

# seeds for the parish

November-December 2008

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.elca.org



## World AIDS Day is December 1

Late at night Linda lies awake, worried by a recent diagnosis. Guilt, shame and a broken heart are keeping her up. The diagnosis: her child is HIV-positive, and Linda gave it to her.

Linda didn't know she was HIV-positive; it was a parting gift from a wayward husband. She didn't know she was at risk for HIV/AIDS or that over 1 million people living in the United States are HIV-positive. She had only been with her husband. She did not take drugs. She didn't know that a simple test could have prevented the transmission to her baby—antiretroviral drugs given to the mother during pregnancy and to the child after birth, as well as C-section deliveries dramatically reduce the risk of mother-to-child transmission.

Scared, alone and ashamed, Linda needs someone to talk to. She can't even think of bringing this to her pastor or her friends from the congregation—the people who were there for her when she went through her divorce.

She well remembers her pastor's moral outrage when he read about the ABCs of AIDS prevention in an ELCA publication.

Stigma and discrimination make it difficult to discuss HIV/AIDS, especially in the Church, because it intersects with highly charged issues—sexuality, class and race—hot topics even in the secular world.

What can a congregation do to eradicate this stigma and discrimination? As people of faith who know that God loves everyone and welcomes all into the community of believers, a congregation can open the discussion, educate and comfort.

December 1 is World AIDS Day, the day individuals worldwide bring attention to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. On the Sunday before or after World AIDS Day congregations could address HIV/AIDS in the worship service. This can be as simple as observing a moment of silence or praying for those impacted by HIV/AIDS, or something as elaborate as

scheduling a service of healing. The ELCA HIV/AIDS Web page, <http://archive.elca.org/aids/december1/>, has a number of ideas for congregations.

With so many people in the United States living with HIV it is important to respond with the love of Christ to those affected in local communities and congregations.

### Resources:

**Talking Together as Christians about Tough Social Issues**, Augsburg Fortress, \$3.25 plus postage, 800/328-4648 or online at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org).

**Exploring Solutions: How to Talk about HIV Prevention in the Church**, a downloadable resource is available at: [www.e-alliance.ch/hivaidsexploringsolutions.jsp](http://www.e-alliance.ch/hivaidsexploringsolutions.jsp).

**Keep the Promise: Advent in a Time of AIDS**, a devotional calendar, online in English, Spanish, and French at <http://tinyurl.com/2w3yah>.



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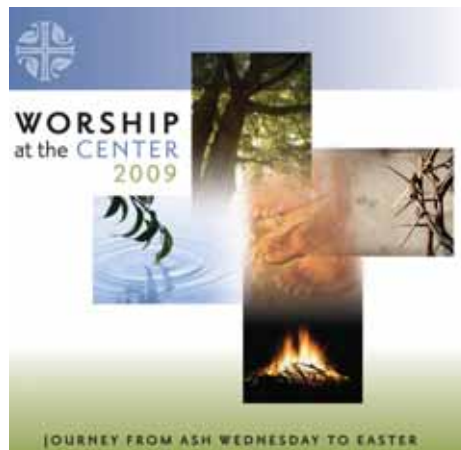
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# Journey from Ash Wednesday to Easter



**Worship at the Center** is a retreat program that focuses on the Lenten season through Easter.

Even at this time of year, when our attention is on the preparation for Advent and Christmas, it's not too early to begin thinking ahead to Lent, Holy Week and Easter.

In fact, now is the time for congregational leaders and members to mark their calendars and plan budgets in order to attend one of three retreats focusing on this important time of the church year.

*Evangelical Lutheran Worship* invites people to keep Ash Wednesday through Easter in a new-old way. Participants at the coming summer retreats will worship using the services for Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Vigil of Easter and join in reflection, study and discussion of the meaning of this journey for ourselves and the world.

Retreat leaders include Liv Larson-Andrews, Mark Mummert, Gail Ramshaw, Ben Stewart and Scott Weidler.

The same program will be offered three times during the summer of 2009 at:

## Northfield, Minn.

June 15–18 (Monday–Thursday)  
St. Olaf College

## Berea, Ohio

June 29–July 2 (Monday–Thursday)  
Baldwin-Wallace College

## Thousand Oaks, Calif.

July 7–10 (Tuesday–Friday)  
California Lutheran University

You can learn more about these events at [www.elca.org/worshipevents2009](http://www.elca.org/worshipevents2009).

## Learn, reflect and discuss worship before you plan

Give your congregation the opportunity to renew its worship life by taking the time to examine your worship practices well in advance of the church seasons.

The task of worship planning is enormously detailed work, intensified by deadlines of the advancing church year. It is easy for details to overcome the reflection, education and evaluation of worship practices essential to the vitality of worship throughout the church.

Before your worship planning gets mired in the details of Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and Easter activities, take a step back and set time aside to review what you do and

why during those seasons. Review, reflect on and discuss the liturgies of the season. Ponder the source of worship and, in connecting to the Book of Faith Initiative, ask how worship practice during this liturgy or season is shaped by the Bible.

It may be helpful to assign members to do some research before a group meets or to gather resources for the meeting. Explore the notes and appendices of the pew and leaders' editions of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* for helpful information. Read through the Sundays and Seasons seasonal reflections (available from [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org)). Delve into the

*Using Evangelical Lutheran Worship* series, which includes three supporting volumes for *ELW: The Sunday Assembly*, *The Christian Life* (Baptism and Life Passages) and *The Church's Time* (soon to be released). A worship dictionary or Bible concordance may also be helpful.

Education, reflection and evaluation of the worship practices of a community may not lead to a change in that practice. The process may simply revitalize and renew current worship practice so that all may hear the Word of God and be strengthened by the Body of Christ in worship.

## Worship planning resources for the new church year

The new cycle of worship planning resources for the church year 2008–2009 is now available from Augsburg Fortress at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org)

- *Sundays and Seasons 2009, Year B*, follows the readings from the *Revised Common Lectionary* to enrich worship preparation with a variety of seasonal and weekly reflections, prayers of intercession, music suggestions and more. (ISBN 9780806671239, \$29-35)
- *SundaysandSeasons.com* is a subscription-based online resource that offers a wide

variety of electronic worship planning resources.

- The *Worship Planning Calendar 2009, Year B*, serves as a planning guide, appointment calendar and guide to daily prayer. (ISBN 9780806671246, \$20)
- *Words for Worship 2009, Year B*, CD-ROM edition, contains texts and graphics with content from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*. It also includes week-to-week elements from *Lectionary for Worship Year B, Revised Common Lectionary*; *Sundays and Seasons 2009*; and the *Psalter for Worship Year B*. (ISBN 9780806671291, \$199)
- *Psalms Settings for the Church Year* includes newly composed settings of all the psalms used in the *Revised Common Lectionary* in a variety of styles. This resource supplements the more standard psalm refrains and tones found in the *Psalter for Worship*. Styles represented include responsorial, hymnic, Anglican chant and through-composed (not repetitive). This volume includes a CD-ROM with congregational parts. Choral parts for *Psalms Settings for the Church Year* are available on the Web at [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org) (ISBN 9780800678562, \$45).

seeds for the parish

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

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

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