



March-April
2007

Volume 20
Number 2

www.elca.org

Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share

Seeds for the Parish
Communication Services
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Shakopee, MN
Permit No. 33



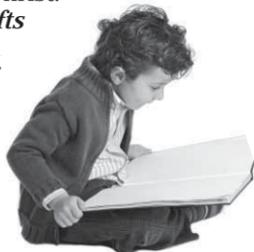
Remember the old *Trix* Cereal commercials from a couple of decades ago? As the *Trix* rabbit tried some new way to enjoy his cereal, kids would scream at the television, “*Silly rabbit! Trix are for kids!*” Twenty years later, a young seminarian heard a similar call in the back of her head as she

arrived for her first national stewardship meeting—“silly seminarian, national committees are for reverend doctors and ordained pastors.” But within the first hour, she realized there was something different about this national committee on stewardship. This was a committee of everyday people—people from the pews, a young couple, a retired businessman, an urban renewal leader, etc.

Gathered around the table, people from all walks of life shared their personal stories of ELCA congregations and the stewardship of the church. These stories gave birth to the new and holistic stewardship material being offered by Augsburg Fortress this summer, *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share*. These stories of people like those in the congregation where you serve, the stories that produced this new resource, emphasize the concept of stewardship grounded in being a disciple of Christ.

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share is intended to change the life of the congregation. It strives to be different than the average stewardship program, because it involves *all* God’s people “declaring how much God has done for them.” (Luke 8:39)

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share, along with the “African Descent Component,” includes everything a congregation needs



to plan and implement a Christ-centered, holistic, and life-giving stewardship that appeals to every age group in the community. Stewardship should be a way of life, not simply an annual response campaign. *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share* will lead a community through the process of lifting up and nurturing individuals, called Mission Interpreters, with gifts for sharing faith stories with the community. As faith stories about graceful living, grateful living, giving to the church, and cheerful giving are shared among the community by the Mission Interpreters, new stories will



emerge from the listeners. Storytelling, as history has shown, is contagious, and it is a proven way of building community, claiming community, and directing community. Our personal stories remind us of our connection to God’s grace and how we are served by God.

Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share begins with Bible study, as it should, because the stories shared by the people of God come from time spent in Bible study. Then there are sermon outlines, bulletin inserts, newsletter articles, litanies, prayer petitions, etc. As the community grounds itself in God’s story, the people will begin to better understand their roles as faithful stewards. They will also begin to recognize how God is active in their lives on a daily basis. This will help them realize how embracing the lessons in this resource can change the world through daily response to what God has first done for them.

As that “silly seminarian” entered the

room, she was greeted with the open arms and hearts of faithful people—people like me, people like you, and people like those you serve in your congregation. And the stories of these faithful disciples highlight the differences God is making throughout the world. If your objective is to transform the lives of the people in the congregation you serve—instead of simply trying to determine what the church budget should be—refer to this new stewardship resource it’s a wonderful place to start. If you are also interested and excited about the people of faith in your congregation growing in discipleship, responding to God’s grace, and “declaring how much God has done for them” (Luke 8:39), this new stewardship resource is essential.



The core of the *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share* stewardship program is the CD-ROM. It offers dozens of easy-to-use, flexible, and editable files for printing, adaptation, photocopying, rewriting, or using “as is.” This CD-ROM will help reach all age groups and program members of the congregation.

The CD and other materials (bookmarks, letterhead, postcards, forms and bulletin inserts) are available from Augsburg Fortress at www.augsburgfortress.org or 800/328-4648.



Extend the Invitation!



Back in the day when spring break was called “Easter break” and Easter season radio shows (in which characters actually attended Easter services) were called “Easter specials,” it wasn’t unusual for folks to invite their neighbors to attend services with them.

Consider the woman who invited her “un-churched” neighbor to visit her Lutheran congregation in a small Illinois town, over 50 years ago. The neighbor accepted the invitation and liked that community of believers very much. She in turn invited her husband, a “fallen-away” Catholic, who soon became a member. Over the years their three

children were baptized, attended Sunday school, and became active members. The children invited their friends, many of whom became members of Lutheran congregations. Soon the children were inviting their future spouses. One child went on to seminary and is now a called and ordained ELCA pastor. Another child works for the churchwide organization in Chicago.

Ah, but the invitations weren’t limited to the immediate family. The neighbor also invited her brother, who was looking for a church. Soon he and his wife became members of a Lutheran congregation in their Long Island, New York, town. Their children? All four are baptized and confirmed members of Lutheran congregations. From one woman came so many.

Society has certainly changed since the 1950s—“spring breaks” have girls going wild, and the religious aspects of Easter are all but banned from the media. But individuals can still invite their neighbors

to attend church with them.

Need some tips on evangelism? Visit www.elca.org/evangelism for resources to help reach out to neighbors, friends and family.

In This Issue ...

Articles

Exploring <i>Evangelical Lutheran Worship</i>	2
LPM Program	2
419 Scams	3
New on the Web	6
Prayer Ventures	7
Bullying	8

Departments

Ripe for Picking	4-5
Q&A	6

Exploring *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

In many ways, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* isn't a whole lot different from previous hymnals and books of worship. A significant difference between *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* and its predecessors is in the way we think about it.

Previous generations have understood their hymnals to be comprehensive; that is, to contain everything that worshiping communities in the church need to worship faithfully for many years to come.

Although *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* may actually contain everything needed for worship in many communities across this church, it was conceived and designed to be *primary*, not comprehensive; to be *core*, not exhaustive. To that end, the process of renewing worship is not over with the publication of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

Sundays and Seasons (both online and in print) continues to offer supplemental liturgical texts and prayers. Additional collections of hymn and songs will be forthcoming. The availability of online resources will continue to expand.

Page numbering

The page numbering system in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is recognizable to those familiar with *Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW)*. The most noticeable difference is that the large section containing hymns is now called "Assembly Song." Each piece of music within this section is numbered at the top of the page, just like *LBW*. The first 150 pieces in this section, however, are the Psalms.

Hymn spotlight

Evangelical Lutheran Worship has many new hymn texts and tunes along with many familiar ones. In a very few cases, a familiar melody was altered. Hopefully, you'll find the alteration satisfactory.

One of these that you may encounter in the upcoming Easter season is #368, "With High Delight Let Us Unite." The tune, "Mit freuden Zart," comes to us from our Moravian brothers and sisters. There are variants of this tune throughout history, but there seems to be a growing ecumenical consensus among churches in the U.S. for the rhythm that appears in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. As our church continues to grow in ecumenical relationships and we find ourselves worshipping together more frequently, it is helpful to know one another's hymns in order to sing together confidently.

Assisting Ministers

Assisting ministers, often lay people who give their time to assist the entire assembly, usually encourage the assembly to do something. "Go in peace. Serve the Lord!" is the most obvious example. An assisting minister may also assist the presiding minister. All assisting ministers help others to do their jobs well.

Gathering

The possibilities for gathering are numerous and very flexible. For example, the greeting ("The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.") may be included at any natural place within the gathering—it may follow a hymn prior to a kyrie or canticle, or it may follow all singing and immediately precede the prayer of the day.

The prayer of the day helps frame the liturgical significance of the particular day. This prayer marks a turning point in the service. The prayer of the day is usually prayed by the presiding minister, either spoken or sung.

Creeds

Evangelical Lutheran Worship uses common liturgical texts developed by the English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC). The ELCA (and predecessor church bodies) participated in the processes that led to the



Staff Photo

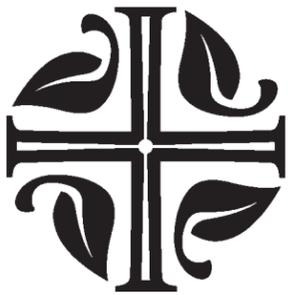
development of these texts.

The limited changes in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds reflect continuing developments in the English language and new approaches in translating the original text. For more complete information about the changes to the texts of the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, see "Frequently Asked Questions" on the text files disc in the *ELW Introductory Kit* mailed to every congregation last September. The content of that disc is also available at www.renewingworship.org/ELW/intro/kit.html

Table Blessing

After all have communed, the presiding minister may offer a table blessing ("The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" ...). Some consider this to be unnecessary, having received the blessing of the sacrament before, or the blessing on the entire assembly to follow shortly. Others consider it a meaningful, uniquely Lutheran, tradition. This text is not included in the pew edition of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. It does, however, appear in the leader's edition as an option.

Interest is High for Worship Jubilee 2007



August 3-6, 2007
Navy Pier
Chicago

- lay leaders
- those responsible for media art and sound in worship
- those responsible for the training of readers, acolytes, ushers, and other ministers of hospitality
- altar guild members and worship environment teams
- church educators
- church musicians, volunteers, and professionals
- pastors and professional lay leaders

The excitement is high and the registrations are coming in. Don't be left out. Make plans now to be a part of your church's celebration of the new book of worship and the future of renewing worship.

For more information about the Worship Jubilee 2007, see www.elca.org/worship/jubilee

Plans for Worship Jubilee 2007 are moving ahead. Brochures were mailed to all congregations in early February. Complete information is at www.elca.org/worship/jubilee including online registration.

The Jubilee is for

- everyone committed to the worship life of the church
- worship committee members

Leadership Program for Musicians Coming

Does your synod have a Leadership Program for Musicians (LPM)? If not, this may be a means to provide valuable training for the musicians in your synod, especially those serving small congregations. This can be particularly helpful for anyone involved in introducing *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* in the congregation.

The LPM offers training in conjunction with several conferences throughout this next year, including the Worship Jubilee 2007. If you want to attend the Jubilee and also become an LPM coordinator, register to attend the Jubilee and register with LPM for training.

Coordinator training includes:

- an overview of the mission and goals of the LPM
- an introduction to seven courses, extensively revised to meet ecumenical needs
- an online version of this curriculum
- an opportunity to strengthen teaching skills
- learning the "nuts and bolts" of managing an LPM program
- the means to establish a network of LPM coordinators to provide on-going support

For information and registration visit the LPM Web site at www.lpm-online.org



Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/seeds

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

Editorial and Circulation Offices

Seeds for the Parish
Communication Services
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631 800/638-3522
E-mail: Janice.Rizzo@elca.org
LutherLink: Jan.Rizzo@ecunet.org

Editorial Staff

Jan Rizzo – Editor
Kristi Bangert – Managing Editor

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

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

Copyright © 2007 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

Permission is granted for ELCA congregations to reproduce excerpts from *Seeds for the Parish* provided that copies are for local use only and that each copy carries the following notice: "Reprinted from *Seeds for the Parish*."

POSTMASTER,

send address changes to:
Seeds for the Parish
Richard Millett
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631
E-mail: Richard.Millett@elca.org

419 Scams Targeting the Church

Almost everyone who uses the Internet and has an e-mail account is familiar with “419 fraud.” Named after a section of the Criminal Code of Nigeria, “419 fraud” or “advanced fee fraud” is a confidence scheme used to fleece people out of their money.

The scam, which has been going on since the 1980s, runs like this: a person says he or she wants to transfer large sums of money out of a country such as Nigeria, but, the person cannot do it. The person needs assistance from an unsuspecting mark with a legitimate bank account. In return for access to that account the con people promise as much as 40 percent on millions of dollars. Once the swindlers have the account number, they loot the account, and the victim loses all the money in the account. Like any other confidence game, the scam plays on people’s greed and temptation to get something for nothing.

These “419” scams come in hundreds of variations. There are the close-relative-scam-letters, the widow-of-a-deceased-dictator scam, the orphan scam, the Russian-bride scam, the classified-advertising scam, the cashier’s-check scam, etc. The U.S. Secret Service estimates that by using one or the other variants, con artists manage to fleece victims out of hundreds of millions of dollars annually.

As more people have become able to sniff out these increasingly publicized scams, the fraudsters are getting a bit more inventive and cunning. They seem to be trending away from playing on greed, to tugging at the heartstrings of kindhearted folks eager to help someone in need.

In early December, 2006, ELCA pastors from at least three synods reported that they received e-mail that originated from a handheld Blackberry device. The messages, which included the pastor’s name, church name, and address, and purportedly were sent by their bishops, made reference to the bishops’ spouses and recent synod functions.

If an unwary pastor responded to the e-mail, the con artist, claiming to be a bishop, told a tale of woe regarding his good friend who is “expanding our ministry” in Uganda. Perhaps in the same e-mail, or after a few more exchanges, the con artist goes for the kill and begs the pastor to “please wire” a certain amount of dollars to an account in Uganda.

Synod communicators and bishops were quick to respond to the fraudulent e-mails by sending out tips on how to handle the situation. Communicator Linda Janssen Gjere advised pastors in the Nebraska Synod: “Please do not



respond to that fraudulent e-mail. If you already have responded, please BLOCK the address that is in the ‘from’ line of the message ... Please be on your guard. Anytime an e-mail from Bishop Dave deFreeze sounds odd or unexpected, look at the spellings, sentence structure and details. If you suspect an e-mail is fraudulent, please call the synod office ...”

Pastors aren’t the only people being hit by 419 scammers. Congregation members are also targeted. Whether e-mails are “harvested” from congregational Web sites or online directories listing congregational leaders, more and more members are being targeted. These folks are considered easy marks because they have a track record of contributing to worthy causes, so the scam artistes are increasing their efforts using fake charities and “ministries in need.”

The *Seeds for the Parish* editor has received quite a few 419s over time. A recent e-mail went like this: “I selected you from your Church, after visiting the website site on search and I really prayed over and I got your email ID. I want you to use the \$19.5 Million US Dollars for the development of Evangelism and also for the less privileged around you ...” The message rambles on a bit and calls on the name of “God Almighty to bless you and your family in Jesus Mighty Name, Amen.” How can a good steward pass up an opportunity to increase their ministry, help the needy, and develop evangelism?

To help get the reader’s attention the scammer

may claim to be on his deathbed. Through the pain of sickness he musters the strength to “forwarded my pictures to your ministry’s attention...” The attached graphics are heartbreaking. They show a dying man suffering from esophageal cancer. Unfortunately, the pictures are real and the innocent man in them died in May 2005. This monstrous kind of deceit is practiced by hundreds of Internet con artists on a daily basis.

What should you do when you receive a fraudulent e-mail?

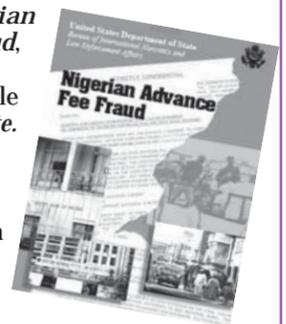
NEVER respond to a 419 solicitation. Even if you do not fall for the con, your e-mail address is “marked” as working, and will then be sold to other scammers.

If you receive an e-mail, write the Internet provider at “abuse” (e.g., abuse@yahoo.com) and get the account shut down. Don’t forget to include the e-mail headers because they are necessary for tracking the message’s point of origin.

To file a complaint or to get free information, visit the Federal Trade Commission’s Web site at www.ftc.gov or call toll free, 1-877-FTC-HELP. The FTC enters Internet and other fraud-related complaints into a secure, online database available to law enforcement agencies.

The United States Department of the Treasury maintains an account for the public to send 419 related documents: “You may also e-mail the 419er documents, especially any banking data they may have given you, to 419.fcd@ussf.treas.gov”

According to *Nigerian Advanced Fee Fraud*, a comprehensive publication, available online at: www.state.gov/www/regions/africa/naffpub.pdf the best defense against the Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud is public awareness.

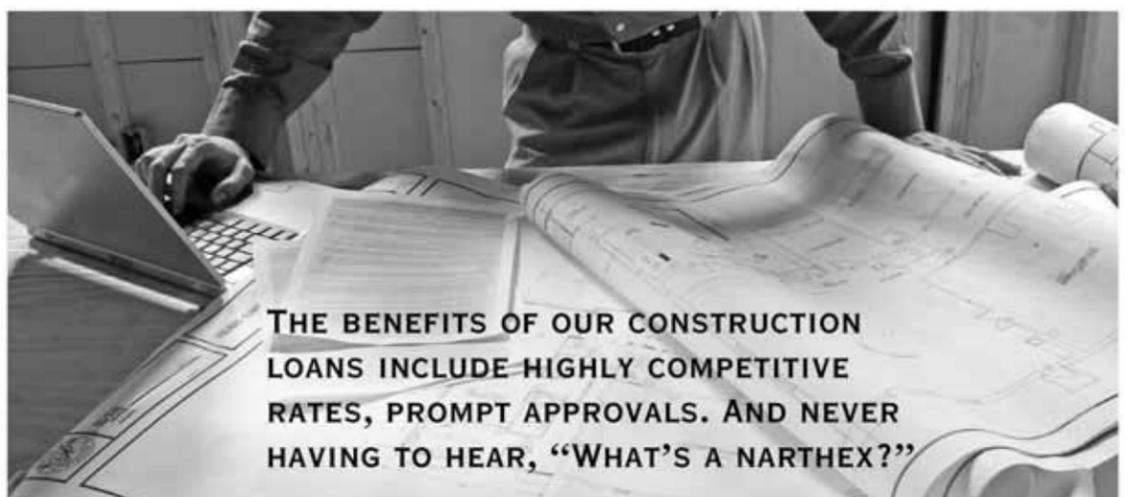


The ELCA Emblem

It would be hard to find a person who has not seen the *Ichthus*—the fish graphic that has been used by Christians since the first century, A.D. The Ichthus represents an anagram of the five Greek letters that begin the words meaning “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior” (*Iesous Christos, Theou Uios, Soter*). During times of persecution this mark was used as a means to identify or acknowledge a fellow believer in Christ. In the 21st century you can still see it, often on the back of automobiles. This identifies the driver as a Christian.

The official emblem of the ELCA was adopted in 1998

The ELCA also has a mark that provides a visually simple, yet dramatic, expression of the faith and purpose of this church—the ELCA emblem. The power of emblems to unite people has been recognized for centuries, even before the early church put the Ichthus into use. That is why it is important for all parts of this church—congregations, institutions, synods, and units of the churchwide organization—to embrace and display one unifying emblem. To find out more about the emblem and how to use it, visit www.elca.org/emblem/



THE BENEFITS OF OUR CONSTRUCTION LOANS INCLUDE HIGHLY COMPETITIVE RATES, PROMPT APPROVALS. AND NEVER HAVING TO HEAR, “WHAT’S A NARTHEX?”

When it comes to a construction loan, your congregation needs an institution with more than financial expertise. You need one with vision – a partner who understands how important a building project is to your congregation. Which is why you need the Mission Investment Fund. As a ministry of the ELCA, we’ve been helping congregations just like yours for nearly a century with the financial help needed to grow and flourish. In fact, we have more than 700 loans totaling over \$380 million at work right now helping ELCA ministries meet the many challenges they face. And if we do it for them, we can do it for you. To find out how we can help, call 877.886.3522 or visit us at www.missioninvestmentfund.org.



877.886.3522

www.missioninvestmentfund.org

Ripe for Picking

Follow Road to Emmaus



“Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that

had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him...”

—Luke 24:13-49

The story of the Road to Emmaus is a multidimensional journey that encompasses all aspects of well-being. During the seven weeks of Easter, invite Jesus to walk with you and live as a new creation in Christ. Make time to walk while you assess your own physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual wellness. Then, select the area that needs most improvement and set a goal to achieve with your wellness journey. Materials are available at www.elcabop.org

Celebrate Earth Day



Don't forget that Earth Day is April 22nd! This year's theme will focus on food, farming, and protecting God's creation. Resources to help you and your congregation celebrate Earth Day are available on the ELCA Web site at www.elca.org/advocacy

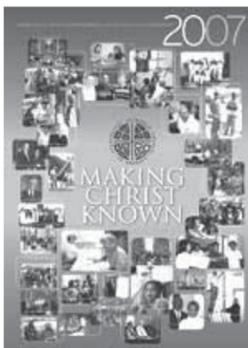
LWF Makes a Difference

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year. With 140 member churches in 78 countries and representing 66 million Lutherans, we do make a difference! The LWF began as a response to the critical need of Lutheran refugees in Europe following World War II. Today that same commitment is lived out in many places around the world. Share the excitement of global work through your congregation's membership in the LWF. Weekly prayers and other resources for use in your congregation's newsletter, Web page or bulletin can be found throughout the year on the LWF North America Web site—www.elca.org/lwf

Making Christ Known

Making Christ Known 2007 features a number of stories that highlight the unique identity of the ELCA, its special ministry, and how the church is funded. Individual articles and photos are available at www.elca.org/stewardship/makingchristknown.html

Making Christ Known 2007 (ISBN 978-6-0002-1860-7) is available from Augsburg Fortress for shipping charges only. Call 800/328-4648.



Post-Easter Retreat for Church Professionals

Dr. Terry Fretheim, well-known and respected Lutheran author and lecturer, will lead a post-Easter Retreat for church professionals, April 9-12, 2007, at Spirit in the



Desert Retreat Center, Carefree, Arizona. Fretheim is professor of Old Testament at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. His theme for the retreat is “Images of God in Creation.”

Spirit in the Desert is a retreat center located in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona. The retreat will provide church professionals time to recover from Lent and Easter activities. Afternoons will be free for sleeping, golf, hiking, reading and labyrinth walking.

Dr. Fretheim says he has chosen creation as a focus because, “until quite recently, the theme of creation has had adverse effects in many areas of life and thought, including our environmental consideration, the relationship between religion and science, and the way in which we think about God and the life of faith.” The retreat, he adds, “will examine a variety of Old Testament texts that focus on the theme of creation and discuss the implications for theology and practice.”

A fee of \$325 covers all sessions with Dr. Fretheim, meals, breaks, materials, and double occupancy lodging.

For information, or to register, visit www.spiritinthedesert.org or call 480/488-5218.

Building for the Future Men's Summit

Men will gather at Navy Pier in Chicago August 1-3 (just prior to the ELCA Church-wide Assembly) to learn more about what it means to enhance the relationship to Jesus Christ, and build families, men's ministries, and congregations.

Featured in the 2 ½-day event will be David Anderson, Paul Hill, and Roland Martinson, authors of *Coming of Age, Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Younger Men*. Martinson and David Murrow, author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*, will address the

issue of the declining participation of men in congregations, and how healthy congregations engage men.

Music and worship for the weekend will be provided by Dakota Road. Audiences of all ages will appreciate the great variety Dakota Road brings to an event. Special music also will be provided by Peter Mayer. Peter is lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett and was the music director for the 2006 ELCA Youth Gathering.

For more information, and to register, visit www.elca.org/lmm

Are You Going to be Left Behind?

Afraid of being “left behind”? What does the Bible really say about “The End”?

Explore this issue in the latest in a series of online courses offered for laity by the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia (LTSP) in April. Study where you live!

Left Behind? – A Lutheran Look at Revelation is the title of the course taught by Steve Keiser, a staff member at Holy Communion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia. Keiser holds an Master of divinity degree from LTSP and is currently working on a master of sacred theology degree.

“The rapture, the anti-Christ, 666, the Beast, Babylon, the Great Tribulation, the Millennium...these ideas about the end of the world have captured the imagination of many Christians in America,” Keiser says. “Our movies, bookstores, and billboards are full of visions about the end of history that claim to be biblically supported. But are they really? What does the Bible say about our future and the end toward which history is moving?”

In six sessions, Keiser will help students study the biblical passages that have given birth to these visions. “We will compare these passages with the interpretation of them offered by popular culture and see how the messages of each differ. We'll also explore the political and social consequences of a distorted

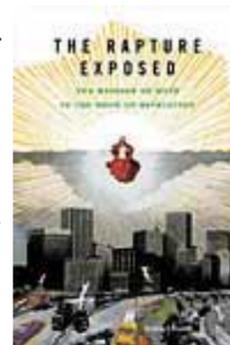
vision of Christian eschatology (the study of ‘last things’).”

Keiser says the texts for the class will be Bible, passages from the *Left Behind* series by Tim LaHaye, and Barbara Rossing's *The Rapture Exposed*.

Topics covered in the six sessions include:

- the coming of the Son of Man in the book of Daniel
- Jesus' teachings about the Son of Man
- the purpose and the meaning of the Book of Revelation
- other biblical passages related to eschatology
- *Left Behind* and *The Rapture Exposed*: alternative approaches
- rapture and politics: how unbiblical eschatology has affected American politics

The course will be online during April–May 2007. Registration will be held during February–March 2007. Tuition for the eight-week course is \$125. For information contact Mark A. Staples LTSP director of faith and life programs at www.Ltsp.edu or Mstaples@Ltsp.edu



Ecumenical Peace Conference Coming in May

Advocates from churches around the country will participate in a conference organized by Churches for Middle East Peace (CMEP) May 6-8, 2007, in Washington, DC. the conference will focus on U.S. policy and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict with speakers, workshops, advocacy preparation, and a day of lobbying elected officials. The program will begin on May 6, and conclude with Hill appointments May 8 and will include a special session for ELCA participants.

For updates and information visit www.cnep.org or www.elca.org/advocacy

Ripe for Picking

Help with Personal and Professional Relationships

Where do individuals serving together in ministry receive their staff training, support, and encouragement? Whether you are new to staff ministry or are looking for renewed direction for your team, the Multiple Staff Workshop is designed to help you intentionally plan your personal and professional working relationship. The workshop is designed for clergy, laity, parish, or synod staff members, and those serving an outdoor ministry or social service organization team.

As one workshop participant said, "Healthy team ministry doesn't just happen. It needs regular and significant investment of time and energy. The Multiple Staff Workshop has proven to be such a significant help that our congregation's pastoral and program staff attends whenever we experience a change or addition of personnel. Each time we have attended we have been able to enhance the satisfaction that each individual finds in doing ministry together, to strengthen team morale and to become more efficient in the performance of ministry tasks. The investment we've made in attending the Multiple Staff Workshop has paid huge dividends for us and I highly commend the Multiple Staff Workshop to all who are called to team ministry."

The three-day, 48-hour workshop offers individuals the opportunity to work together in teams, using their unique gifts to do efficient, effective, and personally satisfying ministry. Leadership is provided by Wally Arnold, recently retired from the ELCA Southern Ohio Synod staff, Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt, assistant to the bishop, ELCA Southern Ohio Synod; and Herm Kuhlmann, Covenant Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, Inc. coordinator. These individuals have collectively been serving in team ministry for more than 50 years. Attendees will also share insights and information with others in comparable ministry settings and in similar ministry roles. Participants will discover their own leadership style, and that of others on their staff and explore the implications for the team. Topics such as communication, team organization, and functions are some of the areas addressed in the workshop.

This workshop is the only known resource of its kind currently being offered in the ELCA. The leadership team regularly schedules a workshop in Region 6 at the Weber Center in Adrian, Mich., the week after Labor Day (this year September 10-12), but is also available to bring the workshop to you at any time or place. This team has led workshops in synods and regions from New York to Montana and from Texas to Canada. For information contact:

Herm Kuhlmann
312 Eastwood Ave.
Westerville, OH 43081-1729
614/891-7233; hkuhlmann@columbus.rr.com

Women of the ELCA — Act Boldly!

Have you been transformed by your faith in Jesus Christ in such a way that you feel called to speak and act boldly?

Women claimed and called by God, live boldly for themselves and their children. So if you want to act boldly, this is the event for you. (See schedule below.) Come and discover how the Holy Spirit already moves boldly through your life and through your community.

For this event, a workbook has been developed to help you discover your potential for bold moves. In group sessions and one-on-one, discussions will center on:

- witness, preaching, modeling, and mentoring
- justice, social ministry, and compassion
- sacrifice, giving, and kindness

Women will reflect on and talk about women who live boldly in the Bible, in history, and in our communities. Part of the day will also be devoted to personal purpose statements that will be incorporated into the final commissioning service.

Sign up for the event nearest you.



The events will be held:

- April 27-28 – Austin, Texas
- May 18-19 – Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- May 18-19 – Renton, Washington
- September 28-29 – Omaha, Nebraska
- September 28-29 – Washington, D.C.

To register, visit www.womenoftheelca.org

Subscribe to E-notes

Grace Matters, the ELCA's radio ministry, has a brand new way to keep you up-to-date! It's the *Grace Matters* E-note delivered weekly to your electronic inbox. The E-note is short and sweet with a preview of the next week's guest and important links. The E-note also shares what people are saying about *Grace Matters*:

"We enjoy Grace Matters as we drive to church on Sunday morning. We like the guests and the thought-provoking messages. Thank you!"

"I call your program my 'iPod friend.' I plan on Grace Matters once a week as I take my morning walks. As far as I am concerned, Grace Matters is the most meaningful reli-

gious radio on today's airwaves. The format is fast, refreshing, deals with current situations and certainly insists that grace matters. Keep up what you are doing. Your work is excellent!"

"Thank you for your program on immigration. I appreciated your message following the interview about how Christ and the early church welcomed those 'outside' the culture and border. Thank you for tackling what should not be such a hot topic.

See for yourself! Subscribe to E-note at gracematters@elca.org or on the Web at www.gracematters.org

Fair Trade for Easter



The purchase of coffee, chocolate, baskets, and other handcrafts from the Fair Trade mini-catalog (ISBN 6-0001-9704-7) benefits African farmers and artisans and Lutheran World Relief.

To obtain the catalog from Augsburg Fortress (free with free shipping; 1 pkg. = 25 catalogs), visit www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger or call 800/328-4648.

Grace Institute

Grace Institute's Spiritual Formation Program IV will be given August 12-14, 2007, at Sinsinawa Mound Center near Dubuque, Iowa. This is an ecumenical, in-depth spiritual formation program for Lutherans. Professional church leaders and lay ministers meet together four times a year for two years. Each session includes worship, presentations, silent reflection, and discussion. Small groups that stay together for the whole program will also be formed. This program fosters personal spiritual growth and leadership.

The eight session themes are:

- grace-centered spirituality
- attending to the Word
- symbols and sacraments
- worship
- contemplative prayer
- discernment, spirituality, and service in the world
- prayer
- evangelism

Presenters include Marty Haugen, Susan Briehl, Fr. Simeon (Orthodox monk), Ginger Anderson-Larson, Mary Preus, Tom Witt, Laura Gentry, and Brad Hanson.

For information visit <http://ministry.luther.edu/grace> or contact Lori Ostlie at ostlielo@luther.edu or 563/387-1271.

Plan Your Health Event

The Woman of the ELCA health events held last fall were a great success, and now you can easily create a similar event for your congregation or synodical organization. All the materials you need are online. Visit www.womenoftheelca.org/getinvolved/health.html



Journeys for Youth ...

Summer is just around the corner. Are you looking for something to do with that great group of kids who went to San Antonio? Do you need to put some life into your summer youth programs? Check out *Journeys*.

Find servant events, high adventure experiences, community building experiences and more! *Journeys for Youth and Young Adults* is available online at www.elca.org/camps/journeys.html

What's New on the World Wide Web?

Do you Yahoo ... for Lutheran Disaster Response?

How many times a week do you use an Internet search engine such as Yahoo!, Google, or Ask.com? For many people, the answer is probably "A whole bunch." What if Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) earned a penny every time you performed such a search? Now it's possible.

GoodSearch.com is a new search engine that donates half of its revenue (about one penny per search) to the charity of the searcher's choice. You use it just as you would any search engine, and GoodSearch is powered by Yahoo!, so you are guaranteed good search results.

To start using GoodSearch, go to www.goodsearch.com. You will see two boxes—the search box, and a box that says "Who do you GoodSearch for?" In this box simply enter in "LDR" and start searching. You can even download a GoodSearch toolbar (www.goodsearch.com/toolbar) for your Internet browser so that you have a search function always at your fingertips.

A penny for every search may not seem like much...but imagine if 1,000 people searched twice each day using GoodSearch. Over the course of a year, LDR would make more

than \$7000. GoodSearch makes it easy to support your favorite non-profit organization ... and all you have to do is something that you already do anyway.

Start searching for Lutheran Disaster Response today!

For more information visit Lutheran Disaster Response at www.ldr.org or call 773/380-2748.



Where Your Offering Goes is an illustrated document that describes how the flow of regular offerings originates with and comes back to the congregation. This resource can be included in newsletters or used as a poster on a congregational bulletin board. Available in color or black and white, *Where Your Offering Goes* succinctly outlines how ELCA congregations support Lutheran missions and ministry.

The Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit (EOCM) of the churchwide organization has a new look for its Web site at www.elca.org/eocm/. Still rich in resources for evangelism, outreach, and materials in Spanish, the revamped site is easier to navigate and has a new clean look.

Two significant additions to the EOCM site are PDF versions of two exclusively online resources:

Awakening to God's Call to Earthkeeping is a 50-page document that includes a leader guide and materials for use by faith-based groups. The four-session group study was designed to showcase issues regarding the environment.



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 the study of human sexuality?

A Augsburg Fortress' *Ignite* curriculum series includes a six-session study, *Biblical Texts on Sex*. It might be an effective resource for young adults. The Bible study series is designed to take both leader and learner on a journey of faith in which they encounter the living God of the universe through serious and in-depth study of the Bible. Here God's word interacts with the life of the participant in a way that sparks discussion and ignites more questions.

We also recommend a few video series for youth study. *Sex, Drugs, and Fast Cars - Your Body is a Temple of the Holy Spirit* (Faith Incubators; www.faithink.com) is a two-session study which is engaging and grabs the attention of youth, getting good discussion started. *Love is Patient: Saving Sex for Marriage* (Paraclete, www.paracletepress.com 800/451-5006) teaches that sexual intimacy is a gift from God to be enjoyed within marriage. Choosing to save sex for marriage is difficult for young people today. They need to know the benefits of saving sex for marriage: respect for oneself, one's sexuality, and one's relationships.

—Julie Aageson, director
Eastern North Dakota Resource Center
Fargo, N.D.

A *Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor: Lutherans Talk about Human Sexuality* (\$5 at www.augsburgfortress.org or online at www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/study/) is the ELCA study currently in congregations for discussion. The eight-part study has excellent foundational resources in two new essays: *For Freedom Christ Has Set Us Free: A Readers' Guide to Galatians* by David Tiede, and an introduction to Martin Luther's Essay *The Freedom of a Christian* by Timothy J. Wengert. Each of the eight sessions includes devotional material, vignettes, and discussion guidelines, and could easily be used with teens as well as adults.

—Catherine Fink, director
Heilig Resource Center
Salisbury, NC

Good Sex: A Whole Person Approach to Teenage Sexuality and God is a video curriculum for youth published a few years ago by Youth Specialties (www.zondervan.org). It is a process-centered video and print resource that invites teenagers to understand sexuality as a gift from God. It speaks to the whole system of sexual formation and how our sexuality can be a natural and healthy part of who we are. Through video, Bible study, storytelling, worship, journaling, and more, the curriculum asks students to consider and understand their sexuality as a critical part of how God shows love for them. Topics include: Plumbing and Wiring, Sexual Identity, Intimacy, Desire, Sex, Responsibility, and Do-overs.

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

A Our most checked-out video curriculum on sexuality for youth is *Sex, Love, & Relationships*, hosted by Pam Stenzel (www.visionvideo.com 800/523-0226). It tells teenagers the truth about sexual activity, experimentation, and permissiveness. The complete curriculum includes four sessions, a comprehensive leader's guide, and reproducible student handouts. Next most popular is *Sex as God's Gift*, also from Vision Video. There are also some older videos from the *EdgeTV* (NavPress) collection—no longer being published but still available in resource centers, or in your congregation's library—Episode 2: *Sexual Choices*; Episode 14: *Making Babies*; Episode 34: *Sexuality-Making Sense of Sex*; and Episode 41: *Relationships-Sex, Friendship and Love*. Other older options also come from the *Unfiltered* series, an episode titled, *Save Sex 'til Marriage*, and from the series *On the Air*, an episode titled *The Gospel of Sex* both published by TotalTV (now BluefishTV).

—Karen Hartha, director
Lutheran Resource Center, Clear Lake, IA
serving Iowa and Illinois Synods

A Any curriculum that deals with the Ten Commandments can include a discussion of sex and relationships. The commandments "Do not commit adultery" and "Do not covet your neighbor's

wife..." lend themselves to conversation about relationships in general and more specifically about sexual relationships.

—Kay Richter, pastor
Calvary Lutheran
Two Rivers, WI

A *Song of Solomon: A Youth Study on Love, Sex, Marriage and Romance* (Tommy Nelson) is a video series geared for middle-school youth. It is designed to help pre-teens navigate the shark-infested waters of the teen years ahead by studying love, sex, marriage, and romance. Also, *Sex as God's Gift* with Mary Ronan (see above) is a series to help 14- and 15-year-olds think in advance about decisions related to sex. In six sessions, youth are challenged to understand sex as a valuable gift, something special and meaningful and not as recreational sport. Special emphasis is given to avoidance of sexual activity before marriage. A leader's guide and reproducible student sheets accompany the study.

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

A *Growing Up in God's Image: Curriculum on Human Sexuality* (PC USA, www.pcusa.org) is a broad-based curriculum with resources for preschoolers through older youth. *In God's Image: Young Children and Sexuality* is for preschool and first grade children and their parents. *God's Plan for Growing Up* targets kids in grades 2 through 5 and *God's Gift of Sexuality* is for younger and older youth. In addition, a study guide, *Sexual Abstinence and the Abundant Life: Study Guide for Youth*, may be used to supplement *God's Gift of Sexuality* or on its own. Last, but not least, *Learning about Sex* is a series of books from Concordia Publishing House (www.cph.org) for children, youth and parents.

—Bonnie Weber, director
North West Synod of Wisconsin
Resource Center
Eau Claire, WI

Legacy Seminars

Is your congregation looking for ways to increase its endowment? Would you like your members to be good stewards of their gifts now and at the end of their lives? The ELCA Foundation can help enhance your congregation's stewardship efforts.

Legacy seminars, provided by ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planners, are designed to inspire, educate, and motivate your members to be life-long stewards of their resources. These free-of-charge seminars provide participants with information regarding estate planning and gift planning options. They are especially helpful to congregations interested in growing their endowments.

For more information about Legacy seminars, call the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970, visit www.elca.org/fo or invite your regional gift planner to visit your congregation today!



Study NOT Statement

The January-February issue of *Seeds for the Parish* incorrectly used a headline "Lutheran Statement on Sexuality..." to describe the latest study on human sexuality. The first draft of a social statement on human sexuality will be available in February 2008 and the proposed social statement will be distributed in March 2009. Responses to the current study from ELCA members, congregations, and institutions by mid-October 2007 will inform the writing of the social statement.

Global Poverty Study Guide Released

A study guide on global poverty and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), produced jointly between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church, is now available for download and for purchase through Augsburg Fortress.

Titled "God's Mission in the World," the guide is intended as a resource for congregations and other groups looking to "broaden their understanding of global poverty and become part of the worldwide movement achieving the MDGs," according to the introduction of the guide.

The guide features six weekly sessions examining Christian understandings of social justice, global poverty, and the MDGs. The MDGs are eight goals adopted in 2000 by all member states of the United Nations, including the United States. The goals are to, by 2015, cut extreme poverty and hunger in half, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality and empower women, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and create a global partnership for development.

God's Mission in the World invites participants to moral deliberation on the realities of global poverty, and offers practical ways that we might together, as an ecumenical body of Christ, respond to our baptismal call to love our neighbor by raising our voices on behalf of those living in deadly poverty," said the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Hanson and the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, presiding bishop and primate, the Episcopal Church, each contributed forwards to the guide.

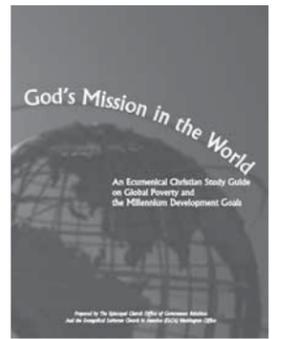
"This study guide is an easy-to-use, comprehensive journey through the causes and solutions to global poverty," said Dennis

Frado, director, Lutheran Office for World Community. "Congregation leaders can use this tool to motivate their members to pressure their elected officials to fulfill their promises toward achieving the MDGs."

The guide was released as part of the ONE Lutheran Campaign, which encourages Lutherans to engage in the political process to encourage the U.S. government to meet the commitments it made to end poverty and achieve the MDGs. ONE Lutheran leaders have been established in 27 out of 65 synods, student groups on ELCA campuses have held ONE Lutheran events, and individual ELCA congregations have been declared "ONE Lutheran Congregations" by meeting certain goals, according to Annie Lysen, ONE Lutheran grassroots coordinator. In October, more than 9,200 Lutherans stood up in opposition to global poverty, which helped set the world record of 23 million people standing up for a cause. Lutherans accounted for 8 percent of Americans who stood up.

"The commitment by Lutherans to engage in advocacy to end poverty is growing," said Kimberly Stietz, ONE Lutheran campaign coordinator. "In 2007, we plan to actively engage Lutherans in advocacy to urge the U.S. Congress to increase poverty focused development assistance, support debt cancellation for the world's poorest nations and make international trade rules fair."

To download the guide, visit www.elca.org/one/. Copies can also be ordered through Augsburg Fortress - www.augsburgfortress.org



Global Mission Event Theme Set

New Heaven, New Earth—Revelation 21 provides the theme for this summer's Global Mission Event, scheduled for July 19-22 at Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Plenary speakers for this exciting annual event include:

- Brazilian theologian Vitor Westhelle, who teaches at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago
- Immaculée Ilibagiza, a survivor of the 1994 Rwandan genocide, who helps others learn to forgive and heal from the long-term effects of genocide and war
- ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson
- Representatives of the Lutheran World Federation, now celebrating its 60th anniversary

Like all summer Global Mission Events, the Ohio GME will feature international presenters, global music, and multigenerational programming for children and junior and senior high youth. GME participants can also enroll in multi-session tracks that focus on cross-cultural relationships, sustainable development, asset



Immaculee Ilibagiza

mapping, and global hunger issues—all key areas for growth for ELCA members who participate in global relationships and service.

Come deepen your understanding of the meaning of global mission today, and mingle with a rich stew of international guests, ELCA missionaries and members, musicians, and artists!

To register or for program information, visit www.elca.org/gme

Sample Seminary and a Global Mission Event

Attention high school youth! Are you ready for a life-changing summer? Consider participating in Trinity Lutheran Seminary's Summer sampler program in Columbus, Ohio. This action-packed three-week program is open to sophomores, juniors, and seniors from across the country.

Youth explore gifts for ministry through service projects, worship, and seminary classes. This summer the June group has a cross-cultural experience staffing an inner-city VBS, and the July group will attend the ELCA Global Mission Event in Columbus.

If you or someone you know are interested in applying to the Summer Seminary Sampler, please complete the application and reference forms by April 15, 2007, online at: www.trinitylutheranseminary.edu Click on Summer Sampler 2007 or contact Pastor Ruth Fortis at 614/235-4136 ext. 4619.

Helping Others Help Themselves

Not long ago, ELCA missionary Dennis Murnyak visited a fish farming project in Igurusi, Tanzania. Three years after one village farmer completed a two-week training course and returned to Igurusi as a project motivator, the village has 142 fish farmers and 207 fish ponds. "Farmers are harvesting fish for home consumption and sale in an area where fish were previously difficult to obtain," says Dennis.

Fish farming has been at the center of Dennis' work. During many years of service in Tanzania, Dennis and his late wife Meredith, were committed to promoting this sustainable, effective means of feeding families and communities.

One of the most attractive aspects of fish farming is its accessibility. In Igurusi, project farmers helped a blind man and a handicapped

woman build their own ponds, which these two tend largely on their own. When help is needed, others in the community lend an extra hand.

"Just as Jesus healed the crippled and the blind, this community is making life better for this blind man and crippled woman," Dennis comments. "Jesus must be pleased with the love and concern being demonstrated in Igurusi."

With more than 4,000 fish farms flourishing in Tanzania, Dennis is turning his attention to starting projects in Malawi, Cameroon, and Mozambique. Supported by the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, he will conduct feasibility studies and plan project proposals for Heifer International, and train local staff to implement farms in these countries.

On March 22, 2007, you are invited to pray for Dennis and to thank God for the life



Dennis Murnyak

of Meredith, who died in March 2006. March 22 is also the United Nations World Day for Water, which recognizes the importance of the conservation and development of water resources. If you would like to learn more about the Murnyaks' work in fish farming, read *Daring to Hope*, edited and designed by Meredith, from Heifer International.

The Congregation's Responsibility to Address Bullying

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

—Matthew 5:44-45

The Gospel's summons calls the church to take responsibility in reducing physical and emotional violence. For many, the thought of bullying prompts images of "playground scuffles." This limited and naive view overlooks the pervasive nature of bullying which also occurs in the classroom, workplace, homes, assisted living situations and nursing homes, and in the congregation! It affects people of all ages but is most critical when it involves children, youth, or those most vulnerable.

What is bullying?

Bullying is commonly defined as intentional, repeated, hurtful acts, words, or other behavior on the part of one or more other individuals. Among children or youth, bullying may be physical (hitting, or damaging possessions), verbal (name-calling or taunting), emotional (threatening or stalking), or social (spreading rumors or the imposition of isolation). In adults, bullying manifests itself primarily through on-going harassment and psychological intimidation that happens when one is ridiculed, insulted, degraded, threatened, or slandered.

The effects of bullying can be very serious. According to ABC News (Nov. 06) 160,000 children miss school every day out of fear of attack or intimidation by other students. Research shows bullying is associated with depression, social anxiety, decreased self-esteem, anger, sadness, paranoia, stress-related health problems, and decline in school or work productivity. These symptoms are especially tragic when the bullying is perceived to be prompted by racial, ethnical, or sexual preference intolerance. A recent study reports that nearly 90% of middle-school students polled reported regularly hearing homophobic slurs by their peers and over half report similar comments made by school staff.

In extreme cases of bullying, victims feel compelled to take drastic measures, such as carrying weapons for protection, seeking violent revenge, or even considering suicide. For the young aggressor, bullying often leads to greater and prolonged violence throughout life.

Cyber-bullying

Internet bullying is the latest, most vicious trend in social cruelty. Web pages, e-mail, Instant Messaging, blogs, and online photo galleries provide a split-second vehicle for peers to taunt, ridicule, slander, or threaten victims and their families. Internet bullying often results in even more adverse physical and emotional consequences than "schoolyard bullying" because now, millions of online users are participants or witnesses to such aggression.



Stock Photo

Bullying and the bystander

What about the witness? In any given group the majority of the people are neither aggressor nor victim, but instead are bystanders to bullying. For some, the moral and ethical dilemma of being a spectator afraid to intervene or to report the activity can lead to feelings of guilt, shame, withdrawal, and even depression. Furthermore, bystanders often become yet another victim of the aggressor for not joining in as an accomplice.

Bullying in the congregation

The congregation is not immune to bullying. Sometimes individuals use bullying tactics against staff, congregation council members, or others in the congregation when a planning decision or vote displeases them. They threaten to leave the church or to stop contributions. Church bullies dominate meetings, engage in ridicule or abusive criticism, or manipulate conversation that silences and disempowers others. A pastor recently recounted a time when she observed a committee member always position himself at the meeting directly across from the same adult. Realizing her role as a bystander in a blatant act of intimidation, the pastor confronted the first individual and named his bullying behavior. His anger toward the pastor lasted several months but the bullying behavior ended immediately. Adults in the church have a responsibility to model for younger generations Christ-like conflict resolution and ways to hold each other accountable for their behavior.

What your congregation can do

- provide opportunities to address issues of bullying from a Christian perspective (such as children/youth ministries, midweek programming, adult forums, retreats, men's or women's groups or intergenerational events).
- Let the church be a place where young members know it is safe to talk about their role in the bullying cycle as the target, bystander, or even the aggressor.
- involve staff, volunteer leaders, and parents in developing a policy to be included in your Children and Youth Ministry Handbook or other congregation-wide publications.
- help parents and other church leaders spot warning signs of bullying and give them tips and tools for ending it.
- ask the congregational council to model an assertive, yet pastoral, response to bullying among adults at church. Create codes of conduct for church meetings.
- call upon the mutual ministry committee or staff support system to offer pastors and other staff the confidential opportunity to name any situations where they considered themselves to play a role in the bullying cycle.

*Diane Monroe
Director for Christian Education
Evangelical Outreach and
Congregational Mission*

RESOURCES

Search the Internet for hundreds of pages of helpful anti-bullying sites, including:

ELCA Schools and Early Childhood Ministries www.elca.org/schools/resources/teachers/bullying.html

Parenting for Peace and Justice www.ipj-ppj.org/

Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. www.pcusa.org

United Church of Christ www.ucc.org

Analyzing increasing inflation rates and the impact on asset management to address one main concern: *Your helping hand.*

Let's thrive.  **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans**

Retirement is the perfect opportunity to volunteer more of your time. How will you give back? As a Fortune 500® company with over \$65 billion in assets under management*, we can help you meet your retirement dream. Begin making your plans for a gratifying retirement at thrivent.com.

*As of June 30, 2006. Securities are offered through Thrivent Investment Management Inc., 625 Fourth Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1665, 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836). Member NASD. Member SIPC. Thrivent Investment Management, Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Securities and related products and services are not deposits, not FDIC insured, are not insured by any government agency, nor are they guaranteed by any bank and may lose value.

24082 N9-06 200602808 ©Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.