

Hungary trip renews companion synod relationship

by Marcia Hahn

Bishop Kevin Jones and eight others from the Northeastern Iowa Synod recently returned from a whirlwind trip to Hungary with a new appreciation for the ways Lutherans serve others in the world.

"We were busy, but it was a good busy," Jones says. "By the end we were physically tired, but spiritually fed and joyful, and grateful for the time."

The June trip was organized by the synod's Global Church Together Network as part of the companion synod relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH). Bishop Tamás Fabiny, his staff and others welcomed their



Bishop Tamás Fabiny of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary and Bishop Kevin Jones of the Northeastern Iowa Synod lead the Sunday worship service at the Lutheran Church of Budavar in Budapest.

Iowa guests with hospitality that went beyond anyone's expectations.

Russ and Cathy Baldner of Calmar Lutheran say that meeting the Hungarian people and seeing how they live out their faith was a highlight of the trip.

"Everyone who we interacted with—even people not associated with the church—were warm, welcoming, gracious and more than generous," Russ says. "The nature of the Hungarian people was a component of everything we did and saw that week."

The week included visits to some of the ELCH ministries that serve refugees, racial minorities and disadvantaged people. Run by a local congregation, the Dévai Fogadó community center in Budapest supports refugees from Ukraine by providing clothing, groceries, cash assistance and other

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Members from the Northeastern Iowa Synod view Martin Luther's "Last Will and Testament" at the National Lutheran Museum during their June trip to Hungary.

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basic essentials, along with language classes, training skills for job applicants, children's day camp, and spiritual support.

"A lot of women from Ukraine are traumatized coming from crisis and thinking about their families back home," says Pastor Liz Bell, assistant to the Bishop and facilitator for the synod's Global Church Together Network. "It's hard for them to move on with their kids, so the center gives them a chance to relax and take a deep breath to help them get their bearings for the next step."

The Iowa group visited a different type of service work in an economically disadvantaged area in the countryside. Set on a restored farm next to a lavender field, the ministry helps people gain skills to make ceramics and handicraft items from the lavender to sell and give them income.

"Whenever we can learn from people in different parts of the world, we do a favor for ourselves to see beyond our own walls and communities. It reminds us that we are part of the bigger church."

—Bishop Kevin Jones

Reg Green, a member of Bethlehem Lutheran, Cedar Falls, and the synod's Racial Justice Advocacy Network, says that his passion for racial justice and anti-racism work led him to join the trip to learn what was being done in Hungary to serve the Roma people. He says he was surprised to learn there were many other minoritized groups of people being helped.



Bishop Tamás Fabiny leads a candlelight service in a Budapest cave to remember a pastor who helped families hide there during World War II bombings.

"They were doing some marvelous things," Green says. "For many of the immigrants, Hungary is not their final destination, which I had not considered before. They were passing through to countries with better economies to provide an opportunity to work."

The group visited some churches from different eras, including the historic Lutheran Church of Budavar, built in 1895 in Budapest. Bishop Jones preached at the Sunday worship service and afterward, Bishop Fabiny took the Iowa group below to a cave that had been used for shelter during World War II.

Fabiny told how people lived in the cave during several days of bombings, and a young pastor would go out early mornings to get bread from a bakery to feed the people. The pastor had sent his wife and one-year-old son to the country where it was safer, so every night he wrote in his journal about what happened each day.

"We went into that space and sat there by tea light candles for a time of quiet while Bishop Fabiny read in English lines from the pastor's journal entries," Bell says. "I could imagine being in that space and hearing the words written so long ago. It was powerful because history happened in that space, and it was so calm and quiet."

That cave service also had special meaning for Green, who has a family connection to the fighting in Hungary. His father was a WW II fighter pilot with the Tuskegee Airmen and was returning from an escort mission when his plane was damaged in Hungarian airspace, and he had to bail out. Fortunately, the Yugoslavian underground picked him up.

"It was a moving experience for me knowing that my father was involved in aerial attacks in that country," Green says. "We too often forget the individual human

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trauma of war for both warriors and citizens."

Fabiny invited the group to visit the ELCH offices and adjacent Lutheran Museum, which houses the handwritten "Last Will and Testament" of Martin Luther.

"Luther left everything to Katie," Jones says. "The practice then was to leave it to your sons, but Luther trusted his wife, and she was capable."

In Fabiny's office, they saw a plaque that displays all the Lutheran bishops in Hungary who have preceded him, beginning in 1610. It was a reminder of the 400-year history of the Lutheran Church in Hungary, which has persisted through persecutions and wars, including the Habsburg dynasty, Nazi invasion and Soviet occupation.

"Through it all they have continued to proclaim the Gospel and provide ministry to their neighbors," Jones says. "This is truly inspirational and a reminder that God is faithful in all times and places."

Jones adds that the Lutheran Church in Hungary today faces many of the same challenges that congregations in the Northeastern Iowa Synod face, especially in their small towns and rural areas.

"I was surprised to learn how similar our churches are. A lot of young people do not come to church and there are a lot of differences of political opinions—much like we experience here."

PLANNING AHEAD FOR A VITALIZED PARTNERSHIP

Jones says his intention for this trip was to pave the way for a deeper

companion synod partnership and new opportunities to collaborate, especially since most of those activities were put on hold during the pandemic. Together, the Hungarians and Iowans talked about being diligent to lift one another in prayer. When Bishop Fabiny heard about the floods occurring in Iowa during the visit,



Russ and Cathy Baldner of Calmar make lavender dolls at a rural Lutheran ministry that teaches disadvantaged people skills to make handicrafts and ceramics to sell for income.

he asked all the congregations in Hungary to pray for people in Iowa.

They discussed creating a written agreement to formalize how the companion synod relationship should work, whether it is through congregation-to-congregation or other ministry connections.

"This relationship is more than two bishops getting to know each other," Bell says. "We want to make sure the momentum isn't lost when there is a transition in staff or bishop."

The Northeastern Iowa Synod plans to invite Bishop Fabiny to attend the synod's Fall Theological Conference

in 2025. There was also talk about bringing some Iowa youth to the 2026 youth festival in Hungary.

Each member of the Iowa group brought a premium blend of coffee for this year's ELCH youth festival to introduce the youth to the world through different coffees. Bishop Jones told their hosts that an additional gift would be wired to them—\$4,000 collected from congregations and individuals in the Northeastern Iowa Synod—to use for whatever ministries they choose.

Cathy Baldner says that seeing faith in action through the ministries in Hungary was a rich experience in many ways.

"What came through for me is that we don't need to reinvent the wheel," she says. "The Hungarian people of the church are doing really good work. From us, they need support."

Jones says that it was important for him to see what possibilities exist for making life better for both churches. "Whenever we can learn from people in different parts of the world, we do a favor for ourselves to see beyond our own walls and communities. It reminds us that we are part of the bigger church."

Connections between this synod and the Lutheran Church in Hungary will continue to grow. A number of other groups and individuals from the Northeastern Iowa Synod have visited Hungary in the past year, and a few of those on the June trip are already making plans to return.

Congregations that would like to arrange a presentation about the travels to Hungary should contact the synod office, 319-352-1414.

Apply now to join Lay Ministry Training

Congregation members wanting to enroll in the synod's new Lay Ministry Training Program need to apply by Aug. 15 to join the first session in September.

The training will give lay leaders the tools and support they need to lead worship, preach, make home visits and do other basic pastoral ministries when their congregations are without an ordained pastor or deacon. Approved congregation members can take additional training to serve as Synod Authorized Ministers (SAM) in specific circumstances.

The Northeastern Iowa Synod joined with the Western Iowa Synod, Southeastern Iowa Synod and South Central Synod of Wisconsin to offer this coordinated lay ministry training. The two-year program will include participation in online lay training through the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin or the Northern Texas-Northern Louisiana Synod. Enrollees from all four synods will gather in person to take additional Zoom classes as a group and to attend retreats.

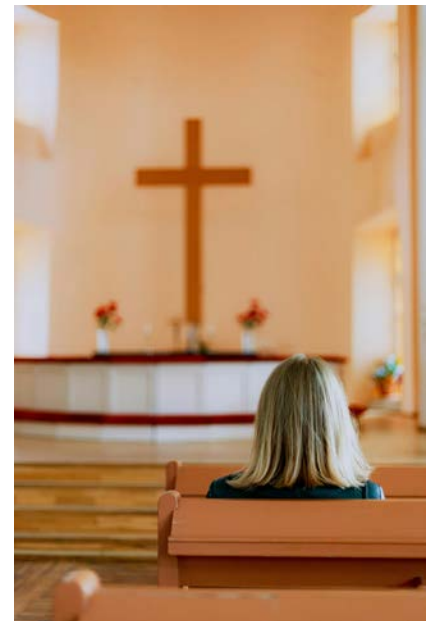
Up to six lay members from the Northeastern Iowa Synod can join this year's cohort. Priority will be given to lay leaders from congregations/parishes that have been in pastoral transition for an extended period of time, or are not able to afford a full-time pastor and not able to form a

sharing partnership with another congregation. Costs will be shared between the synod, the SAM, and the congregation.

APPLY BY AUG. 15

The application process begins by completing a questionnaire and submitting congregational and clergy references. In addition, the Northeastern Iowa Synod office requires an interview with the applicant and the congregation council to determine eligibility.

To learn more and to download application forms, visit www.neiasynod.org/lmt-2024 or contact Pastor Kristen Corr Rod at the synod office, 319-352-1414.



Register early for Men's Retreat

NOV. 1-3, 2024

Registration is open for the "One Year to Live" Men's Retreat set for Nov. 1-3 at Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point.

The retreat is an opportunity for men of all ages to rethink how they set their priorities and discover how God has equipped them to live. It is led by lay members and presented by Lutheran Men in Mission, in partnership with the Northeastern Iowa Synod and Camp Ewalu.

The cost is \$175 for those who register by Oct. 7. After that date, the rate is \$200, due by Oct. 21. Lodging, six meals and materials are included. To download the brochure/registration form and to register online, visit www.neiasynod.org/oysl.



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Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated for use in synod congregations and organizations, with credit to the *Star* newsletter.

Please notify the synod office with name and address changes. The *Star* can be downloaded at www.neiasynod.org/blog/newsletter. To request a printed version, call the synod office.



www.neiasynod.org

New festival to highlight global ministry partners

Global Church Together Festival

Aug. 24, 2024

All congregation members are invited to experience and discover God's work in the world during the Northeastern Iowa Synod's Global Church Together Festival, set for Saturday, Aug. 24, at Trinity Lutheran, Mason City.

Sponsored by the synod's Global Church Together Network, this event will feature a keynote presentation, workshops, "World of 100" global simulation activity, global music, worship and lunch featuring global flavors. The event is set for 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with registration beginning at 8:30 a.m.

The keynote speaker will be The Rev. Dr. Themba Mkhabela, ELCA regional representative for Southern Africa. He will share how ELCA accompaniment works in Namibia and some related projects that the ELCA supports. The day will conclude with a worship service, with The Rev. Dr. Winston Persaud preaching and Pastor Hope Johnson presiding.

Presenters with global connections will lead workshops on these topics:

- **Young Adults in Global Mission** — Brittany Barkus, Collaborative Learning Student
- **Hungary: Meaningful Connections & Opportunities** — Pastor Kathy Graves
- **Namibia Yesterday & Today** — Pastor Mike Wilker
- **Make Your Own: 7-Stranded Roma Bracelet** — Pastor Susan Friedrich
- **Global Music Jam Session** — Pastor Margaret Yackel-Juleen, Pastor David Efflandt and Brittany Barkus
- **The Art of Hospitality Given &**



Received — Pastor Liz Bell and panel discussion

- **Hungarian Cooking Demonstration**

REGISTER EARLY TO JOIN THE WORLD OF 100 ACTIVITY

The cost to attend is \$10 per person. Those who register online by Friday, Aug. 16, can participate in the interactive World of 100 demonstration.

Others will be able to serve as observers.

People are encouraged to download a poster, bulletin insert, postcard and other media kit resources from the synod website to help promote the festival in their congregations.

To learn more and register online, visit www.neiasynod.org/global-festival. Email questions to Pastor Liz Bell or call 319-352-1414.

Welcome ELCA Regional Rep for Southern Africa

The Rev. Dr. Themba Mkhabela, ELCA regional representative for Southern Africa, will visit several Northeastern Iowa communities Aug. 21-25 to highlight the companion synod relationship between Namibia and the Northeastern Iowa Synod.



Born in South Africa, Themba immigrated to the USA in 2000, and became an ELCA member in Colorado. He graduated from Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary

and previously served in the U.S. Virgin Islands and as regional representative for Madagascar, West and Central Africa. In his current role, he oversees ELCA missionaries and ministry partnerships across Southern Africa.

Mkhabela's visit will include stops at Luther College, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Camp Ewalu, Wartburg College and Mason City, where he will keynote the Global Church Together Festival Aug. 24. He will preach at First Lutheran, Decorah, on Aug. 25 at 8:30 a.m. and 10 a.m.

Help replenish the synod's flood bucket supply

This summer, the Northeastern Iowa Synod Disaster Response Network and congregations delivered flood buckets to help Iowans affected by flooding.

Pastor Kyle Barton, facilitator for the Northeastern Iowa Synod's Disaster Response Network, delivered 200 flood buckets from the synod's stockpile in Allison to the Western Iowa Synod Office in Storm Lake. In addition, Bergen Lutheran in Roland sent two flood buckets to Spencer and 18 to Humboldt. St. John Lutheran in Guttenberg sent 10 buckets to Humboldt. St. John in Clarksville assembled 78 buckets, which were donated to help with flood relief in Spencer.

HELP REPLENISH THE FLOOD BUCKET SUPPLY

Flood buckets contain essential cleaning supplies to help people clean up their homes and businesses following a flooding disaster. Since

THANK YOU to the people, leaders, congregations, friends and staff of the Western Iowa Synod for continued generous response in these days. Thanks also to Lutheran Disaster Response and our neighbors in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA and Nebraska Synod, ELCA. The NEED continues to be great and your prayers and financial gifts will support recovery efforts.

—Bishop Lorna Halaas, Western Iowa Synod

2017, this synod has maintained a supply of flood buckets to have on hand for emergencies. Congregations and individuals are invited to help replenish the current supply to ensure readiness for the next time flooding affects Iowa communities.

Making flood buckets could be a good congregational project for this year's "God's work. Our hands." service day on Sunday, Sept. 8. Thrivent Action Grants could help fund the supplies. Instructions to assemble the flood buckets can be downloaded at



Pastor Kyle Barton and his daughter deliver flood buckets to the Western Iowa Synod to help with flood recovery efforts.

www.neiasynod.org/flood-buckets.

Congregations that have flood buckets available or know where flood buckets are needed should contact the synod office, 319-352-1414.

'Leading in Turbulent Times' webinar series begins Sept. 10

The synod's Disaster Response Network invites rostered ministers, lay leaders, staff members and others interested to join a new webinar series focusing on disaster response and preparedness, and coping strategies related to traumatic events.

The free "Leading in Turbulent Times" series will be offered as one-hour lunch and learn Zoom sessions at 12:30 p.m. beginning in September. A variety of presenters will lead the interactive sessions,

which will include group discussions and time for questions.

Scheduled Topics:

Sept. 10 — *Building Use and Being Prepared*

Sept. 24 — *Lutheran Disaster Response: Resources, Tools and Key Learnings*

Oct. 8 — *A Coaching Approach*

Oct. 22 — *Community Grief and Mental Health Triage (Part 1)*

Oct. 29 — *Community Grief and Mental Health Triage (Part 2)*

Nov. 12 — *Check In, Next Best Steps, and Being Community Together*

People will need to register online in order to receive the Zoom link. They can register anytime up to the last session. Once registered, they can attend any or all of the sessions.

Visit www.neiasynod.org/lunch-learn to learn more and register.

A Day of Learning and Networking at the C3 Ministry Fair

Some 190 people attended the Northeastern Iowa Synod's first "Creative Collaborative Congregations (C3)" Ministry Fair in June.

The event featured a worship service, roundtable discussions and 30 workshops offering creative ideas for youth ministry, spiritual practices, outreach ministries, mission opportunities and more. In addition, congregation members brought 220 birthday kits and dozens of sanitary products for local food banks.

"I was really happy with the day," said Bishop Kevin Jones. "There was good energy, and people seemed grateful for the resources and variety of topics. It was a good day to be together as a synod."

Comments shared in a feedback survey agree with Jones, saying they appreciated hearing fresh ideas, networking with others and attending the large group worship service.

"My goal was to get ideas to get our church youth more involved, and Tiger McCluen offered great advice," said one comment. Another said, "Some topics were so different that they made me think 'outside of the box' in general." Some people said they would like having the fair offered more frequently or with an

additional day so that people could attend more than four workshops.

Jan Glaspie, executive assistant for synod administration and ministry fair manager, says that feedback will help in planning the next fair. Plans are to host the fair in alternate years with the Synod Assembly, which will meet again on June 7, 2025.

"I heard from people who said they enjoyed the format, the variety of workshops and the opportunity to sit with presenters and discuss a topic over lunch," Glaspie said.

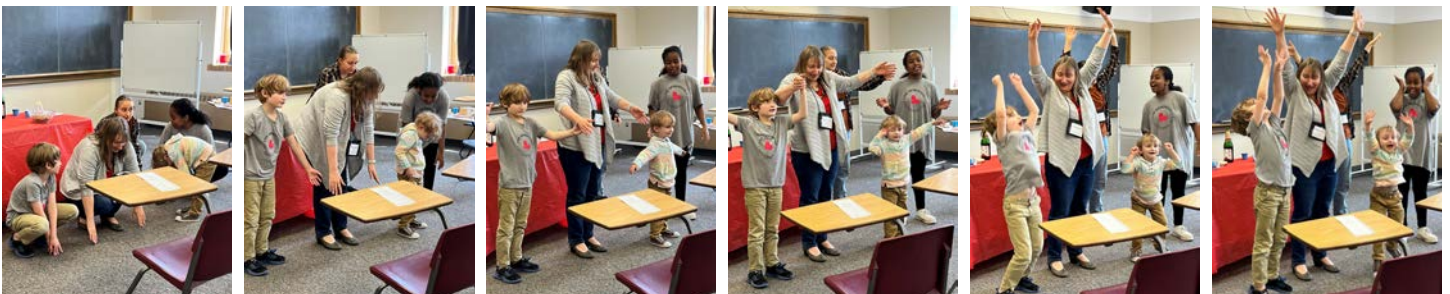
Anyone interested in learning more about a topic or speaker from the Ministry Fair can contact Glaspie at the synod office, 319-352-1414.



Members from across the synod perform in the worship band directed by Pastor Dave Efflandt.



Ministry conversations continue at a roundtable discussion during lunch at the C3 Ministry Fair.



Pastor Sarah Nye and her children demonstrate how actions accompany the Lord's Prayer when it is said at the Dwelling in Faith Dinner Church, a new type of worship and fellowship they presented about during a workshop at the C3 Ministry Fair.

Youth Gathering brings energized ministry to New Orleans

Nearly 16,000 teenagers and adults attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans in July, including more than 400 from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. They celebrated this year's "Created to Be" theme with a different focus each day:

- Day 1: *Created to Be Brave*
- Day 2: *Created to Be Authentic*
- Day 3: *Created to Be Free*
- Day 4: *Created to Be Disruptive*
- Day 5: *Created to Be Disciples*

Pastor Kristen Rod, Director for Evangelical Mission and synod youth ministry leader, attended a youth gathering as a high schooler, but this was her first time attending as an adult.

"It was a really good experience," she says. "You can livestream the gathering and watch the speakers from home, but it is hard to replicate the energy that happens when 16,000 people worship in the same space. It was wonderful to be a part of that."

Rod says she was excited to connect with a few of the speakers who she already knew, including Pastor Joe Liles who was a classmate of hers at Wartburg Theological Seminary. Liles spoke at the first day's mass gathering to tell about New Orleans and help get the energy going for the week. Emphasizing the day's "Created to Be Brave" theme, he encouraged everyone to try new things while there and to remember that God is with them wherever they go.

Day 2 centered on interactive learning and exploration. The Northeastern Iowa youth engaged with a range of exhibits and activities set up at the convention center to learn about ELCA organizations, partner ministries and justice issues. They could



Youth from Zion St. John, Sheffield, host a communion station during an ELCA mass gathering at the Smoothie King Center in New Orleans.



Pastor Kristen Rod reconnects with former seminary classmate Pastor Joe Liles, who spoke at the Youth Gathering.

experience a symbolic separation wall and write messages on it. They had an opportunity to learn about ELCA social statements and write their own ideas for future social statements. Other options included hymn sing-alongs, high-energy playground games and an acolyte relay challenge.



The group from Redeemer, Waverly, get ready to board the Creole Queen as part of synod day at the Youth Gathering.

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Youth Gathering brings energized ministry to New Orleans
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They could also choose to enjoy quiet time with coloring activities, poetry workshops, photo booths, prayer weaving stations, friendship bracelet stands and more.

On Day 3, all of the synod youth groups or “krewes” spread out in the city for accompaniment day to do a variety of service projects. They painted a playground, worked in gardens, assembled hurricane relief buckets, and did cleaning, cooking and maintenance projects for a homeless ministry.

“The kids told me that the hurricane buckets reminded them of the work we do as a synod to create flood buckets,” Rod says.

On Day 4, all of the Northeastern Iowa groups came together for a fun day as a synod. The three synods from Iowa and three from Illinois shared a worship service in the morning. Adrian Walter of First Lutheran, Decorah, led the worship band. Each of the six bishops shared a pre-recorded video message, and youth helped lead the service.

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Accompaniment day at the Youth Gathering sent youth to New Orleans neighborhoods for service work. Left, youth from St. Paul's, Waverly, paint a playground wall. Below left, youth from Trinity, Mason City, spruce up a community garden. Below right, a group of youth from the Decorah area assemble hurricane relief buckets.



Near right, a youth from Calmar/Springfield Luther League shares a message as part of the Gathering's interactive day. Far right, Bishop Kevin Jones and others from the Northeastern Iowa Synod gather for a joint worship service with synods from Iowa and Illinois.



Sabbatical will be a time to renew and study

“Meanwhile [Jesus] would slip away to deserted places and pray.” —Luke 5:16

Shortly after my election in 2021, I met with the Synod Council to discuss compensation. One of my requests was for a sabbatical in 2024. I provided two reasons for this request. First, it would be six years from my last sabbatical while serving a congregation as their pastor. I feel that it is a good model to provide pastors with a sabbatical every six to seven years even if there is a change in call. Secondly, I argued that a sabbatical at the end of my six-year term would not benefit the Synod if a new bishop is elected in 2027. A mid-term sabbatical would provide the time to learn more about the synod and our current context beforehand, and time to implement potential changes afterwards. The Synod Council agreed to a sabbatical in 2024.

Finding 12 consecutive weeks for a sabbatical has proven to be quite difficult. So, in consultation with my staff and some other bishops who have managed sabbatical time, I decided to split my sabbatical into two sections. I will be out of the office from July 29 – Aug. 25 for the first part. The second part will be Nov. 4 – Dec. 29. I believe this will provide the time and space for sabbatical renewal and study as well as making sure I am

present for some important meetings and gatherings on behalf of the Northeastern Iowa Synod in the fall.

August will be primarily rest and family time as I help my son and his wife prepare their home for their first child (and our first grandchild!).

November and December are being planned as time to do a bit of travel with Amy and to create a plan that will help position the synod for strength and success in the coming years.

During these sabbatical absences, I will not be monitoring email or phone calls. At the July council meeting I asked the council to appoint my assistant, Pastor Steve Brackett, to serve as Acting Bishop during my absence. Steve’s experience in the synod office under three Bishops will ensure the synod office and ministry continue without a hitch.

I am grateful for this time to renew so that I can continue to serve the Northeastern Iowa congregations and people to the best of my ability. I ask for your prayers for renewal and insight. Thank you.

— *Bishop Kevin Jones*



Youth Gathering brings energized ministry to New Orleans
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The Northeastern Iowa groups then spent the afternoon together exploring the French Quarter as part of a “goose chase” scavenger hunt. Next, they set off on the Creole Queen paddleboat for a cruise and meal, along with a historical tour of a War of 1812 battlefield.

“Almost 400 people from Northeastern Iowa were on the boat, which was a good way to connect with others from the synod,” Rod says.

The Youth Gathering concluded on Saturday with the final mass gathering in the morning, but a new adventure was just getting started for some when a global tech outage resulted in cancelled flights home.

Bishop Kevin Jones says that he had an awesome week in New Orleans, seeing and meeting so many youth and leaders from Northeastern Iowa at both the Youth Gathering and Young Adult Gathering.

“It was a time of learning, challenge, fun, service, fellowship, and adventure—especially on the way home—that will bless our youth and the congregations of the synod,” Jones says.

Find more photos on the Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA Facebook page, at www.facebook.com/neiasynod.

Ask for action on climate change

by Leslie Sand, Care for Creation Network

Recently, four inches of rain falling in 40 minutes caused [landslides in Lansing](#), Iowa, which took out a propane tank, which caused a house to explode. A nearby campground saw an extreme flash flood event, downing trees and causing electrical damages. As this is being written, a flood warning has been issued for Allamakee and Clayton counties along the Mississippi.

Beyond our synod, Iowans' lives have been lost and upended due to flooding in nearly one quarter of Iowa counties, and Greenfield saw much of the town flattened. And that only covers the last several weeks.

We have come to realize that these are no longer freak weather events; this is a changing weather pattern, known as climate change. [Katharine Hayhoe](#) is a Christian climate scientist, and she says that we need to talk about it. The ELCA's newly released study guide for the social message "Earth's Climate Crisis" is a wonder-

ful tool for congregations to do just that—talk about it. (Find resources at the end of this article.)

As Lutherans, God calls us to care for others and all of His creation. We are good at supporting Lutheran World Relief, making quilts, sending money, and helping out at Thrivent events. These are worthwhile and important responses. Are we called to do more? Yes, and the ELCA Task Force on Civic Life and Faith defines what that looks like.

Polling shows that 70 percent of Americans want action on climate change. We need to respectfully tell our elected officials that we want solutions implemented. We can ask candidates about the issue, and vote for those who tell us they will do that work. There are many; this is not hopeless. [Project Drawdown | 100 Solutions to Reverse Global Warming | One Earth](#) is a repository of work being done globally.



To learn more about respectfully advocating for climate solutions, go to www.citizensclimate.org, where you can join Citizens' Climate Lobby and its Lutheran Action Team, www.cclusa.org/action-teams.

Check out these resources:

- [ELCA Civic Life and Faith](#)
- [ELCA Carbon Pricing Basics](#) (Oct. 2019)
- [ELCA Carbon Tax Implementation Considerations](#) (Dec. 2020)
- [ELCA Earth's Climate Crisis social message](#) (April 2023)
- [Our Kairos Moment Earth's Climate Crisis](#)

Fall Theological Conference set for Oct. 13-15

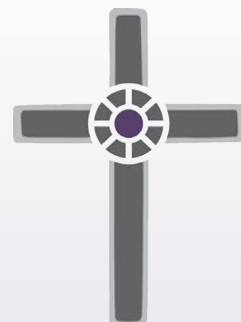
Mark your calendars for the 2024 Northeastern Iowa Synod Fall Theological Conference, set for Oct. 13-15 at the Bien Venu Event Center in Cedar Falls.

The conference will be centered on learning, camaraderie, and spiritual refreshment for active rostered ministers and those preparing to become rostered.

This year's event will give participants tools and insights for preaching in the upcoming Lectionary, Year C, beginning with Advent 2024. Featured speakers will be The Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben, association professor of New Testament at Wartburg Theological Seminary, and The Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland, associate professor of Religion at Wartburg College.

The conference will start at 5 p.m. Sunday and conclude at 12 noon Tuesday. It will include learning sessions, worship service, devotions, lunch and time with Bishop Kevin Jones, who will discuss preaching on the Sunday after the election.

More information about the agenda, online registration and hotel reservations will be posted on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org. Questions can be directed to Pastor Liz Bell, 319-352-1414.



Worship services can recognize and celebrate Juneteenth

by Rev. Daniel Hanson, Trinity Lutheran, Mason City

Count me as one of the many people who did not know the history of Juneteenth until recently. I am still learning the history of slavery and how this injustice, and other racial injustices, shape our present.

If you are also still learning, Juneteenth is a celebration of freedom first celebrated by emancipated African American slaves in Texas in 1865. It took over two and half years after President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 for slaves in Texas to be freed. Only when Union soldiers arrived in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, did enslaved people learn of their freedom. This celebration of freedom

was the beginning of what we now celebrate as Juneteenth.

Some faith communities are choosing to mark Juneteenth by confronting racism and prejudice that still exist in our country and our church communities today. St. John Lutheran Church hosted an ecumenical Juneteenth service this year in Cedar Falls. Collaborating with Bethlehem Lutheran and Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Disciples of Christ neighbors, a service of repentance was held.

This worship service included scripture, prayer, and confession. The mayor of Cedar Falls was present to name examples of how the city historically participated in white supremacy. During a call to confession, attendees were invited to write on a card the things they have done/left undone or said/left unsaid to confess their conscious or unconscious complicity in racism. These cards were placed on the altar, given

to the mercy of God. A recording of Dr. Martin Luther King's Letter to the American Church was also shared.

For Pastor Amy Eisenmann of Bethlehem Lutheran, a meaningful moment in the service was listening to Dr. King's recorded speech. She said, "Listening to Martin Luther King's speech helped us re-live history so that we don't repeat history."

When asked why a congregation would host a Juneteenth Service of Repentance, Pastor Brian Julin-McCleary of St. John's Lutheran responded, "Repentance is a core practice of Christianity. Juneteenth provides a moment for us to face the lies of white supremacy. Repentance sets the stage for us to live a new way."

Offering a worship service of repentance is one way to mark Juneteenth. If your congregation is interested in offering a service of repentance, the Racial Justice Network would be happy to offer resources.

SYNOD COUNCIL WELCOME

Three new Synod Council members elected at the 2023 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly began serving three-year terms in July:

- **Bill Stoen**, a member of Big Canoe Lutheran, Decorah
- **Robin Kime**, a member of St. John, Cedar Falls, and campus ministry associate for ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries;
- **Pastor Charlie Underwood**, who serves St. John, Clarksville

Christine Schmitt has also joined the Synod Council after being elected president of the Synodical Women's Organization in June.

View the complete list on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org/about/leadership-and-staff.

Boundaries Education for Clergy

NOV. 7, 2024

Registration begins in August for the synod-wide day of Boundaries Education set for Thursday, Nov. 7, for all actively serving rostered members. This training is offered in coordination with all 12 synods of ELCA Region 5.

Ministers will gather from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at satellite locations within each synod for the online training, along with in-person discussion

and Q & A. The cost to attend is \$100 per person, which includes lunch. This training day replaces the online Safe Gatherings training for clergy.

Watch for more information about the satellite locations and registration information. Questions can be directed to Pastor Steve Brackett at the synod office, 319-352-1414.

Read more at www.neiasynod.org/2024/04/s-a-f-e-ministry-team.

AUGUST 2024

- 1 "MINISTRY IN THE IN-BETWEEN" LUNCHEON**, Synod Office, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 3 SWO TRANSITIONAL LEADERSHIP MEETING**, Synod Office, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 8 GLOBAL CHURCH TOGETHER NETWORK**, Zoom, 2 p.m.
- 8 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK**, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.
- 9 CANDIDACY COMMITTEE**, Synod Office, 9:30 a.m.
- 15 FIRST CALL GATHERING**, Ewalu
- 24 GLOBAL CHURCH TOGETHER FESTIVAL**, Trinity, Mason City, 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

SEPTEMBER 2024

- 2 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED**, Labor Day
- 3 SYNOD COUNCIL EXECUTIVE MEETING**, Synod Office, 4 p.m.
- 5 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY COLLEAGUE GROUP**, Synod Office, 10 a.m.
- 8 'GOD'S WORK. OUR HANDS.' ELCA SERVICE DAY**
- 10 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.
- 12 DEANS & CHAPLAINS MEETING**, Zoom, 10 a.m.-12 noon
- 12 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK**, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.
- 14 SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**, Synod Office, 9:30 a.m.
- 24 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.

OCTOBER 2024

- 3 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY COLLEAGUE GROUP**, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.
- 8 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.
- 10 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK**, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.
- 13-15 FALL THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCE**, Holiday Inn/BienVenu, Cedar Falls
- 22 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.
- 29 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.

NOVEMBER 2024

- 1-3 ONE YEAR TO LIVE MEN'S RETREAT**, Ewalu, Strawberry Point
- 7 BOUNDARIES TRAINING FOR CLERGY**, Satellite Locations, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 12 LEADING IN TURBULENT TIMES WEBINAR**, Zoom, 12:30 p.m.
- 14 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK**, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.
- 16 SYNOD COUNCIL MEETING**, Zoom, 9 a.m.
- 28-29 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED**, Thanksgiving Break

ORDAINING

- **Jeremy Wolfe**, St. John, Farmersburg, July 28

INSTALLING

- **Rev. Jeremy Wolfe**, St. John, Farmersburg & Luana, Aug. 25
- **Rev. Beverly Butler**, Trinity, Mason City, July 28
- **Rev. Tyler Hoey**, St. Peter, Garnavillo & Peace, Clayton, Sept. 8
- **Rev. Matthew Becker**, Big Canoe & Highland, Decorah, Oct. 6
- **Jesup**, American & La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee), Rev. Patricia Mohr-Kelly, interim
- **Lake Mills**, Salem
- **Leland, Our Savior & Garner, Faith (Miller)***
- **Maynard**, St. Paul, Rev. Susan Friedrich, interim
- **Osage**, Our Savior's
- **Rockwell**, St. Peter
- **Toeterville**, St. Peter & Carpenter, Deer Creek
- **Thornton, St. Paul***
- **Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd***
- **Waterloo, Our Savior's, Pastor Lisa Kruse, contract***

INTERVIEWING

- **Asbury**, Lord of Life, Rev. Karla Wildberger, interim
- **Decorah**, Decorah, staff
- **Decorah**, Good Shepherd, Rev. Marion Pruitt-Jefferson, interim
- **Dows, First***
- **Dysart**, Zion
- **Eldorado, St. Peter***
- **Elgin, Elgin & Elkader, Highland, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim***
- **Greene**, St. Peter, Rev. Jennifer Edinger, interim
- **Independence**, Immanuel
- **Janesville, Messiah***

SELF-STUDY

- **Decorah, St. John's & Hauge***
- **Decorah**, Washington Prairie
- **Hawkeye, Trinity***
- **New Hampton**, Trinity
- **Ossian**, Ossian
- **Tripoli**, Grace
- **Washburn, Redeemer***
- **Waterloo, Trinity***

ROSTER CHANGES

- **Rev. Kevin Frey**, retired
- **Rev. Anita Nuetzman**, retired

*Part-time Call



PRAYER CALENDAR

Please join in praying for the following leaders and ministries of the Northeastern Iowa Synod and ELCA:

AUGUST 1-10, 2024

- **H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders**
- Rev. John W. Gannett
- Rev. Rebecca M. Sogge
- Rev. Bradley C. Hanson
- Rev. Dr. Martin J. Lohrmann
- Rev. Daniel R. Christensen
- Rev. Dr. Ann Fritschel
- Rev. Charles R. Underwood
- Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Lansing
- Our Savior Lutheran Church, Leland
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Lime Springs

AUGUST 11-17, 2024

- **Middle East Peace**
- Rev. Brian T. Julin-McCleary
- Rev. Nancy Solomonson
- Rev. Randy S. Nielsen
- Rev. Daryl L. Schultz
- St. John Lutheran Church, Luana
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Manly
- St. James Lutheran Church, Mason City

AUGUST 18-24, 2024

- Rev. Thomas C. Jones
- Rev. David Severtson
- Rev. A. Dean Williams
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City
- Our Saviour's Lutheran Church, Mason City
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Mason City
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Maynard

AUGUST 25-31, 2024

- Rev. Sidney W. Bohls
- First Evangelical Lutheran Church, McGregor
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Monona
- St. John Lutheran Church, Nashua
- Trinity Lutheran Church, New Hampton
- St. Luke Lutheran Church, Nora Springs
- First Lutheran Church, Northwood

SEPTEMBER 1-7, 2024

- **H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders**
- Rev. Robert A. Scheurer
- Rev. Joel C. Nye
- Edna Kamper
- Amy B. Wrightsman
- Marcia Hahn
- Silver Lake Lutheran Church, Northwood
- Zion Lutheran Church, Oelwein

SEPTEMBER 8-14, 2024

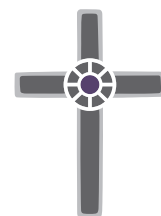
- Rev. Nikoli Falenschek
- Rev. O. Paul Hougen
- Rev. Selmer G. Hernes
- Jan Glaspie
- St. Peter Lutheran Church, Oran
- St. John Lutheran Church (Rock Twp.), Osage
- Rock Creek Lutheran Church, Osage

SEPTEMBER 15-21, 2024

- **Middle East Peace**
- Rev. James E. Klosterboer
- Rev. Katie Pals
- Rev. Joshua L. Schunk
- Rev. Susan Cira
- Rev. David R. Nelson
- Rev. Elizabeth E. Bell
- Dwelling in Faith, Mitchell

SEPTEMBER 22-30, 2024

- Rev. John G. Largen
- Rev. Erika J. Lenth
- Kathy Liddle
- Rev. Paul C. Nelson
- Rev. Michael G. Ashman
- Deacon Susan A. Garbes
- Rev. Kathryn H. Wicks
- Rev. James H. Carpenter
- Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Osage





Good News

July/ August
2024

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President

It is hard to believe another year has passed by and I will be stepping down as your president. I want to thank all of you that supported me during this past year. Being a newbie, there was a huge learning curve.

Our conferences have had several programs and LWR in gatherings around the synod. We are so thankful for all your efforts. LWR totals are: quilts-8203; school kits-4604; Personal care kits-3624; Baby kits-1524; Fabric bundles-159; Blankets-66. Thank you WELCA groups for all your serving throughout our synod.

Rejoice and Renew was the theme for the women's retreat that took place on February 23-24 at the Stone Center EWALU, Strawberry Point. It was a great opportunity to connect with other people in NE IA.

This year's NE IA SWO Convention was held June 15th at Redeemer Lutheran in Waverly, with a total of 53 attendees. Total offering was \$2,235.

Interest sessions were Mike Knipp LSI, Kim Dickey GHM, Karen Weltzin Joni and Friends. We had bandage rolling during the business meeting, for those who are not voting members. Displays: Joni and Friends, Our Savior of Mason City- Lily Bags; Kim Dickey-GHM fliers and pictures; LSI; Care for Creation-Donna Busch.

2024-26 SWO Board Members elected were Christine Schmitt, President; Chris VanDeventer, Secretary; Board Members: Jo Ann Brunsvold, Donna Busch, Darlene Emery, Carolyn Loftaas, Janice Nelson, Becky Pahl, Karen Weltzin. Continuing Board Members (per resolution) Alice Greimann, Vice President, Nancy Poppe, Treasurer, Darlene Emery.

2023/2024 Board Goals

1. Rejoice with the women of NEIA ELCA.
2. Rejoice in all God's gifts revealed in women of the ELCA and renew their commitment.
3. Renew communication and rejoice in those contacts.

The 13th Triennial Convention and Gathering will take place in Des Moines, IA on July 14-16, 2026, with the Gathering following from July 17-19. The web address is www.WELCAtg.org. You will be able to get information and register at this site.

Blessings to all, Sondra Nelson

Justice Committee

What a wonderful gathering held by the NE IA SWO! Interest sessions shared so much information about three of the charitable organizations in our region: Lutheran Services in Iowa, Joni and Friends, and Global Ministries. What was learned and shared in each session should make each of us reflect on what we can do for those who need help: the immigrants and refugees, the mobility challenged, and those needing medical care. But there are also others: prisoners, the hungry, homeless, and others living with chronic afflictions or mental issues.

We simply need to open our eyes, hearts, and minds to know where to share our resources with those in need and to educate others. Rolling bandages, making quilts and care kits, donating unused wheelchairs, canes, and walkers are just the start. Treating the marginalized among us should be a daily part of our lives.

Jesus said: "Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these, my brethren, you did it to me."

Matthew 25:40

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?

1 John 3:17

Submitted by Chris VanDeventer

Stewardship Committee

Our annual gathering was held on Saturday, June 15, at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Waverly. The offering collected that day was \$1,705. An additional amount of \$530 had been sent in earlier. The total offering collected was \$2,235.00. \$1,117.50 was given to Churchwide, \$558.75 to ELCA World Hunger, and \$558.75 to Joni and Friends. Kim Dickey from Global Health Ministries collected rolled bandages that were rolled by participants. One wheelchair was donated for use by Joni and Friends Chair Corp. In kind donations for LSI included 10 tubs of kits for new immigrants, \$150 cash donation, \$250 in Walmart gift cards, and one Kwik Star gas card for \$25. Other donations to LSI included eighteen towels, eighteen

kitchen towels, twelve toothpaste, twelve tooth brushes, seventeen bars of soap, thirteen shampoo, thirteen combs, ten body wash, two fitted sheets, two flat bed sheets, two pillows with pillow cases, sixteen small quilts, sixteen large quilts, twenty disinfectant wipes, miscellaneous kids' games, and lots of clothes hangers. The SWO board thanks everyone for their generosity.

Submitted by Karen Weltzin

Discipleship Committee

Our 2024 gathering was June 15th. We had very good interest sessions full of discipleship. Joni and friends collects manual wheelchairs and parts. The chairs are refurbished and given to people who don't have access to wheelchairs. Volunteers go and outfit the chairs for each individual. You can learn more @ [Wheels for the World™ |Joni and Friends](#) . Global Health Ministry collects supplies for hospitals and clinics in rural areas. We rolled bandages for them and collected suitcases for transport. You can learn more @ [Global Health Ministries \(ghm.org\)](#) . LSI/ Lutheran Services in Iowa explained that even though the Bremwood residential facility is now closed, the LSI ministry is still strong! They continue with programming for families throughout Iowa. One of their newer focus areas is working with legally immigrated families in Iowa. They have starter kits you can build to help families starting over. Our in-kind offering was gathered for LSI. We were able to give them bathroom supplies, bedding kits, wipes, clothes hangers, and games for kids. Also \$425 in gift cards and cash donations were given to LSI. You can learn more @ [Home main - Lutheran Services in Iowa \(lsiowa.org\)](#)

Submitted by Christine Schmitt

Decorah LWR Spring In-gathering

Saturday, May 4, 2024, was the LWR Spring- In-Gathering at Olson's Explosives in Decorah. Donations were received from Upper Iowa River and Shepherd of The Hills. We also received donations from West Paint Creek, Waukon, IA; Trinity Lutheran Church, Spring Grove, MN; and St. Peter Lutheran, Dubuque, IA. A total of 41 churches, with 705 boxes, brought donations for workers from Postville, Elgin, Elkader, Limes Springs, and Cresco to unload and stack. Many thanks to all who helped with the "heavy lifting", to Olson's Explosives for their continued support, and especially to every individual for the countless hours spent quilting, organizing, and assembling various kits. We CAN make a difference.....We DO make a difference. Saturday, November 2, 2024, is the next date for LWR Fall In - Gathering.

1686 Quilts	1102 Per. Care Kits
119 School Kits	524 Baby Care Kits
27 Fabric Kits	3 Blankets

Submitted by Carol Maki

CALENDAR

Aug 3	SWO Transitional Meeting
Oct 5	Cluster D Gathering @ St Paul, Lime Springs
Oct 12	C/E/H LWR Ingathering, LaPorte City
Nov 2	LWR In-gathering @ Decorah

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773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines:

www.WELCAtg.org

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the_-ELCA



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!

Living Faith @



Dear Friends,

This is July, for sure!! The weather has been hot and humid and rainy ... quite the change from some other years. To repeat the words from one of my newspaper articles, the corn is growing right in front of our eyes! My grandma used to say she could hear it growing. I think that might be true this year.

The rivers and creeks are up, the level of water in the ponds and lakes seems to get higher every day. I just hope the corn and beans have deep enough roots to get them through the hot days of dryness in the soil that is sure to come.

Deep roots ... yep, just like us. We need deep roots, too, to be able to sustain us during events of the world that are tough and difficult to understand. The roots we develop with our lessons at worship, Vacation Bible School, Sunday School, and regularly reading the Bible. This falls on the parents, grandparents, teachers, pastors, or others that we like to call faith-shapers. If you're reading this, that might include you! Please share this with others - thank you.

Sue Cira, Pastor, Immanuel Crane Creek Lutheran

We get excited to learn about Jesus at Bible School & at Worship



We need adults and other friends to help us learn ... we discover many things about Jesus by doing crafts, drawing, and listening to you .



We learn to pray

With **August almost here**, it's important to start thinking about fall and school beginning - which means buying supplies. There are many who need help with this, so as you're out finding your supplies, maybe you could slip a few extra items into your shopping bag. Here is the list for school kits collected for Lutheran World Relief ... Learn more at lwr.org

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH KIT

- * FOUR 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper, approximately 8" x 10 ½"; no loose leaf paper
- * ONE 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other
- * ONE pencil sharpener
- * ONE pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)
- * FIVE unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; secure together with a rubber band
- * FIVE black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink); secure together with a rubber band
- * ONE box of 16 or 24 crayons
- * ONE 2 ½" eraser
- * ONE sturdy drawstring backpack-style cloth bag, approximately 14" x 17" with shoulder straps (no standard back-packs)

August is hopefully the last vacation of the season, summer sports come to an end and fall sports begin, county fairs are happening, some congregations worship outside in a park or plan special events for a **Rally Day**, you might have a **potluck** or an **ice cream social**, maybe you could plan a special mission project for the fall.

Back pack blessings take place near the first days of school beginning.

Invite members of the congregation to be **prayer partners** with the children and the youth. Print kids names and baptismal anniversary on the cards that will be distributed. Exchange cards and notes through the year. Sometime during the year have a day where you celebrate prayer partners.

Plan for ways to **involve the children or the whole family with children** of the congregation to participate in the worship service. Help them feel included and important!

Don't forget to have fun while in worship - invite everyone to be involved in singing the children's songs. Adults like to clap and stomp their feet too!



This information is prepared for you by the **Northeastern Iowa Synod - Home Life Network** for use by families and local congregations.

Like our page on Facebook and our posted resources will appear in your newsfeed.

Our page is [Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](https://www.facebook.com/NortheasternIowaSynodHomeLifeNetworkELCA)



Find us on
Facebook

Global Church Together Festival

DISCOVER GOD'S GLOBAL CHURCH

Workshops:

- Hungarian Cooking
- Young Adults in Global Mission
- The Lutheran Church in Hungary
- Namibia Yesterday & Today
- Make Your Own: 7-Stranded Roma Bracelet
- Global Music Sing/Play-A-Long
- The Art of Hospitality Given & Received



Preliminary Schedule:

- 8:30 Registration & Welcome Table Open
- 9:00 Keynote Guest Presenter
- 10:15 Workshops - Round 1
- 11:30 World of 100 Simulation
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:30 Workshops - Round 2
- 2:45 Workshops - Round 3
- 4:00 Festival Worship

REGISTER TODAY!



www.neiasynod.org

\$10/person



Trinity Lutheran Church, Mason City



*Sponsored by the Northeastern Iowa Synod
Global Church Together Network*



AUGUST
24
2024

