



Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

Conversations can set the groundwork for the bishop election

Retired bishops will share insights about what it means to serve as a bishop

by Marcia Hahn

For the first time in 29 years, a new bishop will be elected for the Northeastern Iowa Synod this year, and Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl says that is worth talking about. In fact, she encourages people to have conversations about what kinds of qualities they would like to see in the new bishop and who they would like to nominate at the June 12 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly.

The synod constitution does not have a preprocess to identify specific people for the bishop election, but DeGroot-Nesdahl says voting members can have their own conversations about who may have the leadership qualities and experience they would like in a new bishop.

“It is part of the discernment that the synod does—to have conversations about the duties and responsibilities of the office of bishop, about the qualities and skills needed for that work, and also about who one might nominate for consideration” DeGroot-Nesdahl says.

BISHOPS FORUM TO EXPLORE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

DeGroot-Nesdahl served as bishop for the South Dakota Synod from 1995 to 2007, and earlier this year



Peter Rogness



April Ulring Larson



Stan Olson

she joined three retired bishops in an online forum hosted by the Southwestern Minnesota Synod, where an election for bishop will take place this year. The former bishops shared about their experiences serving as bishops and the leadership qualities they feel are important for a bishop, including having a vision, being respectful of others, building relationships and showing humility.

DeGroot-Nesdahl brought the forum idea back to the Northeastern Iowa Synod and invited three retired bishops from neighboring areas to speak at a forum for the Northeastern Iowa Synod. The live online forum is set for Tuesday, April 27, from 6:30 to 8 p.m. via Zoom. It is open to everyone, but will be of special interest for voting members to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly in June.

“This event can stir and stimulate good conversations ahead of time,” DeGroot-Nesdahl says.

The forum participants will be April Ulring Larson, who served as bishop for the La Crosse Area Synod; Stan

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Olson, who served as bishop for the Southwestern Minnesota Synod and as president of Wartburg Seminary; and Peter Rogness, who served as

bishop for the Greater Milwaukee Synod and the St. Paul Area Synod and as interim bishop for the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin in 2020 when they prepared to elect a new bishop. Each of the three guests will respond to questions about the office of bishop and share their experiences in leadership and discernment about being called to serve as bishop.

“We are fortunate to have this opportunity to hear from three strong leaders who have served in the office of bishop and whom many people in Northeastern Iowa know,” DeGroot-Nesdahl says. “Their reflections and counsel will be helpful in opening our hearts and minds to where God is leading our synod in this call process for a new bishop.”

SYNOD PROFILE GUIDES DISCERNMENT

DeGroot-Nesdahl believes that after a long legacy of leadership, the people of the Northeastern Iowa Synod will look to the new bishop for a vision for what this synod is called to do in this time and place.

“Every new bishop has the challenge of rethinking, refreshing and reevaluating how to best put the synod forward in this new chapter,”



Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

“God works in us, and through us, in this important decision-making, and in going forward after the election as well.”

— Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

she says. “This election marks a transition to a new beginning. Part of the discernment around calling a new bishop is asking ourselves, ‘Where is God calling us to now?’”

The Northeastern Iowa Synod conducted a self-study in 2019 to prepare for the bishop election at the 2020 Synod Assembly, which was postponed until this year. The study developed a picture of who this synod is and what strengths, history, and gifts it has to share. These key findings were revealed:

- One-third of congregations feel good about thriving.
- Two-thirds of congregations don’t feel it is possible to thrive in five years.
- Key leadership qualities needed in the next bishop are a strong visionary, a caring and personable approach, and a strong communicator.
- The new bishop should expect support, a willingness to collaborate and openness to explore new ways to be church together from congregations and rostered and lay leaders of this synod.
- The respondents would like the new bishop to initiate conversations about the changing nature

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ABOUT THE VIRTUAL SYNOD ASSEMBLY

SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 2021

The Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly will begin at 8 a.m. Saturday, June 12, and broadcast live on Facebook at www.facebook.com/neiasynod. The Assembly will end with the election of a Bishop.

REGISTRATION

Online registration begins in April on the Synod Assembly web page. Voting members and those who have voice but no vote are required to register. The deadline to register is Monday, May 10.

The registration fee is \$89 for voting members. Online payment will be available by credit card or bank account. Checks can also be mailed. Registration will not be complete until payment is received.

RESOURCES

The following resources are available on the Synod Assembly web page:

- *Assembly Information Sheet*
- *Resolution Submission Form*
- *Biographical Form* (to be completed by the top seven nominees for election of Bishop)
- *Calling a Bishop Guide*
- *Synod Profile*
- *Parliamentary Procedure Guide*

Visit the Synod Assembly web page at www.neiasynod.org/2021-synod-assembly.

of the ELCA, rural ministries, justice and ecumenical partnerships.

DeGroot-Nesdahl says the calling of a bishop is much like the calling of a pastor to any setting in the call process. The bishop election process, just like a congregational call process, expects the Holy Spirit to lead and guide voting members in choosing one another to be partnered for this next chapter of life together. Pastors choose to share themselves in the process, the synod—represented by the voting members and the self-study—shares its past and its hope for the future, and a call happens.

“God works in us, and through us, in this important decision-making, and in going forward after the election as well.”

DeGroot-Nesdahl encourages people to read the duties and responsibilities of the Bishop, which are outlined in the synod’s constitution and in the *Calling a Bishop* document on the Synod Assembly web page. Those responsibilities include overseeing and administering the work of this synod and exercising leadership in the mission and unity of the church.

“The bishop has the responsibility to lay out a pathway for how the synod will reach out to our neighbors here and throughout the world,” DeGroot-Nesdahl says. “Developing a vision for the future involves engaging people and settings in reflection and in conversation about who we are now, and where we are being called as God’s people.”

As congregations come out of

SUPPORT THE ASSEMBLY OFFERING

The Synod Assembly offering is a vital funding source for synod ministries designated by the Northeastern Iowa Synod Council. This year, the offering will help fund seminary scholarships, companion synod travel expenses, and discretionary assistance for individuals and families in need.

FUND FOR LEADERS

Gifts to the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders help provide scholarships for seminarians from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Tuition scholarships remove potential debt for seminary students and encourage young adults and those with families to pursue answering the call toward lay or ordained ministry. The Northeastern Iowa Synod distributed scholarships totaling \$89,982 to nine seminary students in 2020.

COMPANION SYNOD TRAVEL FUND

The Companion Synod Travel Fund helps cover travel expenses for guests from companion synods in Hungary and Namibia to visit the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Over the past few years, companion synod visitors to this synod have included bishops, pastors, seminary students, Roma college students, and youth

who attended the ELCA Youth Gathering.

The Northeastern Iowa Synod did not host any companion synod guests in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but plans are to resume visits when travel restrictions and safety guidelines allow.

BISHOP CRISIS FUND

The Bishop Crisis Fund is used at the discretion of the Bishop to directly aid persons within the synod territory in times of need. Aid may include providing food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, moving or transportation expenses, or other assistance to individuals and families.

HOW TO GIVE

Gifts to the Assembly offering can be made online through a link on the Synod Assembly web page, www.neiasynod.org/2021-synod-assembly. Those registering for the Synod Assembly can include an offering gift during the registration process.

Checks for the Assembly offering can be made out to the Northeastern Iowa Synod and mailed to: **Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th St. SW, P.O. Box 804 Waverly, IA 50677-0804.**

the year-long challenge of doing ministry in a pandemic, DeGroot-Nesdahl says that congregations and the synod have an opportunity to consider how the pandemic has changed the lives of the people, congregations and synod, and how

they will continue to reach people.

“The bishop has a role to listen to and consider new ideas that people bring forth for doing ministry together, and how those ideas can be

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High school youth invited to WIYLDE at new location

Leading in the WIYLDE

July 23-25, 2021

Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point



WIYLDE, the Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event for high school youth, is back this year at a new location with new adventures.

Set for July 23 to 25, the event will take place at Ewalu Bible Camp near Strawberry Point with the theme, "Leading in the WIYLDE."

WIYLDE is an annual camp for high school youth of ELCA congregations in Iowa to learn how to become future leaders of the church. This year's WIYLDE will focus on leadership skills that students can use in their congregations and beyond. Even though it's only a weekend, there will still be large group teaching times, small group discussions, games and campfires.

The event will follow the same COVID-19 precautions and guidelines that Ewalu will have in place for summer camp. Masks will be required for students

Registration will be open through July 15. The \$60 registration fee includes lodging, meals, and a T-shirt. Congregations are encouraged to contribute \$30 toward that fee.

Questions can be directed to Deb Bachman, youth coordinator for the Northeastern Iowa Synod, at dbachman72@gmail.com.

To download the registration form, visit www.neiasynod.org/wiylde.

ELCA Foundation webinar to focus on planned giving

Thursday, April 15

Congregational leaders are invited to a free webinar offered by the ELCA Foundation to help congregations and ministries promote planned giving within their organizations. The "Developing a Foundation for Planned Gifts Webinar" will be presented online Thursday, April 15, at 12 noon.

The webinar will share real-life experiences from congregations and synods that work with the ELCA Foundation to help congregations set the cornerstone for their own planned giving programs. Presenters will share ways that congregations and organizations can encourage planned giving, such as having policies in place for accepting gifts, honoring the life of the individual, and supporting the goals and ideals of the congregation or ministry.

The ELCA Foundation offers expertise and guidance for congregations and donors as they explore their options for endowment investing and planning.

Those interested in attending the webinar are asked to register at the following website to receive the Zoom link: <https://community.elca.org/online-registration/developing-a-foundation-for-planned-gifts>.

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

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Send news for the May 2021 issue to Marcia Hahn by April 12. We welcome story ideas related to the 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 hahnm@neiasynod.org.



www.neiasynod.org

Letter of Support for Female Rostered Ministers

Male pastors express gratitude for 50 years of ministry alongside female rostered colleagues

Nearly 60 male pastors from the Northeastern Iowa Synod have signed a letter of support for the care and concern for their female rostered colleagues and to celebrate 50 years of ministry alongside one another.

The letter and an accompanying video were developed in response to stories shared in a Zoom meeting last fall by women rostered ministers from this synod about the challenges they have faced in their ministries due to their gender.

Pastor Brian Julin-McCleary of St. John, Cedar Falls; Pastor Greg DeBoer of Immanuel, Independence; and Pastor Brian King of Nazareth, Cedar Falls decided to craft a letter of response to show support for their female colleagues, with input from Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl. In addition, male pastors representing the synod's nine conferences shared messages of support in a video created by staff from Nazareth.

The letter emphasizes that male rostered ministers in the Northeastern Iowa Synod stand with their female rostered colleagues and expresses grief for the bias and discrimination that female pastors face in their ministries compared to their male counterparts, including wage inequities and sexism in the call process.

We value their voices, their contributions, their abilities, and their gifts. The past 50 years have unequivocally demonstrated that our church is better and our witness stronger because of women in rostered ministry. We honor and respect our female colleagues. We expect congregations to do the same.

In addition, the letter calls on all baptized people of God in this synod to take immediate and focused steps to remove systemic sexism and pledges the following:

1. *To celebrate and lift up the ministry of female rostered leaders among us by various means, including ELCA materials such as Faith, Sexism, and Justice: A Call to Action; We are Church, We are Called: 50/40/10; etc.*
2. *To actively listen to the voices of those who have been recipients and victims of sexist comments, bias, and mistreatment in any form.*



3. *To publicly call out sexism within and without the church, as the sin that it is.*
4. *To directly challenge sexist behavior as it appears in our lives and in our congregations.*
5. *To work to develop and implement an intentional and public plan to end sexist injustices, particularly those that are manifested in the compensation and benefit practices and the call process, as developed under the leadership of the Bishop and Synod Council.*
6. *To strongly encourage the congregations and organizations of this synod to unite in setting aside and dedicating one Sunday as a day of confession and forgiveness in regard to the sin of sexism, and to renew their commitment to justice and equity.*

Conference deans have been distributing the letter and video to their colleagues to share with their congregations.

The men's video is one of two videos that will be shown at the Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly on June 12 as part of the assembly's recognition of 50 years of women serving as ordained ministers in the ELCA. The other video features women who are rostered ministers of Word and Sacrament from the Northeastern Iowa Synod to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Ordination of Women.

The letter and both videos can be viewed and downloaded on the Synod Assembly web page, www.neiasynod.org/2021-synod-assembly.

Remember to reach out to virtual worshippers

The darkness of winter, the darkness of Lent, and the darkness of the pandemic are all giving way to the light of spring, to the light of Easter, to the light of immunity.

Many congregations have discovered that while they were worshipping online, they were joined by new friends—sometimes from their community and sometimes from another continent. We should treat these visitors as we would treat visitors to the church building. We should reach out to them, thank them for participating, ask if they have any needs the congregation can address, and give them an opportunity to support the ministry.

Does your congregation have a link on the website and Facebook page that allows virtual visitors to participate in the offering? As we continue virtual worship, we have interesting questions to answer about congregational membership: Can someone in

another town, state, or country become a member? Serve on Committees? Help teach confirmation?

The answers may not be clear, but what we can be confident in is that virtual worshippers should be invited to pray, praise, and be generous just

"We should treat these visitors as we would treat visitors to the church building."



as joyfully as in-person worshippers are.

— Pastor Mark A. Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop

HOW TO GIVE TO SYNOD MINISTRIES

Gifts to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Annual Fund or Fund for Leaders support ministry together, in ways that could not be done alone.

MAIL CHECKS payable to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, with the memo indicating which fund you would like your gift to support, to:

Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th St. SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

DONATE ONLINE at www.neiasynod.org/ministries/generosity or use the QR Code.



INSPIRED GIVING

Life insurance can be a gift to ministry

Many of us have purchased life insurance to protect our spouse and children in the event of our death. Often, however, we live long enough to see our children grow up and become financially independent. This is when life insurance can change from financial protection to financial blessing for a ministry.

Here are some possibilities to consider:

- Change the beneficiary in whole or part to a ministry, like your

congregation or one of the many ministries of the ELCA.

- Transfer ownership of your paid-up life insurance policy.
- Establish a new charitable life insurance policy.

Any of these options could make a tremendous difference to your favorite mission.

Need help?

If you have questions, give Pastor Mark Anderson a call, 319-352-1414.



Endowment fund supports ministries for the young and old

"One of the greatest pleasures of the year is to be able to send substantial grants to long-term care facilities and children's homes."

— *Pastor Mark Anderson*

Each year, partner ministries that serve the youngest and oldest of our community and are affiliated with the ELCA are encouraged to request a grant from the Northeastern Iowa Synod to fund a specific program.

The Northeastern Iowa Endowment Fund was created by a synod council resolution on Sept. 7, 1996, and was funded with a gift of \$1,394,994 in 1998. This gift came from the estate of Mary Evens Joehnk to be used "for old people's homes and children's homes supported by that synod."

The endowed funds are invested with the ELCA Foundation Pooled Fund A. Interest earned from the

endowment is used to fund the grants. Projects funded or partially funded this year include TVs so residents can live stream worship services, chaplaincy programs, a van with a lift, staff training, and devotional materials.

These ministries received grants in 2021:

- Mosaic, Clarion
- Aase Haugen Senior Services, Decorah
- Luther Manor Communities, Dubuque
- Good Neighbor Society, Manchester
- Good Shepherd, Inc, Mason City
- Lutheran Retirement Home, Northwood
- Lutheran Home, Strawberry Point
- Good Samaritan Society, Waukon
- Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community, Waverly



Staff and residents from Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community in Waverly enjoy rides together on "Fun 2 Go" bikes purchased with grants from the Northeastern Iowa Endowment Fund.

- Lutheran Services in Iowa, Waverly

To learn more about this fund, contact Pastor Mark Anderson, assistant to the Bishop, at 319-352-1414 or email andersonm@neiasynod.org.

Conversations can set the groundwork for the bishop election —
<< *Continued from page 3*

part of the vision for the synod."

Bishop nominees bring their own gifts, strengths and qualities to the election process, and voting members will have an opportunity to learn about those at the synod assembly. Nominees will share their biographical information and answer a set of questions to give voting members a sense of how they would lead and what their priorities would be going forward.

"That is part of the discernment that happens in the election process."

DeGroot-Nesdahl encourages

people who know a pastor they wish to nominate to let that rostered minister know ahead of time and to ask for their contact information.

"It would be best to tell that person so they have time to discern if they will allow their name to go forward in the process, especially if the nominees are not from the Northeastern Iowa Synod," she says. "We will then have their contact information so it will be easy to reach them after the nominating ballot."

Information about the April 27

Bishops Forum will be sent to voting members and posted on the synod website in April. In addition, a recording of the forum will be available for public viewing in May.

The 2021 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly is set to begin at 8 a.m. Saturday, June 12, as a virtual event. It will be broadcast live on the synod's Facebook page, www.facebook.com/neiasynod for visitors.

To learn more, visit the Synod Assembly web page, www.neiasynod.org/2021-synod-assembly.

Resources and Updates from Lutheran Services in Iowa

A new "Church Relations" web page from Lutheran Services in Iowa offers video resources for congregations to use in their worship services, devotions or other settings. The web page includes a video sermon from John Claes, LSI's director of Philanthropy, and a five-minute video featuring LSI program directors sharing about the variety of services offered for Iowa children, adults and families.

The web page also offers a five-part mental health video series that can be shared with congregations. The videos range from 12 to 20 minutes and focus on adapting to a new normal, anxiety and depression management, grief and loss, maintaining relationships, and mindfulness.

Visit <https://lsiowa.org/church-relations>.

SPIRITUAL LIFE PROGRAM HAS A NEW LEADER AND EXPANDED SERVICES

Pastor Kyle Barton has joined LSI as the new Spiritual Life leader. Barton will primarily focus on providing faith-based programming at the Bremwood campus in Waverly and at the Beloit campus in Ames. He

will oversee the Spiritual Life program, which offers pastoral care, campus worship, small group Bible study, youth group sessions, and other activities for children.

Barton began his ordained career with a call to St. James Lutheran Church in Allison after completing a bachelor's degree at Wartburg College in Waverly and a Master of Divinity degree at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque. Previously, Barton served as a pastoral intern at St. Peter Lutheran, Dubuque, while also working as an on-call chaplain for Mercy Medical Center in Dubuque.

The Spiritual Life leader's role has recently been expanded to support LSI staff across the state and to serve as a community resource for ELCA congregations and communion partners. This enhanced role will help the Spiritual Life program deepen relationships and create new partnerships and a stronger presence among Iowa



Kyle Barton

ELCA congregations.

Since the Spiritual Life program is faith-based, LSI cannot utilize funding provided by the state contract to support the program. Funding relies solely on private donors, grants, church organizations and congregations to continue God's work. LSI is reaching out to congregations in all three Iowa Synods to consider making a gift to support the Spiritual Life program and to help offset salary expenses for the Spiritual Life leader position.

To learn more or to donate, contact Sarah Green at sarah.green@lsiowa.org or call 515-783-8668.

LSI EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

LSI has employment opportunities in locations across Iowa for people to work with youth in residential treatment, people with disabilities, behavioral and mental health services, early childhood support, crisis management, family safety work, and more. Full-time, part-time, and flexible positions are available.

Apply online at www.LSIowa.org/employment.

View video of the 'Faith and Poverty' Zoom Event

A recorded version of the March 21 "Faith and Poverty" Zoom event is available for viewing.

The event featured three panel members sharing their personal experiences and stories about growing up in poverty. An accompanying video about hunger in Northeastern Iowa is also available, along with documents and resources to use for group discussion and youth activities.

The "Faith and Poverty" event was the final event in the

"Three Tough Talks" series sponsored by the Northeastern Iowa Synod and Lutheran Campus Ministry of the University of Northern Iowa. Recordings are also available of the two previous events, "Faith and Race" and "Faith and Mental Health."

Links to all three events can be found at www.neiasynod.org/youth-ministry.



APRIL 2021 EVENTS

- 1 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 Office Closed, Good Friday
- 6 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (April 6, 13, 20, 27)
- 7 Financial Task Force, Zoom Meeting, 4 p.m.
- 8 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 8 Assembly Planning, Zoom Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- 8 Rostered Ministers Lunch & Learn, Zoom Event, 12 Noon
- 10 Executive Committee, Zoom Meeting, 9 a.m.
- 13 New to the Synod, Zoom Event, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 15 ELCA Planned Gifts Webinar, 12 Noon
- 22 Rostered Clergy Lunch & Learn, Zoom Event, 12 Noon
- 29 First Call Theological Education Continuing Ed Event, Camp Ewalu, 9:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

MAY 2021 EVENTS

- 4 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (May 4, 11, 18, 25)
- 4 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 6 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 6 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 7 Candidacy Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 10 Registration Deadline for 2021 Virtual Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
- 13 Assembly Planning, Zoom Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- 31 Office Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE 2021 EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29)
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 6 Synod Council, Zoom Meeting, 5-6:30 p.m.
- 12 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly, Virtual Event
- 19 Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization Convention, Location TBD

JULY 2021 EVENTS

- 1 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 1 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 6 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (July 6, 13, 20, 27)
- 23-25 WIYLD (Wholly Iowa Leadership Discipling Event), Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point

MARK THESE DATES

Sunday, Sept. 12, 2021

"God's Work. Our Hands." Day of Service

Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021

Bishop Installation at Trinity Lutheran, Mason City

INSTALLING

Rev. Charis Combs-Lay, Immanuel, Cresco, April 18

Rev. Katie Pals, Trinity, Belmond, April 25

Rev. Calvin P. Konop, St. Peter, Dubuque, pending

Rev. Melinda McCluskey, Galilean, Clear Lake, pending

CALL EXTENDED

Decorah, Burr Oak and Hesper

INTERVIEWING

Decorah, First

Decorah, Luther College, college pastor

Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)

Grundy Center, American

Iowa Falls, Bethany, Rev. Darby Lawrence, interim

Mitchell, Faith; Nora Springs, St. Luke; Osage, Rock Creek and St. John (Cross Roads Lutheran Parish), (staff)

Nashua, St. John, Rev. Norman Bauer, contract interim

Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway

Parish), Rev. Jim Scaife, contract interim

Story City, St. Petri, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim

Tripoli, Grace, Rev. Megan Graves, interim

Waterloo, Our Savior's

SELF-STUDY

Allison, St. James

Charles City, Messiah

Chester, United

Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland

Dysart, Zion

Frederika, St. John

Hawkeye, Trinity

Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim

Jewell, Bethesda, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim

La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee)

Mason City, St. Paul, Rev. Matthew Muters, contract

Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross

Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim

Sumner, St. Peter (Richfield) and Waucoma, St. John (Stapleton)

Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd

Waterloo, St. Ansgar, Rev. Susan Weier, contract interim

Waterloo, Zion

West Union, Zion

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Timothy Miller, transferred to Southeastern Iowa Synod

Rev. Kurt Hansen, retired

PRAYER CALENDAR

| APRIL 2021 | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
| | | | | Rev. Steven M. Jacobsen, Decorah 1 | Good Samaritan Center, St. Ansgar 2 | Rev. Allen L. Bidne, Waverly 3 |
| Immanuel, Cresco 4 | Bethany Life Communities, Story City 5 | Rev. Bryan T. Odeen, Osage Mrs. Janice D. Schumacher, Waterloo 6 | Mrs. Martha G. Deines, Cedar Falls 7 | Rev. Amy Strydom, Cambridge, Minn. 8 | Big Canoe, Decorah 9 | Rev. Keith A. Tomlinson, Waverly 10 |
| Rev. Daniel W. Gerriets, Mason City 11 | Rev. Jeffrey A. Blank, Waterloo Rev. Marion Pruitt-Jefferson, Decorah 12 | Strawberry Point Lutheran Home, Strawberry Point 13 | Rev. James Gardner, Waterloo Mrs. Marilyn L. Koch, Cedar Falls 14 | Ms. Jenine Jordahl, Decorah 15 | Rev. Stacey J. Nalean-Carlson, Decorah 16 | Middle East Burr Oak, Decorah 17 |
| Mrs. Jane Hoppenworth, Charles City Rev. Grant J. Woodley, Clarion 18 | Rev. Margo O. Fohs, Deloit Pres. Kristin Johnston Largen, Dubuque 19 | Rev. Jerome G. Godson, Volga 20 | Mrs. Judy Wogsland, Johnston 21 | Good Samaritan Center, Waukon 22 | Rev. Jane S. Keel, Charles City 23 | Canoe Ridge, Decorah 24 |
| Rev. Ernest Elzey, La Porte City Rev. Henrik Engebretson, Decorah 25 | Rev. Scott R. Duffus, Owatonna, Minn. 26 | Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community, Waverly 27 | Decorah, Decorah 28 | Deacon Vera F. Poppen, Clarksville 29 | Rev. Matthew Agee, Dubuque Rev. Kristi V. H. Grieder, Waterloo Mrs. Justine Lionberger, Decorah 30 | |

INBOX OR MAILBOX?

How do you want to receive the Star newsletter?

The Northeastern Iowa Synod's *Star* newsletter is mailed to rostered ministers, lay ministers, presidents of congregational councils and women's groups, ministry partners and other friends of the synod. The newsletter is available as a pdf version to view on the synod website and as a printed copy delivered by mail.

Would you consider receiving the *Star* newsletter as a pdf rather than paper?

Switching to the pdf version saves the synod money for other ministries and has a positive impact on the environment. Plus, the pdf version is available on the first of the month in full color with live links to resources, and it is easy to pass on and share with others.

If you would like to opt out of the paper mailing and receive only the pdf version, please send your name and email address to webadmin@neiasynod.org, call the synod office at 319-352-1414, or return the postcard enclosed with the paper version.



SERMON VIDEO LIBRARY

Look for these upcoming video sermons from the Northeastern Iowa Synod staff:

April 11, 2021

Full worship service with sermon by Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

June 13, 2021

Sermon by Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl

To access the synod's Sermon Video Library, visit <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a9rH7N65s2IGdfVWKZ6PJ0V6noHxZ1sX>.



Good News

April 2021
Volume 34
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

Timing is everything. I've been struggling lately with.... (left blank on purpose). Yesterday's mail brought me the March Gather Magazine. This morning, I took the opportunity I had to open the magazine and start to read. My habit is to read all the articles, cover to cover, skipping over the bible study, then returning to the bible study. Each article spoke directly to my struggles.

I want to talk about struggles. Not in the specifics of who has it worse, or better. But in the how do we face them, how do we deal with them, who do we talk to about them. Look around your world, your family, your friends, your neighbors, your community, your state, your country. Everyone has challenges, this past year has given some of us quite a few. Ever notice how some people are always optimistic about it? Then there are the gloom and doomers, who feel like the world is about to end. No matter where you are on the spectrum, we are all there somewhere. And we need to be able to talk about it and be heard and taken seriously and cared for by our people.

During this year's leadership event, Pivot, don't Panic, the participants received the outline of a tool kit. 1 Purpose, 2 Prayer 3 Praise 4 Plan. Now since the event is for the Women of the ELCA the purpose is the purpose statement. We read it together at the beginning of every board meeting, cluster meeting, SWO gathering and Churchwide event. Some units may even read it at the beginning of their meetings. It is a pretty powerful and profound statement of faith.

Thank you for entrusting me with this role and continue to pray we practice our pivots till the next time.

Blessings, Anna Jetson

Discipleship Committee

The COVID has taken its toll on everyone this past year and will no doubt continue in 2021. How does that affect the call as a disciple? Perhaps COVID has taught us to be more caring. Think of the families out of work for over a year, children not being able to play with friends or be in sports. The world of so many has been affected. How can we as disciples of Christ help. Remember what Christ said, "If you want to be my disciple you must first count the cost. It will cost you." Christ showed the world the cost of his gift. It cost him His life. We are not asked too often to actually give our lives to follow Christ, but there is a cost. Some things we can give: Take care of small children so mom can go get food or to the doctor; take someone to get their COVID vaccine; how about a meal to a family that is struggling. These are just a few suggestions and I am sure you can or have thought of more. And all will cost us something, but you will share the love God has for them. God bless everyone and continue on your journey as a disciple.

Submitted by Bonnie Dralle

Women of the ELCA Gathering postponed to 2023

The Just Love Gathering, scheduled for August 5-8, 2021, has been postponed to 2023 and registration refunds will be offered. Staff is looking for other ways to build community and bring women together virtually in 2021 and 2022. Suggestions? Send your ideas. Additional details available @ [WomenoftheELCA.org](https://www.womenoftheelca.org).



Justice Committee

"God's work. Our hands". We know these words well as members of the ELCA. All the work that we do is for good. Some of us have a passion for WELCA projects with *Lutheran World Relief*, others lead bible studies, and many lend a hand whenever and wherever they see a need. One such faithful woman leading the charge in the Upper Iowa Conference is Leslie Sand, Decorah, IA. Leslie is the team leader for the local *Citizens Climate Lobby*. She has a passion for taking action on climate change solutions. In her words:

"As members of the ELCA, we are called to care for God's creation. Climate change is threatening our earthly home, our health, and our economy on a global scale. ELCA Advocacy gives us guidance on how we can be good stewards and advocates for creation. Recently, ELCA Advocacy published a primer on Carbon Pricing Basics. Carbon pricing is a very effective way to reduce the combustion of fossil fuels, which are the leading cause of climate change. Citizens Climate Lobby is a strong champion of a form of carbon pricing called the Energy Innovation and Carbon Dividend Act. There is no fee. You are invited to put your faith into action by joining the new Lutheran faith action team at

*Citizens' Climate Lobby @
<https://citizensclimatelobby.org>"*

*Or contact Leslie Sand @
lessand52@gmail.com for more information.*

Thank you, Leslie, and all faithful women who take action.

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
Micah 6:8

Submitted by Jen Larson

Stewardship Committee

The pandemic of 2020 has had a profound impact on LWR's Quilt & Kit Ministry. Since groups have not been able to meet and many 2020 Ingatherings were cancelled, the shelves of our warehouses are nearly empty. We know the

passion for this ministry continues to run deep in our beloved quilters and kit makers, and we are grateful beyond words for your faithful service. In these extraordinary times, we're asking you to consider taking an additional step and ship your loving gifts to one of our warehouses. Even a partial shipment would make a huge difference. Your precious handmade gifts can be shipped to: Lutheran World Relief, 398 East Richmond Street, South St. Paul, MN 651-457-9009

We are in urgent need of personal care kits and would appreciate any that can be made and sent ASAP. LWR is truly blessed by your partnership, global compassion and loving support.

Submitted by Lea Norlinger

CALENDAR

- | | |
|---------|--|
| Apr 10 | Ingathering, CEH, New Hampton, 8-11 |
| Apr 12 | Ingathering, Mason City, 8:30-10:30 |
| May 1 | SWO Board Meeting, 9-12, Wartburg Ingathering, BDI, Decorah, 7:30-10:30 |
| Jun 18 | SWO Board Meeting, 7-9, Wartburg |
| Jun 19 | SWO Gathering @ Wartburg College |
| Aug 2-5 | Triennial Convention |
| Oct 16 | Ingathering, CEH, New Hampton, 8-11 |
| Oct 18 | Ingathering, Mason City, 8:30-10:30 |
| Nov 6 | Ingathering, BDI, Decorah, 7:30-10:30 |

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Articles are due the 1st of the month for the next month's newsletter (e.g. April 1 for May issue)

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neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Living Faith @

Happy Easter! Christ is Risen - Alleluia!

How are you celebrating Easter this year? Easter Egg Hunt? Easter Baskets? Chocolate Bunnies? All of this is so much fun, especially when kids are involved! But don't forget the real reason for the season! Here are some facts about Easter that you might want to share with others – young and old alike, as a reminder of why we celebrate Easter:

- **Easter** is the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb on the third day after his crucifixion. That's why we also call it Resurrection Sunday.
- **Easter** is the foundation of the Christian faith. Jesus, the Son of God, fulfilled prophecy and through his death, has given to us the gift of eternal life in heaven. Easter highlights the resurrection – but we also celebrate Christ's resurrection every Sunday!
- **Easter** is celebrated on a different date each year - unlike Christmas. It is always on Sunday, but the actual date is set to coincide with the first Sunday after the Paschal Full Moon, the first full moon after the vernal (spring) equinox. Easter Sunday always falls somewhere from March 22nd to April 25th. This year it falls on April 4th.
- **Easter** next year (2022) will be celebrated on April 17th in case you are wondering! 😊

Here is an idea I've seen pop up lately on social media sites. It is a great way to let people know the importance of Easter and a fun way to invite them to your church (In-person or Online.) You will need a bunch of plastic eggs and some pre-packaged candy to put in 11 of the 12 eggs. Pick some homes to visit and sneak the eggs into their front yard. Make sure to put a door hanger on their front door so they will know what you are doing! It would be a fun project for Sunday school kids! The door hanger can say something like:



You've Been Egged!

**There are 12 eggs
hidden in your yard!**

**Enjoy the Hunt! But don't be discouraged when you find the empty egg. It is a simple reminder of Jesus' empty tomb... for HE IS RISEN! We would love to have you join us for our worship services at:
(Church, Address, Time of services, Name of website, Face Book page, etc.)**

Earth Day is celebrated on April 22nd. It is a wonderful way to involve ALL of God's children in learning about and caring for God's creation. It's also the perfect time of the year to get everyone outside (after a long winter) to appreciate the beauty of springtime and the great outdoors!

Here are some easy and fun ways to observe Earth Day:

Turn the Faucet Off: Did you know you can save up to eight gallons of water a day just by shutting off the faucet when brushing your teeth? You can also conserve a lot of water while washing your hands — just turn off the tap for those 20 seconds you're scrubbing with soap.

Use only reusable products for the day: Use cloth towels and napkins; regular plates, bowls, cups, and utensils instead of paper or throw away plastic; take reusable bags to the store with you; and be mindful of anything you do throw into the trash can! How can you eliminate all the extra trash and garbage every day? What can be recycled? Discuss if this is something you might be able to do regularly.

Adopt a plant! Bringing some greenery into your home can help regulate the temperature through the moisture they release into the air. This also helps reduce the energy required to heat and cool your home. And plants make any room look fresh and inviting!

Create art from recycled materials. Locate extra buttons, used jars and cans, fabric scraps, pieces of yarn, etc., and get creative! Make necklaces, pretty containers, key chains, refrigerator magnets — let your imagination go wild! Even small children can have fun with these types of recyclable projects.

Pick up trash in your yard, or on your block – or around your church! Plan a fun spring cleanup day – have contests to see who can come up with the strangest looking piece of trash – or the most colorful, or the biggest or the smallest! Celebrate with a potluck lunch afterwards. Thank everyone by giving them a new plastic water bottle (find them at the dollar store!)

Make an Earth Day Jar. On scraps of paper, write down simple, easily executable ideas and reminders that you and your family can do to be good stewards of our earth. Put the jar in a central location, and periodically draw a piece of paper and follow the instructions.

Read the Creation Story in Genesis 1 – take turns reading the different verses about what God created and reflect on ways we are either harming or helping God's creation. Talk about what it means to be a good steward of our earth and its resources.



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](#).



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