).

### Program Summary

- Each ELCA congregation or affiliate must apply for credit individually, and is responsible for payment. Organizations purchasing less than \$2,500 per month must use their own credit cards or apply for an Office Depot Charge Card.
- In addition to the approximately 200 "core" contract items available for an average of 61 percent below list price, more than 12,000 in-stock items are available from the ODBSD catalog at about 41 percent off the list price.

The price of these items was lowered beyond the original discounts in 2005. If you have not compared prices for a while, you will be surprised by the low prices for toner, furniture, business machines, and paper. Special order items are also available.

- Orders may be placed via a faxed requisition form, by telephone, or electronically. If you already have an Office Depot Retail Store Account, you will need to obtain a new Office Depot contract account number in order to receive the ELCA discount.

For more information, contact the ELCA Advantage Program office at 800/638-3522, ext. 2988 or [jewel.berg@elca.org](mailto:jewel.berg@elca.org)

## Select Unveils New Online Courses

Select Multimedia Resources is entering its second year of offering online courses nationally for continuing education and for Associate in Ministry candidates and some synodical programs. Beginning in February 2007 Select will be offering:

- *Interpreting the Old Testament* (10 sessions)
- *Ethics from a Lutheran Perspective* (12 sessions)
- *Lutheran Heritage* (10 sessions)
- *Evangelization and Lutheran Worship* (6 sessions)



- *Sent to Preach* (8 sessions)
- *Spirituality: An Invitation to a Closer Relationship with God* (8 sessions)

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

or the Director of Online Courses Jodi Hanson at 605-274-4031 or [jodi.hanson@augie.edu](mailto:jodi.hanson@augie.edu)

## Thanksgiving is Time to "Talk Turkey"

As faith communities, we have much to be thankful for: our faith, our health and our care for one another. This Thanksgiving, be a blessing by providing an opportunity for families to discuss challenging end-of-life questions. One helpful tool is *Five Wishes*®, a living will that asks questions about personal, emotional, and spiritual needs, as well as medical wishes.

Encourage members of your congregation to think, share, and document their wishes. Find an opportunity to share *Five Wishes*® with

your congregation council, as an adult forum, or with ministry teams.

To request free copies of *Five Wishes*®, visit [www.elcabop.org](http://www.elcabop.org). For tools to organize a *Five Wishes*® discussion, visit [www.agingwithdignity.org](http://www.agingwithdignity.org). For other helpful ELCA planning resources, visit [www.elca.org/fo/estateplanning.html](http://www.elca.org/fo/estateplanning.html)



# Ripe for Picking

## The Gospel in Fiction: Words and the WORD

Nowadays, books with a "Christian" angle or interest are best sellers. Consider *The Da Vinci Code* or the *Left Behind* Series. Somewhere between the extremes of Christianity-as-myth and 21<sup>st</sup> century apocalypse, there are stories that connect the gospel with our everyday lives.

*The Gospel in Fiction: Words and the WORD?* is an online discussion with six contemporary storytellers. Each author responds to subjects from the gospel and concerning the life and history of the church.

This study is part of the *Online Theological Study for Laity* series from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP). The instructor will be Mark Rigg, associate chaplain and former chair of English at The Hill School. The collection of short stories used in the course is *Listening for God, Volume 3* from Augsburg Fortress.

Mark says, "Many of us find it daunting to walk into a mega-bookstore in search of authors who have something genuine to say to our inner ear, to our heart, to our true self. Here is a chance to encounter six such authors and to find in the stories that they offer us something more than plot. After all, if all human beings want from their great stories is plot, there's plenty of that on TV and at the movies!"

This course will be conducted online during February–March 2007. During these two months, participants may log on whenever they want. For two months the course will focus on the following authors and their works.

- John Cheever: *The Five-Forty-Eight*
- Mary Gordon: *Mrs. Cassidy's Last Year*
- Wendell Berry: *Pray without Ceasing*
- Reynolds Price: *Long Night*
- Tess Gallagher: *The Woman Who Prayed*
- Tillie Olsen: *O Yes*

Online registration is available December 2006–January 2007. The fee is \$125. For more information, visit [www.Ltsp.edu](http://www.Ltsp.edu) Study guides and other enrichment opportunities are also available at the Web site for no charge. For information contact Mark Staples, Faith and Life Programs director, at [Mstaples@Ltsp.edu](mailto:Mstaples@Ltsp.edu)



## New Devotional Guide

Do you ever wonder how you might begin your council meeting without the pastor saying the opening prayer every time? Here's a resource for you! The 2007 Devotional Guide for ELCA Congregation Councils and Committees provides scriptural reflections, discussion questions, and prayers that will help keep your council focused on the matter at hand. It also includes artwork that can be used in bulletins, newsletters, or other print pieces. The 2007 guide is written by Bishop Margaret Payne and titled *Living in God's Amazing Grace: Thanks Be to God!*

The Devotional Guide was mailed to all ELCA congregations and rostered leaders in September 2006, and is also available at [www.elca.org/communication/devotionalguide.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/devotionalguide.html) To order additional single copies, call 800/638-3522.

## ELCA Good Gifts



Have you made a good gift lately? *ELCA Good Gifts*, the official giving catalog of the ELCA, makes it easy for you to make a meaningful gift this season. You can choose to give a Christmas gift to a special person and support a vital ministry of the ELCA at the same time. Your gifts will

not only bring joy to you and your loved ones, but the proceeds from items purchased from this illustrated 32-page catalog will help support the efforts of World Hunger, global mission leadership development, and other ministries.

Call 800/638-3522 to request a single copy of *ELCA Good Gifts* (ISBN 6-0002-0607-0) or order multiple copies by calling 800/328-4648 or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger) You can also call 800/638-3522, ext. 2970 or visit [www.elca.org/goodgifts](http://www.elca.org/goodgifts)

## Large ELCA Congregations to Gather

*Let the River Flow* is the theme for the first national gathering of large congregations in the ELCA. This event promises to be a virtual river of ideas, songs, and prayers that flow into the mission of the church.

*Let the River Flow* will be held June 18-21 on the campus of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville, Minnesota. Keynote speakers and preachers will include Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, Dr. Martin Marty, Dr. Wyvetta Bullock, Dr. Barbara Rossing, Dr. Len Sweet, and Dr. Reggie McNeal. Evening concert celebrations will be led by Ken Medema and Peder Eide. Approximately 60 workshops addressing a wide variety of ministry areas and concerns will be available.

If your congregation sees itself as a larger congregation dealing with large congregation issues, or if you are feeling the growing pains of becoming a larger congregation, this event is for you!

The "early bird" registration fee is \$100 per person, a saving of \$50 from the regular registration cost, so sign up now! To register, visit [www.elca.org/largecongregations](http://www.elca.org/largecongregations)

## Share Your Evangelism Stories

Does your congregation have evangelism success stories? What's working? What has happened to your congregation as a result?

*The Lutheran* wants to hear your stories and share them in its pages and on [www.thelutheran.org](http://www.thelutheran.org) so your ideas might inspire other congregations. Send your evangelism tips, a brief two- or three-paragraph description and contact information (for those wanting more background) to [lutheran.editor@thelutheran.org](mailto:lutheran.editor@thelutheran.org) or mail to:

Evangelism Tips  
*The Lutheran*  
8765 W. Higgins Rd.  
Chicago, IL 60631.

The magazine staff will review submissions and publish the best ones as regular items on the "Currents" pages of upcoming issues.

## ELCA World Hunger Appeal

Seven new Christmas gift-postcards are ready to announce gift-donations to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, "Stand With Africa" (pictured right), and ELCA Disaster Response. The cards include whimsical ("I decided not to give you this gnome for Christmas") and traditional (an Ethiopian nativity) options.

To obtain the cards (ISBN 6-0002-1751-X; free; one sheet=seven cards), call 800/328-4648 or visit [www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger)



## Another Christmas?

Advent and Christmas got you in a rut? Want to explore different ways to contemplate and celebrate God's gift of life during these seasons? Consider ordering copies of *Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?*, the 2006 version of the time-honored magazine from Alternatives for Simple Living. *Whose Birthday* can inspire you and your congregation to redesign and freshen up your holiday lifestyles!



To order copies and learn about pricing, call Alternatives at 800/821-6153 or visit [www.SimpleLiving.org](http://www.SimpleLiving.org) Ask for the ELCA edition.

## Giving Opportunities

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 might represent a new opportunity to support your favorite ministry. The Act, recently signed by President Bush, includes a variety of charitable giving incentives. Individuals who are over 70.5 years old may make a charitable gift of up to \$100,000 per year directly from an Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or Rollover IRA in 2006 and 2007.

Under prior law, these distributions would be taxable to the IRA owner, but under the Act the distribution will be excluded from the donor's taxable income.

For more information visit the ELCA Foundation's Web site at [www.elca.org/fo/charitableIRA.html](http://www.elca.org/fo/charitableIRA.html) or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2970.

# What's New on the World Wide Web

The ELCA Advocacy Web site has many useful resources available for congregations.

**Join the ELCA e-Advocacy Network**  
E-Advocacy empowers Lutherans to learn about, reflect upon, and advocate Christian values. E-Advocacy makes it easy for every member of the ELCA to work for peace, justice, and environmental stewardship. Visit [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy) to sign up and to obtain contact information for elected officials.

**Join the ELCA Shareholders Network**  
The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program of the ELCA sends periodic updates on faith-based investing and CSR news for those interested in economic issues, social implications of company practices, and corporate shareholder advocacy. Visit [www.elca.org/corporate](http://www.elca.org/corporate) to sign up.

**Share Your Thoughts on the U.S. Farm Bill on LutherLink**  
The U.S. Farm Bill, which concerns agriculture, conservation, and food policy, is scheduled to come before the U.S. Congress for reauthorization in 2007. The ELCA Washington Office has been holding listening sessions around the country focused on this bill. Now you can join an online discussion on LutherLink at [www.faithgroups.com/topic/FARM\\_BILL](http://www.faithgroups.com/topic/FARM_BILL). (If you are not yet a member of LutherLink, visit [www.lutherlink.org](http://www.lutherlink.org).)

**Learn About the ONE Lutheran Campaign and the Millennium Development Goals**  
Download a ONE Lutheran brochure, a PowerPoint presentation, a display kit, the declaration signup form, Web site graphics, and helpful letters, articles, and statements about the ONE Lutheran Campaign and the Millennium Development Goals at [www.elca.org/one/](http://www.elca.org/one/)

**Learn How to Meet with Your Member of**



## Congress

Visit [www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/) for tips on scheduling an event or meeting with the Representative in your Congressional district.

## Learn What Your Congregation Can and Can't Do Politically

Visit [www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/) for helpful guides from the IRS, ELCA legal counsel, and Lutheran Services in America.

## Learn About Advocacy Efforts for Peace in the Middle East

To help the ELCA efforts to achieve peace in the Middle East and for information on Augusta Victoria Hospital, East Jerusalem, visit [www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/middleeast/](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/middleeast/). For information on other ELCA ministries in the Middle East, see [www.elca.org/middleeast/](http://www.elca.org/middleeast/) and [www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/).

## Get Basic Facts and Statistics on a Variety of Issues

A list of domestic and global facts and statistics on hunger, poverty, environmental concerns, child labor, sex trafficking, and HIV/AIDS used at the 2006 ELCA Youth Gathering workshop, "Stand Up, Speak Out" is available at [www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/toolkit/)

## Download or Request Resources Related to the Crisis in Darfur, Sudan

Several letters, statements, schedules of

advocacy events, videos, and pieces of background information on the Darfur crisis are available at [www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/darfur/](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/issues/darfur/)

## Download a Discussion Guide on "Caring for Creation"

Do you have concerns about the environment? You can get a discussion guide based on the ELCA Social Statement "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice" at [www.elca.org/advocacy/environment/education.asp](http://www.elca.org/advocacy/environment/education.asp)

For more information about these advocacy resources, contact Annie Lynsen at the ELCA Washington Office (202/626-7947; [Annie.Lynsen@elca.org](mailto:Annie.Lynsen@elca.org)).

## Color Bulletin Inserts Available on MIF Web Site

The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) Web site now has 10 full-color bulletin inserts—one from each of the ELCA's nine regions and one in Spanish. Each insert tells the story of an ELCA congregation that received a loan from MIF, and includes information about the investments that MIF offers. The high-resolution PDFs can be printed by a color printer or taken to a commercial printing firm. To obtain these, visit [www.missioninvestmentfund.org](http://www.missioninvestmentfund.org)

From the ELCA investments MIF makes loans for capital projects of mission congregations, established congregations, and ELCA-related organizations such as seminaries, social ministry organizations, and outdoor ministries. More than 650 loans are currently at work in ministries throughout the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.



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.html](http://www.elca.org/communication/resourcecenters.html)

**Q** This year in our congregation, we'd like to celebrate Advent and get everyone involved. What resources are out there about celebrating Advent?

**A** I recommend *We Light the Candles* (Brandt, 1991), *The Advent Wreath* (O'Neal, 1989), and *The Story of the Advent Wreath* (Victorson, 1988).

These are geared toward home use, but adapting them for a group setting would be a snap. Also consider *The Jesse Tree: Stories and Symbols of Advent* (Anderson, 1990) or *Jesse Tree Devotions: A Family Activity for Advent* (Breckenridge, 1985). Each of these is available from Augsburg Fortress at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) or 800/328-4648.

—Mark Stahura, senior project developer  
Worship & Music  
Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis

**A** Check out *Prepare Ye the Way: A Collection of Advent Resources*

(LeaderResources, [www.leaderresources.org](http://www.leaderresources.org) 800/941-2218). It includes meditations and prayers for wreath lighting, an Advent wreath blessing, instructions for an Advent wreath workshop, a children's Advent program, and the script and instructions for a "no rehearsal" Christmas pageant. It has ideas for all ages.

—Linda L. Grenz, publisher and CEO,  
LeaderResources  
Bethesda, Md.

**A** In addition to some of the things already suggested, a five-week Advent study from Upper Room (800/972-0433, [www.upperroom.org/bookstore](http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore)) has been used here several times: *Prepare Ye for a New Advent of God's Love in Our World*. Another resource I recommend for Advent/Christmas is a little activity book called *Building Your Own*

*Bethlehem* by Gertrud Mueller Nelson and Peter Mazar. It's available from Liturgy Training Publications (800/933-1800, [www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org)) and is a hands-on project for helping us experience what Bethlehem is about.

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

**A** Channing Bete (800/477-4776, [www.faithguides.com](http://www.faithguides.com)) has some great Advent/Christmas coloring books including a Christmas carols book that has cute colorable pictures in it and one called *My Book about Christmas*. These are geared for younger children, but we all like to color at any age, right?

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

**A** *Sing the Faith: Carols of Christmas* (Augsburg Fortress) for adult Bible study. It would be a natural for Advent.

I also recommend the devotional book, *Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas* (Orbis Books), which features the writings of Lewis, Bonhoeffer, Dillard, Nouwen, and more. Other Advent resources are *A is for Angel* (Augsburg Fortress), Tomie dePaola's *The Night of Las Posadas* (Putnam), *Destination Christmas: Advent Programs and Practices for Youth* (Abingdon, 800/672-1789, [www.cokesbury.com](http://www.cokesbury.com)), and *Cloth for the Cradle: Worship Resources and Readings for Advent, Christmas & Epiphany* (800/GIA-1358, [www.giamusic.com](http://www.giamusic.com)).

—Sara Johnson  
Resource Service Center  
Southwestern Minnesota Synod  
Redwood Falls

**A** AKALOO!! It has lessons and activities for specific seasons in the church year

including Advent, Christmas, Lent, etc. Be sure to check out the many possibilities at [www.akaloo.org](http://www.akaloo.org). See also the *Firelight II* curricula. The *Circle of Seasons* has some wonderful resources for Advent, including four weeks of content, plenty of activities, and learning materials. For pure enjoyment and meditation, you might want to consider *Christmas with Dietrich Bonhoeffer*, a beautiful, full-color inspirational book.

—Beth Lewis, president & CEO  
Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis

**A** One way to get everyone involved is for the congregation to publish its own resource. Circulate the lessons for Advent and ask each family to write one devotion, then put them all together for all families to use.

—Mim Woolbert  
Communication Services  
ELCA Churchwide Office, Chicago

**A** I have always been fond of our Christmas tree decorated with handmade Chrismons. These have been made and repaired by various groups in our congregation through the years. The original pattern books, *Chrismons: Basic Series* and *Chrismons: Advanced Series*, were published by the Lutheran Church of the Ascension in Danville, Virginia ([www.crismon.org](http://www.crismon.org)). Some out-of-print Crismon resources from CSS Publishing might still be available somewhere on the Web: *Chrismons — They Point to Jesus* (Gibson), and *A Chrismon Service* (Edgar). While the adults and older children are making Chrismons, the younger children can be entertained by *The Time of Christmas* (Richter/Kessing), available from Thrivent Financial.

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

# Young Adults in Global Mission

The Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program is a way to develop young leaders for congregations and the ELCA at large.

During a year of international mission service, young people develop their gifts, and put those gifts to work when they return to the U.S.

Many of the program's 148 alumni are pursuing advanced education or careers in social work, education, cross-cultural relationships, music, and ministry of all kinds. Mary Mappus Finklea, who graduated from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in 2005, is the first of 20 YAGM alum now preparing to be pastors.

"We are not the future of the church, but equal participants in the here and now as we pursue peace and justice in this world," says alumna Andrea Metcalfe, in her third year of seminary. "We have been sent, by God's grace, for the sake of the world...and we have returned, by God's grace, globally formed and globally informed, for the transformation of the church and of the world."

Thirty-nine young people began a year of service in August and applications are now being accepted for the 2007-2008 program. Young Adults in Global Mission is open to ELCA members ages 19-30 who are active in their church or campus ministry. Young adults raise a minimum of \$3500 towards their support. A wide range of ministry opportunities is available in eight countries: Argentina, Germany, India, Kenya, Mexico, the Philippines, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom.

Applications submitted by February 15 will get priority attention. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2007.

Details about countries and assignments, plus links to Web sites of some YAGM participants, can be found at [www.elca.org/globalserve/youngadults](http://www.elca.org/globalserve/youngadults) For more information contact the ELCA Global Mission Unit at 800/638-3522, ext. 2520 or [dgmSERVE@elca.org](mailto:dgmSERVE@elca.org)



This year's Young Adults in Global Mission at their orientation

## Television Special

Introducing *Jesus of Nazareth*



Join gifted ELCA pastor, theologian and *Grace Matters* radio host Peter Marty as he travels through the Holy Land. Journey where Jesus walked in this retelling of the gospel story.

Jesus walked in this retelling of the gospel story.

Check for local airtimes beginning  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3  
[elca.org/introducingjesus](http://elca.org/introducingjesus)

## Please Return Your Missionary Covenants!

This month, ELCA missionary Pat Bentsen is planning her home leave. Topping her "to-do" list is visiting her 35 sponsoring congregations.

Each fall, the more than 2,000 congregations and individuals who participate in the Missionary Sponsorship program sign and return their annual covenants to the Office for Global Mission Support/Missionary Sponsorship and Global Gifts. With these covenants, participants pledge to financially sponsor a particular missionary or missionary family.

Covenants are due now! Remember to include in your budget an annual allocation for your missionary, and be sure you sign and return the covenant sent in September. Support from sponsoring congregations adds up to \$4.1 million annually. Thus the ELCA continues to prepare and send missionaries even as other denominations call them home for lack of funds!

For more information on the Missionary Sponsorship program, or for questions about your annual covenant, contact the Rev. David Lerseth at 800/638-3522, ext. 2641, or [david.lerseth@elca.org](mailto:david.lerseth@elca.org)

## Prayer Ventures Remembers Tanzania Missionaries



Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson

Early next year, Dr. Mark and Linda Jacobson will celebrate three milestones: their 22<sup>nd</sup> year of service as ELCA missionaries, their 25<sup>th</sup> year of marriage, and the opening of the new Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre in Arusha, Tanzania.

Dr. Jacobson is medical director of Selian Lutheran Hospital, a hospital of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania - Diocese in Arusha Region. Once a ten-bed clinic, Selian has grown into a 110-bed, full-service hospital, offering outpatient and inpatient medicine, pediatric, general and specialty surgical, obstetric, hospice, and orphan care. About thirty percent of its 40,000 annual patients are HIV positive.

The new Arusha Lutheran Medical Centre,

expected to open this winter, will house the Arusha Orthopedic Surgery Institute, which offers rehabilitative surgery for crippled children and adults.

The Jacobsons' health ministry makes a difference in Tanzania, one of the world's poorest countries. Tanzanian government expenditure on health is less than two dollars per capita annually, and for many people, medical care is unaffordable. The Jacobsons have broadened access to health care by linking Selian to congregations and individuals around the world.

On November 16, you are invited to pray for the Jacobsons as part of the *Prayer Ventures* daily prayer guide at [www.elca.org/prayerventures](http://www.elca.org/prayerventures)

## New Handbook

The *Companion Synod Handbook* is now available for the hundreds of ELCA members who participate in companion synod relationships.

All 65 ELCA synods participate in the program, which celebrates relationships among the 77 independent, self-governing churches that belong to the Lutheran World Federation. Published in August, the *Handbook* has five parts:

- Part I: Companion Synods Basics
- Part II: For Synods
- Part III: For Congregations
- Part IV: Planning Trips
- Part V: Hosting International Guests

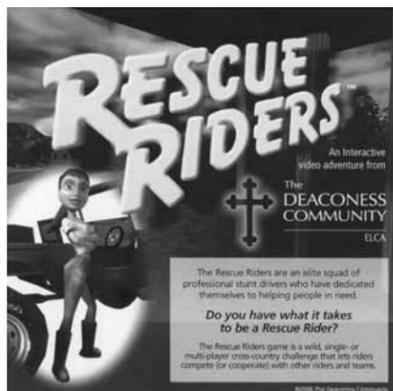
Besides helping Companion Synod committee members initiate, assess, and strengthen relationships, the *Handbook* offers guidelines for international travel.

For copies of the *Companion Synod Handbook*, please call Mia Cortez at ELCA Global Mission, 800/638-3522, ext. 2642. Each part of the *Handbook*, plus appendices and handouts, are available on the ELCA Web site at [www.elca.org/companionsynod/cspresources.html](http://www.elca.org/companionsynod/cspresources.html)

## New Concepts Provide Healthy Gaming

At the Games for Change conference held in New York and Chicago in June 2006, participants discussed new ways of marketing social purpose games to teenagers. Examples of positive and uplifting games include *Darfur is Dying* and *Peacemaker*. Another new game—debuted at this past summer's Youth Gathering—is called *Rescue Riders*, and was developed by the Deaconess Community. The game is reviewed here by Brian Plagge, a high school student from Cedar Falls, Iowa, and a member of Nazareth Lutheran Church.

*Hans Desotel is not your average social worker. He is none other than a rescue rider, a fearless missionary who delivers supplies to the needy. Using his thunderous jeep, Desotel tears through the countryside doing what God has called him to do. The new game Rescue Riders presents a healthy alternative to the blood and gore of many modern day games on the market. As a local missionary, a player's objective is to deliver emergency supplies to disaster victims, charities, and people in need. When a player runs out of supplies, he or she must make a stop at the church to restock. Rescue Riders presents features including online play and single player mode. The Jeep used for delivering supplies has striking qualities such as a turbo booster, high vertical jumping, and the ability to scale a mountain. The game itself presents a valuable concept, but lacks complexity in certain areas.*



The *Rescue Riders* game is now available as a free download from the Deaconess Community's Web site, [www.elca.org/deaconess](http://www.elca.org/deaconess). A user's guide will be available soon, featuring ideas on how to use the game in Sunday school classes, youth groups, and adult groups. DVD versions are available to borrow from synodical and regional resource centers.

# Transitioning into Retirement

No alarm clock. No meetings. No traffic jams. No deadlines. It's called *retirement!*

For years we say, "Well, when I retire I'm going to..." and we list all the wonderful things we will be able to do. My list included reading a book whenever I wanted to, spending hours of bliss at the sewing machine, getting dirty in the garden and not caring, going to a movie in the middle of the week and feeling like I was playing hooky, visiting family and friends on a Tuesday instead of a Saturday, finally getting years of photographs in order, shopping in little unique stores, taking car trips, and napping in the sun.

Well, I've done that! And I've only been retired three months. The big question of the day around our house now is, "What's on your agenda today?" "Oh, bird watching, water the lawn..."

The jump from the full-time rush of a more-than-packed work week to basically nothing is a very big leap indeed. At first it's fun to just roll over in bed and snicker about the folks who have to go to work. The problem is that you roll over, but you don't go back to sleep—your body is telling you to get up, get with it! You crave that morning cup of coffee, you feel the pull to get out the door, and you remember that you were needed.

Many ELCA members of retirement age are not ready to sit in a rocking chair, or while away the hours watching the trucks load and unload at the gravel yard, nor are they ready for people to constantly "do" for them. It's nice to be entertained and have fun things to do, but it's

also nice to be needed and to feel that you are a valuable contributor to the work of the church. The wisdom and skills acquired through life don't just dump out of a healthy person's mind when they retire.

ELCA congregations and institutions are reaping the benefits of using skilled people, who now have the time and the willingness to share their knowledge, on a volunteer basis. Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansdale, Pennsylvania ([tlc@trinitylansdale.com](mailto:tlc@trinitylansdale.com)), has volunteer receptionists—folks who did similar work before their retirement and are happy to slip back into the role. This same congregation is also beginning a volunteer home visitation program with the purpose of helping folks with tasks around the house. A retired carpenter or plumber can help someone, and they get to use their skills; a retired gardener can offer guidance in planting a garden, and a grandma can calm an anxious new mommy.

We've learned that Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit ([info@holyspirit-emmaus.org](mailto:info@holyspirit-emmaus.org)) in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, has developed a program for retired folks that not only helps to keep them busy, but stimulates and educates. There is something going on almost every day including activities like the Investment Club, movies, concerts, a day of connecting with other retired folks, educational day tours, dinners out together, and lectures of interest on current world events.

The ELCA Board of Pensions has a wealth of knowledge and resources to offer you about retirement and wellness issues.



Pastor welcoming active retiree

Congregations can contact the Rev. Cathy Malotky, full-time retirement planning manager, at [cmalotky@elcabop.org](mailto:cmalotky@elcabop.org) and she will share resources with you and help you develop programs that will benefit retirees and give them an opportunity to be useful. You can also contact Tammy Devine, the ELCA Board of Pensions wellness coordinator ([tdevine@elcabop.org](mailto:tdevine@elcabop.org)), for great help and guidance in growing older in a positive and health-filled way.

The Association of Lutheran Older Adults (ALOA) ([www.aloaserves.org](http://www.aloaserves.org)), is an organization that was formed in the early 1990s by a group of ELCA and The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod (LCMS) church leaders to help prepare the church for the "age wave." ALOA sponsors Elderhostels, Seniorfests, cruises, and tours for older Lutherans who enjoy the opportunities to do things together while maintaining their mental alertness. Mark A. Staples ([mstaples@navpoint.com](mailto:mstaples@navpoint.com)), director of Faith and Life Programs at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, says that the seminary and ALOA are beginning a partnership to provide educational alternatives for folks in their retirement and pre-retirement years to help them embrace this time of their lives through faith.

Bob Todd, senior publicist at Augsburg Fortress Publishers ([toddb@augsburghfortress.org](mailto:toddb@augsburghfortress.org)), suggests a few timely books for us to read as we retire or near retirement. Ed Klodt wrote a book titled *The Jonah Factor*, about moving from full-time work to retirement. He dropped out of a Fortune 500 company to pursue a different calling. He's spreading his spiritual journey in a new ministry—it's a good read. Another book to read is *Getting Ready for a New Life* by Richard Bansemer. Log on to [www.augsburghfortress.org](http://www.augsburghfortress.org) for other books or contact Todd.

Dr. John Jorgenson ([jjorg032@comcast.net](mailto:jjorg032@comcast.net)) suggests *Strengthening Aging Families* by Sage Publications, Inc. It is full of ideas for congregations with older persons.

—Brenda Engelby  
Tucson, Ariz.

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## Leave a Legacy

The ELCA Foundation offers a wide variety of free resources to congregations regarding estate planning and planned giving. One such resource is expertise. Invite a Foundation Gift Planner to your congregation for an estate planning "legacy" seminar. Every seminar provides helpful information regarding estate planning needs, as well as charitable gift options that benefit both family and ministry.

There is no cost or obligation to the congregation or your members. Following a seminar, ELCA Foundation staff are available to meet privately with those who request a confidential visit. For more information, call the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, or visit [www.elca.org/fo](http://www.elca.org/fo) to contact the Regional Gift Planner nearest you.