

CREATED TO BE CONNECTED

Conferences bring ministry leaders together

by Marcia Hahn

Congregations and leaders from across the Northeastern Iowa Synod are connecting and collaborating in ministry more than ever—exchanging ideas, cultivating relationships, sharing mission and learning together. In the coming year, this synod will take a closer look at ministry connections as part of the 2025 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly theme, “Created to be Connected.” Many of those connections begin with the synod’s eight geographical Conferences for Cooperative Ministry, which have been at the forefront of building camaraderie and community among ministry leaders and congregations.

CONNECTED IN MISSION

Shepherd of the Hills Conference

Congregations of the Shepherd of the Hills (SOTH) Conference work together to support a local ministry that has been serving



Heather Hageman

Northeastern Iowa families for 56 years.

Shepherd of the Hills Ministries operates a thrift store in a former church in St. Olaf to offer clothes, shoes, personal care items and housewares for families in need.

The building also houses the Clayton County Food Shelf in the basement.

The SOTH Ministries hosts special giveaways for kids—school supplies, coats, Christmas gifts—all made possible with hands-on support from the 25 congregations of the SOTH Conference.

“We partner together,” says Heather Hageman, coordinator of SOTH Ministries and correspondent for the SOTH Conference. “We provide congregations with information they need to do a fundraiser for us, and we try to support and promote their events on Facebook.”

Congregations purchase new coats, hats, mittens and more to support the Coats for Kids giveaway. Some 280 coats have been donated so far this year. The annual Back-to-School event provides backpacks filled with school supplies for families referred from nine area schools.



Volunteers prepare for the Shepherd of the Hills’ annual Christmas for Kids giveaway in St. Olaf.

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Hageman says this event receives the most support from churches, where supplies are collected over the summer.

A partnership with Dollar General stores in Clayton County supports the back-to-school and Christmas giveaways. Youth groups greet customers, share information about the SOTH Ministries, and ask customers if they would like to support the event with a donation.

“The kids are so well educated to respond to customers’ questions,” Hageman says.

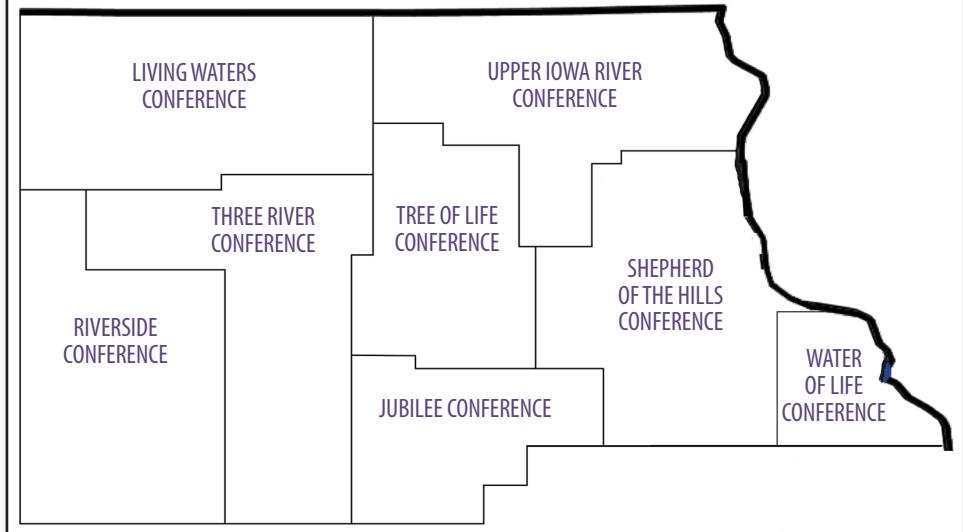
Women’s groups from the SOTH congregations donated 15 quilts for this year’s SOTH hog roast and quilt auction, which is the conference’s biggest fundraiser. The event served 467 people and brought in more than \$13,000.

Confirmation groups are among the more than 30 volunteers who help with the annual Christmas for Kids event in December. Collection boxes for new unwrapped toys are set up at area churches and businesses in partnership with Toys for Tots. The Toys for Tots manager shared with Hageman that the organization will continue to always support Shepherd of the Hills. “They love what this ministry is like and how people support it,” Hageman says.

When a congregation needs someone to fill in for a pastor who is gone, Hageman says she is glad to help out and share about the SOTH Ministries and how everyone works together to support one another.

“All of our projects and the people who help at the store are from within the churches,” Hageman says. “We don’t know everyone’s story in life, but we are made up of

Northeastern Iowa Synod Conferences for Cooperative Ministry



faithful servants who help when we can.”

CONNECTED IN CONVERSATION

Living Waters Conference

The Living Waters Conference has hosted food-packing events, fundraising concerts, youth events and other activities over the years. Nowadays, conference members are happy just to get together for conversation and communion.

“We get together once a month to visit and have communion together,” says Pastor Bill Peters, who serves One in Christ Lutheran Parish. “Probably half of our pastors are retired, so these gatherings mean a lot to them.”

As Living Waters dean, Peters is responsible for gathering pastors in the conference together. A dozen to 20 pastors attend each month, in



Pastor Bill Peters

person or through Zoom. “Some retired pastors who have a harder time getting to the meetings look forward to connecting through Zoom.”

The monthly gatherings start with a half hour or so of chit chat followed by worship, then an hour or more to go around the circle to share their highs and lows and what’s been going on in their congregations or personal lives.

“There are generally no speakers; that’s not what this group has desired,” Peters says.

The pastors share how their family members are doing health wise and changes in their lives, such as buying their first house as they prepare to retire. Peters says there is always someone who can connect with these issues and follow up with them.

A lot of the conversations in recent years have centered on the lack of clergy for congregations. Pastors often offer to help with funerals and special events for congregations that don’t have pastors. They also share

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the names of lay ministers who can assist with their Sunday morning events.

A lot of formal sharing is also happening with three geographical parishes in the conference. The pastors share with others considering this type of agreement how their geographical parishes are set up and how they function.

"We have these conversations and people realize their congregations are not the only ones affected—it's just part of the dynamics that are out there," Peters says.

After serving 20 years as a dean, Peters still enjoys being able to facilitate the meetings and help pastors gather and connect with one another. He says the conversations are opening doors for people to pursue, and that includes retired pastors.

"The retired pastors are curious about what's going on, even though they're not working in a congregation," Peters says. "They offer good advice for the pastors to remain patient and trust God in the big picture."

CONNECTED IN CARING

Upper Iowa Conference

Pastor Jeff Jacobs has turned his role as chaplain for the Upper Iowa River Conference into an under-the-radar ministry centered on encouragement, blessings and humor.



Pastor Jeff Jacobs

Conference chaplains are entrusted

with fostering pastoral care for rostered ministers and their families. They visit families in times of crisis, pray for them, and communicate pastoral care concerns and celebrations with the conference dean and office of the Bishop.

"I see myself as an adjunct of the bishop," says Jacobs, who has served as conference chaplain since 2019.

Jacobs, who serves St. Paul in Lime Springs, Saetersdal in Harmony, Minn., and St. Matthew's in Granger, Minn., likes to send cards to ministers for their birthdays and ordination anniversaries. He has used his "Book of Saints" to tie birthdays to the saint connected to that day, along with some history and a blessing, and has also sent greetings tied to the flower of the month, using the language of flowers to pray a blessing from God. For ordination anniversaries, he has fun creating cards with gag designations that tie faith to their anniversary year.

Jacobs sends cards to spouses of deceased clergy for special occasions or holidays to express good wishes and hope that they are doing well. Twice a year he will take a flower to retired clergy members for a visit and to let them know he is the guy who writes them notes.

"I'm just another friendly voice," Jacobs says. "Sometimes I will discover someone is ill and pass that on to the bishop."

Jacobs connects with the whole conference by sending general emails at Advent time, before Lent and before summer and autumn with a mini devotion to lift up anything that may be on people's hearts and minds. For those who have strug-

gled with health issues, Jacobs sends a message of hope for them to find time for reflection and quiet.

"When I know someone is in the hospital or is ill, I try to visit them," he says.

The Upper Iowa River Conference meets every month, September through May. When a colleague is leaving the conference or retiring, Jacobs makes plans to acknowledge them at the next meeting with a farewell and Godspeed. He also welcomes ministers who are starting a new call or beginning retirement to thank and bless them for their service in the conference.

"I'm content to be in this role and happy to do it for as long as I'm here," Jacobs says.

CONNECTED IN MINISTRY

Riverside Conference

Pastors from the Riverside Conference meet once a month to catch up, share communion, learn together and have lunch.

For the past three years, several of the pastors have teamed up to lead Lenten services in each other's congregations. According to Pastor John Sheahan, who serves as Riverside dean, the Lenten rotation has been a fun way for the congregations and pastors to make new connections.

"We love it," says Sheahan, who serves Bergen, Roland. "The pastors



Pastor John Sheahan

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love going to see the other churches and the congregations love seeing the different pastors.

Pastor Tim Malek of St. Petri, Story City, organizes the rotation schedule and assigns each pastor a topic based on a common theme from the ELCA. The participating pastors repeat their topics at each congregation during the five Wednesdays of Lent, excluding Ash Wednesday and Holy Week. This year's rotation included pastors from four Lutheran congregations from the Riverside Conference and Grace United Methodist of Story City. This coordinated ministry has helped the congregations without pastors keep their Lenten services going.

"The pastors have a lightened load and the congregations enjoy meeting the different pastors in our conference to hear what they have to say," Sheahan says. "We're already planning for next year."

The conference's monthly meetings rotate to different congregations, too. Sheahan gives synod-related updates and everyone shares communion. "For some of us always administrating at a church service, we don't get to commune, so it's a spiritual service at a conference meeting."

Everyone also has an opportunity to share in a confidential setting what is going on in their professional and personal lives. "Everyone is guaranteed to get some stuff off their chest about what they are happy about or frustrated about," Sheahan says. "That works really well as a counseling session for the pastors."

The meetings feature a variety of speakers: Sheahan has presented about his mission trip to Ukraine; Pastor Maureen Howard of Bethany, Iowa Falls, has shared about her trip to Hungary; and Pastor Steve Brackett, assistant to the Bishop, has presented about the synod's new lay ministry training program. Sheahan plans to present what he learned at a recent conference about using AI (artificial intelligence) in the church.

"We're always looking for ideas to share," Sheahan says.

Programs at the Riverside Conference annual meetings reach both pastors and lay members, who are encouraged to attend with their pastors.

"A wide variety of people attend, so a lot of voices can be heard and information taken back to the congregations," Sheahan says. "You can never communicate enough."

CONGREGATIONS JOIN IN SERVICE



Congregations from Shell Rock and Waverly joined forces for a day of community projects and worship on Oct. 6 as part of the ELCA's "God's work. Our hands." annual day of service. Faith, Shell Rock, offered free car washes for the work and personal vehicles of emergency personnel. Wartburg College students joined congregation members at St. Paul's, Waverly, to pack 57 flood buckets. Members of Redeemer, Waverly, tied fleece blankets for mission. Afterward, everyone was invited to worship together at the Wartburg Chapel.

"The five pastors from these congregations thought this would be a good way to engage in mission and let our local communities know that God is really up to something here," says Pastor Dave Efflandt of St. Paul's. "As a group of local clergy, we're really excited about being in partnership with each other in our communities. It's really heartening to see the collegiality of clergy in the Cedar Valley and surrounding communities."

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Classmates connect through shared youth ministry

by Marcia Hahn

A partnership between St. Peter, Greene, and St. James, Allison, has taken youth ministry in their communities to a new level.

What started as an invitation for St. James youth to join a St. Peter mission trip has grown into a thriving shared high school ministry. Some 20-plus students from the two congregations are active in Luther League, annual mission trips, fundraisers and service projects.

“One of the main things that drew the ministries to combine is that most of the kids attend the same school district,” says Pastor Rebecca Baird, who serves St. James.

LUTHER LEAGUE

High school students from St. James and St. Peter meet once a month for Luther League, alternating between the two congregations. The meetings include a devotional, food and fellowship, along with a service project. Service projects have included diaper drives, trick or treat for the local food pantry, adopt-a-highway, Thanksgiving baskets for homebound adults, and adopting children through the Greene Food Bank for Christmas. In addition, Luther League youth collect redeemable cans, bottles, and glass to provide monetary donations to local non-profits and first responders. The redemption fund also covers nearly all of the costs of the mission trips.

For the second year in a row, Luther League will partner with Fostering Families Together for a Christmas Party for foster youth and foster parents. “They play games with the kids while the parents relax and have a



Youth from St. James, Allison, and St. Peter, Greene, stop for a group photo during last summer's joint mission trip to Chicago.

meal,” says Erin Mulder, who leads Luther League. “Everyone wanted to come again for the party this year.”

Annual summer mission trips have taken the youth to Pennsylvania, Montana, and Chicago in recent years. During last year’s trip to Montana, the group volunteered at non-profits, including a senior center, a kid’s camp, Yellowstone National Park, and Thrive. Unfortunately, the trip took an unexpected turn when a volunteer leader from St. Peter, Sarah Hawker, suffered a horrific fall and was hospitalized with a traumatic brain injury.

“If I didn’t appreciate the kids before we left, I have new respect for every single one of them,” Mulder says. “I have never seen a group pull together the way they did and take on roles to support each other and Sarah’s daughter.”

Mulder, who is a member of St. Peter, has been leading Luther League for several years with help from parents, adult volunteers, Baird, and Pastor Jenny Edinger, interim for St. Peter. As a social worker for the State of Iowa, Mulder works with all ages of youth and their families. She uses her knowledge of resources and issues affecting teens to plan discussions and service projects for the Luther League youth.

“My passion comes from what I do every single day and seeing greater needs in the community,” Mulder says. “I try to gear programming to what kids are dealing with in life.”

Topics of conversations have included mental health, school shootings and hunger. Mulder says that following the Montana trip, the saying for the group became “it’s okay not

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to be okay.” This year’s focus is about becoming closer with one’s faith and maintaining it outside of the church.

“You need a specific type of group and setting to have those types of conversations and make it light enough for them to talk,” Mulder says. “We laugh, cry, and have serious conversations all coming back to God.”

Mulder says that she learns a lot from the students, and the students learn from each other by coming together. “They have created relationships they wouldn’t have without Luther League. I hope that in the future they’ll remember those things and will have a stronger faith because of that.”

CONFIRMATION AND FIRST COMMUNION

The youth ministry partnership between St. James and St. Peter expanded in 2023 when they joined their confirmation and first communion ministries. St. Peter was without a pastor or interim, so leaders reached out to Baird to see if St. James could help them.

“Confirmation students feed into Luther League eventually,” Baird says. “So why not combine them earlier to carry with them into the high school program and have faith formation together?”

Twenty students are in this year’s combined confirmation class. Separately, St. James would have had seven and St. Peter 13. Five adult leaders from the two congrega-



Luther League youth from St. Peter, Greene, and St. James Allison, display food items they collected through their “Trick-or-Treat So Others Can Eat” event to support the local food pantry.

gations and Baird lead confirmation.

“It definitely makes for a more fun, energized group to have all the kids together,” Baird says. “Sometimes we do Luther League and confirmation activities together, too.”

During Lent, each student meets weekly with an adult mentor. They attend their congregation’s Wednesday dinner and worship together and meet afterward for discussion.

“It’s a good way for the students to have intergenerational discussion with other adults in the churches,” Baird says.

The youth ministry partnership begins earlier for students preparing for their first communion. St. James fifth graders joined their counterparts at St. Peter for a pottery class in Greene where they created their own chalice (cup) and paten (plate) out of clay. Dawn Dienes-Christensen, owner of Prairie Patterns by Dawn D-C and member of St. Peter, helped the students shape their pottery and talked to them about the bread and wine as they molded their clay. She then fired the pottery in her kiln, and the



Chalices and patens made by fifth graders from St. Peter, Greene, and St. James, Allison, are ready to be fired in the kiln and then used for their first communion.

students used their own creations for their first communion.

“Designing and creating anything related to our faith is important for people of all ages as a way to come to know Christ,” Baird says. “This hands-on approach to learning about the sacraments is especially important for younger students.”

Baird says that combining the youth ministry programs takes some extra time and energy, but it’s worth it. “I really like this partnership. It just makes sense for our students to be together.”

Synod youth and leaders learn ways to connect in ministry

"When the input of youth is present, it makes a big difference in the life of the church," says Aaron Shoppa, program director for ELCA Youth Ministry. Shoppa shared that message at the synod's Nov. 3 "Created to be Connected" youth ministry event, where he was guest speaker.

Youth, young adults, pastors, youth directors, synod staff, and staff from Camp EWALU and Lutheran Lakeside Camp gathered at St. John, Cedar Falls, to create and deepen connections with each other and with God. Participants heard Shoppa share about youth ministry, joined in get-to-know-you games, and broke into discussion groups.

Pastor Kristen Rod led a conversation with the pastors, youth directors and camp staff about how to better support one another in shared ministry goals, what needs there are in the Northeastern Iowa Synod, and what ministry resources each of them could share.

Bishop Kevin Jones joined Shoppa in a conversation with the youth and

young adults. The youth shared who they felt connected to and how they serve as leaders in their faith communities.

"What stuck out to me the most was the desire the youth and young adults have to help lead and shape conversations in their faith communities," Shoppa says.

Shoppa asked the youth for anonymous responses to this question: "If you could tell the church one thing, what would it be?" Their responses:

Be more welcoming. Be more Christ-like. Judgement is a sin. Life is a gift. Don't forget what Jesus said. Love God, love others. Act like youth are leaders now, not just in the future.

The event ended with games and a campfire-style worship service. Shoppa says he would like to connect and have conversations with more youth, adult leaders, and young adults in the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Any congregations interested in connecting with him can email Shoppa at aaron.shoppa@elca.org.



Young adults invited to apply for new year of YAGM service

ELCA young adults ages 21-35 are invited to apply for a year of service with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program.

Applications for the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 service years are open now on a rolling basis, with a priority deadline of Jan. 15, and a final deadline of Feb. 1 of the prospective year.

YAGM is a one-year, international service-learning and faith-formation opportunity for young adults to serve alongside Lutheran companion church bodies and organizations in one of four country programs around the world. Current country programs are projected to be: Argentina & Uruguay, Central Europe, Mexico, Senegal, the United Kingdom, and Cambodia.

Candidates apply to the program at-large rather than to a specific country. Applicant preferences are considered, but the final decision about where volunteers serve is made by Global Mission staff and YAGM country coordinators in mid-March.

To learn more, visit elca.org/our-work/global-mission/young-adults-in-global-mission.

Synod Assembly to focus on connections

by Jan Glaspie, Executive Assistant for Synod Administration and Synod Assembly Manager

June 6-7, 2025
Bien VenU, Cedar Falls,

CREATED TO BE CONNECTED

The 2025 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly will meet Saturday, June 7, at Bien VenU Event Center in Cedar Falls with the theme *Created To Be Connected*.

Check-in will start at 7:30 a.m. with the assembly starting promptly at 8:30 a.m. and closing by 5 p.m. Lunch will be provided. An optional opening worship service will be hosted by Fredsville Lutheran Church on Friday night, June 6, at 7 p.m.

Online registration will begin by Monday, Feb. 10. The early bird registration fee of \$130 will be available through May 1 for voting members. After that date, an additional \$30 fee will be added. No registrations will be accepted after May 15.

The Holiday Inn & Suites/Bien VenU Event Center has reserved a select number of guest rooms for the special price of \$139 plus fees for Friday, June 6. Those who want to stay at the hotel will be able to book a reservation online through a special "[2025 Synod Assembly](#)" link. This link and special pricing will be available through May 8.

ELECTRONIC VOTING

New this year will be electronic voting for all ballots through VPOLL. Every voting member will need to bring to the assembly a device that can access an internet browser in order to vote.

VPOLL provides online election security and authenticity for ethical voting. This software was highly recommended by the Western Iowa



Synod, and the company provides services to many synods across the country. Any device that can connect to the internet can be used for voting. Here is a link for an article on its use, vpoll.mobi/post/what-we-learned-using-e-voting-for-the-first-time-at-our-diocesan-convention.

A special Zoom meeting in May will introduce voting members to the software and give them an opportunity to practice using it. Anyone with questions should contact Alison Pettit in the synod office.

Voting members will also be invited to two informational Zoom meetings at the end of May to help prepare for the assembly and to ask questions in

an informal setting. The first session will review the budgets and compensation guidelines and the second session will review submitted resolutions.

All resolutions must be submitted to the secretary of the synod by May 1, 2025. Log-in information for the Zoom meetings will be sent to registered voting members at least one week prior. Videos of the sessions will be available for those unable to attend live sessions.

Watch for more information about the 2025 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly in synod newsletters, on Facebook and on the synod website, neiasynod.org.



Jan Glaspie

VIRTUAL TREASUERS MEETING SET

Jan. 23, 2025

Congregational treasurers, pastors, financial committee members and others are invited to attend the Congregation Treasurers Meeting set for Thursday, Jan. 23, 6:30 to 8 p.m., via Zoom.

Presenters will be:

- Keith D. Oltrogge, CPA, Denver, on W-2s, church payrolls and contributions.

- Pastor Steve Brackett, assistant to the Bishop, with information about the Northeastern Iowa Synod's 2025 Minimum Compensation Guidelines.

There is no charge to attend. Information about how to join the meeting through Zoom will be emailed to treasurers by Dec. 15. Others interested in attending may call the synod office at 319-352-1414 or email Jan Glaspie.

Influencing Ministry Through Resolutions and Memorials

CREATED TO BE CONNECTED

The synod staff is already preparing for the 2025 Synod Assembly. Our theme, *Created To Be Connected*, continues to emphasize the ways we are one in Christ even in the midst of diverse backgrounds, opinions, politics, and theological lenses. I am looking forward to our time together.

One of the things that happens regularly at Synod Assemblies is that resolutions and memorials are brought to the floor to be considered. These are ways of initiating ministries or providing policy direction in the synod and throughout the ELCA. (Resolutions are specifically for the Northeastern Iowa Synod and memorials are passed on for action at the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly.)

The benefit to this system is that the Synod Assembly is the highest level of decision making in the synod. When something is passed by the Synod Assembly, the Synod Council and synod staff must work to accomplish the goals of the resolution. The same is true for the Churchwide Assembly, the Church Council, and churchwide staff.

In order to create a resolution or memorial that will not only be passed by the Assembly, but will succeed in its intent, there are some additional things to consider.

- Are there adequate resources in the synod budget to accomplish the goal?
- Do we have people who are willing and able to do the work?
- Does a similar ministry or policy already exist? Is work currently being done to put something similar in place?
- Is the goal compatible with current governance (constitution, bylaws, continuing resolutions, and ELCA policies)?
- Is a resolution or memorial the best avenue for accomplishing your goals? Are there other avenues that may be more efficient and timelier? This is especially true as we meet in Assembly every other year now.



Great ideas can often bog down because one or more of these considerations are overlooked. (It can also be problematic when passionate people turn a proposal over to people who are not as passionate about the issue—but that's another story.)

If you, your peer group, or network have an idea that you would like to see take root in Northeastern Iowa or in the ELCA, I invite you to schedule a conversation with me. If necessary, we can include it in budget proposals, ensure that it is not happening elsewhere in the church, provide language and structure that aligns it with existing governance and policies, and explore other avenues to accomplish your goal.

With a little discernment done together early in the process, we can increase the likelihood that we are connected with ministries which the Holy Spirit is already working among us.

— **Bishop Kevin Jones**

(Editor's Note: Bishop Kevin Jones is on sabbatical until Dec. 29, 2024. This article was written prior to his sabbatical.)

Give input on edits to the Human Sexuality Social Statement

Lay and rostered members of the ELCA are invited to submit feedback regarding draft edits to the 2009 social statement *Human Sexuality: Gift and Trust*.

The 2022 Churchwide Assembly authorized two reconsiderations to the social statement, and the Human Sexuality Reconsiderations Task Force has prepared a small set of draft edits for the church to consider. The

results of the task force's work on Reconsideration #1, which are simply editorial, are now available for public comment and feedback through Jan. 31, 2025.

Links to the social statement, edits and survey, are available at elca.org/faith/faith-and-society/current-social-writing-projects/human-sexuality-gift-and-trust-reconsiderations.

Clergy members reconnect at the synod's Fall Conference

"The collective wisdom of this group is outstanding."

—Bishop Kevin Jones

The Fall Theological Conference is a great time for pastors and deacons from across the synod to reconnect and join in fellowship.

Nearly 80 people attended the synod's Fall Theological Conference in October. This year's focus on preaching from the Gospel of Luke began conversations and thinking around the texts that congregations will use in the coming year. The Rev. Dr. Troy Troftgruben and The Rev. Dr. Kristin Wendland led theological discussions that gave clergy insights and ideas they could take home to their congregations.

Many clergy members sacrifice their day off in order to come together at



Attendees join in prayer at the synod's Fall Theological Conference, which took place in October at the Bien Venu Event Center in Cedar Falls.

the Fall Conference and spend time with colleagues and friends from distant parts of the synod. This year, some families attended with their young children, which brought an additional level of energy to the event.

Bishop Kevin Jones says he appreciat-

ed the opportunity to share updates about happenings at the synod and the wider church, and to gain valuable feedback from clergy currently serving congregations.

"The collective wisdom of this group is outstanding," Jones said.

Join a new Men's Ministry Bible Study

7:30 p.m. Mondays
Zoom & Grace Lutheran, Tripoli

The Northeastern Iowa Synod's Men's Ministry Network invites men of all ages to join a new weekly Bible study series hosted online and in person at Grace Lutheran, Tripoli.

The series will use the Lutheran Men in Mission/Project Twelve Lifeline Bible Studies, which focuses on Bible stories to guide the group in honest, safe, and enlightening engagement on the challenges and opportunities that all men share in life.

**LUTHERAN
MEN^{IN}MISSION[®]**

Men can join the group in person at Grace on Mondays (except holidays), 7:30-8:30 p.m., or they can join online through Zoom. All lessons are inspired by the men's courses in the *Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study*, 4th edition (Master Builders Bible for Men).

According to Jim Rathe, facilitator for the Northeastern Iowa Synod's Men's Ministry Network, these studies are non-threatening and a great

place to talk with and get to know other men.

"Whether you are an experienced participant or have never been part of a Bible study, you will be welcomed and made to feel comfortable," Rathe says. "You can participate as much as you want, no homework assignments are given, and there is no advanced reading."

No registration is required to attend in person. Those wanting the Zoom link can [email](#) or call the synod office at 319-352-1414.

New task force to address ministry leadership diversity

by Lisa Nelson, Racial Justice Advocacy Network

The Northeastern Iowa Synod has received a \$2,300 ELCA grant to support a new task force to address the lack of diversity in congregational leadership.

The task force is being formed in response to a resolution passed at the 2023 Synod Assembly:

RESOLVED, That the Northeastern Iowa Synod make a deliberate effort to include candidates of color in their call processes, especially if the call would be available to a recent seminary graduate.

RESOLVED, That the Northeastern Iowa Synod create a taskforce

to identify and address barriers within the call process that limit candidates of minoritized groups.

The synod's Racial Justice Network and Bishop Kevin Jones are working to form a team of people, both lay and ordained, who are willing to learn about the process of call and what parts of it may serve as barriers to congregations calling pastors from racially minoritized groups. The task force will also seek input from pastors from these groups to understand their experience and the things that may prevent them from accepting a call to our synod.

Funds from the "Impact Church Ministry: Strategy Towards Authentic

Diversity" grant will be used to contract with a coach to keep the task force on track as they create a plan for their work and sustain the focus and energy as the group enacts their plan. This coach will develop a plan with the team and help them execute the plan.

SUBMIT NAMES FOR THE NEW TASK FORCE

As the 2025 Synod Assembly is fast approaching, it is time to create this task force and begin the work in earnest. To submit names for consideration for the task force, please email neiasynodrjan@gmail.com by Dec. 31, 2024.

REGION 5 OFFERS COORDINATED DAY OF BOUNDARIES TRAINING



Some 90 rostered ministers from the Northeastern Iowa Synod joined in a day of training on Nov. 7 to learn about professional ethics and boundaries. Ministers gathered for the training at five locations in this synod, including St. Paul, Postville, pictured above. This coordinated training was offered

simultaneously to all 12 synods of ELCA Region 5. Plans are to offer Region 5 training days annually. Next year's training will cover gender justice; in 2026, racial justice training will be offered.

Let's make a difference together!

At this time of year, more than any other, individuals and congregations have supported the synod's annual fund with a gift. I'd like to think it is because they value the connections we have as congregations and ministries, and they see how God is working through these relationships to have greater impact. We can do more when we work together!

They might give because they see how the synod lifts up and forms candidates for pastoral and diaconal ministry. The Candidacy process ensures that those who are called to ministry will have the tools they need to faithfully serve.

In 2024, seven Northeastern Iowa pastors and deacons were ordained, and 11 pastors and deacons were installed in Northeastern Iowa Synod congregations. These new leaders are making a difference!

When you think about the Northeastern Iowa Synod, I hope you notice the work of our networks—filled with passionate people who want to make a difference for creation, racial justice, the global church, those dealing with substance abuse, and more.

In August, the Global Church Together Network organized the Global Church Together Festival with inter-

national speakers, hands-on demonstrations, workshops and worship. This fall, the Racial Justice Network worked with St. Petri Lutheran, Story City, to provide congregations and pre-schools with copies of the children's book *Susie Clark: The Bravest Girl You've Ever Seen*, a story about the young Iowa girl who was the first Black student in the U.S. to integrate a public school through a court order. And, when disaster hit our neighbors in Western Iowa, the Disaster Response Network delivered flood buckets made by congregations in this synod.

God is at work in our communities and congregations, with many hands in Northeastern Iowa helping. I hope you will always feel the support of the synod as we face challenges and opportunities to grow ministries together in new ways.

I am so thankful that God has called us to be connected as the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Please consider a gift to the 2024 Fall Appeal for the Northeastern Iowa Synod this Christmas season so that we can continue to make a difference together.

— Pastor Liz Bell



Empowering our youth leaders at the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit in Chicago



Flood buckets donated to the Western Iowa Synod to help flooded communities



Installation of Pastor Nichole Robson at St. Peter Lutheran, Dubuque

Youth webinar focuses on high school ministry

Youth workers, clergy and volunteers can learn about effective approaches to youth ministry for high schoolers in the Dec. 12 webinar presented by Youth Ministry Consultants (YMC).

The live webinar, *What Every High Schooler Needs From Your*

Ministry, will be presented at 11 a.m. by Rebecca Jacobson of YMC. Anyone from the Northeastern Iowa Synod can register for free by entering the code NEIA24. Recordings of past sessions are also available for viewing. Visit neiasynod.org/ym-webinar-f24 to learn more and register.

DECEMBER 12 | 11:00CT

WHAT EVERY HIGH SCHOOLER NEEDS FROM YOUR MINISTRY

with REBECCA JACOBSON



Why congregations may want to add solar power

by David Voigts, Care for Creation Network

There are several reasons for churches and other religious institutions to add solar power to offset a portion of electricity they use. First of all, money can be saved on the electricity bills. This will be enhanced by a big benefit from the government that will help churches and other religious institutions with the cost of installing solar panels. The Inflation Reduction Act will pay 30% of the cost of the project. This is called "direct pay" or "elective pay." Please be advised that the money will be paid to the owner only after the system is installed and operating, but the benefit is substantial.

The cost of installing solar panels would normally be about \$2.62 per watt (\$2620.00 per kilowatt). For example, the cost of replacing the electricity of an average electric bill of about \$150 would be about \$18,450. However, the direct pay funds would reduce the cost of the example project to \$13,000. This would reduce the payback time from about 10 years to seven years, depending on the actual cost of installing, and the net metering agreement with your utility that governs the amount they pay for the excess energy that is produced and provided to the grid. After the payback period, the electricity would be essentially free.

Please be advised that the cost of the project would be increased if any structural upgrades are needed before solar panels can be installed. For example, since solar panels should last for twenty years or longer, the roof or shingles may need to be replaced or upgraded before solar panels are installed. Also, compliance with local rules and ordinances may increase the cost. A cost estimate for the project can be determined at

www.solar-estimate.org. Also, a directory of solar consultants and installers is available at the Iowa Solar Energy Trade Association (www.iowaseta.org). You may receive marketing calls if you use either service.

Please be advised that considerable paperwork is needed to obtain the direct pay funds, so it is best to have a dedicated, knowledgeable person to ensure that this is done correctly. However, some installing companies will do the paperwork as a service to the client. It is important to add that other projects that reduce fossil fuel use should also qualify for an Inflation Reduction Act rebate.

Another important reason for adding solar is that you will be combating climate change by lowering your carbon footprint. Energy produced by solar panels does not come from the burning of fossil fuels, so their use will not add any heat-trapping carbon dioxide to the atmosphere. In addition, the placement of solar panels on your building or grounds may inspire others by demonstrating that you care about the environment and combating climate change.

The cost of the project would be the responsibility of the church, although after it is operational the cost would be reduced by the direct pay rebate. The system could be funded by available funds, by a special fundraising appeal, or by a loan for all or part of the cost. Please remember that the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA provides low-cost loans to churches for projects like this.

If you decide that you do not want to own the system directly, a third-party could own it. The third-party owner may be a church member(s) or an in-

vestor. In this case, a "Power Purchase Agreement" will be needed. It will control how much will be paid to the third-party for the electricity generated by the solar panels. Usually, this will be at least 15% less than the current price being charged by the electric utility. Even if the electricity rate goes up, your cost will remain flat for the life of the agreement, typically 20 years. After this period, the church will be given ownership of the system.

Third party ownership has the advantage over direct ownership of having a guaranteed savings each month without any cost to the church. Also, Power Purchase Agreements have a long and successful track record. However, the savings probably will not be as much as with direct ownership, and since more parties are involved, there may be more project complications.

The final choice will be dependent on the unique situation of each church. The following sources of information may help you in making that choice:

- IRS Publication 5817
- Interfaith Power and Light's Congregational Solar webpage (under Resources)
- The Nature Conservancy: Solar for Nonprofits
- Environmental and Energy Study Institute
- Midwest Renewable Energy Association
- Greenpenny Bank (an Iowa online bank that helps with projects like solar)
- www.elca.org/climatecare
 - Social Message on Climate
 - Climate Crisis Study Guide

Addiction and Recovery During the Holidays

by Deacon Jackie Schilling, Substance Abuse Network Member

Navigating Mental Health and Addiction During the Holiday Season

The holiday season is often portrayed as a time of joy, celebration and togetherness. However, for many, it can also be a period of heightened stress, anxiety and temptation. The pressure to attend gatherings, the financial strain of gift-giving, and the emotional weight of family dynamics can all contribute to mental health challenges and the risk of relapse for those in recovery¹.

Celebration Gatherings: A Double-Edged Sword

Holiday gatherings can be a source of joy, but they can also be a trigger for stress and anxiety¹. The expectation to be happy and social can be overwhelming, especially for those dealing with mental health issues or addiction¹. It's important to recognize that it's okay to feel a range of emotions during this time and to take steps to protect your mental well-being.

Tips for Staying Clean and Sober During the Holidays

Plan Ahead: Identify potential triggers and plan how to handle them². This might include bringing a sober buddy, having a non-alcoholic drink in hand, or planning an exit strategy if things become overwhelming².

Lean on Your Support Network: Don't hesitate to reach out to friends, family, or support groups for help². Having a strong support system can make a big difference.

Set Boundaries: It's okay to say no to events or situations that might compromise your recovery². Prioritize your well-being and communicate your needs clearly and respectfully².

Practice Self-Care: Make time for activities that recharge your mind and body, such as exercise, meditation, or spending time in nature³.

Create New Traditions: Consider starting new, sober friendly traditions that can help you enjoy the holidays without relying on substances⁴.

Resources for Help

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health or addiction during the holiday season, there are resources available:

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): 1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Text "NAMI" to 741741 for crisis support
- American Addiction Centers: 1-866-644-4401

Remember, you're not alone. The holiday season can be challenging, but with the right support and strategies, you can navigate it successfully. Take care of yourself and reach out for help when you need it.

Resources:

- 1 [mentalhealthfirstaid.org](https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org)
- 2 [americanaddictioncenters.org](https://www.americanaddictioncenters.org)
- 3 [samhsa.gov](https://www.samhsa.gov)
- 4 [continuumrecoverycenterofcolorado.com](https://www continuumrecoverycenterofcolorado.com)



DECEMBER 2024

2 MEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY, Mondays at Grace, Tripoli & Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (except holidays)

5 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY, Synod Office, 10 a.m.

6 CANDIDACY COMMITTEE, Synod Office, 9:30 a.m.

12 GLOBAL CHURCH TOGETHER NETWORK, Zoom, 10 a.m.

12 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

23-31 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED, Christmas Break

JANUARY 2025

1 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED, New Year's Day

2 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

6 SYNOD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, Zoom, 2:30 p.m.

6 MEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY, Mondays at Grace, Tripoli & Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (except holidays)

9 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

16 DEANS & CHAPLAINS MEETING, Zoom, 10 a.m.

18 SYNOD COUNCIL, Zoom, 9 a.m.

20 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

21 SUBSTANCE ABUSE NETWORK, Teams, 3:30 p.m.

23 CHURCH TREASURERS WORKSHOP, Zoom, 6:30-8 p.m.

FEBRUARY 2025

3 MEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY, Mondays at Grace, Tripoli & Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (except holidays)

6 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

13 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

21-22 SWO WINTER RETREAT, Ewalu Stone Retreat Center, Strawberry Point

MARCH 2025

3 MEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY, Mondays at Grace, Tripoli & Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (except holidays)

6 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY, Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

7 CANDIDACY COMMITTEE, Synod Office

11 LUTHERAN DAY ON THE HILL, Des Moines

13 RACIAL JUSTICE ADVOCACY NETWORK, Synod Office & Zoom, 3:30 p.m.

15 SYNOD COUNCIL, Synod Office, 9:30 a.m.

22 SWO MEETING, Synod Office, 9 a.m.-12 noon

APRIL 2025

3 TRANSITIONAL/INTERIM MINISTRY MTG., Zoom, 9:30 a.m.

7 MEN'S MINISTRY BIBLE STUDY, Mondays at Grace, Tripoli & Zoom, 7:30 p.m. (except holidays)

18 SYNOD OFFICE CLOSED, Good Friday

INSTALLING

- **Rev. Randy Baldwin**, St. Paul, Maynard, Dec. 15
- **Rev. Eric Thiele**, Decorah, Decorah, pending
- **Rev. Adam Starrett**, Elgin, Elgin & Highland, Elkader, pending

INTERVIEWING

- **Asbury**, Lord of Life, Rev. Karla Wildberger, interim
- **Decorah**, Good Shepherd, Rev. April Ulring Larson, interim
- **Dows, First***
- **Dysart**, Zion
- **Eldorado, St. Peter***
- **Greene**, St. Peter, Rev. Jennifer Edinger, interim
- **Independence**, Immanuel
- **Janesville, Messiah***
- **Jesup**, American & La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee), Rev. Patricia Mohr-Kelly, interim
- **Jewell**, Bethesda
- **Lake Mills**, Salem
- **Leland, Our Savior & Garner, Faith (Miller)***
- **Osage**, Our Savior's
- **Rockwell**, St. Peter
- **Thornton, St. Paul***
- **Toeterville**, St. Peter & Carpenter, Deer Creek

- **Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd***
- **Waterloo, Our Savior's**, Rev. Lisa Kruse, contract*

SELF-STUDY

- **Cedar Falls**, Bethlehem
- **Clarion**, First
- **Decorah, St. John's & Hauge***
- **Decorah**, Washington Prairie
- **Hawkeye, Trinity***
- **Joice**, Bethany; Lake Mills, Winnebago; Northwood, Silver Lake; Albert Lea, Minn., Lunder (One in Christ Lutheran Parish)
- **New Hampton**, Trinity, Rev. Sue Cira, contract
- **Ossian**, Ossian
- **Tripoli**, Grace
- **Washburn, Redeemer***

ROSTER CHANGES

- **Rev. Amy Eisenmann**, transferred to Eastern North Dakota
- **Rev. Grant Woodley**, disability
- **Rev. David Tielbar**, transfer from Northern Great Lakes

*Part-time Call

OBITUARY

Word has been received that **Rev. Richard Simon Hanson**, age 93, passed away on Sept. 23, 2024, at Agrace Hospice in Fitchburg, Wisconsin. He graduated from Luther College in 1953. He attended Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul and was ordained in 1958. He served as a professor of religion at Luther College from 1963 until 1999.

A memorial service is planned for this spring in Decorah. He is survived by three children and several grandchildren. His full obituary is available at driftlessjournal.com/obituary/richard-simon-hanson.

PRAYER CALENDAR

Please join in praying for the following leaders and ministries of the Northeastern Iowa Synod and ELCA:

DECEMBER 1-7, 2024

- **H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders**
- Rev. Dennis Niezwaag
- Rev. Lee Gable
- Rev. Cindy Krause
- Jean Swiggum
- St. John Lutheran Church (Bennington), Waterloo
- Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Waterloo

DECEMBER 8-14, 2024

- Rev. Denise Anderson
- Rev. Lynn Noel
- Rev. Tracy Hinkel
- Rev. Kristin Wendland
- Rev. Dr. Elaine Siemsen
- Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, Waterloo
- Trinity American Lutheran Church, Waterloo

DECEMBER 15-21, 2024

- **Middle East Peace**
- Rev. Charles Peterson
- Rev. Donovan Hommen
- Rev. Nathan Wicks
- Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Waterloo
- St. John Lutheran Church (Stapleton), Waucoma
- St. John Lutheran Church, Waukon
- Redeemer Lutheran Church, Waverly

DECEMBER 22-31, 2024

- Rev. Jim Cherry
- Rev. Keith Sievers
- Rev. Joan E. Haug
- Joan Dalen
- Rev. Dan Baldwin
- Rev. Dewayne Teig
- Rev. Paul Schaedig
- Rev. Cal Fick
- Margaret Browne
- Rev. Maureen Howard
- Carolyn B. Oppedahl
- Karen Fretheim
- Rev. David Werges

JANUARY 1-11, 2025

- **H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders**
- Marilyn Thalacker
- Rev. Todd Burrichter
- Linda Groe
- Rev. Kathy Graves
- Rev. Michael Sherer
- Rev. Ruth Ann Shriver
- Rev. Gary Heidt-Johnson
- Zion Lutheran Church, Castalia
- St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church & School, Waverly
- St. Paul Lutheran Church, Wellsburg
- Zion Lutheran Church, West Union

JANUARY 12-18, 2025

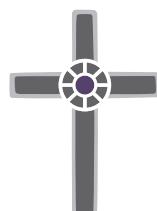
- **Middle East Peace**
- Rev. Adam Starrett
- Bishop Elizabeth Eaton
- ELCA Churchwide Staff, Chicago, IL
- Northeastern Iowa Synod Council
- Bishop Lorna Halaas & Staff of the Western Iowa Synod
- Bishop Amy Current & Staff of the Southeastern Iowa Synod
- St. James Lutheran Church, Allison

JANUARY 19-25, 2025

- Rev. Kurt Hansen
- Verona Zelle
- Rev. Luther Thoresen
- Rev. Lois Knutson
- Jane Chilson
- Rev. Nancy Larson
- St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Arlington

JANUARY 26-31, 2025

- Rev. Sarah Nye
- Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Asbury
- Trinity Lutheran Church, Belmond
- St. Olaf Lutheran Church, Belmond
- Calmar Lutheran Church, Calmar
- Springfield Lutheran Church, Calmar





Good News

Nov/ Dec
2024

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.

President

Hello all Mary and Martha people! We had a grand time on our Mary & Martha travel day. 24 people meet at the Grotto (including 2 men) Lots of rocks. On to Algona with an interesting POW museum and nativity scene. We are looking forward to planning a trip next fall.

We have 2 additional fun events planned for this year. 1. Our winter retreat at the Stone Center in Strawberry Point is scheduled for Feb. 22-3. Come and spend the night or just come for the day! More details to come! 2. We will have a party, June 14, where we plan on having a bunch of things to hear about and learn. If you have a group you would like people to know about, let us know and we will try to get them there.

On March 22 your SWO board will have a meeting in Waverly with all interested/cluster leaders invited. We will be finalizing June party gathering activities. Make plans to join us at one or all the fun events!

*Sparkling with Jesus,
Christine Schmitt*

Justice Committee

Biblical justice involves making individuals, communities, and cosmos whole by upholding both goodness and impartiality. In our Bibles we read: *Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world*, James 1:27, or *The righteous care about justice for the poor, but the wicked have no such concern*, Proverbs 29:7. Justice flows from God's heart and character. On September 11, our church held its annual church bazaar. It is a great event that shows how the people share God's great love by purchasing items at a greater value, knowing that the money raised will be given as Love Gifts to those not as fortunate. It is also a great time to have fellowship and show love for one another. Our church also

participates by making care kits and quilts for LWR that will be brought to the warehouse in Minnesota to be distributed to those in need. As God's people, justified by faith, by a God of all justice, we can experience the love of sharing and as our Pastor Dave says, "and have fun doing it." We ask the Holy Spirit to lead us to opportunities to bless others.

Submitted by Darlene Emery

Stewardship Committee

At this time of the year we especially think of what we have been given and show appreciation for the blessings we have received. One way to give is to bring Thankofferings in support of the ongoing ministries of the churchwide women's organization. These offerings support healing and wholeness for women of all ages through the affirmation and advancement of women's emotional, physical, and spiritual health. We also have members that work together to prepare quilts and kits or roll bandages to be sent to LWR. This "work" brings hope & comfort to neighbors worldwide. Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your work to the Lord, and your plans will be established.*

We are asking **each unit** to share the number of kits/quilts being sent to LWR, as well as other contributions that your unit may have sent, by contacting:

JoAnn Brunsvold or Alice Greimann
sjbruns@wctatel.net alice.greimann71@gmail.com
(641) 512-4236 (641) 430- 7527

Submitted by Alice Greimann

The Cluster D Spring Gathering will be at Highland Lutheran Church, rural Decorah on April 5, 2025 coffee 8:30am and Gathering at 9:30 am.



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

Discipleship Committee

What does discipleship mean to you? As Women of the ELCA we practice seven marks of discipleship: praying, studying, worshiping, inviting, encouraging, serving, and giving. Whether it be making quilts or kits for Lutheran World Relief or other charities – local or international or assisting in worship, we grow in faith and share what we've learned with friends and neighbors. Email our NE IA SWO discipleship committee members with your group's ideas. We'd love to share them with others!

To give you a start, I'll share a few things we have done at Our Saviour's and St. Paul in Mason City: the Lily Bag Project for women who need clothing immediately at the hospital or the women's crisis center after escaping abuse; the Little Food Pantry that is always open to anyone to not only take food items, but to also give food items they may have to share. We also connect through Bible study groups (with and without the men in our congregations). Our present Bible study is based on the video series, "The Chosen", where we are developing a better understanding of life during Jesus' time and what it was like for him and his followers.

We look forward to hearing from each of you so that we may share your ideas and expand our discipleship activities. Join me in prayer: *Dear Lord, may we be good disciples by worshipping you, studying your word, doing your works, and encouraging others to do the same. In your Son's name we pray. Amen*

*Chris VanDeventer, Karen Weltzin
Becky Pahl, Donna Busch*



Mary and Martha fun for all

Friday Feb 21 and Sat. Feb. 22, 2025

YOU and your friends are invited to a retreat to Celebrate all the Marys and Marthas! This is a Celebration of YOU!

Who is welcome? Any woman who belongs to the ELCA and their friends.

A Woman, a Christian, a helper, a doer, a listener, a learner.

Activities: bible board games, mixer game, puzzle, *bring your own crafting projects*
(everything is welcome including: Quilting, bandage rolling, knit/crochet, etc)

Celebrating and learning and doing.



Friday Feb 21st arrive anytime after 4pm

join soup supper, hymn sing, game, puzzle and crafting time.

Stay overnight and meals for \$35

Beds, bedding, and towels included (Share a room)

What to bring: comfortable clothes, craft projects opt, yourself with a joyful heart

Saturday Feb. 22nd: come for the day,

breakfast/ coffee @ 8am; Noon meal, bible study, hymn sing, bible study, crafting time and lots of fellowship

Welcome @ 9am, Day ends @ 3pm

Day only rate for meals and building usage \$15

Registration deadline: Monday Feb 19th

EWALU Stone Center, 35124 Hwy 13, Strawberry Point, IA
which is 2.5 miles north of Strawberry Point. Handicap accessible facility.

hosted by Your NE IA Women of the ELCA Synod Board and Katie's Fund

Snow dates Feb. 28- March 1

questions ? contact: Christine Schmitt candcschmitt@gmail.com
641-397-2572 or cell 641-220-5361

CALENDAR

Feb 22-3	EWALU Winter Retreat
Mar 22	SWO/ Cluster Meeting in Waverly
Apr 5	Cluster D Spring Gathering @ Highland Lutheran
Jun 14	M & M Sharing Party, TBD

NEIA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

Christine Schmitt, President

641-220-5361, candcschmitt2@gmail.com

Alice Greimann, Vice President

641-456-2973, alice.greimann71@gmail.com

Chris VanDeventer, Secretary

515-320-2877, cdvandeven@gmail.com

Contact Women of the ELCA

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

773.380.2730 or 800.638.3522, ext. 2730

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2026 Triennial Gathering in Des Moines

www.WELCAtg.org

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA-