

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.

Exploring Solutions: How to Talk about HIV Prevention in the Church, a downloadable resource is available at: 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>.



Constant Contact, puts your electronic communications into high gear with ELCA templates [Page 5](#)



Lutherans in China offer a pleasant surprise for Global Mission executive director. [Page 4](#)



Grace Matters radio ministry host, Peter Marty explores Grace in daily life in his new book. [Page 7](#)



Faith dramas keep up the tradition without taking a lot of time from busy schedules. [Page 3](#)

CONTACT US

Submit a Story.....773/380-2949
Delivery Questions.....773/380-2407
Subscriptions.....773/380-2407

INDEX

Summer worship retreats.....2
Learn, reflect & discuss.....2
Planning the church year.....2

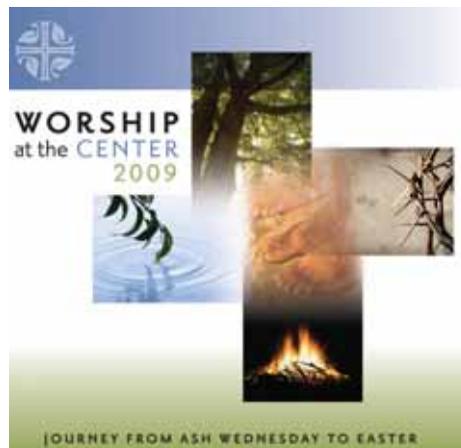
Key Leader Program.....3
Christmas pageants.....3
In God's Name.....4

Donations from China.....4
Q&A.....5
Iraq study.....6

Gathering registration.....6
Faith and genetics.....6
Select courses.....6

Celebrate human rights.....7
LWF cookbook.....7
The RevWriter Resource.....7

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.

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). 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

- *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 (ISBN 9780800678562, \$45).

seeds for the parish

www.elca.org/seeds

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

Editorial and Circulation Offices Communication Services

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
8765 W. Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631 800/638-3522
E-mail: Janice.Rizzo@elca.org

Editorial Staff

Jan Rizzo – Editor
Kristi Bangert – Managing Editor

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

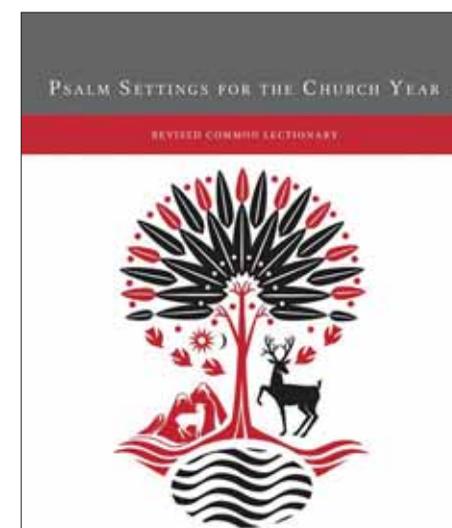
Copyright © 2008 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. All rights reserved.

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

POSTMASTER, send address changes to:

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

Credits: cover, stock photo; page 2, Augsburg Fortress graphic; page 4, printed with permission of CBS Broadcasting, Inc.; pages 3, 4, 7, staff photos.



A tale of two congregations

It was the best of times but not the worst of times for two congregations that turned to the ELCA's Stewardship Key Leader (SKL) program for their recent capital campaigns. Each had different needs. Each had very successful outcomes.

Grace Lutheran, Rock Hill, S.C., needed to reduce debt in order to enhance its ministry. The congregation of about 600 members owed a \$1.3 million debt from a previous \$2.5 million building project. "We definitely had a need," said Pastor Ray Mohrmann. "It's not easy to get people fired up for debt reduction, but they were excited about the possibilities of future ministry—which means adding staff and reaching the ultimate goal of calling a second pastor."

Aided by members with capital campaign experience, Grace Lutheran turned to SKL Director Pastor Charles "Chick" Lane for an August 2007 campaign launch. "As our consultant, Chick made two visits and kept in touch by phone or e-mail," Mohrmann said. "He knew he didn't need to 'hold our hands' through the process, but provided us with guidance and leadership."

Pledge Sunday was held September 30, a bit of a delay in Grace's annual campaign. "This didn't negatively affect our annual campaign because we were getting a good stewardship education (from SKL)."

Mohrmann said the program was a great fit with their congregational culture, especially in the area of prayer and scripture. "The message was the joy of giving rather than the duty," he said. "We responded well to that. It wasn't heavy-handed, but rooted in the Lutheran theology of grace. The low overhead with the program was also very attractive. We're just very pleased with the results. Contributions have come in faithfully, and I've recommended it to several colleagues."

It was October 1, 2000, one hour before the Minnesota Vikings' kickoff. Pastor Josh Nelson spent an hour knocking on doors in search of members for a new mission church. Four months later, Spirit of Joy began worship at the high school in Buffalo, Minn. "We grew to such a size that it was time to do a building campaign," Nelson said. "We interviewed



The youth and children make an impact on the stewardship drive at Spirit of Joy with their collected coins.

two other fundraising organizations before choosing Stewardship Key Leader because of its affordability and the structure of the program."

Spirit of Joy launched its program last spring. From laying out expectations to Commitment Sunday, Nelson said the program went "smooth as silk." He added, "We received a lot of support in setting up and training our committee. The members had a good sense of their duties, which included a one-page job description."

An organized person, Nelson said he liked the structure of SKL—as did the committee members. "We were a little nervous at first because the economy was slowing down. Our consultant helped calm those fears by assuring us that people respond differently to a faith need."

Spirit of Joy exceeded their pledge goal of \$300,000 by \$35,000. "We have a 20-acre lot and an architect now with the hope of having our building ready by the fall of 2009," Nelson said. "We definitely have momentum now."

For more information about the Stewardship Key Leader program, contact Charles Lane at skl@elca.org or 800/638-3522, ext. 2606.

Christmas pageants for busy schedules

Most people remember the Charlie Brown Christmas special; even today's young children know that story. Those raised in the Church most likely remember their own experiences with Christmas pageants.

Way back in 1965 Charlie Brown complained about the overwhelming materialism he saw during the Christmas season. Upon Lucy's suggestion, as his five-cent psychologist, he became the director of the school Christmas pageant—and everything that could go wrong did, and the pageant participants couldn't keep their minds on the script.

Times really haven't changed so much since 1965. Advent is still the busiest time of the year, there is a lot of materialism, and it's hard to get pageant participants to pay attention at rehearsals. That's why the Rev. John Trump, who has an MFA in playwriting from Colum-

bia University, has written pageants using the following approach:

- Everyone should enjoy themselves
- The season is busy; therefore, practices must be kept to a minimum
- The pageant should be first and foremost for the children, but adults also want to tell and hear the story
- The pageant must be of sound theology
- Sets, lights and costumes should be kept to a bare minimum
- Whenever possible, the congregation should have the chance to participate.

Trump is pastor at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in Columbia, S.C. Check out his Christmas pageants at: www.faihdrama.com, which also offers Lenten dramas, historical dramas, topical dramas, general liturgical dramas and liturgical resources. Pricing varies.

It's the "golden years."
Not the "barely getting by years."

For some, retirement is the time to rethink work. Like turning a hobby into a full-time job. As a Fortune 500[®] company with over \$70 billion in assets under management,* we can help make it happen. How will you thrive in retirement? Tell us at thrivent.com/retirement.

Let's thrive.  **Thrivent Financial for Lutherans[®]**

*As of Dec. 31, 2007. Securities are offered through Thrivent Investment Management Inc., 625 Fourth Ave. South, Minneapolis, MN 55415-1665, 800-THRIVENT (800-847-4836), a wholly owned subsidiary of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Member FINRA. Member SIPC. ©Thrivent Financial for Lutherans 2008 200705524 1/08. 25265 N4-08

Chinese congregation gives ELCA funds for Midwest floods

The Rev. Rafael Malpica Padilla said he is rarely at a loss for words, but the generosity he and others witnessed Aug. 10, half a world away in China, left him speechless and grateful for the partnership of Luzhou Christian Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

Malpica Padilla, executive director, ELCA Global Mission, and other ELCA leaders and staff, visited the congregation that Sunday to participate in worship. The Lutherans were in China for many reasons, one of which was to see how ELCA contributions following the May 12 earthquake in Sichuan Province are at work.

The earthquake's devastation was beyond anything Malpica Padilla had seen before, including hurricanes and the 2005 South Asia tsunami.

Luzhou Christian Church's pastor, the Rev. Liao Xin Qin, asked Malpica Padilla to offer a brief greeting and homily for the nearly 300 people who were assembled. After he finished, there was a surprise. "The pastor said, 'We have been waiting for you.' She mentioned that we had accompanied them as they had served their people through all of (their) challenges and particularly through the earthquake. But also, they came to know of the floods that had affected the United States and the ELCA's involvement," Malpica Padilla said. Liao then presented Mal-

pica Padilla with an envelope containing the equivalent of \$500 USD, the contributions of members. Barely able to express his appreciation, Malpica Padilla remembered what he saw at that moment.

"I could see their faces. They gave what they



Pastor Gu Yumei of Mianzhu Church told the group that weekly worship attendance at her congregation had gone from 200 before the earthquake (at 21 preaching points) to more than 800. Find more information at www.elca.org/disaster and find related pictures at www.imageevent.com/elcahunger/chinaearthquake.

didn't have, just to show their solidarity and love to a sister church that has walked with them. That was worth the trip," he said. "In the midst of their need, they heard about ours and responded." The gift is a sign of companionship

and accompaniment, Malpica Padilla said.

The funds were designated for the 2008 Midwest floods and will go to Lutheran Disaster Response, a collaborative ministry of the ELCA and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, for its ongoing response.

Though 250 miles from the earthquake zone, Luzhou Christian Church was able to reach out to earthquake survivors because of its understanding of holistic ministry, said the Rev. Y. Franklin Ishida, director, Asia-Pacific Continental Desk, ELCA Global Mission, who was also on the trip. Their witness, that of other Christians and of partners such as the ELCA, has been noticed and appreciated by the Chinese government and its citizens, he said.

The congregation supports a cerebral palsy program at the local hospital, operates a clinic that provides basic health services to the community and helps develop rural communities. The ELCA provided a ventilator to the congregation for use by children at the hospital (see *Seeds for the Parish* cover story January-February, 2008).

ELCA World Hunger funds were provided to the congregation to help pave a road and to provide water well pumps to some 100 families in the village of Tudiba. The village is a producer of a special lychee fruit, once a favorite

After the Floods

Lutherans respond to disaster in Iowa and Wisconsin



After the Floods is a five-minute video about how members of the ELCA serve as communities recovering from the 2008 floods and tornadoes in the Midwest. To view this video online go to: www.elca.org and enter "after the floods" in the search box.

of the Tang dynasty imperial court, Ishida said. The lychee fruit trade has brought economic rewards due to the improved road. For example, the fruit was sent to visiting dignitaries at the recent Summer Olympic Games in Beijing, he said.

ELCA Global Mission personnel and Christians in China have been working together for nearly four years through the China Christian Council and partners such as Luzhou Christian Church, Ishida said.

You can learn more about ELCA Global Mission at www.elca.org/globalmission.

Documentary featuring world religious leaders available on DVD in December

In God's Name, the documentary featuring Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and 11 other world religious leaders, which aired on CBS network television December 23, 2007, will be available on DVD beginning Dec. 16, 2008.

The documentary, produced by brothers Jules and Gedeon Naudet, explores the complex questions of our time through the intimate thoughts and beliefs of 12 of the world's most influential spiritual leaders.

On September 11 2001 the two brothers were caught in the collapse of the World Trade Center. Jules was shooting inside when the South Tower fell. "On September 11, we faced death and thought we had lost each other," remembers Jules. "This harrowing experience was the first step in a journey that would take us around the world searching for answers to the meaning of life."

The quest took them to Egypt, England, India, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, Russia, the Vatican, South Carolina and Illinois. The 12 leaders featured in the special are:

1. Alexei II, patriarch of Moscow and head of the Russian Orthodox Church
2. Amma, a Hindu spiritual leader
3. Pope Benedict XVI
4. The Dalai Lama
5. Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, a Shi'ite Muslim leader
6. The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and president of the Lutheran World Federation
7. Michihisa Kitashirakawa, Jingu Daiguji of the Shinto Grand Shrine of Ise
8. Yona Metzger, Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Israel
9. Dr. Frank Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention
10. Muhammad Sayyed Tantawi, sheikh of Al-Azhar and a prominent Sunni Muslim leader
11. Joginder Singh Vedanti, jathedar of the Akal Takht, the Sikhs' highest authority
12. Dr. Rowan Williams, archbishop of Canterbury and head of the Church of England

The DVD and a book of photographs is offered through *National Geographic* and will be available at retail outlets across the country and online. Find more information about the program and download a study guide at www.elca.org/ingodsname.



Filmmaker brothers Jules (left) and Gedeon Naudet with Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson. Hanson is also the President of the Lutheran World Federation, a global communion of Christian churches with 68.3 million members in 140 churches.

Constant Contact—inform and inspire your members with e-mail

Living Grace Lutheran Church, Omaha, Neb., a mission start congregation that began public worship on September 17, has continually used the Internet in its communication and marketing strategy. Early in his development work, The Rev. James Lindberg began an e-mail prayer partner network to connect with interested and supportive individuals both nationally and internationally. This prayer partner network has grown to over 250 individuals. The congregation also has its own group on the popular social networking site *facebook*.

To save money in paper and postage costs, newsletters are not mailed to members. Instead the congregation uses Constant Contact, a marketing Web site, for weekly communication. These e-newsletters include short articles about upcoming ministries, information about the current sermon series, and weekly offering and attendance statistics. They also contain numerous links to the congregation's Web site, which is updated regularly with new and fresh content, including a pastor's weekly video devotion. Visitors and members may sign up for these newsletters at the congregation's Web site (www.livinggraceomaha.org). As many as five new subscribers sign up for the e-newsletter each week.

Because most of the people of Living Grace have e-mail and Internet access, this is an effective way for the congregation to communicate regularly with its members. It is also a source of inspiration and helps strengthen the members' faith, and is an innovative means of outreach to new people with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Constant Contact is now part of the ELCA Advantage Program, a national cooperative buying program designed for use by ELCA congregations and affiliated agencies, institutions and organizations. Visit <http://elca.constantcontact.com> to join the ELCA program.

The main benefit of joining is access to an ELCA-branded newsletter template developed specifically for congregations. In the future there will also be content updates that will provide fresh newsletter material each month including Prayer Ventures, ELCA news headlines and stories of faith in action.

Organizations already using Constant Contact may be able to switch to the ELCA program without interrupting their use of

the service. All they have to do is fill out the form at: <http://tinyurl.com/ccconvert>

Presently there is no discount over the regular fees, but Constant Contact provides a 30 percent discount for non-profit organizations, such as your congregation, paying on an annual basis. A part of the program fees come back to the ELCA, which helps fund the costs to provide the custom template and content feeds.

5 Steps for getting started with e-mail marketing

Step 1: Ask your members for their e-mail addresses

- Use an e-mail sign-up book.
- Collect addresses from new members.
- Ask for e-mail on all forms.
- Add an e-mail sign-up box to Web site.

Step 2: Determine your communication goals (what you want to accomplish).

- Inform members of upcoming events.
- Introduce new members.
- Send inspirational quotes or verses.
- Send last minute information.
- Communicate with specific groups.

Step 3: Decide what types of e-mails you want to send.

- Informative newsletter.
- Special worship event invitations.
- Send event surveys and registrations.

Step 4: Determine a communication schedule and stick with it.

Be consistent in your communications, as they reinforce your connection with your members. Determine how often you want to communicate with your members and then commit to that. If you tell your members they will get a weekly message, then make sure to send one each week.

Step 5: Examine your members' responses and adjust accordingly.

With the reporting feature that comes with most e-mail marketing services, take a look at how many of your members open the e-mails you send and what links they click on. Based on this information you may want to make adjustments.

Q&A

We want to provide a cancer support group in our congregation and need a resource for guiding the conversation. What do you suggest?

I am using, "Confronting Death: a Christian Response to the end of Life" with my Stephen Ministries. It is the new Walt Wangerin DVD and tells the story of his journey with cancer. It would work well with a support group. This DVD is available for \$59.95 from Paraclete Press at: www.paracletepress.com or 800/451-5006.

—Carol Hughes, Chambersburg Congregational Resource Services Center, Chambersburg, Penn.

I would include *An Odyssey Through Cancer* by the Rev. Wibert J. Fields. It describes Dr. Fields' struggle with terminal cancer and is intended for individuals and families facing cancer. This book is available through Wheat Ridge Ministries, www.wheatridge.org, or by phone at 800/762-6748 or 630/766-9066 for \$5.00 (includes shipping and handling).

I also suggest:

- *Cancer and Faith* by John Carmody, Twenty-third Publications, www.twentythirdpublications.com, 800/321-0411, \$9.95
- *Everyday Strength: A Cancer Patients' Guide* by Randy Becton, Baker Publishing Group, \$11.99, www.bakerpublishinggroup.com, 800/877-2665. This book is also available, at a discounted price at www.bakerbooksretail.com.

—Julie K. Ageson, director, Eastern North Dakota Synod Resource Center, Fargo, N.D.

I suggest the DVD: "Reflections on Psalm 23 for People with Cancer" by Ken Curtis. It explores coping with advanced stages of cancer from personal experience. After he learned his diagnosis, Curtis pursued a combination of traditional and alternative medicine with a firm spiritual foundation and a prayer support team. The 23rd Psalm was a vital part of the spiritual component. The DVD was produced by Gateway Films. To order for \$19.99 go to www.visionvideo.com where you can also download the free study guide. The DVD is also available from Ecufilem at 615/242-6277.

I also suggest *When God Weeps: Why Our Sufferings Matter to the Almighty* by Joni Erickson Tada. Published by Zondervan, list price \$12.99. Available online at: www.amazon.com, www.barnesandnoble.com and www.borders.com or at the Christian bookstore near you.

—Karen Harthan, director, The Resource Center, Clear Lake, Iowa

I recommend the Augsburg Fortress book: *When you are Diagnosed With a Life-Threatening Illness* by Jan Ansorge. The author speaks about her own experience from diagnosis through treatment. This 48-page booklet can be ordered at www.augsburgfortress.org for the online price of \$5.59. For phone orders, at the regular price of \$6.99, call: 800/328-4648.

—Catherine Fink, director, Heilig Resource Center, North Carolina Synod, Salisbury, N.C.

New resource on faith and genetics

A new adult study resource, *Genetics and Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility*, is now available for congregations interested in exploring the implications of contemporary genetics for Christian faith and life. It features a five-session core exploring the relation of Christian faith and ethics to genetics. There is also an optional additional eight sessions on topics including stem cells, genetics and human identity, and a primer on genetics with a glossary. This study marks the initial phase of developing an ELCA social statement on genetics expected to be considered at the 2011 Churchwide Assembly. A first draft of the social statement will be available next year. Copies of this study are available for \$4.00 each from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648.

Iraq study resource coming soon

Are you looking for a winter study series for your congregation or campus ministry? A five-week study guide, *Iraq: A Lutheran Study Guide on the Future Role of the U.S.*, will be available in December 2008.

The study guide seeks to facilitate moral deliberation on the U.S. role in Iraq and the broader Middle East as called for by Presiding Bishop Mark S. Hanson and the 2007 Churchwide Assembly. Questions explored in the guide include:

- How can our country aid the Iraqi government in improving security, reducing civil conflict and promoting reconciliation in Iraq?
- What should the role of the U.S. in Iraq be today, and in 10 years?
- What commitments do we have to Iraqis, American soldiers, and to all those affected by war?
- As people of faith how can we respond to the reality of terrorism and its challenge for Iraq, the U.S. and the world?
- What has our country learned about its role in an increasingly interconnected world in the 21st century?

Visit www.elca.org/advocacy for the latest updates and information on the resource. Please direct any questions to Kim Stietz, director for international policy, at kim.stietz@elca.org.

Registration open for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering

The excitement has begun! Online registration for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans opened September 15th and will close on January 15, 2009, unless the maximum of 36,000 participants is reached earlier.

The 2009 gathering will be a different experience than previous gatherings. Based on Philippians 2:1-8, the 2009 ELCA Youth gathering will look and feel more like a servant school. The focus of the program is God's call to servanthood and a deepening understanding of basic Christian practices related to servanthood.

The daily programming for the Gathering will feature intentional preparation, action, reflection and celebration. The program will also include worship, music, speakers, Bible study, community service, recreation, learning opportunities, the Interaction Center



and a lot more.

To register, prepare for or learn more about the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering, visit <http://archives.elca.org/youth/gathering.html>.

The Gathering staff and its planners have been closely monitoring the hurricane con-

ditions in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. While some areas have been hit hard, the impact of this season's hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region has not diminished the ability and commitment of the city of New Orleans and the ELCA to safely host the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering.

Imagine yourself as God created you

ELCA Young Adult Ministry and ELCA Candidacy announce a family of resources for young adults around the questions we all ask ourselves: What do I like to do? What am I good at? What am I passionate about? What is needed in my community? How does my faith live and breathe every day?

An online social network at www.imagineyourself.ning.com has been created for young adults asking these questions. It's like facebook, only deeper; a place to share your story!

Visit www.elca.org/imagineyourself where you can meet people like Elizabeth, a young

professional engaged in faith, family and community and Eric, a diaconal minister doing hospital chaplaincy. Here you can read other profiles of young adults who are asking those questions ... and living the answers.

Mailer-sized pieces we like to call "invitations" introduce Elizabeth, a family practice lawyer; Rozella, a grad student in urban youth ministry; Kristina, an ELCA Young Adult in Global Mission volunteer and Pete, a parish pastor. Sharing *Imagine Yourself* with a young adult is a great way to start a conversation. One parish is using this small resource with new members as a way to introduce life in

the ELCA and the Lutheran understanding of vocation. A label area allows you to personalize the "invitation" with your own contact information.

Order *Imagine Yourself* in packages of 50 from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648. (\$7.50 per 50, \$15 per 100, \$30 per 300, (plus postage). *Imagine Yourself* Display Board Sets for Invitation to Service and other displays are only \$15 per set plus postage. They are available from Augsburg Fortress.

Select online courses for the new year

Select is offering new online courses for continuing education, associate in ministry candidacy and a variety of certification processes. Courses offered this winter, beginning in February 2009, will be:

- Introduction to the Old Testament (new!)
- Lutheran Heritage

- Spirituality: Invitation to a Closer Relationship with God
- Evangelization and Lutheran Worship/Sent to Preach
- 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. For more details on the online courses go to www.selectlearning.org



Celebrate human rights on December 10

After learning that Christian leaders were at the table 60 years ago during the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, Christian Albers took on a mission to interview as many human rights activists acting on their faith as he could.

Albers, a vicar from Germany and program assistant at the Lutheran Office for World Community, has compiled the series of interviews on a Web site (<http://humanrightschurch.org>), launched to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the declaration on December 10. This declaration was fundamental to the founding of the United Nations and continues to influence that body.

The subjects of his interviews explain why churches must be involved in promoting and protecting human rights, and they speak from

diverse perspectives from countries that include Argentina, Tanzania, El Salvador, United States, Liberia, Germany and India.

"The stories people tell come alive on a video," said Albers, explaining why he started the project. "This Web site can be seen easily around the world; you don't need access to special U.N. documents to understand human rights."

Congregations can use Albers' educational video as well as other tools to mark the anniversary on December 10. For ideas to celebrate the anniversary, visit www.everyhumanhasrights.org/.

December 10 "will be a *kairos*—an appropriate time—for the ecumenical movement to reconnect with the cause of human rights. Churches can make of the 60th anniversary of the Universal Declaration an opportunity

for human rights 'evangelism,'" said Peter Prove, assistant to the general secretary for International Affairs and Human Rights at the Lutheran World Federation in Geneva, Switzerland.

According to Prove, church bodies have moral authority, broad reach, capacity for education and ability to build bridges with other faith traditions and civil society. All this puts them in a unique position to influence international mechanisms for the protection of human rights.

The Lutheran Office for World Community in New York is a shared ministry of the ELCA and the Lutheran World Federation that advocates for dignity and justice for all people and works for peace and reconciliation among nations.

A gift of food

Food for Life: Recipes and Stories on the Right to Food, is a new cookbook published by the Lutheran World Federation–North America (LWF), the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada. It contains global recipes adapted for North American cooks plus stories of how people in the Lutheran community work together to improve lives and address root causes of poverty and hunger.

This book uses recipes, stories and table blessings from different contexts and cultures to prepare global dishes for family and congregation and to lift up the work of the Lutheran World Federation. One-third of all ELCA World Hunger Appeal funds go directly to LWF projects that strengthen global food security around the world.

Enhanced with color photos, *Food for Life* is meant for any cook with global tastes. The book contains four sections:

- The Agricultural Cycle: dishes for growing, planting, harvesting and "hungry" seasons.
- The Religious Cycle: dishes for Christian, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist religious celebrations and feasts or fasting times.
- The Life Cycle: dishes for births and birthdays, weddings and funerals, and other festive occasions and family celebrations.
- Daily Life: dishes that families eat (and drink) for breakfast, main meals, and snacks or desserts.

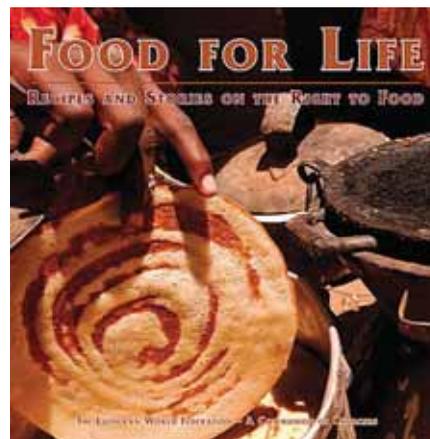


Photo: © Ryan Spencer Reed

Need help with children's faith formation?



If your congregation is searching for ideas for children's ministry, look no further. *The Little Lutheran* (www.thelittlelutheran.org) tells children 6 and younger that Jesus is both savior and friend—and reminds them how much God loves them. In the magazine's sturdy and colorful 24 pages, *The Little Lutheran* teaches through stories, songs, activities, prayers and ritual. The earliest years of childhood are crucial for learning, and parents look to congregations to help with faith formation. In 10 issues a year, this magazine helps pastors and congregations nurture that faith. *The Little*

Lutheran is also perfect for baptismal gifts, worship bags, children's sermon resource, cradle roll mailings, preschools and more. Order six or more subscriptions to receive the group rate of \$12.95 per year. Individual subscriptions are \$24.95. Call 800-328-4648 or e-mail: subscriptions@augzburgfortress.org.

RevWriter Resource enters seventh year of publication

Are you a busy church leader who is looking for timely resources and ministry ideas? Subscribe to *The RevWriter Resource* (ISSN 1545-939x), a free electronic newsletter offering an article, devotion and resources each month on a variety of ministry topics.

"I started the *Resource* as an offshoot of my church consulting ministry," says Pastor Sue Lang, owner of *RevWriter Resources, LLC*, and publisher of the newsletter. "There are a lot of exciting things happening in congregations. The *Resource* is another way to share them."

Recent topics have included nurturing spiritual leaders, teaching leaders to lead, learning to listen effectively and evaluating assets. Articles are often written by authors of newly released church leadership books such as Meredith Gould, whose book, *The Word Made Fresh: Communicating Church and Faith Today*, was released in August 2008 by Morehouse Publishing. Articles are archived online for one year.

To subscribe to The RevWriter Resource, visit www.revwriter.com/congregational/resource.shtml. Writers Guidelines are located at: www.revwriter.com/congregational/writerguidelines.shtml.

New book from Grace Matters host

Combining lively prose and creative insight, pastor and radio host Peter W. Marty probes the intricacies of daily human experience and invites readers to reconsider their faith lives with fresh eyes.



The Anatomy of Grace takes well-worn religious language from another era and refashions it into powerful speech for the 21st century Christian. Organized around the themes of serendipitous grace, unobtrusive grace, ordinary grace, surprising grace, mysterious grace and weightless grace, the work is both a treatise on living the Christian life well and a stirring reminder of why congregational life matters so significantly in America.

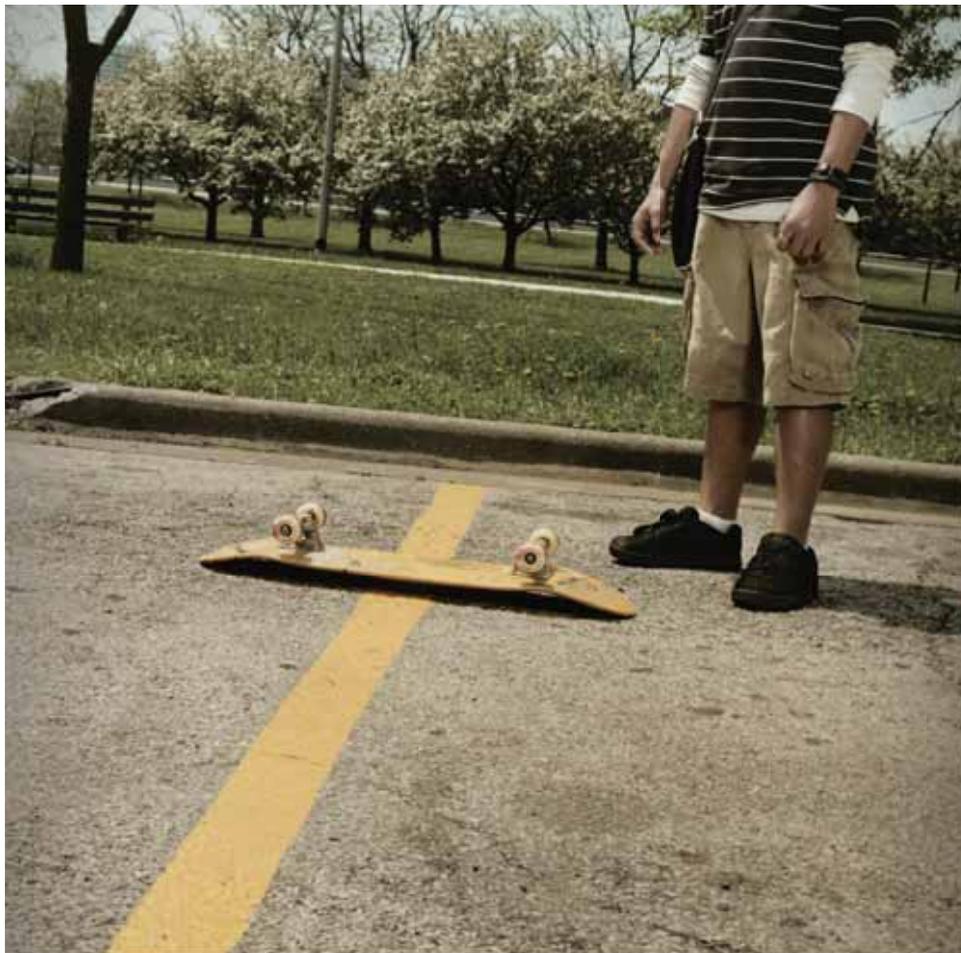
Available from Augsburg Fortress at 800/328-4648 or www.augszburgfortress.org.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

8765 West Higgins Road
Chicago, IL 60631

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Shakopee, MN
Permit No. 38



Some investments do more than just grow your finances.

Welcome. That's how young people feel at Calvary Lutheran, a church in Rapid City, South Dakota, that's grown a thriving midweek ministry in the fellowship hall it built with a Mission Investment Fund loan. When you or your congregation invests with the MIF, you get more than just a great rate of return. You also fund loans that help set out the welcome mat for the next generation of Lutherans. **To learn more, contact us at 877.886.3522 or elca.org/mif.**



Mission Investment Fund
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.