

Lay members embrace new roles during transition

by Marcia Hahn

From preaching in the pulpit to sharing home communion visits, lay members are taking on new roles to carry out ministry when a pastor is not available.

HOME COMMUNION TEAM

St. Peter, Greene, has been without a called pastor since May 2022, so the congregation relies on supply pastors to offer Holy Communion once a month during the worship service. A team of lay members began extending that ministry in December to bring communion to the homes of members who aren't able to attend church and to residents of the nearby care center.

"Everyone on the team has a relationship with the people they are serving, whether it is an old neighbor or an old friend," says Jeff Dralle, who started the home communion team with his wife Pam and parish nurse Jo Ann Peterson. "The visits are quite rewarding."

About a dozen lay members comprise the St. Peter home communion team. Team members set up their own appointments to bring the communion elements to people in their homes and at the care center. Jeff and Pam prepare the pre-packaged communion kits and place them on the altar to be consecrated by the visiting pastor during the worship service. The pastor recognizes the team members at the altar and gives them a sending blessing.

The volunteers complete their home communion visits over the next few days.

Dralle says he tries to be proactive in reaching out to members in their homes, rather than waiting for a communion request. "If someone hasn't been to church in a couple years, we will call them and explain how we are authorized to bring them communion," he says. "The key is for them to accept us as lay people delivering consecrated elements. These are sanctioned actions that are blessed by the ELCA."

The team members are paired with people they already know, so they take time to ask about their family, listen to any concerns and ask if they have any questions. They bring the Sunday bulletin and share about what is going on in the church. They also bring a printed liturgy to follow, and they take communion with those they visit — to share the body and blood of Christ with them.



Jeff Dralle and Jo Ann Peterson, members of the home communion team for St. Peter Lutheran, Greene, prepare communion kits and the elements for consecration so that team members can give communion to members in their homes.

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“Our visits can easily consume an hour” Dralle says. “Pam and I like to hold hands with them and say the Lord’s Prayer together. It creates a more meaningful service.”

These renewed friendships can extend beyond the communion visits. Team members will often make follow-up phone calls to those they have visited and send greeting cards to wish them well on special occasions.

Ninety-nine-year-old Norma Noel has always been connected to St. Peter Lutheran, where she taught Sunday school for more than 50 years and was baptized, confirmed and married. She continues to knit for the prayer shawl ministry, but in recent years she has been unable to attend worship services in person. St. Peter’s pastor used to bring communion to her home whenever she requested; now, her old friend Sandra Ross brings communion to her each month as part of the home communion team.



Norma Noel

“It’s wonderful,” Noel says. “It feels so comforting, like bringing the church into my home.”

Ross brings a doily to set the communion ware on to represent the altar. She visits with Noel, shares the liturgy, takes communion with her, and closes with a prayer. Ross phones Noel between visits to stay connected and see how she is doing.

Ross says she initially didn’t think she was worthy to give the sacrament. “After deep thought, I decided it was the least I could do for those who have missed getting communion,” she says. “It is very humbling to serve my church in this manner. Each participant has expressed their gratitude, and I very much have been rewarded by the experience.”

Noel says she still misses going to church, but she finds the communion visits to be refreshing and uplifting. “It’s hard for a church to be without a pastor, but this group comes to your home and you feel they are a part of God’s blessing that comes right with them.”

FAITH STORIES

For the first time in 12 years, St. Peter, Garnavillo — which is in shared ministry with Peace, Clayton — was without a called pastor when Pastor Hillary Burns-Kite began a new call in February 2022. Karl Johnson, who was the St. Peter president at the time, recalls that congregation members were nervous, but he says people stepped up to carry on the ministry.



Karl Johnson

“I got up one Sunday as president and gave a pep talk on how we are called to share our faith and keep things going,” Johnson says. “It’s not the pastor’s job; it’s our job.”

The St. Peter worship planning

committee decided they wanted to offer communion twice a month and arranged for two nearby supply pastors to lead those services. A seminary student led worship on the other Sundays, along with representatives of area non-profit organizations who were invited to share about their missions.

On one Sunday, the scheduled seminary student was unable to attend, so Johnson filled in and shared about his faith. That led to several other congregation members volunteering to share their faith stories, as well.

Johnson grew up attending St. Peter and has served as church organist off and on since his teens. When worship services moved to being online during the pandemic, he filled in to assist with the technical side of the broadcasts. To test that the Facebook app was working, Johnson shared some “words of wisdom” online. That impromptu segment led to him creating daily livestream posts about farming and faith, which he continues to share with his 130 Facebook friends.

Johnson says those online videos and his work in recent years with a spiritual director helped give him the confidence to speak about his faith to others in worship services. “I don’t use a written speech, but I usually have a few points that I want to make or I will read a quote from someone,” he says.

Rozelle Howard volunteered to share about her faith during a worship service at St. Peter last August. Howard says she gained the confidence to speak in front of

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We are not small because we are not alone

In January I had the opportunity to travel to the Holy Land for the first time. The trip was sponsored by the Service and Justice Home Area and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) desk of the ELCA. Seventeen bishops and several churchwide leaders went at the invitation of Bishop Azar of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL).

Much of our time in Israel, Palestine, and Jordan was spent visiting the congregations, schools, and ministries of the ELCJHL and learning what life is like for Lutherans there. I learned that Christians make up less than two percent of the population in these lands. Lutherans are less than one percent. With only six congregations and about 2,500 members, the impact this small group has on the larger community is much bigger than one might think possible.

There are a number of primary schools connected to congregations. Enrollments reach as high as 450 students K-12. Christian, Muslim, and Jewish students learn alongside one another. (More than half of students are non-Christian.) Along with other subjects, students are taught English, mediation, and leadership. Some 97 percent of graduates go on to college or university.

In addition to schools, there are a number of ministry partners including Dar Al Kalima University, An Environmental Education Center, and Lutheran World Federation ministries at Augusta Victoria Hospital and a vocational training center in Ramallah.

Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.” —Matthew 13:33

On more than one occasion, Bishop Azar reminded us that the size of a church (or congregation) was not the most important thing to consider. He said, “We are not small, because we are not alone.” With Lutheran partners from around the globe and with local partners in the communities they serve, ELCJHL ministries impact an estimated 40 percent of the population. More importantly, their ministries bring hope and new life to people who are denied freedoms that others take for granted.

Throughout the trip I kept thinking about the smaller congregations in our synod that continue to provide ministries that bring hope and new life. Anti-hunger ministries feed people locally and around the world. Clothes closets provide seasonally appropriate work and school clothing. We have one primary school, two colleges, and a seminary in addition to so many ministries that support students, teachers, and school staff. And, like the ELCJHL,



Top: Bishop Kevin Jones and three other bishops wear stoles given to them from a Lutheran church in Bethlehem. Above: ELCA bishops visit a Lutheran school in Amman, Jordan.

we provide regular times and places where the Gospel of Jesus is regularly proclaimed.

The size of a congregation or church body isn't important because we are not alone. We walk together in this life, and our Savior has promised to be with us through it all. Thanks be to God.

—Bishop Kevin Jones

Plan now for Day of Renewal

April 27, 2023

Redeemer Lutheran, Waverly

“Building Up One Another” will be the theme for this year’s Day of Renewal, set for Thursday, April 27, at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Waverly.

The Day of Renewal is a time to worship, learn and reconnect. All actively serving rostered ministers of the Northeastern Iowa Synod and those training to become rostered ministers are invited to attend.

Kris Meyer, Ph.D., who serves as vice president of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, will lead a conversation around important ways for ministers to be in relationship with their colleagues and congregations. Meyer has been involved in education since 1989, serving as a teacher, counselor, administrator, storyteller, motivational speaker and workshop leader on topics related to resilience and stress management.

Meyer will lead discussions related to the series of brainstorming sessions that rostered ministers from the Northeastern Iowa Synod have been participating in over the past few months. Using information gathered from those sessions, the Day of Renewal conversations will address:

- What are unique concerns for women in the Northeastern Iowa Synod?
- How do we move toward a healthier, more collegial and intentional rostered minister community?
- How might we respond and move forward as individuals and as a whole system?

“Our hope is that everyone will leave with a deeper understanding of those with whom we are in ministry,” Meyer said.

The Day of Renewal will begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at 3:30 p.m. There is no cost to attend. Lunch and refreshments will be provided.

Online registration will be available at www.neiasynod.org.



Kris Meyer

Apply for an ELCA Digital Ministry Grant

Is your congregation or community doing something innovative in the digital sphere when it comes to engaging your community and spreading the Gospel? Are you desiring to take your online ministry to the next level and have a sense of how to get there?

This year, digital ministry grants from the ELCA Congregational Stewardship Team are available for congregations making inroads on the digital byways and highways. These grants will be awarded to congregations nominated by the synod to promote electronic giving in the congregation, encourage digital ministry creativity, and help fulfill the mission of the ELCA to reach new, young, and diverse people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Each synod can nominate up to three congregations in their synod no later than April 15, 2023. Interested congregations can present an idea of what they would do with extra funding to spread the Gospel in the digital sphere, encourage congregational and community participation online, or invest in hardware or software to expand their ministry’s reach.

To learn more or to share your ideas, contact Kristen Rod, Director of Evangelical Ministry, at rodk@neiasynod.org by April 14.

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Send news for the April 2023 issue to Marcia Hahn by March 17.

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

Registration to begin for the 2023 Synod Assembly

June 9-10, 2023

Luther College, Decorah

Online registration for the 2023 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly will begin by Monday, March 6. The two-day assembly will be at Luther College in Decorah June 9-10. Portions of the assembly will be available for viewing online; however, all voting will take place in person.

The assembly will start at 7 p.m. Friday with worship, orientation and social time. Saturday's schedule begins at 9 a.m. and will include plenary sessions for synod business and reports, ministry exhibits, lunch and closing worship.

Keynote speakers will address this year's theme, "Growing Together in Faith, Hope and Love," based on 1 Corinthians 13:13. Jill Beverlin, program manager for ELCA Coaching, will attend as the churchwide representative.

The assembly offering will be designated for the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders to support scholarships for seminary students and the Bishop's Crisis Fund to assist local families in times of need.

PRE-ASSEMBLY ZOOM MEETINGS

Voting members are invited to partici-

Growing Together
in Faith, Hope
and Love



Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly
June 9-10, 2023

pate in two informational Zoom meetings to help prepare for the assembly and to ask questions in an informal setting.

- **Tuesday, May 30, 6:30 p.m.**
Review the budgets and compensation guidelines.
- **Thursday, June 1, 6:30 p.m.**
Review submitted resolutions.

All resolutions must be submitted to the secretary of the synod by May 1. One of the resolutions that will be reviewed at the Zoom meeting is a proposal for the synod assembly to take place every other year, rather than annually. Bishop Kevin Jones has created a video explaining more about the proposal. The video can be viewed on the synod's [YouTube](#) page.

Log-in information for the Zoom meetings will be sent to registered voting members. Videos of the sessions will be available for those unable

to attend them live.

HOW TO REGISTER

Early bird registration is available through May 1. After that date, an additional \$25 fee will be added. No registrations will be accepted after May 15.

Commuter and non-commuter registration fees are available for both voting members and visitors. Voting members must be voting members of their congregations. Each congregation is encouraged to elect a youth voting member.

Online registration will be available on the synod website. Paper and pdf registration forms can be requested. People can register individually or someone from the congregation can register everyone at once. Call or email the synod office for assistance, 319-352-1414 or glaspiej@neiasynod.org.

More details about who may register, registration fees and other general information are provided in the synod assembly insert included with this issue of the *Star* and on the synod website.

For assembly updates and to register online, visit www.neiasynod.org.

Join RAGBRAI to fight hunger

July 22-29, 2023

The three Iowa ELCA bishops plan to ride RAGBRAI together to highlight anti-hunger ministries and raise \$50,000 for ELCA World Hunger. Bicyclists are invited to

join them for the entire route or for just a day or two. There are other ways that congregations and their members can support this effort. Visit www.neiasynod.org/2023/02/bishops-ride to learn more.



Enjoy a generous, life-giving Lent

“What are you giving up for Lent?” she asked me with curiosity. With all the preparing for Lent and Ash Wednesday, I hadn’t given it a whole lot of thought.

During the Tuesday morning text study with other pastors in the area, someone mentioned taking something on for Lent or giving something away each day of Lent. Frankly, all of that seemed like a lot of extra work in a season where I was already feeling overwhelmed. Somehow, the art of simplifying seemed a lot harder than plowing forward and taking what needed to be done as it came.

I’d like to think that I responded to the one asking me about Lent nicely and didn’t dump all the things pulling me in so many directions on her. I would like to have asked her if she had found a way to “do” Lent that was generous to God, for herself, and for those around her (me without coffee is not particularly generous to those nearest me). What worked for her? What has been meaningful for you?

Lent can be like a spiritual tire align-

“This year, in the middle of Lent, I invite you to pause for a moment. What is the next generous thing you can do, or not do, for your faith life with God?”

ment or health check-up — a time to assess how things are going and make some needed adjustments. It is an invitation to declutter and simplify to remove any barriers to a full and loving relationship with God.

This year, in the middle of Lent, I invite you to pause for a moment. What is the next generous thing you can do, or not do, for your faith life with God?

It might be a walk outside to reconnect with God’s creation and give thanks, or to simply breathe. Or cook something delicious — to enjoy the act of creating nourishing food and remember the One who “brings forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine.” Take a nap, rest in



Liz (Albertson) Bell

God. Look up something interesting like nano technology or something you heard about earlier this week and marvel at the wonders of God’s work. Call a friend or neighbor, pick up some extra food for the food pantry, take a bag of things to a secondhand store, or do nothing at all (find a spot to be quiet and “be”).

This year, in the middle of Lent, I invite you to consider the next small thing you might do, or not do, to tend to your relationship with God. And in doing or not doing it, enjoy a generous and life-giving season of Lent.

— *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.



Registration is open for WIYLDE

June 19-22, 2023

Youth who are currently in grades 8 - 12 are invited to participate in this summer's Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership Discipling Event (WIYLDE), set for Monday, June 19 through Thursday, June 22, at Camp EWALU near Strawberry Point.

The event will feature Peer Ministry Leadership Training from Lyle Griner, National Peer Ministry director. Peer Ministry Leadership Training is based on the Good Samaritan story to train youth in relational leadership skills.

Youth who come to WIYLDE will learn about how to live like the Good Samaritan — listening to, helping, welcoming, and caring for those around them. They will be equipped to be leaders in their congregations, peer groups, schools and communities, learning how to help others who are dealing with difficult issues.

WIYLDE participants will have opportunities to practice these relational and leadership skills with each other and with younger campers at EWALU, along with opportunities to experience some of the fun camp activities that EWALU has to offer.

WIYLDE youth will stay at Ewalu's Stone Center and will join in various activities each day at the main site. The week will conclude July 22 with a WIYLDE-led worship service, which family members, pastors, youth directors, and other guests will be invited to attend.

The cost for WIYLDE is \$200 per participant; congregations are encouraged to cover \$100 of that registration cost. Registration forms are available to download from the synod website, www.neiasynod.org. The registration deadline is June 1. For more information, contact Pastor Kristen Rod, rodk@neiasynod.org.

Register for Rural Ministry Conference

April 16-18, 2023

Registration for the 2023 Rural Ministry Conference is open through March 30. The conference will take place April 16-18 at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in Dubuque with the theme "Flourishing: Land, People and Community." It is offered in conjunction with the International Rural Churches Association and will be an opportunity to meet with others from around the world who are engaged in rural ministries.

Keynote speakers will be the Rev. Dr. Gil Waldkoenig, who will present "Soundscapes of Grace in Creation

and Ministry," and Heather Major, Ph.D., who will present "Embodied, Contextual and Rural." Workshops include "Congregations and Climate Change" presented by the Rev. Dr. Craig Nesson of Wartburg Seminary, "Building a More Vibrant, Resilient, Just and Joyful Rural Future" by Anna Johnson of the Center for Rural Affairs, "Rural Ministry, Global Impact" presented by Mark Swanson of Growing Hope Globally, and "Think Like a Farmer" by the Rev. Nicole Woodley of rural Clarion, Iowa. The Rev. Dr. Ann Fritschel will lead the Bible study.

The standard registration rate is \$200 per person. The fee is \$50 for those

Care for Creation

TREE PLANTING GUIDE

Congregations may want to consider sponsoring a tree planting project to encourage creation care. This type of project can add to an eventual tree canopy, build community and teach skills and values to youth and adults.

The Care for Creation Network offers a *Tree Planting Guide* with tips to successfully plan and execute a successful tree planting project. The guide can be downloaded from the Care for Creation web page, www.neiasynod.org/care-for-creation.

EARTH DAY VIRTUAL WORSHIP

Everyone is welcome to join an online Earth Day worship service hosted by Lutherans Restoring Creation on Sunday, April 23, 2023. The Rev. Dr. R. Guy Erwin will provide a creation-focused sermon based on the readings for the day.

Congregations can register to receive a bulletin and other accompanying materials, which will be available by April 9 to download. The worship service will be available to view on April 22. A link for more information can be found on the Care for Creation web page, www.neiasynod.org/care-for-creation.

who would like to sign up for only the workshops on Monday, April 17. Discounted hotel rates are available through March 13.

To register online and to learn more, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu/rural-conference.

the church after sharing her story at a service at the local assisted living center. She says she based her message on the Sunday lectionary and let her Christian faith come through.



Rozelle Howard

“I am not formally trained in speaking at all, but I had written my faith story when I was 18,” Howard says. “I was an exchange student overseas with a Christian family and I realized that Jesus is our savior, and we need a personal relationship with him. Part of being a Christian is being out in the community using whatever gifts we have.”

St. Peter members have used their gifts to keep all their ministries going during this time of transition, including Bible study groups, cross-generational Sunday school, home visits, a 125th anniversary celebration, and fundraising for a new roof on the church and parsonage.

Pastor Harold McMillin signed on in October to serve as interim pastor for both congregations, preaching three Sundays each month. St. Peter members continue to volunteer for the other Sundays to share their faith messages.

“Being without a pastor is scary,” Johnson says. “The first reaction everyone had was, ‘What are we going to do?’ With a small congregation, you don’t know what’s going to happen, but it has worked out. It turns out we can do a lot.”

Resources for Communion Ministries

By Kristen Corr Rod, Director for Evangelical Mission

Martin Luther taught that the most important part of the experience of receiving Holy Communion was the words, “For you.” Lutherans believe that through the sacrament of Holy Communion, Jesus shows up and feeds us with his body and blood.

Congregations have many different practices around how Holy Communion is set up and distributed — some congregations use only wine or juice, some congregations use both, some congregations use wafers, some use unleavened bread, some use yeast bread, and many offer gluten-free bread. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many congregations have started using prepackaged communion elements as well.

One thing that congregations have been doing for generations is sending out Holy Communion to people who are unable to attend worship in person. Ordained pastors preside over Holy Communion during a worship service, but lay people can serve as communion ministers, bringing this holy meal to those who are homebound or in hospitals or nursing homes. This ministry is considered an extension of the Holy Communion table.

There are resources in the ELW to assist congregations in providing a lay communion ministry. Many of these resources can be found in the ELW Pastoral Care edition, which can be purchased from Augsburg Fortress as a hard bound book, or downloaded from www.SundaysandSeasons.com for those who have online subscriptions. To find these resources, log into Sundays and Seasons online, click the “library” tab, then click “ELW” and scroll down to “Pastoral Care,” and click “Holy Communion.” This opens up services for “Sending of Holy Communion,” which is used in a regular worship service to bless the communion elements that will be taken out by the lay ministers, and “Holy Communion in Special Circumstances,” which is designed to be used by lay ministers during communion visits. Both of these services can be downloaded and adapted to fit your congregation’s needs.

For congregations that would like to learn more about Holy Communion, Augsburg Fortress publishes the curriculums “Fed and Forgiven” and “A Place for You,” which both have age-appropriate instruction about Holy Communion for a variety of ages. These can be used in congregational discussions, intergenerational classes, or communion classes for children, youth, and families.

Congregations often like to have ordained pastors lead communion classes. If your congregation is currently without a pastor and you are looking for someone to lead a communion class, I encourage you to contact the synod office. I or another synod staff person would love to come teach a communion class for you!

MARCH EVENTS

- 2 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom,
- 2 Racial Justice Network, 12 Noon, Zoom
- 2 Compensation Committee, 4 p.m., Zoom
- 5 Water of Life Conference Assembly, 2 p.m., St. Matthew, Dubuque
- 6 Care for Creation Network, 4:30 p.m., Zoom
- 7 Rostered Men's Brainstorming Session, 2-5 p.m., Trinity, Mason City with Zoom option
- 9 Rostered Ministers Holy Land Lunch & Learn with Bishop Jones, 12 Noon, Zoom
- 9 Executive Committee, 4 p.m.
- 10 Candidacy Committee Approvals, 8 a.m., Synod Office
- 11 Synodical Women's Organization, 9 a.m.-12 Noon, Synod Office w/virtual option,
- 12-14 Women in Ministry Retreat, Ewalu Stone Center, Strawberry Point
- 14 Lutheran Day on the Hill, Des Moines
- 16 Youth Ministry Network, 10 a.m., Decorah, Decorah,
- 18 Synod Council Meeting, 9 a.m.-12 Noon, Synod Office
- 30 Rostered Men's Brainstorming Session, 11 a.m.-3 p.m., St. John, Cedar Falls

APRIL EVENTS

- 6 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom,
- 7 Office Closed, Good Friday
- 13 Tree of Life Conference Assembly, 10:30 a.m.-1 p.m., TBD
- 16-18 Rural Ministry Conference, Best Western Hotel & Conference Center, Dubuque
- 20 Youth Ministry Network, 10 a.m., First, Northwood
- 24-25 First Call Theological Education Event, Ewalu
- 27 Day of Renewal, 10 a.m.-3:30 p.m., Redeemer, Waverly

MAY EVENTS

- 4 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom
- 6 Synodical Women's Organization, 9 a.m.-12 Noon, Synod Office,
- 12 Candidacy Committee Meeting, 8 a.m., Synod Office
- 18 Youth Ministry Network, 10 a.m., St. Peter, Dubuque
- 20 Synod Council Meeting, 9 a.m., Zoom
- 29 Office Closed, Memorial Day
- 30 Pre-Assembly Review of Budgets & Compensation Guidelines, 6:30 p.m. Zoom

JUNE EVENTS

- 1 Transitional/Interim Ministry Colleague Group, 9:30-11:30 a.m., Zoom

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*](#)

**Part-time Call*

- 1 Pre-Assembly Review of Resolutions, 6:30 p.m. Zoom
- 9-10 Synod Assembly, Luther College, Decorah
- 12 Synod Office Closed
- 19-22 WIYLDE (Wholly Iowa Leadership Discipling Event), Camp Ewalu, Strawberry Point

MARCH 2023						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders Julie Nordstrom, Cedar Falls 1	First, Cresco 2	Rev. Norman L. Bauer, Charles City 3	Ruth E. Groth, Chassell, Mich. Rev. David L. Lentz, Ossian 4
Northeastern Iowa Synodical Women's Organization 5	Rev. Kent Mechler, Mason City 6	St. John, Charles City 7	Aase Haugen Senior Services, Decorah 8	United, Chester 9	Rev. Dr. H. George Anderson, Green Valley, Ariz. 10	Luther Manor, Dubuque 11
Rev. Virginia A. Olson, Decorah 12	Jenine Jordahl, Decorah Rev. Robert F. Lehmann, Dubuque 13	First, Clarion 14	Good Neighbor Home, Manchester 15	Rev. Roger L. Buhr, Decorah 16	Middle East Peace St. John, Clarksville 17	Good Shepherd Inc., Mason City 18
Galilean, Clear Lake 19	Lutheran Retirement Home, Northwood 20	East Clermont, Clermont 21	Rev. Laurel J. Meester, Dows Rev. Ronald L. Roberts, Clermont 22	Faith Lutheran Home, Osage 23	West Clermont, Clermont 24	Good Samaritan Center, St. Ansgar 25
Rev. Francis Johnson, Strawberry Point 26	Beverly Ager, Red Wing, Minn. 27	Rev. Harold R. McMillin Jr., Garnavillo 28	Rev. Dennis E. Bauer, Cedar Falls 29	Sarah Andersen, Decorah Rev. H. Allen Vik, Decorah Rev. Tyler Hoey, Tripoli 30	Immanuel, Cresco 31	

Visit Hungary in June

June 12-16, 2023

Openings are still available for anyone interested in joining a trip to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary, which is in a companion synod relationship with the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

Set for June 12-16, 2023, the trip is being organized by the Rev. Dr. Mark Yackel-Juleen and the Shepherd of the Hills Conference, on behalf of the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

There is room for up to 12 people to join the trip. The cost per person is projected to be about \$2,500, which includes airfare (coach class), accommodations (double occupancy), in-country transportation, entrance fees, and meals when done as a group. Single occupancy is available for an additional fee. A scholarship subsidy of up to \$1,000 per participant is available, if needed.

Anyone interested in joining the trip should apply by March 15. To request an application form or for more information, contact shephill@neitel.net.

Lutheran Day on the Hill

March 14, 2023

9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Registration for this year's Lutheran Day on the Hill is open through March 7. The event, set for Tuesday, March 14, in Des Moines, is sponsored by Lutheran Services in Iowa and the three Iowa ELCA synods as an opportunity to connect with legislators to advocate for Iowa families and children. The day will include devotions, a keynote speaker, advocacy training, and break-out sessions, along with lunch at the Capitol and advocacy conversations with legislators.

Complimentary charter bus transportation is available. A bus will depart from the Bremwood campus in Waverly at 6:30 a.m. and will pick up additional passengers at Nazareth Lutheran in Cedar Falls at 6:50 a.m. The bus will depart the Capitol at 2:30 p.m. to return home.

There is no cost to participate in this event. Learn more and register online at, www.lsiowa.org/LDH.



2023 NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD ASSEMBLY

General Information

DATE: June 9-10, 2023. This will be a two-day, in-person Synod Assembly.

LOCATION: Luther Collage, Decorah, Iowa. Portions of the Assembly will be livestreamed, but all voting will take place in person.

THEME: Growing Together in Faith, Hope, & Love, based on 1 Corinthians 13:13

RESOLUTIONS: Resolutions must be submitted to the Secretary of the Synod by Monday, May 1. The Resolution Submittal Form can be downloaded at www.neiasynod.org/2023/02/2023-synod-assembly.

PRE-ASSEMBLY ZOOM MEETINGS:

Voting members are invited to participate in two informational Zoom meetings to help prepare for the Assembly and to ask questions in an informal setting. These meetings do not replace discussion during the Assembly.

Tuesday, May 30, 6:30 p.m. - Review the budgets for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 and the compensation guidelines for 2024 and 2025.

Thursday, June 1, 6:30 p.m. - Review resolutions that will be presented at the Assembly.

Log-in information for the Zoom meetings will be sent to registered voting members. Both Zoom sessions will be recorded so that those who can't join them live will have access to view them later.

ASSEMBLY SCHEDULE:

The Assembly begins at 7 p.m. Friday with worship, orientation and social time. Saturday's schedule will start at 9 a.m. and will include three plenary sessions for synod business and reports, along with lunch, ministry exhibits, and closing worship. Synod business will include resolutions and elections for a synod treasurer, synod council members, nominating committee and other committee members.

ELCA Representative:

Jill Beverlin, ELCA Coordinator of Coaching Ministries, will attend as the churchwide representative.

COST: Fees listed below are for early bird registration through May 1, 2023. **No registrations will be accepted after May 15.**

Voting Members (Add \$25 after May 1.):

\$115 for commuters (includes lunch on Saturday)

\$155 for noncommuters staying on campus Friday night (includes breakfast and lunch Saturday)

Visitors (Add \$25 after May 1.):

\$95 for commuters (includes lunch on Saturday)

\$135 for noncommuters staying on campus (includes breakfast and lunch Saturday)

There will not be a commuter option without meals.

REGISTRATION:

Voting members and visitors can register online at www.neiasynod.org/2023/02/2023-synod-assembly. People can register individually or someone from the congregation can register everyone at once.

Paper and pdf registration forms are available by request. Call or email the synod office for assistance, 319-352-1414 or glaspiej@neiasynod.org.

Please make checks payable to the Northeastern Iowa Synod and send with registration forms to:
Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

WHO MAY REGISTER?

Voting members must be voting members of their congregations. Each congregation is encouraged to elect a youth voting member.

Voting members to the Synod Assembly will be the following:

1. All rostered individuals under call on the roster of the synod.
2. The formula for congregational representation for the Synod Assembly follows:
 - The total lay delegation from any congregation be as nearly as possible 45% male and 45% 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 lay voting member for every 750 baptized members, i.e., 750=1 additional, 1500=2 additional, 2250=3, etc.
3. Members of the Synod Council.
4. All ministers of Word and Sacrament on the retired roster of this Synod shall elect 10 percent of their number to be voting members of the Synod Assembly; all other retired ministers of Word and Sacrament shall be advisory members with voice but not vote.
5. All ministers of Word and Sacrament on leave from call for reasons of disability shall elect 10 percent of their number to be voting members to the Synod Assembly. There shall be a minimum of one (1) such person provided both voice and vote.

Pre-assembly materials will be emailed to registered voting members by May 10, 2023.

VISITORS

Any interested person may register as a visitor to the Synod Assembly. Visitors do not have voice or vote. Rostered ministers not under call and retired clergy not elected to represent retired clergy are permitted voice but not vote.

No registration is necessary to view the live-streamed portions of the Assembly.

ON-CAMPUS HOUSING

Housing for Friday night will be assigned on a first-registered, first-assigned basis in college residence halls. All rooms are air conditioned. Most rooms are double occupancy and have single beds; none are bunks. Sheets, blanket, pillow, pillow cover, towel, hand towel, and washcloth are provided. For your personal comfort, you may wish to bring an additional pillow or blanket. You will need to bring your own toiletries, such as soap and shampoo. Bathroom and shower facilities are shared, but designated as men's or women's.

OFFERINGS AND IN-KIND GIFTS

The Synod Assembly offering will be designated for the H. George Anderson Fund for Leaders and the Bishops Crisis Fund.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For updates about the Synod Assembly, visit the synod website, www.neiasynod.org/2023/02/2023-synod-assembly, or call the synod office, 319-352-1414.



Good News

March
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

The board held a very productive meeting with our cluster leadership and we learned much together. We updated the cluster guidelines and the SWO policies and procedures for 2023. The major change was that to be an active unit, only one meeting a year will be required. The other changes were mainly in the wordings.

We spent a great deal of time on our June 17 gathering at Trinity Lutheran Church in Belmond. We need to finalize a few more details but the packets are being mailed, emailed or distributed at cluster gatherings. Also if you are in need of LWR supplies from Nazareth in Cedar Falls, they supplied us with an order form to be filled out and sent back to them so they can just fill orders and not have to bring all the supplies. You can pick up on the 17th by paying with cash or check. We will post the order forms on the Facebook page and the webpage.

We are still confirming where monetary and in kind offerings will be going and will notify everyone by email, Facebook and the webpage. Committee assignments were also determined. Without the help of our cluster leadership and members like you, we could not make the gathering a special day for all!

I am so thankful for the women who make a choice to serve our synodical organization and for the support of our cluster leaders! We shared great fellowship, business, laughs and a good lunch at Pizza Ranch. I look forward to getting to know all of you better!

May you all have a wonderful rest of March. Spring is coming and the joy of Easter will soon be with us again! God's blessings to you all.

Cindy Pogge, President



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

Stewardship Committee

Stewardship in the Bible is one of the essential topics that you learn as a disciple of Christ. The role of stewardship was common during biblical times and is often used as an example of the Christian's relationship to God. That is, everything belongs to God and we are to manage it and treat it not as our own, but as His. It is the role or responsibility of managing something for someone else. The Bible calls us Christians to be good stewards of the resources God has entrusted to His people - including time, talents and possessions, using the resources He has blessed us with for His glory.

A story that was told to me about stewardship. Imagine that you are invited to a friend's house. While you are there, your friend is called about an emergency. Your friend asks you to watch her young puppy while they are gone. You agree. Now even though the puppy is not yours, you are responsible for taking care of it while your friend is away. You are its steward.

So, what are your thoughts when you hear the word "stewardship?" Do you mainly think about your finances? Does taking care of the environment enter your mind? Do you answer the call to use your time, talents and abilities and make the most of every opportunity to share your blessings? These ideas and much more are parts of what it means to be a steward. Stewardship is one of the ways that we are called by Christ to live our lives, for the glory of God.

Submitted by Alice Greimann

Introducing Carolyn Looftas

I am a new member of the NE IA SWO board. I belong to Bethany Lutheran Church in Kensett. I am currently the WELCA president. I have been a member of the church council, serving as secretary and president. I have taught VBS and Sunday School and I was the adult Sunday School facilitator. I currently facilitate the Gather Bible Study at circle. I am hoping to learn more about the SWO board and how I can help with its mission.

Welcome to the Board, Carolyn!

Discipleship Committee

Justice is not easy to understand in this world where there is so much unrest. There is no set of rules telling us what justice is. Justice challenges us to do more. It makes us take a look at the barriers that can keep people from flourishing. We need to be reminded of Micah's call "to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God". (6:8)

Justice can look very different. It includes serving God in ways that will help bring healing to our church, our community, our country, and the world. It can include praying for others, not just the people you know personally. As Women of the ELCA, we need to act boldly for justice so that others can follow our examples. So, during this month of Lent, I challenge you to look for ways you can help to fight the injustices of this world and follow Isaiah's command to "seek justice, correct oppression, bring justice to the fatherless, (and) plead the widow's cause". (1:17)

Submitted by JoAnn Brunsvold

Justice Committee

What do you think of when you hear the term "Discipleship?" Jesus told the disciples that they must deny themselves and follow Him: "in the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples," Luke 14:33 What are you willing to give up? How do you show discipleship in your church and your community?

One way of showing discipleship is participating. I see facilitating the Bible Study from the Gather magazine as a way of showing discipleship. Maybe you are in a circle where some of the women don't want to "take a turn" giving the Bible Study. Try to find ways to include as many people as you can and maybe some will feel more at ease in leading. Sharing information about the articles from the Gather magazine and sharing what you have learned from the lesson may help others in their faith journey.

What can you do? Maybe in your church you teach Sunday School, give children's sermons, make quilts for Lutheran World Relief, or help with local food pantries. By sharing the gifts of time and talent, you become Jesus' disciples in your community and the world.

Submitted by Carolyn Looftas

- 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

NE IA Women of the ELCA Executive Board

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

Contact Women of the ELCA:

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

Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA:

neiasynod.org/women-of-the-ELCA

Living Faith @ HOME

Dear Faith Shapers,

March is a great month for faith shaping. We are in the midst of Lent. Lent is a great time to try a new spiritual practice or restore one that you have stopped doing. Here are some spiritual practice ideas:

- ◆ Mealtime Prayers
- ◆ Sharing Highs and Lows & Praying over them
- ◆ Reading the Bible
- ◆ Listening to a Bible podcast
- ◆ Lighting Lenten Candles
- ◆ Picking a Bible verse to memorize
- ◆ Praying
- ◆ Acts of Kindness
- ◆ Gratitude Journaling
- ◆ Read a Gospel as family during Lent
- ◆ Be Still- Start your day with God and 10 minutes of listening
- ◆ Prayer Journaling
- ◆ Contemplative Family Walks
- ◆ Meditation App

May you continue to seek ways to be closer to God this Lent.

Deacon Lisa Kammerer



March 17th is St. Patrick's Day. Enjoy a snack of Lucky Charms and talk about God.

Rainbow Marshmallow- A symbol of God's promises

**Balloon Marshmallow- God lifts our burdens.
Psalm 55:32**

**Heart Marshmallow- God is abounding in love.
Exodus 34:6**

Star Marshmallow- God knows the names of the stars and my name, too. Psalm 147:4-5

**Moon Marshmallow- Sorrow only lasts for the night.
Psalm 30:5**

**Clover Marshmallow- Reminder of the Trinity
(Father, Son & Holy Spirit)**

Horse Shoe Marshmallow- Do you really need luck when you walk with God?



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](#)

 Find us on Facebook

ACTS OF KINDNESS FOR LENT

LENT IS A TIME TO PRAY, GIVE, SERVE AND WALK CLOSER TO GOD. HERE ARE SOME FUN AND EASY ACTS OF KINDNESS YOU CAN DO. PICK ONE ACT OF KINDNESS TO DO EACH DAY AND AT MEALTIME OR BEDTIME TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU DID AND HOW IT FELT. .

1. USE ONLY KIND WORDS ALL DAY
2. DONATE BOOKS TO THE LIBRARY OR LEAVE A KIND NOTE IN A BOOK
3. COLOR A PICTURE AND MAIL IT TO A FAMILY MEMBER
4. COMPLIMENT THREE PEOPLE TODAY
5. DONATE PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS TO YOUR LOCAL FOOD BANK
6. LEAVE CHANGE IN A VENDING MACHINE
7. HELP SOMEONE BY RETURNING THEIR GROCERY CART
8. WRITE A THANK YOU NOTE TO A TEACHER OR A COWORKER
9. BUY SOMEONE A CUP OF HOT CHOCOLATE, TEA OR COFFEE
10. THANK A VETERAN
11. GATHER UP TOYS OR CLOTHES TO DONATE
12. READ A STORY TO A NURSING HOME RESIDENT OR SHUT IN
13. INVITE SOMEONE TO GO TO CHURCH WITH YOU
14. GIVE SOMEONE A FLOWER OR PACK OF SEEDS TO PLANT
15. TAKE TREATS TO FIRST RESPONDERS
16. WRITE DOWN POSITIVE QUALITIES OF FAMILY MEMBERS
17. BRING IN TRASH CANS OR SHOVEL SHOW FOR A NEIGHBOR
18. BAKE TREATS FOR STAFF AT SCHOOL OR WORK
19. PLAY OR SIT WITH SOMEONE NEW
20. FEED THE BIRDS