



Synod Assembly to focus on 'Growing Together'

Voting members will consider a proposal for biennial assemblies

by Marcia Hahn

The Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly returns to Luther College in Decorah for the first time since 2017 when it meets June 9-10 with the theme "Growing Together in Faith, Hope and Love."

2023 SYNOD ASSEMBLY

The assembly will kick off Friday evening with a worship service followed by orientation and social time. Saturday's schedule will include morning prayer, three plenary sessions, lunch, ministry exhibits and closing worship. The plenary sessions will include voting for elections and resolutions, and reports from the synod networks, partner ministries, Bishop Kevin Jones and Jill Beverlin, this year's churchwide representative who serves as program manager for ELCA Coaching Ministry. In addition, three different speakers will present on faith, hope and love—the three emphases of the assembly theme.

"Our theme builds on the 'Better Together' theme from last year," says Bishop Kevin Jones. "We're now growing together in these specific areas of faith, hope and love."

NEW ASSEMBLY FORMAT

The assembly will feature a couple format changes from previous years: two pre-assembly Zoom meetings to review resolutions and financial



matters, and no workshops or educational sessions at the assembly.

The two informational Zoom meetings will take place in the week or two prior to the assembly. In one of the meetings, voting members will learn about the proposed synod budget and compensation guidelines. The other meeting will review submitted resolutions and memorials. Voting members will have opportunities to ask questions during the live meetings. Both Zoom sessions will be recorded so that those who can't join them live will have access to view them later.

"I often hear from people that they don't always feel fully informed," Jones says. "We will have discussions ahead of time for those who want it so that people will come to the assembly with a sense of being prepared."

One of the resolutions that voting members will consider is for the assembly to take place every other year, rather than annually. The

synod's constitution requires a regular meeting of the synod assembly to be held at least triennially, as determined

by the synod council. Last fall, the synod council appointed a task force to look into options for how often the synod assembly should meet. The council approved the task force's recommendation for the synod assembly to meet once every two years. During the off years, the synod would host



Kevin Jones

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service/ educational events open for anyone in the synod to attend. Even though the synod council has the authority to make the change, the council decided to bring the proposal to this year's synod assembly for discussion and vote.

"The churchwide assembly went from meeting every two years to every three years, and a number of ELCA synods are moving away from annual assemblies," Jones notes.

One consideration with the move to biennial assemblies is how it would affect elections and when some terms would start for new council members, committee members, and voting members for the synod assembly and churchwide assembly. If needed, the constitution allows special meetings of the synod assembly to be called by the bishop with consent of the synod council for defined purposes, such as elections or other issues.

"Plans are we would elect people for the next two years, but their terms would not start until 2024," Jones says. "The budget would be approved for one year with a spending plan for the second year. Assembly voting members may be asked to represent their congregations for two years, in case a special meeting is needed during the off year."

Jones has created a video that can be shared at conference assemblies



Jan Glaspie

NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

June 9-10, 2023
Luther College, Decorah, Iowa

THEME

Growing Together in Faith, Hope and Love

PRE-ASSEMBLY ZOOM MEETINGS

Two Zoom meetings will be scheduled prior to the assembly for voting members to review:

- The proposed budget and compensation guidelines
- Resolutions and memorials submitted by May 1, 2023 (Additional resolutions may be submitted during the assembly)

SYNOD ASSEMBLY VOTING MEMBERS

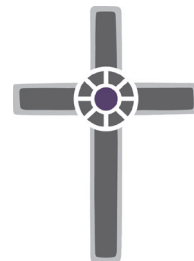
The synod council has approved the following lay congregational representation for the 2023 synod assembly:

- The total lay voting members from any congregation be as nearly as possible 45 percent male and 45 percent female

- two voting members elected by each congregation

- plus one youth voting member elected by each congregation (must be eligible to vote in their congregation)

- plus an additional voting member for every 750 baptized members, i.e., 750=1 additional, 1500=2 additional, 2250=3, etc.



SYNOD ASSEMBLY OFFERING

The synod assembly offering will be designated to the following:

- The H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders to help provide scholarships for seminarians from the Northeastern Iowa Synod
- The Bishop Crisis Fund, which is used at the discretion of the Bishop to directly aid persons within the synod territory in times of need

and congregational meetings to explain the idea behind having synod assemblies every other year, how it can be a benefit, and how some of the logistics would work. The video can be found in the synod's video library at www.neiasynod.org/download-category/worshipresources and on the synod's YouTube page.

"The biennial assembly would allow us to be more focused on the business at hand when we are in as-

sembly and to gather in worship, learning and fellowship in the non-assembly years."

SYNOD-WIDE GATHERINGS

Jan Glaspie, assistant to the Bishop and synod assembly manager, says she is excited about the possibility of planning synod-wide events that everyone could participate in. If the proposal for biennial assemblies is

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Lots to Learn at the Bishops Academy

Every two years the bishops of the ELCA and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) gather for continuing education and fellowship at the Bishops Academy. These are times for learning, conversation, and fellowship.

This year the Academy met in Bloomington, Minnesota. Normally the Academy seeks a warmer location in January, but we were taking advantage of some conference center credits that remained after the 2022 Youth Gathering was cancelled. The Twin Cities greeted us with 15 inches of freshly fallen snow, which played havoc on travel plans. At the last minute, the schedule was rearranged, and a Zoom option was created for those who couldn't make it because of the weather.

This year, bishops turned in proposals for talks and nine were chosen by the planning committee. We heard presentations on A Theology of Disability, Global Partners in

Malawi and Wisconsin, The Authority of Bishops, The Response of the Church After the Tulsa Massacre, Rural Ministry, Being Church Together (how to disagree and get along), and more.

We also took an afternoon tour of the George Floyd Memorial and visited with people from three local ELCA congregations. They shared what their congregations experienced in those summer days of 2020 and in the years since. These ELCA congregations became safe places for people to find information, food and supplies (provided by donations), medical help, and more. Leaders, both lay and clergy, shared what it meant to open their doors during the early months of the

"I am grateful for the opportunity to learn with colleagues and have my thinking challenged."



pandemic to care for neighbors and be community together. We finished the evening with an Epiphany worship service at another ELCA congregation in St. Paul.

Like so many continuing education events, I came home with lots to process and think about. I am grateful for the opportunity to learn with colleagues and have my thinking challenged. The result, I pray, is that I am better equipped to serve in ministry here in Northeastern Iowa by the power of the Holy Spirit.

—Bishop Kevin Jones

Nominations sought for new ELCA commission

Nominations are being accepted to fill the ELCA's new Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC).

Voting members at the 2022 Churchwide Assembly adopted a memorial concerning restructuring the ELCA's governance, and in November the Churchwide Council authorized establishment of the CRLC to review the current governance and structure of the ELCA.

The commission will consist of no more than 35 voting members from across the ELCA. Each synod council

or executive committee may nominate two people from the synod to be considered for the commission. In addition, at-large members will be chosen from among all the names received, both from synod nominations and from the open nomination process.

Anyone from the Northeastern Iowa Synod who would like to be considered for the commission or who would like to nominate someone else (with their permission) may send their name, brief resume and a paragraph telling why they want

to serve on the commission to Alison Pettit at the synod office, pettita@neiasynod.org, by Feb. 19.



Open nominations for those wanting to be considered for an at-large position must be submitted online by March 9.

To learn more about this opportunity and to begin the nomination process, visit www.elca.org/CRLC.

Lutheran Day on the Hill

March 14, 2023

The annual Lutheran Day on the Hill, sponsored by Lutheran Services in Iowa and the three Iowa ELCA synods, is set for Tuesday, March 14 in Des Moines.

More than 200 people will gather at St. John's Lutheran Church in Des Moines to learn about critical issues facing Iowa children, adults and families. The morning kicks off with a key note speaker, a welcome from LSI's CEO, John Twardos, and a brief message from one of Iowa's three bishops. Participants will then break into groups to learn how different service lines at LSI are supporting the most vulnerable Iowans. After learning how to advocate from LSI's lobbyist, everyone will head to the Iowa State Capitol for lunch and an afternoon to meet directly with legislators.

This year's event will focus on three critical issues:

- Investing in a strong human services workforce
- Support for services that empower refugees and immigrants
- Support for Iowa's mental health system

Stay up to date with the latest news regarding Lutheran Day on the Hill by following Lutheran Services in Iowa on Facebook and Instagram and checking their webpage at www.lsiowa.org/LDH.



Women in Ministry Retreat

March 12-14, 2023

Women from the Northeastern Iowa Synod who are rostered ministers or on their way to being rostered ministers are invited to a Women in Ministry Retreat March 12-14 at Ewalu Stone Center, Strawberry Point.



With a "Wellness and Spiritual Renewal" theme, women will have the opportunity to rest, renew, and explore a variety of activities, including mindfulness meditation, spiritual direction, group painting, chair massages, worship and free time to connect with one another.

The event begins at 5 p.m. Sunday with supper provided, and concludes at 11:30 a.m. Tuesday with brunch. The actual cost per participant is \$200, but thanks to funding from Portico Benefit Services, Thrivent and the Northeastern Iowa Synod, the registration fee is \$150, which includes lodging and five meals. Anyone needing additional assistance with costs may contact Pastor Kristen Corr Rod, director for Evangelical Mission, at 319-352-1414 or rodk@neiasynod.org.

To learn more and to register online, visit www.neiasynod.org.

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Send news for the March 2023 issue to Marcia Hahn by Feb. 16.

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. To request a printed version, call the synod office.



www.neiasynod.org

Mission Support Intent

Congregations are reminded to submit their Mission Support Intent Forms for 2023. The information provided through these forms is useful for the synod budgeting process.

Completed forms should be submitted to Michelle Van Riper at vanriperm@neiasynod.org or by mail to PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

To download the form, visit www.neiasynod.org/download-category/congregations.

Rural Ministry Conference to include international guests

April 16-18, 2023
Dubuque, Iowa

Registration is open for the 2023 Rural Ministry Conference, set for April 16-18 at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in Dubuque. Wartburg Theological Seminary is sponsoring this ecumenical conference in conjunction with the 7th Quadrennial Gathering of the International Rural Churches Association (IRCA). The event will be an opportunity to meet and converse with others from around the world who are engaged in rural ministries.

This year's theme, "Flourishing: Land, People and Community," will explore God's intent that the land, people and community flourish in the midst of global climate change, a global pandemic and other challenges faced by rural communities.

The Rev. Dr. Gil Waldkoenig, professor of Church in Society and director of the Town and Country Church Institute at United Lutheran Seminary, will share his roots in Appalachian music and soundscapes to inspire people to sing and tell the gospel and listen for its resonance in the places God has called them. Dr. Heather Major, lecturer in Hebrew Language at Highland University of Highlands and Islands, Scotland, and vice-chair of the International Rural Churches Association, will speak about approaches to mission and ministry in rural places.

A number of breakout sessions are planned, including practical ways congregations can address climate change, presented by the Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson, professor of contextual theology at WTS, and a Global Farmer Experience simulation of the daily challenges farmers in developing countries face, presented by the Rev. Mark Swanson, regional director for Growing Hope Globally.

REGISTRATION DETAILS

Early bird registration, due Feb. 28, is \$185 for one or \$165 per person for two or more registering at the same time. After Feb. 28, the standard rate is \$200 for one person or \$180 per person for two or more. The registration deadline is March 30. The conference rate for a hotel room is \$86 per night if reserved by March 13; call the Best Western Plus Dubuque at 563-557-8000 to reserve. People can join two additional conference days with members of the International Rural Churches Association for an additional \$85 fee, plus additional housing.

More details about the conference and online registration will be available at www.wartburgseminary.edu.

HOST AN INTERNATIONAL DELEGATE

Delegates from Europe, Asia, Africa and Oceania are expected to come to Dubuque as part of the International Rural Churches Association quadrennial meeting. The international pastors have indicated that they would like to experience and talk with rural congregations in the U.S. WTS is looking for some congregations within two or three hours of Dubuque that would be willing to host one or more of these delegates for a rural immersion experience April 15 and 16. Many of the delegates have indicated a willingness to either preach or share what rural ministry is like in their home country.

Congregations interested in hosting a delegate or wanting more details should contact Barbara Fritschel at ircawts2023@gmail.com.

Make plans for Day of Renewal

April 27, 2023

Rostered ministers should mark their calendars for Thursday, April 27, to attend the annual Day of Renewal. The event is an opportunity to gather, worship and learn together. Watch for more details about the location, theme, speakers and agenda on the synod website, www.neiasynod.org, and in the *Star* newsletters.

2023 IRS Mileage Rate

The Internal Revenue Service 2023 optional standard mileage rate used to calculate the deductible costs of operating a vehicle for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes is 65.5 cents per mile. To learn more, visit www.irs.gov/newsroom.

We can learn to be generous disciples

In a recent workshop on faith and giving, the presenter reminded us that “Generosity is a basic orientation to life. It is a learned character trait, an attitude, a practice, and it is a virtue.”

I’ve met generous people before, those who are generous deep down into the core of their being. It oozes out of them in the way they talk with words and body language that say “you are welcome, it is so good you are here, and I will make sure this is a safe space for you to be you.”

When they share their time, they are fully present. When they volunteer and commit to something, you know it will be done. They know what matters to them, and they actively pray to discern what might matter to God. They support the ministries that they are called to with generous financial support and the use of their time and talents.

Have you met these generous people? There are so many traits that make up an embodied, truly generous person. One of the gifts they provide, for which I am deeply grateful, is the gift of space—a hospitality in their mind and heart. This hospitality allows me space to think, create, wonder, or simply be without fear of judgement or being mocked.

I want to be a deeply generous person like the one described in this article. Do you? Because God is so generous with abundant grace, we are called to respond by living our lives generously and giving freely of our time, talents, and money to those ministries that are important to us, and that we feel God is calling us to.

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

— Galatians 5:22-23



Liz (Albertson) Bell

Generosity is a process. It is not a destination that we arrive at; it is a goal that pulls us ever forward into new and exciting endeavors. Whether you are new to the practice of living generously or you have been practicing these skills and behaviors for years, we are all called to continue to grow in our generosity.

I hope you might join me in our mutual calling to practice the art of generous living and help to cultivate generous communities. Be a beacon of generosity that creates hospitality for those around you. Give freely of your time, talents, and money.

There is no shortage of need in our world, whether our immediate community, our geographical region, or our planet. But the good news of Jesus Christ is that God is abundant in grace. In response to that abundance, we are called to live with abundant generosity, knowing that the Holy Spirit will equip us for all the good work that we are called to do.

— 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 or use the QR Code.



Opportunity to Visit Hungary Synod Companion in June

Plans are underway for a summer trip to visit the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, which is in a companion synod relationship with the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

In August 2022, the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen, treasurer of the Shepherd of the Hills Conference and faculty member of Wartburg Theological Seminary, and the Rev. Margaret Yackel-Juleen, lead pastor of One In Faith Parish, travelled at their own expense to Hungary to lay the groundwork for a grassroots delegation from the Shepherd of the Hills conference and the Northeastern Iowa Synod to visit our brothers and sisters in Christ there.

Both pastors say they had an amazing experience thanks to the wonderful hospitality of the Hungarian Lutherans they had the privilege of meeting. They are now working to put together a delegation of up to

12 people to travel to Hungary in June 2023. Target dates are June 6-20, but may vary a bit until officially formalized. Because the size of the delegation is limited, potential participants must submit an application.

At this time, the cost is projected to be about \$2,500 per participant, which includes airfare (coach class), accommodations (double occupancy), in-country transportation, entrance fees, and meals when done as a group. There is a scholarship subsidy of up to \$1,000 per participant, if needed.

Anyone interested in the possibility of



Rev. Margaret Yackel-Juleen, left, with the delegation of folks who met her and her husband last summer when they visited a church in Pécs, Hungary.

visiting a fascinating land and one of the world's most historic and beautiful cities—Budapest, meeting wonderful, faithful Hungarian Lutheran Christians, and representing our synod, contact shephill@neitel.net for more information and to request an application. Applications must be received by March 15, 2023.

Portico Benefit Services Updates

by Jennifer Prinz, Portico Regional Representative

UTILIZE TEXT SUPPORT

The ELCA-Primary health plan employee assistance program (EAP) benefit has expanded to include Talkspace—digital, confidential online counseling with licensed therapists via text, video, or audio. Read more at [myPortico EAP](#).

RETIREMENT ON THE HORIZON?

Increase your confidence and peace of mind by learning more about developing a withdrawal strategy, utilize Social Security, plan for health care costs, and more. Participate in live virtual workshops or watch



the recordings whenever it works for you. Learn more, or sign up to participate, at [myPortico Retirement Readiness Series](#).

GET AN EARLY START ON TAXES

The Richard R. Hammar "Clergy Tax Return Preparation Guide" and the "Federal Reporting Requirements for Churches" are both available to download free at [myPortico Tax Planning Resources](#).

DEVELOP AN 'I CAN DO THIS' MINDSET

Deep breaths, time with loved ones, a good night's sleep ... what are your best practices for keeping yourself centered and healthy? If you're looking to expand your toolbox, and you have ELCA-Primary health benefits, check out Learn to Live's new course focusing on building resilience. Take the initial assessment and then enroll in the self-guided program at no out-of-pocket cost to you. www.learntolive.com/program.

Support the Iowa Bishops Ride Against Hunger

ELCA congregations and members from across Iowa are invited to join or support the three Iowa ELCA bishops as they ride this year's RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa) to fight hunger.

Bishop Kevin Jones of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, Bishop Amy Current of the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and Bishop Lorna Halaas of the Western Iowa Synod plan to ride 50-plus miles each day in the 50th RAGBRAI to highlight anti-hunger ministries and raise \$50,000 for ELCA World Hunger.

RAGBRAI is set for July 22-29, 2023. This year's route begins at Sioux City and ends at Davenport. Overnight towns along the route are Storm Lake, Carroll, Ames, Des Moines, Tama-Toledo, and Coralville.

To prepare for the ride, Bishop Jones is seeking people who would be interested in organizing some training rides in May or June around the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

"It would be great to have a few opportunities to ride around the synod with folks from Northeastern Iowa," Jones said. Anyone interested should contact the synod office, 319-352-1414.

Here are some more ways people can support the bishops on this adventure:

- **If you are on this year's route**, consider hosting the ELCA Bishops Against Hunger team on your church property or hosting the bishops and their spouses in your home or in your church building.
- **Share along the route.** If your congregation or ministry will be serving a meal, snacks, pie, water, etc. along the route, the bishops team will promote it along the way and will plan to show up and participate at your location.
- **Highlight your hunger ministry.** Share how your congregation or organization is involved in anti-hunger ministries so the bishops can highlight these before the ride and along the way.
- **Ride with the bishops** for the whole RAGBRAI route or just a day or two. Register at <https://ragbrai.com> and join team "ELCA Bishops Against Hunger."
- **Please share this information** with your congregation to consider ways to support the



bishops' ride and give a gift to fight hunger through ELCA World Hunger.

- **Pray** for this shared ministry together as One Iowa—Three Synods.
- **Consider cheering on** the Iowa bishops team along the way.

"Whether or not your town is on the RAGBRAI route this year, I encourage you to find a way to use a Thrivent Action Grant to either support us on this ride, or better yet, strengthen your own anti-hunger ministries where you live," Jones said.

To learn more about how to support the ride, to sign up for updates and to share about your hunger ministries, visit www.neiasynod.org/2023/02/bishops-ride.

Abdelkader Essay Contest for High School Students

High school students in the United States are invited to expand their global perspectives and compete for scholarship awards by entering the Abdelkader Global Citizenship Prize Essay Contest. The contest is sponsored

by the Abdelkader Education Project to help students learn about Emir Abdelkader, a 19th century humanitarian whose legacy is a model for understanding Islamic culture, interfaith relations, ethical leadership

and multiple world views.

The Abdelkader Education Project was formed in 2009 in Elkader—

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Recommended Reading List from Care for Creation

by Donna Rasmussen, Member of the Care for Creation Network

Members of the Northeastern Iowa Synod Care for Creation Network have assembled a list of recommended reading for the long days of winter. (The book titles link to descriptions on www.Goodreads.com.)

The Overstory by Richard Powers (W. W. Norton & Company, 2019) This is a long, beautiful novel as a kind of environmental fable about attempts to save old growth forests in the U.S.

Climate Justice: Hope, Resilience, and the Fight for a Sustainable Future by Mary Robinson (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018) She was the president of Ireland, brought peace there, and came to speak at Luther.

The Planet You Inherit: Letters to my Grandchildren when Uncertainty is a Sure Thing by Larry L. Rasmussen (Broadleaf Books: Minneapolis, 2022)

An Inconvenient Sequel: Truth to Power by Al Gore (Simon Schuster, 2017)

Climate Church, Climate World: How People of Faith Must Work for Change by Jim Antal (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2018)

How to Avoid a Climate Disaster: The Solutions We Have and the Breakthroughs We Need by Bill Gates (Knopf Publishing Group, 2021)

Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World by Katharine Hayhoe (Simon & Schuster, 2021) Katharine Hayhoe is an "evangelical climatologist."

America's Climate Century: What Climate Change Means for America in the 21st Century and What Americans Can Do about It by Rob Hogg



(Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2013) Rob Hogg is a former state senator in the Iowa Legislature.

The Ecology of Commerce by Paul Hawken (HarperBusiness, 1994)

The Land Remembers: The Story of a Farm and Its People by Ben Logan (Itchy Cat Press, 1975) Ben Logan, who studied under Aldo Leopold, tells how his family farm, located just across the Mississippi near Viroqua, Wis., shaped the lives of him and his family.

Bayou Farewell: The Rich Life and Tragic Death of Louisiana's Cajun Coast by Mike Tidwell (Vintage, 2004).

"The Big Thirst: The Secret Life and Turbulent Future of Water" by Charles Fishman (Simon & Schuster, 2021) Shares water availability issues.

Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet by Bill McKibben (Times Books, 2010)

Storms Of My Grandchildren: The Truth About The Climate Catastrophe And Our Last Chance To Save Humanity by James Hansen (Bloomsbury Press, 2004) Iowan James Hansen is a leading climate scientist who was one of the first to raise the alarm about climate change.

The Water Will Come: Rising Seas, Sinking Cities, and the Remaking of

the Civilized World by Jeff Goodell (Little Brown & Company, 2017)

Whole Earth Discipline: An Ecopragmatist Manifesto by Stewart Brand (Viking Books, 2009) Brand was the editor of the *Whole Earth Catalog*.

Devotions: The Selected Poems of Mary Oliver by Mary Oliver (Penguin Press, 2017). More than 200 beautiful and powerful poems from across the decades of a marvelous poet's career encapsulating the interdependence of all living things and nature's offering of the glimpsed sacred.

The World-Ending Fire: The Essential Wendell Berry by Wendell Berry (Allen Lang, 2019) A collection of graceful, down-to-earth, and hopeful essays from across Berry's long life, writing of the pleasure and sanity of local communities and natural, sustainable life.

Flight Behavior by Barbara Kingsolver (HarperCollins, 2012) It's about the various effects on the individuals who live in a small town in Appalachia where, unpredictably, a flock of butterflies arrives because their migratory flight plan has been disrupted by climate change.

Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer (Milkweed Editions, 2013)

Guardians of the Trees: A Journey of Hope Through Healing the Planet: A Memoir by Kinari Webb (Flatiron Books, 2021)

UN Climate Report 2022 (un.org/en/climatechange/reports) It includes several different climate reports and a summary of the main report.

Lenten Resources for Congregations

by Pastor Kristen Corr Rod, Director for Evangelical Mission

Lent is nearly upon us, and congregations often use extra resources to help members dig deeper into their faith into this holy time.

One free resource from ELCA World Hunger is the **40 Days of Giving** Lent study guide. This resource provides five sessions that connect Psalms with stories about the work ELCA World Hunger is doing around the world. This would be a great resource to use for a Bible study or Sunday school group, or it could be utilized during worship services on Sundays or at midweek services. We have many congregations in our synod that generously give to ELCA World Hunger, so this is a great (and free!) way to learn about the work they do with our offerings.

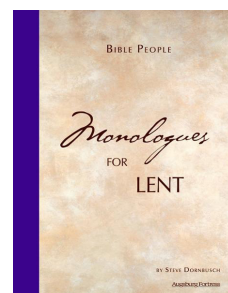
If you want to expand on the use of psalms or you just want some great music, I encourage you to check out www.psalmmersion.com. This is the website of musician Richard Bruxvoort Colligan, who has been studying the psalms for many years now. He has written many reflections on and songs about many psalms. These songs can help us gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the psalms, which were the worship songs of the ancient people of God.

Augsburg Fortress, the ELCA publishing house, has many resources available for individual and congregational use. They have a daily devotional for use during

the Lenten season called **Water and Spirit**, as well as a book of **Monologues for Lent** based on Biblical characters, which would be a great resource to use during worship services in the season of Lent.

If you're looking for resources for children and families, Augsburg Fortress publishes **Spark Worship Bulletins** for both pre-readers and readers. And the ecumenical resources **Illustrated Ministry** has beautiful coloring pages and children's bulletins for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter. They also provide several devotionals for families (although I'm sure these devotionals could be adapted for Sunday school or worship use). **Illustrated Ministry** also makes **stickers of the Easter story**, a color and cut out **Easter Resurrection Set**, and for congregations that have people who like to perform, there's even an **Easter pageant**!

May you and your congregation grow in your faith as you worship and reflect during the holy season of Lent!



Synod Assembly to focus on 'Growing Together'
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approved, planning would begin for a synod-wide educational event to be offered in 2024.

"The event would be a resource for the whole congregation, not just those coming to assembly as voting members," Glaspie says.

Event ideas include a resource fair, synod-wide worship service, and community service projects.

Workshops could be offered for musicians, Christian education leaders, secretaries, treasurers, administrators and other congregational leaders.

"To have the educational piece and a service project together is an opportunity for more people to learn about the synod networks and mission partners and to get involved in what they do," Glaspie says. "If

anyone has ideas for a workshop or a service day, please let me know. This can be a great opportunity to come together and meet new people in the synod."

Watch for more information about the 2023 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly in future issues of the *Star* newsletter, the Northeastern Iowa Synod Facebook page, and the synod website, www.neiasynod.org.

FEBRUARY EVENTS

- 2 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 4 Synodical Women's Organization Cluster Meeting (snow date), Synod Office w/virtual option, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- 10-11 Candidacy Retreat, Shalom Spirituality Center, Dubuque
- 12 Upper Iowa Conference Assembly, Decorah, Decorah, 2 p.m.
- 16 Youth Ministry Network, St. Paul's, Postville, 10 a.m.
- 19 Jubilee Spring Conference Assembly, Bethlehem, Cedar Falls and Zoom, 1 p.m.
- 19 Shechem Conference Assembly, Trinity, Hawkeye, 1:30 p.m.
- 26 Three River Conference Assembly, Fredsville, Cedar Falls, 2 p.m.

MARCH EVENTS

- 2 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 10 Candidacy Committee Approvals, 8 a.m., Synod Office
- 11 Synodical Women's Organization, Synod Office w/virtual option, 9 a.m.-12 Noon
- 12-14 Women in Ministry Retreat, Ewalu Stone Center, Strawberry Point
- 14 Lutheran Day on the Hill, Des Moines
- 16 Youth Ministry Network, Decorah, Decorah, 10 a.m.
- 18 Synod Council Meeting, Synod Office, 9 a.m.-12 Noon

APRIL EVENTS

- 6 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 7 Office Closed, Good Friday
- 16-18 Rural Ministry Conference, Best Western Hotel & Conference Center, Dubuque
- 20 Youth Ministry Network, First, Northwood, 10 a.m.
- 27 Day of Renewal, TBA

MAY EVENTS

- 4 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, Zoom, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- 6 Synodical Women's Organization, Synod Office, 9 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
- 12 Candidacy Committee Meeting, Synod Office, 8 a.m.
- 18 Youth Ministry network, St. Peter, Dubuque, 10 a.m.
- 20 Synod Council Meeting, Zoom, 9 a.m.
- 29 Office Closed, Memorial Day

INSTALLING

Rev. Jane Harris, Mason City, Our Saviour's & St. Paul, Feb. 5, 2023

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, Rev. David Powers, interim
 Dubuque, Holy Trinity, Rev. Jason Davis, interim
 Dubuque, St. John's, Rev. Ann Fritschel, interim
 Eldorado, St. Peter*
 Garnavillo, St. Peter & Clayton, Peace, Rev. Harold McMillin, contract interim
 Greene, St. Peter
 Hampton, St. Paul
 Leland, Our Savior & Garner, Faith (Miller)*
 Maynard, St. Paul, Rev. Steven Samuelson, contract interim
 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, Rev. Erika Breddin, contract pastor
 Waverly, St. Paul's, Rev. Mark Anderson, interim

SELF-STUDY

Cresco, Immanuel
 Decorah, St. John's & Hauge*
 Dows, First
 Elkader, Bethany & Strawberry Point, Emanuel, Rev. Katherine Longtin Johnson, interim
 Hawkeye, Trinity*
 Janesville, Messiah*
 Jesup, American & La Porte City, Zion (Jubilee)
 La Porte City, American
 Lake Mills, Salem
 Osage, Our Savior's
 Rockwell, St. Peter & Thornton, St. Paul
 Sumner, St. John (Buck Creek) & Oran, St. Peter
 Washburn, Redeemer
 Waterloo, Trinity*

ROSTER CHANGES

Rev. Brian King, transferred to St. Paul Area Synod
 Rev. Jason Davis, transferred from Southeast Synod
 Rev. Eugene Ketterling, deceased
 Rev. Scot McCluskey, retired
 Rev. Laurel Meester, on leave from call
 Rev. Karla Wildberger, on leave from call
 Rev. James Harbaugh, deceased

*Part-time Call

FEBRUARY 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Patricia Nelson, Waverly 1	St. Paul, Cedar Falls 2	Rev. Bryan L. Robertson, Waukon Rev. Scot McCluskey, Clear Lake 3	Fredsville, Cedar Falls 4
Bethlehem, Cedar Falls 5	Grandview University, Des Moines 6	Rev. Patricia L. Shaw, Waverly 7	Rev. Dr. Richard Simon Hanson, Decorah 8	Deacon Mildred Dieter, Waverly Rev. Kristen C. Rod, Waverly 9	Rev. Jane E. Harris, Rockwell Rev. Stephen P. Brackett, Waverly 10	Rev. Burton L. Everist, Mason City 11
Marion G. Krentz, Chicago Rev. Linda Marlett, Cedar Falls 12	St. John American, Cedar Falls 13	Luther College, Decorah 14	Deacon Jean P. Rieniets, Dubuque Rev. Roger McKinstry, Waterloo 15	Barbara Fricke, Waverly Rev. Peter R. Kowitz, Decorah 16	Middle East Peace Nazareth, Cedar Falls 17	Rev. Alan R. Schulz, Columbus Rev. David L. Coffin, Elgin Rev. Robert Ericson, Cedar Falls 18
Rev. Margaret R. Yackel-Juleen, Elkader 19	Alison M. Pettit, Charles City 20	Wartburg College, Waverly 21	Lutheran Services in Iowa, Bremwood Campus, Waverly 22	St. John, Cedar Falls 23	Lutheran Youth Organization 24	Messiah, Charles City 25
Rev. Steven L. Ullestad, Cedar Falls 26	Mosaic, Omaha, NE 27	Rev. Darrel W. Gerriets, Waverly Bishop Kevin T. Jones, Mason City 28				

OBITUARIES

Rev. Eugene Ketterling died Dec. 28, 2022, at the age of 101. He received his BA degree from Wartburg College in Waverly and graduated from Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque in 1950. He was ordained June 23, 1950. He served parishes at Center and Elgin, North Dakota, as well as Dimock/Corsica, South Dakota. After retiring from full-time ministry, he served as a visitation pastor and supply pastor.

In 2004, he and his wife, Clara, moved to Waverly, Iowa, where he was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. A memorial service for both Eugene and Clara (who passed in June 2020) took place Jan. 4 at the Good Shepherd Chapel at Bartels Lutheran Retirement Community in Waverly. They are survived by a son and daughter. A complete obituary can be found at www.kaisercorson.com.

Rev. James Harbaugh died Jan. 19, 2023, at the age of 68. He was ordained Oct. 20, 2001, in the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA. He transferred to the Northeastern Iowa Synod in 2009 and served at St. John and St. Olaf, Belmond; Trinity, Hawkeye; Zion, Castalia; and St. John and St. Paul, Guttenberg. He retired in August 2020 to Roseville, Minn. to be near his grandchildren.

He is survived by his wife, Janice; his three daughters; and four grandchildren. A celebration of life took place Jan. 27 at Mount Olive Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, with a livestream on YouTube. A complete obituary is available at www.gillbrothers.com.

Abdelkader Essay Contest for High School Students

<< *Continued from page 8*

which was named after Emir Abdelkader—as an organization committed to cultural literacy, civility and respectful engagement drawing on Emir Abdelkader's life story. The Northeastern Iowa Synod Council voted to recognize the work of the Abdelkader Project and partner with it in ministry.

The first-place scholarship prize is \$1,000, second place is \$750 and third place is \$500, along with honorable mention prizes. Essays of 1,000 to 2,000 words must be submitted by April 1, 2023.

To learn more, visit <https://abdelkaderproject.org>.





Good News

February
2023

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

Well, here we are in 2023, some things still the same and some change. At our board meeting in January we met with the Cluster presidents and heard about their plans for the new year. Watch the newsletter and FB for events and dates for your cluster.

The board also did more planning for our SWO convention on June 17, 2023 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Belmond, Ia. This is an excellent opportunity for you and your WELCA friends to come and take part in the business of the women and to meet friends, old and new. Let's all try and bring our numbers back up for our attendees since we are slowly getting back to a more normal life.

Our conversation will continue on how to use our Katie's Fund of \$1000.00. Since one of our topics of discussion was using it for leadership opportunities, I am going to copy from Linda Post Bushkofsky's letter information I think you will find of interest.

1. Thank you all for being so patient in waiting for the \$1,000 grant from Katie's Fund. I apologize for the delay. The process has taken much longer than expected.
2. Information about the Triennial convention can be found at welca.org/convention.
3. The 2023 Leadership Event will be held February 17-18, 2023. A planning team has been busy at work, and they are pleased to announce that the online leadership event will be open to all who wish to attend.
4. Our churchwide executive board has a policy encouraging all SWOs and units to spend down their monetary reserves at the end of the year in a way that reflects the interdependent relationships among all expressions of this organization. Sometimes ministry requires that a small amount of savings be held from year to year. It is up to each synodical organization and unit to annually decide how much to keep in reserves for the next year. This is a reminder that before the end of this fiscal year (January 31, 2023), each SWO and unit is encouraged to spend down reserves and to support the churchwide organization in that spend-down.

Hope you all have a happy New Year and Blessings to each and every one of you.
Cindy Pogge, President

Discipleship Committee

Christ said, *By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.* John 13:25

But how will the world know about Jesus? By "this"? "This" meaning if "we" Christians have love for one another? Don't we need to evangelize? Don't we need to recruit? What about the whole baptize all nations and the Great Commission? Yes, yes that is all true! Jesus did command his disciples, including us to spread the Gospel so all could know about Jesus' saving grace. And how to do that? - by our discipleship. By being a Christian. The Holy Spirit takes care of the rest!

How beautiful the words of this song written in the 1960s by a Catholic priest, the late Father Peter Scholtes.

We are one in the Spirit we are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land
We will work with each other we will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride

All praise to the Father from whom all things come
And all praise to Christ Jesus his only Son
And all praise to the Spirit who makes all things one.

Submitted by Lynda Akers

Stewardship Committee

Christian Stewardship can be defined as **the responsibility that Christians have in maintaining and using wisely the gifts that God has bestowed.** "*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.*"

1 Peter 4:10.

That giving and serving spirit seems to come easier at certain times of the year. We are reminded so much at holiday times that others less fortunate need to be remembered and we tend to increase our donations of money and food. But what happens when the holidays are over, when we're tired and a little worn, and we just want to "hunker down" and let winter pass. Sometimes, our desire to help others gets put on a back burner. We would

be hard-pressed to find any Biblical text that directs us to only use our gifts for just two months out the year.

Let's keep the spirit alive all year long. Praise God each day for the varied gifts God has given and use those gifts wisely to share with others.

Submitted by Donna Busch

Justice Committee

The word justice means many different things, but my focus this month is providing food for those in need. We hear of people starving around the world but we also need to know that there are people here in Iowa that face food insecurity. The Northeast Iowa Food Bank of Iowa continually works at making a difference for Iowans in need. Did you know that one in six people in Iowa don't have enough to eat. What can we do to help? A very easy way is donating food to your local pantry, either a permanent pantry or a mobile pantry. Check their website to find one near you. [Northeast Iowa Food Bank \(neifb.org\)](http://neifb.org) Mobile food pantries can be found in 17 communities in Northeast Iowa and their truck comes to you with most once a month. Counties served in NE Iowa: Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Buchanan, Butler, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Floyd, Grundy, Howard, Mitchell, Poweshiek, Tama, Winneshiek. From Isaiah 58:7, *Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help.*

There is a lot that happens behind the scenes, at the NE IA Food Bank. Food is gathered and sorted through individual and retail donations, food drives and wholesale purchases. Some food is repackaged. Last year, the Food Bank distributed more than 6.63 million meals within this 17 county service area. Other important things they sponsor with are the Backpack Program, Community Gardens, Elderly Nutrition, Summer Feeding and more. Whether it is food or money, donations help the Northeast Iowa Food Bank fight hunger. As Christians we are to feed the poor and help people who are in need. From Hebrews 13:16, *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

Submitted by Vickie Grube

Decorah LWR Ingathering

November 5, 2022 was the Lutheran World Relief - Fall - In - Gathering day. It was a rainy fall day and as usual the LWR truck was set up at Olson's Explosives in Decorah. We received donations from Clusters B, D, and I. We also received donations from churches in Waukon, Spring Grove and Spring Valley, MN. A total of 752 boxes were loaded into the truck, which included 1474 Quilts, 606 Personal Care Kits, 1502 School Kits, 524 Baby Care Kits and 92 Fabric Kits. Many thanks to all who helped with the "heavy lifting" (loading the truck), to Olson's Explosives for their continued support, and especially to each and every individual for the countless hours spent quilting, organizing, and assembling various kits. We CAN make a

difference! We DO make a difference! May 6, 2023 is the next date for LWR Ingathering.

Submitted by Carol Maki
camaki44@gmail.com

CALENDAR

- 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
- Apr 22 Upper Iowa Gathering @ Big Canoe, Decorah
- Apr 23 Little Flock Gathering @ Elgin
- May 6 SWO Board Meeting, Waverly, 9 am-12 pm
Decorah LWR Ingathering, Olson's Explosives
- June 16 SWO Board Meeting @ gathering site @ Trinity, Belmond
- June 17 35th Annual NE IA WELCA Gathering @ Trinity, Belmond
- 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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*Articles are due by 1st of the preceding month e.g.
April 1 for May issue)*

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Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA



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

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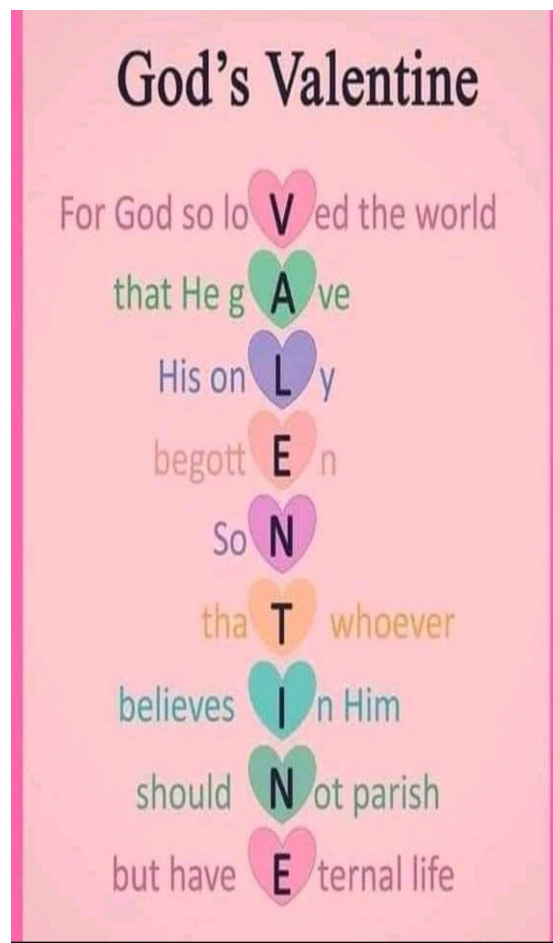


February ... the month with the least number of days on the calendar but seems like the longest. The weather can be cloudy, foggy, snowy, cold, rainy or sunny (sometimes all of them on the same day!) February has a number of special days - the best known of which are Valentine's Day, American Heart Month, Groundhog Day, Super Bowl Sunday, Presidents' Day, and, this year, Ash Wednesday.

I found a few others that aren't as well known: Random Acts of Kindness Week, Dark Chocolate Day, Tater Tot Day, Ice Cream for Breakfast Day and a whole lot more. The ones we recognize most are Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday.

These are the ones I will highlight here in this article. Enjoy your month of February and let's hope the weather doesn't bring too much more snow!

Sue Cira, Zion & Immanuel
Crane Creek Congregations



■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ A Valentine's Day Service Project

(taken from Feb. 2019 Faith at Home)

Encourage your kids to show their love for God by serving someone else. They could complete a simple service project like making a meal, shoveling snow, or cleaning for someone who could use help. Have the kids make a valentine for the person and include the words: "We love because God first loved us" or "We are valentines of God."

✚ LENT ✚

Lent is a 40-day liturgical season that begins on Ash Wednesday and concludes on Easter. Sundays are not included in the 40-day count because every Sunday is a joyful celebration of Jesus' resurrection. Though not biblical, Lent has long been a tradition in the Christian Church, and it is thought that the tradition of the 40 days recalls the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness fasting and being tempted by Satan (Matthew 4:1-11), the 40 days and nights Noah and his family spent on the ark and the 40 years of Israel's wandering in the wilderness. Focused on the Easter promise of new life and renewed faith, Lent invites us to look honestly at ourselves as we seek to be strengthened in the call to be Christ's disciples. Lent is considered a time when many people make a special focus on enhancing their ever-growing and loving relationship with God. Christ's life, ministry, and death are remembered during this season. It's also a time to think about how God is with us all the time. You may choose to do this through prayer, reading the Bible, helping others, or something else. Anything that connects you with God is a great practice. We can ask what is breaking down (in individuals, our congregations, our communities, and in the world) and what is waiting to be recreated or revitalized ... the hope of new life that comes through baptismal waters.

Ash Wednesday



*Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*

ECCLESIASTES 3:20

Ash
Wednesday
is the first
day of Lent.
On this day,
Christians

focus on their complete sinfulness and Christ's suffering and death to insure their salvation. Ashes are referred to many times in the Old Testament as signs of sorrow, mourning, humility, and repentance, and on Ash Wednesday they are used to remind people of their mortality; that "you are dust, and to dust you shall return." (Genesis 3:19).

Here's an Activity to try ... Pretzel Prayer Pals

With the pretzel being a common food associated with the season of Lent and prayer, it is a great way to share your faith with others. The shape of the pretzel twist is patterned after the common posture of early Christians in prayer - arms crossed or folded across their chest, each hand touching the opposite shoulder.

Bake your own pretzels or buy the twists from a store. Place a few pretzels in a clear plastic bag, seal the bag, and attach a card or a note letting your "prayer pal" know you are praying for them during this season of Lent. You can add decorations to make it personalized.



This information is prepared for you by the **Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network** for use by families and local congregations. Like our page on Facebook and our posted resources will appear in your newsfeed. Our page is [Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](#)



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