



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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Internet Resources for Musicians

Parish musicians in small, newly formed or growing congregations are always on the look out for new musical resources. The Internet offers a host of resources for parish musicians—and they are mostly free! Check out the following:

- Library of Congress – Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1820-1860, 1870-1885, <http://memory.loc.gov>. This huge database of the archival files of the U.S. Copyright Office contains over 62,000 pieces of sheet music. The database is searchable by subject, instrument, title, composer, style of music and/or type of choir.
- Choral Public Domain Library – www.cpd.org. With over 9,000 scores by more than 1,300 composers, something can be found for any size choir. The database may be searched by composer, title, era (chant to modern), style (anthems to oratorios) and liturgical season (Advent to Quinquagesima). Most scores are printable in multi-page PDF format.
- Werner Icking Music Archive – <http://icking-music-archive.org>. Classical music is predominant in this large database

maintained in Denmark. Searchable by composer, the collection features scores from Europe's most familiar names. The database is updated daily and provides many pieces for organ, choir and instruments.

- Hymns of Martin Luther – The Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org>. A free PDF version of an 1884 edition of 36 hymns by Luther in German/English. This is a historic and authoritative resource that may be used by choirs and congregations. These hymns are particularly appropriate for special services.
- Free Christmas Carol Music – www.christmascarolmusic.org and <http://christmas-songbook.net>. Between the two sites there are more than 100 pieces of free sheet music for Christmas—secular and religious, SATB, melody line with chords, guitar lead sheets and transcriptions for many instruments. This is handy for preparing service booklets for “lessons and carols of Christmas,” children’s programs, caroling groups and congregation sing-alongs.



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seeds for the parish

July-August 2008

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.elca.org



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Children at an Ohio congregation didn't receive new Bibles from their congregation this year. The books they were given were slightly used.

Never give a child a new Bible

On a blustery March morning in a mid-sized town in northeastern Ohio, people gather for Sunday worship. With about 400 baptized members, the congregation is similar to the community it serves, with an even mix of young, mature and senior members. "The congregation is small enough to know people by their names and yet large enough to be always meeting someone new," says a man extending his hand in greeting to a visitor.

Settling into a front pew is a senior couple with the grandsons they are raising. At the back of the assembly is a young family—new members—a mother, father, their 3-year-old toddler and his infant sister, who was baptized just the week before. A single mom and her teenaged daughter are chatting with a retired widower, whose children left the nest years ago. A brother and sister play a rhyming game while their parents talk to friends about

the upcoming adult forum retreat. A typical Sunday morning for this Lutheran church? Not really. Because today is Bible Sunday, and this year it's different.

When the congregation's pastor returned from the ELCA Churchwide Assembly last August, he was brimming with ideas for the newly adopted "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible Initiative." The vision of the five-year initiative is: "That the whole church become more fluent in the first language of faith—the language of Scripture—in order that we may live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened and empowered by the Word."

One idea the pastor brought back from Chicago: "Never give a child a NEW Bible! Instead, take that Bible and pass it around to family members, parents and grandparents, and have it marked up with favorite Bible

passages." The pastor thought it was perfect for his intergenerational congregation. This March morning, as the hum of activity dies down and people are seated, carefully marked Bibles are being placed into the hands of fourth graders.

A mother watches her child eagerly turn the pages of his Bible in search of the brightly colored highlights she made for him. She remembers the cross bookmark a member of her home congregation crocheted for her when she was a child. It now marks the page where her confirmation verse can be found.

A teenaged girl laughingly points to the passage she was allowed to pick out for her little sister from Leviticus 3: "All fat is the Lord's."

...he was brimming with ideas for the newly adopted "Book of Faith: Lutherans Read the Bible" Initiative.

A woman tells her granddaughter about the beautiful white Bible she received the day she was confirmed, April 6, 1952. She remembers the date because it is stamped in gold leaf on the back cover of the now well-worn book she still uses in her daily devotions. "I want her to read the passages that have touched me from the Gospels of Mark and John," says the grandmother. "Perhaps one day she too will give her grandchildren special Bibles with her favorite passages marked and tell them of the Bible their great grandmother marked for her. She may even share the verses I picked out, and they will know a little something about me."

As the call to worship begins, members of the adult forum wonder what ideas the pastor is going to use at their upcoming Bible retreat. "Yep," a man whispers to his wife, "Never give a child a new Bible—I can't wait to see what the Bible is going to give us on that retreat."

To find ideas for your congregation and more information on the Book of Faith Initiative go to www.elca.org/bookoffaith/.



Diane Monroe suggests fun and inspiring ideas for leading children and youth in prayer. **Page 2**



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Daily Prayer



Staff photo

Paul urges the community at Thessalonica to “pray without ceasing ... for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thessalonians 5:17-18 NRSV). This suggests that the Christian life is shaped by prayer: being open to the presence of God, listening for the word of God, seeking Christ in everything, and caring for each other and for creation. Prayer nourishes our lives of faith in every aspect.

The pervasiveness of prayer in the lives of Christians leads to common patterns around prayer. For centuries, Christians have gathered to sing, hear Scripture and recall the resurrection dawn and the light no darkness can overcome at the beginning and end of the day.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship includes these highly adaptable orders for Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Night Prayer and Responsive Prayer.

“... pray without ceasing ...
for this is the will of God in
Christ Jesus for you”

Whether you have been asked to lead devotions at a committee meeting, are looking for a pattern for personal or family devotions or are planning assembly worship during the week, these orders are helpful. These flexible rites

offer patterns and structure for the Christian community's life of prayer. But oftentimes, the question remains: How do I adapt these resources for my particular setting?

Go to www.elca.org/worship and follow the link to the new *Exploring Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Shaping Daily Prayer and Responsive Prayer for a Variety of Settings*. This resource includes helpful advice about how to use and adapt *Evangelical Lutheran Worship's* orders for Morning, Evening and Night Prayer as well as the order for Responsive Prayer for meetings, retreats, personal devotion, assembly worship and more.

How are you and your congregation using daily prayer resources?

Congregations and individuals use the ancient church orders of Morning, Evening and Night Prayer in many different ways. Congregations gather as an assembly utilizing daily prayer patterns daily, weekly or seasonally. Some use the daily prayer patterns for personal devotion. Others find more creative ways to observe daily prayer. An online survey reviews the practices, insights and resources for daily prayer that are being used across this church, in order to better understand where further resources are needed. Participate in the online survey about daily prayer at www.elca.org/worship.

New Resources

Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Keeping Time, The Church's Years by Gail Ramshaw and Mons Teig

This resource from the *Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship* series explores why Christians have different ways of looking at time and how the life of the church is ordered and organized by days, weeks, seasons and years. It provides detailed information about Sundays, festivals, seasons and commemorations as well as daily prayer. Available after August 1, 2008, from www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 978-0-8066-7016-4, \$35.00).

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Enlarged Print Edition

Evangelical Lutheran Worship is also available with enlarged black print and is binder-ready. This edition comes in a storage box that contains 30 tab dividers for convenient organization. Extra pages of frequently used portions are included, such as the Creeds and Confession and Forgiveness. It is useful for persons with impaired vision, service leaders or musicians. Available from www.augsburgfortress.org (ISBN 978-0-8066-5672-4, \$80.00).

seeds for the parish

www.elca.org/seeds

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Teach us to pray

Diane Monroe, director for Christian education, Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission, offers the following ideas for leading children and youth in prayer:

- **BUILDING BLOCK PRAYER** – Use a stack of children's building blocks. Place one block on the table proclaiming Christ as the cornerstone of our faith. Invite each person to add one block as a petition is spoken. The finished structure will look differently each time but is always firmly grounded in God's love.
- **CUBE PRAYERS** – On a wooden block or small square cardboard box, draw or stamp a different symbol on each of the six sides. Each person takes a turn at rolling the cube and of-

fers a prayer according to the symbol on top.

- **HAND SQUEEZE PRAYER** – Hold hands in a circle. Eyes closed. Someone begins with the first petition. When the person is done, he/she squeezes the hand of the next person and so on around the circle.
- **PAPER TOWEL PRAYER** – Each person is given a roll of paper towels and is asked to write a person's name or a personal prayer concern on each sheet. Re-roll. Each day tear off one sheet and lift up prayers for that particular concern or person.
- **WEB PRAYER** – Begin by holding a ball of yarn or string and then offer a sentence prayer. Hold on to the end and toss the ball across the circle. The person who catches the ball offers a



Stock photo

prayer, holds on to string and then tosses the ball to someone else. This continues until all have participated. Close by thanking God for the connected faith community.

And how are the children?

Let the little children come to me and, do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs. – Matthew 19:14

The Masai people of Kenya and Tanzania in East Africa often greet one another with, “Kasserian ingera?” which means “and how are the children?” The typical response is “All the children are well,” acknowledging that if the children are well, then so, too, the community can be considered healthy and productive. This simple yet power-packed phrase honors and values children and reminds adults of their privilege and responsibility. What would happen if each of us regularly asked this same question in our congregations, homes, and communities? What would children’s ministry across the ELCA look like?

If your children’s ministry begins with kindergarten, you’re starting too late. Researchers tell us that the capacity for faith growth is at its strongest between birth and three years old. Pastor Nancy Windels and others at Normandale Lutheran Church, Edina, Minn., know this well. Visit www.faithimprints.normluth.org to learn more about their program. As children grow, they are busy discovering the world. It is in those moment-by-moment discoveries that parents and others must expect and anticipate expressions of spirituality as children use their gifts of wonder and imagination in sensing God’s presence through sight, sound, smell, touch and taste.

Even though attention to a clean, well-maintained, secure facility is a must for children’s ministry, a safe and loving emotional environment is far more critical. When children are assured that more than just the pastor or Sunday school teacher cares about them and prays for them, their identity in the faith community is strengthened. When children feel at home at church, they come to know God as a trustworthy, loving, caring, life-giving Creator. They trust that they can bring their fears, angers and short-comings without judgment. They imitate caring Christ-centered relationships with others. For all these reasons, congregations must have clear policies in place that safeguard children from physical and emotional harm or abuse, and eliminates any roadblocks that stand in the way of healthy relationships and Christian formation. For suggested resources visit www.elca.org/legal/protectingchildren.

As children and their parents enter your facility, or even as they approach the parking lot or front entrance, all must feel welcome.

That sense of hospitality grows when children know they are welcomed with a “come as you are” attitude. Consider this exercise. Ask each committee in your congregational structure to list all their responsibilities and volunteer tasks. Review the list marking only those tasks that absolutely could not be done by a child. Chances are, worship, newsletter articles, bulletin boards and many other aspects of the Christian community would be enhanced by the gifts children can bring.

Children need to understand that they too are disciples

The ELCA Evangelical Outreach and Congregational Mission unit intends to support and engage leaders in the formation of evangelizing congregations that make disciples for Jesus Christ who use their gifts for God’s reign in the church and in the world. Children need to understand that they too are disciples and “disciple-makers” as they invite others to come to know Christ. Helping young disciples grow compels parents and others to first model practices of faith and give them the language of faith-full living! Mentoring and cross-generational activities provide opportunities for disciples of all ages to grow and learn from one another. Pray for children and teach them to pray. Put age-appropriate Bibles in their hands and tell the biblical story together. Let their life-experience contribute to God’s ongoing story of salvation. Teach them that their day-to-day discipleship is their vocation. Offer many opportunities to help children become stewards, serve others, worship in the community and tell others at school and at home of God’s loving action in their lives.

Suggested resources:

- Youth and Family Institute www.youthandfamily.org
- *Splash! Birth to 3 Faith Formation* www.augsburgfortress.org
- Ministry with Children Weblog at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. www.luthersem.edu/cyff/faculty_staff.asp
- Cross-generational discipleship <http://archive.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/index.html>
- *The Ministry of Children’s Education: Foundations, Contexts, and Practices* www.augsburgfortress.org
- *Children Matter: Celebrating Their Place in the Church, Family, and Community*, Eerdmans Publishing, ISBN 0-8028-2228-2

Assessing your children’s ministry

Consider how the following are addressed in your congregation:

- A children’s ministry mission statement informs all aspects of congregational life
- Planning, implementation, and evaluation of children’s ministry is done by a team of leaders representing all aspects of congregational life
- Prayer precedes recruitment of children’s ministry leaders and volunteers
- The whole child is regarded as programming is offered that supports spiritual, intellectual, physical, social, moral, emotional, imaginative and self-reliant development
- Strong attention is given to ritual, milestones and baptismal affirmation
- Worship, service, fellowship and education is planned with children in mind
- Cross-generational opportunities are offered
- Current realities in children’s lives are considered and integrated into programming
- Expressions of advocacy for all children are evident in your public voice and service
- Leaders and volunteers in all children’s ministry activities are regularly recognized and thanked
- Scholarships are set aside to help children attend camps or retreats

You’re never too young to start thinking about not acting your age.

Have a retirement vision—even if it’s to act like a kid again. As a Fortune 500[®] company with over \$70 billion in assets under management,* we can help you plan for what’s ahead. How will you thrive in retirement? Tell us at thrivent.com/retirement.



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Give thanks for the dedicated ministry of Jim and Karen Noss, in Cameroon



Staff photo

Karen and Jim Noss retire after 32 years as missionaries in Cameroon.

Which church needs a roof? Will the lumber and metal supplies arrive before the volunteers come to build the new roof? Is there enough housing space for the volunteers? Are the housing units ready? Have transportation logistics been worked out for the nine volunteers and a translator?

ELCA missionaries Jim and Karen Noss answer these questions in a snap. Serving respectively as the ELCA mission treasurer and administrator and ELCA logistics coordinator, Jim and Karen have handled the finances and logistic needs of ELCA missionaries in both Cameroon and the Central African Republic. This summer, Jim and Karen are retiring after 32 years in Ngaoundere, Cameroon.

In the last few years, Jim and Karen have helped host ELCA groups from Cameroon's Companion Synods in South Dakota, Northern Minnesota and Pennsylvania as they participate in the construction of roofs for churches in villages around the country. The church structures are built by the congregations, which then invites their companions to visit for the

completion of the roof and the dedication of the church. This relationship is a joy for members of both churches. Together, they will have completed the ninth church roof project this year.

... thank God for the Nosses' many years of service on July 30

The Noss family roots in Cameroon stretch back even before Jim and Karen. As Jim explains, "It will be 60 years since my parents, with their two boys, first arrived in Meiganga with the assurance from one farmer in southern Minnesota that he would give \$1,000 for their support for each year they were in Cameroon. Apart from that one pledge of funds, many had assured them of their prayers." After growing up in Cameroon and studying in the United States, Jim met Karen. They married in 1965 and three years later they began short-term service in Ngaoundere.

Jim and Karen began working with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Cameroon (ELCC) to develop a financial system compatible for computers. They trained Cameroonians to staff the financial aspects of the church, and began to expand the relationship of the ELCC and the ELCA by providing for the logistics of short-term visitors and new mission personnel.

As they prepare to return to the U.S. this summer, Karen and Jim express excitement in their next step. "We are eager to spend more time with family, especially our children, their spouses and the grandkids. We also look forward to time with friends and our faithful church sponsors ... and have much to share of the Lord's ministry in Central Africa."

You are invited to thank God for the Nosses' many years of service on July 30 with *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.

Campaign produces new Middle East peace resources

Middle East peace and the absence of peace; Israel and the Palestinians; settlements and the separation barrier: the complex issues and concerns swirling around these topics can make it daunting to undertake teaching and leading the discussions that are so vital to the ELCA's "Peace Not Walls" campaign for justice in the Holy Land.

A new Resource User Guide available at the Peace Not Walls Web site can help. Go to <http://archive.elca.org/peacenotwalls/> and click on "Educate" – scroll down to find the "2008 Resource User Guide."

There are many different kinds of resources available. The Resource User Guide is intended to help you decide which will work best for your class or event.

Turn to Peace Not Walls online resources for help preparing for adult forums, youth programs, women's meetings, worship and travel.

The 2008 Resource User Guide includes adult sessions (one session or a series of three), a session for youth, and another for young adults or campus ministry. A session designed for women is provided. Resources for worship

should be used with every group.

The Peace Not Walls Web site strives to help pastors and teachers introduce concerns about justice in Palestine and Israel and expand understanding of the issues and options for taking action. Peace Not Walls is the campaign of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America to learn, pray and act for peace with justice in the Holy Land.

There are a number of new resources to consult and/or use in your own ministries. Most are available via the Peace Not Walls Web site, and they can be ordered at no cost by e-mailing Marie (Mia) Cortez at marie.cortez@elca.org or 773/380-2642 (or 800/638-3522, ext. 2642).

New 2008 resources

- 28-minute DVD "Peace Not Walls: Making a Difference in the Holy Land" features images from the Holy Land and interviews with ELCA members, Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, ELCJHL Bishop Munib Younan, Rabbi David Rosen, and many others. This video explores such topics as the ELCA's Middle East peace initiative, the Israeli separation barrier, accompaniment
- with the Lutheran church there, and collaboration with interfaith peace partners. www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/resources
- Discussion guide for "Peace Not Walls: Making a Difference in the Holy Land" [PDF] www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/resources
- Updated reproducible flier, "Many Walls Stand in the Way of Peace" [PDF] www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/resources
- "The Holy Land: Recent History and the

The Separation barrier, is seen here from a rooftop in Aida Refugee Camp, in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

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Quest for Peace" — PowerPoint presentation with script and user guide; outlines the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and describes how the ELCA and the ELCJHL are working for peace. www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/resources

- Peace Not Walls educational Resource User Guide www.elca.org/peacenotwalls/resources
- Newly-expanded Peace Not Walls FAQs [PDF] www.elca.org/peacenotwalls.

ELCA world hunger gifts make a difference in Liberia

A young, single mother living in a rural Liberian community knew her baby was sick when he refused to eat. Because immediate medical attention was not an option, she and her child set out that morning on the long journey through the brush to reach a hospital.

After carrying her child for hours, the woman came upon a river that required a ferry to cross it. It was almost midday before she finally made it to the other side, and by then her baby had a fever. Another full day of walking brought her to a road. There she got a ride in the back of a pickup, enduring two hours on a dusty road before finally reaching her destination.

He was not sure that the baby would live, but he said there was a chance ...

Phebe Hospital in Banga County, Liberia, took the woman in, according to Dr. Garfee T. Williams, the hospital's medical director. The baby was malnourished and suffered from malaria. He was not sure that the baby would live, but he said there was a chance because of the faith of people who share their resources.

The ELCA's involvement at Phebe Hospital, as well as with Curran Hospital in Zorzor, provides medical treatment when necessary for people like this mother and her baby, at little or no cost to them.

Gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal, administered through the ELCA

Global Mission unit, rebuilt Phebe Hospital twice during turbulent war years (1990–2006) and continue to help fight malaria and other diseases of poverty. Your gifts offer hope for a comprehensive solution to the root causes of poverty by helping communities access health care, learn about nutrition, improve agricultural techniques and much more.

For more information on the work of the ELCA in Liberia, go to:

- Walking with the Lutheran Church in Liberia: www.elca.org/liberia (see "News about Curran and Phebe Hospitals")
- ELCA Global Mission's "Country Packet" on Liberia: www.elca.org/countrypackets/
- ELCA World Hunger's "Stories" section on Africa: www.elca.org/hunger/stories (see "Africa"). Insert a "Reproducible Story" on Liberia in your bulletin, asking for gifts to the World Hunger Appeal.
- ELCA Good Gifts: www.elca.org/goodgifts (see "Care for the world's hungry" or give to "Stand With Africa" or "ELCA World Hunger: Health Care")

Gifts to support this ministry—checks made out to ELCA World Hunger Appeal—may be sent through your congregation or directly to: ELCA World Hunger Appeal, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago IL 60694-1764. Contributions may be made online at www.elca.org/goodgifts.

Get the facts about world hunger

How many people in the world are hungry? What percentage of people who are hungry in the United States are children? On average, in 2007 how many millions of people participated in the Food Stamp Program each month?

Find the answers to these and many more questions at www.elca.org/hunger, including dozens of statistics and facts that you can print in congregational bulletins, newsletters and other educational or fund-raising materials.

While you're at www.elca.org/hunger, sign up for "Fast Facts," a listserv that e-

mails one hunger-related fact to you every Monday. These and other world hunger facts include statistics on water, poverty, HIV/AIDS and other related topics. This hunger education information is made available by the ELCA World Hunger Program.

Are you a Hunger Contact?

Have you signed up to be a "Hunger Contact" yet? Stay "in the know" about programs supported by gifts to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal. To sign up, go to www.elca.org/hunger/contact.

Q&A

With the dog days of summer upon us what book do you recommend reading on a lazy, hazy day?

A book I highly recommend reading during the lazy-hazy days of summer is *The Illuminator* by Brenda Rickman Vantrease. Set in 14th century England, the author has managed to create interesting and somewhat unusual characters not often found in historical fiction. A prominent character in the book is the local anchoress, based on the mystic, Julian of Norwich, who is not often mentioned in historical fiction of the period. Nor does one often come across an illuminator as an integral character in a novel. The author also seamlessly weaves historical figures into the fabric of her fiction with practiced ease. This is a well-defined, imaginative book that brings the Middle Ages to life.

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

A book I have enjoyed is *Surprises Around the Bend: 50 Adventurous Walkers* by Richard Hasler. It's a delightful collection of essays and stories on walking and hiking. These are stories that describe the spiritual, mental and physical advantages of walking and hiking. Included are pieces from a diverse collection of famous walkers including Francis of Assisi, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr., Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Thomas Merton and others! This book is available from Augsburg Fortress at www.augsburgfortress.org or 800/328-4648. It is also available in both paperback and Kindle formats at Amazon.com.

—Beth Lewis, president & CEO, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis

Three Cups of Tea by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin is an inspiring story of one man's mission to promote peace, one school at a time. It is a real-life adventure story that recounts Mortenson's difficult and sometimes dangerous mission to build schools in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The Indiana Jones-like Mortenson is the director of the Central Asia Institute, a non-profit organization with a mission to promote and support community-based education in remote regions of Pakistan and Afghanistan. He is the son of Lutheran missionaries and spent his childhood in Tanzania on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro. Mortenson is currently a member of Christ the King Lutheran Church, Bozeman, Mont.

Purchases made on Amazon.com of the *Three Cups of Tea* paperback book, audio CD set and single track music CD will generate up to 7 percent of proceeds to benefit Central Asia Institute.

— Jan Rizzo, editor, *Seeds for the Parish*, Chicago

For anyone interested in radical Christianity and a life of faith that reflects the teachings of Jesus and being the Body of Christ in the world I recommend *Take This Bread: A Radical Conversion* by Sara Miles (publisher Ballantine). It's truly a stunning account of Miles' life as a journalist, cook, "foodie," and political activist that bumps up against a transformative eucharistic encounter in a church in San Francisco.

—Julie K. Ageson, coordinator, ELCA Resource Centers, Fargo, N.D.

New Book of Faith resources available

Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study is the first new resource for the Book of Faith Initiative. The book introduces Lutheran perspectives that guide our understanding of Scripture and shows how four methods of Bible study can open up Scripture passages. Four sample Bible studies demonstrate the four methods, and two Assessment Tools aid reflection and discussion about individual and group Bible study practices. The Assessment Tools are also available online.

A Leader Guide is also now available. This resource is free with the purchase of 10 or more units of *Opening the Book of Faith: Lutheran Insights for Bible Study*. Purchasers will receive a link to their Leader Guide within two business days of purchase.

Opening the Book of Faith is designed to help all adults recall or relearn the Lutheran approaches to Scripture that have been so fruitful over the centuries. A Spanish translation will be available soon.

To order, visit www.elca.org/bookoffaith



Adult Bible study resources will make up the second Book of Faith offering to be published by Augsburg Fortress. These resources will provide a comprehensive, holistic, Lutheran approach to engaging Scripture using the four methods of study introduced in *Opening the Book of Faith*. An introductory course will be offered fall 2008, culminating in a spring 2009 release of major Bible studies.

The third Book of Faith resource is the *Lutheran Study Bible*, also to be released in spring 2009. Using the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation, this Bible will integrate solid study material—maps, timelines, historical background—with articles and notes on Lutheran perspectives and principles for Bible study.

As part of your deeper engagement with the Word, help your group or congregation to make a commitment to the Book of Faith Initiative. Register your group or congregation's commitment at www.elca.org/bookoffaith Open Scripture. Join the conversation!

Resource for Race and Culture Statement Available in September



Stock photo

Members are urged by the Church Council to open a dialogue based on *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture*.

Congregational leaders are urged to plan now to use a discussion resource this fall on the ELCA's social statement, *Freed in Christ: Race, Ethnicity and Culture*.

The ELCA Church Council has invited congregations and members to begin a sustained dialogue in 2008 that will help this church to become more anti-racist and multicultural. Church leaders, congregations and members are encouraged to use this social statement to guide their dialogue. Discussion material for four sessions about the social statement will be available by September 1 on the ELCA Church in Society and Multicultural Ministries Web sites. In making this invitation to congregations and members, the Church Council responded to a call from the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, for a Sacred Day of Dialogue and Discussion on May 18, 2008.

Pentecost preparations for a less-and-more Christmas

If you want things to be different during the Christmas season—less stressful and more meaningful—it helps to create an action plan during Pentecost. Here are some ideas and resources to encourage some pre-holiday reflection and planning.

The Christmas-list exercise

On your own, as a member of a family or group of friends, or as part of a congregation class/event, consider your traditional calendar commitments and “to do” lists during Advent and Christmas.

- List the activities, foods, and events that you “do” every year in November and December. Consider each tradition you list; what is very important, important, or not important to you? What is on your list that you would be happy to do without...or do at some other time of year?
- List anything new that you think would be a special addition to your Advent observance and Christmas celebration.
- Commit to a November/December calendar and to-do list that reflect what you learn.
- After completing the exercise first as an individual, share your lists with family members and negotiate a family plan for November and December.

Unwrap your present thinking exercise

Most Christmas presents are wrapped with layers of family history, expectations, market-driven fantasy and emotion. Unwrapping

Christmas-gift traditions and expectations can lead to being more open to the true gifts of Advent and Christmas.

- Consider your family's Christmas-gift traditions: What is expected? What gift-strategies, like drawing names, do you use? How are they working?
- Consider your personal experience: What kind of Christmas presents did you receive as a child? What was your favorite Christmas gift last year? What was your “best ever” Christmas gift? What made these gifts special?

Dreaming of a simple Christmas Exercise

Most of us end up wanting at Christmas. We want less debt, chaos and “stuff.” We want more time and space for meaning and awe; we want to delight our loved ones; we want to replay our memory (or play out our vision) of the perfect Christmas.

- What would you like “less of” and what would you like “more of” during the coming Advent and Christmas seasons?
- Brainstorm alternatives to store-bought presents. Strategize antidotes to “too much.”
- Let family and friends know what you intend to give this Christmas.
- Let family and friends know what you'd like to receive this Christmas. “Don't give me anything,” for example, is not as helpful as “Please don't give me a thing...I'd much rather receive a gift-donation, the gift of your time or a hand-written letter.” Consider sending an ELCA Good Gifts catalog to folks who want to remember you at Christmas.

- Find ways to avoid temptation. Consider “giving up” shopping in malls and mega-stores during Advent. Go against the grain and refrain from buying anything the day after Thanksgiving.

Resources to prepare the way

- ELCA *Good Gifts* Catalog (Free. AF order number 978-6-0002-1950-5. Call 800/638-3522 for a single copy, 800/328-4648 for multiple copies). Visit www.elca.org/giving to see the online catalog.
- LWR Coffee, Chocolate, and Handcrafts Projects: Visit www.lwr.org/fairtrade to place orders, request catalogs, and learn about consignment-sale options.
- *Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal* (AF order number 978-6-0002-1892-8; \$12 plus shipping). Find a leader guide and helpful links at www.elca.org/hunger/resources/.
- Alternatives for Simple Living: Visit www.simpleliving.org and explore a wealth of simple-living resources, including the annual booklet, *Whose birthday is it, anyway?*
- Pentecost 2008 ELCA World Hunger Congregation Connections (Free. AF order number 978-6-0002-2112-6). Find it online at www.elca.org/hunger/connections.
- Find great tips in the annual 12 Days of Christmas list offered by the ELCA Corporate Social Responsibility program (www.elca.org/advocacy/corporate). Review last year's “12 Days” suggestions at <http://archive.elca.org/advocacy/corporate/news.asp#12days>.

Simple Consumer Actions to Combat Poverty

Women of the ELCA is a part of a global movement to raise money and clout for women-led community solutions. Women of the ELCA promotes economic stability of women and families as a critical strategy for ensuring community vitality as well as the safety of our world. An investment in women's economic empowerment is a lasting investment in families, communities and nations.

Now a powerful alliance between Good Deed Foundation and the Women's Funding Network enables consumers to combat poverty through a range of simple actions that will generate new, massive and sustainable resources for women's funds. Through its partnership with the Women's Funding Network, Good Deed Foundation will invest two-thirds of Good Deed revenues in programs that build women's financial assets, job opportunities, skills and entrepreneurship in the U.S. and across the globe. Additional Good Deed revenues will provide solutions

to climate change, a phenomenon that is expected to greatly increase poverty, according to the United Nations Security Council.

Women of the ELCA promotes economic stability of women and families as a critical strategy for ensuring community vitality...

Simple Consumer Actions:

Recycle your cell phone: Turn unwanted cell phones into money and practical support for women's programs by recycling your old phones and collecting them at events and meetings. It's as simple as requesting a postage-paid envelope or a collection box at www.GoodDeedFoundation.org/recycle.

Request Good Deed-branded products: Good Deed Foundation is working with

several grocery store chains to ask them to stock Good Deed-branded products and even add the Good Deed logo to their own store brands. You can tell your local grocery store that you and consumers across the country are eager to purchase products with the Good Deed logo at their stores. Go to www.GoodDeedFoundation.org to find out more.

These simple consumer actions have the potential to raise major revenue. For example, 250,000 households each recycling two cell phones could generate more than \$1 million for good. As for the supermarket products, just think: Hundreds of brands, thousands of stores, millions of consumers!

As a member of the Women's Funding Network, Women of the ELCA is committed to the success of Good Deed's Simple Consumer Actions. Join Women of the ELCA by flexing your consumer power! A simple act. A world of good!

Order Eco-Palms for 2009

This Palm Sunday, more than 2,130 congregations across the United States celebrated Palm Sunday using Eco-Palms. Thanks largely to the 988 Lutheran congregations leading the way, 590,000 palms were ordered for Palm Sunday 2008.

For the harvesting communities in Guatemala and Mexico, this means more than just a fair price for their palms. About \$29,500 will go back to the communities for specific funding for programs such as scholarships, teachers' salaries and support for the elderly.

For more information about Eco-Palms or to pre-order for 2009, please visit www.lwr.org/palms.

LACE Membership drive underway

The Lutheran Association of Christian Educators (LACE) is in the midst of its annual membership drive. One of the current goals is for LACE to continue to partner with others who share in the ministry of Christian education.

Membership categories now include a reduced rate for retired Christian educators, as well as individual and congregational memberships. If you include a friend's new membership along with your renewal, you will receive a \$10 discount!

Please visit www.elca.org/lace or contact the LACE office at 843/705-3769.

Empowerment for team ministry through workshops

More than 13 percent of the congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are served by more than one pastor. This figure is even higher, possibly 25 percent or more, when one includes parishes served by a pastor, an associate in ministry, a diaconal minister, a deaconess or any number of non-rostered lay staff. Where do these people learn to do ministry as a team? Where do they receive their staff training, support and encouragement? Whether new to ministry or looking for renewed direction for your team the Multiple Staff Workshop is designed to help you intentionally plan your personal and professional working relationships. The workshop, although designed for parish clergy and laity, has also been attended by bishops and synodical staff as well as outdoor ministry and social service organization teams.

One workshop participant said, "Healthy team ministry doesn't just happen. It needs regular and significant investment of time and energy. The Multiple Staff Workshop has proven to be such a significant help that our congregation's pastoral and program staff attends whenever we experience a change or addition of personnel. Each time we have attended we have been able to enhance the satisfaction that each individual finds in doing ministry together, to strengthen team morale and to become more efficient in the

performance of ministry tasks ... I highly recommend the Multiple Staff Workshop to all who are called to team ministry."

The workshop is a 48-hour, three-day opportunity for ministry leaders to work



The Multiple Staff Workshop, is where people learn to do ministry as a team.

together as a team to explore each other's unique gifts and to learn efficient, effective and personally satisfying ministry skills. Leadership is provided by the following team: Wally Arnold, recently retired from the ELCA

Southern Ohio Synod staff; Suzanne Darcy Dillahunt, assistant to the bishop, Southern Ohio Synod; and Herm Kuhlmann, coordinator for the Covenant Cluster of Lutheran Seminaries, Inc. These clergy have collectively been serving in team ministry for more than 50 years. Those who attend the workshop will also have opportunity to learn from others in similar settings and comparable ministry roles. Some of the topics participants will address are:

- Team organization
- Staff meetings
- Personal leadership style
- Covenanting together for ministry

This workshop is the only known resource of its kind being offered in the ELCA. The leadership team is available to bring this workshop to any synod in the ELCA and has led workshops in synods across the country from Texas to Canada and from New York to Colorado. For the past 20 years there has always been a workshop held in Region 6 the week after Labor Day; this year it will be held in Adrian, Mich., Sept. 8-10, 2008. For more information contact:

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Native Nations to air in October

"Indian is what they called us to oppress us, and Indian is what we use to gain our freedom."

—Alberta Downwind, Ojibwe Nation

Native Nations, hosted by Peter Coyote, chronicles the American Indians' struggle for civil rights and the creation of the National Indian Lutheran Board to raise funds and awareness for that struggle. The program covers the period from 1862, when 38 Dakota Sioux were executed in the largest single-day mass hanging in United States history, to the 1960s, when many Indian tribes joined together to speak out with a unified voice.

Check www.elca.org/nativenations for your local broadcast date and time.