

Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

First call ministers and congregations learn together

by Marcia Hahn

When Kristi Grieder graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary in



Kristi Grieder

2018, she knew that her first call would come with some restrictions. Grieder and her husband wanted to stay in the Waterloo area where he was employed, and she wanted some flexibility to care for her six-month-old daughter. Grieder found the perfect fit through a part-time call to Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, a Waterloo congregation that had been without a pastor for 18 months.

“Good Shepherd is a really good

learning environment,” Grieder says. “The culture is very nonjudgmental, very compassionate and patient, and accepting of everyone. They have not had a first call pastor before, so they learned new things about the first call program and what their role is. Resources from the synod have helped both of us understand what our partnership looks like.”

The transition from seminary to a first call can be challenging, so the ELCA charged the synods with creating an educational program to support pastors during their first three years of call.

“It’s been really successful to offer intentional systems of support to help pastors create good habits,” says Pastor Dan Gerrietts of Trinity Lutheran, Mason City, who serves

“They all bring great energy and passion into their work, and that’s a real plus for a congregation.”

— Pastor Dan Gerrietts

as chair of the synod’s First Call Theological Education Committee.

First call ministers are expected to complete 50 contact hours of continuing education each year, so the FCTE Committee offers continuing education opportunities, individual support, a colleague group, and an annual educational event to help them achieve that goal. Committee members visit one-on-one with new pastors and deacons to review their

>> *Continued on page 2*



First call ministers and members of the Northeastern Iowa Synod First Call Theological Education Committee meet at the 2019 FCTE education event.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 First call ministers and congregations learn together
- 3 Why we mark Good Friday
- 5 The Moses Project networks rural ministry pastors
- 7 Congregations
- 8 Prayer Calendar

education progress, learn how their ministries are going, and offer suggestions. Congregations commit to giving first call ministers the financial support and time off they need to fulfill their FCTE requirements and to support the whole person and their family.

“Supporting the spouse and children enriches their ministry,” Gerrietts says.



Dan Gerrietts

“Those who are well supported serve their congregations in healthier ways. If the congregation can be intentional, it enriches the whole experience and makes those calls last longer.”

CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT

Since Grieder’s call is part-time, she and the congregation work as a team to do more ministry. “All of us step up and do what we can together,” she says. “It’s very collaborative.”

That teamwork was evident when the congregation decided to host its first “trunk or treat” event last October. A neighborhood quilters group and a mom’s group joined congregation members to plan the event, which included a chili contest, games and activities, and trick or treating. Some 200 people from the community attended.

“We average 30 people on a Sunday for worship, so this exceeded our expectations,” Grieder says.

The congregation also supports Grieder’s other ministry serving as an on-call spiritual care counselor/chaplain for Cedar Valley Hospice for people at the end of their life. Grieder was working with the organization before her call with Good Shepherd, so the congregation built that opportunity into her call and has made it part of their mission.

“There is not a formal relationship between Cedar Valley Hospice and Good Shepherd, but the congregation is able to meet more needs in the community indirectly through their support of me and my role with Cedar Valley Hospice.”

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

First call pastors and deacons get together once a month for the First Call Colleague Group to check in with each other, see how everyone is doing emotionally and spiritually, and share ideas about what is going well and not so well in their ministries.

“Having a community around you that you can identify with and share similar experiences has been really helpful,” says Pastor Bryan Odeen, who is in his first call as associate pastor for Our Savior’s, Osage. “I have one experience and everyone else has their own, but we are all learning new things and learning from each other. It’s not only a community; it’s a way to learn together.”

Pastor Margaret Yackel-Juleen, who serves the One in Faith Lutheran Parish of Arlington, Strawberry Point, Volga and Littleport, facilitates the colleague group meetings and sees a lot of the same challenges that first call pastors faced when she entered ministry 11 years ago.

“Ministry is a profession and calling that is not nine to five,” Yackel-Juleen says.

“Some surprises come up in ministry that the pastors didn’t hear about in seminary, such as keeping a schedule that balances their personal life and vocational life.”

New pastors have a lot of creative ideas they want to bring to worship, but they need to consider their parishioners’ desire for comfort. Female ministers tend to have more challenges with people recognizing their leadership and authority.

Yackel-Juleen says there are times when it is important for the group to discuss current topics relevant to their ministry. At a recent meeting she asked the group if they had any questions about the next synod assembly and the Bishop nomination and election process. At the next meeting she plans to initiate conversations about the fear and anxiety the ministers and their congregations may be feeling about the coronavirus pandemic.

“How do we remind people to take care of one another and be safe with precautionary measures? How do we make sure we don’t alienate one another and still take care of someone who is need?”

One topic that Gerrietts says is being discussed more is how to talk about divisive and difficult issues in



Margaret Yackel-Juleen

Why we mark Good Friday

A good friend trusted me with why she thought that Good Friday was the worst worship experience of the year. I listened. Then I decided not to give her a complete sermon on why there cannot be Easter without Good Friday. It was a brief reflection, but my judgment was that she simply needed to explain to the bishop what was wrong with Good Friday.

Here is what I wished that I had said.

If you have ever been whipped, beaten and betrayed, you need a Savior to take all of that to the cross and

grave, and then be raised.

That is why we mark Good Friday. And, yes, there cannot be Easter without the crucifixion. Though it is depressing, it is life. Only then do the resurrections in our lives become real.



— Steven L. Ullestad
Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod

Ministries are carrying on in new ways

Northeastern Iowa Synod congregations are currently not gathering in person for worship due to the coronavirus outbreak, but congregational leaders are finding other ways to offer worship services and stay connected with their parishioners and communities.

Congregations are using Facebook, YouTube, Zoom and other video conferencing apps to live stream worship and Lenten services, question and answer sessions, devotions and church meetings. Pastors continue to participate in text study groups and stay connected through online Zoom meetings. Synod networks and committees are also using video conferencing for some of their meetings and events.

Emails and posts on Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites connect people to daily readings, photos, videos, prayers, podcasts, reflections, and Sunday school ideas for children and families to do together at home. Some congregations are emailing sermons and announcements to parishioners and initiating phone

trees to call members to check how they are doing. Congregations are also suggesting ways that members can continue to give offerings during this time of social distancing, such as mailing checks, giving online, or using a church drop box.

The synod's Disaster Response Network sent a letter inviting members of this synod to take time every evening at 8 p.m. to pray for neighbors near and far as they face the COVID-19 pandemic. Congregations were also encouraged to ring their church bells at 8 p.m. as a call to pray in unity.

Pastor Joelle Colville-Hanson, ELCA director for evangelical mission, shared on the synod's "God's Work. Our Blog" more about the ways that congregations are continuing ministry during this pandemic. Visit the blog at <http://blog.neiasynod.org>.

"These are unprecedented times, but our rostered leaders and members are rising to meet the challenge in innovative and faithful ways," Colville-Hanson wrote. "There is more than one way to 'Show em Jesus.'"

ELCA RESOURCES

The ELCA offers a list of resources to help congregations and members stay connected and resilient during public health emergencies. The resources include ideas for worship in the home, a starter guide for live streaming, prayers, guidance for funeral practices, online giving, information about COVID-19-related benefits for congregations, messages from Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and more. Visit www.elca.org/publichealth.

A Message from the Bishop in Hungary

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, which is in a companion synod relationship with the Northeastern Iowa Synod, is experiencing COVID-19 in much the same way that the church is here.

ELCH Presiding Bishop Tamás Fabiny recently preached to the nation live on Hungarian television. The worship service is available on YouTube with subtitles at <https://youtu.be/XzXT7Sp4tW8>.

New Date for Synod Assembly

Saturday, Aug. 22, 2020

The 2020 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly has been postponed until Saturday, Aug. 22, at Wartburg College in Waverly. The primary purpose of this one-day assembly will be the election of a new bishop. Voting members will also elect a synod secretary, synod council members and nominating committee.

Check the synod assembly web page for updates regarding registration and agenda, www.neiasynod.org/synod-assembly-2020.

Check for Scheduling Updates

Due to concerns regarding the coronavirus, the synod office is currently closed to the public until further notice; however, staff are checking and responding to emails and voicemails.

Numerous synod events are being cancelled, postponed or offered online through video conferencing. Changes for meetings in April are noted on page seven of this newsletter. Please check the events page on the synod website for future updates on the status of meetings and events, www.neiasynod.org/event, or contact the event facilitator.

Online Health Benefits

Members and spouses with ELCA-Primary health benefits are reminded of two primary care telemedicine benefits that can be helpful during this time of social distancing.

The Doctor on Demand service provides live online video appointments with board-certified physicians, psychologists, and psychiatrists to treat the most common non-emergency medical and mental health issues. A medical visit costs \$53, which is applied to the annual deductible. A device with a front-facing camera is required.

The 98point6 app delivers secure 24/7 text-based primary care services through messaging on mobile phones. U.S.-based board-certified physicians can diagnose, recommend treatment, answer questions and prescribe most medications. No appointment is necessary. Co-payments are \$0 or \$5, depending on the health plan level.

To learn more, visit <https://myportico.porticobenefits.org>.

Lutheran Campus Ministry offers virtual events

Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Northern Iowa is reaching out to students through a number of virtual events.

The ministry moved in January to ThreeHouse: A Wesley Foundation student campus ministry located at 2422 College St., across from the UNI campus in Cedar Falls. In its new location, Lutheran Campus Ministry began offering a full schedule of volunteer opportunities and weekly events for students, including crafts and games, worship, meals and conversation, coffee house, and more. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, ministries are now being offered online and are open to everyone:

- **Monday Meet-Ups: Coffee and Grace at the Kitchen Table**, 10 a.m.
- **Tuesday Soup Chats**, 12 noon.
- **Wednesday Worship**, 9 a.m.
- **Facebook Friday: Fun Facts and Thoughts for the Weekend**, 4 p.m.
- **Daily Dose of Dave**, 2:10 p.m. everyday

Visit their Facebook page to watch videos and find Zoom links, www.facebook.com/threhousewesley.

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

Bishop Steven L. Ullestad – ullestads@neiasynod.org
Assistants to the Bishop

Rev. Mark A. Anderson – andersonm@neiasynod.org

Rev. Stephen Brackett – bracketts@neiasynod.org

Linda J. Hudgins – hudginsl@neiasynod.org

ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

Rev. Dr. Joelle Colville-Hanson – colville-hansonj@neiasynod.org

Star Editor

Marcia Hahn – hahn@neiasynod.org

The *Star* is published 11 times a year by the Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th Street SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804; www.neiasynod.org, phone 319-352-1414, FAX 319-352-1416.

Send news for the May 2020 issue to Marcia Hahn by April 13. We welcome story ideas related to the 2020 theme, "Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation."

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. To receive an electronic version of the *Star*, rather than paper, send your request to hahn@neiasynod.org.



www.neiasynod.org

The Moses Project networks rural ministry pastors

by Marcia Hahn

A new continuing education program offers rural Lutheran pastors a vision of ministry that can enhance their congregational leadership and, in turn, the vitality of their congregations.

The Moses Project, offered through Grand View University in Des Moines, provides professional development, resources and tools for rural pastors in the early stages of their careers to learn innovative strategies and build relationships with experienced clergy members. The project is funded by the Thriving in Ministry Initiative of the Lilly Endowment and is offered in collaboration with the Southeastern Iowa and Western Iowa Synods of the ELCA.

“Everything in this program has been very practical, and some of it has reinforced what I figured out on my own.”

— Pastor Bob Scheurer

Parts of the program take place on the Grand View campus, but most of the learning is done through online classrooms and video conferencing for the colleague mentoring groups. The program is offered over the academic year with nine four-week learning modules focusing on topics linked to rural ministry.

Pastor Bob Scheurer, who serves Zion, Rockford, and St. Paul, Marble Rock, is one of four pastors from the Northeastern Iowa Synod enrolled in the program. With 12 years serving in rural ministry in

North Dakota and Iowa, Scheurer was initially told he had too much experience to qualify for the program, but Grand View didn't want to turn him away.



Bob Scheurer

“I am from New Jersey and we didn't have rural ministry classes at seminary in Philadelphia, so I have had to seek out books and classes on my own,” Scheurer says. “Everything in this program has been very practical, and some of it has reinforced what I figured out on my own.”

Module topics teach pastors how to get to know their communities, how to serve as the town's only pastor, how to reengage people in the church, how to understand a congregation's cycles, how to move a congregation forward to face challenges and opportunities, and other ministry-related strategies.

Each module gives the pastors assignments, such as materials to read and videos to watch, along with online meetings with their mentor colleague groups. In the “knowing your community” module, pastors learned how to look up census reports and town demographics to see what mix of people live in their communities so that they can plan congregational outreach projects to better serve them.

“We learned to investigate our own town and find out who is connected to whom to build a web of influence,” Scheurer says. “It got me out

into the town to find out who to contact if someone needs help or if we can be part of the help.”

Grant and Nicole Woodley, pastors for First Lutheran, Clarion, serve as part of the leadership for the project. Nicole is a mentor for five pastors in a mini cohort. Grant is a presenter for module eight, which focuses on innovation and change.

One of the best parts of the program for Scheurer has been developing relationships with other pastors who are in rural ministry. Some 30 pastors from rural communities across the Midwest are currently enrolled in the program. They use Zoom videoconferencing to meet as a large group and to meet in their smaller groups for mentoring and to share ideas.

Scheurer says he has gained a better understanding of how to measure success for a rural congregation that's not going to grow because the community is not growing. He explains that people from agricultural communities are not necessarily looking for one more environment for change or loss, so the church can serve as a stable place for the community.

“A lot of time pastors come out of seminary as social justice warriors with the idea that everything has to change, but that has not been my experience at all,” Scheurer says. “Our worship here is consistent and people come every Sunday. The Word of God is being taught, the sacraments are being administered,

>> *Continued on page 8*

the congregation. “It’s a challenge for first call pastors to come out of a seminary environment that is a safe space for difficult conversations and to then enter a congregational setting that may or may not be open to them. We’re trying to be more intentional in training leaders for this.”

The synod’s annual First Call Theological Continuing Education Event offers educational sessions and an opportunity for first call ministers to review their continuing education progress with a committee member. Educational sessions focus on the culture and history of Iowa congregations, geographical parishes, financial planning, time management, spirituality, second call discernment, and more.

First call ministers are also encouraged to become self-guided learners and seek out reading materials and learning opportunities beyond the synod-sponsored events. Grieder traveled last year to a church in the Twin Cities to attend a two-day immersion event based on the ELCA’s Life of Faith Initiative. Participants learned first-hand how the congregation helps people connect faith to their daily life and understand their own calling and vocation through the Lutheran perspective.

“It was really inspiring,” Grieder says. “The experience strengthened the commitment I already had to help people understand they have gifts given to them by God that they can share with others in their daily lives.”

SUPPORT FOR NEW IDEAS

According to Gerrietts, first call pastors who are younger are savvy

“As a first call you’re still figuring out your voice and style of ministry, so having a congregation that is open to me learning in their midst has been really helpful.”

— Pastor Bryan Odeen

users of social media and technology to engage their communities. Second career pastors come with more experiences and wisdom.

“They all bring great energy and passion into their work, and that’s a real plus for a congregation.”

Odeen says he appreciates his congregation’s graciousness to go along with ideas that have never been tried before.

“They’re willing to let me make some mistakes and try new things,” Odeen says. “As a first call you’re still figuring out your voice and style of ministry, so having a congregation that is open to me learning in their midst has been really helpful.”

A couple years ago Odeen suggested adding a “Blue Christmas” worship service before Christmas to support families who had lost a loved one in the past year. He and Senior Pastor Cindy Krause received the go ahead, and together they developed a service that used music, liturgy and candles to recognize the hurts that people can be feeling during the Christmas season.

Odeen says this experience helped people recognize how much their loss would affect them during that time of year. The service was offered again last December and has



Bryan Odeen

been well attended both years by people from Our Savior’s and from the Osage community.

“I brought it up as something that might be kind of nice,” Odeen says. “I am lucky enough to have a senior pastor who was on board with it right away.”

The congregation supports Odeen’s growing process, even when he brings an idea that doesn’t work. Odeen loves to play and write music, so last winter he organized an evening for people to get together in the church’s fireside room to play music and sing hymns.

“There was an astounding lack of interest,” Odeen says. “Some people said they hoped to come, but on that day it was just my daughter and I who were there. I’ll take a step back and see what I can do differently if I want to try that again.”

Gerrietts says it’s a special calling for a congregation to take on a first call pastor, and the synod is intentional about deciding if a congregation is well-suited for a first call.

“It’s a great opportunity for a congregation to rally around and help the pastor grow, make mistakes and learn from it,” Gerrietts says. “When this goes well, first calls can be a joy and blessing for all involved, and can last much longer than people might expect.”

EVENTS

APRIL EVENTS

- 2 Event, Day of Renewal, *Cancelled*
- 2 Meeting, Youth Ministry Network, Trinity, Mason City, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., *Changed to Zoom*
- 10 Office Closed, Good Friday
- 23-24 Event, Youth Ministry Network Retreat, *Changed to Zoom*
- 26-28 Event, First Call Theological Education Retreat, *Cancelled and Changed to Zoom*
- 28 Event, Vocation Day, *Cancelled*

MAY EVENTS

- 1 Meeting, Candidacy Committee, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., *Changed to Zoom*
- 7 Meeting, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m., *Changed to Zoom*
- 17 Meeting, WIYLDE Video Chat, 7-8 p.m.
- 25 Office Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE EVENTS

- 4 Meeting, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 4 Meeting, Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul's, Waverly, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 14-17 Event, WIYLDE (Wholly Iowa Leadership Discipling Event), Wartburg College, Waverly, *To Be Rescheduled – New Date TBA*
- 15-16 Office Closed
- 19 Meeting, Synodical Women's Organization Board, Wartburg College, Waverly
- 20 Event, Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization Convention, Wartburg College, Waverly

JULY EVENTS

- 2 Meeting, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 Office Closed, Independence Day
- 20-23 Event, ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering, Phoenix

AUGUST EVENTS

- 6 Meeting, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 14 Meeting, Candidacy Committee, 8:30-4 p.m.
- 22 Event, Synod Assembly, Wartburg College, Waverly (*Rescheduled from June*)

CONGREGATIONS

ORDAINING

Clark Baldwin, pending

INSTALLING

Rev. Peter Kowitz, Decorah, Decorah, May 10
Rev. Brian Julin-McCleary, St. John, Cedar Falls, May 31
Rev. Kristen Briner Wipperman, St. Matthew and Luther Manor, Dubuque, pending
Rev. Katie Pals, Trinity, Belmond, pending

INTERVIEWING

Cresco, Immanuel
Guttenberg, St. John's and St. Paul, Rev. Jim Harbaugh, interim
Independence, Immanuel (staff)
Nashua, St. John, Rev. Charis Combs-Lay, interim
Northwood, First, Rev. Burton Everist, co-interim and Rev. John Gannett, contract co-interim
Tripoli, Grace, Rev. Dennis Niezwaag, contract interim
Tripoli, St. John (Crane Creek)

SELF-STUDY

Calmar, Calmar and Decorah, Springfield
Charles City, Messiah
Chester, United
Clear Lake, Galilean
Clermont, West Clermont
Decorah, Burr Oak and Hesper
Dubuque, St. Peter (staff)
Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
Frederika, St. John, Rev. Megan Graves, interim
Hawkeye, Trinity
Luana, St. John and Farmersburg, St. John
Mason City, St. Paul, Rev. Matthew Muters, contract
Mitchell, Faith; Nora Springs, St. Luke; Osage, Rock Creek and St. John (Cross Roads Lutheran Parish), (staff)
Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway Parish), Rev. Jim Scaife, contract interim
Story City, St. Petri, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
Sumner, St. Peter (Richfield) and Waucoma, St. John (Stapleton)
Waterloo, Our Savior's, Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, contract interim
Waterloo, St. Ansgar

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. James Radatz, transferred to La Crosse Area Synod
Rev. Karen Grandall, transferred to Southeastern Minnesota Synod
Rev. Anita Nuetzman, on leave from call
Rev. Dennis Bauer, retirement

APRIL 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Rev. Steven M. Jacobsen, Decorah 1	Bethany Life Communities, Story City 2	Rev. Allen L. Bidne, Waverly 3	Big Canoe, Decorah 4
Strawberry Point Lutheran Home, Strawberry Point 5	Rev. Bryan T. Odeen, Osage Janice D. Schumacher, Waterloo 6	Martha G. Deines, Cedar Falls 7	Rev. Amy Strydom, Cambridge, Minn. 8	Burr Oak, Decorah 9	Rev. Keith A. Tomlinson, Waverly 10	Rev. Daniel W. Gerriets, Mason City 11
Rev. Jeffrey A. Blank, Waterloo Elaine Ehlers, Ankeny Rev. Marion Pruitt-Jefferson, Decorah 12	Good Samaritan Center, Waukon 13	Rev. James Gardner, Waterloo Marilyn L. Koch, Cedar Falls 14	Jenine Jordahl, Decorah 15	Rev. Stacey J. Nalean-Carlson, Decorah 16	Middle East Peace Canoe Ridge, Decorah 17	Jane Hoppenworth, Charles City Rev. Grant J. Woodley, Clarion 18
Rev. Margo O. Fohs, Deloit 19	Cecil Maureen Johnson, Stillwater, Minn. Rev. Jerome G. Godson, Volga 20	Judy Wogsland, Johnston 21	Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community, Waverly 22	Rev. Jane S. Keel, Charles City 23	Decorah, Decorah 24	Rev. Ernest Elzey, La Porte City Rev. Henrik Engebretson, Decorah 25
Rev. Scott R. Duffus, Owatonna, Minn. 26	Rev. Allan J. Stoa, Albert Lea, Minn. 27	Good Samaritan Center, West Union 28	Deacon Vera F. Poppen, Clarksville 29	Rev. Matthew Agee, Dubuque Rev. Kristi V. H. Grieder, Waterloo Justine Lionberger, Decorah 30		

The Moses Project networks rural ministry pastors

<< Continued from page 5

and people are receiving the care they need. Even if it doesn't always feel like it, that all has value."

The Moses Project is offered free for Lutheran pastors who serve in rural communities and are between four and nine years into their career. Pastors commit approximately three hours a week to engage in the project outside of the on-site times, which are scheduled three times during the year. Expenses for tuition, travel, books, and on-site housing and meals are covered through the Lily Endowment grant.

Grand View is accepting applications for the 2020-2021 cohort, which begins in August. Apply at www.grandview.edu/the-moses-project.

Hunger grant deadline extended to June 1

ELCA World hunger announces that the deadline to apply for the 2021 Domestic Hunger Grant has been extended to June 1, 2020.

This year 116 ministries in 63 synods are receiving Domestic Hunger Grants. The grants accompany congregations and their partners throughout the United States and Caribbean to address local issues such as food security, clean water, housing, job readiness, human rights, policy change, leadership development and more. Grants are awarded for a three-year cycle, with a maximum award of \$10,000 per year, contingent upon fund availability and the completion of annual

evaluations.

People can learn more about the granting priorities, the ELCA GrantMaker system and how to apply by viewing one of two webinars that will be available online Tuesday, April 7, at 12 noon and Thursday, April 16, at 6 p.m.

Those wanting to apply must be registered in ELCA GrantMaker by May 8. Applications are due June 1 and will be reviewed from mid-June to mid-September. Awards will be announced in November.

To learn more, visit elca.org/domestichungergrants.



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
JULY 16-19, 2020 | PHOENIX
WELCA.ORG

Good News

April 2020
Volume 33
Number 4

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.

From the President

Jesus Christ is risen! Jesus Christ is risen indeed! I hope you attended or will be attending your spring cluster gathering. I love getting together with other women and hearing all the different things we are up to.

I was just in Chicago with the other synodical presidents. It was a busy, information-packed weekend. One thing most of you will be interested in is the changes LWR is making. They no longer need bulk soap. As much as we in the northern hemisphere love fleece, fleece is not so good for the environment. LWR is no longer accepting fleece tied blankets after May 1. Please use any soap you have collected for your kits. Any fleece blankets can be donated locally. If you already have it packed in the boxes to load on the truck this spring, they will find appropriate places to use them.

The board is finalizing the details for our June Gathering in Waverly. I hope you will join us for a day of community, learning, and laughter. Our theme is Just Love. We have lots of things packed in our schedule for June 20. Then in July is the Triennial Gathering in Phoenix. I look forward to attending every three years. My mother is going with me for the week. I hope if you can't join us in person, that you will follow the activities at welcatg.org or your favorite social media for Women of the ELCA.
Blessing, Anna J.

Discipleship Committee

As we near this Easter season, what are we thinking in the way of discipleship? Are we continuing the LWR projects, reaching out to others, inviting them to see what we are accomplishing and join our efforts? Have we made the extra effort of encouraging them to

join our families at worship services? It's something I work on a lot in my head as I go through the day. My guilt grows as I read my devotionals. Prayers to the Holy Spirit waft heavenward. Yet, the words haven't been spoken, nor the phone invitation made. Accomplishing goals is said to be easier if they are spoken and shared with others. So this is me, speaking and sharing with you. I can enumerate discipleship efforts of mentoring, setting up benefit/funeral details, leading Bible study and completing LWR projects. Those are simple, though time consuming, efforts on behalf of others. However, carrying through on the decision to share the Gospel, the Love of Christ and the invitation to speak of faith with others I care about is a task I have set for myself this Lenten season. May God's Love and Guidance support you in your discipleship efforts. *Submitted by Lavonne Teem*

Justice Committee

Creation Justice Ministries

The April 2019 issue of *Living Lutheran* magazine included a news article from the ELCA Advocacy staff about Creation Justice Ministries (CJM). CJM partners with the ELCA and other denominations, congregations and individuals to do justice for God's planet and God's people. This year their focus is on youth leading environmental justice efforts. They have a resource available at www.creationjustice.org called "Next Generation Rising" for congregations to use. A story from this resource is about the twenty-one youth who have filed a landmark case called "Juliana v. United States," which maintains that the government has had a role in causing climate change and has, therefore, violated the rights to life, liberty and property, and failed to protect essential public resources.

Everyday is Earth Day. Ways to take action:

~ Write letters to elected members of Congress expressing commitment to care of God's creation for

CALENDAR

Registration for the Triennial Gathering is now open

- Apr. 1 Deadline for May *Good News*
Apr. 4 Clusters C,E,H LWR Ingathering and salad luncheon, St. Timothy's, Hudson
Apr. 6 LWR truck, 9–11 a.m., South Port Mall, Mason City
Apr. 18 Cluster G, Living Waters, Spring Salad Luncheon, St. James LC, Mason City
Apr. 18 Spring Gathering, Cluster I, Shechem, St. John's Arlington
Apr. 25 Upper Iowa River Cluster Spring Gathering, Immanuel LC, Cresco
Apr. 25 Spring Gathering, Little Flock Cluster B, St. Peter, Garnavillo
Apr. 25 Cluster F Riverside Spring Meeting, Immanuel Lutheran, Story City
Apr. 30 **Deadline** for SWO Board, Officers and Nominating Committee nominations to Jan Harbaugh (address below)
May 1 Deadline for June *Good News*
May 2 Board Meeting @ Wartburg College 9am–12:30pm
May 2 LWR Ingathering at Olson's Explosives, Decorah
June 19 Board Meeting at Wartburg College, 7–9pm
June 20 SWO Convention, 8:30am–4:00pm, Wartburg College
June 25 Deadline for July-August *Good News*
July 16–19 *Just Love*, Women of the ELCA Gathering, Phoenix, AZ
Aug. 1 Deadline for September *Good News*
Sep. 1 Deadline for October *Good News*
Sep. 19... Cluster G Living Waters Fall Gathering TBA...

today and future generations.

~ Plant a tree to encourage stewardship of creation.

~ Send a kid to camp. A place for youth to cultivate a relationship with the land and the Creator.

Submitted by Jennifer Larson

Stewardship Committee

As we draw closer to Holy Week and the joy that

Easter brings, I thought this prayer was helpful in reminding us of our greatest teacher and steward—Jesus.

A Steward's Prayer

O Lord, we pray that as we be,
People of God chosen by thee,

That you give us strength and guidance every day,
For our role as stewards to portray.

That our voice and works may proclaim,
The ministry of Christ is our aim.

That our actions will speak louder than what we
say,

Where the security in our life is God's way.

That we generously respond to what you first gave,
Your Son, a Savior, our lives to save.

And when we have decisions to make,
To thee, O Lord, our prayers we take.

Keith A. Mundy, 1998

http://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/A_Stewards_Prayer.pdf?_ga=2.9466806.281813009.1582829404-1638734836.1562866116

Jesus died for all our sins and opened the gates of heaven so we might live with God forever. There is no greater example of stewardship. Blessings to you this Easter season. Submitted by Deb Jacobsen.

Just Love

Following Jesus is messy. Loving one another is justice. We are not perfect. We are one body in Christ.

Interested in Triennial?

Already registered, but need a roommate?

Have questions??

Contact Diane Wills, 641-425-8628 or

wills.dianes@gmail.com

Looking forward to JUST LOVE,

Diane Wills

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Anna Jetson, President

952-240-9569 amjetson@yahoo.com

Jan Harbaugh, Vice President

563-412-8906 jan.harbaugh@gmail.com

JoAnn Brunsvold, Secretary

641-512-4236 jobvold76@yahoo.com sjbruns@wctatel.net

Beverly Sheridan, Treasurer

563-382-9025 sherida701@gmail.com

701 Serenity Drive

Decorah, IA 52101

NEIA Women of the ELCA Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/NEIASWO/>

Good News

Editor Jan Harbaugh

P. O. Box 236, Guttenberg, IA 52052

563-412-8906 jan.harbaugh@gmail.com

Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter (e.g. April 1 for May issue). Please put WELCA in your subject line. (You can also send paper copies by "snail" mail.)

Contact Women of the ELCA at:

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>

8765 W. Higgins Road

Chicago, IL 60631-4189

NEIA Women of the ELCA website:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Living Faith @



Dear Faith Shapers,

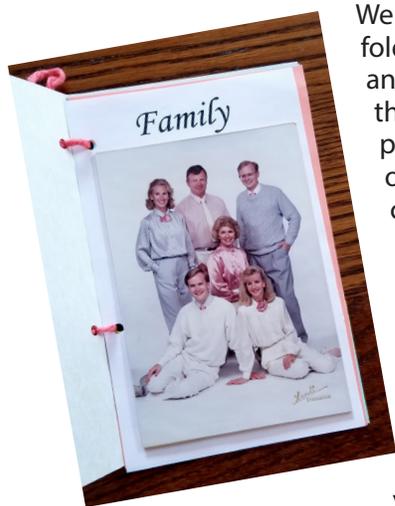
Happy Thanksgiving!

Um, no, this isn't an overdue (nor super early!) submission for the "Living Faith" page, although its origin was from last fall.

Yet "thanksgiving" is appropriate any time of year, even if we are in the midst of Lent — or maybe especially in Lent, when we are called to be particularly grateful for Christ's suffering and sacrifice on our behalf.

Psalm 50:23 declares, "Those who bring thanksgiving as their sacrifice honor me", and the Thanksgiving Booklet created on one of my church's Family Sundays may be used as a guide for prayer, thanksgiving and mindfulness to others through Lent and throughout the year.

HOW TO MAKE A THANKSGIVING BOOKLET



We first created a simple cover folding cardstock lengthwise and punching a couple holes through (see reverse of this page for a rough template). If one doesn't have cardstock, construction paper could be a sturdy alternative. I preprinted our cover pages with "Thank You God for", but one could title it any number of ways: "My Thank You Book", "Thanksgivings", "Praise & Prayer Book", whatever suits you!

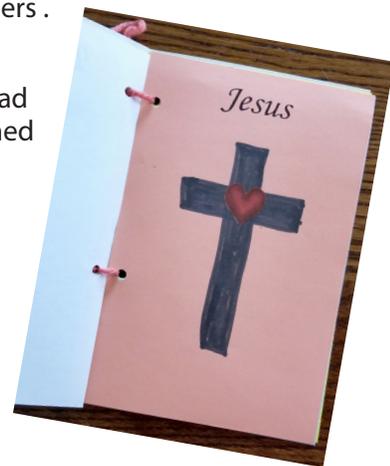
For the interior pages, I also pre-printed (and pre-punched) a number of half pages titled at the top with Family, Friends, Pets, Home, School, Church, Jesus, Creation, Work, Play, Food, Health, Hobbies, Helpers, but also provided many blank pages. Thus, one might be more specific than "Family" and create one page for Parents, another for Grandparents, then Brothers & Sisters, Aunts & Uncles, Cousins, or pages for Favorite

THANKSGIVING BOOKLET FOR LENT



Places, Sunday School, Teachers . . . possibilities are limitless.

Once children and families had selected the pages they wished to use, they put them within the cover page in desired order and tied all together through the holes with yarn. I suggest a bow tie, not a knot, so it's easier to add or rearrange pages later. Then they drew pictures on the appropriate pages of family or church or creation (there were stickers, too, for variety), and of course at home they might also paste in photographs.



The booklet then becomes a resource to page through and lift up thanksgiving for the multitude of loved ones and blessings in your life. In addition, the blank page opposite each titled page can be a simple prayer journal to write specific requests for someone ill or for a particular need at church or in the community, and to add notes of thanksgiving when prayers are answered.



Whether you create a Thanksgiving Booklet like this for Lent or any time of year, may it aid your family in being creatively thankful and prayerful.

— Pastor Jeff Jacobs,
St. Paul – Lime Springs (IA)
Saetersdal & St. Matthew's (MN)

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**.



*Thank You
God for*

