

Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation

Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach supports pastoral ministry

The ELCA chaplain brings spiritual care to patients at the University of Iowa Hospitals

by Marcia Hahn

Pastor Lynn Noel of St. Paul, Postville, knows firsthand how meaningful it can be to receive a visit from the Lutheran chaplain at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) in Iowa City. Noel was a returning patient at UIHC in the past year, and during each stay the Lutheran chaplain was there to support him and pray with him.

“She gave me comfort and peace by being there for surgery I was having done,” Noel says. “My wife couldn’t be there due to COVID restrictions, but Cindy was always there.”

Pastor Cindy Breed serves as the ELCA chaplain at UIHC, bringing comfort, reassurance and hope to patients and families. Her position is supported by Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach (LCO), a not-for-profit organization that provides funding for the ELCA chaplain presence at UIHC.

Thirty to 85 identified Lutherans are hospitalized daily at UIHC, and each morning Breed checks the list

to plan her visits. She starts with those who are in the intensive care unit and sees patients in all areas of the hospital. Breed may share communion with a patient who is fighting cancer, pray with a patient who is waiting for a heart transplant, baptize a newborn in the nursery, or sit with a family who has someone in surgery.

Breed says she tries to lift patients

“The LCO program depends wholeheartedly on individual gifts and congregational support.”

— Pastor Lynn Noel



Lynn Noel

up and bring a sense of humor and joy to them. Her message to patients and families is that there is always eternal hope in Jesus Christ, even when there isn’t hope in a cure.

“I see my job as reminding patients and family members of God’s love that is with them,” Breed says.

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Pastor Cindy Breed meets with a family member as part of her ministry serving as ELCA chaplain at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

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LCO IS AN EXTENSION OF PASTORAL MINISTRY

Breed follows up on pastors' requests to check on their parishioners in the hospital and to let those patients know that their pastor asked her to stop by. "That connection is really neat, especially when I say I am a Lutheran pastor, and they are Lutheran too," Breed says.

Her role has become even more vital in the past year since COVID-19 restrictions have limited the access that pastors and family members have to patients.

"The chaplain acts on the pastor's behalf, which has been especially helpful since COVID hit and we were not allowed to enter the hospital," says Noel, who serves as president of the LCO Board. "We appreciate her providing Christ's sacrament and being an extension of each congregation's ministry."

Breed also responds to requests from families to visit their family members in the hospital. "I can sense the loneliness in people who wish their whole family could come see them," Breed says. "I have been a friendly presence to visit them."

All of Breed's visits with patients are confidential, so she does not share any information from her visits with the pastor or family unless the patient gives her permission. She uses her knowledge of procedures at UIHC to serve as an advocate for patients, especially when family members can't be there. If she notices that a patient is experiencing distress or is unhappy about a part of their care, Breed will let a health care team member know

that something needs to be addressed or that a patient could use some counseling. If she senses that someone is struggling with end-of-life issues, Breed may suggest a palliative care consult to help sort out their wishes for the last part of their life. If pain is an issue, she will try to see if something can be done to help with physical pain.

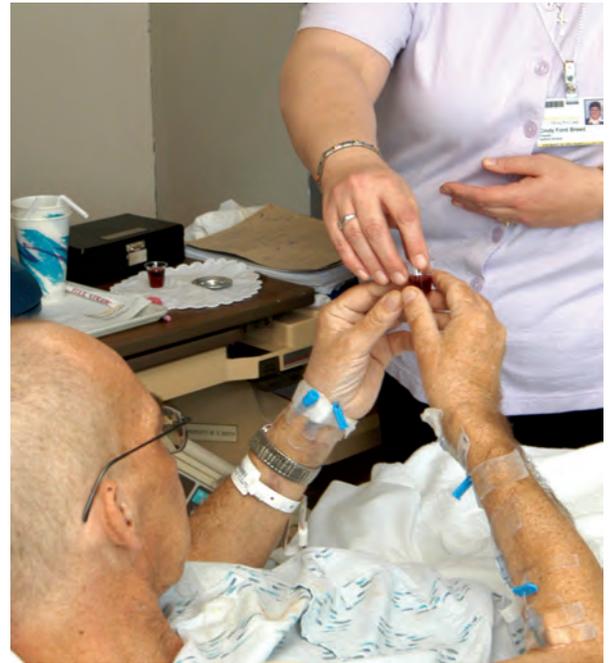
"Sometimes a simple visit can turn into realizing that someone is in crisis," Breed says.

When Breed is on call, her ministry reaches beyond Lutherans to serve all patients in the hospital. "If the person is not a Christian, I can still bring God's love by who I am and by my presence," she says. "I listen to their story and find out what's important to them. I can say a prayer without it sounding like a prayer."

CONGREGATIONS HELP FUND CHAPLAINCY OUTREACH

LCO serves Lutheran patients from all three ELCA synods in Iowa, the Northern Illinois Synod and other ELCA synods. In 2020, the Lutheran chaplain had contact with more than 600 patients, including 144 from the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

University Hospitals provides office space, telephone service and parking for the LCO chaplain, but does not provide salary or benefits. The LCO chaplain does not receive



Pastor Cindy Breed, ELCA Chaplain, shares communion with a patient at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

2020 LUTHERAN CHAPLAINCY OUTREACH STATISTICS

Pastoral Visits: 612
Contacts with Pastors: 143

Church Affiliation of Patients:

Evangelical Lutheran Church of America:

Southeastern Iowa Synod: 346

Northeastern Iowa Synod: 144

Western Iowa Synod: 22

Northern Illinois Synod: 16

Other ELCA Synods: 3

Other Lutheran Denominations: 56

Non-Lutheran Denominations: 18

Gifts from Northeastern Iowa Synod:

Congregations & Organizations: \$12,406

Individual Donors: \$2,185

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ELCA grant can help congregations meet new people

Easter season blessings to you as we continue to live into the meaning of Jesus' gift of new life for us in these times.



We are leaning into our vaccinated lives, daring to gather with loved ones, and with careful protocols in place, to resume in-person worship. Daffodils and robins are harbingers of the spring season upon us. We are much closer to the 'better days ahead' than we have been for many months, though still proceeding with caution.

What will our lives be like post-Covid? Or at least with COVID protections in place? What will our church look like? Can we see beyond the yearning for "everything like it used to be" and glimpse what God may in fact be calling us to in this time?

In his book, *Becoming A Hybrid Church*, David Daubert wrote: "... This was not God's first pandemic and we are not inventing the first post-pandemic church—just the most recent one. And because the church is ultimately not the church because of human effort but rather it is a work of God—whatever comes of this, the reign of God still lies boldly on the horizon." (p. 128)

Earlier in 2021 the ELCA launched "The Future Church" design. This may be a good time in the life of your ministry site to explore both a book like Daubert's, and the information at elca.org about Future Church's possibilities for congregations and synods. Future Church is not a response to

the time of pandemic as Daubert's book is, but a vision for who we can be, and who we are called to be going forward.

The Future Church design establishes a common purpose: "To activate each of us so that more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice and love." Future Church inspires us to be actively pursuing ways to open doors and opportunities for new, younger and more diverse members into our communities of faith in order to share Jesus, and to learn together of God's call to mission going forward.

What would this look like from where you sit? I encourage you to engage in a conversation in your faith community about this design after learning more about it at elca.org and in this *Living Lutheran* article: www.livinglutheran.org/2021/03/so-more-people-may-know-the-way-of-jesus.



OPEN DOORS GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Register by May 14 to apply.

Recently our Synod received word of a new way to help our congregations engage with the Future Church design. The "Open Doors" grant, which has been made available through the ELCA, is a new initiative to support ELCA congregations interested in meeting new people during this time of regathering in physical spaces. These grants range in amount and are open to all ELCA congregations. Here are some key points shared during a recent Conference of Bishops

Zoom meeting:

- A good idea should be able to come from anywhere, and while not every good idea needs money, no good idea should be held back due to a lack of seed money to get it started!
- There is no set of "best practices" for how to meet new people following a global pandemic. We are committed to learning together and from the experiences of congregations.

I encourage you to explore this idea of meeting new people—engaging people who are new, young, and diverse when possible—but open to all so that the story of Jesus and our church's mission in Jesus' name can be heard and shared ever more broadly.

If you have a new, specific and actionable idea for how your congregation might meet new people while regathering in community with COVID-19 pandemic considerations, apply by for a one-time grant of between \$1,500 – \$2,500. I look forward to seeing and hearing from you about your application as well.

Friday, May 14, 2021, is the deadline to register in ELCA GrantMaker in order to fill out an application. Visit elca.org/opendoors to learn more and to start the application process.

We have the promise of new life in this Easter season, and in this time of coming through the pandemic. I'm eager to see how God is calling us to new relationships and mission adventures going forward.

Christ is Risen, Indeed!

— *Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl*

Synod Assembly Updates and Resources

Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly Saturday, June 12

The Northeastern Iowa Synod's first virtual assembly is set for Saturday, June 12, and several resources are available to help voting members prepare.

The one-day assembly will include the election of a Bishop, along with recognitions, worship and prayers. The theme will be "Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation," with the Rev. Dr. Martin J. Lohrmann giving the keynote. Lori Fedyk, treasurer of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American, will serve as the churchwide representative and will preside over the election of the Bishop.

REGISTER BY MAY 10

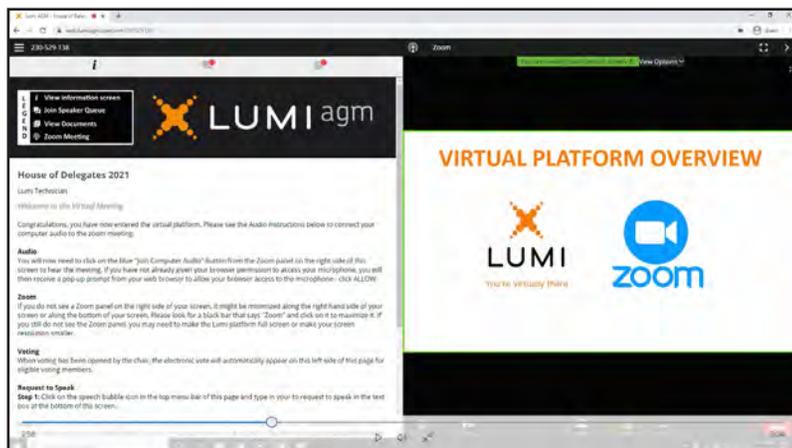
All voting members must register online by Monday, May 10. The registration fee is \$89 per voting member. Registrations will not be accepted after May 10. Visit the synod assembly web page to register. Each voting member will receive a follow-up letter with their log-in credentials for the assembly. They will also receive an email with pre-assembly reports and a direct link to log in to the virtual assembly.

Visitors will be able to view the assembly live on the synod's Facebook page—Northeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA—beginning at 8 a.m. on June 12. There is no charge or registration required to watch on Facebook.

VIDEO OVERVIEW OF VIRTUAL ASSEMBLY

The online synod assembly will use a technology platform provided by LUMI, a company that facilitates live webcasts for meetings with secure credentialing and voting systems. LUMI has provided a video to help voting members learn how to use the technology to vote, speak and access online documents during the assembly. Each voting member will need to use a desktop or laptop computer with a microphone and speaker to participate in the assembly. Cell phones and iPads will not be fully supported with this technology.

"We recommend that the video be included in upcoming conference meetings to help voting members understand how the technology will work," says Linda Hamilton, synod assembly manager. The LUMI video is available to view on the synod's website.



A video posted on the Synod Assembly web page gives an overview of the technology that voting members will use in the virtual Synod Assembly.

TEST YOUR TECH ON JUNE 10

Voting members will have an opportunity to try out the LUMI technology in a "Test Your Tech" online rehearsal set for Thursday, June 10. Voting members can join the rehearsal session any time between 5 and 7 p.m. to practice how to log in, view documents, vote and speak during the assembly. LUMI representatives will moderate and answer

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NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD

Interim Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl – degroot-nesdahla@neiasynod.org

Assistants to the Bishop

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

Rev. Steve Brackett – bracketts@neiasynod.org

ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

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

Star Editor

Marcia Hahn – hahnm@neiasynod.org

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Send news for the June 2021 issue to Marcia Hahn by May 10. We welcome story ideas related to the theme, "Celebrating Renewal: Johannes Bugenhagen, Parish Pastor of the Reformation."

Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated for use in synod congregations and organizations, with credit to the *Star* newsletter.

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www.neiasynod.org

money from any ELCA Synod. It is funded solely by gifts from congregations, individuals and organizations.

“I feel really blessed that for so many years people have said that we need this position and need to support it,” says Breed, who has served as the Lutheran chaplain since 1997.

Volunteers from the Southeastern Iowa Synod, Northeastern Iowa Synod and Northern Illinois Synod serve on the LCO Board, including Noel and Pastor Kyle Barton from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Board members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of two terms. Noel says that more board members are needed.

“The LCO program depends wholeheartedly on individual gifts and congregational support,” Noel says. “Our role is to help raise awareness about Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach and to help congregations be part of this partnership through financial gifts, prayers and support.”

Breed visits patients when their pastors can't be there, and that back-up support can save costs for congregations. The most recent issue of the LCO quarterly newsletter explains that each time a minister travels to Iowa City to visit a congregation member, it can cost the congregation \$100 to \$300 in travel costs, depending on distance. Noel suggests that congregations may want to consider redirecting some of that savings to support the Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach.

“If congregations from all three Iowa synods gave a hundred dollars each to LCO, that would go a long

way with helping our budget,” Noel says.

More than 200 individuals, congregations and organizations donated to LCO in 2020, including 50 congregations, individuals and women's groups from the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Congregations support LCO by including it as part of their budget, by hosting fund-raising events or special offerings, or by giving through endowment funds or other planned gifts.

Breed encourages pastors to let their parishioners know that a Lutheran chaplain is available at the University Hospital and to remind them to sign up to be listed as Lutheran when they are patients at the hospital so that the chaplain will know to visit them.

“Our Lutheran theology is very important and is part of our identity,” Noel says. “We all need God's love and grace, and that's what this Lutheran witness is about.”

Throughout her 24 years serving as a chaplain, Breed says she feels the patients and families have often been the ones ministering to her—by the way they talk about their faith, the way they show courage, and the way they know hope in their life.

“When someone gets ill, that is when their faith and all that they have learned and lived until now comes to fruition,” she says. “It's awesome when people show such deep faith and deep trust, and that has really blessed me.”

To learn more about Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach, visit www.lcoiowa.org.

SUPPORT LUTHERAN CHAPLAINCY AT UIHC

Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach is a 501c.3 organization whose goal is to ensure the continued and long-term presence of an ELCA chaplain at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. LCO is funded solely by gifts from congregations, individuals, and other organizations.

HOW TO SUPPORT LCO:

- Allocate funds through the congregational budget.
- Give through endowment gifts and memorials.
- Host a fund-raising event or special offering.
- Designate LCO for gifts available through Thrivent, Facebook, and other giving opportunities.
- Subscribe to the LCO newsletter.
- Invite the Lutheran chaplain to speak or preach to your congregation or groups.
- Encourage parishioners to sign up as Lutherans when hospitalized at UIHC.
- Contact the Lutheran chaplain to check on parishioners or family members at UIHC.
- Volunteer to serve on the LCO Board.
- Pray for patients and caregivers.
- Visit www.lcoiowa.org to donate online and to learn more.
- Send contributions to: Lutheran Chaplaincy Outreach, 123 E. Market St., Iowa City, Iowa 52245.

New Opportunities for Growth, Renewal and Stewardship

It is the best of times. It is the worst of times.

For those who have lost a loved one during this pandemic, lost a job, lost their healthcare, or had to dip into their retirement savings, these are the worst of times.

For others, these are the best of times. Corn, soybeans and lean pork are selling at the highest prices in a number of years. Bank earnings, the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500 Index are near record highs, and some economists are predicting impressive economic growth for the rest of year.

Just as the roaring 1920s followed the 1918 pandemic, the global availability of the vaccine is set to bring a roaring 2020s following this pandemic. What will a new age of prosperity mean for congregations and for the work of the global church? Without giving prayerful consideration of these reali-

ties, it might not mean anything.

As congregations reopen, now is the time to reopen our attention to stewardship. During the pandemic, congregations did whatever it took to stay in ministry with their members and beyond. As we come back together, it is time to give thanks for that ministry and to look ahead to what a post-pandemic church and post-pandemic stewardship can look like.

A coming-back-together celebration could include an offering for Lutheran World Relief for those who are not enjoying these economic blessings. Perhaps a major stewardship drive is needed to seek commitments to grow the congregation and the wider church's ministry in the years ahead. There are so many exciting opportunities ahead for growth and renewal, let's not let this chance slip by.

If you have questions or ideas, I'd love

to be in conversation with you.

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



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 this QR Code.



INSPIRED GIVING

Invest in Ministry Through a Donor-Advised Fund

A donor-advised fund is a flexible way for families to support ministries. With a donor-advised fund, you can annually recommend how your gift will be used to support ministry.

Creating a donor-advised fund can be a good opportunity to involve your family in giving so they are also able to experience the joy that giving brings. The fund can be created and funded while you are living or it can be funded after you and/or your spouse pass away.

You can create a donor advised fund with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through an irrevocable gift. You may receive an immediate income tax deduction for the gift.

The ELCA invests your gift, and each year you advise the ELCA about which ministries of the church you wish to receive distributions from the fund. Your donor-advised fund assets have the opportunity to grow in value, allowing you to give more

to the ministries you love over time.

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



MAY 2021 EVENTS

- 2 Shechem Conference Meeting, West Clermont, Clermont, 1 p.m.
- 2 Upper Iowa Conference Meeting, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 4 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (May 4, 11, 18, 25)
- 4 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 6 Youth Ministry Network Retreat, Ewalu, 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 6 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon
- 7 Candidacy Committee Meeting, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 10 Registration Deadline for 2021 Virtual Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
- 13 Assembly Planning, Zoom Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- 16 Riverside Conference Meeting, St. Paul, Hampton, 2 p.m.
- 20 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon
- 30 Three River Conference Meeting, TBA, 2 p.m.
- 31 Office Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE 2021 EVENTS

- 1 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (June 1, 8, 15, 22, 29)
- 3 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 3 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 3 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon
- 6 Synod Council, Zoom Meeting, 5-6:30 p.m.
- 10 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly "Test Your Tech" Online Rehearsal, 5-7 p.m.
- 12 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly, Virtual Event
- 14-15 Synod Office Closed
- 17 Rostered Clergy Lunch and Learn, Zoom, 12 Noon
- 19 Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization Convention, Location TBD

JULY 2021 EVENTS

- 1 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 1 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 5 Synod Office Closed, Independence Day
- 6 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (July 6, 13, 20, 27)
- 13 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.
- 23-25 WIYLDE (Wholly Iowa Leadership Discipling Event), Ewalu, Strawberry Point

AUGUST 2021 EVENTS

- 3 Women Clergy, Zoom Meeting, 1 p.m. Every Tuesday (Aug. 3, 10, 17, 24, 31)
- 5 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 5 Youth Ministry Network, Zoom Meeting, 10 a.m.
- 6 Candidacy Committee Meeting, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 10 Church Council Presidents, Zoom Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

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.

INSTALLING

Rev. Melinda McCluskey, Galilean, Clear Lake, May 23
 Rev. David Werges, Decorah, Burr Oak and Hesper, June 6
 Rev. Calvin P. Konop, St. Peter, Dubuque, pending

CALL EXTENDED

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

INTERVIEWING

Decorah, First
 Decorah, Luther College, college pastor
 Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
 Grundy Center, American
 Iowa Falls, Bethany, Rev. Darby Lawrence, interim
 Mitchell, Faith; Nora Springs, St. Luke; Osage, Rock Creek and St. John (Cross Roads Lutheran Parish), (staff)
 Ridgeway, Peace, Orleans and Madison (Ridgeway Parish), Rev. Jim Scaife, contract interim
 Story City, St. Petri, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
 Tripoli, Grace, Rev. Megan Graves, interim
 Waterloo, Our Savior's

SELF-STUDY

Allison, St. James
 Charles City, Messiah
 Chester, United
 Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland
 Dysart, Zion
 Frederika, St. John
 Hawkeye, Trinity
 Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim
 Jewell, Bethesda, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim
 Mason City, St. Paul, Rev. Matthew Muters, contract
 Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim
 Sumner, St. Peter (Richfield) and Waucoma, St. John (Stapleton)
 Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd
 Waterloo, St. Ansgar, Rev. Susan Weier, contract interim
 Waterloo, St. John (Bennington)
 Waterloo, Trinity
 Waterloo, Zion
 West Union, Zion, Rev. Duane Miller, interim

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Jeffrey Blank, retired
 Rev. Sidney Bohls, interim, St. James, Mason City

MAY 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						Rev. Paul J. Fohs, Deloit 1
Rev. Randall V. Baldwin, Lake Mills Rev. David Burling, Story City 2	Janice M. Kraabel, Decorah Rev. Mark A. Oehlert, Peosta 3	Good Samaritan Center, West Union 4	Eileen Delk, Welch, Minn. Rev. James M. Magelssen, Mason City Rev. Phillip E. Olson, Ossian 5	First, Decorah 6	Rev. Edwin A. Schick, Dubuque 7	Rev. Dale A. Halverson, Northfield, Minn. 8
St. Paul's Lutheran School, Waverly 9	Deacon Marianne J. Beck, Waverly 10	Evelyn R. Fitzgerald, Charles City 11	Glenwood, Decorah 12	Rev. Kevin G. Frey, New Hampton 13	Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, Ill. 14	Good Shepherd, Decorah 15
Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio 16	Middle East Peace Hauge, Decorah 17	Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque 18	Haldis Kaasa, Decorah 19	Hesper, Decorah 20	Highland, Decorah 21	Rev. Laura Gentry, Waukon Rev. Dennis W. Hanson, Cedar Falls 22
Rev. Nicole L. Woodley, Clarion 23	Rev. Gary L. Johnson, Cedar Falls Leota Lenning, Greensboro, N.C. 24	Luther College Congregation, Decorah 25	Rev. Russell G. Leeper, Charles City Rev. Elizabeth Retz, Waterloo Rev. John P. Sheahan, Roland 26	Rev. Joel L. Guttormson, Lake Mills Rev. Edgar M. Krentz, Chicago, Ill. 27	St. John's, Decorah 28	Washington Prairie, Decorah 29
St. John (Maxfield), Denver 30	St. Peter, Denver 31					

Synod Assembly Updates and Resources
 << Continued from page 4

questions. Registered voting members will receive an email with the link to join this session.

BISHOPS FORUM VIDEO

A video of the April 27 Bishops Forum is available on the synod assembly web page for viewing. The video features three retired bishops who answered questions during a live webcast and spoke about their experiences as bishops and the leadership qualities needed to serve as a bishop.

RESOURCES, FORMS & LIVE UPDATES

Check the synod assembly web page for resources and forms related to the assembly, including a general information sheet, guide to calling a

bishop, biographical information and withdrawal forms for nominees for Bishop, and the Resolutions Submittal Form. Resolutions must be submitted no later than 12 noon Friday, June 11, to the secretary of the synod.

Live updates and voting results during the assembly will be available on Facebook and Twitter, with the hashtag #NEIA21.

To register and to learn more, visit www.neiasynod.org/2021-synod-assembly.

Follow live updates on Facebook, www.facebook.com/neiasynod, and Twitter, <https://twitter.com/neiowasynodelca>.

MARK THESE SEPTEMBER DATES

Sunday, Sept. 12, 2021

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

Sunday, Sept. 20-21, 2021

Tri-Synodical Fall Conference at Lutheran Church of Hope, West Des Moines, and Live Online

Saturday, Sept. 25, 2021

Bishop Installation at Trinity Lutheran, Mason City



Good News

May 2021
Volume 34
Number 5

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

HOT OFF THE PRESSES!!!!!! This just in, we are going to offer a ½ day gathering on June 19 in Waverly. We are hopeful that you will see all the details soon and will join us, whether it is in person or virtually. We will be making the registration form available soon so that you can register and safely gather with us. We are keeping it simple sister (KISS)! Our plan is to have Bishop Andrea DeGroot-Nesdahl lead us in Bible Study to start our morning, then take care of some business and have Pastor Kyle Barton from LSI lead our closing worship. The plan is to be completed by 12:30, in time for a late lunch at your leisure. I hope all of you are as excited as I am to be starting to gather safely together. I know quite a few of us have gotten part or all of our vaccines. We have had many conversations and questions and concerns about should we or should we not gather in June. In the end as long as we are a “small” in person group (limited to about 50 people), we can also have as many who want to join us virtually. Maybe you are not ready to gather with that many people, but maybe you are willing to have your group gather at church to watch together or in the privacy of your home. We are asking that those that join us in person, wear a mask and social distance in the facility. And as always, there is the disclaimer, if the Covid-19 number rise, we may have to delay or do it all virtually.

Thank you for being so patient with us as we navigate the return to “normalcy”!

Blessings, Anna Jetson

LSI Challenge

As many of you already know, we are partnering with LSI to raise \$5000 for their Spiritual Life Challenge. To participate in the LSI Spiritual Life Challenge, please send donations directly to Lutheran Services in Iowa PO Box 848, 106 16th St SW, Waverly, IA 50677. Just add a note on the memo line or with your contribution stating it is for the LSI Spiritual Life Challenge.

Discipleship Committee

In the devotional book, Together with Jesus, by Richard E. Lauersdorf, he tells us “In England, on the base of a statue of Jesus with arms outstretched were the words “Come unto me.” After the war, an artist was hired to restore that statue (that had been) shattered by German bombs. But he couldn’t find Jesus’ hands. So he left the statue without them and changed the wording on the base to read, “Christ has no hands, but ours.”

As disciples of Jesus we are called to give of ourselves, to follow his examples of showing love and care for all. In our lives we have many opportunities to use our hands to show our love and care for others. We delight in living in the ways we have been shown to express our love. We do this when we provide food and clothing for those in need, share our time and possessions, participate in church services, Bible study, and activities that support the missions of our churches and organizations. How do we know different ways to show our love? Paul writes in Galatians 5:6, “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.” The core teaching of the Bible is God’s love for all and our call is to love one another.

One portion of the prayer in Return to the Lord, A Service of Repentance and Renewal, written by Pastor G. Kim and Diane Wills, reads, “God of our mothers and fathers, we thank you for those You have used to sow the seed of Your Word in our lives. We particularly remember this night, those who now rest in you. Strengthen us in our journey here on earth and use us, as instruments of your grace, to sow the seed of Your Word in the lives of those we meet along our paths.”

Many others in our lives have demonstrated how our hands can share the ways our discipleship is expressed through acts of kindness, compassion, understanding, and love. Thanks be to God.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

Justice Committee

“As our nation continues to struggle with questions of race, justice, and equality, our faith helps us to navigate these conversations with humility and deep concern for the wholeness and flourishing of all God’s children, for we are all made in God’s image.

It’s beyond time for tough conversations. What does it mean to bear the societal privilege of whiteness, especially if we have not lived what we consider to be privileged lives? How have systems and institutions in our society been structured to favor whiteness and to exclude or harm BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities?

How do we become actively anti-racist? How do we claim our part in the damage that has been done and then go forward to effect change? How does racism thrive even in our churches? And how will faith help lead us forward”? (Bills, Pr. Melissa. “Book Club.” *First Lutheran Church*, 4 Feb. 2021, www.firstlutherandecorah.org/bookclub/.)

The above words were the invitation to participate in book club discussions within my congregation, First Lutheran Church in Decorah. The books we read were challenging, they made us angry and used strong language. Two books that moved me the most were “The Hate U Give” a novel by Angie Thomas and “Dear Church: A Love Letter from a Black Preacher to the Whitest Denomination in the US” by ELCA pastor Lenny Duncan. What I found best about the books was that they showed me a perspective so very different from my own. The novel by Thomas made real to me the social statement “Black Lives Matter” and the decision by the 16 year old main character to not stay silent. Lenny Duncan’s book pointed out that some of our traditions within the Lutheran Church are not welcoming for BIPOC. Most memorable to me was when Duncan reports that as a seminarian, he was expected to wear a white robe with a hood. Duncan is a black man. We can do better.

Submitted by Jen Larson

Stewardship Committee & LWR

I don’t know if you’ve noticed, but things have been a bit different the past year. We so grateful for how flexible and resourceful this community has been during the pandemic. You’ve made changes to your quilting and kit making groups, and you’ve been doing your best amid the challenges and uncertainties of Ingatherings. I’d like to offer special thanks to a everyone who went above and beyond to make their fall 2020 Ingatherings possible and safe.

Your quilts and kits are needed more than ever. Right now, our inventory is almost gone. The

items we received from fall Ingatherings are already blessing our recipients. Meanwhile, war, poverty and disaster haven’t slowed just because there’s a pandemic. Quite the opposite, your work is so important, and we are so thankful that despite this different, difficult year, you continue to work diligently to create offerings of love for your neighbors in need.

We are looking forward to your Spring shipments.

Submitted by Lea Norlinger.

CALENDAR

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

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Anna Jetson, President

952-240-9569, amjetson@yahoo.com

Alice Greimann, Vice President

641-456-2973, algreimann@wbfrec.com

JoAnn Brunsvold, Secretary

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

Beverly Sheridan, Treasurer

563-382-9025, sherida701@gmail.com
701 Serenity Drive, Decorah, IA 52101

Checks payable to Women of the ELCA

Good News, Editor Diane Wills

641-425-8628, wills.dianes@gmail.com
1399 Beeds Lake Drive, Hampton IA 50441

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

Contact Women of the ELCA:

<http://www.womenoftheelca.org/>
773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Living Faith @



HAPPY SPRING!!! — it seems like with spring comes the normal “Iowa” weather! One day we have warm temperatures with sunshine and only a little wind. The next day finds us in hooded sweatshirts and covered with a blanket - mostly because the wind is blowing and it’s cloudy. Just walking outside can be a struggle if the wind is blowing at your face!! Yes, spring actually arrived in March, but the excitement extends on - at least for me. I really look forward to warmer weather so we can be outside more. Spring is the season of new beginnings - fresh buds bloom, animals awaken and the earth seems to come to life again. Farmers and gardeners plant their seeds and wait for the young sprouts to emerge from the ground. I especially like the idea of new beginnings. We can look forward to new beginnings everyday from God. God provides a place for you even when you see nothing but desert and wilderness. “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” *Isaiah 65:17*

Spring brings the birds back from the south where they stayed for the winter - robins are the birds most often associated with spring; however, hummingbirds and orioles are my favorites. I start putting out the feeders a few days before May 1st; then we wait for them as they start to arrive ... first a few at a time and then more - to remind me of all God’s new beginnings. Include with that the flowers that bloom in the spring and the world becomes all new for the year. It is truly a marvelous season - renewal of life!!

Student Pastor Sue Cira, TEEM



Coloring opportunity

Here is a picture to color. Flowers blooming with green leaves and grass - bees buzzing around ready to do their job. Pollination is essential for the continuation of the life of plants.

What kind of flowers do you see in the picture? What kind of flower is your favorite? What color flower is your favorite?

Spring is a time to take care of all the aspects of our wellbeing including Social, Emotional, Intellectual, Financial, Physical, and Vocational areas of our life. Exercise and taking care to be healthy are a way to help with living a faithful life. A prayer is offered here with some ideas for individuals, families, and congregations to encourage wellness through bicycles. Going on a bike ride is a great way to connect with each other through conversation, see God's beautiful creation, make memories, learn something, and get the body moving. Many areas in north Iowa offer bike trails that are safe and meander through breathtaking scenery. Blessings on the Journey!

Prayer for the bicycles and the riders:

Let us pray. God of play and transport, We are thrilled to be able to experience your world from the seat of our motorcycles and bicycles, from our skateboards and scooters and rollerblades. Keep those who ride mindful of cars and animals, rocks on the trails, and rounding corners. Keep those who drive aware of speedy bicycles, new riders wavering in their steadiness, and the tenderness of training wheels. Bless these wheels that they would move us from place to place safely. Bless the helmets that we wear that they would protect us if we fall and be a sign to those around us that we value the life you have given us. Be the wind at our back and the strength to push up a hill. Grant us safe travel throughout our days, may it be well with our souls, and guide us safely home each night.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Ideas for Home:

- Talk about bike safety. For help go to:
<https://icsw.nhtsa.gov/people/injury/pedbimot/bike/kidsandbikesafetyweb/>
- Go for a bike ride as a family. Talk about God's creation, about sunrises and sunsets, or how important it is to tend to our health by exercising.

Ideas for Congregation:

- Sponsor a bike rodeo - invite local law enforcement officers to teach about safety. Offer healthy snacks and treats. Have a blessing of the bicycles.
- Have an all congregation BRTTN ("Bike Ride Through the Neighborhood"). Invite those along the way to join you.
- Have a blessing and sending for those in your congregation that are attending "RAGBRI". If you are near the trail, offer the church building as a sanctuary.

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.

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