



New stewardship program aims to build generosity

by Marcia Hahn

Inform. Inspire. Ask. Thank.

Those four simple acts form the basis of a new stewardship program coming to the Northeastern Iowa Synod to guide interested congregations through their fall campaigns.

The “Building a Culture of Generosity” program will offer six live Zoom training events from August to November, along with templates, resources, videos and opportunities for one-on-one guidance from a professional fund-raising consultant.

“This is a great opportunity for congregations that have never done a campaign before, and for those that have, this program will help them think about stewardship in a new way,” said Pastor Liz Albertson, Assistant to the Bishop for Shared Ministry. “The consultants expect most congregations to increase revenue by 10 percent.”

GSB Fundraising, a firm that provides customized fundraising services for organizations and congregations, developed the building generosity program at the request of an ELCA bishop who was concerned about congregations being able to do effective stewardship following the pandemic. The ELCA churchwide organization has committed more than \$50,000 in grant money to underwrite the costs for congregations to participate in the program, and GSB will discount some of their costs so that more

congregations can participate.

The full cost of the program is \$450; however, the partnership between the ELCA, GSB and the synods brings the cost to \$250 for each congregation.

In turn, congregations are asked to share 10 percent of their increase in revenue with their synod for Mission Support.

“This isn’t just a stewardship program; it is also an evangelism program.”

— Rev. Mike Ward

According to the Rev. Mike Ward, a GSB partner and consultant, the answer to Mission Support is better revenue coming into the congregations. “If we can change the revenue trend, we will also change the Mission Support trend.”

STEPS TOWARD REVENUE GROWTH

In an introductory Zoom presentation to synod coordinators, Ward shared that participating congregations have achieved an average 10 percent growth rate in revenue.

“I’ve seen congregations who have



Liz Albertson



Mike Ward

been on the verge of not being able to fully pay their pastor come through the other side of this program in a more solid financial state.”

Ward explained that the program offers steps to help congregations build a culture of generosity. The process begins with storytelling about inspiring acts of generosity in the congregation and their out-

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comes. The live training sessions will also talk about strategic planning and congregation governance, infrastructure for a solid stewardship appeal, and the four basics of any stewardship campaign: inform, inspire, ask and thank.

“We dive deeply into each of those four pieces,” Ward explained. “Inspiration and asking are often the two most missed activities in a stewardship drive, so we really work at that and provide examples.”

The Building a Culture of Generosity program is a modified version of GSB’s larger program, “Stewardship for all Seasons,” which can cost \$4,000 per congregation. St. John, Nashua, and Grace, Tripoli, are currently working with the Stewardship for All Seasons program, thanks to funding provided through Wartburg Theological Seminary to support seminary graduates in their first year as pastors.

The Rev. Todd Burrichter of St. John and a council member began attending the Stewardship for all Seasons Zoom sessions in January with congregation leaders from across the country. The first two sessions focused on communication and storytelling. Burrichter says he learned how to assess his congregation’s online presence and communication with parishioners and discovered that the congregation did not have much of an online presence. He also learned that communication should focus more on sharing positive stories rather than asking for too many things of parishioners.

“As a result of that first Zoom, we have been making deliberate efforts

to reach out more via email and Facebook posts,” Burrichter said.

The next Zoom session focused on how to interview congregation members to learn



Todd Burrichter

their stories and share about the impact the congregation and their faith has on their lives. “It educates the pastor and stewardship teams to give them ideas and tools to have a successful stewardship campaign with the hope it will be an ongoing change in church culture,” Burrichter said.

Beyond the financial aspect, Burrichter said he plans to use faith stories that focus on the stewardship of time and talents to help congregation members recognize and use their own talents. “I want people to feel invested, motivated and empowered to use their talents and the freedoms given to them through the cross and the empty tomb to positively impact the community by participating in ministries of the church.”

According to Ward, the principles from both fund-raising programs can apply to volunteer development. “Every time we talk about money, you can insert volunteerism,” he said.

Ward explained that the Building a Culture of Generosity program emphasizes financial stewardship, but it is approached from a discipleship

standpoint. Biblically, it is grounded in the feeding of the 5,000 and Matthew 6:21, where Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

“This isn’t just a stewardship program; it is also an evangelism program,” Ward said.

FALL COHORT BEGINS IN AUGUST

Currently, 17 synods — including the Northeastern Iowa Synod — will participate in the fall cohort for the Building a Culture of Generosity program, with a goal of 20 to 25 congregations from each synod. Rostered ministers and stewardship leaders from the Northeastern Iowa Synod and Western Iowa Synod will attend live daytime Zoom sessions together starting in late August, with the Rev. Dr. Nathan Swenson Reinhold serving as their consultant and trainer. Videos summarizing the sessions will be available for those not able to attend live.

Each participating congregation will receive three copies of the book *Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity*, written by Ward and published by Fortress Press. In addition, congregations can request to meet one-on-one with their GSB consultant.

Ward recommends that the pastor and at least one lay member attend the six live sessions, but it doesn’t have to be the same lay person for each session. In addition, people can attend regional sessions offered in the evenings with congregations from six synods. Recordings of the

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Renewing Our Role as Stewards of God's Gifts

I saw the first tractors of the season out in the fields as I drove to the First Call Theological Education Gathering the last week of April. After the rains of the previous week, the verdant green color that pervades our state is appearing once again. The inevitable appearance of new life and growth in the fields and in our gathering caused me to think about God's call to us to be good stewards of all that we have been given.

Stewards of Creation: The story of creation in Genesis places us as overseers of the creation. In Deuteronomy there are numerous examples of ways to care for the land, water, and livestock where we live. We have become aware of the complexity and interconnected nature of all that exists, opening our care to debate. Balancing the disparate needs of neighbors and wildlife requires prayer and hard conversations. But this is the task that we have been given.

Stewardship of the Church: We are certainly called to care for one another, stewarding our time, treasure, and abilities for the sake of the neighbor. This includes par-

ticipating in the life of our congregation, our Synod, and the ELCA. Congregational Annual Meetings, along with synod, and churchwide assemblies, are where we come together to do this work. Between assemblies, the congregational, synod and churchwide councils are entrusted to see that ministry is faithfully carried out.

On June 10-11 the Northeastern Iowa Synod will gather in Assembly to steward the Church where we live. We will elect leaders to join the Synod Council, hear reports from ministry partners, learn in workshops, listen to one another, and build relationships that remind us that we are one body, the Body of Christ in the world today. Then, in August, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly will meet in Columbus, Ohio, to do this on a different scale.

If I'm honest, I don't relish the idea of spending a Friday evening and Saturday in meetings. I know there are people who love this kind of thing, but not me. Yet, I frequently come away from these assemblies feeling more connected to other parts of the church and more informed about why we do what we

do. I feel like I am better equipped to be the steward I am called to be in all parts of my life. I leave the assemblies



with the realization that I am not alone in the task of caring for the church or for the creation.

So, thank you for the faithful ways you steward creation and steward the church. Your prayers for farmers, ecologists, and policy makers, alongside your care of home, property, and pets are valuable tools in this work. Your prayers for the pastors, deacons, and lay leaders in your congregation, in our synod, and in the ELCA (and of course the whole Body of Christ regardless of denomination) are as valuable as the various ways you show up for worship, fellowship, and service in any of those places.

May the new life that is springing up around you this Easter season, bless you with new life within.

— Bishop Kevin Jones

New stewardship program aims to build generosity
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sessions will be available to view for 30 days following the live session.

Albertson says the program is designed for congregations that want to increase their revenue and are ready to begin a stewardship campaign. "There is an open invitation to all congregations; however, if a

congregation is in conflict or is not going to be able to dedicate time for a stewardship appeal this fall, they may want to wait for next year," she said.

Albertson plans to contact a number of congregations to see if they would like to participate,

but she encourages any interested congregation to reach out to her to learn more.

"This program has solid principles, a proven track record, accompaniment and coaching, and other con-

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Men are invited to the 'One Year to Live' retreat

Nov. 11-13, 2022
Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point

Men of all ages are invited to make plans for the next "One Year to Live" men's retreat, set for Nov. 11-13 at Ewalu Camp & Retreat Center, Strawberry Point.



This spiritual boot camp is an opportunity for men who yearn for real friendships and a closer relationship with Christ to band together to examine their life and priorities, and discover how God has equipped them to live. It is presented by Lutheran Men in Mission, in partnership with the Northeastern Iowa Synod and Camp Ewalu.

The retreat focuses on small group discussions and activities led by lay men who have attended previous OYTL retreats and rediscovered their own faith in Christ. Men who attend the 45-hour OYTL retreats leave with a new mission statement for life and a plan centered on how they would live their lives if they knew they had only one year to live.

This weekend retreat starts at 5:30 p.m. on Friday and ends at 3 p.m. Sunday. Those who register by Oct. 21 receive the discounted rate of \$175. Standard registration is due by Nov. 2 for \$200.

To download the brochure/registration form or register online, visit www.lutheranmeninmission.org/events/one-year-to-live.

God's work. Our hands.

Sunday, Sept. 11, 2022

Mark your calendar for Sunday, Sept. 11, when ELCA congregations join together for "God's work. Our hands." annual day of service. Visit ELCA.org/DayofService for updates and resources.



ELCA Youth Gathering to return to New Orleans

The ELCA has announced that the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering will take place in New Orleans, July 16-20. The Gathering brings together thousands of high-school age Lutherans from across the country and overseas for faith formation, worship, fellowship and service.



Earlier this year the ELCA announced that the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering had been canceled due to the ongoing pandemic, the recent COVID-19 surge and public health considerations.

New Orleans hosted two consecutive ELCA Youth Gatherings — in 2009 and 2012, with nearly 700 youth and adults from the Northeastern Iowa Synod attending. Service-learning projects during both events addressed the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina, and participants worked alongside residents to help in the long-term recovery efforts.

To learn more about the 2024 Gathering, visit www.elca.org/youthgathering.

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Send news for the June 2022 issue to Marcia Hahn by May 13.

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 hahn@neiasynod.org.



www.neiasynod.org

Register by May 15 for the Synod Assembly

BETTER TOGETHER

June 10-11, 2022

Wartburg College, Waverly

Registration for the 2022 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly is open through May 15.

The Assembly will meet June 10-11 at Wartburg College in Waverly with the theme, "Better Together," based on 1 Corinthians 12:12-13. Portions of the Assembly will be available to stream online.

Voting members and visitors can register online at www.neiasynod.org. Registration forms can also be downloaded and mailed in. Pre-assembly materials will be emailed to registered voting members in May. No registration is necessary to view the live-streamed portions of the Assembly.

Friday's activities begin at 7 p.m. with Bishop Kevin Jones preaching for the opening worship service. An orientation and social time with entertainment will follow. Saturday's schedule begins with morning prayer at 8:30 a.m., followed by plenary sessions, workshops, ministry exhibits, lunch and closing worship, concluding around 5 p.m.

Synod business during the plenary sessions will include reports, resolutions and elections for a synod vice president, synod council members, nominating committee and other committee members. Synod staff will lead a "Getting to Know You" session. The Rev. Robin Brown, director of Congregational Generosity for the ELCA, will attend as the churchwide representative and will preach at Saturday's closing worship service.



Jon Ailabouni

SPECIAL MUSIC

Several talented artists will share their musical gifts at the Synod Assembly. Tom and Betsy Kirby of Mason City will share acoustic music for Friday's worship service and social time. They are known by many as part of the group Betty and the Gents, which features unique covers and original songs.

Trumpeter, composer and educator Jon Ailabouni of Decorah will bring a touch of jazz to the closing worship service on Saturday. Ailabouni regularly serves as a guest worship director, bringing the jazz tradition into familiar hymns and liturgy in churches across the Midwest, Colorado, and Texas. Joining Ailabouni will be fellow musicians Dakota Andersen, cantor; Mike Conrad, piano; Alex Proshounin, bass; and Dave Tiede, drum set. Ailabouni will also present the workshop, "Jazz, Faith and Worship."

OFFERINGS & IN-KIND GIFTS

The Synod Assembly offering will support the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders to provide scholarships for seminarians from the Northeastern Iowa Synod, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service to support newly arrived refu-

Assembly Schedule

FRIDAY, JUNE 10

6:30-8 p.m.	Registration Check-In
7 p.m.	Worship Service <i>Bishop Kevin Jones preaching</i> Orientation
8 p.m.	Hospitality & Entertainment

SATURDAY, JUNE 11

7-8:15 a.m.	Breakfast - <i>for overnight guests only</i>
7:30 a.m.-3 p.m.	Registration Check-In
8:30 a.m.	Morning Prayer
9-10:30 a.m.	Plenary Session I
10:45-11:45 a.m.	Forums, Workshops
10:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.	Ministry Exhibits
11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m.	Lunch
1:30-2:30 p.m.	Forums, Workshops
2:45 p.m.	Plenary Session II
4-5 p.m.	Worship <i>Message from Pastor Robin Brown</i>

gees in America. Gift envelopes will be available at the synod assembly for checks. Donations can also be made online at neiasynod.org/give.

A truck will be parked in front of Neumann Auditorium to accept "welcome kits" for Lutheran Services in Iowa to support refugee families from Afghanistan and other areas as they resettle in Iowa. LSI lists 10 different types of kits that can be assembled, with highest needs currently for the "Meal Prep" and "Welcome to

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Ministry Formation Without Fear of Debt

It takes spiritual courage, mental discipline, and an openness to new experiences and learning to go through the training and formation to become an ELCA deacon or pastor.

One thing seminary students from the Northeastern Iowa Synod do not have to worry about is how they are going to pay for their education. Our candidates are free to fully engage their time of ministry formation without fear of huge seminary debt, thanks to generous gifts to the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, 16 seminarians received scholarships from the Northeastern Iowa Synod H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders. This fund has ensured that none of our seminarians from

the past six years have had tuition-based debt!

Gifts to the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders support seminary students in two ways: the endowment fund and immediate-use scholarships. The endowment fund provides an interest draw that will support seminarian scholarships for decades to come. In the 2021-2022 academic year, \$45,100 of endowment income was shared. For the 2022-2023 academic year, we have \$25,500 to distribute.

Many congregations and individual donors prefer to support the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders' immediate-use scholarships. These gifts are raised each year and are used right away. For the upcoming academic year (2022-2023), we have approximately \$68,500 to give

away! Our current fundraising goal is \$50,000, to be applied to the following school year.

I hope that as you think about how you are called to give in the next year, you might consider a gift to the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders. With your gifts, seminarians are freed to do the work of formation without concern for how they are going to pay for tuition. What a great gift to our future deacons and pastors!

— *Pastor Liz Albertson, Assistant to the Bishop for Shared Ministry*



Plan now for training to ensure children's safety

Now is a good time for congregations to plan to include boundaries training for staff and volunteers who will be working with children as part of your fall programming. The Northeastern Iowa Synod is committed to ensuring that safe places of worship, fellowship and Christian education are provided for everyone we serve. The synod offers "Safe Gatherings" as an option for ministry sites to complete this important training.

Safe Gatherings is an online abuse prevention program that screens and trains clergy, staff and volunteers to help prevent abuse of children, youth, and vulnerable adults in group settings. When employees and volunteers are trained to identify potential abusers, to recognize the signs of

abuse and to know how to handle reporting, they are better equipped to prevent abuse.

HOW IT WORKS

Upon successful completion of the Safe Gatherings application, background and reference checks, and the online training program, each applicant will receive documentation of approval valid for three years. Participants will have continued access to online training materials for a full year. The price per applicant \$45 for rostered ministers and youth worker staff, and \$37 for volunteers. The higher price for rostered ministers and youth workers covers a different level of background checks required for staff who may move several times during their career. The

price for all levels includes processing of two electronic references, national and county background checks, sex offender registry check, and the 2-hour online abuse prevention and boundary awareness training.

GET STARTED

To learn more and to get started with training, visit neiasynod.org/2021/06/s-a-f-e-ministry-team. Have questions? Call Pastor Steve at the synod office, 319-352-1414.

— *Pastor Steve Brackett, Assistant to the Bishop for Rostered Leadership*



MAY EVENTS

- 1 Early Bird Registration Deadline for Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
- 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 Church Council Presidents, Zoom, 6:30-8 p.m.
- 14 Synodical Women's Organization, Zoom, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 15 Registration Deadline for Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
- 17 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 19 Deans & Chaplains, Synod Office, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.
- 21 Synod Council Meeting, Synod Office, 9 a.m.
- 30 Office Closed, Memorial Day

JUNE EVENTS

- 2 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul's, Waverly, 10 a.m.
- 7 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 10-11 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly, Wartburg College, Waverly
- 13 Synod Office Closed
- 17 SWO Board, St. John, Nashua, 8 a.m.-1 p.m.
- 18 Synodical Women's Organization Gathering, St. John, Nashua & Online, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
- 21 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.

JULY EVENTS

- 4 Office Closed, Independence Day
- 5 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 7 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 16 Synod Council Meeting, Synod Office, 9 a.m.
- 19 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 24-27 Synod Youth Gathering "Boundless Gathering," St. Paul, Minn.

AUGUST EVENTS

- 2 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 4 Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 4 Candidacy Committee Meeting, Synod Office, 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
- 8-12 Churchwide Assembly, Columbus, Ohio
- 16 Women Clergy, Zoom, 1 p.m.

INSTALLING

Rev. Joel Becker, Faith, Shell Rock, May 15
 Rev. Daniel Hanson, Trinity, Mason City, May 28-29
 Evan Meester, St. John, Frederika, pending
 Rev. Nathan Wicks, Peace, Orleans, & Madison, Ridgeway (Ridgeway Parish), pending
 Rev. Joy Ridge Edeker, Bethesda, Jewell, pending

INTERVIEWING

Allison, St. James, Rev. Norman Bauer, contract interim
 Decorah, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim
 Denver, St. Peter, Rev. Scot McCluskey, interim
 Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)
 Hudson, St. Timothy
 Ryan, Peace and Dundee, St. John (Unity of the Cross Lutheran Parish), Rev. Rhea Evanson, contract interim
 Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd*
 Waterloo, Our Savior's, Pastor Lisa Kruse, contract synodically authorized minister*
 Waterloo, Zion

SELF-STUDY

Cedar Falls, Fredsville
 Chester, United
 Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland, Rev. Waldemar Gies, contract interim
 Decorah, St. John's & Hauge*
 Dubuque, St. John's
 Eldorado, St. Peter*
 Elkader, Bethany & Strawberry Point, Emanuel
 Garnavillo, St. Peter & Clayton, Peace
 Greene, St. Peter
 Hampton, St. Paul
 Hawkeye, Trinity*
 Hudson, St. Timothy, Rev. John White, contract interim
 Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim*
 Leland, Our Savior and Garner, Faith (Miller)*
 Mason City, Our Saviour's & St. Paul
 Sumner, St. John (Buck Creek) & Oran, St. Peter
 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. Clark Baldwin, transferred to Southeast Minnesota Synod, retired
 Rev. Duane Miller, transferred to Nebraska Synod
 Rev. Virginia Olson, retired

*Part-time Call

MAY 2022

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

OBITUARY

The Rev. Oliver E. Johnson died April 11, 2022, at the age of 97. He was ordained on June 22, 1953. He spent his professional life serving in parishes in Hoople and Grafton, N.D., and Cylinder, Clarion, McCallsburg, and Radcliffe, Iowa. He retired on Feb. 10, 1989. He went on to serve as an associate pastor at Redeemer Lutheran Church in Waverly, where he remained a member until his death.

A memorial service took place on April 19 at Redeemer. He is survived by his wife, Grace Johnson, and three children.

For a complete obituary, visit: www.kaisercorson.com/obituaries/Oliver-E-Johnson?obId=24548616#/obituaryInfo.

New stewardship program aims to build generosity
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gregations are learning with you, so you're not alone," Albertson said. "If you don't ask and don't talk about stewardship or money, people will give less. This is a way to open that

conversation in a safe way and hear from others who have done that."

To learn more, contact Albertson at 319-352-1414 or email albertsonl@neiasynod.org.

Register by May 15 for the Synod Assembly
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Iowa" kits. The kits do not have to be complete; any individual items will be accepted and used, including gift cards to grocery stores, Walmart, and Target. To learn more about the kits, visit neiasynod.org/2022/03/refugees-need-our-help.

SUNDAY VIRTUAL SERMON

A video sermon by Bishop Jones will

be available for congregations to use on Sunday, June 12, if they wish. The sermon, based on the Assembly theme "Better Together," is being offered to give rostered ministers and worship leaders a week of respite following the Synod Assembly.

To register online for the Assembly and for more updates, visit www.neiasynod.org.



Good News

May 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

Happy May! Seems like there are lots of things to celebrate this month: May Day, Mother's Day, Confirmation, Memorial Day, Baccalaureate, and Graduation. I don't know about you, but I enjoy getting together with family and friends to celebrate. I am looking forward to our gathering on June 18 at St. John Nashua. We will have opening worship with Bishop Kevin Jones preaching. We will have business to tend to: electing new officers, board members, nominating committee, triennial voting members, motions and resolutions submitted. We will be having interest sessions: Friends of the Family, Bishop Jones, Stretching with Karen, and a display area with a variety of projects that women of NE IA Synod do. We will be collecting our in-kind offering for Friends of the Family. The morning will end with a luncheon and door-prizes. There will be an option to zoom for those who want to participate virtually. Registration forms, nomination forms, and resolution forms are available at our website (www.neiasynod.org/women-of-the-elca). I look forward to seeing you in June!

Blessings, Anna Jetson

Gathering Information

Our Annual SWO Gathering will be on Saturday, June 18 @ St John Lutheran in Nashua, 8 am - 1 pm and a luncheon is included. Our theme is *One Body in Christ* and our theme verse is I Corinthians 12:27, "Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it." The focus will be on how each of us has a very important part in the function of the Body as a whole. The designated In Kind Offerings for June 18 Gathering are for Friends of the Family. They serve 27 counties in Northeast Iowa.

Items needed most:

Bath towels and washcloths, twin XL sheets
Notebooks, mop, broom
baby wipes and diapers (especially sizes 4 & 5)
baby formula and food
new bras, underwear and socks (any size)

toilet paper, paper towels
hand sanitizer, Clorox wipes
laundry soap, dish soap, all-purpose cleaner
shampoo, conditioner, body wash, lotion.

If you are not a shopper, we also accept cash or gift cards from major retailers. If you are an Amazon shopper they do have an Amazon Wish list that delivers it directly to them. (check out their website: [Domestic & Sexual Abuse Victim Advocacy | Friends of the Family \(fofia.org\)](http://Domestic&SexualAbuseVictimAdvocacy|FriendsOfTheFamily(fofia.org))) Thank you for your generosity!

Our monetary offerings will be split between the CW WELCA and Lutheran Disaster Response-Ukraine. See you in June!

Submitted by SWO Board

Discipleship Committee

I always wondered why the WELCA Good News Newsletter had articles about discipleship, justice, and stewardship. Now that I am on the board and writing some of the Discipleship articles I know! Discipleship, Justice, and Stewardship are areas of focus where we take action according to our WELCA Mission Statement. Read the Mission Statement again at the top of the newsletter. WELCA is about getting involved!

So what *is* discipleship and what *are* the articles all about? According to the dictionary, discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ or disciples are followers of Jesus who are intent on carrying out the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and the Great Command (Acts 1:8).

At WELCA, participants practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Whether it be making quilts and health and school kits for LWR, learning in Bible study, attending our annual gathering or assisting in worship, they grow in faith and share what they've learned with friends and neighbors.

Submitted by Lynda Akers

CALENDAR

May 7 LWR Ingathering @Olson's Explosives, Decorah
May 14 SWO Board @ St John, Nashua, 8:30-noon
Jun 17 SWO Board @ St John, Nashua, 8 am- 1 pm
Jun 18 NE IA SWO Gathering @ St John, Nashua
Oct 8 LWR Ingathering @Immanuel, Independence
Oct 10 LWR Ingathering @Southport Mall, Mason City
Nov 5 LWR Ingathering @Olson's Explosives, Decorah
Sept 18 2023 Triennial Convention & Gathering

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.

Justice Committee

As I think back to my article in January, I had challenged myself to learn more about the injustices in the world, in the United States, and in our own communities. Have I acted justly and loved mercy and shown mercy, as I walk humbly with God? (Micah 6:8) My answer is that I keep trying and that I keep searching for more information. The first Sunday in May has been recognized as Rachel's Day; it is to make us aware of the violence against children and the actions that address the violence. "Rachel's Day *Women boldly standing for children*" is an excellent resource from the Women of the ELCA website and it includes a litany of lament and hope for the day. While on the website, check out the Eleventh Triennial Convention area. The voting members adopted several memorials that included: engaging in education against school violence and mass shootings, supporting and participating in Thursdays in Black, encouraging the practice of using reusable bags, and continuing to fight human trafficking. My challenge to you is to be more like Rachel and do not be deterred, speak out, take action, and tell others of what you've learned about Rachel's Day.

Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold

Stewardship Committee

As we really practice "Stewardship" in our lives, our hearts and wills become generous children of God. Stewardship in our lives begins with hearing the Good News of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit working through the written words in our Bibles. As our hearts are led to study the words printed in our Bibles, every day we begin to unfold the true value of

living for others. Jesus' examples help mold us to become stronger and more loving family members. Sharing our time and talents are necessary for us to become the leaders that our Lord Jesus intended us to be. The practice of stewardship involves the ways we devote our time and energy every day in reverence to God. Being selfish goes against every idea Jesus every quoted. We grow in grace and love only by following His suggestions. Every blessing in our lives is another reason to keep sharing what we have with those around us. Our personal actions speak louder than any words. What have you done today for someone else? My challenge to you is find a new way to share your love with your friends and family this week. Make our Lord Jesus proud.

Submitted by Lea Norlinger

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

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Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA



NE IA Women of the ELCA- Check us out and give a like or post about your church's activities!

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

Living Faith @

May, 2022



Psalm 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

²He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;

³he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake.

⁴Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff —

they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

my whole life long.

When I was growing up, my family raised a small flock of sheep. It was just a hobby, and we only ever had 15 or so ewes (female sheep) and 1 ram (male sheep) at a time. But it meant that my siblings and I grew up getting to know sheep and helping to take care of lambs. My dad did all the shearing, but when lambs needed to be bottle fed, my siblings and I got to help! (This led to some pretty adorable photos, if I do say so myself!)

—Pastor Kristen Rod

The Bible talks a lot about sheep.

Psalm 23 compares God to a shepherd who takes care of the sheep.

In the gospels of Matthew and Luke, Jesus tells the parable of the lost sheep, where a farmer has 100 sheep and loses one, and he leaves the 99 to go search for the lost sheep, because God will stop at nothing to find us when we are lost.

In the gospel of John, chapter 10, Jesus talks about how he is the Good Shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep. He also talks about how his sheep know his voice, and when he calls to them, they follow him.

Every year, in the 4th Sunday in the season of Easter, the gospel reading comes from John 10, and we hear Jesus talk about how he is the Good Shepherd. This is one of my favorite days of the year, because I get to talk about the sheep I had growing up!

Children love animals. This means that there are lots of great ways to help kids make connections with the shepherd imagery in the Bible!



* Sheep and lamb stuffed animals are widely available. You

can give some to the children in your family and tell them about how we are like sheep and Jesus is our Good Shepherd. You could even hide one in your house and have the children look for it, just like the Good Shepherd leaves the 99 to look for the lost sheep.

*You can do crafts where you draw a sheep on a piece of paper or cardstock and then have your child glue cotton balls to the sheep drawing, to symbolize the woolly coat of the sheep. You could even draw or paint other images from Psalm 23 in the background, like a field of green grass and a pool of still water.

*You can visit a farm or a petting zoo, and talk about how Jesus takes care of us just like the farmers and zookeepers take care of the sheep.

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](#)

