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

# Seeds for the Parish

RESOURCE PAPER FOR LEADERS OF ELCA CONGREGATIONS

## Jordan — The Land the Media Forgot

You never hear much about the “East Bank” of the Jordan River. But, as many Jordanians are eager to tell you, “the Holy Land is on both sides of the river.”

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, a moderate Muslim country, is a hospitable destination for faith-based travelers. It is a country where Christians and Muslims have co-existed peacefully for centuries, education is valued, women hold responsible positions in business and government, and over 200 Old and New Testament sites can be visited safely.

### Sites to visit in Jordan:

#### Mount Nebo—go to the mountain top and see the Promised Land

Surrounded by otherworldly wilderness and jutting up from the plains of Moab, is Mt. Nebo. It was here, on the highest point in the Moabite range, that Moses viewed the land that he could never enter.

Today Mt. Nebo is a popular spot for both pilgrims and tourists. The “mountain” rises about 3,300 feet at the end of a chain of mountains that skirt the Dead Sea. From its summit on a clear day, visitors can take in a wide vista of the Promised Land, with views that include the north shore of the Dead Sea, the Jordan River Valley, Jericho, the Mount of Olives, and the rooftops of Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

A Byzantine basilica, uncovered by archaeologists in the 1930s, is incorporated into the Memorial Church of Moses, a modern structure that stands on the site today. Construction of the basilica dates from about AD 394 with expansions made in the sixth century. The church, with its ancient mosaic floors, primarily houses archaeological finds. In 2000, Pope John Paul II visited Mt. Nebo during his pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

#### Gadara

#### When Jesus walked into Gadara, it was a miracle for two gentiles but a very bad day for swine.

Gadara, one of the cities that made up the Decapolis, or federation of 10 Greco-Roman city-states, was a bustling place in its day. Strategically situated along key trade routes, the city was distinguished for its cosmopolitan atmosphere. Hence it attracted writers, artists, philosophers and poets.

It was here, according to Matthew 8:28, in the “country of the Gadarenes,” where two “demoniacs” met Jesus and where he cast out the demons from the possessed men into a herd of swine, which ran “violently down a steep place into the sea and perished in the waters.”

At the ruins of ancient Gadara (or Umm Qais) visitors can wander through many well-preserved Roman structures, including a colonnaded street, a small theater, temples and palaces. You can see the Sea of Galilee and its steep bank from many vantage points in this ancient city.

#### Madaba

#### Before GPS and MapQuest, the mosaic map in Madaba was the place to find your way in the world.

First mentioned in Numbers 21, Madaba, the city of mosaics, has a long history. Occupied consecutively by the Amorites, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Nabataeans, it flourished from

the second to the sixth centuries. All of its mosaics date from this period of time.

Although now fragmented, the great mosaic map of Jerusalem and Palestine, completed during the sixth century, is preserved in the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George. It is among the earliest maps of the Holy Land discovered to date.

The best preserved mosaics can be found in the Apostles’ Church, just outside of Madaba, on the Kings’ Highway. Earlier mosaics can also be found in private homes in the area.

### Other places of interest in Jordan are:

**The Kings’ Highway**, one of the oldest trade routes in the world, which ran from Babylon to Egypt.

**Herod’s Palace**, where John the Baptist was beheaded after Salome performed her fateful dance.

**Amman**, the capital of Jordan and in biblical times, Rabbath Ammon, the capital of the Ammonites.

**The Dead Sea**, lies between the mountains of Moab and Gilead and was a favorite spot of Herod the Great, who bathed in its waters for medicinal purposes. Still popular today for its therapeutic waters, it is the site of many spas and resorts.

**Bethany beyond the Jordan**, one of the claimants to the baptismal site of Jesus. The site was developed by the government of Jordan and opened in 2000. It is in the vicinity where John the Baptist was known to have preached and baptized.

**Petra**, not a holy site, but it is probable that biblical figures traveled through the rose-colored city, made famous by the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*.

### If you are interested in mixing service with sightseeing, there are many opportunities.

As explained by Philip Griffith, director of Habitat for Humanity in Jordan, “We have built 350 houses in five communities during the last six years.” Habitat offers opportunities for individuals and groups from one week to several months in duration. “Those buildings have involved more than 350 volunteers to date and our goal on both sides is to go beyond ideology and culture to address those in greatest need.”

Habitat works with community-based organizations, giving people materials and tools to build. That is also the main function of the King Hussein Foundation and its executive director, Hana Mitri Shahin.

Shahin, a Christian who has been married to a Muslim man for 23 years, administers seven foundation programs that promote sustainable development, women’s empowerment, eradication of poverty, education, leadership development and the extension of democracy in her country.

Those efforts are increasingly directed at Muslim women in Jordan. “Our work is capacity-building—to enlarge the ability to move away from charity and toward self-development by equipping



Security personnel at the Grand Hyatt in Amman, Jordan.

women with the right skills to create self-sustaining communities.”

The foundation, she said, places a major emphasis on creating community centers in major Jordanian cities that offer simple health care, individual and family trauma care, work and income-generation skills.

### Security

Jordanians take security seriously. Since the 2005 bombings at three hotels in Amman, security has tightened considerably. When you travel to Jordan, be prepared to clear five security checkpoints at the Queen Alia Airport upon your departure from Amman. Hotels throughout the country ensure the safety of their guests by using metal detectors and searching luggage.

### Travel Resources

To assist with travel arrangements, the ELCA churchwide organization offers a trip-planning Web-based resource, *Visiting the Holy Land and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land*. It provides sample itineraries, contacts for local Lutheran ministries, help with organizing a service-oriented trip, planning guidelines, outlines for pre-trip orientation sessions, ground logistics, and suggestions for sharing your experience upon your return home. This 20-page resource is free and may be downloaded from [www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/accompany/travel.html](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/accompany/travel.html).

The Jordan Tourist Board also offers a host of resources for group and individual travel. For news, upcoming events, trip planning, and brochures on biblical Jordan, visit [www.seejordan.org](http://www.seejordan.org).

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## In This Issue ...

### Articles

Planning Worship in the Season of Lent.....	2
Pastoral Care Resources.....	2
<i>Book of Faith</i> : Join the Conversation.....	3
Resource Centers.....	6
Kids Not For Sale.....	7
Discipleship and Developmental Disabilities.....	8

### Departments

Ripe for Picking.....	4-5
Q&A.....	6

# Planning Worship in the Season of Lent

As early as the mid-fourth century, Christians observed a time of preparation before the Easter celebration. The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts for 40 days. The forty days of Lent recall the 40 day fast of Jesus in the wilderness after his baptism (Matthew 4:2, Luke 4:1-2) and Moses' 40-day fast on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28). It is a time of simplicity, renewal and preparation, especially preparation for baptisms that will occur at the Easter Vigil.

## Gathering

The time of gathering in the season of Lent may reflect the simple nature of the season using only the Kyrie and no hymn of praise. That simplicity may also be reflected within the worship space by removing clutter, removing or replacing fresh floral arrangements with dried branches, or taking down decorative banners.

## Hymn

The verses of the African American spiritual, "Jesus Is a Rock in a Weary Land" (ELW#333), reflect this year's Lenten lectionary readings. Verse 1 refers to the story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead which is the appointed Gospel reading for the Fifth Sunday in Lent. Verse 2 recalls the story of Jesus washing the feet of the disciples which is the appointed Gospel reading for Maundy Thursday. Consult the *Musicians Guide to Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for information on how to lead this hymn ([www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org), ISBN 978-0-8066-5389-1).

## Proclamation

Mid-week Lenten worship services present the opportunity to emphasize and expand upon Lenten lectionary themes of God's mercy and forgiveness. The daily lectionary provides a series of biblical texts that complement the Sunday readings. The daily texts for Monday through Wednesday reflect back on the previous Sunday while Thursday through Saturday's texts anticipate the coming Sunday. Each Wednesday, a reading from one of the four Gospels is provided. The daily lectionary can be

found beginning on page 1121 of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*.

The *Sundays and Seasons* resources from Augsburg Fortress suggest a mid-week Lenten set of readings for Evening Prayer that highlights the Sunday Lenten lectionary themes by repeating one of the Sunday readings for each mid-week service and suggesting complementary hymns. Additionally, *Sundays and Seasons* provides a six-part worship series entitled, *Shadows of the Cross*. This series focuses on particular events in Christ's journey to the cross and the spiritual insight therein. Each week provides visual and tactile suggestions that may enhance the proclamation of the Gospel. *Sundays and Seasons* resources are available in print at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) (978-0-8066-5301-3) or online at [www.sundaysandseasons.com](http://www.sundaysandseasons.com).

## Sending

"Go in peace. Remember the poor." Lent is a time to reflect on our baptismal call to participate in God's mission in the world. With this dismissal, the congregation is sent into the world reminded both of the peace of Christ and of the need for Christ's reconciling presence in the hurting places of the world. This dismissal urges the worshipping community to live out their baptismal call to participate in Christ's mission with their own thoughts and actions. In the announcements of the congregation, highlight local ministry opportunities that serve people who are hungry, marginalized, or oppressed. Invite the congregation to participate in ministries that advocate on behalf of those who struggle. For information on advocacy ministries go to: [www.elca/advocacy/](http://www.elca/advocacy/).

Alternatively, encourage the youth of the congregation to research and create displays located at the exit doors of the worship space that focus on the ministries of Lutheran World Relief ([www.lwr.org](http://www.lwr.org)) each week to make the connection between worship and mission.

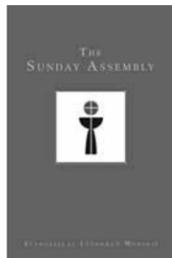
## New Pastoral Care Provisional Resources

The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care* provisional resources are now available for review and response at [www.elca.org/worship](http://www.elca.org/worship). Compared to the current Occasional Services companion book to *Lutheran Book of Worship*, these provisional resources contain extended material that can be used by rostered leaders or lay persons in a variety of care-giving situations, including healing, marriage and death.

New in this volume is an order for celebrating the **Anniversary of a Baptism**. This ritual is intended for use in the home but may be adapted for other situations such as a Christian education setting. The ritual guides those gathered to read Scripture, share stories about the Baptism and pray.

Expanded in this volume is an order for the **Blessing for a Home**. This order is a flexible pattern of scripture reading and prayer for specific areas of the home, including the living room, kitchen, dining room, bathroom and bedroom. Typically used when someone moves into a place of dwelling, the order may also be used as an annual ritual.

Each section of the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care* provisional resource contains new prayers for a variety of circumstances. Too numerous to list here, see the table of contents at [www.elca.org/worship](http://www.elca.org/worship). Feedback on these provisional materials from congregations and individuals received before February 1 will help shape the final volume, to be released in fall 2008. The forthcoming Volume Two of the occasional services resources will contain material for use in the worshipping assembly.



## How to Use *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*

*Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship* is a three-volume series exploring in detail the rites and resources in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. The first volume, *The Sunday Assembly*, written by Lorraine S. Brugh and Gordon W. Lathrop, addresses general principles of the central liturgy of Christian worship, Holy Communion, and examines how worship interacts with environment, music, and the preached word. The volume features useful and practical suggestions for all those who lead the Sunday assembly. Order at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) or call 800/328-4648. \$35.00, item 978-0-8066-7013-3.

## Education Opportunities

**The sixtieth session of the Institute of Liturgical Studies** at Valparaiso University — March 31-April 2, 2008. For more information on the Institute and the new "Preachers Retreat," visit [www.valpo.edu/ils](http://www.valpo.edu/ils).

**Lectionary Homiletics' 16<sup>th</sup> annual Festival of Homiletics** will be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 19-23, 2008. For more information visit [www.goodpreacher.com/festival](http://www.goodpreacher.com/festival).

**The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada** annual worship conference June 25-29, 2008. Visit [www.worshipconference2008.org](http://www.worshipconference2008.org) for more information.

## Music Conference

April 24-26, 2008 New York City  
June 27-29, 2008 Grinnell, Iowa

Building community is the goal. Music is the vehicle for "Music That Makes Community."

An ancient practice of singing is being rekindled ... a way of singing that has been central to folk traditions for centuries. Taught and sung from memory, it is simple and beautiful, faithful and traditional. Sung without the use of a book, these songs allow congregations to focus on singing from their hearts with confidence.

"Music That Makes Community" will teach and practice techniques to help you use accessible and original music in your congregation. This communal music is accessible to the widest range of singers in any size of congregation, and may be practiced without the luxury of a choir or organist/pianist.

"Music That Makes Community" is designed specifically for clergy, musicians, and others who want to learn how to lead music effectively without the use of hymnals or other printed materials.

Participants will learn the skills involved in selecting and leading paperless music, and will have the opportunity to practice these skills. Time will be spent discussing the role of this type of music in the church.

See [www.allsaintscompany.org/events](http://www.allsaintscompany.org/events) for more information.

## Seeds for the Parish

[www.elca.org/seeds](http://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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# Book of Faith: Join the Conversation

At the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, everyone in the ELCA was invited and encouraged to engage the five-year collaborative initiative, Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible. Through this initiative, we are all called to enhance our individual and collective knowledge of the Bible and its teaching, and to achieve a greater fluency in the first language of faith, the Holy Scriptures.

## Make A Commitment

In this first year of the initiative, you and your congregation are invited to make a commitment to seek a deeper understanding of the Bible. To this end Book of Faith is not a fixed, pre-packaged Bible study program. Over the next five years new Bible study resources will be forthcoming, but Book of Faith primarily calls you and your congregation to commit to renewed reading and study of the scriptures, which will yield greater wisdom and more insights from the Lutheran tradition of biblical interpretation.

Your congregation may declare its participation in Book of Faith by filling out and submitting a commitment form found on the churchwide organization's Web site at: [www.elca.org/bookoffaith](http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith) (the direct link to the commitment page is found at: [www.elca.org/bookoffaith/join/commit.html](http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith/join/commit.html)). There, you will be invited to:

- briefly describe how your congregation will

- join the conversation and strive to become more fluent in the language of Scripture
- indicate whether you are interested in considering participation in future training programs about teaching the Bible
- share the good ideas for Bible study that you have discovered in your congregation that might be of value to the churchwide Book of Faith initiative.

Bishop Mark Hanson and Book of Faith director, Dr. Diane Jacobson, are available at [www.elca.org/bookoffaith/resources](http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith/resources). In spring 2008, Augsburg Fortress Publishers will produce a book about Lutheran approaches to the Bible. For information about other resources, see the Book of Faith resources listing below compiled by Beth Lewis, president and CEO of Augsburg Fortress.



## book of faith

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

### New Resources

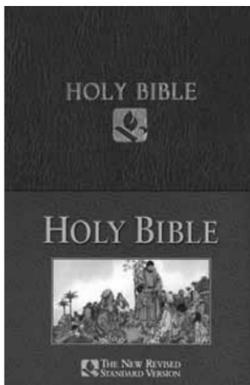
Even though the Book of Faith initiative is less than six months old, new resources are already available to assist you and your congregation. A series of short studies on key biblical texts, including a video presentation by Presiding

### Beyond 2012

Because it is an initiative and not a fixed program, Book of Faith is not intended to be completed and come to an end in five years. The five-year focus of this initiative is designed instead as a launching pad, from which a renewed and deeper engagement with the Bible can continue in the life of the ELCA. By 2012, it is our prayer that the Book of Faith initiative will, in the words of the resolution adopted by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly, "shift the culture and customs in this church toward a new level of valuing and being shaped by the power of the Word."

*The Rev. Mark Wilhelm,  
Associate Executive Director for  
Educational Partnerships and Institutions  
Vocation and Education*

## Book of Faith Resources from Augsburg Fortress



Although this initiative was just approved at the churchwide assembly, Augsburg Fortress is already receiving inquiries such as, "Where are the Book of Faith Bible studies?" "What Bible should we use for our Book of Faith small groups in our congregation?" and "Is there a Book of Faith component to Akaloo available?"

"Augsburg Fortress is fast in meeting ministry partners' needs, but not quite *that* fast!" said Beth Lewis, president and CEO of Augsburg Fortress Publishing.

If Augsburg Fortress is hearing those questions, it's likely that people in ELCA resource centers and congregational offices are also hearing them. Here are some resources from Beth Lewis for you and those you serve:

1. The Augsburg Fortress and ELCA Web sites' Book of Faith pages [www.augsburgfortress.org/community/bookoffaith](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/community/bookoffaith) and [www.elca.org/bookoffaith](http://www.elca.org/bookoffaith).
2. Many Bibles are available to meet the needs of people of all ages! These include:
  - Bibles for children - [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search "children" and chose "Bibles & Bible Study" from the dropdown menu.
  - Study Bibles - [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search "Study Bibles" and chose "Bibles & Bible Study" from the dropdown menu.
  - Pew Bibles - [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search "Pew Bibles" chose "Bibles & Bible Study" from the dropdown menu.
  - For the new Bible with cranberry cover that matches *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* - [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) and search "Bibles & Bible Study" from the dropdown menu.

**NOTE:** *The People's Bible*, a Bible with multicultural study notes, artwork, etc. is due to be published by Augsburg Fortress in November 2008. A Lutheran Study Bible

will likely be published in the first quarter of 2009.

3. Examples of available Bible study resources:
  - Augsburg Adult Bible Studies*, a subscription-based weekly Bible study resource [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search "Adult Bible Studies."
  - No Experience Necessary*, now with all eight units and videos - [www.augsburgfortress.org/education/noexperiencenecessary](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/education/noexperiencenecessary).
  - Conozca su Biblia* (in Spanish) [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search by title.
4. Curricula for occasions such as Sunday school and confirmation:

- Lutheran Handbook 2* - [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) search "education."
- Akaloo*, the Web-based, print supported, intergenerational faith formation resource: [www.akaloo.org](http://www.akaloo.org) (For free trial offer - [www.akaloo.org/trial](http://www.akaloo.org/trial) and [www.akaloo.org/webinars](http://www.akaloo.org/webinars).)
- 5. Other varied resources to assist with increasing biblical fluency:
  - Books in Fortress Press and Augsburg Fortress imprints.
  - Worship bulletins and lectionary inserts.
  - The *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* family of resources - [www.augsburgfortress.org/worship/evangelicallutheranworship](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/worship/evangelicallutheranworship).



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# Ripe for Picking

## Winter Select Offerings

Select Multimedia Resources offers online courses for continuing education, associate in ministry candidacy and a variety of certification processes. Courses offered this winter, beginning in February 2008, will be:

- Interpreting the Old Testament
- Lutheran Heritage
- Spirituality: Invitation to a Closer Relationship with God
- Sent to Preach: Evangelism and Lutheran Worship
- Systematic Theology: Fundamentals in Christian Theology
- Money Leadership for Pastors: Your Life with Money

For more information about Select Multimedia Resources visit [www.elca.org/select](http://www.elca.org/select).

For more details on the online courses visit [www.selectlearning.org](http://www.selectlearning.org).

## Spanish Stories to Tell



We all have stories to tell about what God has done for us, with us and through us. Use the questions on these bookmarks to spark storytelling within your congregation and celebrate God's story as it is unfolding in your community. Or insert them in bulletins, hymnals, mailings and other materials. Keep the *Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share* theme fresh.

English: 978-0-8066-5369-3, \$7.95 pack of 50  
Spanish: 978-6-0002-2041-9, \$7.50 pack of 50

Order from [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org). Questions? call 800/638-3522, ext. 2756

## Education Statement



The ELCA Social Statement, *Our Calling in Education* (ISBN 978-6-0002-2060-0), is now available for use by Christian Education committees, pastors, campus ministers, parents and educators. For a free complimentary copy, call

the Church in Society resource request line at 800/638-3522, ext. 2996. For multiple copies, order from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

## Global Mission Annual

Where do ELCA missionaries work? What do they do? Find out in the *2008 Global Mission Annual*, which showcases ELCA global mission work around the world. Learn more about:

- how ELCA funds support international proclamation, service and accompaniment
- the mission model of accompaniment
- ELCA strategies for each continent
- companion churches like the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
- how you can serve as a missionary
- how to connect to global mission and companion synods activities in your synod.

To order this 60-page annual at no cost, call 800/638-3522, ext. 2642 or e-mail [Marie.Cortez@elca.org](mailto:Marie.Cortez@elca.org).

## Filling Children's Easter Baskets?



Don't think soft baby chicks or candy-filled plastic eggs. Don't think plush or even chocolate bunnies.

If you have grandchildren, children, godchildren, nieces, nephews or friends age six or younger, don't look any further for a gift. Buy them a subscription to *The Little Lutheran*—a durable 24-page magazine that will arrive in their mailboxes 10 times a year. The magazine is filled with stories, colorful pictures, activities, prayers, songs, rituals and more, produced by *The Lutheran Magazine*.

Instead of yet another toy, give songs and stories to teach the children in your life that Jesus is their savior and friend. Provide them with learning activities to help their creativity blossom. Give children

and their parents a monthly ritual to remind them how much God loves them.

Put subscribing to *The Little Lutheran* on your to-do list now. Fill those Easter baskets with a gift that lasts—*The Little Lutheran*. One year: \$24.95; two years: \$45. Visit [www.thelittlelutheran.org](http://www.thelittlelutheran.org), call 800/328-4648 or e-mail: [subscriptions@augzburgfortress.org](mailto:subscriptions@augzburgfortress.org) and ask for a sample copy for the Easter basket too!

## Bible Study Helps Youth Connect Life and Faith

Have you ever wondered how to help young people better understand their daily life and world events in the context of faith and scripture? *Faith Lens*, a free online weekly Bible study for youth can do just that ([www.elca.org/faithlens](http://www.elca.org/faithlens)).



ELCA Youth Ministry's *Faith Lens* is designed for senior high age youth but is adaptable for young adults and adult groups. You can even write your own *Faith Lens* when big news is breaking close to home. "Create Your Own Faith Lens" ([www.elca.org/faithlens/createyourown.html](http://www.elca.org/faithlens/createyourown.html)) provides you with some "how to" tips and links to different news sources.

You'll find a new *Faith Lens* posted online each week throughout the year. It's usually accessible by Tuesday and is written by a different writer each week. A print-ready (PDF) version is also available and you can send the current *Faith Lens* study to other leaders and congregations by using the links at the top of the page.

*Faith Lens* is posted every week on the ELCA Youth Ministry Web site and connects a current news story in the world with the lectionary texts for the upcoming Sunday. The format includes a summary of a current news story, discussion questions, a reflection on the Gospel text, suggested activities, prayer and links to related resources.

## Sexism is a Church Issue?

The ELCA has made significant progress in its vision and support of women's leadership since the ordination of Elizabeth Platz and Barbara Andrews in 1970 in predecessor bodies of this church. Women now serve as six of the 65 elected synodical bishops; Lutheran women have registered in record numbers at seminary; and more women serve as senior pastors than 15 years ago. Nevertheless, sexism is still a systemic sin that demands thoughtful theological attention and active transformation by this church.

A theological response to sexism requires this church to step behind crimes against women, such as domestic violence, rape, and human trafficking, to engage deeply with each

other on theology that addresses sexism and gender justice.

To access a sample Bible study to begin theological study on sexism, please visit the Justice for Women Web site at [www.elca.org/justiceforwomen](http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen), where you can also find other resources and information on programmatic work on sexism, including an upcoming conference on theology for clergy, lay, and academic audiences. For more information about the ELCA's work on justice for women, contact Dr. Mary Streufert in the Church in Society unit: 800-638-3522, ext. 2281, or [Mary.Streufert@elca.org](mailto:Mary.Streufert@elca.org).

## New Theme Adopted by 2008 Global Lenten Series

Want ideas for Lenten midweek or Sunday services with a global focus? The Global Mission Web site ([www.elca.org/globalmission/lent](http://www.elca.org/globalmission/lent)) offers everything you need for eight Lenten services (Ash Wednesday through Good Friday):

- worship outlines and liturgies, sermons, bulletin covers
- Powerpoint-ready images, even recipes for global suppers!
- an Easter service from Jerusalem with a sermon by the ELCA pastor serving



the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem

This year's series explores the theme, "Global Companions: Who is My Neighbor?" Stories and sermons highlight the work of ELCA missionaries in Madagascar, Senegal, Peru, Costa Rica, Japan, Egypt, Lithuania and Israel.

"We were able to be in touch with the Lutheran Church around the world through this series," says a pastor who has used the series. "It made us proud to be members of the ELCA. Members thoroughly enjoyed this Lenten series!"

# Ripe for Picking

## Accept the MIF Challenge

Women of the ELCA participants are helping to build and renovate ELCA congregations through their support of a challenge to purchase investments from the Mission Investment Fund (MIF).

To meet the challenge, Women of the ELCA participants must purchase 500 new MIF investments or invest a total of \$1.5 million before June 30, 2008. In return, MIF will provide a grant to support Women of the ELCA's Seventh Triennial Gathering and Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, in July 2008. More than \$1 million has been invested to date by participants. The invested funds will be used by MIF to make loans to ELCA congregations for renovation, expansion and relocation projects.

Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA, said that because MIF's mission is to help build the Lutheran church, "It's only natural that Women of the ELCA would want to continue that mission emphasis by entering into this challenge."

MIF Executive Vice President Eva Roby, said, "This is a wonderful example of how ELCA members work together to build the church, and in the process, continue to spread the good news of Jesus Christ to our neighbors."

MIF offers investments to ELCA congregations and their members, synods and ELCA-related ministries such as seminaries, outdoor ministries and social ministry organizations. With the invested funds, MIF makes loans to new mission congregations for purchases of land and construction of initial church buildings, and to established ELCA congregations for purchases of land, renovation and relocation projects, and refinancing of existing capital debt.

Women of the ELCA participants may obtain information packets about the challenge by contacting MIF at 877/886-3522 (toll free) or via e-mail at [mif@elca.org](mailto:mif@elca.org). Information is also available on the MIF Web site at [www.MissionInvestmentFund.org](http://www.MissionInvestmentFund.org).

Women of the  
**ELCA** Challenge

## Lutheran Men Gathering in August

In July of 1988, after a period of more than 25 years without a men's churchwide organization, about 200 men gathered at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas and founded a new men's ministry. It was the goal of those men that the fledgling ministry would flourish and grow within the ELCA and would some day be self-supporting. That day has arrived.

Following in the footsteps of those founding visionaries, men from throughout North America will attend the Coming of Age Lutheran Men's Gathering in Omaha, Nebraska, August 6-8, 2008, not just to celebrate, but to secure the future of this ministry.

After years of being subsidized by the church, Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM) can point to prevailing in the "Building for the Future" challenge, thus adding \$1.5 million to the LMM Endowment Fund. LMM will also celebrate becoming a separately incorporated ministry with a close relationship to the ELCA through its Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission program unit.

The Gathering's "Coming of Age" theme

has a two-fold meaning. One implies LMM's emphasis on youth and the opportunities afforded for all to build inter-generational relationships. The other embodies the ministry's maturity and self-reliance.

Featured speakers will include former Nebraska coach and congressman, Tom Osborne, *Coming of Age* authors David Anderson and Paul Hill, as well as Larry Clark, Ernie Hinojosa and others. Musical entertainment will include Dakota Road, a popular band at youth gatherings and men's events, and Peter Mayer, lead guitarist for Jimmy Buffett's band.

Conceived to bring men of all ages into a deeper relationship with God, the event will not only feature prominent speakers and musicians but will also offer the attendees opportunities to serve and play. In the 48,000-square-foot interactive center, men can build Habitat for Humanity sheds and participate in high ropes courses and other games.

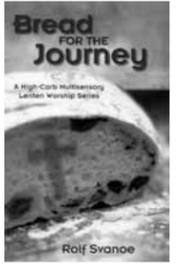
For more information, and to register for the event, visit [www.elca.org/lmm](http://www.elca.org/lmm) or call 800/638-3522, ext. 2595.



Former Nebraska coach and congressman, Tom Osborne

## Lenten Worship Series

In *Bread for the Journey*, author Rolf Svanoe has sought to engage our senses and enhance our encounter with God. This Lenten worship series offers sermons for Ash Wednesday, each Sunday in Lent, and services for Easter Week. This book includes recipes for breads that can be baked and distributed during the services as well, each scent and taste offering an additional insight into the Lenten worship experience.



Rolf Svanoe is the associate pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Sioux Falls, S.D.

To order go to: [www.csspub.com](http://www.csspub.com) or call: CSS Publishing Company, 1-800-537-1030. Item #: 0-7880-2507, \$9.95

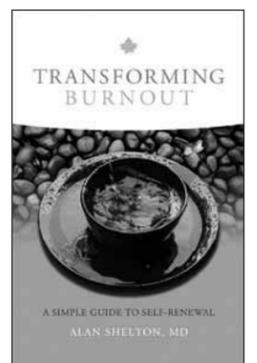
## Extinguish Burnout

Do leaders and members of your congregation ever feel burned out in the midst of the vital work they do for your church and community?

Dr. Alan Shelton, a family physician, offers his recent book *Transforming Burnout: A Simple Guide to Self-renewal* as a practical guide for ministers, lay leaders and congregation members experiencing compassion fatigue.

*Transforming Burnout* tells a personal story of burnout, teaches us how to recognize and face it, and leads us to spiritual strength and renewed vitality through daily habits that encourage whole health.

Alan Shelton is an experienced workshop leader at lay minister retreats and feels called to continue speaking on the subject of burnout and renewal. For more information or to order, visit [www.TransformingBurnout.com](http://www.TransformingBurnout.com). This book is also available from [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) for \$14.09.



## Chaplains Wanted

The National Lutheran Association on Scouting (NLAS), in full cooperation with the ELCA and its youth ministry, is seeking pastors and professional youth ministers to serve as chaplains for more than 45,000 Boy Scouts and adult leaders expected to attend the National Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Va., in late July/early August of 2010.

Prospective chaplains must be in good physical condition, registered members of the Boy Scouts of America, and be approved by their local Boy Scout Council executives. Upon receiving the completed applications, the Boy Scouts of America will consult with the Head Lutheran Chaplain to review and approve applicants.

Those interested in the 2010 National Scout Jamboree chaplaincy corps can start their training by attending the "Scouting in the Lutheran Church" conference at the Philmont Scout Ranch, N. M., July 27-August 2, 2008. For more information, visit [www.nlas.org](http://www.nlas.org) or contact:

Rev. Sherman Martell, Head Lutheran Chaplain for the 2010 B.S.A. National Jamboree  
Luther Memorial Church  
2840 South 84th Street  
West Allis, WI 53227  
Phone: 414-541-3790  
E-mail: [shermanmartell@sbcglobal.net](mailto:shermanmartell@sbcglobal.net)

**Women of the ELCA**

*Be refreshed. Be inspired. Be connected!*



**Seventh Triennial Gathering • July 10-13, 2008 • Salt Lake City, Utah**

Women of the ELCA invites you to enjoy worship, Bible study, inspiring speakers and fellowship with Lutheran women from across the United States and the Caribbean.

**EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS JANUARY 31**

**COME TO THE WATERS**  
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800-638-3522, ext. 2730    [women.elca@elca.org](mailto:women.elca@elca.org)    [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org)

# What's New on the World Wide Web

## Lutheran Travel Guru on elca.org

Rick Steves, host of public television's *Rick Steves' Europe*, public radio's *Travel with Rick Steves*, author of over 30 travel guides, and active member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynnwood, Washington, now has his own Web page on [elca.org](http://elca.org).

The Web page has links to the series of faith-based documentaries hosted by Steves and in collaboration with ELCA video producer Tim Frakes. Find out more about these documentaries and read Steves' reflections on their production. You can also find a short biography on Steves.

These popular programs can be used for family devotions, adult Bible classes and confirmation classes. To visit Steves' Web page go to: [www.elca.org/communication/ricksteves/](http://www.elca.org/communication/ricksteves/).

## Youth Talk about Human Sexuality

The Task Force for the ELCA Studies on Sexuality has launched a mini Web site ([www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/youth](http://www.elca.org/faithfuljourney/youth)) to encourage senior high youth to provide feedback for the first draft and proposed social statement on human sexuality.

*Free in Christ to Care for the Neighbor: Lutheran Youth Talk about Human Sexuality* is the interactive adaptation of the adult study *Free in Christ to Serve the Neighbor*. The Web site uses music, movie clips, vignettes of young people and activities to engage youth between the ages of 13 and 18 in a variety of learning styles. Bible study, prayer and ELCA social teachings guide youth as they reflect on topics such as:

- When is sex OK?
- Creation and sin
- Sexuality as depicted in popular culture



Youth are encouraged to comment from the perspective of faith on the world they live in via an online discussion form.

# Online Resources Make it Easy to Participate in the Souper Bowl

America's youth are working to make 2008 a record year for the Souper Bowl of Caring, with a national goal of raising \$10 million in cash and cans for hunger and poverty-related charities across the country.

Youth will collect cash donations in large soup pots on or near Feb. 3, 2008. Each group gives their donation directly to the charity of their choice—no money is sent to Souper Bowl of Caring headquarters. Organizers simply ask that groups report their collection amount so a national total can be determined.

In 2007, close to 14,000 youth organizations raised \$8 million for charities across the country, and since beginning with a single

prayer in 1990, the Souper Bowl of Caring has raised more than \$41 million for those in need.

This year, ELCA World Hunger and ELCA Youth Ministry are inviting congregations and youth ministries to participate in the national Souper Bowl of Caring and to prayerfully consider making it a souper bowl of daring!

"Each year during the Souper Bowl of Caring, youth groups across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) creatively and enthusiastically lead their congregations to respond to Jesus' call to 'Go and do likewise.' Each year the ELCA World Hunger Appeal gratefully receives many donations from Souper Bowl collections to serve hungry neighbors

around the corner and around the world. I thank God for these servant leaders and ask for God's blessings on all who give and receive through the Souper Bowl of Caring" said the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the ELCA.

To learn more about hunger and participate in the Souper Bowl of Caring go to:

- [www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger)
- [www.elca.org/youth](http://www.elca.org/youth)
- [www.elca.org/hunger/souperbowl](http://www.elca.org/hunger/souperbowl)
- [www.souperbowl.org](http://www.souperbowl.org)



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

**Q** We're looking for resources that would help our congregation take practical steps toward change and help us know what to expect during this change. What can you recommend?

**A** Be sure to check the online Congregational Resource Guide [www.congregationalresources.org](http://www.congregationalresources.org) (Alban Institute). You'll find a tutorial there, *Spiritual Strategic Journey: Congregational Redevelopment*, which may be helpful. Books I would recommend include: *The Church Transition Workbook: Getting Your Church in Gear* by Bill Kemp (Upper Room Books, [www.upperroom.org/bookstore](http://www.upperroom.org/bookstore)); *Discontinuity and Hope: Radical Change and the Path to the Future* by Lyle E. Schaller (Abingdon Press, [www.abingdonpress.com](http://www.abingdonpress.com)); *Leading Congregational Change: A Practical Guide for the Transformational Journey* by Herrington, Bonem, and Furr (Jossey-Bass, [www.josseybass.com](http://www.josseybass.com)); *Memories, Hopes, and Conversations: Appreciative Inquiry and Congregational Change* by Mark Lau Branson (Alban Institute, [www.alban.org](http://www.alban.org)); and *Recovering the Sacred Center: Church Renewal from the Inside Out* by Howard E. Friend (Judson Press, [www.judsonpress.com](http://www.judsonpress.com)).

—Julie Aageson Director  
Eastern North Dakota Resource Center  
Fargo

**A** *Who Is Our Church?* is a publication by Alban Institute that helps congregations take a good look at their past, difficult as it may be, and move ahead with plans and future developments. I think a concentrated study of this book by any committees and interested people would produce good results.

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

**A** *Leading Change in Congregations: Spiritual and Organizational Tools for Leaders* by Gil Rendle (Alban Institute) is a must read for leaders of congregations. It discusses both the support and the inevitable resistance as well as the importance of communication. The video *The Business of Paradigms* with Joel Barker ([www.starthrower.com](http://www.starthrower.com)) really helps to lay the groundwork for change in an organization. These are two great resources, with which every leader in the church should be familiar.

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

**A** My favorite resource for change is John Kotter's book, *Leading Change* (Harvard Business School Press). Even though this book is meant for the corporate world, congregational leaders can learn a lot from it. Kotter offers a practical approach to an organized means of leading, not managing, change. He presents an eight-stage process of change, with highly useful examples that show how to go about implementing it. Based on experience with numerous companies, his sound advice gets directly at reasons organizations fail to change, reasons that primarily concern the leader. He also has written a book that's a parable about change, *Our Iceberg Is Melting*. To learn more about John Kotter's resources, including his video on change, *Changing and Succeeding under Any Condition*, see [www.johnkotter.com](http://www.johnkotter.com)

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

**A** *Building Hope* (ELCA, [www.augsburgfortress.org/store](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store)) is a DVD that offers good examples of congregations achieving sustainable

change and building joy-filled, deeply faithful church communities that reach out to those around them and bring them in their doors. The book, *A Servant's Manual: Christian Leadership for Tomorrow* by Michael Foss (Augsburg Fortress), includes conversation about congregational mission as well as envisioning and managing change. I would also recommend *Best Practices from America's Best Churches*, edited by Wilkes, Minchin (Paulist Press, [www.paulistpress.com](http://www.paulistpress.com)), for a wide array of practical advice from churches that have "been there—done that."

—Catherine Fink, director  
Heilig Resource Center  
Salisbury, NC

**A** LeaderResources ([www.leaderresources.org](http://www.leaderresources.org)) publishes *Facing Change: A Resource for Church Leaders* that uses the Kubler-Ross stages to help people understand and face changes in a congregation. It describes a retreat with a room for each of the stages and activities that the group does in each room. The retreat will help participants identify and process their reactions to change, understand the incremental changes of systems and learn to operate as a healthy team.

—The Rev. Linda L. Grenz  
Publisher and CEO  
LeaderResources

If nothing ever changed,  
there'd be no butterflies.  
—Author Unknown

# Kids Not For Sale

Her name is Kim, and she is eight years old. Tonight she will be bought for sex—perhaps 10 times before the sun comes up.

The people who “own” Kim tell her that the money she makes—less than \$2 a night—goes to her parents, and she is a good little daughter for helping them. In reality, her family never sees the money. In fact, they never see her again.

Kim has no idea that this year marks the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in Great Britain. She never heard of William Wilberforce, the young politician who waged a 20-year battle to end it. To Kim, slavery continues, and child trafficking is one of its faces.

Today, more people—27 million adults and children—are held in slavery than in all the years of the colonial slave trade combined. One of its most horrifying forms is commercial sexual exploitation of children.

This year, 1.2 million children—mostly girls, but also boys—will be bought and sold for sex around the world in organized prostitution rings. An “auntie” shows up in a village and offers to educate a distant niece. “Just sign here,” she tells the parents, who never see their child again.

Girls who belong to ethnic minority groups will cross borders to earn money to send home to their families by selling the only possessions they have—their bodies. In one country, it’s possible to purchase a five-year-old girl—not just for an hour, but forever—for about \$600.

I’ve seen the cages that hold girls until they no longer have a will to fight. Their stories are horrific—abuse, torture, disease and eventually death by AIDS. Children are bought and sold for sex every night in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, South America and even the United States.

In 2000, Congress passed the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, which went a long way toward reducing trafficking around the world. Child trafficking is illegal in almost every country, but in many places, laws are

unenforced or under-enforced, and traffickers routinely skirt the law.

In “Amazing Grace,” the film about Wilberforce’s fight to end an institution, a former slave talks about the brutal practice of branding slaves with the same hot irons used to mark cattle. “Branding lets you know you no longer belong to God,” he says, “but to a man.”

When I tell stories of kids I’ve met, I get one of two reactions: “I don’t want to know” or “How can I help?”

To the first group, my response is that, yes, child trafficking is overwhelming, and the stories can be painful, but unless we bring them to light, we have no hope of stopping it.

The other reaction seems a lot harder to address. Unless you can hop on a plane and rescue kids, or counsel them, or comfort them, what can you—one person—do to stop a worldwide horror that by its very nature operates underground and in darkness?

The answer is just what you’re doing: not turning away, not turning the page. Being aware of what is happening in the dark and disgusting world of child trafficking is the first step you can take to end it.

Awareness is not the only answer, but it is part of the answer. In countries like Thailand, where it was once not polite to talk about issues such as this, the rate of trafficking has gone down dramatically as schools now teach awareness programs to children. It doesn’t touch every child, especially those from ethnic minority groups who are still greatly at risk, but it’s helping.

You may never meet a victim, but you can become aware of what she endures and speak out on her behalf. Google “child trafficking,” and read about organizations that work to end trafficking—International Justice Mission, the Amazing Change Campaign, Justice For Children International, ECPAT, Stop the Traffic, PawPaw’s Pals, the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, and many more. Almost every agency will tell you what you can do to help.

The State Department’s TIPS (Trafficking



Photo by Diana Scimone

*How much is a little girl like this worth?*

in Persons) List ([www.state.gov/g/tip](http://www.state.gov/g/tip)) ranks 150 countries according to their efforts to end trafficking. If you’re traveling to another country or do business there, use the list to educate yourself on what’s happening within their borders.

Like other forms of slavery and eradication of entire groups of people, child trafficking feeds on silence and ignorance. Wilberforce was one person who stood against many—and brought down an institution without a shot being fired. Let’s not be guilty of perpetrating this present form of slavery by being silent or ignorant.

Diana Scimone ([diana@pawpawspals.org](mailto:diana@pawpawspals.org)) is president of PawPaw’s Pals, Inc. ([www.pawpawspals.org](http://www.pawpawspals.org)), an international relief agency helping children in disaster and crisis situations around the world. She wrote this article while working on the “Not For Sale” child-trafficking awareness project aimed at children who are at risk for trafficking.

## Understanding Inter-Religious Relations

Dialogue among Lutherans and people of other faiths might be called “a window for understanding.” A free downloadable resource, “Windows for Understanding: Jewish-Muslim-Lutheran Relations” is available through ELCA Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Relations.

Talking together is just one part of dialogue. ELCA congregations and leaders are getting engaged with the Muslim and Jewish communities in efforts for peace and justice.

“Building relationships is the bottom line,” according to Pastor Ann Helmke, director of the PeaceCenter in San Antonio, Texas. Last November Helmke worked with religious leaders to organize an event for 200 people, “Soul of a Citizen.” They included Baha’i, Buddhist, Hindu, Native American, and Sikh leaders as well as Christians, Muslims and Jews.

In congregations, the newspaper is an easy starting point for discussion. “Praying the newspaper is one of the best ways to start to connect with others and probably the technique most used in Sunday schools,” Helmke said. The PeaceCenter offers a resource, *Peace is Our Birthright*, at the Web site: <http://1.salsa.net/peace/ebooks>. The first chapter, “Pray” is available free.

Helmke said, “For Christians the question is, How do we take our baptism out into the world and make public our values and beliefs?” A starting point for dialogue can be lighter though. “Try talking about food, because everyone loves to eat, then move on to celebrations and holy days,” she said.

Confirmation mentor groups from Easter Lutheran Church in Eagan, Minn., annually accept the open invitation from Temple Israel in Minneapolis to attend a *Seder* meal and learn its meaning to the Jewish people.

According to Pastor Kevin Olson, confirmation students are also expected to

visit “a church from a tradition not our own.” They can choose to visit a synagogue, a Greek Orthodox church, the Roman Catholic Cathedral of St. Paul, or New Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Minneapolis.

Lutherans for Justice in the Holy Land got underway in 2006 at Central Lutheran Church in Portland, Ore., as a congregational expression of the ELCA initiative, Peace Not Walls: Stand for Justice in the Holy Land ([www.elca.org/peacenotwalls](http://www.elca.org/peacenotwalls)). The new group seeks to help Central focus on the moral and spiritual challenges presented by ongoing conflict in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon.

Central member Jennifer Grosvenor provides strong linkage to Portland’s Institute for Christian-Muslim Understanding (ICMU); she serves on the ICMU Board. The two groups help distribute information about each other’s activities and events, and Grosvenor passes it along to the Oregon Synod communicator. She has been invited to speak at the synod assembly and synod global mission events as well.

According to Grosvenor, “While Lutherans for Justice in the Holy Land speaks out for the congregations and institutions of Palestinian Lutherans in particular, our efforts for justice are for all the people of the Holy Land.” For more information go to [http://centralportland.org/justice\\_in\\_the\\_holy\\_land.htm](http://centralportland.org/justice_in_the_holy_land.htm).

“Windows for Understanding: Jewish-Muslim-Lutheran Relations,” the 70-page downloadable guide, provides detailed sections on Judaism and Islam. You can find it at: [www.elca.org/ecumenical/interreligious/windows.html](http://www.elca.org/ecumenical/interreligious/windows.html).

## Sexual Exploitation and the Church

Most members of the ELCA are able to identify the more egregious forms of commercial sexual exploitation, such as pornography, strip clubs, and sex tourism. Unfortunately, there are many other ways to participate in a sex-saturated culture.

The ELCA’s message on *Commercial Sexual Exploitation*, defines this type of exploitation as “the destruction of God’s good gift [of sexuality] and human integrity.” When sexual exploitation is organized into a system for profit, it is *commercial* sexual exploitation.

Have you thought about the ways that you participate in a culture of sexuality? For example advertising tells you that sexuality is to be packaged and sold. The retail of human bodies on television, billboards, magazines and other advertising venues supports commercial sexual exploitation.

What role can you play in subverting a culture of sexual exploitation? A good place to start is to identify the forms of sexual exploitation inhabiting your own life.

See the ELCA’s Justice for Women Web site for further theological and organizing resources and information: [www.elca.org/justiceforwomen](http://www.elca.org/justiceforwomen). For further information, contact Dr. Mary Streufert in the Church in Society unit: 800/638-3522, ext. 2281, or [Mary.Streufert@elca.org](mailto:Mary.Streufert@elca.org).

# Discipleship and Developmental Disabilities



Stock Photo

A Sunday school teacher gave each student a piece of a small jigsaw puzzle. He reminded the class that without each individual piece they held in their hands, the complete picture would never be finished. He explained that without each and every one of us God's plan is incomplete. This lesson just happened to be in a class of adults with developmental disabilities, but the same message rings true for all congregations eager to respond to the call to discipleship by welcoming people with a variety of abilities. Walk together, learn from each other, and consider all partners in faith as their contributions are woven into the fabric of your congregation's life.

We must reshape our attitude about people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities by

building from the perspective of similarities rather than differences. When your congregation looks at one of its members with a disability, do they see an individual who only has needs? Or, do they see an usher, greeter, alter guild member, acolyte, communion assistant, choir member, banner maker, bulletin folder, nursery volunteer, teacher assistant, prayer chain member, church library assistant, grounds maintenance worker, or pastoral call committee member? With enough support, anyone can do anything!

*A developmental disability is a disability that is manifested before age 18 and is attributable to mental retardation or related conditions that include cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism or other neurological conditions.*

## Evangelism and Inclusive Ministry

As we take a wide-angle snapshot of our congregations, how many of actively involved members are people with disabilities? Parents and siblings often fear a sense of isolation, rejection or even embarrassment as they consider the congregation's reaction to their loved one's involvement in church. Many congregations share wonderful stories of entire families who became involved and baptized in the church through the gate-way invitation of a wholistic disability ministry. As you begin your ministry with and among people with disabilities, connect with neighboring congregations and reach out into the community with the message of God's love

and grace for ALL. Contact local agencies and institutions. Encourage those with disabilities to invite their friends. Your congregation will be enriched and strengthened.

## Beginning a Developmental Disability Ministry

The most successful disability awareness initiatives seek to answer a fundamental question. How are the God-given gifts of all people discovered and put to use in this community of faith?

Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services has prepared a comprehensive and easy to use manual called *Building a Developmental Disability Ministry* to help congregations start and sustain a vital ministry with and for people with developmental disabilities and their families. For more information see the contact listing below.

In the meantime, as you consider what a developmental disability ministry might look like in your setting, be open to creative and significant essentials and possibilities:

- Ask your prayer team or worship leaders to call upon the Holy Spirit to stir the hearts of people who would form a small coordinating team.
- Use temple talks, bulletin inserts, or newsletter columns to educate, equip, and dispel apprehension about interacting with people with disabilities.
- Language communicates values. Teach people of all ages to use "people-first" references that honor the individual rather than the disability. We say, "child with a disability", not "disabled child". We say, "people with developmental disabilities", not "the developmentally disabled." In addition, respect adults with developmental disabilities. They are adults not children.
- Consider a special monthly worship service for the congregation and the community designed for people with disabilities and their families. St. Paul Lutheran Church Lionville, Penn., and their Rejoicing Spirits worship service can help you get started. (see Rejoicing Spirits below).
- Train high school youth and adults to be mentor/buddies (Friendship Ministries listed below provides training and resources).
- Uphold the notion of "whole person-whole family" by recognizing that parents, siblings, and caregivers have unique concerns, struggles and celebrations.
- Help individuals in the congregation develop a relationship with those with disabilities with a visit, call, or invitation to congregational activities and birthday cards.
- Many ELCA congregations offer adapted Sunday school classes for people with disabilities in the congregation and community. Don't limit yourself to traditional Sunday morning activities. Consider a day-long retreat for social and spiritual nurture with lots of music and interactive stimuli.

*Diane Monroe  
Director for Christian Education  
With special thanks to David Morstad,  
Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services*

## Retirement. Small steps can make a big difference.

It doesn't take much. As little as \$50 a month invested in an IRA at Thrivent Financial can make a big difference when it's time to retire. The sooner you start, the better retirement can be.



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## Suggested Resources

Bethesda Lutheran Homes and Services  
[www.blhs.org](http://www.blhs.org) or 800-369-4636

National Christian Resource Center (NCRC)  
[www.blhs.org/resources/ncrc.asp](http://www.blhs.org/resources/ncrc.asp) or 800-369-4636, ext. 4449

ELCA Disability Resource Listing  
[www.elca.org/christianeducation/educators/specialed.html](http://www.elca.org/christianeducation/educators/specialed.html)

Friendship Ministries  
888/866-8966 or [www.friendship.org](http://www.friendship.org)

Rejoicing Spirits  
[www.rejoicingspirits.org](http://www.rejoicingspirits.org) or 610/363-6264