



Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

Encourage youth to explore their ministry gifts

by Marcia Hahn

"Have you ever thought about a call to ministry? I think you have some gifts suited for ministry."

Lily Brondyke was attending her sister's high school theater event when a family friend, who happened to be a pastor, turned to Brondyke and shared those simple, life-changing words.

"I would have never considered ministry without that external voice naming it so pointedly to me," says Brondyke, who is a second year Master of Divinity residential student at Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque. "I didn't have the language or the inclination to recognize a vocational calling to ministry until someone equipped me."

The Rev. Dr. Brian Beckstrom, dean of Spiritual Life/Moehlmann Chaplain Chair for Wartburg College, sees firsthand how a few words of encouragement can spark a young person's interest in ministry. Beckstrom coordinates the Integrated B.A./M.Div. Degree Program for Ordained Ministry, which allows students to complete a Bachelor of Arts from Wartburg College and a Master of Divinity from Wartburg Seminary in six years, rather



Brian Beckstrom

than eight. The program, which is in its third year, offers a streamlined curriculum that reduces redundancies and enables some classes to count for both seminary and college credit.

Almost all the students in the program have been referred to it by someone from their congregation. "The number one thing we have discovered is that it is helpful for students to have someone they know and trust give them a nudge to think about ministry," Beckstrom says. "Students need to know that someone sees those gifts in them."

Beckstrom suggests pastors and adult leaders pay attention to which students take on leadership roles in their youth groups, help with worship services, and are willing to think about what God is calling them to do. Encourage those students to explore their faith formation more in depth through Bible camp, ELCA Youth Gatherings, and the synod's Lutheran Youth Organization Network and annual Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event (WIYLDE).

YOUTH ACTIVITIES CAN NURTURE THE CALL TO MINISTRY

"In high school, I could not wait until WIYLDE and the youth gathering," says Nicole Kiefer, a junior religion major at Luther College



Amber Boettcher, a second-year student in the Integrated B.A./M.Div. Degree Program for Ordained Ministry at Wartburg College, serves communion at the Wartburg Chapel.

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who plans to go on to seminary. “These places were full of validation, hope and safety in some of the darkest times in my life. The opportunity to get to know other

Christians, hear testimony, worship, share Bible studies, and learn more about Jesus changed my life and made me fired up for ministry.”



Nicole Kiefer

“It is part of our job to nurture the gifts of the baptized, to point out, lift up and encourage them. It makes a big difference. I know it did for me.”
— Pastor Brian Beckstrom

In college, Kiefer says her desire to pursue ministry continues to be reinforced by her friends, campus pastors, church family and those she has met working on staff at Camp EWALU. “I never went to a Bible camp growing up; however, I believe that camp is truly a place where youth can encounter and develop a burning love for Christ and ministry.”

Tyler Hoey says his whole life has been a journey leading him to where he is today — a third-year Wartburg Seminary student serving his internship in Loganville, Wis. Growing up, Hoey attended Camp Ewalu every summer and began serving as a counselor while in high school. He says he was able to practice his ministry skills and learn

how to share the good news of Jesus Christ with both young and old.

“I knew when I was in high school, after I was a leader-in-training at Ewalu, that I would work in ministry,” Hoey says. “At Wartburg College my religion professors prepared me for seminary, and now that I am in seminary, I continue to walk on this journey of ministry with God guiding me and calling me.”

Hoey says that the most supportive individuals of his journey toward ministry have been his parents, his grandparents and his wife, Miranda, who often tells him he is going to be a wonderful pastor. “When she says this, I know she means it with her whole heart,” Hoey says. “I can’t help but feel encouraged and keep walking along this journey.”



Tyler Hoey

From his own experience, Hoey says that one of the best ways to get young people excited about participating in ministry is to empower them in the little things. “Ask them to do special music for worship or to be a worship assistant and nudge them toward a Bible camp. Eventually you may want to point them toward seminary, but before you do that, you need to empower them as lay leaders in their communities.”

Kiefer emphasizes how important it is to allow youth to have a say in what happens in their congregation and to offer consistent times for youth groups, mission trips and other events. “Adults should do their best to make these places feel

safe, where youth can be themselves and have time set aside to talk about Jesus and make connections with others.” Kiefer says. “As a youth, it feels good to be validated, loved and heard.”

LEARN ABOUT MINISTRY VOCATIONS THROUGH CAMPUS VISITS

Beckstrom encourages students to take advantage of special discernment days offered by Luther College, Wartburg Seminary and Wartburg College. Pastors and congregational leaders are invited to bring their students to Wartburg College for a “Vocation Day” planned for April. Offered in partnership with the Northeastern Iowa Synod, this day of discernment gives middle school and high school youth an opportunity to learn about parish pastor ministry and other leadership opportunities in the ELCA. Look for more details in next month’s *Star* newsletter and on the synod’s website, www.neiasynod.org, when the date is confirmed.

The junior year is when high school students think the most about their vocation goals and start campus visits, but Beckstrom says he is happy to receive referrals for students as young as ninth grade.

“We try to build a pool of students to talk to about ministry as a discernment process rather than recruitment,” Beckstrom says. “Ministry is not right for everyone, so we want to make sure they have a really developed sense of what God is doing in their lives.”

Most students enter the B.A./M.

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Changes can come with hope and joy

During the final episode of the sitcom “Frasier,” Roz remembers her final conversation with her Grandmother. “It is so short.” “Of course,” says Roz, “I was wearing a mini-skirt.”

Well, mini-skirts aside, it is so short.

When I was first elected, I knew that there were certain changes that needed to take place. It was imperative for our synod to implement the ELCA’s policy of responding to sexual misconduct of rostered ministers.

I didn’t anticipate that we would need to invest so much time and energy in responding to the false claims and misrepresentations of our ecumenical agreements. But we did, and our church made historic decisions that have opened

“I feel like we just got started.
And yet, I know that this is the
time for change.”

up new possibilities for ministries.

We all knew that matters of sexuality would need to be addressed. What I was not prepared for was the hatred and threatened violence associated with the conversation.

For me, it was fairly simple. There is the law and the Gospel. The law is always open to change in order to create a safe community for all. We take votes on those changes. That is the way the church has always been. We never vote on the Gospel. That is simply a gift from God. Faithfulness to a Lutheran

understanding of the law and Gospel dialectic means that we listen, study and vote to make the community safe for all.



I join Roz’s Grandmother as she observes that it is all so short. I feel like we just got started. And yet, I know that this is the time for change.

We can look forward to the changes with hope and joy. We trust in God’s presence as our call process unfolds.

— Steven L. Ullestad
Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod

Rostered Women’s Gathering set for March 15-17

March 15-17, 2020
Camp Ewalu Stone Center

Women rostered ministers of the Northeastern Iowa Synod are invited to attend the Rostered Women’s Gathering set for March 15-17 at Camp Ewalu Stone Center.

With the theme, “Stretch, Yield, Yearn,” this event is an invitation to wholeness in community with one another. Women will have the opportunity to rest, renew, be encouraged and collaborate.

The retreat begins at 5:30 p.m. on Sunday with dinner and ends with a

noon lunch on Tuesday. Meals and lodging are provided. Please bring snacks to share.

The event is co-sponsored by women rostered ministers of this synod and the synod’s Fall Conference Coordinating Committee.

Cost to attend is \$200. Registration is due by Sunday, March 1. The Stone Center is located north of Strawberry Point, Iowa at 35124 Hwy 13.

To register, email amyzlarson@gmail.com and mail a check payable to Ewalu to Amy Larson, 701 Iowa Ave, Decorah, IA 52101.



Portico offers new Live Well benefits

Members and spouses with ELCA-Primary health benefits will be able to earn \$200 each in wellness dollars in 2020 by completing a biometric screening and exploring a financial topic of their choice on the myPortico website. The biometric screening is an appointment with a health care professional who collects the person's physical measurements, blood pressure and a blood sample to determine blood glucose, cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

This year's Live Well invitation also offers members new ways to access quality health care, personalize their wellness journeys, and live healthy lives. ELCA-Primary health plan members can begin to explore the following new benefits:

- "Being" — a holistic, faith-based, educational platform offering expert-led videos on a range of well-being skills, such as longevity, purpose, resiliency, and more.
- "Learn to Live" — a self-directed online mental health support program designed to help participants manage stress, depression, social anxiety, insomnia, and substance use.

- "98point6" — an app that delivers 24/7 text-based primary care services for below the cost of an in-person office visit. The app connects members from anywhere in the U.S. via text and video with board-certified physicians who can diagnose, recommend treatment, and prescribe medication (except controlled medications) anywhere in the U.S. — no appointment required.

Get started at <https://myportico.porticobenefits.org>.

Election Resources Available

It's the time of year when conference assemblies meet to nominate individuals for the Synod Council and committees and to prepare for the Synod Assembly and Bishop election in June.

Conferences are encouraged to review the resources available on the synod website to help with this process. Resources include an overview of the Bishop election process, the *Calling a Bishop* document and the *Synod Profile*. Visit www.neiasynod.org/synod-assembly-2020.

Lutheran Day on the Hill

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020
Des Moines, Iowa

Registration for the 2020 Lutheran Day on the Hill is open through Tuesday, Feb. 18.



Lutherans from Iowa's three ELCA synods will travel to Des Moines to speak with legislators at the Iowa State Capitol to advocate for children and families in Iowa. This year's focus is on sustainable funding for Iowa's Children's Mental Health System, investing in a strong human services workforce, support for services that empower refugees and immigrants, and clean energy advocacy.

Complimentary charter bus transportation is available from several Iowa locations. This event is made possible through an ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant.

Learn more and register online at www.LS Iowa.org/LDH.

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Send news for the March 2020 issue to Marcia Hahn by Feb. 17. 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 hahnm@neiasynod.org.

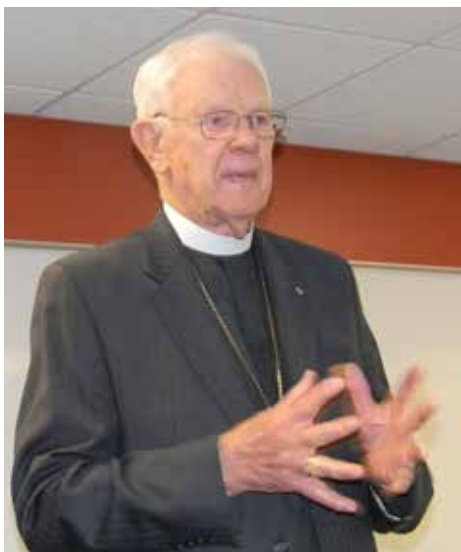


www.neiasynod.org

Remembering Herbert Chilstrom, first ELCA presiding bishop

The Rev. Dr. Herbert W. Chilstrom, who served as the first presiding bishop of the ELCA, died Jan. 19 at his home in Green Valley, Ariz. Chilstrom served as ELCA presiding bishop from May 1987 to October 1995.

Originally from Litchfield, Minn., Chilstrom served three parishes in



The Rev. Dr. Herbert Chilstrom presents a workshop at the 2013 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly.

Minnesota, was a professor of religion and an academic dean at Luther College, Teaneck, N.J., and was bishop of the Minnesota Synod of the Lutheran Church in America before becoming the ELCA presiding bishop.

Chilstrom last visited the Northeastern Iowa Synod in 2013 as a special guest along with three other early church leaders to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ELCA. Chilstrom presented a workshop at the assembly about the early years of the church. He recalled attending the first commission meeting in 1982 with 70 people there. "Thankfully, some wise people emerged in that process," Chilstrom said.

Chilstrom also gave the Sunday morning sermon at the 2013 assembly, in which he spoke about tithing and living a generous life. He shared how as a youth he hated confirmation and singing in junior choir, but a week at Bible camp one summer became a major turning point in his life. "The Good News that God

loved me exactly as I was came to life in me," he said.

He began to read his Bible every day, joined the adult choir and became the unpaid youth director for the congregation. He later came across a pamphlet about the pleasure believers get from tithing, so he started to tithe while in high school and continued it into college and with his wife throughout their marriage. Chilstrom called tithing as a first gift a joyful way of life, and he invited others to join him.

Chilstrom is survived by his wife of 65 years, Corinne (Hansen), also a Lutheran pastor; and a daughter, son and four sisters. Two services will take place: Thursday, Feb. 13, at Desert Hills Lutheran Church in Green Valley, Ariz., and Saturday, Feb. 15, at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn.

Read his complete obituary at <https://elca.org/News-and-Events/8020>.

Hungarian seminarian visits synod ministries

Bence Slezak, a Lutheran Seminary student from Hungary, visited various Lutheran ministries in the Northeastern Iowa Synod during January as part of the synod's companion synod relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary. Slezak attends seminary in Budapest and is in the United States for a year of study at Trinity Lutheran Seminary at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio.

Slezak flew to Iowa after a visit to the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. Pastor Mark Anderson, assistant to the Bishop, hosted Slezak

and, despite a snow delay, Slezak visited several sites, including St. Paul Lutheran and La Luz Hispana organization in Hampton to learn about the Latino population; St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School, Waverly; Messiah Lutheran, Janesville, and St. John Lutheran (Maxfield), Denver, to learn about rural ministry; Wartburg College; two area farms and the synod office.

Thank you to everyone who took time to host Slezak and show him Iowa hospitality.



Bence Slezak, a seminary student from Hungary, visits with Pastor Katie Rodriguez during his recent visit to the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

Fund for Leaders Challenge reaches \$125,000

The Bishop and Ruth's challenge to match their gift of \$10,000 resulted in an amazing number of contributions to the synod's H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders, totaling \$125,000!

Contributions came in the form of checks, IRA distributions, and on-line gifts from individuals, families, congregations, and endowments. We are very grateful for each and every gift!



— Pastor Mark A. Anderson
Assistant to the Bishop

Encourage youth to explore their ministry gifts
<< Continued from page 2

Div. program as freshmen, already knowing their goal is to be a parish minister. Beckstrom says students want to commit early to the program because of scholarship funds made available through generous gifts. Scholarships are also available for seminary students, who take online classes while working part-time for pay in a congregation with a pastor/mentor.

"Anytime you can, affirm when you see a young person display gifts of leadership," Beckstrom says. "It is part of our job to nurture the gifts of the baptized, to point out, lift up and encourage them. It makes a big difference. I know it did for me."

To learn more or to make a referral, visit www.wartburg.edu/ordained-ministry.

Registration is open for WIYLDE

June 14-17, 2020
Wartburg College, Waverly

Registration is now open for high school youth from ELCA congregations to attend the Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event June 14-17 at Wartburg College in Waverly.

This annual camp is designed to help high school youth learn how to become future leaders of the church. The event features guest teachers,

small group activities, large group Bible studies, games and more.

The cost to attend is \$300 per student. Scholarships of \$100 are available through the Northeastern Iowa Synod, along with a \$25 discount for students who recruit a friend who is new to WIYLDE.

Registration is due by Friday, May 1, 2019. Download the registration form at www.neiasynod.org/wiylde.



WIYLDE CLASS OF 2019

Rural Ministry Conference

March 1-3, 2020
Dubuque, Iowa

Registration for the Rural Ministry Conference is due Saturday, Feb. 22. Sponsored by Wartburg Theological Seminary, the conference is set for March 1 - 3 at the Best Western Plus Hotel in Dubuque.

This year's theme is "Ministry in Divisive Times." The event features plenary speakers, six workshops and Bible study.

To learn more or to register, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu.

EVENTS

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 6 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 6 **Meeting**, No Youth Ministry Network meeting due to Extravaganza
- 7-8 **Event**, Candidacy Retreat, Shalom Spiritual Center, Dubuque
- 11 **Meeting**, Assembly Planning Committee, Wartburg, Waverly, 4-6 p.m.
- 13 **Meeting**, Endowment Fund Investment Committee, Synod Office, 9 a.m.
- 16 **Meeting**, WIYLDE Video Chat, 7 p.m.
- 25 **Event**, Lutheran Day on the Hill, Des Moines

MARCH EVENTS

- 1-3 **Event**, Rural Ministry Conference, Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque
- 3 **Meeting**, Executive Committee, synod office, 9 a.m.
- 5 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 5 **Meeting**, Youth Ministry Network, Bethesda, Jewell, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 7 **Meeting**, Synodical Women's Organization Board, Synod Office, 8 a.m.-12 noon
- 8 **Meeting**, WIYLDE Video Chat, 7-8 p.m.
- 14 **Meeting**, (snow date) Synodical Women's Organization Board
- 15-17 **Event**, Rostered Women's Gathering, Camp Ewalu Stone Center
- 21 **Meeting**, Synod Council, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 29 **Meeting**, WIYLDE Video Chat, 7-8 p.m.

APRIL EVENTS

- 2 **Event**, Day of Renewal, Nazareth, Cedar Falls, 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 2 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 **Meeting**, Youth Ministry Network, Trinity, Mason City, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 10 **Office Closed**, Good Friday
- 14 **Meeting**, Assembly Planning Committee, Wartburg, Waverly, 4-6 p.m.
- 23-24 **Event**, Youth Ministry Network Retreat, Ewalu, Strawberry Point
- 26 **Meeting**, WIYLDE, Location and Time TBD
- 26-28 **Event**, First Call Theological Education Retreat, Ewalu (Stone Center), Strawberry Point

MAY EVENTS

- 1 **Meeting**, Candidacy Committee, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 7 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group,

CONGREGATIONS

INSTALLING

Rev. Amy Eisenmann, Bethlehem, Cedar Falls, Feb. 23

INTERVIEWING

Belmond, Trinity
Cedar Falls, St. John
Decorah, Decorah
Dubuque, St. Matthew and Luther Manor
Independence, Immanuel (staff)
Nashua, St. John, Rev. Charis Combs-Lay, interim
Tripoli, St. John (Crane Creek)

SELF-STUDY

Charles City, Messiah
Chester, United
Clear Lake, Galilean
Clermont, West Clermont
Cresco, Immanuel
Decorah, Burr Oak and Hesper
Decorah, Luther College
Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
Frederika, St. John, Rev. Megan Graves, interim
Guttenberg, St. John's and St. Paul, Rev. Jim Harbaugh, 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)
Northwood, First, Rev. Burton Everist, co-interim and Rev. John Gannett, contract co-interim
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)
Tripoli, Grace, Rev. Dennis Niezwaag, contract interim
Waterloo, Our Savior's, Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, contract interim
Waterloo, St. John (Bennington)

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Norman Bauer, on leave from call
Rev. Scott Duffus, on leave from call

9:30-11:30 a.m.

- 17 **Meeting**, WIYLDE Video Chat, 7-8 p.m.
- 25 **Office Closed-Memorial Day**

FEBRUARY 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Patricia Nelson, Waverly 1
Doris Kampfe, Rockford 2	Rev. Scot McVey McCluskey, Clear Lake Rev. Bryan L. Robertson, Waukon 3	Grand View University, Des Moines 4	Rev. Joyce D. Sandberg, Roseville, Minn. 5	Bethlehem, Cedar Falls 6	Rev. Patricia L. Shaw, Waverly 7	Rev. Dr. Richard Simon Hanson, Decorah 8
Deacon Mildred Dieter, Waverly Rev. Kristen C. Rod, Jesup 9	Rev. Stephen P. Brackett, Waverly Rev. Jane E. Harris, Rockwell 10	Rev. Burton L. Everist, Mason City Joyce J. Rohde, Manchester 11	Rev. Linda Marlett, Cedar Falls 12	Luther College, Decorah 13	Fredsville, Cedar Falls 14	Rev. Donald L. Feuerhak, Cedar Falls Rev. Roger McKinstry, Marion Deacon Jean P. Rieniets, Dubuque 15
Wartburg College, Waverly 16	Middle East Peace Nazareth, Cedar Falls 17	Rev. David L. Coffin, Elgin Rev. Robert Ericson, Cedar Falls Rev. Alan R. Schulz, Columbus, Ohio 18	Rev. Dr. Edward W. Amend, Cedar Falls 19	Lutheran Services in Iowa, Des Moines 20	St. John American, Cedar Falls 21	Lutheran Youth Organization 22
St. Paul, Cedar Falls 23	Mosaic, Omaha, Neb. 24	Messiah, Charles City 25	Bishop Steven L. Ullestad, Cedar Falls 26	Synodical Women's Organization 27	Rev. Darrel W. Gerriets, Waverly 28	Rev. Kevin T. Jones, Mason City 29

OBITUARIES

DEACON DELORIS LAUBE

Deacon Deloris Laube died Dec. 19, 2019, at the age of 90. She was commissioned as an associate in ministry on Nov. 1, 1965. She served as an elementary school teacher at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School in Waverly for many years until she retired on Aug. 31, 1991. The funeral service took place Dec. 30 at St. Paul's Lutheran Church and School.

Deacon Laube is survived by three children. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Paula Hemingson, 80 9th Ave. NW, Waverly IA 50677-1549. For the complete obituary, visit www.kaisercorson.com/obituaries/Deloris-Ilene-Laube?obId=9800518#/obituaryInfo.

PASTOR DWIGHT ALBERS

Pastor Dwight Albers died Jan. 25, 2020, at the age of 67. He was ordained on June 1, 1997, and served as pastor at Trinity, Mott, North Dakota; Zion, Creighton, Nebraska and West Clermont, Clermont, Iowa. He went on disability leave on Nov. 27, 2010 and retired on Sept. 1, 2018. The memorial service took place Jan. 30 at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Monona, Iowa.

Pastor Albers is survived by his wife, Sharon Albers, and three sons. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Mrs. Sharon Albers, PO Box 1005, Postville IA 52162-1005. For the complete obituary, visit graufuneralhomes.com/2020/01/rev-dwight-albers-postville-iowa-january-25-2020/.

IRS 2020 Mileage Rates

The Internal Revenue Service 2020 optional standard mileage rate for calculating the deductible costs of operating a car, van, pickup or panel truck for business is 57.5 cents per mile, down one half of a cent from the rate for 2019. For medical or moving purposes, the 2020 rate is 17 cents per mile. The rate for driving in service of charitable organizations is 14 cents per mile.

Learn more at www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2020.



Good News

February 2020
Volume 33
Number 2

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

I'm doing my "happy" dance! Mom and I are registered for the Triennial Gathering in Phoenix. I am so excited to be going with her again. I was pretty sure once I got her to one Gathering, she would go again. Every three years, I look forward to the gathering of women, usually in a place I haven't been before. I hope you are able to come to Phoenix and join in the fun and excitement to see what the Women of the ELCA have been up to and where we are going next.

Now for something a little closer to home. Our SWO gathering is June 20, 2020 at Wartburg College in Waverly. Your unit leader should have received a mailing with registration forms, nomination forms, etc. These forms will also be available on our website: <https://www.neiasynod.org/women-of-the-elca/>. Hope you will join us for a day full of fun and learning. I want to remind each cluster that we are looking for two nominations from each cluster, one person willing to serve on the SWO board and one person willing to serve on the nominating committee. If the spirit moves you to participate, please complete the nomination form. If you know someone and think they would be a great leader, make the suggestion to them and request they complete the nomination form.

Does your unit celebrate Bold Women? February 23, 2020 is Bold Women Sunday. Resources, including a liturgy, promotion flyers, and BOLD resources are at www.womenoftheelca.org. We are surrounded by BOLD women. You may not even realize you are the BOLD woman that others look up to. Send stories of BOLD women and how you celebrate them to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/NEIASWO>.

Justice Committee

What does Justice mean to you? Does it mean

helping someone in need? Does it mean standing up and saying this is not ok? Does it mean sitting with someone while they struggle through the challenge they are facing? I think it means all of these and more. Women have been standing up for others, sitting with others and taking care of others for a long time. Do we recognize the work we are doing? Sometimes I hear, "but that doesn't happen here. What's happening ½ way around the globe doesn't affect me and my town." I think we need to realize the world does impact us in our neighborhoods and in our daily lives. We may have a stable grid that delivers electricity to us daily, but that doesn't mean we can't help our neighbor. I have been noticing more solar panels and solar fields as I travel around the synod. I think it is a benefit to all when we use natural resources that are easily renewed to power our day, wind or sun.

I recently received feedback that hearing about what is happening elsewhere is good, but doesn't help with what I need for here and now. Then I read the article in *Living Lutheran* about what is happening in our campus ministries and what the younger generation is interested in. Sometimes I wonder if we want them to be interested in what we are interested in—doing things the same way we always have done things. Let me ask you this. Do you have the same interests your mother had? Your grandmother? Don't get me wrong, I do a lot of things with my mother, but sometimes we have different ideas of what we want. I don't try to change her and luckily for me she appreciates the things I like to do as well. You just might be surprised at how much Justice work you do. There is an opportunity to join others and learn more ways to make a difference for others on February 25 at Lutheran Day on the Hill. More information is available at: <https://lsiowa.org/get-involved/advocate/> Submitted by Anna Jetson

Just Love

Following Jesus is messy. Loving one another is justice.

CALENDAR

Registration for the Triennial Gathering is now open

Feb. 1	Deadline for March <i>Good News</i>
Mar. 1	Deadline for April <i>Good News</i>
Mar. 7	Board Meeting @ Synod Office 9am–12:30pm (Mar. 14 Snow Date)
Apr. 1	Deadline for May <i>Good News</i>
Apr. 25	Upper Iowa River Cluster Spring Gathering, Immanuel LC, Cresco
Apr. 25	Spring Gathering, Little Flock Cluster B, St. Peter, Garnavillo
May 1	Deadline for June <i>Good News</i>
May 2	Board Meeting @ Wartburg College 9am–12:30pm
May 2	LWR Ingathering at Olson's Explosives, Decorah
June 16	Deadline for July-August <i>Good News</i>
June 19	Board Meeting at Wartburg College, 7–9pm
June 20	SWO Convention, 8:30am–4:00pm, Wartburg College

We are not perfect. We are one body in Christ.

The 2020 Triennial is just around the corner—July 16–19. Imagine a convention center packed with 2,500 Lutheran women filled with energy, love and just plain FUN!!!! There is so much to do and see: learning experiences, worship, keynote speakers, fellowship, friends from near and far, the sights of Phoenix, exhibits, quilts, trips and on and on! This will be my 7th Triennial and I am now sharing the experience with my daughters—a girls' weekend! If you are interested in going, or have already registered, or need help with roommates or travel arrangements, registrations or just have questions, please give me a call, 641-425-8628 or wills.dianes@gmail.com.

Looking forward to JUST LOVE, Diane Wills

Around the Synod

Little Flock Cluster B Fall Gathering

The leaves were just about to turn in the hills around Farmersburg, a glowing sugar maple outside the

church greeted us all. Sixty of us came together for our Fall Fling October 19, 2019. St. John's Luana ladies served us refreshments before our program started in the sanctuary. Rosetta Anderson, president, opened our meeting by welcoming two new churches to our cluster—Elgin Lutheran, Elgin and Highland, Elkader.

"Seeing is Believing" was our theme for the day brought to us by Becky Fuelling, Pastor Harold McMillian and Charlene Sauer. Pastor asked for a few volunteers and the next thing they knew, they had blindfolds on for 45 minutes. We sang our hymns, held our business meeting and then Pastor McMillian asked them to share with us this blinding experience. Pastor McMillian read a verse from Mark 9:25 and we talked about all kinds of blindness—spiritual, financial, social—and how the world can close in on us. We have our own evil demons that blind us. God gives us a heart of compassion; we need one another to get through life...through faith!

Our guest speaker, Charlene Sauer FNP-BC, shared with us her life-changing experiences of traveling to Honduras. Their mission is to better children's lives by improving their vision, one eye surgery at a time! Each medical volunteer pays for their travel and daily expenses to be there. Children in America who have strabismus (crossed eye) are fixed around the age of 1–2. Unfortunately, in Honduras they don't get that care, have the equipment or money to help themselves. "That is why we travel there to help them, if we didn't, who would?" stated Charlene.

A few announcements were made: **April 25, 2020 Spring Gathering at St. Peter-Garnavillo; May 2, 2020 LWR truck** Decorah 7:30–10:30am, Olson Explosives (St. John's, Farmersburg assist with loading); and need new **2020 board members** from St. Paul, Postville & Emmanuel, Strawberry Point.

Many thanks to the ladies of St. John's Farmersburg for hosting a delicious lunch and handing out door prizes to four lucky ladies! *Submitted by Rosetta Anderson*

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Good News

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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). Please put WELCA in your subject line. (You can also send paper copies by "snail" mail.)

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neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Living Faith @



Dear Faith Shapers,

Sometimes I feel sorry for February. (I know, weird.) But February has the misfortune of always being stuck right in the middle of winter. It's not at the beginning of winter with the excitement of Christmas, a brand new year, and pretty white snowflakes. It's not at the end of winter when we start to enjoy longer days, warmer temperatures, and the first sightings of tiny green buds peeking through rapidly melting snow. Nope – February is smack-dab in the middle of those never-ending weather delays and cancellations, messy piles of mismatched mittens, and the dreaded cabin fever that has even the most saintly among us screaming, “Enough!”

Poor February!

But February does give us a great opportunity for some fun and unique activities with our family, and our students. Valentine's Day (February 14th) is the perfect time to try out some fun crafts for gifting to loved ones, and to simply discuss what it means to love one another – the way that God first loved us! Presidents Day comes quickly after that (February 17th) and gives us an excellent chance to learn the history of our country and its leaders. And this year Ash Wednesday falls on February 26th when we can begin our journey to Easter with some meaningful activities to help us understand what the forty days of Lent are all about. And this year we even get an extra day in February – how about a special Leap Year party to wrap up the month?

I hope these resources will help you and your family or students to avoid the “middle-of-winter” doldrums and look forward to a fun-filled and faith-filled February!

Jane Harris

Pastor at St. Peter Lutheran Church, Rockwell and St. Paul Lutheran Church, Thornton



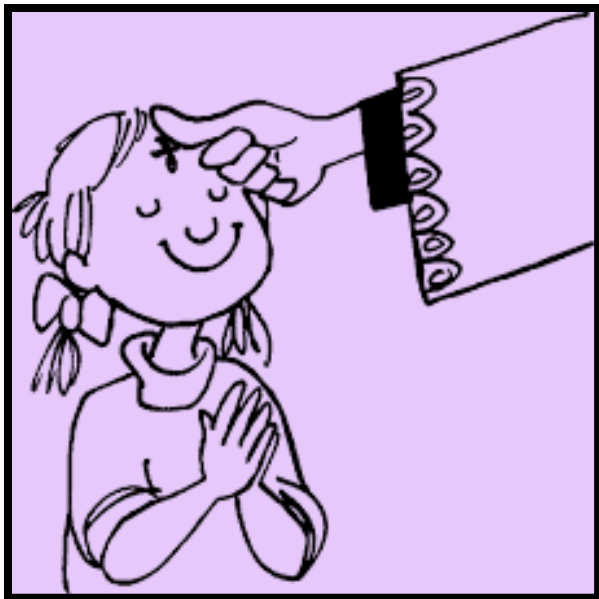
A fun and easy heart craft – showing children that Jesus' love for us truly is unconditional. Tape it on a mirror in their bedroom or bathroom so they see it every day.

History of Valentine's Day

No one is quite sure where the origins of Valentine's Day first came from. There were at least three Saint Valentine's from the early Catholic Church who were martyrs. The day of St. Valentine could have been named after any one of them. The day became associated with romance sometime in the Middle Ages. In the 1300s English poet Geoffrey Chaucer wrote a poem that linked the day with love. This likely was the beginning of celebrating love on this day. In the 18th century sending romantic cards on Valentine's Day became very popular. People made elaborate handmade cards with ribbons and lace. They also began to use hearts and cupids as decorations. The holiday spread to the United States and in 1847 the first mass produced Valentine's cards were made by entrepreneur Esther Howland.

Here's a Valentines' Day craft to help kids remember that Jesus loved them so much, He gave up His life on a cross. Use brown foam sheets or construction paper for the cross and candy hearts. Pick (appropriate) sayings from the candy hearts to glue on the cross. You can then use magnetic tape to put on the back for a magnet, (wait until glue from putting the candy on dries) or you can string a ribbon thru the top for hanging.





Each year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where he fasted and where Satan tempted him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection. Often called the Day of Ashes, Ash Wednesday starts Lent by focusing the Christian's heart on repentance and prayer, usually through personal and communal confession. This happens during a special Ash Wednesday service.

Here are some activities that will help children learn more about Ash Wednesday & Lent:

- Have a big pancake feast on Shrove Tuesday (the day right before Ash Wednesday), sharing the meaning behind it. Pancake Day comes from England where it was common tradition to use up all the eggs, milk, and butter in the kitchen prior to Ash Wednesday. These ingredients were often used to make pancakes!
- On Ash Wednesday, hold a simple candle-lighting service at home. Have each person reflect on things they'd like to let go of – bad habits and so on. Burn those as a way of releasing them. Prayer: Lord have mercy on us, forgive us, and help us to do better.
- Draw a large cross or use a cross you may have hanging on the wall. Take your finger and trace around the shape of the cross while saying the Lord's Prayer. Make this a daily practice throughout Lent this year.
- Attend an Ash Wednesday service! Explain beforehand why we start Lent this way – if you need help check out this website: https://www.ducksters.com/holidays/ash_wednesday.php

An easy and meaningful activity to participate in throughout Lent is to create a 40-day prayer chain.

Simply take construction paper and cut the paper into 40 strips (or 46 if you want to include Sundays,) about 1 inch by 8 inches, but that can vary a bit. (Just be sure your paper chain strips are wide enough to write on, and not too narrow that you can't read them, or too wide that they become giant, droopy paper ovals.)

Each day talk about someone or something you and your children would like to pray for and write it on one of the strips of paper. (One prayer request per paper strip.) You can guide the children to include both prayers of thanksgiving, and prayers requesting something. Then tape, glue, or staple the chains together. On Day 2 you will have 2 links on your chain; Day 3 there will be 3, and so on.) Every day until Easter they will see their prayer chain growing and growing! What a fun way to learn about praying for one another!



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](#)

