

Congregations reenergize with anniversary celebrations

by Marcia Hahn

Congregations of the Northeastern Iowa Synod have reasons to celebrate, and they are finding creative ways to do so within the parameters of the coronavirus pandemic. Nearly a dozen congregations have celebrated milestone anniversaries in the past few months to reminisce and reenergize, and Bishop Kevin Jones has joined many of those festivities.

“Celebrating congregational anniversaries has been a joy,” Jones says. “We celebrate these milestones together as a synod to be reminded of God’s faithfulness through the generations, and we are given hope for today and tomorrow.”

Founded and Forward in Faith

Our Savior’s, Osage

Members of Our Savior’s, Osage, weren’t sure if they would be able to celebrate the congregation’s 125th anniversary in 2021 due to the pandemic, so no funds were set aside. Early in the year, however, a few members came up with the theme “Founded and Forward in Faith,” which was printed on T-shirts to sell to raise funds for a possible celebration.

“The response was excellent,” says Cindy Krause, Our Savior’s senior pastor. “We ordered a banner and walked in our July 4 parade, and those two things kicked off our celebration.”



Jill Balsley directs the children’s choir during the October celebration service for the 125th anniversary of Our Savior’s, Osage.

From there, Krause wrote a series of trivia questions about the history of the congregation for members to answer out loud during worship services beginning in September. In addition, congregational leaders shared “Then and Now” PowerPoint presentations with worshipers about how Sunday school, worship services, music and choir, and other parts of church life have changed over the years.

Those weekly teasers culminated in a weekend celebration in October that included a time capsule, worship with special guests and a sit-down meal, and a history display. The capsule, which was buried during a candlelight Holden Evening Prayer service, included

letters, publications, photos, headlines and souvenirs related to what was happening in the life of the

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congregation and the community in 2021. Plans are for the capsule to be opened in 50 years.

“It is very interesting to write a letter to a congregation 50 years in the future when I’m not going to be on earth anymore,” Krause says.

The congregation invited pastors who had served at Our Savior’s, members who went on to become pastors, and Bishop Jones to join in the Sunday worship celebration. Pastor Roy Ott, who served Our Savior’s from 1994 to 2015, dressed up as Methuselah to give the children’s sermon. Afterward, the older children came up front to join the younger ones in a choir that numbered 80-plus children.

“We’re very fortunate to have a lot of children and a lot of young families in the congregation and it was wonderful to have the children all together in the choir,” Krause says.

Krause credits a lot of creative members for their work in gathering historical items for the time capsule, history display and his-

tory book. One member made a large sign for the front sanctuary area to remind people that the congregation is celebrating.

“Our hope was that this celebration would be something to energize the congregation, and I think it did,” Krause says.

Trinity at 150 — Created to Serve Trinity, Mason City

Outdoor spaces, technology upgrades and service projects enabled Trinity Lutheran in Mason City to celebrate its 150th anniversary in a variety of ways in the past year.

The “Trinity at 150” celebration officially kicked off in September 2020 with a Sunday afternoon car



Bishop Kevin Jones joins the congregation of Zion Jubilee, La Porte City, during their 160th anniversary celebration Dec. 5.

cruise through the church parking lot. The event marked the completion of a major church renovation project, promoted a new season of Sunday school, and set the tone for anniversary festivities for the coming year. Some 200 Trinity families and friends stopped at the various stations set up in the parking lot, reconnected with the pas-

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A procession of worshippers from Trinity Lutheran, Mason City, walk from the Palace Theater, where worship services took place for a number of years, to the new and current sanctuary building during a dedication service in May 1950.

God's faithful presence leads us

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I found myself with a long drive home after worshipping with two congregations in the synod. It had snowed the previous two nights and the curving, hilly roads were snow covered and slick in some places and clear and dry in others. I had to pay careful attention to the ever-changing road conditions so that I didn't end up in a ditch, or worse.

Every once in a while, I pried my eyes off the road for a second or two to catch a glimpse of the amazing beauty around me. The fresh snow had blanketed the fields and valleys that sparkled in the sun against a clear blue sky.

As I drove westward across the synod, the steep hills began to flatten, peaking at a lower frequency. The distance between towns grew longer and the sky grew larger. Yet, I dared not look across the landscape for long. Salted, melting snow created slush and puddling water that would grab at my wheels or be splashed across my windshield by oncoming traffic.

February will be the 24th month that we have been living with the COVID-19 virus and its variants. I find myself wanting to pick up my eyes and look toward the horizon; to appreciate the beauty and wonder that God is creating around me. I want to make plans for the summer without the threat of imminent change just days before it takes place. I want to make decisions about what is safest and healthiest for family, friends, and communities that won't be made obsolete by new discoveries or competing opinions.

It's a bit like driving on winter roads in northeast

"It's okay to slow down a bit and catch glimpses of the wonder and beauty around us."



Iowa. Stretches of icy roads and drifting snow are interrupted by small stretches of dry roads. We keep our eyes on what is immediately in front of us for our own safety and the safety of others. But every once in a while, we can look up at the beauty around us. When we do, we might notice the changing topography and find beauty there too. The trick, I discovered, is to slow down and not speed up when the road is clear and dry.

In my visits around the synod, I hear about the difficulty of the journey and see the beauty of Christ's presence. Fewer people in the sanctuary or volunteering for ministry can leave us stressed and anxious. And still, the Gospel is proclaimed in word and deed, sacraments are shared, prayers are lifted up, the hungry are fed, the grieving are comforted, and people participate in community, in person and online.

I invite you to join me in lament over this long pandemic winter and in thanks for God's faithful presence through it. It's okay to slow down a bit and catch glimpses of the wonder and beauty around us. God is leading us through this. God will lead us out.

— Bishop Kevin Jones

Alison Pettit to join synod staff



Alison Pettit will begin serving as administrative assistant for the Northeastern Iowa Synod on Feb. 21. She will

provide administrative assistance and support for synod ministries related to the roster, call process, candidacy, and committees connected to the Synod Council.

Alison currently serves as director of Faith Formation for Redeemer

Lutheran, Waverly. She has also been active in the synod serving as facilitator for the Hunger Network and as synod coordinator for the ELCA Youth Gathering.

Day of Renewal Returns

March 31, 2022

Bethlehem Lutheran, Cedar Falls

Rostered ministers are invited to attend the "Day of Renewal" Thursday, March 31, at Bethlehem Lutheran, Cedar Falls. The event will also be offered online.

The Day of Renewal offers time and space for rostered ministers to worship, learn and be together. This year's theme will be "In the Gory and in the Glory — God is With Us."

The event will be from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. This event is a gift for rostered ministers, so there is no cost to attend.

More information about the event and how to register will be available in the March issue of the *Star* newsletter and on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org.

Mission Support Intent Forms

Congregations are reminded to submit their Mission Support Intent Forms for 2022. The information provided through these forms is useful for the synod budgeting process.

Completed forms should be submitted to Michelle Van Riper at vanriperm@neiasynod.org or by mail to PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

To download the form, visit www.neiasynod.org/download-category/congregations.

2022 IRS MILEAGE RATE

The Internal Revenue Service 2022 optional standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating a vehicle for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes is 58.5 cents per mile, up two cents from the rate for 2021.

To learn more, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-issues-standard-mileage-rates-for-2022.

Lutheran Day on the Hill

March 10, 2022

Everyone is invited to join Lutheran Services in Iowa and the three Iowa synods of the ELCA for the 2022 Lutheran Day on the Hill Thursday, March 10.

This day is essential for amplifying the voices of those who are not heard, for seeking social justice, and for empowering people to exercise their right and responsibility to be part of the legislative process. Hear from legislators, pastors, policy experts, and LSI staff members about important issues that impact Iowans' health and wellbeing.

LSI will monitor the COVID situation to determine if an in-person event is viable. If not, the event will be virtual. Online registration opens Feb. 3 at <https://lsiowa.org/ldh>.



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Send news for the March 2022 issue to Marcia Hahn by Feb. 11.

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www.neiasynod.org



tors, and picked up treats and commemorative anniversary souvenirs.

Trinity members let the community know about its 150th anniversary by building a float for the North Iowa Band Festival Parade in May. Some 30 members, young and old, walked behind the giant birthday cake float wearing their anniversary T-shirts.

“It was a great way to let the community know about Trinity’s 150 years,” says Sharon Lindgren, co-chair of the Trinity anniversary committee.

May also brought the beginning of a monthly video series highlighting each of Trinity’s five core values — courageous mission and service, lifelong faith formation, authentic worship, radical hospitality and extraordinary generosity. The videos, which feature historical photos and narration, premiered during worship services and were posted online.

To emphasize Trinity’s anniversary theme of “created to serve,” the planning committee challenged

the congregation to raise \$15,000 and 150 hours of service to support an ELCA World Hunger project in Chile and Habitat for Humanity of North Central Iowa.

“We exceeded our goal by raising over \$20,000 and giving more than 150 volunteer hours to build a home for Habitat,” Lindgren says. “Pastor Dan Rift from ELCA World Hunger joined us in July for a church service and a meal, which helped move the donations upward.”

In August, more than 250 members and friends from the surrounding neighborhood enjoyed food and music at an anniversary concert and barbecue in the Trinity courtyard. Trinity’s year-long celebration culminated in October with a special weekend of worship services and a sit-down dinner, along with greetings from past pastors and a commemorative sermon by Bishop Jones, who served at Trinity for seven years. In addition, Trinity commissioned an anniversary hymn — “Radiating Christ” by Elaine Hagenberg — which premiered

throughout the weekend with performances by the Trinity Choir, bells and brass.

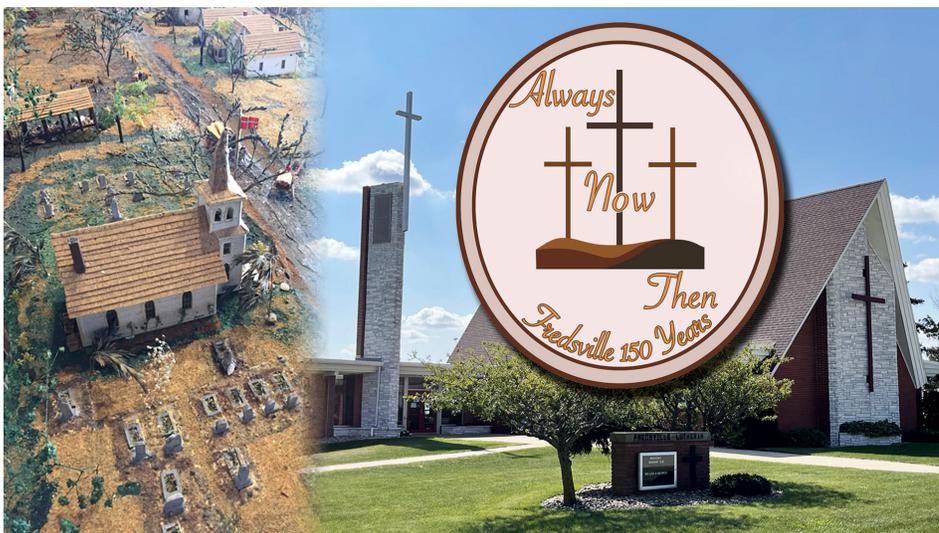
“It feels like we’ve been ‘celebrating’ or talking about the 150th Anniversary for four to five years, so it’s almost strange that the entire thing has come to a close after all this time,” says Pastor Dan Gerrietts.

Always, Now, Then — Fredsville 150 Years Fredsville, Cedar Falls

A group of Danish settlers established Fredsville Lutheran Church a few miles west of Cedar Falls in 1871, and that Danish heritage remains a big part of church life today. In fact, it is at the center of the congregation’s 150th anniversary celebration, which kicked off in September with a cemetery tribute to the congregation’s founding fathers and a luncheon featuring Danish sandwiches, salads and pastries. Longtime members shared memories of what it was like attending church before the current church building was built in 1961.

“It was very meaningful hearing their memories,” says Jean Loger, chair of the Anniversary Planning Committee.

A focus on Danish history continued in November with a display of banners from the National Danish Museum depicting the settling of Danish Lutherans in the Plains. Pastor Denny Hanson, who serves Nazareth Lutheran in Cedar Falls and is a local Danish historian,



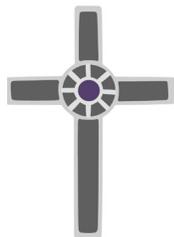
Fredsville Lutheran, Cedar Falls, celebrates 150 years with the theme “Always, Now, Then.”

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Two-day Synod Assembly set to meet in person

BEING TOGETHER

June 10-11, 2022
Wartburg College,
Waverly



The 2022 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly returns to Wartburg College in Waverly for a two-day event June 10-11. The Assembly will meet in person with the theme "Better Together," based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-13.

"After two years of forced separation due to the pandemic, it is time we gather as the Northeastern Iowa Synod," says Bishop Kevin Jones. "This assembly will be a time to focus on

the ways we are unique and connected as the body of Christ. Bringing the gifts and passions of each individual and congregation to the ministry of Christ in our synod makes us better together."

Details are still being finalized, but plans are for the assembly to start Friday evening with worship, orientation and planned social time for those who want to partake. Saturday will include synod business, workshops and closing worship.

Instead of having a keynote speaker, the synod staff will lead a "Getting to Know You" presentation. The Rev. Robin Brown, director of Congregational Generosity for the

ELCA will attend as the churchwide representative.

This year's synod offering will be designated for the Northeastern Iowa Fund for Leaders and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service. In addition, congregations are encouraged to bring "welcome boxes" for Afghan refugees being resettled in Iowa and elsewhere. Read more about the welcome kits below.

Watch for more information about registration, lodging, workshops and updates related to the Synod Assembly in the *Star* newsletter and on the Synod website., www.neiasynod.org.

Donate Welcome Boxes for Refugees

Lutheran Services in Iowa has begun welcoming the first families from Afghanistan to resettle in Iowa. Congregations, families, neighbors and others can help welcome these refugees by making LSI "welcome boxes." Four categories of boxes containing items for daily living can be assembled: personal care kit, bathroom kit, meal prep kit and meal service kit.

People can donate as many welcome boxes as they like. LSI asks that the kits contain only new items placed in clear plastic tubs.

They encourage people to include a hand-written, unsealed note in each box to welcome the family.

Congregations can bring assembled boxes to the 2022 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly June 10-11 at Wartburg College, Waverly. Donations are also being accepted at LSI office locations throughout the state. To arrange a drop off at an LSI office location, contact **Nancy.Strutzenberg@LSIowa.org**.

To learn more about LSI Resettlement Services, visit <https://lsiowa.org/resettlement-services>.

To download welcome box instructions, visit <https://neiasynod.org/2021/11/personal-care-kit>.



Liberian Lutheran Ministry Wish List

A community of Lutheran Liberian immigrants is worshipping at Trinity Lutheran in Waterloo. This ministry is seeking a variety of items, including:

- Bibles
- Educational materials for Sunday school and Bible study
- Non-touch COVID temperature detectors
- Drum set
- Sound system

Anyone with items to donate toward this ministry should contact the Rev. Dr. Joelle Colville-Hanson at the synod office, 319-352-1414.

Rural Ministry Conference to focus on climate change

March 6 - 8, 2022
Dubuque, Iowa

The 41st annual Rural Ministry Conference is set for March 6 - 8 in Dubuque with the theme "Creation Stewardship and Ministry in a Time of Climate Change." Hosted by Wartburg Theological Seminary, this ecumenical conference includes speakers, workshops, Bible study, worship and opportunities to network with others who are active in and concerned about rural ministry.

This conference will explore climate change's impacts in rural America and how climate and creation stewardship are addressed in the United States. Grounded in biblical and theological understandings, emphasis will be on practical ways for rural congregations, leaders, and communities to think about creation stewardship in a time of climate change.

The Rev. Melanie Mullen, who serves as the Episcopal Church's Director of Reconciliation, Justice & Creation Care, will present the keynote address. Matt Russell, executive director of the USDA Farm Service Agency in Iowa and a fifth generation Iowa farmer, will also present. The Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson, academic dean and professor at WTS, will lead the Bible study.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Empowering Rural Pastors to Lead Climate Action Community

Irene Demaris, acting director of Iowa Interfaith Power & Light, will take participants through the process of inviting diverse rural Iowans into dialogue about solutions to the climate crisis.

Adding Season of Creation to your Liturgical Calendar

The Rev. Jeff Schlesinger from Heart



of Illinois Lutheran Parish will describe "Season of Creation" and how his congregations have been edified by celebrating it.

Going Deeper with the Speaker

Mullen will lead this continued conversation from the plenary session to explore more deeply themes of creation justice.

Cultivating Hope Amidst a Groaning Creation

The Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen, director for Small Town and Rural Ministry at WTS, will engage participants in conversation about finding active hope in the face of the seemingly overwhelming challenge of global climate change.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Early bird registration, due Feb. 13, is \$180 per person or \$160 for two or more people. Standard registration is \$195 per person or \$175 for two or more people. There is a registration option for Monday only for \$70. All events will take place at the Best Western Plus Hotel in Dubuque.

To register online, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu/event/41st-annual-

[rural-ministry-conference](http://www.wartburgseminary.edu/event/41st-annual-rural-ministry-conference). Questions can be directed to Ann Fritschel at afritschel@wartburgseminary.edu or 563-589-0308.

OBITUARY

The Rev. Jeffrey Allen Blank died Jan. 11, 2022, at age 66. He was ordained Aug. 14, 1988. He served as pastor at North Crow River, Redeemer, and Grace, Cokato, Minn.; Christ Lutheran, Lancaster, Wis.; Trinity American, Waterloo; St. James, Allison; and St. John (Bennington), Waterloo. He retired on April 15, 2021. A service will take place sometime this summer at the family farm.

Jeff is survived by his wife, Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, and her three daughters. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, 2226 Coventry Ln, Cedar Falls, IA 50613. Memorials may be made to the Allison Airport and Unity Point Hospice.

For a complete obituary, go to: www.richardsonfuneralservice.com/obituaries/Jeffrey-Blank.

presented about “Happy vs. Holy Danes” at a potluck event.

Bishop Jones preached at the Nov. 14 worship service, which was followed by fellowship time with families decorating Danish cones and creating Danish heart basket ornaments.

Loger came up with the idea to honor immigrants who started the Fredsville Church by supporting today’s refugees. Noisy offerings throughout November and December raised \$700 for Lutheran Services in Iowa’s refugee and immigrant programs.

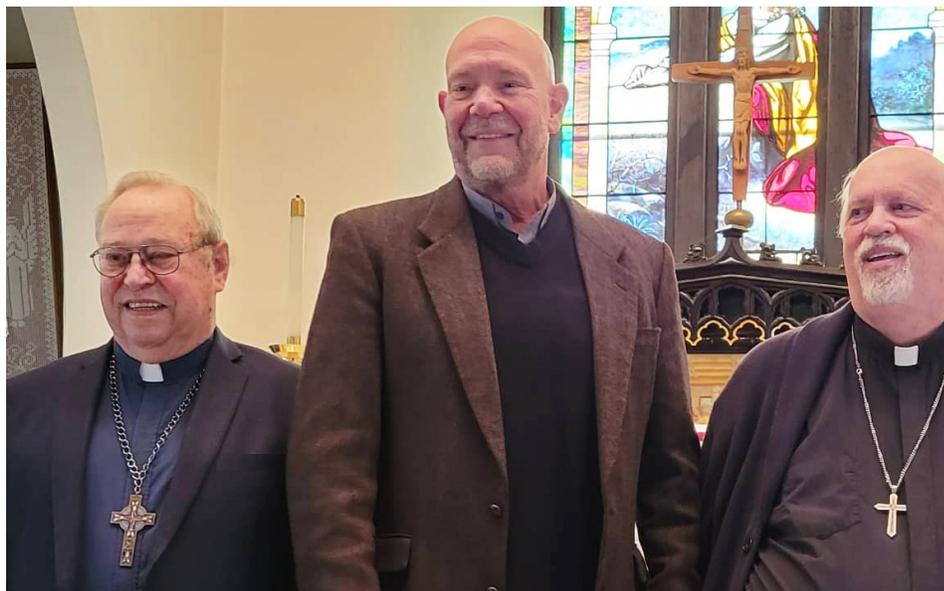
“The people who started our church were immigrants from other countries and now we were in a position to help refugees from other countries,” Loger explains. “The refugees come because they have to, not by choice like the early immigrants did.”

Fredsville’s anniversary events had a late start in 2021 due to the pandemic, but the congregation plans to continue celebrating in 2022. A memory book is in the works, the congregation’s “Danish Favorites” cookbook is already on its third printing, and a bus tour to Elk Horn to visit the Museum of Danish America is being planned. The final event will be a special church service and meal.

A Guiding Light for 100 Years

St. Paul, Guttenberg

St. Paul, Guttenberg, celebrated its 100th anniversary and church heritage during the All Saints Sunday worship service with the theme “A Guiding Light for 100 Years.”



Pastor Harold McMillin and Pastor Jay Ilten, who have both served at St. Paul, Guttenberg, returned for the congregation’s 100th anniversary celebration in November, with Pastor Mike Ashman (right), who currently serves St. Paul.

Everyone attending received souvenir flashlights and memory books.

Congregation members painted and spruced up the church building to prepare for the special worship service and meal. Bishop Jones preached, and confirmation and high school students spoke about the differences in the church today compared to 100 years ago.

The congregation recognized several pastors who had served in the

church in the past or their family members who were present. A St. Paul family that formed a musical group shared special music, which helped draw people from the whole community.

“It was very well attended, and people were very happy to see the former pastors of the church who attended,” says Pastor Mike Ashman.

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.



FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom,
9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 11-14 Youth Ministry Network Extravaganza, Onsite
and Online
- 13 Upper Iowa River Annual Conference, Good
Shepherd, Decorah, 2 p.m.
- 15 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 15 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting,
6:30 p.m.
- 20 Three River Annual Conference, Zion-St. John,
Sheffield, 2 p.m.
- 20 Shepherd of the Hills Annual Conference, 2 p.m.,
Online Event
- 20 Living Waters Annual Conference, 2 p.m. Online
Event

MARCH EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom,
9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 Youth Ministry Network, St. Peter, Greene, 10 a.m.
- 10 Lutheran Day on the Hill, Des Moines
- 12 Synodical Women's Organization, Zoom,
8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 15 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 19 Synod Council Meeting, Synod Office and Virtual,
9 a.m.-12 noon
- 31 Day of Renewal, Bethlehem, Cedar Falls

APRIL EVENTS

- 5 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 7 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom,
9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 7 Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul, Postville,
10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 15 Office Closed, Good Friday
- 19 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.

MAY EVENTS

- 3 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 5 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom,
9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 5-6 Youth Ministry Network Retreat, Ewalu
- 6 Candidacy Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 10 Registration Deadline for Northeastern Iowa
Synod Assembly
- 14 Synodical Women's Organization, Zoom,
8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 17 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 30 Office Closed, Memorial Day

INSTALLING

Rev. Maureen Howard, Bethany, Iowa Falls, pending

INTERVIEWING

Allison, St. James, Rev. Norman Bauer, contract interim
Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
Grundy Center, American
Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway
Parish)
Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross
Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim
Shell Rock, Faith
Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*
Waterloo, Our Savior's*
Waterloo, Zion
West Union, Zion, Rev. Duane Miller, interim

SELF-STUDY

Chester, United*
Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland, Rev. Waldemar Gies,
contract interim
Decorah, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge, Rev. Adam Starrett,
interim
Decorah, St. John's & Hauge*
Denver, St. Peter, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
Frederika, St. John*
Garnavillo, St. Peter & Clayton, Peace
Hawkeye, Trinity*
Hudson, St. Timothy, Rev. John White, contract interim
Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim*
Jewell, Bethesda
Leland, Our Savior and Garner, Faith (Miller)*
Mason City, Our Saviour's & St. Paul
Mason City, Trinity (staff)
Toeterville, St. Peter & Carpenter, Deer Creek
Waterloo, St. Ansgar, Rev. Erika Breddin, contract interim*
Waterloo, Trinity*
Waverly, St. Paul's, Rev. Mark Anderson, interim

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Liz Albertson, new call as Assistant to the Bishop for
Shared Ministry, Northeastern Iowa Synod
Rev. Nicole Woodley, new call as Chaplain, Ewing Funeral
Homes and Monument, Britt, Kanawha, Clarion,
Belmond and Dows

*Part-time Call

THANK YOU FOR GOING PAPERLESS

To receive an electronic version of the *Star* newsletter
instead of a paper version, send an email to hahnm@neiasynod.org
with the subject: Online Only.

FEBRUARY 2022

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| | | H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Patricia Nelson, Waverly, Iowa 1 | Doris Kampfe, Rockford, Ill. 2 | Rev. Scot McVey McCluskey, Clear Lake Rev. Bryan L. Robertson, Waukon 3 | Zion, Castalia 4 | Rev. Joyce D. Sandberg, Roseville, Minn. 5 |
| Grand View University, Des Moines 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 | Marion G. Krentz, Chicago, Ill. Rev. Linda Marlett, Cedar Falls 12 |
| Bethlehem, Cedar Falls 13 | Luther College, Decorah 14 | Rev. Roger McKinstry Waterloo Deacon Jean P. Rieniets, Dubuque 15 | Rev. Peter R. Kowitz, Decorah 16 | Middle East Peace Fredsville, Cedar Falls 17 | Rev. David L. Coffin, Elgin Rev. Robert Ericson, Cedar Falls Rev. Alan R. Schulz, Columbus, Ohio 18 | Rev. Margaret R. Yackel-Juleen, Elkader 19 |
| Wartburg College, Waverly 20 | Nazareth, Cedar Falls 21 | Lutheran Services in Iowa, Des Moines 22 | St. John American, Cedar Falls 23 | Lutheran Youth Organization 24 | St. Paul, Cedar Falls 25 | Rev. Dr. Steven L. Ullestad, Cedar Falls 26 |
| Mosaic, Omaha, Neb. 27 | Rev. Darrel W. Gerriets, Waverly Bishop Kevin T. Jones, Mason City 28 | | | | | |

Revitalizing Creation Care in the Synod

JOIN THE CARE FOR CREATION NETWORK

A resolution passed at the 2021 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly has renewed interest in reactivating the Care for Creation Network in the synod. One of the statements in the resolution rededicates the synod to care for creation, including reactivating the synod's dormant Care for Creation Network to further educate about care for creation and climate solutions in our synod. The resolution built on principles expressed in the ELCA's social policy statements, "Caring for Creation" (1993) and "Sufficient, Sustainable Livelihood" (1999), and ELCA Advocacy's "Carbon Pricing Basics" (2019).

In the past, the Care for Creation Network provided information and ideas to congregations and members through the synod newsletter, Synod Assembly workshops and resolutions. Water quality, biodiversity, native landscapes, climate change and sustainable agriculture were among the topics covered.

Names of interested individuals are now being gathered to work together on the Synod's Care for Creation Network. For more information, contact Donna Rasmussen, rdrasmussen@outlook.com or 563-735-5602. A Zoom meeting to brainstorm ideas for the network, which may also be useful for local Creation Care groups, will be held the end of February.

There are also Creation Care training webinars that can help in starting activities locally. In order to advance creation care in your congregation, it is highly beneficial to form a team/network/working group in your own congregation or in partnership with other congregations (e.g. a Green Team, Care for Creation Network, Creation Care Working Group, etc.). The February Zoom meeting may help to connect people interested in forming more local networks and provide information about upcoming training webinars.

— Donna Rasmussen
Hesper Lutheran Church, Decorah



Good News

February 2022

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

It is a new year! How are things going for you? We are busy getting ready for our gathering in June at St. John Lutheran Church in Nashua. I hope everyone has received the unit mailing that was emailed to your church secretary, pastor, or congregation leader. If not, please contact me or Jo Ann Brunsvold, our secretary and we will make sure you receive a copy of the registration forms for June. The forms are also available on our webpage (neiasynod.org/category/women-of-the-elca) We are seeking two nominations from each cluster, one as a SWO board members or officers and one willing to serve on the nominating committee. We will also be accepting nominations for voting members to the 2023 Triennial Convention. There is also an opportunity for an Educational Scholarship for women going back to school. If you have any ideas or suggestions on ways the Women of the ELCA can make an impact in our community/world, consider submitting a resolution calling the Women of the ELCA to action. Please keep us in your prayers as the SWO board members and cluster leaders participate in the national leadership event, February 17-19, 2022 via Zoom.

Blessings, Anna Jetson

LWR Ingathering Reports

From Waterloo area...Clusters C, E, F, G & H gathered items in New Hampton & Mason City on October 16 & 18.

New Hampton Totals

1584 Quilts; 114 Baby Care Kits; 715 School Kits; 76 Personal Care Kits; 6 Fabric Kits; 40 Blankets.

Mason City Totals

1210 Quilts; 234 Baby Care Kits; 1467 School Kits; 241 Personal Care Kits; 22 Fabric Kits 13 Blankets.

From Decorah...As in the past, our collection process took place on the first Saturday in November at Olson's Explosives' parking lot in Decorah. The truck was set up at 7:30 AM, our work crew was ready, and soon donations began arriving from Clusters D, B, & I. We also received very generous donations from St. Peter in Elma, IA., St Ansgar in Waterloo IA, and a student service organization from Luther College in Decorah. By 10:30 AM, a total of 896 boxes had been received and packed into the semi-truck for shipping. Thank you!

Decorah Totals

1723 Quilts; 959 Personal Care Kits; 2217 School Kits; 545 Baby Care Kits; 77 Fabric Kits; 12 Blankets.

Many thanks to Olson's Explosives, our crew of workers from Big Canoe Lutheran & Zion Lutheran of West Union and to all who spent countless hours working on various projects and preparing them for shipment. Your efforts do make a difference in so many ways. Beginning in May of 2022, Sandy Gavle & Dee Wyatt will be passing the torch to Sue Darling and Carol Maki from Big Canoe Lutheran in rural Decorah. Thank you for your cooperation and support over the last 5 1/2 years. It has been a pleasure to serve - we learned so much and met many amazing people.

Sue Darling
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TOTALS from all collections for Fall 2021

4526 Quilts; 893 Baby Care Kits; 4399 School Kits; 1976 Personal Care Kits; 105 Fabric Kits; 65 Blankets.

Thank you and all your awesome gals, Jesus loves you!

Lea Norlinger 641-494-7614, Mason City, IA

Lrprk0@gmail.com NE IA SWO board & LWR contact.

Introducing Vickie Grube

I am a new board member for the NE Iowa Women of the ELCA. I live just south of Cresco and a member at Immanuel Lutheran Church, 'the church with the clock.' My husband of 45 years and I, have three children and two grandchildren. We live in what used to be a one-room schoolhouse (third owners) where his mother taught school. Together we are up in the balcony each Sunday with my husband coordinator of IT services.

I am a Norman Borlaug Heritage board member and together with my husband we enjoy coordinating the NBHF Julenek-wheat project, the Win/Win Julenek what project which is about feeding the birds while feeding hungry people.

I am a retired registered nurse from Mayo Clinic and now work here in Howard County as a supplemental

nurse with our local hospice and home health care. My passion lies with hospice and now I also enjoy being a hospice volunteer. In the past I have served on various church boards, thoroughly enjoyed chaperoning numerous youth trips with the ELCA and working on various activities with social concerns. I am a certified Parish nurse with hopes of someday serving as a health advocate for our parishioners.

It is God's grace that guides and gives all of us strength as we journey through life helping others. The gift of a New Year is one of God's many blessings...I look forward to learning more about us together serving in the Northeast Iowa ELCA synod...and having fun doing it.

Discipleship Committee

Many are still asking, "What does it really mean to be a disciple of Christ?" The ribbons and paper from gifts are now in garbage bags. Gifts are being enjoyed and perhaps some have been put aside, the thrill gone. What kind of gifts were given to those less fortunate during the Christmas season? Maybe cookies given to shut-ins; extra special foods given to a food pantry; personal care items shared with nursing home residents; or perhaps treats sent to prisoners. So many things given to people usually remembered this **one time** of the year, Christmas. Do these tokens of kindness make us feel good? Definitely, but wouldn't be better to extend our generosity more than just at Christmas? The need is not only at Christmas. Christ's love needs to be felt all year. Discipleship is a 24-7 job. I challenge you to reach out throughout the year and show the light of Christ. 1 Peter 1:8, "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him. Though you do not now see Him, you believe in Him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory."

Submitted by Bonnie Dralle

Justice Committee

Justice. What does that word mean for you? One definition is "promoting a just society by challenging injustice and valuing diversity." Ok I get that (maybe), but it really doesn't say what justice would look like. This is my first write-up for the Justice Committee and I found myself struggling to write this. I once heard, "You can't start a conversation about justice anywhere but at the cross of Jesus." So, whether we are talking about the injustices in the world like human trafficking or talking about making health kits for crisis shelters, we need to keep Jesus in the conversation. Micah 6:8, "He has showed you, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." Take a moment to ask yourself "Have I acted justly today, have I shown mercy, and have I walked humbly with God?". That was a tough question for me today. One of my fellow board members reminded me once that even using reusable grocery bags is a simple way we can keep plastic out of landfills. That is one small thing most of us can do to help make our world cleaner and safer. I hope you will

join me in researching the area of justice in the ELCA. There is a section called Justice for Women on the elca.org website that is very informational.

Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold

Save a tree and get your Star by email! Email webadmin@neiasynod.org to request the change!

Stewardship Committee

Have you celebrated Bold Women Sunday? Consider doing something special this year, Feb 27, 2022 is Bold Women Sunday. Resources are available at womenoftheelca.org.

LSI Challenge Update

We are nearing the \$4000 mark, on our way to \$5000. We are almost there!!!! To contribute to the LSI Spiritual Life Challenge, please send donations directly to LSI, 106 16th St SW, PO Box 848, Waverly IA 50677. Please include Spiritual Life Challenge on the memo line. Thank you for all you have done for LSI and the Women of the ELCA.

CALENDAR

- Mar 12 SWO Board via Zoom, 8:30-noon
- May 14 SWO Board via Zoom, 8:30-noon
- Jun 17 SWO Board @ St John, Nashua
- Jun 18 NE IA SWO Gathering @ St John, Nashua
- Sept 18 2023 Triennial Convention & Gathering

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Articles are due by 1st of the preceding month e.g. April 1 for May issue)

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773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA



NE IA Women of the ELCA

Living Faith @



Dear Faith-Shapers,

February finds us in the depths of winter, with cold weather and short daytime hours. You and your child may be looking at the calendar to plan special activities for the month. There are opportunities that can be arranged to provide emotional, social, physical, and spiritual health and well-being. The goals that you set for the new year are either being accomplished or have fallen by the wayside.

There is a list of holidays and observances for the month that includes some interesting reasons to celebrate. I found it fascinating that almost every day includes a food item — no wonder we have trouble keeping ourselves fit and trim ... we get bombarded with temptations on every side.

With that in mind, here are some ideas for staying on a positive wave-length:

Seek understanding and listen before jumping to a conclusion — especially when dealing with other people.

Focus on the positives — keep a jar of notes to read when you find yourself slipping into negative thoughts.

Try some new or different activities than your usual routine.

Be Generous and practice encouragement — see the next column.



Encouragement Goes Far

We all can use encouragement at times, even some celebration when we meet a goal. Cheering on a friend or family member who wants to stick with a change is a wonderful way to show your support — possibly to be more physically active, to lose weight, to read more, to volunteer for a cause. Congratulate the small steps made and celebrate progress along the way.

Help it happen—don't push too hard—and stay positive with your comments and actions.



As I am writing this for the month of February, it's a frigid cold day in January and I'm still in the "new year" mode. A new year gives us the chance to catch up, to do what we missed out on, or didn't get done last year — which can be seen as quite a challenge especially in these last couple years with Covid-19 present. It can even be a challenge to think of new ideas to try someday. But, here in 2022, we can look with hope to having the best year ever!!!



HAVE hope
TRY new things
BE active
SEE the good
SAY "I Love You ... " more
CHALLENGE yourself
CHOOSE to be happy
EAT better
ENJOY today
FORGIVE more readily
READ more often
BECOME YOUR BEST YOU!!!

THIS YEAR...

In this season of Epiphany, we hear from John 1:5 "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that - and, therefore, we shine our light, we share the light of Christ we carry in our hearts in order to drive out the darkness of sadness, despair, and hopelessness we see in the world ...

- Smile more
- Stay away from negative conversations
- Compliment friends & family
- Send a "thinking of you" note
- Say a prayer for specific people
- Read an uplifting book
- Take time to relax and destress
- Read the Bible
- Recognize the light of others

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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White Apathy

A feeling of apathy, indifference, unconcern, detachment, dispassion, and disregard about racism by people with white privilege.

Voluntourism

The trend and business of tourism, where people with privilege from Western countries travel to do charity volunteer work in countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY

NETWORK Pr. Hillary Burns-Kite, Network Coordinator

"Black History Is More Than Slavery". This statement caught my attention, when I saw it printed on a t-shirt. It serves as walking billboard, displaying a thought provoking message.

Who do we most readily think of when we hear the topic "Black History"? Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Martin Luther King Jr.? These women and men are historic, memorable, and important threads in the fabric of our history; not just in this country, but across the globe. However Black History has so much more of an impact, in our society and culture, than just the area of civil rights.

When celebrating and educating on Black history, it is important to have a well-rounded representation of influential leaders and stars from various fields of work. Here are few resources to learn from and explore.

Young, Gifted, and Black: Meet 52 Black Heroes From Past and Present by Jamia Wilson, Illustrated by Andrea Pippins; (2018), Wide Eyed Editions

<https://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2020/february-web-only/black-theologians-authors-scholars-list-african-americans.html>

Jagger, K. ; Martz, G. ; Toback, F. ; Williams, R.R. (Producers). (2021-2022). High On The Hog: How African American Cuisine Transformed America [TV Series]. Netflix Studios; One Story Up Prod; Pilgrim Media Grp.