



## Educational resources help Lutherans tackle world hunger

Living where robust crops dominate the landscape and accessibility to good, affordable food is taken for granted, it's easy for Iowans to feel far removed from the realities of world hunger. A number of new resources and educational materials, however, is helping to bring awareness of world hunger closer to home and to the minds of Lutherans.

According to Norb Strasser, chair of the Northeastern Iowa Synod's Hunger Work Group, the opportunities for churches to promote hunger awareness grow each year as new tools and online resources — many of them free — make it easy to incorporate hunger activities into every level of worship. Strasser suggests starting at the websites of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ([www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger)) and its publishing arm, Augsburg-Fortress Publishing House ([augsburgfortress.org](http://augsburgfortress.org)) to find hunger-related toolkits, resource packets, Sunday school curriculum and more to keep the message of world hunger active in the church.

Church leaders should already be familiar with the **Hunger Resource Packets**, published twice a year and mailed to ELCA churches. Strasser also hands them out at the annual Northeastern Iowa Synod assemblies. The packets list new and updated resources available to help hunger leaders raise money and create awareness about the ELCA World Hunger Appeal.

With the online **Hunger Education Toolkits**, leaders can download a pre-designed hunger learning experience or choose from several activities to create a custom learning experience for their own specific audience, time frame and gathering. Each experience offers opening prayers and hymns, group activities, and actions that each person can take with them to stay connected, such as writing to elected officials or purchasing locally grown food.

The toolkit's "100 People: A Global Village" learning experience scales the world's population down to 100 people in a village, making it easier to relate to world hunger statistics. For interactive activities, group members can read population statistics aloud, take a hunger quiz, or play a TV game show takeoff, "Family Food," to understand the characteristics of the world's population.

Strasser used the toolkit for a hunger workshop he presented at the 2009 Northeastern Iowa Synod Assembly in June. To demonstrate the need for more resources for the hungry, he removed chairs one at a time to force people to share chairs and make do with fewer places to sit. "It showed in a small way that we have this little bit of resources available, and all these people need help," Strasser says.



As the Hunger Work Group chair, Strasser attends the annual ELCA World Hunger Leadership Gatherings to see and experience new hunger

education resources he can introduce to churches locally. At a recent gathering he learned about the "Taking Root: Hunger Causes, Hunger Hopes" education curriculum

created for children in Grades 3-6, youth in Grades 7-9, and teens in Grades 10-12.

"The program is very interactive and fun, it uses Biblical references, and

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it's pretty current," Strasser says. "And I like that it is separated by age groups. A lot of resources in the past weren't broken up in that manner."

According to its creator, the Rev. Stacy K. Johnson, Taking Root was designed to help people imagine a world without hunger, and then consider steps to transform that image into reality. "Many hunger curricula teach about hunger, emphasizing facts, figures and statistics," Johnson said. "Taking Root is different. It seeks to focus on the deep, structural and attitudinal reasons for hunger and the strategies that can end hunger."

Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls purchased the Taking Root curriculum from Augsburg-Fortress and used it as the five-day theme for Vacation Bible School (VBS) last summer. Teresa Baird, director of Christian Education, says the program is a little more abstract than what most teachers might be used to,

but it works well with the additional resources incorporated into the program.

Baird says that the Africa link component was especially popular with the kids and opened up new opportunities for them to learn about another part of the world. One of the VBS teachers had been to Tanzania, and one of the children had relatives from Ethiopia visiting, so both were added to the curriculum to share their experiences in those countries. A special snack time even featured African food.



"Since the theme was hunger and poverty, we had the kids make ugali, an African food that is a very bland, mushy cornmeal that can be used like a spoon to scoop up beans and rice to eat with it," Baird explains. "We told the kids that it won't taste good at all, but in Africa they don't care what it tastes like. It's an important food because it feeds their bellies. The kids really enjoyed that and learned a lot."

Lessons in poverty and hunger also included a "one man's junk was another's treasure" craft day and field trips to the World's Windows fair trade store and to a field of crops planted for a local food resources bank. Bethlehem Pastor Gary Hedding says that the VBS students learned that one way they can help feed people around the world is to buy fairly traded products, such as those sold at World's Windows.



Vacation Bible School students at Bethlehem Lutheran, Cedar Falls, visit the World's Windows fair trade store and listen to Greg Hankins, board chair of World's Window, read about how children in Africa make their own toys.

"In this way, people in places where hunger is common are able to earn enough to feed themselves, their families

## Hunger Education Resources

Here is a list of some of the many online hunger-related resources that are available for free. Visit [www.augsburgfortress.org](http://www.augsburgfortress.org), [www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger), or call 800-328-4648. Those interested can also contact Norbert Strasser, Hunger Work Group Chair, at 319-415-6454 or send an email to [nobbynose2000@yahoo.com](mailto:nobbynose2000@yahoo.com) to see samples firsthand or for help ordering. Strasser and members of the Hunger Work Group are also available to speak to churches about ELCA World Hunger and available resources.

**Living Simply with God** – a 40-day hunger calendar

**Go and Do Likewise** – a CD-Rom with six PowerPoint presentations about ELCA World Hunger and other ministries

**God's Global Barnyard** – a collection of stories that relate to animals and projects that help feed people

**New Everyday** – an inspirational booklet that offers scripture, prayer and 40 devotions for disaster survivors

**Hunger and Hope** – dramas about hunger, poverty and mission

**Open a World of Possibilities** – a continuing series of curricula about hunger-related work in various parts of the world

**ELCA Good Gifts Catalogue** – 65 gift ideas to impact the mission and ministries of the church

**Hunger Education Toolkits** – design, host, and lead a learning experience on hunger or hunger-related topics

**World Hunger Resource Packet** – new and updated resources that help hunger leaders raise money for and awareness about the ELCA World Hunger Appeal

and others in the community, rather than having to rely on gifts of food from others," Hedding explains. "This

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# Faith is Expressed through Service to Others

A biblical faith has everything to do with justice, mercy, compassion and a commitment to feed hungry people. Those who dismiss these concerns as “social issues” and somehow unrelated to a saving faith have not yet studied the fullness of scripture.

The church remembers the hungry of this world throughout the year. However, those who hunger are on our minds in a particular way during the month of November. The

harvest has been completed. The nation celebrates a day of Thanksgiving. The church recommits itself to giving thanks for the goodness of God by feeding hungry people.

Our synod has expressed this commitment in several ways. We provide resources to congregations for education and opportunities for giving. Our Lutheran Youth Organization is providing ongoing leadership in raising money to combat

hunger. The Hunger Work Group keeps God’s Word before us and faithfully asks for our response.



Each time that a synod staff person preaches in a congregation of this synod, we ask the congregation to make a special offering to the ELCA Hunger Appeal. Hungry children are fed each time a representative of the bishop is in a pulpit in this synod.

Our Book of Faith is clear. Faith in Jesus is expressed through compassion and service to others. This is one of the most joyous parts of our faith.

– Steven L. Ullestad  
Bishop, Northeastern Iowa Synod

“...he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.”  
Luke 1:53

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor...”  
Luke 4:18

“Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.”  
Matthew 11:4-5

“...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”  
Matthew 25:35-36

## Continuing Education Opportunity

### Claiming the After Pastor Role

Nov. 18-20, 2009

Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, OH

The “After Pastor” Seminar is designed to review the emotional dynamics, the behavioral repercussions, the key leadership insights and the range of responses appropriate to the adaptive challenges required of a congregation following the professional misconduct of a pastor. This seminar is open to both interim and conventionally called church leaders.

Tuition is \$495. Leaders are Barbara Keller, ELCA Consultant for Misconduct Prevention, Vocation and Education Unit (Churchwide Deployed Staff); and Paul N. Svingen, DMin., ELCA Interim Consultant/Educator, Minneapolis Area Synod Interim Pastor, and Adjunct Faculty, Louisville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. For registration, visit [www.trinitylutheranseminary.edu/ContinuingEd/](http://www.trinitylutheranseminary.edu/ContinuingEd/).

# A Youth's View on Learning about Hunger

As an attendee of the 2009 ELCA National Youth Gathering in New Orleans, the one thing I heard over and over was that education is key to solving the problems of poverty. However, I began to hear an endless cycle. Education is necessary to rise out of poverty and hunger, yet students who come to school hungry are often irritable, which can lead to behavior problems, inability to think and lack of focus needed to learn.

In order to solve the issue of hunger, education is necessary for not only the impoverished, but the "wealthy" as well. "Taking Root: Hunger Causes, Hunger Hopes" works to address the education of the latter. Rather than bore you with long descriptions, here are some key points of the curriculum:

- The curriculum is currently divided into three age groups: Grades 3-6, Junior High (Grades 7-9), and Senior High (Grades 10-12). Looking through the lessons, though, it becomes obvious the curriculum can work for any age group, often with few modifications.
- Suggested applications include Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, retreats, confirmation, multi-generational gatherings, and midweek Lenten or Advent gatherings.
- Each session, or lesson, centers around a theme and includes Bible texts, stories, African links, activities, and songs. This allows leaders immense possibilities in tailoring the program towards their particular need and time availability.

- The leader receives an extremely well put together guide. This includes details about the theme, learning objectives, a suggested timeline, handy lists of needed materials broken down by section and activity, valuable background information, and how to go about leading and guiding the students. As an added bonus, key points (such as what to say to or ask of the students and answers) are in bold.
- Grades 3-6 and junior high students receive a graphic intense "newspaper" that mirrors the busy, keep-it-coming lifestyle of today's youth with a varied layout to keep students interested while the high school students experience videos.

As a four-year graduate of the WIYLDE (Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership and Discipling Event) leadership camp, I was extremely impressed by the curriculum and its addressing every aspect of leading others. More importantly, I was

extremely impressed with how much just glancing through the sessions moved me concerning world hunger. Imagine what the impact will be when people work through the whole series.



**Doug Dobrzynski**  
Trinity Lutheran, Mason City  
2007-2009 LYO Board Member

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*Send news for the December issue to Marcia Hahn by November 2.*

# Global Mission Festival to showcase Lutheran outreach around the world

From Postville to China to the island of Madagascar, mission outreach projects from around the world will be featured at the Global Mission Festival set for Sunday, Nov. 8, at Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Cedar Falls.

The family-oriented event, set for 2 to 6 p.m., is sponsored by the Global Mission Work Group of the Northeastern Iowa Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Registration begins at 1:30 p.m. Youth groups and confirmation classes are encouraged to attend.

The afternoon will feature presentations from ELCA missionaries and volunteers, displays hosted by area mission organizations, worship and music, and games for children. The day will conclude with a global dinner. Keynote speaker will be Rev. Rafael Padilla, executive director for the ELCA Division for Global Mission. Also attending will

be the Rev. Eliaikim Shaanika, a guest from the Northeastern Iowa Synod's companion synod in Namibia.

Scheduled workshop presenters and their topics are: Pastor Dennis Dickman, "Living with Islam;" Dr. Fred Strickert, "The Church in Palestine: An Undying Witness for Peace;" Ron and Else Schardt, "Papua New Guinea Ministry and Adventures, Then and Now;" Pastor Herb Haferman, "Stories from Tanzania;" Pastor David and Elayne Werges, "The Power of Mission Trips;" Northeastern Iowa Synod visitors to Namibia and the Rev. Eliaikim Shaanika, "Our Companions in Faith;" Maryn Olson, "Recovery in Postville;" Rev. Dr. Jean Rabary and Dr. Mamy, "Madagascar;" and Ruoxia Li, "My Experience of Church in China."

Organizations and groups hosting displays at the event include Lutheran World Relief, Iowa Heartland Habitat for Humanity, Riverside Lutheran Bible Camp, Self-Help International,



**Rev. Rafael Padilla**  
executive director for the ELCA Division for Global Mission, will be the keynote speaker at the Nov. 8 Global Mission Festival

Barnabas Uplift, Lutheran Services in Iowa, Synod Mission Trip to Guatemala, Namibia Workgroup, Global Mission Unit of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, Fair Trade, and the Lutheran Youth Organization of the Northeastern Iowa Synod.

Cost to attend is \$10 per adult and \$5 per student, with a maximum cost of \$25 per family. Dinner and snacks are included. To learn more, contact the Northeastern Iowa Synod at 319-352-1414 or visit [www.neiasynod.org](http://www.neiasynod.org).

## New Session of Safeguarding God's Children Added

The "Safeguarding God's Children" workshops provide training to prevent and respond to child sexual abuse in everyday life and ministry. A November session has been added to the current schedule:

**Nov. 15, 2009** – St. John, Charles City, 1 – 4 p.m.

**March 7, 2010** – St. Paul, Monona, 2 - 5 p.m.

**March 7, 2010** – Our Savior, Osage, 2 - 5 p.m.

To register for one of these workshops, contact the host church.

Additional congregations are encouraged to host the "Safeguarding God's Children" workshops. A minimum of 10 registered people is necessary for the event to take place. Full attendance and evaluation is required for participants to receive a certificate of completion. The host church will be responsible for publicity to surrounding congregations and conferences.

To learn more about hosting a workshop, contact a member of the S.A.F.E. committee or Pastor Darrel Gerriets at the synod office, 319-352-1414.

# Youth rally at Luther concert event for World Hunger Appeal

Some 400 people from Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin raised more than \$3,500 to fight world hunger as part of the Jesus, Justice, Jazz concert at Luther College Oct. 11. The event included a kickball tournament and concert featuring musical artists Agape, LOST AND FOUND, Rachel Kurtz, and performers from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American (ELCA) 2009 Youth Gathering in New Orleans. The concert's opening act featured Christian rap artists RJC of Redeemer Lutheran Church, Minneapolis.

Prior to the concert, youth from 10 ELCA congregations formed six teams that competed in the Youth Group Kickball Tournament organized by Luther Athletes Serving Others. Proceeds from the tournament's registration fees, concert ticket sales and offering during the concert will support the "Change the World: 2009 Lutheran Youth Challenge" to raise \$1 million for ELCA World Hunger. In addition, concertgoers brought

more than 500 pounds of food contributions for the Decorah Food Pantry.

"The music of Agape, Rachel Kurtz, and LOST AND FOUND, combined with the energy and faith of scores of young people, was a great witness to the Body of Christ serving others for the sake of the world," said Mike Blair, campus pastor for Luther College. "It's inspiring to see ELCA youth joining in a creative and spirited response to the 2009 challenge to change the world."

The concert event was sponsored by the Northeastern Iowa Synod Lutheran Youth Organization and



Six teams participated in the Youth Group Kickball Tournament at Luther College on Oct. 11 as part of the Jesus, Justice, Jazz concert to raise money for world hunger.

Luther's Office for College Ministries, along with support from the Luther Student Congregation, Wellness Program, and Student Activities. Follow the Jesus, Justice, Jazz tour online at [www.j3tour.com](http://www.j3tour.com).

## Tour de Revs Inspires Record Giving for Hunger

ELCA World Hunger reached a new milestone this summer due, in part, to the miles ridden by the Tour de Revs – the three Lutheran pastors who pedaled to every ELCA synod in the country to raise awareness about world hunger.

Giving in June 2009 was the highest on record for ELCA World Hunger, up nearly \$300,000 from the previous six-year average for that month. July giving increased nearly \$400,000 over its six-year monthly average. These numbers reverse a six-month pattern of reduced giving from previous years.

It is impossible to know how much of this success can be attributed to the Tour de Revs, but we do know that as of Sept. 3, 2009, the tour raised \$175,348.33. We are also confident that gifts were made to ELCA World Hunger because of the Tour de Revs, without direct attribution.

The tour's inspiration and special event giving made a difference. We are still receiving gifts regularly, and we are confident that the seeds planted by Tour de Revs, including their educational work, will grow and bear fruit in years to come. We are grateful to them.



– Pastor Mark A. Anderson  
Assistant to the Bishop  
Northeastern Iowa Synod

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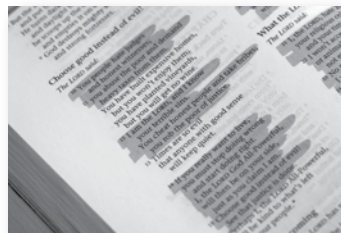
is a more reliable and dignified way of helping people who are hungry.”

Offering the outings and adding story books suggested in the Taking Root materials helped shape the curriculum for the youngest children attending Bible School.

“The suggested reading books that became part of the curriculum were wonderful,” Hedding says. “One story about a grumpy lighthouse keeper who helps feed stray cats showed that sometimes people need to go out of their way a little bit to help. That worked very well for the younger kids.”

Another resource that Strasser learned about this year and

recommends is *The Poverty and Justice Bible*, published in 2008 by the Bible Society ([www.povertyandjusticebible.org](http://www.povertyandjusticebible.org)). The Tour de Revs pastors introduced it to Strasser and others when the pastors visited Iowa in August. The Bible highlights — in orange — 2,848 passages that speak about poverty and justice, making it easy to reference verses related to issues today. Jesus’ own words are highlighted in 290 verses in the New Testament. Included in the Bible is a 54-page “reflect and respond” guide titled *The Core* to help lead related discussions.



“It really makes you realize what Jesus really wanted and the direction he wants us to take,” Strasser says.

Strasser encourages hunger leaders to explore the many resources available online, or to contact him to see samples firsthand. Many of the items are offered free with little or no shipping fees, and they can be adapted to work with any kind of setting. He also encourages leaders to let him know how the hunger-related tools have worked in their churches so that he can share that information with others.

“It’s all trial and error of what works,” he says. “To talk about hunger, you have to keep changing things and creating and getting new ideas. You can’t come in with the same story every year.”