

## Protect your ministry through Safe Gatherings training

by Marcia Hahn

With some 30 years' experience overseeing daycare and preschool programs — including the Tri-County Head Start program — Kim Young-Kent knows firsthand the practices needed to keep children safe. Throughout her career, Young-Kent has attended mandatory child safety training every three years, and she recently completed the “Safe Gatherings” training with staff members from Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls, where she serves as director for the Blessed Beginnings Childcare Ministry.

“This is my second year working in a faith-based setting, and the training was very good,” Young-Kent says. “It puts into place ideas and suggestions you can’t take for granted just because you are in a faith-based situation where people tend to be more trusting.”

Safe Gatherings is a comprehensive online abuse prevention program offered to congregations through an agreement with the Northeastern Iowa Synod. This program integrates abuse prevention and boundary awareness training, along with background checks and reference checks for church staff and volunteers who work directly with children, youth and vulnerable adults in group settings. Employees and volunteers learn how to identify potential abusers, recognize the signs of abuse and handle reporting, which means they are better equipped to help prevent abuse from happening.



Kim Young-Kent directs the Blessed Beginnings Child Care Ministry at Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls.

“Boundaries training is so important for congregations and needs to be a topic of discussion,” says Pastor Steve Brackett, assistant to the Bishop. “We recommend all volunteers and staff have boundaries training and always have at least two adults with children at all times.”

The Safe Gatherings online training includes nine modules that cover the different types of abuse and neglect, common behaviors of a child predator, safe practices to prevent abuse at the church and off-site, ways to respond to suspected

“The biggest takeaway from the training is to make sure that no adult is ever in a setting alone with a child or in a situation where something can be misconstrued.”

— Kim Young-Kent

abuse, and the effects that an abuse situation can have on the church and community. In addition, the training addresses abuse prevention for online ministries and teaching situations.

“The biggest takeaway from the training is to make sure that no adult is ever in a setting alone with

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a child or in a situation where something can be misconstrued,” Young-Kent says. “Always have another set of adult ears handy.

We deal one on one with kids all the time — feeding, diapering and moving them. Our policy is that doors are always open in the hallways. On field trips, we make sure we have sight and sound supervision of all of the children, and more than one adult with those kids.”

Congregations can use whatever resource they want to train their staff and volunteers, but Brackett recommends that someone from the congregation — usually the Sunday school superintendent or youth director — manage this aspect of ministry to make sure people follow through with the training. He adds that congregations also need to have a safety policy in place and review it annually.

“It is vital that someone manages that policy and makes sure that volunteers and staff are given boundaries training every three years,” Brackett says. “The online training is convenient for people to complete on their own time at home, but it is easy for people to put it off when they have other priorities. An advantage with the Safe Gatherings program is that they help keep track of who has had the training and they will send an email to the congregation when someone needs to renew their training.”



Steve Brackett

“The training is inexpensive compared to the costs to a congregation if someone were abused on church property.”

— Pastor Steve Brackett

## GROUP TRAINING IS AN OPTION

In his previous vocation as a school administrator, John Sheahan made sure that teachers and staff received the safe training



John Sheahan

and yearly updates required by law. As pastor for Bergen Lutheran at Roland, Sheahan coordinated a four-hour Safe Gatherings training

session at the church for staff and volunteers to complete together.

“Offering the group session made a lot of sense for me to ensure we are doing due diligence to protect our students and our staff,” Sheahan says. “We wanted to make sure the people who had the most contact with kids were doing things the way they should. The group session allowed for questions and some rich conversation about what we were hearing.”

Sheahan says that a lot of the training is common sense, but it is good for people who need to hear it — such as never leaving a Sunday school class unattended and making sure students are properly accompanied if they need to leave the classroom.

“You don’t want to take things for

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## 10 ESSENTIALS TO PREVENT SEXUAL ABUSE

Church Mutual Insurance Company, the leading insurer of religious organizations of all denominations, offers a variety of resources regarding sexual abuse prevention and safety in the church. Here are 10 essentials of sexual abuse prevention for organizations:

1. Provide training.
2. Establish sensible policies and procedures.
3. Perform criminal background checks.
4. Screen workers and volunteers.
5. Maintain appropriate supervision levels

with children — at least two adults present when working with minors.

6. Supervise the staff.
7. Establish digital and online behavior guidelines.
8. Understand mandatory reporting obligations.
9. Establish an abuse response process.
10. Provide monitoring and oversight of your sexual abuse prevention program.

For more safety resources, visit [www.church-mutual.com/98/Safety-Resources](http://www.church-mutual.com/98/Safety-Resources).

## Building on our Strengths

At a recent Zoom meeting with congregational presidents, I asked those attending to introduce themselves and share something good that is happening in their congregation. By the end of the introductions, I was filled with joy by what was being shared. While the rest of our agenda was talking about the places their congregation was experiencing anxiety and worry, beginning our time with the ways we are blessed shaped our conversation in positive ways.

That meeting has ignited my imagination around the ways we tend to function in community. When problems arise, they capture our thoughts and our energy. We rally to “fix” the issues before they can cause more anxiety. We spend a lot of time in councils and committees seeking solutions to problems that often end up feeling like a patch, but not a long-term solution.

I’ve been wondering what might happen if we spend more time building on the positive things we see happening in our congregations. Did you have good turnout for the God’s Work Our Hands event? Why not schedule another, similar event at a different time of the year? Is your VBS a yearly success? What would it look like to do something similar once a month in place of weekly Sunday School? Is a community group using space in your church to bless people in your neighborhood? What if you opened your doors to more groups?

In the gospels, the disciples were faced with angry and resistant listeners when they went out to preach. Jesus counseled them to shake the dust from their feet (Luke 9) and to refrain from casting pearls before

“Building on our strengths is a way of paying attention to where the Holy Spirit is active in our midst.”



swine (Matthew 7). Jesus taught the disciples to focus on those who were captured by his message and to not focus on those who were against it — a lesson that they took with them into the world after his ascension.

Building on our strengths is a way of paying attention to where the Holy Spirit is active in our midst. We still need to address the problems and issues that arise, but what if 75 percent of our time in councils and committees is spent on our strengths and only 25 percent on our problems?

I have been wondering what it would be like to begin all our synod meet-

ings focusing on the good things happening in our congregations. Where is God active and at work among us? How can we be more aligned with that work? How can we better use our resources (time, energy, finances) in these places and these ministries?

Lord, open our eyes and hearts to the places in our midst, both new and old, that you are at work bringing your grace and love to those in need. Amen

—Bishop Kevin Jones

### Leadership Discussions at the Fall Conference



More than 60 rostered ministers and collaborative learning students from the Northeastern Iowa Synod learn about courageous and resilient leadership at the Fall Theological Conference in October. The Rev. Sarah Ciavarri led six sessions of the “Dare to Lead” program via Zoom, rather than in person, due to contracting COVID. The conference included opportunities for those attending to share about their own leadership experiences.

# Volunteer Opportunity in Hungary

The Northeastern Iowa Synod and its companion synod, the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Hungary, invite people from Northeastern Iowa to consider volunteering in Hungary to help teachers and students practice their English skills.

This volunteer opportunity is from February to April 2023. Housing would be provided, and volunteers would pay for their travel and daily living expenses. Since this volunteer placement is for less than 90 days, visas would not be needed.

Volunteers help teachers by listening to children and youth in classroom settings practice speaking in English. Volunteers may also help adults practice in the school setting. Schools may be located in a village or in a neighborhood in Budapest. Volunteers would be able to use the very fine public transportation system.

The spring volunteer opportunity can accommodate up to two adults and possibly a child. There may also be opportunities for three to five volunteers in the fall of 2023, mid-September to mid-December.

To learn more about this opportunity and to apply, contact Pastor Liz Albertson Bell, assistant to the Bishop, 319-352-1414 or [albertsonl@neiasynod.org](mailto:albertsonl@neiasynod.org).

## YAGM applications begin Nov. 1

Applications for the 2023-2024 Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) service year will open Nov. 1. Young adults ages 21 to 29 may apply for this yearlong mission journey abroad.

YAGM is a one-year, international service-learning and faith-formation opportunity for young adults to serve in accompaniment with Lutheran companion church bodies and organizations and to become immersed in a new community. Young adults work with congregations, schools and social service ministries and gain work experience in several types of fields, including health care, education, immigration, youth ministry and more.

To learn more and to begin this year's application process, visit [www.elca.org/yagm](http://www.elca.org/yagm).

## Rostered Ministers Gathering

July 17-20, 2023  
Phoenix, Ariz.



Rostered ministers are encouraged to save the date for the ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering set for July 17-20 in Phoenix. The event will feature Bible studies, keynote speakers and a variety of activities centered around the theme "Rekindle the Gift Within You." (2 Timothy 1:6).

This gathering will be an opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the church for fellowship, renewal, inspiration, worship and continuing education. All ELCA deacons, pastors, and bishops (under call, on leave or disability, retired, or an approved candidate for call) are invited.

Watch for more information about the Rostered Ministers Gathering on Facebook, [www.facebook.com/ELCARMG](http://www.facebook.com/ELCARMG), and on the Gathering's website page, [www.elca.org/rmg](http://www.elca.org/rmg).

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Send news for the December 2022-January 2023 issue to Marcia Hahn by Nov. 11.

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. The *Star* can be downloaded at [www.neiasynod.org/blog/newsletter](http://www.neiasynod.org/blog/newsletter). To request a printed version, call the synod office.



[www.neiasynod.org](http://www.neiasynod.org)

## Give your input on a new social message on climate care

A draft of the social message “Earth’s Climate Crisis” is now posted online for public comment through Dec. 2.

The ELCA Church Council in November 2021 authorized development of a social message on climate care. Pastor Jim Martin-Schramm, a member of First Lutheran, Decorah, served as lead author of the draft. Feedback helps the drafters know how the document could be more clear, helpful and faithfully Lutheran.



Everyone interested is encouraged to visit <https://elca.org/climatecare>

to read the social message draft and use the online survey to share their input by Friday, Dec. 2. Questions or longer responses can be emailed to [draftsocialmessage@elca.org](mailto:draftsocialmessage@elca.org).

The drafters and review team will study the public feedback to prepare a proposed social message, which will be reviewed by the Conference of Bishops and presented to the Church Council for consideration this coming spring.

## Tips to Start a Creation Care Team in Your Congregation

by Leslie Sand and Carol Gilbertson, Members of the Care for Creation Network

Since the Churchwide Assembly in August overwhelmingly passed the churchwide goal of reducing its net greenhouse gas pollution 50 percent by 2030 — and the Northeastern Iowa Synod was one of 16 synods nationwide that had brought that goal forward to the whole church — our synod Care for Creation Network is seeking ways to help all of our 147 congregations to work on ways to accomplish that goal in the next eight years. (See Donna Rasmussen’s “Churchwide Assembly memorial calls for climate action” in the October issue of the *Star* newsletter, p. 10, [www.neiasynod.org/download/star-newsletter-october-2022](http://www.neiasynod.org/download/star-newsletter-october-2022).)

The first step for each congregation — large or small, urban or rural — is to establish your church’s Creation Care Team. We have set out some recommended steps for your congregation to follow to do just that:

1. If you are an individual, find two to three like-minded congregation

members who will meet with you and talk together about your concerns and goals. Ask your pastor to strongly support your team.

2. If you are a pastor or council member, you can bring the proposal to the church council. If not, your group can present the proposal for a Creation Care Team, or whatever you decide to call it. Make a case to your council by explaining not only the churchwide action on abating climate change, but also our earth’s dire need in this crisis moment. (See, for example, the explanation of the problem in the draft social statement on “Earth’s Climate Crisis” at [www.elca.org/climatecare](http://www.elca.org/climatecare), and the ELCA paper “Climate Change 101” at [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources).)

Sample language for Council resolution:

“The \_\_\_\_\_ Church Council



*authorizes the formation of the Creation Care Team and encourages congregational participation. The Creation Care Team’s purpose is to help the congregation and members steward the gifts of God’s creation. The team will help incorporate creation care into our worship life, institutional maintenance and improvement, educational programs, our personal stewardship at home and work, and our public witness. The team will help us network with other area congregations, businesses, and organizations, the Northeastern Iowa Synod, the ELCA, and independent groups like*

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# God delights in the small things too

“Ministry is a great joy, but it can also be soul sucking,” exclaimed Pastor Sarah Ciavarrri, ELCA pastor and speaker for the Northeastern Iowa Fall Theological Conference. Many of our Northeastern Iowa leaders nodded in agreement.

Ministry is a great joy. Bringing a meal to a neighbor who is hungry for food and company is satisfying. Seeing a first grader light up when he sees his Sunday School teacher at the grocery store — priceless. Showing up to surround grieving friends or neighbors with prayer, song and a faithful presence during the funeral — holy. Preaching a sermon where everyone, including the preacher, is caught up in the moment — breathtaking. Ministry is a great joy.

Arguing over the kind of bush we should plant, having members leave angry, walking with those who are struggling and not being about to “fix” it, spending hours working on a Bible Study that no one attends can all be soul sucking. The uncertainty of this time and space in this wild, wicked and beautiful world of which we are part and to which God calls

“Do not despise the day of small beginnings.”  
— Zachariah 4:10

us to be — can bruise the soul. It is overwhelming.

How can we make a difference when we don’t know how, and so much seems to be in flux? A friend of mine often reminds me that none of us are able to solve world peace, but whenever we reach out to make peace — even the relatively small act of saying “you hurt my feelings” to a friend so you both can make amends — there is more peace in the world. When you engage in a small act of kindness, there is more kindness in the world. Each act of love, of grace, of justice — no matter how small or great — means that there is more love, more grace and more justice in the world.

“God delights in the small things, too,” Pastor Sarah reminded our deacons and pastors, many of whom are weary and, at times, overwhelmed with the joyful parts and the soul-bruising parts of ministry and living life in these days. The



Liz (Albertson) Bell

work is not done in vain because God is faithful and works through our seemingly small acts to weave together God’s will in the world.

Our pastors and deacons are not the only ones who find themselves simultaneously joyful and bruised; many of you who are reading this feel this too.

May you find more joy than burden in your daily living and ministry and may each of us take comfort in God’s blessing of the small acts of love, mercy and goodness. Because “God delights in the small things too!” and God delights in you!

— Pastor Liz

## HOW TO GIVE TO SYNOD MINISTRIES

Gifts to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Annual Fund or Fund for Leaders support ministry together in ways that could not be done alone.

**MAIL CHECKS** payable to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, with the memo indicating which fund you would like your gift to support, to: Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th St. SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

**DONATE ONLINE** at [www.neiasynod.org/give](http://www.neiasynod.org/give) or use the QR Code.



granted that a child can go to a restroom alone and be fine — that’s when problems can occur,” Sheahan says. “It also protects the volunteer or staff member to have two adults there, so they are not accused of something.”

For an upcoming youth group field trip, Sheahan says they will have adults serve as drivers and not trust the teens to drive themselves. “We feel this is in our best interest and aligns well with what safe gatherings are about. It’s more about common sense to take these precautions. We don’t want to set ourselves up for something we could control and chose not to.”

Sheahan says that after the group session, the completed training was reported to the church council and certifications of completion were stored in his office and in the secretary’s office. “Our insurance people are glad to see people trained in it.”

Congregations from the Northeastern Iowa Synod are eligible to use the Safe Gatherings training for a negotiated cost of \$45 for pastors and youth workers, and \$37 for Sunday school teachers, volunteers and other paid staff. The higher price for rostered ministers and youth workers covers a different level of background checks for staff.

“The training is inexpensive compared to the costs to a congregation if someone were abused on church property,” Brackett says. “More than the financial cost is the mental health, spiritual health and guilt that goes along with an abuse situation.”

In addition to boundaries training, Brackett says that every three

years all rostered ministers are required to complete a clergy ethics course, which is available through Safe Gatherings for \$29 per user. The two-hour online course focuses on ethical challenges and boundaries, such as technology and addictive behaviors, sexual abuse and misconduct, confidentiality and accountability, plagiarism, abuse of power, and more.

To learn more about the Safe



Adult members of Bergen Lutheran, Roland, help Sunday school students decorate pumpkins for those who are homebound.

Gatherings online training courses, visit <https://safegatherings.com> or contact Brackett at the synod office, 319-352-1414.

## Candidates for Ministry —

# Where are they now?

**Dayna Weltzin** entered the Northeastern Iowa Candidacy process in December 2019 with a goal to become a minister of word and sacrament in a rural small-town setting. She graduated from Wartburg Theological Seminary in May 2022 with her Master of Divinity degree. She accepted a call to serve St. Paul’s Lutheran, Clear Lake, S.D., where she was ordained and installed on July 23.

Weltzin grew up attending Zion Jubilee, La Porte City, and says she is thankful for her Zion family accompanying her through candidacy and seminary. She earned her bachelor’s degree in Spanish and communications in 1990 from Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minn. She went on to earn two master’s degrees in adult education and translation before enrolling at Wartburg Seminary.

Weltzin lives in Clear Lake, S.D., with her husband Tim.



Dayna Weltzin

# Seasonal Resources for Congregations

We know that our synod currently has many congregations without pastors (many of the ELCA synods are in this situation) and the other synod staff and I wanted to make congregations aware of resources that can be used in worship or youth/children's ministry — even without a pastor.

Children's books make great children's sermons in worship. (And if you have other ideas for children's sermons, children's books can be used in the "adult" sermon, too!) The ELCA publishing house, Augsburg Fortress, has a branch called Beaming Books that is completely dedicated to books for children, youth, and families. Beaming Books has some excellent books that relate to Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas, which you can find at [www.beamingbooks.com/store/category/286967/Holidays-and-Occasions](http://www.beamingbooks.com/store/category/286967/Holidays-and-Occasions).

One of my favorites is called *The Star in the Christmas Play*, by Lynne Marie, illustrated by Lorna Hussey. It's an adorable story about a group of young animals that are trying to decide which part they will each

play when they put on a play of the Christmas story. The little giraffe realizes that he's too tall to play parts like Joseph or a shepherd, but finally he discovers that his height means that he is just perfect to play the star that guides everyone to the manger!

There's another sweet book called *A Cold Night*, written and illustrated by Emanuele Bertossi, in which many animals look for a place to stay warm on a cold night, and then they realize that a man and woman are also seeking shelter, so the animals invite them to come into the barn with them, and they get to witness a special birth!

Beaming Books also has beautifully illustrated pop-up books by Agostino Traini, including one about the birth of Jesus, as well as Thanksgiving-themed books; *Porcupine's Pie* by Laura Renault and *Thanksgiving in the Woods* by Phyllis Alsdurf.

And if you're looking for something to send home with families, Augsburg Fortress publishes "Families Celebrate Advent and Christmas,"



which can be found at [www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9781506483498/Families-Celebrate-Advent-and-Christmas-2022-23](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9781506483498/Families-Celebrate-Advent-and-Christmas-2022-23). This is a deck of cards with simple rituals, prayers, and activities that families can use to celebrate the Advent and Christmas seasons.

I have a few of these books at the synod office in Waverly, and you're welcome to stop by and take a look!

— Pastor Kristen Corr Rod  
Director for Evangelical Mission

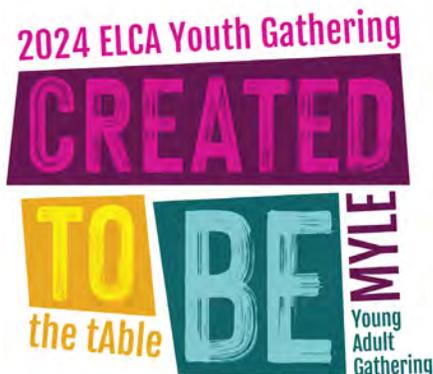
## Youth and Young Adults Gatherings

July 16-20, 2024, New Orleans

The ELCA has announced the theme for the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering — "Created to Be," centered on Psalm 139:14 as a reminder that God has created everyone to be themselves. The Youth Gathering will take place July 16-20, 2024, in New Orleans. Additionally, a new Young Adult

Gathering will also take place in New Orleans concurrent with the Youth Gathering.

Due to the cancellation of the 2022 ELCA Youth Gathering, many young people were not able to participate in these faith formation events. In



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## NOVEMBER EVENTS

- 3 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Synod Office & Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 8 Executive Committee Meeting, Zoom, 4 p.m.
- 11-13 "One Year to Live" Men's Ministry Retreat, Ewalu, Strawberry Point
- 12 Synodical Women's Organization Meeting, Synod Office, 8:30 a.m.-12 noon
- 17 Youth Ministry Network, Threehouse, Cedar Falls, 10 a.m.
- 19 Synod Council Meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.
- 24-25 Office Closed, Thanksgiving

## DECEMBER EVENTS

- 1 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom Meeting, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 2 Candidacy Committee, Synod Office, 8:30 a.m.
- 15 Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul's, Waverly, 10 a.m.
- 23-30 Office Closed, Christmas Break

## JANUARY 2023 EVENTS

- 2 Office Closed, New Year's
- 5 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 14 Synod Council Meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.
- 14 Congregation Treasurer's Meeting, Zoom, 9-11:30 a.m.
- 16 Office Closed, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- 19 Youth Ministry Network, Trinity, Mason City, 10 a.m.
- 28 Synodical Women's Organization Meeting, Synod Office, 8:30 a.m.-12 Noon

## FEBRUARY 2023 EVENTS

- 2 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 16 Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul's, Postville, 10 a.m.

*Youth and Young Adults Gatherings* —————

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partnership with ELCA Young Adult Ministries, the first-ever ELCA Young Adult Gathering will be offered for individuals who will be 18 to 35 at the time of the Gathering. Programming and content are still being discerned. Young adult participants will be invited to join the ELCA Youth Gathering's mass gathering and closing worship.

To learn more about these two events, visit [www.elca.org/YouthGathering](http://www.elca.org/YouthGathering).

## INSTALLING

Rev. Erika Breddin, Waterloo, St. Ansgar, pending

## INTERVIEWING

Allison, St. James, Rev. Norman Bauer, contract interim  
 Cedar Falls, Fredsville, Rev. Lee Gable, interim  
 Decorah, Big Canoe & Highland, Rev. Waldemar Gies, contract interim  
 Decorah, Decorah, staff  
 Decorah, First, staff  
 Decorah, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge, Rev. Adam Starrett, interim  
 Denver, St. Peter  
 Dubuque, St. John's  
 Dubuque, St. Matthew, Rev. Karla Wildberger, interim\*  
 Eldorado, St. Peter\*  
 Elma, St. Paul (Maple Leaf)  
 Greene, St. Peter  
 Hampton, St. Paul  
 Toeterville, St. Peter & Carpenter, Deer Creek  
 Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd\*  
 Waterloo, Our Savior's, Pastor Lisa Kruse, contract synodically authorized minister\*  
 Waterloo, Zion  
 Waverly, St. Paul's, Rev. Mark Anderson, interim

## SELF-STUDY

Cresco, Immanuel  
 Decorah, St. John's & Hauge\*  
 Dubuque, Holy Trinity  
 Elkader, Bethany & Strawberry Point, Emanuel, Rev. Katherine Longtin Johnson, interim  
 Garnavillo, St. Peter & Clayton, Peace, Rev. Harold McMillin, contract interim  
 Hawkeye, Trinity\*  
 Janesville, Messiah, Rev. Dave Powers, contract interim\*  
 Jesup, American & La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee)  
 La Porte City, American  
 Leland, Our Savior & Garner, Faith (Miller)\*  
 Mason City, Our Saviour's & St. Paul  
 Maynard, St. Paul  
 Sumner, St. John (Buck Creek) & Oran, St. Peter  
 Washburn, Redeemer  
 Waterloo, Trinity\*

*\*Part-time Call*

NOVEMBER 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Rev. Leo E. Combs-Lay, Cresco Rev. Michael R. Blair, Waverly <b>1</b>	Deer Creek, St. Ansgar <b>2</b>	Immanuel, Scarville <b>3</b>	Rev. Calvin P. Konop, Dubuque <b>4</b>	Ellen Ward, Decorah <b>5</b>
Zion St. John, Sheffield <b>6</b>	Faith, Shell Rock <b>7</b>	Rev. Jane Granzow, Iowa Falls <b>8</b>	St. Paul, Sherrill <b>9</b>	Rev. Jeffrey D. Jacobs, Lime Springs Rev. Ole Winter, Decorah <b>10</b>	Rev. Dr. Jennifer E. Edinger, Decorah <b>11</b>	Our Savior's, Stanhope <b>12</b>
St. Petri, Story City <b>13</b>	Rev. Robert L. Edwards, Story City Rev. William P. Thalacker, Waverly <b>14</b>	St. Sebald, Strawberry Point <b>15</b>	Rev. Corey W. Smith, Waverly <b>16</b>	Middle East Peace Emanuel, Strawberry Point <b>17</b>	Rev. Katherine Johnson, Strawberry Point <b>18</b>	St. John Evangelical, Sumner <b>19</b>
St. John (Buck Creek), Sumner <b>20</b>	Rev. Gary G. Hatcher, Garnavillo <b>21</b>	St. Peter (Richfield), Sumner <b>22</b>	Grace, Tripoli <b>23</b>	St. John (Crane Creek), Tripoli <b>24</b>	St. Paul, Volga <b>25</b>	Redeemer, Washburn <b>26</b>
St. Ansgar, Waterloo <b>27</b>	St. John (Bennington), Waterloo <b>28</b>	Our Savior's, Waterloo <b>29</b>	Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Waterloo <b>30</b>			

Tips to start a Creation Care Team in your congregation  
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*Lutherans Restoring Creation.*" (from First Lutheran Church, Decorah)

3. After the Creation Care Team is approved, publish that statement in your church newsletter and/or bulletin, preceded by a paragraph like this:

*"The church council has passed a resolution to form a Creation Care team at \_\_\_\_, in conjunction with the Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network." More information is posted on the Care for Creation page on the synod website, [www.neiasynod.org/care-for-creation](http://www.neiasynod.org/care-for-creation). Below is the council resolution and the first Green Tip from the Synod (then include the wording of your church council's resolution).*

4. Consider regular notifications and suggestions in the bulletin and/or newsletter that suggest Green Tips for ecological living as part of caring for creation. Brainstorm some activities that can be accomplished with

relatively few resources — promote a walk/bike/roll to church day, give suggestions to limit car/plane trips, reduce food waste, begin composting, plant a tree, conserve water, publicize the rummage sale as a way to recycle, plant milkweed seeds. You can also submit a proposal to Thrivent to get a \$250 gift card for printing costs or supplies, etc. Find out more at [www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-action-teams](http://www.thrivent.com/about-us/membership/thrivent-action-teams).

5. Encourage the council or building maintenance committee to have an energy audit done on your church building to discover how it can be made more efficient, and make a goal to implement the resulting recommendations. Educate and encourage members to do the same in their homes and work environments. Effective energy audit providers can be found at Winneshiek Energy District's website, [\[trict.org\]\(http://trict.org\).](http://www.energydis-</a></p>
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6. Consult the Northeastern Iowa Synod office about possible speakers regarding carbon neutrality, climate solutions, etc. Some speakers are listed here.

7. Ultimately, your congregation could apply to be a "cool congregation." Visit [www.iowaip.org/resources/#cool](http://www.iowaip.org/resources/#cool) and [www.coolcongregations.org/start-up-kit](http://www.coolcongregations.org/start-up-kit).

8. A final goal is to aim to reduce your church's carbon footprint by 50 percent by 2030. Let's all make that goal a reality for our Northeastern Iowa Synod!

Resources:  
***Iowa Interfaith Power & Light Lutherans Restoring Creation ~Congregations***  
***LRC Creation Care Self-Organizing ELCA Creation Care Coaching***



# Good News

November  
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***

As our fall gatherings start to come together let us enjoy the gift of friendship and working together to make a stronger organization. Does your church enjoy getting together to tie quilts, make school kits, baby kits or LWR projects? Bible studies are another great way for us to share our faith in God and help us grow in our beliefs. Do you know a church where the women's organization is struggling? Ask them to join you in whatever you are doing.

At our next board meeting we will be finalizing some of the items for our June Gathering. Please make plans to attend. Invite a friend or bring a whole carload. Sit in on the business meeting and learn about the women's organization. Plan on attending one of the interest sessions that will give you information or entertain you.

I marvel at God's creation in the form of the crops providing an abundant harvest. Help keep our farm friends safe and please pray for the people of Florida and the coastal states that had any damage from hurricane Ian. Even though we do not understand God's plan for us, the way neighbors help neighbors shows us the goodness of the world, instead of the worst of it.

Watch for more information about our June gathering. In the meantime, attend your cluster events and take care of each other.

*God's Blessing to you all,  
Cindy Pogge*

## ***Introducing Linda Seely***

My name is Linda Seely and I was born and raised in Seattle, Washington until a whole 18 years and then I got married to my great husband who was in the Navy. We traveled and raised three sons, Philip, Scott, and Michael. In 1990, we had the worst tragedy as we lost our middle boy, Scott, who was ready to go to sea for the first time and he was murdered by another Navy man. It's been 32 years and we are both retired and just celebrated our 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary in October! Both our other boys are successful in the mortgage business. I hope this tells you all about me and how Our Lord has given me strength to keep us all together!

***Welcome to the NE IA SWO Board!***

## ***Stewardship Committee***

During the month of November many women of the ELCA turn in their thank offerings they have collected through the year. Thank offerings were started back in the late 1800's. We give in thanksgiving for the many blessings received—and we do receive so many blessings, don't we? That is why we give our thank offerings.

Many women set aside small amounts at home throughout the year and then bring together their gifts with those of the other women in their circles or local groups at the end of the year. Others organize a thank offering service with the whole congregation, celebrating their women's ministries. Our thank offerings are then used to support the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization.

If your congregation does not have a specific time for the thank offerings, we are able make thank offerings any time the spirit moves us. They can be given online by going to [www.womenoftheelca.org](http://www.womenoftheelca.org). Individuals can also give their offering by mail. Make checks payable to: **Women of the ELCA** and write **Thank offering** on the memo line. **Then mail it to:**

*Women of the ELCA  
ELCA Gift Processing Center  
P.O. Box 1809  
Merrifield VA 22116-8009*

It's been shown time and again that gratitude is good for us – spiritually, mentally, and even physically. Making a thank offering is gratitude in action.

*Submitted by Alice Greimann*

## ***Justice Committee***

When this is printed in November, Hurricane Ian will not be in our thoughts as much as it was the first week in October. So, I am trying to see how Justice fits into the disaster from the hurricane. I went back to one of the definitions of Justice. It is equity and impartiality, mercy and compassion. Those last two are such important words for us who may not have loved ones living in the disaster areas. How can we continue to show mercy and compassion for others that we do not know or do not hear about every day? It reminds me of the old phrase, "Out of sight, out of mind". If we aren't seeing or hearing about the

devastation on the news, we suddenly become busy with our own lives and the ups and downs we all experience. It is hard to remember that there are thousands of people still struggling from the damage done by the hurricane. Please continue to pray for those who have lost their homes and loved ones in the hurricane and pray for the continued work to clean up the devastation. It is going to take weeks, months, and possibly longer to recover from this storm. How can you show your compassion, even now a month after the disaster? If you can send funds to the Lutheran Disaster Fund. As always they will be the last boots on the ground, serving those that need help the most. To give online, go to [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org) then “Our Work”, then Lutheran Disaster Response.

*Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold*

### ***Discipleship Committee***

Did you know that that the teenage Michael Jordan did not make the varsity basketball team when he was only 15 years old? He is one of the most celebrated basketball players ever to play the sport. Jordan is philosophical about failure. In a terrific Air Jordan commercial from 2006, he solemnly observes, “I’ve missed more than 9,000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. Twenty-six times, I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

Most of us don’t rise or fall on such a public stage, but even secret failures can knock us to our knees. Most of us can probably relate to the disappointment of not making a team or a business misstep that resulted in problematic consequences or a women’s activity that is no longer thriving.

The question is not whether we fail, but how do we recover? Are we able to harbor the losses and grow stronger because of them, or do we break under the weight of defeat? Can we learn from our mistakes and renew our efforts to succeed? And—perhaps most importantly—why do we forgive star athletes so readily and often for their mistakes but resist forgiving ourselves?

Paul, one of Jesus’ strongest disciples, was also one of His strongest persecutors. He openly admits in his letters how he failed over and over again. But he did not stop. He kept trying and that is where he succeeded in leaving us with a wonderful legacy of faith.

**Keep the faith and don’t be afraid to fail!**

*Summarized from Bold Café, September 8, 2022*

*To subscribe for free, go to [www.boldcafe.org](http://www.boldcafe.org)*

*This is an on-line publication of the Women of the ELCA*

## **CALENDAR**

**2022**

- Nov 1 2023 Triennial Scholarship Applications Due
- Nov 5 LWR Ingathering @Olson’s Explosives, Decorah
- Nov 12 SWO Board Meeting, Waverly, 9 am-12 pm

**2023**

- Jan 28 SWO/Cluster Leadership Meeting, Waverly, 9 am-3 pm
- Mar 11 SWO Board Meeting, Waverly, 9 am-12 pm
- Apr 15 C/E/H LWR Ingathering @ Redeemer, Waverly
- Apr 17 LWR Ingathering @Southport Mall, Mason City
- May 6 SWO Board Meeting, Waverly, 9 am-12 pm
- June 16 SWO Board Meeting @ gathering site (TBD)
- June 17 35th Annual NE IA WELCA Gathering @ TBD
- Sept 18 2023 Triennial Convention & Gathering
- Oct 14 C/E/H LWR Ingathering @ Redeemer, Waverly
- Oct 16 LWR Ingathering @Southport Mall, Mason City

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#### **Alice Greimann, Vice President**

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*Articles are due by 1st of the preceding month 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](http://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!

# Living Faith @

*November is a time to be thankful!*

*We give thanks for the Saints  
(All Saints Day)*

*We give thanks for abundance  
(Thanksgiving)*

*We give thanks for what is yet to come  
(Advent)*

*What are you thankful for??*



*November Blessings*

+++++

## All Saints Sunday



Do you observe All Saints Sunday in your church? In my church, we remember church members who have died in the last year - since the previous year's All Saints Sunday. We light a candle for each person (saint) and recite a prayer or litany. We also sing the hymn "*For All the Saints*" at the beginning of our service. If you have children in your home, it might be a great time to talk about what a "Saint" is! They are not just people who have died. Saints are ordinary baptized people who love and serve

God! That includes us! Because of our Savior Jesus Christ, we are all one big family of saints in God's eyes!

This might be the perfect time to take out old photo albums and show your children pictures of family members who are now in heaven. Explain to them how they are related and even share a story that you remember about them!

All Saints Sunday is also a great time to talk about the famous saints that we read about in the Bible, like St. Paul, or St. Peter; or others whom the church recognizes as saints: St. Teresa, St. Patrick, St. Francis, etc. - There are many! You can research online to find out more about them – or ask your pastor or a faith formation leader in your church for resources on the religious saints.

# Happy Thanksgiving!

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite Holidays. It's a time to reflect on all of our blessings. And the food is usually pretty good too! 😊

Take some time with your family to count your blessings – even if it hasn't been a very good year for you or your family – take time to talk about where you *did* see God working in your lives – even in the not-so-good times. Gratitude has a way of lifting our spirits and warming our hearts.

If the kiddos get a little bored while you are cooking the turkey – take a sheet of paper and write “HAPPY THANKSGIVING” on it – and see how many other words they can make out of those two words. The one with the most words gets an extra big slice of pumpkin pie!



**Advent** begins this year on November 27<sup>th</sup>. Advent is the four weeks that lead up to the birth of Jesus Christ. The word Advent originates from a Latin word “Adventus” which means “coming” or “arrival.” Advent Season is focused on preparing for the coming of Jesus Christ in

several different ways: his birth over 2,000 years ago; his second coming in the future as the Messiah; and also, as he comes into our hearts every day. There are all kinds of ways to celebrate Advent with your family – there are special Advent calendars that mark each day in Advent with a special bible verse, or an activity like a doing a random act of kindness, (See Pinterest!) or my favorite Advent activity: Get a large box, and each day, add a non-perishable food item to it, Then donate the items to your local food pantry before Christmas so that those in need will have food for the Holidays.

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 [Home Life « NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD \(neiasynod.org\)](http://HomeLife«NORTHEASTERNIOWASYNOD.neiasynod.org)

