seeds for the parish

Resource Paper for Leaders of ELCA Congregations

www.elca.org

Practical help in a fluid economy



What effect will the tumultuous U.S. economy have on ministry this year and beyond?

The answer to this question is far from clear but one thing, however, is clear: God's mission for the church has not changed. Even so, the shape that the ministry takes is open for creative and faithful amendment. As budgets are being prepared and financial stewardship programs take shape, be bold, nimble and purposeful in your planning.

10 items:

developing a responsible spending plan for the congregation will be more difficult and anxious than at any time in previous years. Fear will choke off generosity, and difficult choices will be presented. If salaries are frozen (or reduced), or if your priority program is underfunded, do not act precipitately or take 6. CONDUCT FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP those decisions personally. Percentage giving PROGRAMS: The members of the congreis always a means to strengthen and witness our faith in God. Model a 10-10-80 lifestyle pledges because of the rapid changes in this by sharing 10%, saving 10% and keeping 80% of your income.

- 2. PRAY: Add 15 minutes to the time that the congregation council spends in prayer, study and worship at their regular meetings. Initiate a new mission focused Bible study or add 120 days is a better choice. a prayer group to the church calendar. Seek God's voice in this time of economic challenge 7. CLOSE THREE AND START TWO: Scruthrough prayer, Scripture study and faith conversation.
- 3. CALL EARLY: If the declining markets and economic downturn have shortened the congregation's horizon for institutional survival, call for help sooner rather than later. Call either the assistant to the bishop who relates to your congregation or contact the director of evangelical mission or the stewardship specialist in your synod. The longer congregations wait to face critical circumstances, the fewer 8. ENGAGE IN ASSET MAPPING: Rely on the options to be proactive.
- in tracking donations and other sources of income, as well as spending. Plan not to overspend your congregational budget. Review each budget line and make faithful and significant changes to bring your spending into line with God's purpose for the church.
- 5. CREATION CARE: Take steps to control For leaders who are seeking benchmarks in energy use and other environmental costs in responding to our challenges, consider these your church. Install 24/7 programmable clock thermostats on all heating and cooling zones. Seal drafty windows and doors. Heat and cool 1. DON'T OVERREACT: The struggles of only the areas of the church that are needed. Critically review the church calendar, and schedule multiple groups and events in the building at the same time. Move meetings, worship and gatherings into smaller rooms and homes.
 - gation will find it difficult to make year-long economy. They will appreciate it if the stewardship committee understands that struggle. Ask members to make financial pledges three

times in the coming year: February, June and October. While a 12-month pledge will be difficult, asking members to project ahead

- tinize the present array of ministry programs that are on the agenda of the congregation. Identify three programs or activities that have historically been part of your ministry that have not gained traction in recent times. Determine not to do those things in the coming year. Take them off the agenda. Add (only) two new ventures to your ministry plan in the coming year. Reducing by three, while adding two, will likely control some spending.
- the creativity and innovation of your members to put excitement in your planning. Conduct 4. CRUNCH THE NUMBERS: Be diligent an asset-mapping exercise and knit the gifts and interests of your members into new ministry programs without increasing financial costs. Affirm the giftedness and generosity of members in new ways with an asset map.
 - 9. REALLOCATE YOUR TIME: Pastors, look critically at your weekly schedule. Identify areas where you can equip others to pick up some of the work that you do. Redirect your new-found time specifically to work in the areas of evangelism, witness and stewardship. Work with the congregation council in designing goals and benchmarks for this endeavor.
 - 10. ENJOY THE MOMENT: The joy of ministry is in serving Jesus Christ. We find purpose in mission and relationships. Do not let the worries of the world pull you down. Enjoy the moment, living in the Grace of God.

It is possible to keep sanity in our stewardship even in this dynamic economy. Continue to preach and teach about stewardship. Everyone is talking about money, values and priorities. Make sure God's voice is heard in the midst of that conversation.



Harriett Dudley is the star of "God's work. Our hands." Video Contest.



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin, presents "Lutheran Study Bible" to companions in Malawi.



Help with walking the walk and talking the talk.

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The emerging church and stewarship: connecting with community service

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The stewardship of worship

Each worshiping assembly has the responsi- How do you steward the worship life of the bility to steward the proclamation of the gospel in means of grace for the sake of the world. In worship, we encounter the very presence of • God in Jesus Christ. We are gathered by God, we feast in God's presence through Word and Sacrament and we are sent out to continue our • participation in the mission of God. Our words and actions in worship support God's plan.

The introduction of *Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW)* calls for the regular renewal—or • stewardship—of worship so that it is responsive to the world that the church is called to serve. Like tending a garden to produce an abundant harvest, congregations nurture and care for worship to feel the presence of God in Jesus Christ and to proclaim it in their community.

Being a good steward of Christian worship means to connect the worship practices of the church across time and space while also being attentive to the community. In Worship Guidebook for Lent and the Three Days (coming from Augsburg Fortress, late fall 2009), Gail Ramshaw writes.

"We might say that using these new/old rites is less like owning a house, to which you can make any structural or ornamental changes that you choose, and is more like renting a house, which you can furnish and decorate as • you wish, yet without major alterations. Using these services is not like inventing a clever Halloween costume for this year's party, but is more like a bride altering her grandmother's gown to wear for her wedding."

congregation? Here are some ideas:

- provide ongoing study about historical, ecumenical and Lutheran patterns of wor-
- reflect on why we do the things we do in our congregation's worship;
- consider what is the best way for our congregation to worship at this time;
- consider how each person or group within the community is included or unintentionally excluded; give special attention to those who are in the minority: people with disabilities, young children, visitors,
- try sitting "in the round" for a season so that the members of the assembly might see one another as equally valued members • of the assembly;
- in the invitation to worship, find succinct ways to explain how certain postures (standing, sitting, kneeling) engage the person in worship. For example, "The assembly stands to welcome the presence of Christ in our midst" or "The assembly stands and proclaims God's Word in song;"
- publicly affirm the assembly's mission: See Affirmation of Christian Vocation (ELW pew edition, page 84), Affirmation of Baptism by the Assembly (ELW pew edition, page 234-237), and the new Blessing and Sending for Mission (ELW: Occasional



Services for the Assembly, page as yet undetermined);

- connect the offering and mission. Help the assembly understand how the collection of money in the offering is an integral part of the mission of the church. Carry the collection of money in the procession at the end of worship to signify its use for the sake of the world:
- invite the assembly to participate in mis-
- use the margins of weekly bulletin pages to describe the history or purpose of worship components:
- include information about the church year in your newsletter to help worshipers learn and better participate in the ebb and flow of the various seasons; and
- periodically host worship education and reflection events. See the Learning Center at www.elca.org/worship for ideas on topics and studies.

Remembering Those Who Have Died

Evangelical Lutheran Worship: Pastoral Care includes a service for "Remembering Those Who Have Died." This service is useful in the month of November when the church remembers all the saints. It may be used in its complete form, or elements may be included in the worship of the assembly on All Saints Day, Nov. 1. The notes that follow the service offer assistance for adapting the materials to a variety of situations. (Available

seeds for the parish

from Augsburg Fortress, \$40 www.

augsburgfortress.org.

www.elca.org/seeds

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Planning resources for the new church year

Good stewardship of the worship life of the congregation necessitates planning and preparation. The new church year that begins with the first Sunday of Advent marks a shift in the pattern of readings from the Gospel of Mark (lectionary year B) to the Gospel of Luke (lectionary year C).

Worship planners may best prepare for the new year by reading through and studying the Gospel of Luke before planning worship centered in Luke's proclamation of Jesus Christ.

Now available, Sundays and Seasons 2010, Year C, follows the readings from the Revised Common Lectionary to enrich worship preparation with a variety of seasonal and weekly reflections, prayers of intercessions, music suggestions and more. This resource offers a brief summary of Lukan motifs as an introduction to planning for the new lectionary year.

The following resources are available from Augsburg Fortress at 800-

The Worship Planning Calendar 2010, Year C, serves as a planning guide, appointment calendar and guide to daily prayer. (ISBN 9780806671246, \$20).

Words for Worship 2010, Year C, CD-ROM edition, contains texts and graphic files with content from Evangelical Lutheran Worship. It also includes week-to-week elements from Lectionary for Worship Year C, Revised Common Lectionary; Sundays and Seasons 2010; and the Psalter for Worship Year C.

www.SundaysandSeasons.com is a subscription-based online resource that offers a wide variety of worship planning resources.

Occasional Services for the Assembly

Evangelical Lutheran Worship Occasional Services for the Assembly, the second volume of occasional services, readings and prayers, will be available in November 2009. Commended for use by the ELCA Church Council in March 2009, this volume contains services relating to congregational life and the church's ministries. The volume is in a format suitable for use in worship, with a durable hard cover in a deep red color and convenient ribbons. Examples of new resources in this volume are a "Blessing and Sending for Mission," used for collections gathered by the congregation for use in mission, and a combined "Holy Baptism and Affirmation of Baptism" service (\$65, available from Augsburg Fortress, ISBN 978-0-8066-9635-5).

Well done, good and faithful steward!

On an unseasonably cold and rainy August afternoon residents of the Alma Nelson Rehabilitation and Health Care Center, Rockford, Ill., are indoors.

Two or three sit in their wheelchairs, watching images on a silent television. A nurse's assistant deals cards to a patient while another naps under a heavy blanket. Busy staff personnel make notes in charts, others accompany their charges into their unlit rooms.

Physical therapy has just concluded. More patients line up in their wheelchairs, some slumped to the side and asleep. Near the door, happily chatting with her therapist, is Harriett Dudley. With bright eyes and a warm smile, she wears her 92 years with grace.

"Harriett has a lot of visitors," reports one of her nurses. "She has four to six visitors a day. It's great when the little ones come to see her, they brighten up the day for everyone here."

For Harriett, the rehab center is where she must be right now. "I need to get better and get back to what I'm supposed to do," she explains. The retired teacher and reading specialist wants member of the day care center board and a to get back for Silvie and Antonio and all of the other children at Trinity Day Care Center. Harriett has a stack of handmade get-well cards that the children drew for her. "Some of the children drew tears, because they were sad I was sick, others drew angels."

Harriet, a member of Trinity Lutheran Church, Rockford, Ill., volunteers her time tutoring reading for underprivileged and special needs children at her congregation's day riett's story." care center.

to go first. She holds my hands and gives me members, congregations and individuals for hugs. We walk hand-in-hand to the room where we read," relates Harriett. "When Trinity first opened the day care center I knew I needed to do something, maybe just reading to a group of children. Then the tutoring op-



The Rev. Gary Heedum, interim pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church, Rockford, III.



Harriett Dudley cannot recall a time when she didn't want to be a teacher. At 92 she is tutoring children at the Trinity Day Care Center.

portunity came up."

In addition to tutoring, Harriett is also a member of the senior task force committee; she also stuffs bulletins and helps out with congregational mailings.

"Harriett is a wonderful witness to what it is to be a disciple," said Trinity's interim pastor, Gary Heedum. "I was searching for ways to share her story. Then I got an announcement for the ELCA's 'God's work. Our hands.' Video Contest and I knew that was how to tell Har-

Heedum's video entry, "This is what I can "When I come to read, Silvie always wants do," is one of 224 videos created by ELCA the contest that ended July 15.

> As the star of the entry, written and directed by her pastor, Harriett tells viewers about the stewardship of her talent as a reading specialist. From arriving at the church in her 1988 Buick to meeting with her students individually, Harriett tells her story through a voice-over. She didn't want to talk before the camera, because she believes that is not good use of her tal-

> To view Harriett's video, visit www.elca. org/videocontest, click on Watch Videos: Start Now, and key in the title, "This is What I Can Do." You may also want to check the other 223 videos, but be prepared. Keep a box of tissues handy, because most of the entries, including Harriett's, tug strongly at your heartstrings.

Share your story!

The feature stories that are printed in this section of Seeds for the Parish report on an individual's work, achievements and contributions to this church. E-mail your story ideas to Marianne Griebler, associate director for marketing for member communications, at stories@elca.org.

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Best Small Cap Value Fund over a five-year perior

*This recognition only indicates performance relative to other mutual funds in the same category. The Fund received this award for this time period only. This recognition does not necessarily reflect the recent negative performance experienced. For updated performance information, go to Thrivent.com. Past performance is not indicative of future results.

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Investing in a mutual fund involves risks, including the possible loss of principal. The prospectus contains more complete information on the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the Fund, which investors should read and consider carefully before investing. Prospectuses are available from a Thrivent Financial representative or at Thrivent.com.

Global formation events soar at the Wisconsin global village



Can attending an ELCA Global Formation Event (GFE) increase interest and participation in global mission in your congregation, conference or synod?

Yes, say members of the ELCA East-Central Synod of Wisconsin, which co-hosted a Global Formation Event in February 2008 with the ELCA Global Mission unit.

"We saw the value of the time we put into our companion synod relationship with the Western Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa," said Pastor Mark Ziemer of Grace Lutheran Church, Tomahawk, which has a sister congregation relationship with Lekubu Lutheran Parish in Lekubu, South Africa. "Instead of being a burden or the pastor's pet project, it became something to be proud of!"

The 25 members of Grace who attended the tions in South Africa.

GFE took advantage of its focus on connecting global and local ministry by participating in tracks on global travel, social ministry, stewardship and children's education. The plenary sessions on culture were particularly helpful, says Ziemer. "If we are going to be the body of Christ, it's imperative that we include those who are not like us in that exercise."

When the GFE ended, the Grace team sat down to review the weekend and incorporate what it had learned into the life of the congregation. "We decided we needed to learn more about how to vocalize our faith and put it into action in concrete ways," says Ziemer.

Recognizing the value of networking with others, Grace leaders also stepped up their participation in quarterly companion synod meetings in both their local conference and their synod. They joined the Companion Synod Task Force of the East-Central Synod of Wisconsin in planning a global-themed summer camp to keep enthusiasm for mission high.

"Global Village: Walking Together in God's World," which took place July 8–11, 2009, at Crossways Pine Lake Camp, drew 185 participants, including 10 from companion congregations in South Africa.

The Global Formation Event, the relationship with Lekubu Lutheran and the Global Village Camp have also solidified Grace's financial commitment to the ELCA.

"Grace is one of the top five congregations in the synod when it comes to contributing to Lutheran Disaster Response and Lutheran World Relief," says Ziemer. "We understand that our money is not being sent to the ELCA, but is participating in the work of the ELCA. We're excited about the ELCA and value of ELCA ministries!"

Global and domestic ministry the focus of Global Formation Event

Global mission no longer takes place "over there." Immigration, travel and the Internet are bringing the world to us! What can we learn globally to help our congregations serve and thrive in our own back yards?

Bring a team from your congregation and find out at one of the **ELCA Global Formation Events** taking place this fall in Texas, Nebraska and Washington state.

Global Formation Events bring together experts and resources on global *and* domestic ministry under one roof, for one weekend, in one convenient location so congregational leaders can build skills to be an effective part of God's mission no matter where you are.

For only \$35.00 and in only 1-1/2 days, your congregational team can enhance your connections with the worldwide Lutheran family, energize your congregation, gain practical skills for mission; and give, receive and serve more

effectively

And you'll enjoy yourself as you experience exciting worship, sing songs from around the world, explore challenging ideas and learn new methods of mission.

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

2009 ELCA Global Formation Events

October 1–2, 2009 Katy, Texas

October 30–31, 2009 Lincoln, Nebraska

November 13–14, 2009 Olympia, Washington

Watch for details on locations at www.elca.org/globalevents or call 800-638-3522, ext. 2642

The Lutheran Study Bible goes to Africa

Picture a room full of pastors dancing with the *Lutheran Study Bible* held high. Listen to their voices raised in four-part harmony celebrating this wonderful gift from their companions in the ELCA. Imagine the joy that is in the hearts of the members of the lay school that purchased and shared these Bibles with their companions in Malawi.

The ELCA Northwest Synod of Wisconsin and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi (ELCM) model what it means to actually be companion synods. You might have seen the video made of this exchange in the ELCA's "God's work. Our hands." Video Contest. Read on for the rest of the story.

When news of the *Lutheran Study Bible* made it to the ELCM, the synod knew it wanted every one of its pastors to have one. The synod contacted the Rev. Gregory P. Kaufmann, assistant to the bishop of the Northwest

Synod of Wisconsin, and director of its Lay School of Ministry, which is "twinned" or matched with the Training Department of the ELCM. They asked for 150 hardcover copies.

The Lay School of Ministry board took the request and ran with it. They added their order of 150 Bibles to a synod order of 350 Bibles

(gifts to all who attended the 2009 Synod Assembly) and ordered 100 more as personal copies. They invited lay school participants to purchase one or more Bibles for Malawi and easily sold all 150.

Mphatso Thole, the companion synod coordinator for the ELCM, was in Wisconsin for a six-week working visit with his counterpart Diane Kaufmann. Together they traveled the synod, sharing stories about how Bible study is done in Malawi, and the importance of having a good Lutheran study Bible for their pastors. You can view a video of Mphatso Thole talking about Bible study in Malawi on the Book of Faith Ning site.

All who purchased Bibles took time to sign them, and write down their favorite Bible passages and stories. In May, at the closing worship service of the lay school, the Bibles were blessed and then loaded into

suitcases to be hand-delivered by three different groups travelling to visit Malawi in June. Each was placed in a special cloth bag, labeled "God's work. Our hands.", so that the pastors could carry the Bibles around the dusty countryside without damaging them.

Upon arrival in Malawi, the Bibles were presented to the pastors by both Bishop Pederson of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin synod and Bishop Bvumbwe of the ELCM. Bishop Pederson spent a day talking through all the useful tools of the *Lutheran Study Bible*, and leading the entire group in a study of the book of Jonah.

Diane and Mphatso are now working on strategies to study the Bible together, despite the minor detail of living on two different continents. These study Bibles will be very helpful tools in that process.

Walking the walk and talking the talk

"Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you."

-1 Peter 3:15b

These are the words of encouragement shared by the apostle Peter with the saints in exile. These words steered early Christians away from fear and toward the faithfilled life that God had chosen for them. God calls us to life in the Spirit and trans- 3. Is 10 percent the base level of sharing in forms our fear into boldness, makes our slow responses nimble and turns our distraction to purposeful action and attitude. For this frightened, lazy and abstracted Revisit your commitment with an eye toculture this is indeed good news!

Be a good steward in not just talking the talk, but walking the walk. God's 4. Is faith celebrated in your sharing? life-giving mission is to change and save lives—whatever it takes. So call upon one another to strengthen faith and love, and generosity. What does "walking the walk" look like in your life?

- thing in your life?
- What is different in your life because God's call to be bold, nimble and purposeful has shined on your actions and attitudes?
- How might you allocate resources differently in your household or congrethe work God is calling you to do?

Ask the following questions to open a conversation about how you can explore, identify and share a full or expanded mission gift:

- 1. Is sharing proportional? Do you share 6. Join in intercessory prayer for disciples, proportionally from your resources to support the mission tasks of the congregation, synod and ELCA churchwide units? What of this church. percentage of your total unrestricted income did you share last year? What percentage did you share five years ago?
- 2. Is your sharing a first-fruits gift? Disciples are encouraged to make decisions about mission sharing first, before other decisions are made and as a matter of priority. Remember we share out of love, not out of what is left over. Send your gifts on a weekly basis.



- your household? Most households made decisions about sharing this year when anxiety about the economy was at its peak. ward growth.
- Generosity is rooted in dependence upon God's grace and love for our brothers and sisters. Sharing is an expression of faith in to be bold, nimble and purposeful in your God. We are not motivated to share because we "have" while others "have not." No longer do we give because "we" are different from "them." We share, not be-How is your walk different because cause we are different, but because we are faith in Jesus is the most important no different. Our motivation for sharing is faith. God showers blessings, promises and challenges upon us all. Generosity is not predicated on what we can afford but on how much we have received from God.
 - 5. Does your congregation tithe unrestricted bequests and unrestricted endowgation in order to better accomplish ment income? If your congregation has received or is receiving an unrestricted bequest, give 10 percent of that gift as a special gift for the synod, ministry partners or the churchwide mission. This level of giving is a continuing example of proportional sharing.
 - evangelists, teachers, bishops, pastors, rostered leaders, congregations and members

This church responds to missional challenges by being the first responders to human need in difficult times. Many individuals and congregations are challenged to do more with less. Now is the time to talk stewardship and walk the walk of generosity.



In your experience, what one thing has the greatest impact in developing steward leaders?

Kaw Prairie is a recently organized mission congregation reaching un-churched, once-churched, and numbed-by-church people. We have low barriers to get folks into worship (contemporary music, topical message series, children's program during sermon, and so on), but we have high expectations for the worshipers who choose to become members:

Tithes & Treasures

Covenanted members agree to strive toward the biblical benchmark of tithing within three years of joining. Additionally, only tithers are nominated to the congregation council, so the congregation knows it is led and protected by biblically obedient leaders. High stewardship standards grow strong steward leaders— and they create passionate ministry volunteers, for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.

Time & Talent

Since all believers are in the 'priesthood,' we should all see our spiritual gifts as callings! We challenge worshipers to discover their gifts and passions through workshops we offer, then pursue them in a ministry where they can really change lives with Jesus' love. Seeing fruitfulness in your ministry makes it easy to show faithfulness in your generosity.

—Dan McKnight, pastor, Kaw Prairie Community Church, Kaw Prairie, Kan.

In my experience, the one thing that has made the greatest impact on developing steward leaders has been the grace-empowered full embrace of the gospel itself already in place, alive and unfolding. I have found stewardship leaders living an already-existing sense of giving back to God out of sheer love for God in Jesus Christ. People who take leadership roles in stewardship seem to have almost an innate understanding that all comes from God. Stewardship simply becomes, by God's grace, a life responsive to the gospel through (often tithing-measured) giving of financial gifts, abilities and time. I am so enriched and blessed to be working with such leaders here and now.

—Daniel B. Ward, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

Prayer and the creativity of our steward leaders led us to continue the emphasis of gratitude that was focused on outreach rather than in-house blessings. Jesus said, "You reap what you sow" and we found that to be the truth once again. This year our effort will be focused on actual physical as well as financial helping of others as we enlarge on the ELCA theme—"God's work. Our hands." As of yet we do not have the full plan and strategy in place for the fall, but I feel certain it will be creative and generously faithful to the loving nature of our Lord.

-Dale L. Peterson, pastor, St. John Lutheran Church, Mendota, Ill.

Davey and Goliath's lost episodes

This Collector's Edition of ten 15-minute episodes is available to the public for the first time ever! Some of the episodes were pulled from broadcast stations more than 40 years ago, and some have never even been distributed. Content issues, political incorrectness or unapproved visuals kept these episodes in the vault. Now re-edited with acceptable video standards for young children, we hope you and your family will enjoy these lost episodes of the beloved Davey and Goliath television series. Great for Sunday school classes, youth groups or vacation Bible schools, each episode teaches a life lesson from the perspective of Davey Hansen and his talking dog, Goliath. Children love the stop-motion animation charm of these programs. The series was originally created by the United Lutheran Church in America in 1968 and produced by Art and Ruth Clokey, who also created the Gumby™ television programs. Every episode in the series has been digitally restored and closed-captioned. The lessons of learning, understanding and forgiveness in each episode are as appropriate today as they were 40 years ago. These previously unseen episodes are now available to a whole new generation of children.

Order *Davey and Goliath's Lost Episodes* from your favorite online book-seller.

Liturgical resources available

A treasure of liturgical resources is found in music library of The Resource Center at Clear Lake, Iowa. Starting with 12 boxes of choral music donated from Waldorf College, Forest City, Iowa the library has expanded to over 600 titles. Each title has between 10 and 100 copies and ranges in genre from early 1900s classical pieces to more contemporary arrangements.

Internet users can search the online catalogue and request specific titles or can ask for suggestions from the center. Titles can be borrowed free of charge. Karen Harthan, director of the Resource Center, says this resource is a perfect way for congregations to bring new, quality music to their worship experiences while "not placing stress on music budgets." For more information visit, www.lutheranres-roucecenter.org.

Disaster preparedness is good stewardship



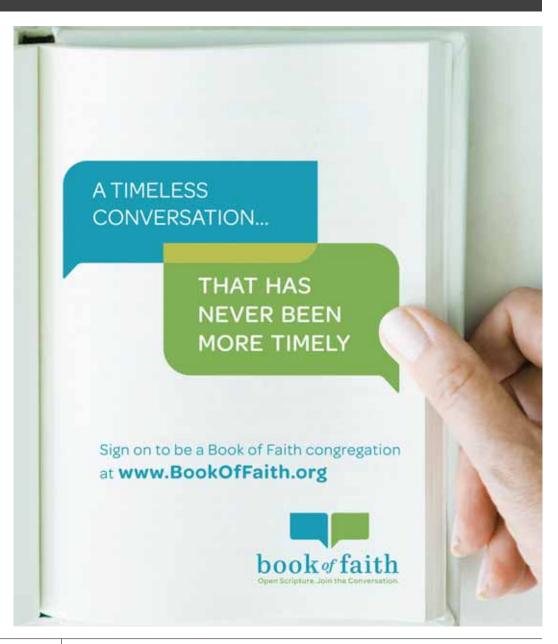
A powerful form of stewardship, and responsibly looking after our safety and property is disaster preparedness, or making basic preparations for an emergency. Creating a family and congregational disaster preparedness plan will help you remain safe and secure if a disaster strikes your community. September is National Disaster Preparedness Month, so visit www.ready.gov for relevant information. Also visit www.ldr.org for helpful resources on congregational disaster preparedness from Lutheran Disaster Response.

Genetics and faith

What is God calling the ELCA to teach and advocate regarding stem cells, genetically modified organisms, genetic testing, patented life and the pastoral challenges arising from developments in genetics?

The ELCA study, "Genetics and Faith: Power, Choice, and Responsibility," explores these questions. The ELCA's Genetic Task Force, which published the study, invites ELCA members to share their thoughts by responding to the study by Nov. 1, 2009. Responses will help inform the task force as it begins to write a draft social statement on genetics that will available in March 2010. Response forms are part of the study.

For a complimentary copy of the study and a free DVD, call the ELCA Resource Information Service at 800-638-3522. Multiple copies are available through Augsburg Fortress at 800-328-4648. Order item #000779 for the study; ISBN: 978-6-0002-2205-5 for the free DVD.



Select Multimedia Resources for ...

Stewarding relationships

Making Mutual Ministry Work

Many congregations have found that the understanding and practice of mutual ministry fosters the relationships between pastor and people. These relationships shape the entire ministry of the congregation. Making Mutual Ministry Work is a "workshop in a box" that will help establish and strengthen mutual ministry in your congregation.

Stewarding congregational health

Congregational Leaders in Anxious Times

This DVD makes a rich resource for leadership development. Explore the need for mission-mindedness, good boundaries and the courage to challenge.

Stewarding the vocation of teachers

Teaching the Bible, Hosting the Conversation

Teaching and learning the Bible are two of the primary faith formation practices for Christians. For members of the ELCA, the Book of Faith Initiative calls us to encounter the Scriptures in a deep and powerful way. This course helps support the development of teaching skills.

These and other resources can be found at www.selectlearning.org.

New LWT Bible study coming in September

You won't want to miss the new Lutheran Woman Today Bible study beginning in the Leader Guide: The Leader Guide provides September issue: "To God's Beloved: Paul's Letter to the Romans." This nine-session study will explore the epistle to the Romans—one of the foundations of Christian theology. Martin Luther called it the most important piece in the New Testament. He even said it would be worth memorizing!

The author of this study is the Rev. Dr. Sarah Henrich, professor of New Testament at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn. Henrich wrote the 2005 summer Bible study on boldness, and she led the study at the Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering that year in San Antonio.

Study Resources

The only piece essential for the "To God's Beloved" study is a subscription to *Luther*an Woman Today magazine. The following companion pieces, however, add depth to the study:

the Bible study leader with additional background information not found in Lutheran Woman Today. Included are tips on how to lead the discussion, instructions for activities, ideas on prayers and more.

Companion Bible: This handy volume puts the study texts in one convenient place. Printed in an easy-to-read size, it offers biblical texts for every session.

Bookmark: The "To God's Beloved" bookmark is a terrific way to promote the Bible study and makes a great gift for group members. It is sold in packs of 12.

Call 800-328-4648 or visit www.augsburgfor*tress.org* to order the magazine or companion pieces. And be sure to visit the LWT Web site at www.lutheranwomantoday.org for videos and other resources.

Explore your baptismal vocation

Vocation. Stewardship. Education. Explore what these mean, how they relate in the Christian life and what the ELCA teaches about them. The Church in Society program unit has an exciting, new graphicdriven DVD resource to guide congregations in studying Our Calling in Education, the ELCA social statement adopted by the 2007 Churchwide Assembly.

This DVD resource features sessions for a variety of audiences using diverse formats, printable handouts, video clips, Web links and bibliography information. You may pick and choose what is of interest for your particular group.

To order this multimedia resource, please contact Augsburg Fortress at www.augsburgfortress.org or 800-328-4648 and ask for ISBN 978-6-0002-2249-9. The cost is \$1.00 per DVD plus shipping.

Grace-Full Living

With Grace-Full Living, Women of the ELCA continues its focus on women's health in all its many facets, including our relationship with money. If we take a holistic approach to wellness, doesn't it make sense to include financial health in that picture? When we consider health in mind, body and spirit, do we ponder how giving is integral to our well being?

Grace-full Living is in three sections that will help women:

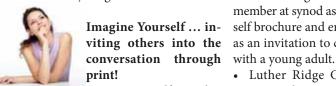
- see how our feelings regarding the role of money in our lives today are intimately connected to what we have been taught or shown by our parents, families, partners and friends:
- see how giving demonstrates confidence in the ministry of the church, and how that generosity contributes to a more balanced life;
- learn to recognize the indicators of financial wellness and to discern which areas need attention.

This resource can be used in its entirety at one time, or it can be divided into parts to explore over several sessions.

The entire resource is free at www.womenoftheelca.org in the section Stewardship and Giving. If you have any questions about Grace-Full Living, contact Women of the ELCA at 800-638-3522, ext. 2730, or women. elca@elca.org

Imagine Yourself ... as a mentor advocate for vocational discernment with young adults

ated a family of resources about vocational discernment for young adults.



a printed tri-fold brochure that we call an "invitation." Use this resource to invite a young adult to a conversation on vocation! These invitations will lead to the Web resources listed below. We've left a blank space in the Web-address area for your comment or personalized contact information.

Imagine Yourself ... on the Web!

Use featured profiles of young adults from all across the country to inspire and stir vocational conversation with young adults. Stories from the Imagine Yourself brochure at www. *elca.org/imagineyourself* highlight ways that some young adults are "asking the questions and living the answers!"

Encourage young adults to share their stories on the Imagine Yourself Social Network at www.elca.org/imagineyourself. It's an interactive media site with a focus on discovering vocation with peers.

young adult vocational resources:

- ELCA Virginia Synod gave each voting display for an "Invitation to Service" event. member at synod assembly an Imagine Yourself brochure and encouraged them to use it as an invitation to converse about vocation
- · Luther Ridge Conference Center and Imagine Yourself started as Camp used Imagine Yourself as an invitation to converse about vocation with young adult summer staff.
 - Pastor Scott put Imagine Yourself brochures in new-member packets to begin a conversation with new congregation members about the Lutheran understanding of voca-
 - The ELCA Northern Illinois Synod candidacy committee is planning to use Imagine Yourself to begin a partnership with the Center for Vocation at Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill., to help the committee become better discernment advocates with young
 - Shirley Splitgerber and her local Women of the ELCA unit invited women to share their call stories. Afterward they gave out Imagine Yourself brochures to the women and encouraged them to "pass it on" as an invitation to begin a conversation with other young adult women.

The Vocation and Education unit has cre- Some ideas for using Imagine Yourself • A synodical candidacy committee used Imagine Yourself poster boards as part of the

> We'd love to hear from you! Let us know how you're using the Imagine Yourself brochure or if you have an idea for a resource.

Kristen Glass, director for Young Adult Ministry: Kristen.Glass@elca.org

Kim Beckmann, Director for Candidacy: Kim. Beckmann@elca.org

Order from the Augsburg Fortress Distribution Center: 800-328-4648.

Imagine Yourself tri-fold brochures in packages of 50

ISBN 978-6-0002-2220-8

\$7.50 per 50, \$15 per 100, \$30 per 300 (plus

Imagine Yourself 8 ½ x 11 display board

ISBN 978-6-0002-2219-2 \$15 per set (plus shipping)

Take the Global **Engagement Survey**

How are you involved in ministry or relationships in other countries?

Take the Global Engagement Survey. Your answers will help us learn how Lutherans are involved in God's work around the world.

Go to www.elca.org/globalsurvey or call 773-380-2642 for a copy of the survey.

Social statements a phone call away

Single, complimentary copies of social statements, messages, studies of social issues, and related resources are available by calling 800-638-3522.



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Stewardship is not just a matter of dollars and cents. Find out more about it in this issue of "Seeds for the Parish."

Stewards from the emerging church

Stewardship was never just about money, but today's generations are connecting with the service aspect of stewardship in a whole new way.

For younger generations within the church, the subject of financial stewardship can be a particularly sensitive area, with no thanks given to the cost of college loans in a time of economic uncertainty. Because of this, many congregations are trying to find ways that their young adult members can tithe their time and energy, as well as their income. In the emerging churches a renewed enthusiasm for community service has brought with it an increasing demand for ways in which members can use their talents effectively.

Four years ago Rick DeVos and Benjamin Gott came up with an idea they called *TheCommon.org*. It began when they saw a need within their own congregation, Mars Hill in Grand Rapids, Mich. The fast-growing Mars Hill was trying to connect volunteers to service opportunities, but the way in which they were doing it was ineffective. In response, DeVos and Gott set up *TheCommon.org*, a Web site where users can post a need (for example, "a ride to church") or an ability ("transportation") and see them matched with someone from within

their own community. In this way, for a small, per-member fee, congregations and other organizations can strengthen their communities with simple, user-friendly technology. As Gott says, the interface moves quickly through the Internet into a place of real-life interaction.

The excitement for this brand of stewardship is obvious when someone looks at the way *TheCommon.org* has grown over the past two years. It continues to grow, and while its online communities are organized in a secure, community-member only way, a feature called "blending" allows one group to share needs and solutions with another group. This outward interaction appeals to many congregations looking for a way to serve their neighborhoods.

The trend toward service-as-stewardship is growing, and *TheCommon.org* is excited to be a part of it. "That deep community and giving emphasis has increasingly been a focus in a lot of communities, and it's great to be able to support that idea and movement," Gott says.

For more, examples of how *TheCommon.org* works, visit their Twitter feed at "www.twitter. com/thecommon." There, you'll find instances of people helping other people in real-time. Case studies can also be found at "www.thecommon. org/blog."



Who knew saving for retirement could light up a new church?

In n short years, the members of Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Rockport, Texas, have gone from meeting in rented storefronts to breaking ground on their own church building — thanks to a loan from the Mission Investment Fund. Invest with the MIF and you don't just earn a competitive rate of return, you help fund loans so new congregations like Holy Cross find homes of their own. To learn more, contact us at 877.886.3522 or elca.org/mif.



Mission investment Fund Evangelical Lutheran Church in America God'swork. Our hands.