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Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

“Go and do likewise” with ELCA World Hunger

The lawyer gave Jesus the right answer: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...and love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). “But wanting to justify himself,” he went on to ask “And who is my neighbor?” (10:29). Jesus instructs the lawyer and us by telling a story about a man beaten and left half dead. Two good people proved to be bad neighbors and ignored the man. A third, though, allowed himself to recognize, react, and remember; like a good neighbor, the Samaritan cared. Jesus closes the story with the directive to “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37).

Giving to ELCA World Hunger Appeal, Stand With Africa, and ELCA Disaster Response are ways we embrace Christ’s exhortation and expectation to “Go and do likewise,” and make a life-saving difference for neighbors in need around the world and close to home.

Go and do with ...

High on a mountain in Peru, Elias stood in front of the irrigation system that he and his community of farm families helped build. He spoke with pride and thankfulness: “Thank you for working with us. Thank you for your partnership.”

The community’s school teacher spoke, too. “I brought the children here today,” he said, “to see what their parents and so many others are doing for their future.”

ELCA World Hunger is efficient and effective because it is relationship-driven and accompaniment-based. For example, gifts to ELCA World Hunger Appeal, directed through partner Lutheran World Relief, provided \$7,000 to fund the irrigation project. LWR staff in Peru provided expertise and helped coordinate the efforts of the local agencies that came together collaboratively to address needs in the area. Sixty families invested sweat equity and prepared 74 acres of shared land, built a 33,000 gallon reservoir, dug a trench down the mountain, and installed the hoses and sprayers.

For the past three years the quinoa crop failed because of drought. This season, with irrigation, the community hopes to harvest three full crops. There will be food on the table and food to sell and money to send their children to school. Thanks be to God for the privilege to “go and do” with neighbors.

Go, do, and make a difference

Patrick, a thin and solemn young man, sat on a carpet of dried grass in his home outside of Bukoba, Tanzania. After his parents died of AIDS, Patrick became the head of a household of one. Fifteen years old, Patrick was in his last year of primary school.

ELCA World Hunger Appeal helps fund the HUYAWA program that cares for Patrick and other children orphaned by AIDS. The program provides basic supplies and financial assistance for school and health care.

When asked what he hopes for after graduation from primary school Patrick replied, “I don’t expect to be selected for secondary school; I hope to become a proper farmer.” Later, when asked what he prays for, Patrick admitted “I pray to [get] good grades [on the final examinations] and be selected to join



Elias Fernandez Quispe the campesino elected to speak for the community. (Photo taken by Sue Edison-Swift)

secondary education.”

A year later we learned that Patrick did do well on his examinations and he was selected to continue his education. Patrick received a scholarship from HUYAWA to attend a two-year carpentry program. This vocational education is life insurance for Patrick. With a marketable trade, Patrick can break the cycle of hunger and poverty and claim a future with hope.

The Samaritan, our model good neighbor, attended to the beaten man’s immediate needs by caring for his wounds, and he also provided for the man’s continued care. ELCA World Hunger helps us be neighborly and address both immediate and long-term needs. As part of an integrated and comprehensive program, our gifts fund immediate relief, sustainable development, open-our-eyes education, and change-the-system advocacy. Thanks be to God for the “response ability” to go, do, and make a difference!

Go, do, and remember

Upon leaving Patrick’s home, the visitors promised “we’ll keep you in our hearts.” Patrick put his hand on his chest and smiled.

Each gift to ELCA World Hunger Appeal, Stand With Africa, and ELCA Disaster Response is a prayer-full promise to remember. Through our gifts we are there, long term, with our most vulnerable neighbors. Even if the story of our neighbors’ need is no longer in the news or never made the news, through our compassionate program we recognize, react, and remember. As good neighbors we “Go and do likewise.” Thanks be to God.

—Sue Edison-Swift is communication director for the ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal.

July 15 is “Go and do likewise” Sunday

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is the Gospel text for Sunday, July 15, 2007. This is a once-every-three-years opportunity for the congregation to focus on the “Go and do likewise” programs of ELCA World Hunger, Stand With Africa, and Disaster Response. Many new and favorite resources are available to help. The resources sampled below are free, including free-to-you shipping. They are available by calling 800/328-4648 or ordering online at www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger

• “Go and do” bookmark

Find the “Go and do likewise” World Hunger Appeal theme on the front of the bookmark and Luke’s Parable of the Good Samaritan on the back. (ISBN 978-6-0002-1175-2; 1 pkg. = 30)

• 2007-2008 World Hunger BASICS bulletin

This useful piece explains the “basics” of, and encourages giving to, ELCA World Hunger Appeal, Stand With Africa,

and Disaster Response. Each bulletin includes an offering envelope. Use as an insert for Sunday’s bulletin or as a stand alone piece. (ISBN 978-6-0002-1910-9; 1 pkg. = 50)

• “Go and do likewise” World Hunger Poster

Reflect on the woman walking straight and tall while carrying two buckets down the dusty road. How might she, how will we, be “go and do likewise” good neighbors? (ISBN 978-6-0002-1911-5; limit five per congregation)

• 2007 World Hunger Top 40 Resources

This handy catalog features new and favorite ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal resources. Many feature the “Go and do likewise” theme. (ISBN 978-6-0002-1921-5)

The resources above and many more are sampled in the **Summer 2007 World Hunger Resource Packet** (ISBN 978-6-0002-1923-9), which congregations will

receive later in May or early in June. Learn more about ELCA World Hunger resources at www.elca.org/hunger/resources and www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger

In This Issue ...

Articles

Worship Workshops	2
Assembly Elections.....	3
Little Lutheran Debuts.....	3
What’s New on the World Wide Web?	6
Global Evangelism	7
LDR in action.....	8
<hr/>	
Departments	
Ripe for Picking	4-5
Q&A	6

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Exploring *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

Scripture and Worship

“Worship in the Christian assembly is biblical.” That is how a brief but important section of our new book of worship begins (pp.1154-1159).

This is a valuable resource for anyone wanting to explore and further understand the church’s worship. Along with the “Pattern for Worship” which precedes each portion of the liturgical material in the front of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, these few pages could be the basis for conversation and study with congregational classes, council retreats, small groups, choir devotions and private reflection.

Daily Lectionary

Valuable for planning corporate worship on days other than Sunday, the Daily Lectionary (pp.1121-1153) is also a helpful resource for personal devotions or small group use.

Along with these readings, personal devotions and other daily prayers you could also include the Prayer of the Day for the particular Sunday from the Thursday before through the Wednesday following (pp. 18-63). These follow a three-year cycle, enabling the reader to become familiar with an ever larger body of scripture. We are currently in Year C of that cycle.

Responsive Prayer

A brief form of corporate prayer is presented on pages 328–331. It includes the Lord’s Prayer, Apostles’ Creed, a brief litany based on verses from the Psalms (often called “Suffrages”) and concludes with additional prayers and a brief blessing.

Responsive Prayer is useful for the opening

and closing of meetings and other times when a brief order is desired. The litany portion could be incorporated into other services, such as Morning or Evening Prayer. If Responsive Prayer is to be included with a hymn or song, Scripture, and, perhaps, a homily, planners would do well to consider the basic pattern for worship for the daily prayer services (pages 296-297).



Hymn Spotlight

Although the Holy Trinity is specifically remembered in worship on the Sunday following Pentecost (June 3 this year), the doctrine of the Trinity is celebrated every time we assemble.

The hymn, “Come, Join the Dance of Trinity” (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* #412) is a text new to many by Richard Leach, set to a familiar English folk tune. The text presents an image of the Trinity that is very different than most of us have ever considered:

*“Within the dance of Trinity,
before all worlds begun,
we sing the praises of the Three,
the Father, Spirit, Son.
Let voices rise and interweave,
by love and hope set free,
to shape in song this joy, this life:
the dance of Trinity.”*

Imagine an assembly of worshipers singing this vision led by instruments that make it actually sound like a dance. It’s a great vision of the church at work in the world. Give it a try this coming Holy Trinity Sunday, then continue to dance the Trinity’s mission in all that your community of faith does.

Worship Jubilee 2007 – It’s not too late!

At Worship Jubilee 2007, August 3-6 at Navy Pier in Chicago, there are exciting and valuable things planned for everyone —pastors, lay people, church organists, choir directors and members, educators and staffers. Don’t miss out on this opportunity to worship with many other Lutherans from across this church, and to try things that you may not experience with your home congregation. Hopefully, what happens in Chicago does not stay in Chicago! This Jubilee will fill you with ideas to take home that may have an impact well beyond your time in Chicago. Please plan to attend. For complete information, including registration, visit www.elca.org/worship/jubilee

Workshops for Church Musicians Available Locally

The national board of the Leadership Program for Musicians (LPM) now offers workshops on church music ministry in an intensive, one-day setting at your congregation or in your area. Workshops cover a lot of material in a short time and are led by board members who have taught LPM courses and are experienced with smaller congregations. The length and topics of the workshop vary depending upon the situation and local needs.

Contact LPM to custom design your workshop, review available topics and suggest ways to publicize your event. Anyone from any denomination interested in music and liturgy in the church—musicians, pastors, worship leaders and choir members—should find these workshops helpful. For complete information,

visit www.lpm-online.org or contact Anna Leppert-Largent, LPM Consultant–Coordinator, at 989/753-6576 or lpm-online@sbcglobal.net



Lutheran Church Musician Conference Coming this Summer

What do David L. Miller (former editor of *The Lutheran* magazine), his son, Aaron David Miller (fast-rising recitalist, composer and organ improviser), Don Saliers (renowned theologian/musician from Emory University), and his daughter, Emily Saliers (half of the popular Indigo Girls duo) and Luke 1:50 all have in common?

They all embody this summer’s Association of Lutheran Church Musicians (ALCM) conference theme, “From Generation to Generation” (a line from Mary’s immortal *Magnificat*).

The conference will explore the many ways that church music passes from one generation to the next. The *Magnificat* will be present in song, word and prayer, with David and Aaron



Aaron David Miller

Miller leading an opening hymn festival based on this theme. Don Saliers, with a video appearance by Emily, will demonstrate the similarities and differences of music-making across the generations.

Plan to spend an engaging and invigorating time in Houston this summer with hundreds of your fellow church musicians. Treat yourself to a golden opportunity to refresh your spirit, worship with other musicians and renew your role in music-making.

The conference will be held July 8-12, 2007, in Houston Texas.

For information and to register, visit www.alcm.org/publications/assets/houston_registration.pdf

Seeds for the Parish

www.elca.org/seeds

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

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Election for Presiding Bishop and Secretary at August Assembly



Presiding Bishop Hanson and Secretary Almen

This summer 1,071 voting members, plus congregational observers, resource members, advisory members, ecumenical guests and visitors will gather at Chicago's Navy Pier for the Tenth Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), *Living in God's Amazing Grace: Thanks be to God!*

The assembly will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the ELCA and its worldwide ministries. In addition to major agenda items including consideration of a social statement on education, an initiative on studying Scripture called *Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible* and synodical memorials, the assembly will elect a presiding bishop and a secretary.

The ELCA has had three presiding bishops: the Rev. Herbert F. Chilstrom (1987-1995), the Rev. H. George Anderson (1995-2001) and the Rev. Mark S. Hanson (2001-). Bishop Hanson has announced his openness to a call to serve an additional six-year term.

The Rev. Lowell G. Almen has served as the secretary of the ELCA since he was first elected

in 1987, having been re-elected in 1991, 1995 and 2001. Secretary Almen has announced his retirement as secretary as of October 31, 2007.

The presiding bishop and secretary of the ELCA are elected by the churchwide assembly using a process known as the ecclesiastical ballot. On the first ballot, a voting member can write down the name of any eligible person. The office of presiding bishop is open only to ordained ministers of the ELCA. Either an ordained minister or a lay person who is a member of a congregation of this church may serve as secretary. In order to be elected on the first ballot, a person must receive three-fourths of the legal votes cast. If no one is elected, the first ballot serves as a nominating ballot.

Prior to the second ballot, those people who do not wish to serve in the office for which they have been nominated may remove their names from consideration. All remaining names appear on the second ballot. In order to be elected on the second ballot, a person must receive three-fourths of the legal votes cast. On the second and subsequent ballots, only votes for the persons listed on the ballot are legal.

The third ballot consists of the names of the seven persons (plus ties) that receive the greatest number of votes on the second ballot. Before the third ballot, biographical information about the nominees is distributed. When the election is for the presiding bishop, the nominees participate in a one-hour forum during which they respond to questions from voting members. This format has been developed by the Executive Committee of the

Church Council. Nominees for presiding bishop also are invited to address the assembly for five minutes each. To be elected on the third ballot, a person must receive two-thirds of the legal votes cast.

The fourth ballot consists of the names of the three persons (plus ties) that receive the highest number of votes on the third ballot. Prior to the fourth ballot for presiding bishop, nominees are invited to participate in a question-and-answer period moderated by a person appointed by the Executive Committee of the Church Council. Prior to the fourth ballot for secretary, nominees are invited to address the assembly for five minutes. To be elected on the fourth ballot, a person must receive 60 percent of the legal votes cast.

The fifth ballot and any subsequent ballots consist of the names of the two persons (plus ties) that receive the greatest number of votes on the previous ballots. A simple majority is needed to elect.

The presiding bishop and secretary serve for six-year terms. Their duties, which suggest the gifts appropriate for the positions, can be found in Chapter 13 of the *Constitution, Bylaws, and Continuing Resolutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, available at www.elca.org/secretary/constitutions

The 2007 Churchwide Assembly will be an exciting occasion to celebrate the ELCA's 20 years of ministry as well as its leadership—past, present and future. For more information, visit www.elca.org/assembly/07

New Children's Magazine is Born



The Lutheran magazine has given birth. Hmm, how can this be? Well, remember: Birth is about more than babies—it's about ideas, dreams, new products and much more. So after several months of dreams, plans

and hard work, the editorial staff of *The Lutheran* has given birth to *The Little Lutheran*.

The Lutheran has long wanted to create products that expand the primary ELCA publication's mission and ministry. The staff

sees *The Little Lutheran* as a way to help parents and other caregivers nurture the faith in their children. Because *The Little Lutheran's* stories are faith-based, they nurture a child's spiritual awareness from a young age. Designed for children from birth to age six, *The Little Lutheran* is 24 sturdy pages of stories, colorful pictures, activities, prayers, songs and much more.

The magazine is published 10 times annually and looks and feels more like a book. It features nontoxic ink, no staples and no advertising. All this for \$24.95 a year (or \$48 for two years).

The Little Lutheran can be read to babies, who love to hear the sound of parents' or grandparents' voices. Older toddlers can read some of the stories themselves. This magazine provides material for quality time with all those special toddlers in your life. And if you don't

live near your grandchildren, a subscription from you will be like a monthly hug for them.

The magazine will help children learn about God's amazing love for them and the world in which they live. It will help them see Jesus as their savior and friend. And *The Little Lutheran* will help them learn about children across the globe.

The Little Lutheran is also an evangelism tool. Congregations may purchase copies to include in their worship bags for children. Or they may provide a subscription to each child at baptism. Congregational plans are available.

The magazine was test-marketed in March and April and will launch with the July/August issue. To learn more about this newest ELCA publication and to subscribe, visit www.thelittlelutheran.org call 800/328-4648 or e-mail subscriptions@augsborgfortress.org

The Unchurched

Knowing where a typical unbeliever is coming from is the first step to connecting with them. Researcher Thom Rainer interviewed thousands of unchurched Americans and published the results in: *The Unchurched Next Door*. Many of the following findings may surprise you:

- Most of the unchurched prefer to attend church on Sunday morning if they attend.
- Most are not antichurch or antireligion.
- Most Americans have never been invited to church—never.
- 82 percent of the unchurched are at least "somewhat likely" to attend church if they are invited.
- Two percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church.
- Most of the unchurched feel guilty about not attending church.
- Very few of the unchurched have had someone share with them how to become a Christian. And Christians have not been particularly influential in their lives.
- The attitudes of the unchurched are not correlated to where they live, their ethnic or racial background or their gender.
- Many of the unchurched are far more concerned about the spiritual well-being of their children than of themselves.

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877.886.3522
www.missioninvestmentfund.org

Ripe for Picking

ELCA Women Gathering

The Women of the ELCA is grounded in the words of its purpose statement, which commits them to “grow in faith and affirm our gifts.” One way to follow through on this commitment is by setting aside time for self-discovery.

In four locations on two weekends this summer and fall, Lutheran women are invited to come together for a day and a half.

“Act Boldly” opens on Friday evening with a celebration of community. Then on Saturday, using the new “Act Boldly” workbook, participants will discover what boldness means. Part of the day will also be spent working on personal purpose statements.

To register now visit www.womenoftheelca.org (The more women who register together, the lower each person’s registration cost!)

Take the ELCA Advantage

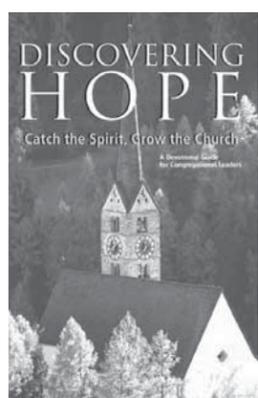
The Finney Company (an ELCA Advantage Program partner) announces a new Web site to help ELCA congregations and other affiliates with promotional ideas. The Finney Company specializes in promotional products, and can provide apparel, donor walls, gifts and recognition items, all designed to bear a custom imprint. Their new, ELCA branded Web site features over 70,000 promotional items and a searchable database to help you zero in on that perfect idea. Most items display the ELCA logo.

Stephen Finney, an ELCA member, is available to help with ideas, brainstorm on projects or help guide you through the Web site. The company has been serving Lutherans since 1960. They understand your needs and always offer their very best pricing to ELCA congregations, educational institutions and other affiliated organizations and ministries.

The new Web site address is www.elcastore.thefinneycompanystore.com

For more information, contact Stephen Finney at 877/4-FINNEY or steve@callfinneyfirst.com

New Devotional Here



Last year the Discovering Hope Affinity Team of the Small Town and Rural Alliance (STAR) joined forces with the Evangelizing Leaders and Spiritual Renewal/Revivals Network of the ELCA to create a new devotional guide for congregational leaders. *Catch the Spirit, Grow the Church* by Nancy Nyland, pastor of two small-town Nebraska congregations, is an easy-to-use devotional based on the best practices and principles of Discovering Hope.

This 28-page booklet will stimulate discussion about the key approaches to congregational renewal and health and can be used during congregation council and committee meetings, Bible studies and long range planning sessions. It is a sequel to *Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*, by David Poling-Goldenne and L. Shannon Jung.

Catch the Spirit, Grow the Church can be purchased from Augsburg Fortress for \$5.99.

Here is the complete list of Discovering Hope resources:

- Discovering Hope: Building Vitality in Rural Congregations*
- Discovering Hope*, Video (VHS)
- Building Hope*, Video (DVD & VHS)
- Catch the Spirit, Grow the Church* – a devotional guide for leaders

How One Congregation Supports the Military

Members of Zion Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation in Cloquet, Minn., appreciate and care for the military men and women who have some connection with their congregation.

Expecting another large deployment of military personnel from the area, they hope to be a model of support for those who serve in the military and for families who have given the ultimate sacrifice. The congregation lifts up these men and women in several ways:

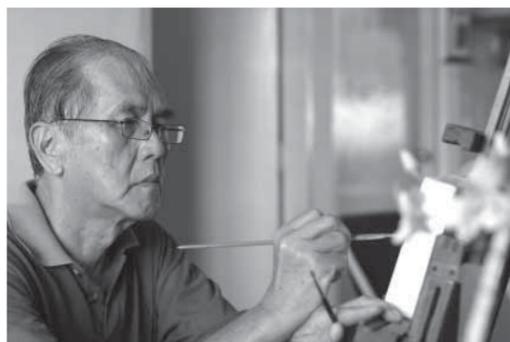
- a bulletin board is displayed where names and pictures are posted
- military members are remembered in daily prayers and during worship services
- Christmas packages are sent to those overseas, including phone cards, making it possible for them to call home
- for those on leave the congregation gives out movie theater passes to their entire families.
- at both Christmas and Easter, plants are purchased for the sanctuary to honor those who serve
- local radio broadcasts are sponsored occasionally in honor of all military men and women

The Zion Lutheran congregation believes in emotional support for military personnel and their families, and thanks God for a fellowship of faith that gives generously to their ministry.



Stock Photo

Calling all Artisans — Design Contest Announced



Stock Photo

In honor of the 20th anniversary of the ELCA, the Office of the Presiding Bishop has announced a design competition for gifts to be presented on behalf of the ELCA to global and ecumenical guests. The gifts may be of any kind, but must be easy to replicate inexpensively. Since they may be packaged for overseas

distribution, artists are encouraged to be mindful of weight and fragility. Options include, but are not limited to, crosses, calligraphy, icons and lithographs.

Specifications: Designs may not be larger than 12” in height or width, and 1” thick.

Eligibility: Artists must be members of the ELCA.

One entry per artist.

Deadline: September 1, 2007, to submit a photo or slide of the entry; originals will be requested of finalists. Submit entries to:

Myrna Sheie
Office of the Presiding Bishop, ELCA
8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

Online Course to Examine Creation

Was creation a moment in time? Or is it ongoing even today?

The Rev. Dr. Nelson Rivera thinks a careful reading of Genesis leaves room for thinking about creation as a process that is still happening today.

Rivera, associate professor of systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, will explore ideas about Creation next fall in an online course for laity offered by the seminary’s Faith and Life Institute called “Science in God’s World: Contributions and Controversies.”

“Our faith influences the way we think about a variety of topics connected with science,” says Rivera, who has had a dual love for theology and science since his Puerto Rican youth when he followed the careers of early astronauts. Some of the hot topics he’ll touch upon are:

- why the subject of biological evolution is such a lightning rod for many Christians
- cloning, stem cell research and the environment
- is the discipline of science a gift from God?
- does science shed light on our understanding of God’s world or does science get in the way of understanding?

The class will be held in October and November. Registration will be in August and



Michelangelo. *The Creation of the Sun and Moon*. 1508-1512. Fresco. Sistine Chapel, Vatican. Stock Photo

September at www.Ltsp.edu The non-credit course is part of an extended series for the growth and enrichment of lay people. It is the 19th course in the series.

For information about this course and other seminary Faith and Life Institute offerings, contact Mark A. Staples, Institute director, at Mstaples@Ltsp.edu

Ripe for Picking

Men Wanted!



Is church just for “nice guys,” or is it also for guys who sit shirtless in the stands of a NASCAR race, struggling with addictions, relationships and work?

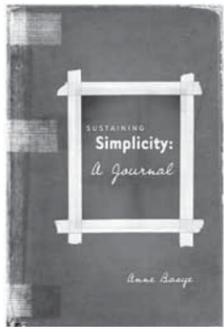
- Why does the percentage of men-to-women in worship continue to slip?
- What is the message for a man who visits your congregation for the first time?
- Does the setting make him feel that men are welcome? What would happen if your congregation grew by just 10 more men deeply committed to Jesus Christ?
- What would happen if your congregation’s ministry could reach the husbands of the women who attend services without their spouses? Answers to these questions and more will be addressed at the Men’s Ministry Summit August 3-5, 2007, prior to the ELCA Churchwide Assembly in Chicago.

The declining number of men in church and its negative effect on congregations and families has been a national topic of conversation for the past several years, and Lutheran Men in Mission has been at the center of it. With the theme “Building for the Future,” men will gather to reflect on their relationship to God, and how to build a men’s ministry in their congregations and throughout this church.

The Summit will take place at the Hyatt Hotel in Chicago. Featured speakers will include Roland Martinson, Paul Hill and David Anderson, authors of *Coming of Age: Exploring the Spirituality and Identity of Younger Men*; Dick Hardel, executive director of the Youth and Family Institute, and David Murrow, author of *Why Men Hate Going to Church*. Dakota Road will provide music for the worship throughout the weekend and Peter Mayer, lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffet, will perform a special concert.

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

Less is Better Claims New Book



Let’s be honest: It’s tough to live the examples and words of Jesus in daily life. Too many things to do, too many things to hold onto, too many relationships. Too little time, too little money, too little joy, too little encouragement to change from “too many” and “too little” to “what’s

necessary.” For many of us, our present ways of living aren’t working all that well.

An important new book, *Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal*, has just been released by the ELCA Hunger Program. In this 212-page journal, readers travel for one year through the daily life experiences of poet and author Anne Basye. The journal is packed full of her discerning observations as well as her deep questions. It’s an honest, in-depth sharing of the successes and struggles of one follower of Christ trying to live justly and joyfully.

Poignant and gently challenging, *Sustaining Simplicity* can help you and your congregation “live simply so that others can simply live.”

Accompanied by a Web site (www.elca.org/hunger/simple) with additional leader helps and further tools for simple living, the journal can be a powerful resource for combating the causes of hunger and poverty that begin in your own backyard or within your own spirit.

Reviewers have praised *Sustaining Simplicity* for the author’s courage in opening her life for the scrutiny of others. The book also receives high marks for its implicit invitation for readers to engage in honest, hopeful conversations about their own lifestyle stewardship. With the Web site, *Sustaining Simplicity* can become part of a your congregation’s program of hunger education. Good congregational uses for the journal include small group ministries, women’s groups, book clubs and stewardship or hunger teams.

Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal is available through Augsburg Fortress Publishers now. You can order a copy by phoning 800/328-4648 or visiting the online store at www.augsburgfortress.org The cost of the journal is \$12.00 per copy, plus shipping. ISBN 978-6-0002-1892-8.

Multicultural Event Coming in July

The ELCA, in partnership with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (PCUSA) and the Reformed Church in America (RCA), is sponsoring **Spirit of Wholeness in Christ: A Racial Ethnic Multicultural Event**, July 12-15, 2007 at the Los Angeles Airport Marriott Hotel.

The event is managed by the multicultural staff of the Communion Agreement Racial Ethnic (CARE) group, mandated by the Formula of Agreement, where the participating churches pledge to live “together under the Gospel in such a way that the principle of mutual affirmation and admonition becomes the basis of a trusting relationship in which respect and love for the other will have a chance to grow.”



The goals of this event include:

- the bonding of individuals from diverse races and cultures in Christian fellowship
- learning to value and appreciate racial/cultural differences
- providing leadership development opportunities for our constituencies
- providing tools for combating racism

People of numerous ethnicities and races will be represented. Programs will be available for children, youth and young adults.

For more information and to register, visit www.elca.org/multicultural or contact Rosemary Dyson at rosemary.dyson@elca.org 800/638-3522, ext. 2832. To receive a registration booklet contact the registrar, Jenny Wu, at 800/638-3522, ext. 2444, or jenny.wu@elca.org

Nourish Your Faith

Whether you are working two jobs or freshly retired, a long-time member or new to the church, *Lutheran Woman Today* will help you nourish your faith in daily life.

The magazine’s nine-month Bible study, which begins in September, is *Blessed to Follow: The Beatitudes as a Compass for Discipleship*. It is written by Martha Stortz, professor of historical theology and ethics at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkeley, Calif., and the author of *A World According to God*.

Jesus, in his first public appearance in Matthew’s Gospel (5:3-12), climbs a hill and gives his followers a sermon that might have left them perplexed, Stortz writes in her 2007–2008 Bible study. We are most blessed when we’re at our lowest.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Or, as it is written in *The Message*: “You’re more blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you, there is more of God. . . .” That makes some sense. When we humble ourselves, we can pay more attention to God and to others.

Jesus’ words give us direction on how we should live as Christians; they are a compass as we continue our journey of discipleship. Just as God blessed all creation in Genesis, so does Jesus bless us and transform us to be blessings for others.

Lutheran Woman Today’s award-winning Bible study brings together women of all ages and ways of life to explore God’s Word. To receive a free promotional brochure/poster with Bible study and issue themes, call Laura Barkenquist at 800/638-3522, ext. 2737. To subscribe to the magazine (\$12 a year), call 800/328-4648 or order online at: www.augsburgfortress.org Go to Stores, Lutheran resources, or *Lutheran Woman Today* magazine for online order form. Order now to get your September issue.

Select Online Courses

Select Multimedia Resources of the ELCA is in its second year of a dramatically new operation.

Recently Select has been busy producing a round of new educational resources using some of the best theologians and scholars that the church has to offer. Included, for example, is a new series of lectures on the theology of the cross by systematic theologian at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Vitor Westhelle. Professor Westhelle has also written a new book on this critical topic, *The Scandalous God: The Use and Abuse of the Cross*, published in Jan. of 2007 by Fortress Press which will be included in this course offering that is ideal for use in congregational adult studies. A new series on Dietrich Bonhoeffer is now available, along with a major new production on systematic theology entitled *Fundamentals of Christian Theology*.

Upcoming online classes for fall 2007: *Fundamentals of Christian Theology* (New Course!), *Interpreting the New Testament*, *Augsburg Confession*, *Rediscovering the Catechism, From Jesus to Luther*.

These courses and a number of other new educational resources are available at the Select Multimedia Resources Web site, www.selectlearning.org This is yet another new feature of Select, the ability to purchase items online using a credit card, or by calling the toll free number at 877/675-6275.



What's New on the World Wide Web?

Hunger Resources Online

New World Hunger weekly listservs!

If you need information for your bulletins, newsletters or a sermon on world hunger, look no further! Two new weekly listservs are now regular features at www.elca.org/hunger

Hunger Sermon Starters

Every week it faces you: another sermon! As a preacher of the Word of God, you must communicate the wisdom of God in words that provoke action. Weekly sermon starters concerning hunger, which include children's sermon and Bible conversation starters, are now available in a new listserv: "Hunger Sermon Starters." To sign up visit www.elca.org/hunger/sermon-starters.asp

Fast Facts

Do you ever wonder how many people in the world are hungry? Do you need short hunger-related statistics for your bulletins, newsletters or presentations? Sign up for "Fast Facts," and you'll receive weekly e-mails with information about hunger-related issues in the U.S. and around the world. Visit www.elca.org/hunger/facts/facts.html

Click Three times and Give a gift.

Three clicks. That's all it takes. In three clicks, you can:

- send Patrick, a child orphaned by AIDS, to school for year
- send a faithful, gifted student like Kimberly to seminary in preparation for a lifetime of ministry and service
- help a mission congregation right here in the United States purchase much-needed land to build a worship center

And that's just the beginning. At *ELCA Good Gifts Online* (www.elca.org/giving), you can give gifts that will help the church care for the world's hungry, share the gospel, support missions throughout the world, bring relief after disasters and invest in our leadership. If you can't decide on a particular ministry, don't worry—simply designate your gift to "where the need is greatest" and the churchwide organization will use your donation to support the ministries that need your dollars most.

Besides streamlining the giving process, *ELCA Good Gifts Online* (formerly *Giving Basket*) boasts many new options for acknowledging gifts with electronic cards, printable cards and certificates. Use these new resources to help make your good gifts count. Make a world of difference in just three clicks. Visit www.elca.org/giving today!



mission endowment fund, contact the ELCA Foundation at 800/638-3522, ext. 2970 or don.hallberg@elca.org

Does your congregation have a mission endowment fund established through the ELCA Foundation? With 1,300 endowment accounts and a current market value of \$314 million, the ELCA Foundation is always looking for better ways to serve participating congregations and organizations. The new Endowment Fund Online Web site (www.elca.org/foundation/endowmentfundonline) allows 24-hour, secure access to monthly statements, withdrawal, addition, change in authorization and other Pooled Trust forms in addition to archived copies of the Pooled Trust's quarterly newsletters and access to the latest information about the Pooled Trust. For more information regarding account access, contact the Endowment Fund Online Administrator at 800/638-3522, ext. 2902 or endowmentfund@elca.org. For information about establishing a

Free Online Hunger Education Event

You're invited to participate in *STARTING SIMPLE: Beginning a Simple Living Emphasis in Your Congregation*, a Web-based learning event ("Webinar") for congregational leaders. Part of the ELCA's overall hunger education program, the one-hour event will be offered on Thursday, May 10 and Thursday, May 17, at three convenient times each day. With a small group of other congregational leaders from around the country, you'll learn how to present the virtues of simple living to your congregation. No technical experience is necessary to participate. To learn more about this limited-enrollment event, visit www.elca.org/hunger/resources/WebEx.html. For further information, contact Bob Sitze at bob.sitze@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2708.



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

Note: In the last issue of Seeds the question should have been: Which resources would you recommend for the study of human sexuality for children and youth?

Q We're looking for resources to teach Bible stories to children in our congregation. What do you recommend?

A One church in our synod uses *Young Children and Worship* by Sonja M. Stewart and Jerome W. Berryman (Westminster John Knox; www.wjkbooks.com) to teach Bible stories to children for their Sunday school curriculum. The program is a very "hands-on" method using wooden figurines and a "desert box" of sand to tell and retell the Bible stories and it emphasizes that classrooms are special places and Sunday school is a special time to be with God. The next book being used is *I Wonder: More Bible Stories for Children and Worship* by Janet Schreuder (Reformed Church Press; www.rca.org). It has been fun to see the excitement grow in this church!

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

A The *Godly Play* program from Jerome Berryman is a more educational approach while the *Children and Worship* program from Sonja Stewart takes more of a worship approach. The book Darlene mentions above (*Young Children and Worship*, by Sonja and Jerome) is the basis for *Children and Worship*. Jerome has six new volumes for *Godly Play* (Living the Good News; www.livingthegoodnews.com) and Sonja's other book is *Following Jesus: More about Young Children and Worship* (Geneva Press; www.ppcbooks.com). I bubble over at

these programs which take their roots from the Montessori method and the work of Sofia Cavalletti. My daughter and I took the *Children Worship* training from Sonja. It was a special time for us! I commend this program to you.

—Jane Schuyler,
Congregational Support Specialist
Reformed Church in America

A Sofia Cavalletti, a Catholic biblical scholar and teacher of young children, is one of my favorites for her approach to telling the biblical stories. Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi, a Montessori educator, present the stories of God through ritual and worship. They collaborated on a book and a process, *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, which advocates teaching the biblical stories through ritual and play. The primary focus is the mystery of God in liturgy, scripture, and life. *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey* explains the process in detail. Cavalletti developed a second resource and pattern for older children called *The Vine and the Branches* (out of print) and *Living Liturgy: Elementary Reflections*, a background for adults working with the program or interested in Christian liturgy. All of Cavalletti's books are published by Liturgy Training Publications (www.ltp.org).

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

A I'd like to suggest *Bible Now!* from the American Bible Society (www.bibles.com). It includes stories from both the Old and New Testaments. Each is told first in a simplified version from the CEV (Contemporary English Version), and then with colorful drawings and captions. There's a "key verse"

given for each story, too. I can imagine reading the story to the children, and then having them tell the story back again by following the illustrations. This one would be great in the church or in the home!

—Sara Johnson
Resource Service Center
Southwestern Minnesota Synod
Redwood Falls, Minn.

A I recommend *The Rhyme Bible* by L.J. Sattgast (ZonderKids; www.zondervan.com). The illustrations are fresh and the manner in which the Bible stories are told is vibrant with energy. The passages beg to be read aloud! Even those who have heard a particular story many times in the past listen with new ears.

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

A Don't forget the *Heaven and Mirth* series by Mike Thaler! Although they look like children's books, adults who know the Bible will enjoy the humor in these stories. The series was published by Faith Kidz (Cook Communications) but is now out of print. Each book focuses on a value and then tells five stories from the Bible. It's the clever humor and puns that I love about these books. I have two in my resource center. Each story has a "nugget" from Goldie, the miner prophet. Thaler says he was sad there weren't any humorous retellings of the Bible that were vivid and alive for kids. So, after being a secular children's book author for most of his life, he set out to retell Bible stories with humor and affection.

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

Global Evangelism Raises the Roof

“Why are you in China? What does a Christian believe?”

ELCA missionaries in China hear questions like this every day. “I have more opportunity to share my faith than I do in the U.S., because so many people are curious,” says a nursing instructor in northern China.

With 80 million Christians, China is one of many countries in which Christianity is growing. Most new believers respond to local evangelists and church leaders who speak their language and understand their culture. Missionaries from the ELCA, always ready to share their faith, focus on supporting local evangelism efforts and equipping new leaders.

In Hong Kong, for example, the Lutheran Theological Seminary (LTS-HK) offers classes in Cantonese, English and Mandarin to students from a dozen Asian countries. Graduates return home to serve as pastors, teach or establish seminaries. “Theological education is a crucial investment in the church’s future because it provides people with the skills to proclaim the gospel effectively in their own land and their own language,” says ELCA missionary, the Rev. Ted Zimmerman, who teaches New Testament Studies in Hong Kong.

The ELCA supports LTS-HK and other international seminaries by providing teachers and financial support. ELCA scholarships enable leaders like the Rev. Magdi Gendi to prepare for effective evangelism. Gendi, acting president of the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt, completed his PhD in Old Testament at Luther Seminary. In Egypt, “there are eight million nominal Christians, people who don’t know what Christianity is all about,” says Gendi. These Christians are a natural focus for outreach by graduates of the Cairo seminary.

Companion churches like the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Malawi (ELCM) particularly appreciate direct financial grants, which are used to design and administer a comprehensive program that trains evangelists and equips them with bicycles to reach new preaching points.



Members and children of a church in Malawi. Missionary Karen Ressel pictured in back row. This new church was built by the members with a roof provided by ELCA and NW Synod of Wisconsin funding.

When a community is ready to erect a church building, the ELCM pays for the roof using funds provided by the ELCA and the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin. “Evangelism is best done by local people who know the context very well,” says ELCM Bishop Joseph Bvumbwe. “With a grant like this to help us witness to Christ in our country, we are able to achieve immense results.”

“Regardless of the call, each missionary is an evangelist,” says the Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla, executive director of the ELCA Global Mission unit. “Evangelism is the good stewardship of the gospel. The ELCA’s global

evangelism emphasis supports our companion churches in being good stewards of this gospel as ‘each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift,’ as Paul says in Ephesians 4.”

The ELCA engages in evangelism outside the U.S. by providing:

- grants and personnel for international seminaries
- scholarships that equip international church leaders
- grants for outreach programs designed and administered by a local church

Get Equipped for Global Ministry at the 2007 GME

Are you active in a companion synod committee? Planning an international mission trip for congregational youth? Exploring international service?

The 2007 ELCA Global Mission Event (GME) can help equip you for global ministry! In addition to the usual array of stimulating Global University Sessions, the GME will offer one-day “tracks” designed to give you an in-depth understanding of global ministry skills and prepare you to share them with others. Five sessions are planned:

- **Cross-Cultural Relations.** Consider how we interact with people from different cultures, and gain tools to help facilitate

optimal, cross-cultural relationships.

- **Sustainable Development.** Learn the basics of “sustainable development” and how to discern whether a particular project will truly enhance a community or will merely create harmful dependency.
- **Asset Mapping.** One hurdle we encounter in companion relationships is figuring out who we are in relation to one another. This session will help us go beyond our *actions* and focus on our *identity*.
- **Racism: What DO Whites Have to Lose?** Our emotions are usually triggered by the thought of what damage is done by racism to people of color. This session will explore

how white people lose out from racism in our society.

- **Hunger Connections.** Experience a role-play simulation of what happens when globalization affects the lives of real people. Channel your passion to the elimination of hunger and injustice wherever they occur. The tracks begin and end on Friday, leaving you plenty of time to enjoy the GME on Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. The GME will be held July 19-22, 2007, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

For information visit www.elca.org/gme

Prayer Ventures Highlights Central African Republic

Water is abundant in the Central African Republic, but most surface water sources are contaminated by disease-causing bacteria, viruses and parasites. People daily bury their loved ones who die from water-borne diseases, which kill more people in Africa—especially children—than AIDS.

Finding ways to ensure safe water is a priority for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Central African Republic (EELRCA). With assistance from the ELCA, the church is developing a community-based program that will help provide clean drinking water for people in rural areas.

ELCA missionary Paul Sharp, a water specialist, trains EELRCA leaders to lead workshops that help villages assess water use and sanitary conditions and learn about water-borne diseases.

Sharp and EELRCA leaders have installed a demonstration slow sand filter at the Ecole Biblique in Baboua. “The school should experience significant reduction in illnesses such as diarrhea, and visitors will learn that operation of the filter is quite simple,” says Sharp. “By educating people about water treatment by filtration, the filter will help build support for future projects.”

On May 25 you can pray for Paul Sharp and the EELRCA water project in *Prayer Ventures*, the guide to daily prayer for the ELCA’s global and outreach ministries. *Prayer Ventures* may be downloaded from www.elca.org/prayerventures A print version may be requested by calling 800/638-3522, ext. 2642.



A slow sand filter in operation in the Central African Republic

Lutheran Disaster Response Still in Action

In the immediate aftermath of the 2005 hurricane season, donations amounting to over \$26 million poured in to ELCA Domestic Disaster Response from individuals, congregations, synods, foundations and businesses. Through Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR) and its affiliates, these generous contributions are affecting lives by the thousands, both in the physical rebuilding of the Gulf Coast and in the spiritual and emotional renewing of the victims.

Lutherans have a reputation for being "long-distance runners" when it comes to disaster response. The commitments made by Lutheran volunteers to bring help and hope following these most recent disasters have solidified that reputation. In January 2007, LDR reached the incredible landmark of 1 million volunteer hours served in response to the 2005 hurricanes. Who are these amazing volunteers? They include teams sent by congregations on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. They include nearly 2,000 Lutheran college students who have sacrificed their spring breaks to help those in need. Maybe they include you and members of your congregation.

LDR volunteers make an impact that reaches far beyond a gutted house or a few sheets of new drywall. Many volunteers have shared stories of receiving a "Thank You" from someone that they were not even helping. The simple presence of volunteers, especially those who have traveled from afar, brings hope to those who are picking up the pieces.

Would you like to put together a volunteer work crew in your congregation? Find helpful information at www.ldr.org/volunteer

Are you ready?

Unfortunately, natural disasters can strike at any time and in any place. Aside from the ongoing work along the Gulf Coast and in Florida, Lutherans responded to 15 different disasters in 2006, including floods, tornadoes, ice storms and even an earthquake. These disasters impacted hundreds of communities stretching from New England to Hawaii, and affected thousands of households.

Even with the knowledge that we could be stricken by a natural or human-caused disaster, many of us fail to properly prepare. We worry that the act of preparing for disaster will make us overcautious about future events or overanxious when we see severe weather approaching. In fact, disaster preparedness has proven to decrease anxiety and bolster us with a sense that we are ready for challenges that might come our way.

Through the network of LDR affiliates, members of Lutheran congregations can receive disaster preparedness training. This can include putting together a household disaster kit or talking about places to find shelter. Whole congregations are also encouraged to conduct disaster preparedness planning. This could include securing an alternative location for regular worship gatherings and facilitating



Still cleaning up after Katrina. Lutherans are in for the long haul. Staff photo

pastoral care for individual members. It could also involve identifying potential roles and responsibilities in serving the broader community through spiritual care and social ministry.

LDR affiliates are committed to increased awareness of disaster preparedness throughout the next several years, and they have received grant funding to carry out training with local congregations, synod offices and social ministry organizations. If you would like to plan disaster preparedness training for your congregation, find your local LDR affiliate at www.ldr.org/contact/affiliates.html You can also contact your synod office to propose a synod-wide training event.

A fresh start

Shirley is the single mother of two boys, Charles and Camarin. With Hurricane Katrina bearing down on the Gulf Coast, Shirley made the decision to evacuate her family, and they relocated in the Washington, D.C. area.

Through the Katrina Aid Today case management program, Shirley became a client of Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area, an affiliate of Lutheran Disaster Response. Shirley and her caseworker developed a personal recovery plan. She found work as an emergency dispatcher, and she enrolled in classes at the local community college.

This past Christmas, Shirley and her sons attended a dinner for all Hurricane Katrina evacuees living in the Washington, D.C. area. It was a fantastic opportunity for the survivors to socialize and share their stories with one another. Charles and Camarin, along with the other children who attended the dinner, were excited to receive Christmas presents, courtesy of several local businesses and volunteers.

Now Shirley and her sons are making the final arrangements for their move home to Louisiana. Shirley will finally be able to reconnect with her elderly mother, and she plans to continue her studies of forensics on a full-time basis. Through the long-term case management of LDR and its affiliates, ELCA Domestic Disaster Response directs disaster survivors along their road to recovery. For Shirley, Charles and Camarin, it means returning home to family, friends and a fresh start.

Want to spread the word about the work of the ELCA in disaster response? You can find this story and others as bulletin inserts at www.elca.org/disaster/resources



Charles and Camarin with Christmas presents. Staff photo

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