



Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

Bishop moves into retirement surprised and grateful

Bishop Steven Ullestad reflects on his 32-year ministry serving the Northeastern Iowa Synod

by Marcia Hahn

When Steven Ullestad was a junior at Wartburg College in Waverly, he had a plan for his life. He would graduate from college carrying debt, teach music until the debt was paid for, attend seminary, begin his first call and, after all that, marry his new girlfriend, Ruth.

“A lot of things in my life did not go according to my plan,” Ullestad says.

Ullestad married Ruth that same year, started seminary right after college, and went on to serve as Bishop of the Northeastern Iowa Synod for 28 years, the longest that any Bishop has served in the ELCA. Ullestad will retire at the end of August amid a year that no one could have predicted — the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person worship services suspended, and synod assembly postponed.

Ullestad helped shape the Northeastern Iowa Synod since its beginning in 1988, serving as assistant to the Bishop for four years before being elected Bishop in 1992. Throughout his ministry, he has nurtured a culture based on supporting pastors and deacons.

“The key to having a healthy synod has been to develop healthy leaders,” Ullestad says. “We have



Bishop Steven Ullestad

“I was so excited about the new church and the possibilities.”

— Bishop Steven Ullestad

tion build a new church and then move on to do it again in a new community. The family moved to Postville during Ullestad's junior year of high school, and from there he enrolled at Wartburg College to become a social worker. A voice teacher convinced him to switch his major to music. He soon met Ruth, who was also a music major at Wartburg, while on a choir tour to Denver, Colo.

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sought to accomplish that by focusing on particular values that include a love of the church and its mission, evangelical hearts, collegial work, Biblical stewardship and ethical leadership.”

A LIFE GROUNDED IN MINISTRY

Ullestad's calling to the synod has kept him rooted in place, but he grew up in a family on the move. His father was a Lutheran pastor who liked to help a congrega-

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"We sat next to each other on the bus, held hands and would go for walks before our concerts," Ullestad says.

They married on a Saturday during their junior year at Wartburg and left the following Monday for a five-week choir tour of Europe. "We stayed in a lot of homes, and some of the families thought we were brother and sister and put me in the basement and her on the second floor," Ullestad recalls.

Entering East Berlin through "Checkpoint Charlie" brought another challenge for the newlyweds. "We were supposed to line up alphabetically, and Ruth lined up next to me with her new name, but the East German soldiers had only her maiden name, Schuldts," Ullestad says. "The guards with the machine guns and big dogs shouted out Schuldts, and Ruth stepped forward and quietly says, 'Here I am.'"

Ullestad and Ruth both did student teaching in music in Cedar Falls, and Ruth went on to teach music for 28 years. Ullestad found his student teaching experience to be a rude awakening of what the reality of the classroom was compared to the theory. "I knew I needed to do something different, so I decided to look at seminaries," he says.

They first looked at two seminaries that were in the process of merging and visited the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago — once during rush hour and again during the worst snowstorm in the city's history. Discouraged, Ullestad followed up on a suggestion to visit Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque.



Newlyweds Steven and Ruth Ullestad take a break in the music lounge at Wartburg College.

"They had a Texas barbecue for their annual softball game between the faculty and students, with a hog roasting in the ground and Texas Lone Star beer," Ullestad says. "I decided I could go there."

Ullestad served his internship at nearby Garnavillo, Guttenberg and Clayton Center, and returned to seminary for his senior year with Ruth pregnant with their first child. With an over-supply of seminary students at the time, Ullestad began taking classes for a master's of sacred theology degree while waiting for an interview with a congregation. "I was the last in my class to have an interview," Ullestad says.

That interview resulted in a call to St. Timothy Lutheran in Hudson. Ullestad guided the congregation through a move across town to a new passive solar church during the recession of the 1980s and continued commuting to Dubuque for his seminary coursework. He served St.

Timothy for eight and a half years, leading up to the impending merger of three Lutheran denominations to form the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988.

The district office of the American Lutheran Church knew of Ullestad's leadership with youth ministry and his commitment to the work of the church, and called him to serve on the transition team to form a new synod for Northeastern Iowa.

"I told them no three times because I was overwhelmed with what I was doing and I couldn't imagine taking on one more thing, but finally I said yes," recalls Ullestad, who became chair for the transition team. "I was so excited about the new church and the possibilities. I loved the organizing principles that people would make the decisions and not a centralized place. Instead

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It is time to embrace the mystery

I don't appreciate the question at all.

"So, what do you think your legacy will be?"

Here is the answer.

I woke up every morning with the love of my life.
Nothing else has mattered.

If you want a list of ministry accomplishments,
OK. Checkout the website, newsletter articles and
minutes of the synod council.

But my legacy?

I woke up every morning with the love of my life.

Even though we may have been thousands of miles

away, our hearts and minds were
with each other.

"What lies in the future is a mystery to us
all." — Richard Carpenter

And so it is. I have spent much of
my life at least guessing what my
future may be. But no longer.

It is time to live in the mystery.

It is time to embrace the mystery, if mystery can be
embraced.

— Steven L. Ullestad
Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod



Bishop moves into retirement surprised and grateful
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of hierarchy, there would be three
equal expressions of partners
working together. We designed a
structure that reflected that."

Bishop David Brown, who served
as the synod's first bishop, asked
Ullestad to join his staff as an assis-
tant to the Bishop, beginning Jan.
1, 1988. The synod office opened
in Waverly with old doors laid out
on boxes to serve as desks, then
moved to a new office building in
1990. Two years later, Bishop David
Brown retired and Ullestad was
elected the new Bishop.

As part of the election process at
that time, five pastors nominated by
the Synod Call Committee traveled
as a group around the synod to give
presentations and answer questions.
At age 39, Ullestad was by far the
youngest nominee, and many of
his colleagues questioned if he had
enough experience to take on being
Bishop.

"That was an interesting experience
of learning from others," Ullestad
says. "I told them it's about the call.
We each have gifts, strengths and
vision, and that was true for this
calling, too. In fact, it may be an
advantage for a new church to have
new leadership that doesn't need to
do things the way it was before."

CONTROVERSIES AND CHALLENGES

The synod and churchwide organi-
zation have faced a range of con-
troversies and challenges over the
years, and Ullestad recalls how the
synod overcame some of them:

Church Structure Based on Partnerships

"Our first challenge was to get
into people's heads that we were
not going to tell them what to do
or give the answers, but we would
work with them to develop the
answers. When the congregations
do the work, they know why they
are together, and the parish works

better and longer. People weren't
used to having that much say, so it
was a major shift."

Ecumenical Agreements

To develop ecumenical dialogue and
agreements, Ullestad says the synod
had to overcome false information
that was being shared by people
from outside the synod. "They gave
a complete misrepresentation of the
ecumenical agreements, but we got
through it. Our synod has pretty
level-headed, thoughtful folks."

Human Sexuality Social Statement

In 2009, the ELCA Churchwide
Assembly adopted the "Human
Sexuality: Gift and Trust" social
statement, addressing a spectrum
of topics relevant to human sexual-
ity from a Lutheran perspective.
"The challenge was that pastors
had weeks of people telling them

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Synod Position Opening

Congratulations to Linda Hudgins, who has announced her plans to retire after serving more than 30 years as assistant to the Bishop-Administration. She has represented the Bishop in the call process and synod assemblies, and her attention to detail has provided care for this synod's congregations and rostered ministers. Notes of appreciation for Linda may be sent to the synod office.



Linda Hudgins

The Northeastern Iowa Synod has begun the process to fill the Assistant to the Bishop-Administration position. This position represents the Bishop in the call process and has primary responsibilities in oversight of the synod budget, office management, support staff coordination, assembly manager, communications, and constitution reviews.

Applications will be accepted through July 22, 2020. The position description and information can be downloaded at www.neiasynod.org.

COVID-19 Resources

The Disaster Response Network would like to remind rostered members of the COVID-19 resources that are available on the Synod's Disaster Response web page at www.neiasynod.org/disaster-response, including a document outlining questions that must be considered for the safety of the entire worshipping community, the state of Iowa COVID-19 dashboard, and guidance offered from the Centers for Disease Control.

A section on the CDC website dedicated to worshipping communities can be found at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html. This site offers general considerations and resources to help communities of faith discern how best to practice their beliefs while keeping their staff and congregations safe.

People can search for other news articles for guidance about reopening that has the endorsement of the scientific community.

Youth Events Rescheduled

Two annual events for youth have been postponed or rescheduled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WIYLDE

The Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event (WIYLDE) has been rescheduled for June 2021. This annual event helps youth delve deeper into their faith and learn skills to become leaders in the church. Watch for updates as plans for the 2021 event evolve.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LOCK-IN

Due to the policies the University of Northern Iowa is implementing in response to the pandemic — and the desire to keep students and the faith community safe — the annual Middle School Lock-in, usually held at UNI in the fall, has been postponed.

Current plans are to hold the event at a later date, potentially in the spring of 2021. Some 400 youth from the Iowa synods typically attend this event. Organizers will work to bring the youth together again when it is safe to do so.

Anyone with questions should contact Robin Kime, Community Engagement and Relations, ELCA Lutheran Campus Ministry at UNI, at robin@threehouse.org, or Pastor Mark Anderson, assistant to the Bishop, at andersonm@neiasynod.org.

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

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

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

Rev. Stephen Brackett – bracketts@neiasynod.org

Linda J. Hudgins – hudginsl@neiasynod.org

ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

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

Star Editor

Marcia Hahn – hahnmm@neiasynod.org

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Send news for the September 2020 issue to Marcia Hahn by Aug. 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 hahnmm@neiasynod.org.



www.neiasynod.org

Stewardship Program for the Pandemic

The traditional time for congregational stewardship programs is in the fall of the year. However, we don't know if congregations will be worshipping in-person this fall, either because they did not "open" or because they have closed again due to a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

So I have created a stewardship

program that could be used if congregations are worshipping in person or not. This program is only a suggestion — you may use it or not, modify it to fit your context, or use it as a springboard to create something much better.

You can download the stewardship program "You Are Not Alone — A Multi-Platform Stewardship

Program for a Congregation in Pandemic" on the synod's Generosity web page, www.neiasynod.org/ministries/generosity.

— *Pastor Mark A. Anderson*
Assistant to the Bishop



Fall Leadership Event Update

Networks invited to meet online and report

This year's Fall Leadership Event, originally set for Saturday, Sept. 19, in Waverly, will not take place due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Fall Leadership Event has been an opportunity for synod networks to meet in person to welcome new members and plan projects for the coming year. Those plans are then shared with the Synod Council, which meets that same afternoon.

This year, instead of meeting in person, synod networks are encouraged to meet via electronic means at their convenience and report back to the Synod Council by Nov. 1 through their Synod Council liaison or they can email directly to Syd Brinkmann, Synod Council vice president, at fourbrnk@netins.net.

The synod networks are Companion Synod-Hungary, Companion Synod-Namibia, Disaster Response, Home Life, Hunger, Lutheran Youth Orga-

WELCOME SEMINARY GRADUATES

Two candidates assigned to the Northeastern Iowa Synod have completed their seminary studies in the TEEM program through Wartburg Theological Seminary. TEEM — Theological Education for Emerging Ministries — is a three-year certificate program for candidates age 40 or older to take online classes and work in a congregation that will become the pastor's first call.

Clark Baldwin earned his TEEM certificate working with One in Faith Lutheran Parish, where he will serve as an associate pastor for St. John, Arlington; Hope (Littleport), Elkader; St. Sebald, Strawberry Point; and St.



Paul, Volga. Baldwin has a bachelor's degree in finance from St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minn. He serves as camp director for Ewalu Camp & Retreat Center, Strawberry Point. Baldwin is married with two children and two grandchildren.

John Sheahan

earned his TEEM certificate working with Bergen Lutheran, Roland, where he will serve as pastor. Sheahan has a master's degree from the University of Northern Iowa in education administration and previously served as middle school principal for Roland-Story Middle School. Sheahan is married with three children and four grandchildren.



nization, Men's Ministry, Generosity, AMMPARO Welcoming, and Racial Justice Advocacy. Committees that usually meet at the event include

the Compensation Committee and S.A.F.E. Ministry Team.

their interpretation of sexuality, but when I could get to them and answer their questions, they could see it would have a nominal effect on them. Congregations said 'okay' as long as they were not required to make a change they didn't want to make, and that has held true — a congregation decides if it will have a gay pastor or not.

"The other piece is there are a lot of people who have family members and friends who are gay or lesbian. Once we moved out of the intellectual and theological arguments and on to relationships, we got through it."

Declining Population

Ullestad believes that the synod's biggest challenge today is the declining population. The Northeastern Iowa Synod formed in 1988 with 198 congregations and nearly 97,000 baptized members. Today the synod has 69,000 baptized members and 146 congregations, including one synodically authorized worship community.

"When you look at what it was, is now and will be in 10 years, you realize the next Bishop is going to deal with something we kind of had to deal with around the edges. It's going to be very front and center. With fewer baptized members supporting each of those congregations, that has a direct impact on how to support the overall mission of the church."

MEMORIES AND HIGHLIGHTS

Nearly three decades serving the church he loves has brought Ullestad more joy and memories than he could have imagined.

Ullestad, often accompanied by Ruth, has logged thousands of miles flying and driving to meetings and events, including companion synod trips to Hungary and to Namibia with their children.

In 2006, Ullestad spoke with Pope Benedict XVI in Rome as part of an 18-member ELCA delegation visiting church leaders across Europe. Five years later, the Bishop and his wife received a personal invitation to attend a state dinner at the White House in honor of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. They met President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, Merkel and other dignitaries, and enjoyed an evening concert in the Rose Garden with music provided by James Taylor.

"When that invitation came to the office, I thought one of my buddies from college had a fancy printing press and sent it. We called some people to make sure the invitation was true."

Making those flights, however, didn't always come easy for Ullestad due to his intense fear of flying. He had just been nominated for the first bishop's election when Bishop Brown sent him to Washington D.C. for a meeting. Ullestad met with a counselor to prepare for the flight, but by the time his plane landed in Chicago, he was petrified.

"I knew I couldn't be a bishop and not fly. I called Ruth from Chicago and told her this has been a horrific experience; I have to withdraw from the election."

Due to overbooking, the airline bumped Ullestad to first class for the second leg of the trip, and the

added comforts and attention from the flight attendants helped him make it to D.C. His fears reemerged, however, when he boarded a small plane

for the return trip to Cedar Rapids. A raucous women's bowling team from Massachusetts boarded the plane, and when a member seated next to Ullestad learned he was a nervous assistant to a Bishop, she occupied him in conversation about anything but flying. "We talked about a lot of things and before I knew it we had landed," Ullestad says. "She broke me of my fear, and I was able to stay in the process for election."

Closer to home, Ullestad says he has always enjoyed being invited to help congregations celebrate their anniversaries. "People are so proud and get a sense of history that brought them to that place."

Another highlight has been attending confirmation festivals. "The sanctuaries are full of confirmation students who are engaged and listening and are very respectful that the Bishop came to see them. They all wanted their pictures taken with me, which became a fun part of the routine."

One of the most powerful parts of Ullestad's ministry has been to preside at ordinations for new



Steven Ullestad, assistant to the Bishop in 1988 for the newly formed Northeastern Iowa Synod.

ELCA ministers. Ullestad uses the occasion to silently renew his own promises to God. “I listen to the person make their commitment and promises for ordination and realize the experiences and challenges ahead of them, but they promise God, and God and the church promise them.”

As Bishop, Ullestad has devoted many hours serving on various boards, committees, and task forces for ELCA ministries and community organizations, including the ELCA Genetics Social Statement, Augsburg Fortress, Lutheran Services in Iowa, Wartburg College, and Unity Point Health – Allen Hospital, Waterloo.

“Most people don’t understand that dimension of the calling to build bridges with partnerships,” Ullestad says. “I tried to give a voice connected with congregations, that here is what is relevant and necessary.”

STRENGTHENING MINISTRIES

Ullestad’s leadership style relies on a gentle voice, open mind and sense of humor. His ministry has consistently emphasized open communication and supportive relationships among colleagues. He skillfully led the synod assemblies with humor and patience to give everyone a voice.

Ullestad is among the first to support new ideas in mission, such as when a pastor wanted to organize a haylift to Texas. He fosters ecumenical relationships to serve the broader community through partnerships, such as the Barnabas Uplift certified nursing assistant training program and the commu-



Bishop Steven and Ruth Ullestad attend a White House State Dinner in 2011 honoring German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

nity response to help immigrant families affected by the Postville, Iowa, raid in 2008.

Ullestad is devoted to helping youth become leaders in the church, including having a youth serve on the synod council and as congregational voting members for synod assemblies. He also extended a council seat to the president of the Synodical Women’s Organization.

Well before social media and digital technology became a vital part of ministry during the COVID-19 pandemic, Ullestad implemented an organizational restructure in 2011 for synod ministries to function as networks using online tools to stay connected. He also revamped the synod’s director for evangelical mission’s role to focus on social media as an evangelism tool to support congregations and conferences.

Ullestad has maintained a presence at both of his alma maters by serving as a guest instructor for Wartburg College and Wartburg Seminary. Last fall, he and Ruth bolstered support for seminary scholarships by pledging \$10,000 in matching gifts for the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders. Their generosity inspired others to give as well, raising \$125,000 for the scholarship fund.

Throughout his ministry, Ullestad’s goal has always been to create a culture that supports and appreciates rostered ministers. He recalls two pastors from different denominations who expressed their appreciation for that welcoming culture. The first, who became an ELCA pastor, heard the Bishop tell pastors at the Northeastern Iowa Synod Fall Conference that the church appreciates how much they do and that Jesus loves them — words the pastor said he had never heard someone in authority say before. Another pastor came to a Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly with his wife, who is a pastor in this synod. The pastor shared that at his denomination’s conventions everyone comes ready to argue and fight at the microphones with another; but here, everyone begins with worship together.

“We’re not here to fight, we are here to figure out what God wants us to do,” Ullestad says.

LOOKING AHEAD

The last couple years have brought some health challenges for both the Bishop and Ruth, including open

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Little Free Pantries bring blessings to Denver families

When you know you are blessed, the only response is to be a blessing to others.

A newlywed couple from St. Peter, Denver, felt blessed to be married last August, and they shared that feeling with others by building a pair of “blessing boxes” for the community. The boxes serve as Little Free Pantries, with one located at the St. Peter parking lot and the other located at the mobile home park on the outskirts of town.

Jennifer and Brad Becker learned during a premarital session that the St. Peter Mission Board was planning to put blessing boxes in the community. Brad, who is a finish carpenter, quickly volunteered to build them.

“They donated everything,” says Pastor Dawn Pederson. “The couple was blessed by making them.”

Jennifer was especially excited about the project. For the blessing, she placed a framed quote by Maya Angelou inside each pantry box: “When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed.”

The pantry at the mobile home park is filling a need that Pederson first heard about when she began her call at St. Peter last year. She had visited with the school guidance counselors

and learned they were concerned about food insecurity in the mobile home park.

“The park is located south of town off of Highway 63, which makes it a challenge for access to food,” Pederson says. “We are finding that the mobile home park blessing box is accessed a lot, and the box at the church serves as a backup as there is need.”

The St. Peter Mission Board restocks the boxes with food and personal care items as needed. “I anticipate we will provide some socks, gloves, mittens, and stocking caps in the winter months,” Pederson says.

Brad grew up in the St. Peter congregation and Jennifer grew up in the United Methodist Church, but she is eager to learn more about Lutheranism. They are both active in the church, and Jennifer had planned to serve as a St. Peter delegate to this year’s synod assembly before it was postponed.

“What a joy it is for me to be their pastor and to have them as part of the body of Christ here at St. Peter,” Pederson says.

Read more about the Little Free Pantry project at www.neiasynod.org/ministries/hunger.



Jennifer and Brad Becker



Little Free Pantry “blessing box” at the Denver mobile home park.

Fall Conference Update

Oct. 18-20, 2020

The Fall Theological Conference for rostered ministers and spouses is currently scheduled for Oct. 18-20 in Dubuque with Dr. Andrew Root of Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn., speaking about “Bonhoeffer as Pastor to Youth.”

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a

decision will be made in the coming weeks whether the conference will take place as an in-person event or as a virtual event.

Please save these dates and watch for updates through email, Facebook and the synod website, www.neiasynod.org.

EVENTS

JULY EVENTS

- 2 **Zoom Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 **Office Closed**, Independence Day

AUGUST EVENTS

- 6 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 14 **Meeting**, Candidacy Committee, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

SEPTEMBER EVENTS

- 3 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 **Meeting**, Youth Ministry Network, location TBD, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 7 **Office Closed**, Labor Day
- 13 **Event**, "God's work. Our hands." ELCA Day of Service
- 19 **Zoom Meeting**, Synod Council, 1-4 p.m.

OCTOBER EVENTS

- 1 **Meeting**, Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 1 **Meeting**, Youth Ministry Network, (location TBA), 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 8 **Event**, Colleague Leaders Gathering, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- 18-20 **Event**, Fall Theological Conference (location TBD)



Sunday, Sept. 13, 2020

The ELCA "God's work. Our hands." service day is still on for Sunday, Sept. 13.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, congregations are invited to explore ways to participate in their homes or from a safe distance. Congregations that can't participate on Sept. 13 may want to consider another day for service activities.

Visit [ELCA.org/DayOfService](https://www.elca.org/DayOfService) for planning resources and promotional items.

CONGREGATIONS

ORDAINING

Clark Baldwin, pending

INSTALLING

Rev. Micahel Ashman, St. John's and St. Paul, Guttenberg, pending
Rev. Becky Sogge, First, Northwood, pending
Rev. Peter Kowitz, Decorah, Decorah, pending
Rev. Kristen Briner Wipperman, St. Matthew and Luther Manor, Dubuque, pending
Rev. Katie Pals, Trinity, Belmond, pending

INTERVIEWING

Cresco, Immanuel, Rev. Charis Combs-Lay, contract
Decorah, Burr Oak and Hesper
Dubuque, St. Peter (staff)
Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
Independence, Immanuel (staff)
Mitchell, Faith; Nora Springs, St. Luke; Osage, Rock Creek and St. John (Cross Roads Lutheran Parish), (staff)
Nashua, St. John
Tripoli, Grace, Rev. Dennis Niezwaag, contract interim
Tripoli, St. John (Crane Creek)

SELF-STUDY

Calmar, Calmar and Decorah, Springfield
Charles City, Messiah
Chester, United
Clear Lake, Galilean
Decorah, First
Frederika, St. John, Rev. Megan Graves, interim
Hawkeye, Trinity
Jewell, Bethesda
La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee)
Mason City, St. Paul, Rev. Matthew Muters, contract
Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway Parish), Rev. Jim Scaife, contract interim
Story City, St. Petri, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
Sumner, St. Peter (Richfield) and Waucoma, St. John (Stapleton)
Waterloo, Our Savior's, Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver, contract interim
Waterloo, St. Ansgar
Waverly, LSI/Beloit (chaplain)
Wellsburg, St. Paul

AUGUST 2020						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Rev. John W. Gannett, Mason City 1
Rev. Bradley C. Hanson, Decorah 2	Bethany, Iowa Falls 3	Messiah, Janesville 4	Rev. Dr. Martin J. Lohrmann, Dubuque 5	Rev. Daniel R. Christensen, Lime Springs 6	American, Jesup 7	Rev. Charles R. Underwood, Clarksville 8
Zion (Jubilee), La Porte City 9	Bethesda, Jewell 10	Rev. Brian T. Julin-McCleary, Cedar Falls Rev. Randy S. Nielsen, Mason City Rev. Nancy Solomonson, Decorah 11	Bethany, Joice 12	Bethany, Kensett 13	Elk Creek, Kensett 14	Rev. James F. Harbaugh, Guttenberg 15
American, La Porte City 16	Middle East Peace Salem, Lake Mills 17	Winnebago, Lake Mills 18	Rev. Thomas C. Jones, Independence 19	Our Savior's, Lansing 20	Our Savior, Leland 21	St. Paul, Lime Springs 22
Rev. A. Dean Williams, West Des Moines 23	St. John, Luana 24	Bethlehem, Manly 25	St. Paul, Marble Rock 26	Our Saviour's, Mason City 27	St. James, Mason City 28	Rev. Sidney W. Bohls, Mason City 29
St. Paul, Mason City 30	Trinity, Mason City 31					

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heart surgery and aneurysm repairs for him, and for her full recovery from a stroke that occurred on their way to the National Youth Gathering in Texas. Their plans for retirement will focus on staying healthy and spending more time with their three children and seven grandchildren.

Ullestad says that as his commitments as Bishop have started winding down, he realizes he is ready to move on.

“I was not the only one who was surprised when I received this call to be Bishop, but I was most profoundly grateful. I have seen more of the church than what I realized was there and have found that the church is even deeper and broader in its outreach and commitment than I could have ever imagined. Now, I leave as I entered – surprised and grateful.”

The Synod Council will plan a retirement reception for Bishop Steven and Ruth Ullestad at a later date. In the meantime, cards of congratulations may be sent to: Bishop Steven Ullestad, Northeastern Iowa Synod, P.O. Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677.

OBITUARY

Rev. Dr. Edward W. Amend died on June 6, 2020, at the age of 89.

He was ordained on May 29, 1955. He served as pastor at Ascension Lutheran, Tulsa, Oklahoma. He then served as professor of religion and humanities in the Department of Philosophy and Religion at the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, until his retirement on Aug. 1, 1997.

Services will be held at a later date at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls, Iowa.

For the complete obituary, visit www.richardsonfuneralservice.com/obituaries/Edward-Amend/#!/Obituary.

He is survived by his wife and their three children. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to his wife, Dali Amend, 7703 University Ave., Apt 205, Cedar Falls, IA 50613-5048.

RACISM

a belief or doctrine that insignificant differences among the various human races determine cultural or individual achievement, usually involving the idea that one's own race is superior

ANTI-RACISM

a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily

Suggested Online Resources:

<https://elca.org/Our-Work/Publicly-Engaged-Church/Racial-Justice-Ministries>

<https://embracerace.org/resources/where-to-find-diverse-childrens-books>

Facebook.com/HiddenHeritage2000

Facebook.com/OfficialBerniceKing

RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK

Pr. Hillary Burns-Kite, Network Coordinator

What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God. -Micah 6:8

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. -Galatians 3:27

The synod Racial Justice Advocacy Network would like to offer some resources for individuals and congregations for educating ourselves around racism. Racism is a topic we **all** can be having conversations around; no matter the ethnic make-up of our congregations or communities. We hope the content of this insert will help spark conversations among families, congregations, friends and co-workers; to inspire more awareness of racism and work toward anti-racism.

ELCA Resources:

- * Explanation of the Declaration of the ELCA to People of African Decent – Adopted by the ELCA Church Council in 2019, <https://elca.org> ; for use as individuals and small discussion groups.
- * Strategy Toward Authentic Diversity Booklet – Adopted at the ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2019, <https://elca.org> ; for use by as congregation councils and small discussion groups.
- * Troubling the Waters for Healing of the Church – Copyright 2004, <https://elca.org> ; for large discussion groups.
- * Small Catechism with African Decent Reflections – Augsburg Fortress 2019; for use in adult and youth study groups
- * Dear Church: A Love Letter From A Black Preacher To The Whitest Denomination in the U.S. – Augsburg Fortress 2019; for use as individuals or adult and youth study groups

General Resources:

- * Luther's Small Catechism : An Exposition of the Christian Faith in Asian Contexts and Cultures – Christian World Prints, 2019; for use in adult and youth study groups
- * Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery – <https://dofdmenn.org> , 2014; for use in adult study groups
- * White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack by Peggy McIntosh – 1990; for use as individuals or in adult and youth study groups
- * The Color of Compromise by Jemar Tisby, 2019; for use as individuals or in adult and youth study groups
- * Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You by Jason Reynolds and Ibrham X. Kendi, 2020; for youth and young adults



WOMEN OF THE ELCA GATHERING
AUGUST 5-8, 2021 | PHOENIX
WELCATG.ORG

Good News

July-August
2020
Volume 33
Number 7

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

So, I am writing this on June 20, 2020—the day we would have had our SWO Gathering. Last night I did social time via Zoom, as I had realized that what I miss is the time we sit and chat after everything is all set up or the times in-between. I don't know about you, but I am tired of this roller coaster. I am tired of the finger pointing and the arguments over what I should or should not be doing. Who should or should not be working? Then bam, the focus changes, and now there is a new debate. Every day, there are people who die, every day, there are people who do things they shouldn't do. We cannot continue this way.

I have seen a lot of posts on social media about how because children were not spanked, they do not know how to behave. I disagree with that. Physical punishment that leaves marks on a child is not ok. Parents are able to discipline and teach children right from wrong without physical discipline. There are other forms of discipline that are just as, if not more effective, than what was done back when I was young. In my work, I work with families that are at risk. Too many times, the parents themselves don't know what structure and organization is or how beneficial it is to them. Most times they are just rebelling against their past. Children need structure. Adults need to learn how to problem solve and take responsibility for their own actions, or lack of action. We all need to be more loving and accepting of each other.

Back to the roller coaster of life: How are you keeping in communication with your world? Are you out and about? Or are you keeping it cautious? I hope you are all able to keep connections that feed your soul and keep you safe and secure.

God's Blessing, Anna J.

Discipleship Committee

Covid-19, what a challenge it has presented to all of the peoples of the world—negativity, depression and possibly death. But out of this darkness discipleship shines:

So many people sewing face masks for their local hospitals, family, friends and LWR; the volunteer nurses who joined hospital staff in hot spots of our nation; the long hours nurses and doctors are working to save as many lives as possible, including their own. Churches are inventing new ways of sharing God's word. We learned how important fellowship can be.

We have been forced to slow down and reexamine our priorities—eating meals together, working together in our homes, loving our children and grandchildren from afar.

As we work through this complicated situation, I pray we come back with a greater understanding and appreciation for each other—maybe show a little more kindness. *Submitted by LuAnn Brunes*

Justice Committee

Peace

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.
(John 14:27)

At the memorial service for George Floyd in Minneapolis, Rev. Al Sharpton delivered the eulogy. He said many people are asking for peace. Do they want "peace" or do they want "peace and quiet"? When our pastors give the benediction at the end of worship "The Lord bless you and keep you, the Lord's face shine upon you, and give you peace," what kind of peace is this referring to? When Jesus says that peacemakers are blessed and become children of God, what kind of peace is he speaking about?

The ELCA's social policy resolution,

CALENDAR

Aug. 1	Deadline for September <i>Good News</i>
Aug. 22	SWO Board Meeting 9–11, ZOOM
Sep. 1	Deadline for October <i>Good News</i>
Sep. 19	Cluster G Living Waters Fall Gathering TBA
Oct. 1	Deadline for November <i>Good News</i>
Nov. 1	Deadline for December <i>Good News</i>
Nov. 7	LWR Ingathering for Clusters CEH, St. Timothy's, Hudson
Nov. 9	LWR truck ingathering, 9–11 a.m., South Port Mall, Mason City

"Condemnation of White Supremacy and Racist Rhetoric," adopted by the 2019 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, states: "As persons called to love one another as God has loved us, we therefore proclaim our commitment to speak with one voice against racism and white supremacy. We stand with those who are targets of racist ideologies and actions." As church, together we must work to condemn white supremacy in all forms and recommit ourselves to confront and exorcise the sins of injustice, racism and white supremacy in church and society and within ourselves as individuals and households.

Peace is about action and not about quiet.
Submitted by Jen Larson

Stewardship Committee

Greetings all! In a normal year I would be reporting about the wonderful Convention that we just had, but this is not a normal year. Due to the pandemic we have had to postpone our convention until next year. Many of you have been asking if we were still accepting Convention offerings—the answer is YES! At our recent Board meeting (via Zoom) we decided that our offering this year would go 50% to the church-wide offering (as we have done every year) and the remaining 50% would be divided between our Synodical

obligations—LWR, LSI, Riverside Bible Camp, EWALU Bible Camp and Wartburg Seminary for a female theological student. Please use your Offering Form A to send in your offering. If you do not have one, these forms can be found at www.womenoftheelca.org under "Tools for Leaders, Stewardship Resources, Offerings". We ask that you print off copies for future use as the carbon copies are no longer available. Your offering checks should be made out to WELCA (with convention offering in the memo line) and mailed to me, Beverly Sheridan, 701 Serenity Drive, Decorah, IA 52101. Thank you for your support. Hopefully next year we will be able to meet in person. Stay healthy everyone. *Submitted by Bev Sheridan*

Just Love

With no COVID-19 vaccine on the horizon, Women of the ELCA's executive board voted to postpone the organization's convention and gathering until August 2021. The executive board met by video on April 25.

"We are postponing not canceling," said Linda Post Bushkofsky, executive director of Women of the ELCA.

The Eleventh Triennial Convention scheduled for July 14–16, 2020, in Phoenix, Arizona, is being rescheduled for August 3–5, 2021. And the 2020 "Just Love" Gathering, scheduled for July 16–19, 2020, is being rescheduled for August 5–8, 2021.

"We hope that everyone who is currently registered will come next year," Bushkofsky said. "And if they aren't able to come, they could gift their registration to someone else."

Staff will be working out final arrangements with the Phoenix businesses and communicating directly with all who are voting members-elect for the convention and who have registered for the Gathering. <https://www.womenoftheelca.org/new-triennial-event-page>

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Anna Jetson, President

952-240-9569 amjetson@yahoo.com

Jan Harbaugh, Vice President

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

JoAnn Brunsvold, Secretary

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

Beverly Sheridan, Treasurer

563-382-9025 sherida701@gmail.com

701 Serenity Drive

Decorah, IA 52101

NEIA Women of the ELCA Facebook page:

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

Good News

Editor Jan Harbaugh

P. O. Box 236, Guttenberg, IA 52052

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

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

Contact Women of the ELCA at:

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

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

8765 W. Higgins Road

Chicago, IL 60631-4189

NEIA Women of the ELCA website:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA



Bring Martin and the Small Catechism to the table this summer.

It was meant to be a primer to help equip parents to share the essence of the Christian faith at home around the dinner table. Now it has been broken down into short lessons that can be shared around the table or during any quiet time set aside for this purpose.

The resource booklet can be found at <http://wndsynod.org/martin-family-table/> along with videos that correspond with each lesson.

Why study the Ten Commandments?

All people, including kids, need rules. Rules help people know right from wrong. Rules help us feel cared for and safe, but more important is that the 10 Commandments are God's rules.

Kids need to understand that God gave us these rules because he loves us and wants us to be safe. Have some fun as you grow in faith and learn about God's rules together!

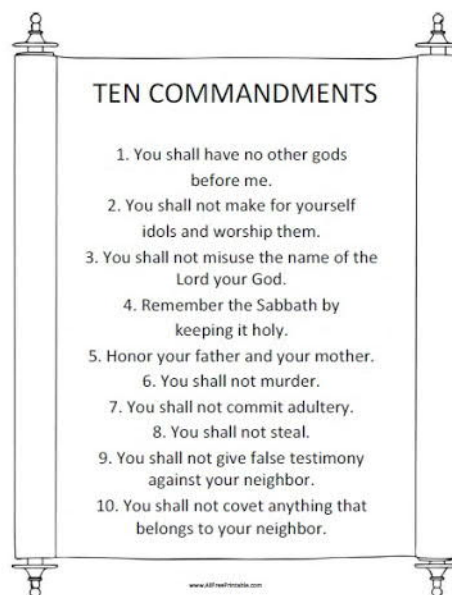
Deuteronomy 6: 5-7:

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your

soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am

commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children

and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, and when you lie down and when you rise."



Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our
Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed helps us learn about the
Trinity.

Thank you, God, for all you have created. For my
family and friends, for each person here, for the
creatures that crawl, and fly, and swim, for the
beauty of the world around us. Thank you for
taking care of us and for providing all we need.
And most of all thank you for loving us. Help us to
see how we can help take care of one another
and your creation and share your love with the
world. Amen.

Gracious God, We thank you for sending your
beloved son, Jesus, to show us your abundant
love for us. Thank you for the powerful way Jesus
loves us and forgives all our sins. Help us live as
Jesus, as children of God, free to share your love
with the world around us. Amen.

Gracious God, thank you for the variety of gifts
you give each person. Thank you for sending the
Holy Spirit to help us learn about you and how
much you love us. Help us find new ways to use
our gifts to share your love with our world each
and every day. Amen.

Learning the Lord's Prayer is fun and provides
understanding of each petition.

To add some music try YouTube and search on "Ten
Commandments songs", "Apostle's Creed songs for
children" and "The Lord's Prayer for kids" these will
bring up several videos that can be used to learn a
new song and assist with memorizing all three and
confirmation students can benefit from these as well.

Martin and the Family Table is a project of the Western North Dakota
Synod, supported in part by a grant from the ELCA focusing on
commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.
The resources included in the resource book were written by a team of
pastors and deacons from across our synod. Please feel free to reproduce
them for use in your home or congregation. May they be the basis for
memorable Table Talk in your family of faith.



This information is prepared for you by the
Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network
for use by families and local congregations.
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newsfeed. Our page is [Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](#)

