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Star
Northeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

On Earth as in Heaven:
Forgive Us As We Forgive Others

By Bishop Kevin Jones

In the Lord's prayer the kingdom of heaven is revealed as a place where forgiveness is the way of life. We both receive and offer forgiveness as a way of participating in the healing work of God through Christ Jesus. In Revelation 21:2 John sees, "On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (NRSVUE) Healing is an ongoing act of restoration in Christ's presence. Forgiveness is a key component of that process.

Too often, however, we pair the word "forgive" with the word "forget." Forgiveness is not forgetting. In fact, the term "remember" (re-member) carries the connotation of putting the body back together. Restoration and healing accompany forgiveness when we are aware of the ways that we have been broken and address them.

At the 2023 Synod Assembly we passed a resolution "to identify barriers that prevent people from minoritized communities from serving as leaders in our synod and to expand the pool of pastoral candidates available to serve our congregations." This summer, the task force doing this work completed its report and presented it to the Synod Council. (The report can be found on the Synod website.)

The report begins by connecting the good news of the forgiveness we have through Jesus (Gospel) to anti-racism and anti-white supremacy work which we are called to as part of the ongoing restoration and healing of our world and our church. It reminds us that we were born into an unjust system of bias based on ethnic origin and skin color. The report then recommends actions that we can take as Northeastern Iowa Synod staff, council, committees, congregations, and with our ministry partners.

At the September council meeting we had an extended conversation with the task force around the report. I was encouraged by our conversation and the willingness to step more intentionally into this work. I find the recommendations to be achievable next steps for us to take. The Synod staff are already looking at ways we can begin some of this work now. The Synod Council will be prioritizing recommendations and exploring a potential resolution for the 2027 Synod Assembly.

Continued Next Page...

On Earth as in Heaven Continued...

I am grateful to the four members of the task force and to the people they interviewed to identify the barriers some of our siblings experience in the candidacy and call process. I am also grateful for the Strategies Toward Authentic Diversity (STAD) grant we received from the ELCA that provided a coach for the task force. I encourage you to read the report and begin praying and thinking about what you and your congregation can do.

The kingdom of heaven is among us right now. Jesus is calling us to the healing wholeness that comes with restorative forgiveness.

Generosity: Called, Equipped, Sent

By Rev. Jennifer Thomas

Every day across Northeastern Iowa, lives are being touched by leaders who answered God's call. A pastor offers comfort during a difficult season. A deacon helps young people discover faith and belonging. A lay leader prepares to serve their congregation in new ways. None of these ministries happen alone.

Through your Mission Support and generous gifts to leadership development, the Northeastern Iowa Synod walks alongside people as they discern, prepare for, and live out God's call. Together, we support seminary students, Lay School for Ministry participants, first-call pastors and deacons, and congregations raising up new leaders for the future of the church.

One of those leaders is Rev. Craig Moss, who was recently ordained after years of discernment, study, and formation. Throughout his journey, congregations across our synod helped make that call possible through prayer, encouragement, mentoring, and financial support. Today, Craig is sharing the gospel, caring for God's people, and serving Christ's church as a newly ordained pastor.

Craig's story reminds us that when we invest in leadership development, we are investing in ministry that will impact countless lives for years to come. Every scholarship, coaching conversation, internship experience, and leadership opportunity becomes a seed planted in God's kingdom.

Thank you for helping make those stories possible. Your generosity ensures that future leaders will be called, equipped, and sent to share God's love throughout Northeastern Iowa and beyond.

To support leadership development and other ministries of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, visit www.neiasynod.org.

Disaster Response Network Update

The Northeastern Iowa Synod Disaster Response Network is in a season of renewal and regrouping. In response to the recent Agristar building fire in Postville and its impact on workers, families, and the wider community, the network has begun reconnecting leaders and partners across the synod to strengthen our capacity for disaster response and recovery.

Our network follows a model of accompaniment, seeking to walk alongside individuals, congregations, and communities affected by disaster rather than directing or managing recovery efforts from outside. This approach emphasizes listening, relationship-building, and supporting local leadership as communities discern their own needs and next steps.

While the network is rebuilding momentum, Northeastern Iowa congregations have a strong history of responding faithfully in times of crisis. Over the years, congregations and volunteers have assembled and distributed flood cleanup buckets, maintained disaster response supplies, partnered with local and statewide relief efforts following floods and severe weather events, shared preparedness resources with congregations, and offered educational opportunities focused on disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. In 2024 alone, congregations across the synod helped replenish and distribute hundreds of flood buckets to communities affected by flooding in Iowa, demonstrating the church's commitment to practical care and mutual aid.

The network currently gathers online, meeting monthly to quarterly depending on current needs and emerging situations. These gatherings provide opportunities for information sharing, coordination, mutual support, and planning.

A significant new development is the launch of a pilot volunteer responder training program in partnership with Lutheran Disaster Response, a ministry of the ELCA. Through this initiative, volunteers will have opportunities to receive training in Psychological First Aid, MESS (Mental, Emotional, and Spiritual Support), and other helpful courses offered through the Sphere Community learning platform. The goal is to develop a network of trained responders who can provide compassionate, trauma-informed support when disasters affect communities within our synod and beyond.

Pastor David Severtson and Pastor Jen Thomas will participate in the ELCA Disaster Response Community of Practice training in October. This experience will provide encouragement, practical resources, and opportunities to learn from other synods and organizations engaged in disaster ministry. We hope to gather ideas for strengthening our own network, expanding volunteer engagement, and fostering more resilient congregations and communities throughout Northeastern Iowa.

As this work continues to take shape, we give thanks for the partnerships, relationships, and commitment that make accompaniment-based disaster ministry possible. Together, we seek to embody Christ's presence among neighbors facing disruption, loss, and recovery, while building a stronger foundation for disaster preparedness, response, and long-term community resilience throughout our synod. Email Pastor Jen at thomasj@neiasynod.org to get involved in the network or to sign up for online trainings.

Your Gifts to ELCA World Hunger Reach Our Global Companions

By Rev. Mike Wilker

When you give to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal—in the offering plate, by mail, or online—your gift travels farther than you might imagine. It supports a remarkable breadth of ministry: food pantries and advocacy here in the United States, and health clinics, clean water, microloans, agricultural training, disaster relief, and leadership development in more than 60 countries around the world.

What many of us in the Northeastern Iowa Synod may not realize is that these same gifts also accompany our own global companions—the churches with whom we share relationship, prayer, and friendship.

This spring, the ELCA Global Mission Team wrote to Bishop Kevin Jones and our synod with a report on exactly this. In the 2026 fiscal year, ELCA World Hunger supports companion churches and partners around the world with over $6 million of grants directly to ministries in other countries, plus $236,333.00 granted through the Lutheran World Federation. Among the projects that report highlighted are two that touch our synod's own companion relationships directly.

Hungary: The Lutheran Community and Creative House in Kötcse

Our synod's relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary (ELCH) took on special meaning in 2025, when we had the joy of hosting the Bishop of the ELCH here in Northeastern Iowa. The ELCH is a church that knows something about faithfulness in a diaspora. It is the third-largest Christian denomination in Hungary, with three dioceses, nearly 300 parishes, and 500 places of worship, and its congregations are often small and scattered across the country in an island-like pattern its people affectionately call Insula Lutherana, the "Lutheran Island." Even so, it maintains an extensive witness—including a network of schools reaching from nursery age through secondary education, and three institutions of higher learning—and in recent years it has, with support from the Lutheran World Federation, taught Hungarian to Ukrainian refugee children and worked through school workshops to dispel prejudice against the Roma, an ethnic minority long subject to discrimination across Europe.

This year, ELCA World Hunger funds support the ELCH's **Lutheran Community and Creative House** (a grant of $24,621). Located in the village of Kötcse—a community of barely five hundred souls tucked into the vineyard- and forest-covered slopes of the Somogy hills, about a ten-minute drive from Balatonszárszó—this ministry, whose fuller name is the Regional House of Traditions, gathers people to preserve and pass on the folk crafts and cultural heritage of the region. Visitors describe a lovingly restored building with a traditional covered porch and a folk playground set up in its yard. One Hungarian reporter captured the heart of the place in a single line: it is a house where even basket-weaving becomes a form of prayer. It is a reminder that God's work of nurturing community takes many beautiful forms—including the patient, hands-on labor of keeping a people's traditions and faith alive across generations.

Namibia and Southern Africa: The InfoHuts

Our synod's decades-long companion relationship with the Lutheran churches of Namibia and Southern Africa is one of our most treasured. In 2025 we welcomed four bishops of the Namibian Lutheran churches to Northeastern Iowa—another chapter in a friendship that spans generations.

ELCA World Hunger funds support two projects connected to this region: an LWF project on church preparedness ($11,400), and, through the Lutheran Communion in Southern Africa (LUCSA), the **InfoHuts of Namibia** ($38,000). The InfoHuts are community digital and empowerment hubs established by Lutheran churches like ELCIN and ELCRN. They give rural youth and teachers access to computers, e-learning tools, and life-skills training. At the Oniipa center, local teachers find computer access and free e-learning facilities; at the Nakayale/Onakayale center, digital literacy is paired with youth livelihood projects like community gardening. Across these hubs, the ministry weaves together digital skills, agricultural and small-scale farming training, and community health awareness—including support around health and gender-based violence. It is a beautiful picture of the whole gospel at work: feeding minds, hands, and spirits together.

One Offering, a World of Accompaniment

This is the quiet wonder of ELCA World Hunger. A gift given in Decorah or Waverly or Cresco does not simply disappear into a large fund. It becomes bread and computers and clean water and courage. It becomes a Creative House in Hungary and an InfoHut in Namibia. And it becomes tangible love shared with the very companions whose bishops have sat at our tables and prayed in our sanctuaries.

As the prophet Micah reminds us, we are called to do justice, love steadfastly, and walk humbly with our God. Through ELCA World Hunger, our synod gets to do all three—alongside friends across the ocean who are doing the very same.

Thanks be to God—and thank you for your generosity.

The InfoHut director, the Reverend Doctor Magdalena Ya-Shalongo, speaks with ELCA representatives.

An active-duty soldier and a retired teacher speak about their experience in a lay preacher's class to prepare to be chaplains.

The CaSTLE Project from Wartburg Seminary Offers a Variety of Resources for Congregations

By Rev. Kristen Corr Rod

How do you live out your faith in your daily life? How do you notice others living out their faith, doing God's work in the world, being the Church in the world?

When we pray the Lord's prayer, that prayer includes the line, "Your kingdom come," or, "Thy kingdom come," depending on what translation you pray. In his Small Catechism, Martin Luther explains that when we pray this line, we are trusting that God's kingdom will come, with or without us. After all, some of Jesus' first words of his public ministry were, "The kingdom of God is here," which could also be translated "the kingdom of God is at hand," or "the kingdom of God is walking around in your midst." God has already begun the work of bringing God's kingdom to this earth, through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus has shown us what God's kingdom looks like. But, Luther continues, when we pray "Thy kingdom come," we are praying that the kingdom of God might come TO US, and IN us, and THROUGH us. We are praying that we might be a part of the work that God is doing in the world.

That is what it means to live out our faith, to BE the Church in the world. How does what we learn about Jesus in Sunday worship shape the values we live out during the rest of our week? How might we already be using the gifts God has given us to participate in God's work in the world?

Sometimes, living out our faith involves lay people stepping into more leadership roles in congregations and participating in lay training programs. Sometimes, it involves people recognizing the way that God is already working through them when they are at their job. Sometimes it simply means noticing the presence of God in simple parts of everyday life, like a beautiful sunset or a smile from a friend.

The CaSTLE Project (CaSTLE stands for Country and Small Town Lived Ecclesiology) is an initiative of Wartburg Seminary, funded by a grant from the Lilly Foundation, that is providing resources and support to congregations across the ELCA. The word "Ecclesiology" is a fancy word for how we think about what it means to be the Church in the world. It is about how we live out our faith not just in our congregational buildings, not just during Sunday worship, but also out in our everyday lives.

The CaSTLE Project provides subgrants to synods, to strengthen synodical Lay Training programs and to fund the creation of resources to support the ministry of all lay people. The Northeastern Iowa Synod, in collaboration with the Southeastern Iowa Synod, the Western Iowa Synod, and the South Central Synod of Wisconsin, received one of these grants, and we commissioned the creation of a new resource, a guidebook called "An Everyday God for an Everyday Church and Everyday People," which was written by ELCA Coach Jen Kunka. This guidebook contains many practical ideas that can be utilized in congregational worship services, newsletters, meetings, and more, to help people begin to recognize God's presence in the world and to name how they are using their gifts to do God's work in their daily lives.

Continued on next page...

The CaSTLE Project continued...

On Sept 5, several participants from the Lay Ministry Training Programs of the Northeastern Iowa Synod, the Southeastern Iowa Synod, and the Western Iowa Synod gathered for a retreat based on this guidebook. Jen Kunka led the group in discussions and activities based on the sessions in the guidebook. Participants experienced rich conversations and developed meaningful connections with others in the Lay Ministry Training Programs across Iowa.

The CaSTLE Project also provides many resources to help people talk about how they live out their faith in their daily lives, as well as support for lay training programs across the ELCA. Their website, www.thecastleproject.org, has a rich library of resources including videos about how worship shapes our daily lives, recordings of webinars about guiding congregations through times of change, and study guides for several books, as well as songs, liturgies, stories, articles, ideas for midweek Lenten worship, and more. All of these resources can be accessed by anyone for free, simply by creating a login to their site. Check them out!

Leaders in Northeastern, Southeastern and Western Iowa synods for an inspiring CaSTLE project retreat on September 5, 2026.

NEIA Synod Energy Reduction Grants Awarded

At the September 19, Synod Council meeting, four Energy Reduction Grants (ERG) were awarded to four congregations in the Northeastern Iowa Synod. Congratulations to the recipients of the 2026 fall awards:

Bethany Lutheran, Iowa Falls: $950 towards replacing inefficient refrigerator saving 1000 kWh/year. Total cost of project $1,900.

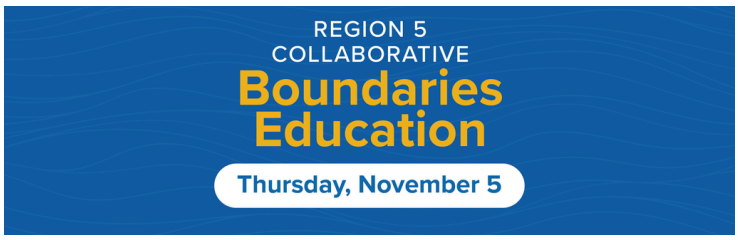
Decorah Lutheran, Decorah: $3,058 to upgrade lights and ballasts for 300 bulbs providing a 47% reduction in energy use for lighting. Total cost of project $6114.

St. Timothy Lutheran, Hudson: $10,000 for a new ductless HVAC system with individual room controls. Estimated 50% savings in energy use and cost. Total cost of project $144,000.

First Lutheran, Decorah: $10,000 for replacing 4 AC units with heat pump system providing a 47% reduction in cooling and 77.8% reduction in energy use for heating in spring and fall. Total cost of project $226,000.

For more information about the Energy Reduction Grants or to apply for the spring granting cycle visit the Synod website.

Region 5 Boundaries Education



The synods of Region 5 (the synods in Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan) are collaborating to present annual boundaries education for active rostered ministers and SAMs. The purpose of this collaboration is, in part, to show a shared commitment to boundaries education across the region, to create and sustain professional ministry leadership in our synods, for safety in our communities of faith, and to pool our resources to offer high-quality educational events.

The collaborative boundaries education follows a three-year cycle covering Professional Boundaries, Gender Justice, and Racial Justice. This year's focus is Racial Justice.

Participants are expected to be present for the entire event and to engage with the material presented as fully as they are able.

Participants may attend the training at a site outside of their home synod, if desired due to proximity or other reasons. Please register with your HOME SYNOD, who will then contact the synod where you will be attending.

Registration is open on our website or by clicking **here**.

Gathering Expedition

Friday October 30 (6:00 pm) to Sunday November 1 (10:30 am), 2026 at Ewalu

Gathering Expedition is a weekend retreat where youth and their adult leaders step away from the noise to explore faith, purpose, and leadership. It's a time to pause, listen, and prepare for what God is doing next.

Young people are invited to discover their voice and practice leading alongside others. Through worship, service and shared learning, they will grow skills and confidence to live their faith boldly in daily life. This retreat will also serve as a stepping stone on the faith formation journey—building connection and momentum before the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering, where the shared experience peaks in a powerful churchwide celebration of faith.

Register **here.** Registration can also be done through the Synod website.

Upcoming Events

October 2026

- **October 8, 2026 -**Global Church Together Network
  - Zoom @ 1:30 p.m.
- **October 8, 2026 -** Racial Justice Advocacy Network
  - Zoom @ 3:00 p.m.
- **October 20, 2026** - Substance Abuse Network
  - Zoom @ 1:30 p.m.
- **October 30-November 1** - Gathering Expedition
  - Camp Ewalu - Strawberry Point

November 2026

- **November 5, 2026 -** Region 5 Boundaries Education
  - Site Selection Available in Registration
- **November 10 - November 11** - Northeast Iowa Faith Leaders Retreat Presented by AMOS
  - Camp Ewalu - Strawberry Point
- **November 12, 2026 -** Racial Justice Advocacy Network
  - Zoom @ 3:00 p.m.
- **November 19, 2026** - Global Church Together Network
  - Zoom @ 2:00 p.m.

December 2026

- **December 10, 2026 -**Global Church Together Network
  - Zoom @ 1:30 p.m.
- **December 10, 2026 -** Racial Justice Advocacy Network
  - Zoom @ 3:00 p.m.
- **December 17, 2026** - Disaster Response Network
  - Zoom @ 2:00 p.m.

Congregations

Interviewing:

- **Allison, St. James**
- **Arlington, St. John**; **Elkader, Hope (Littleport)**; **Strawberry Point, St. Sebald**; **Volga, St. Paul** (One in Faith Lutheran Parish)
- **Cedar Falls, St. John's** (staff)
- **Clarion, First & Congregational UCC**
- **Decorah, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge**
- **Dows, First** (part-time call)
- **Dysart, Zion**
- **Garnavillo, St. Paul & McGregor, First** - Rev David Tielbar, interim
- **Janesville, Messiah** (part-time call)
- **Jesup, American**, Rev. Susan Friedrich, interim
- **Joice, Bethany; Lake Mills, Winnebago; Northwood, Silver Lake; Albert Lea, Minn., Lunder** (One in Christ Lutheran Parish)
- **La Porte City, Zion** (Jubilee)
- **Lake Mills, Salem**
- **Leland, Our Savior & Garner, Faith** (Miller) (part-time call)
- **Mason City, Our Saviour's & St. Paul** (part-time call)
- **New Hampton, Trinity**
- **Roland, Bergen**
- **Sheffield, Zion St. John**
- **Thornton, St. Paul** (part-time call)
- **Toeterville, St. Peter & Carpenter, Deer Creek**
- **Waterloo, Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd** (part-time call)
- **Waterloo, Zion & Cedar Falls NewAldaya Lifescapes** (full-time)
- **Waukon, St. John,** Rev. Mark Oehlert, interim

Self-Study:

- **Charles City, St. John -** Rev. Kris Ferkin, interim
- **Decorah, St. John's & Hauge** (part-time call)
- **Dubuque, St. John's -** Rev. Pat Mohr-Kelly, interim
- **Hawkeye, Trinity** (part-time call)
- **Oelwein, Zion**
- **Washburn, Redeemer** (part-time call)
- **Waterloo, St. Ansgar** (part-time call)
- **Waterloo, Trinity** (part-time call)

Roster Changes:

- Rev. Gary Hatcher, Resigned from Roster
- Rev. Lisa Dietrich, transferred from Central / Southern Illinois
- Rev. O. Paul Hougen, deceased

Installations:

- October 25 - Rev. Jonathon Dolan, Jewell, Bethesda
- Pending - Rev. Jennifer Bohls, Rev. Sid Bohls, St. James, Mason City

Northeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prayers

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

September 1-7, 2026

- Big Canoe Lutheran Church, Decorah
- Burr Oak Lutheran Church, Decorah
- Rev. Bob Scheurer
- Decorah Lutheran Church, Decorah
- Hesper Lutheran Church, Decorah
- Amy Wrightsman
- Edna Kamper

September 8-14, 2026

- Rev. Nikoli Falenschek
- Rev. Paul Hougen
- Rev. Matthew Becker
- Rev. Sam Hernes
- First Lutheran Church, Decorah
- Luther College Congregation, Decorah
- Jan Glaspie

September 15-21, 2026

- Middle East Peace
- Rev. Jim Klosterboer
- Rev. Katie Pals
- Rev. Sue Cira
- Rev. David Nelson
- Rev. Joel Nye
- Rev. Paul Nelson
- Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Decorah

September 22-30, 2026

- St. John Lutheran Church (Maxfield), Denver
- St. Peter Lutheran Church, Denver
- Rev. Erika Lenth
- Rev. John Largen
- Rev. David Tielbar
- Rev. Sue Garbes
- Rev. Jim Carpenter
- Rev. Kathy Wicks
- Rev. Mike Ashman

October 1-7, 2026

- Rev. Dr. Jim Martin - Schramm
- Rev. Ron Poe
- Rev. Joel Becker
- Deacon Pat Gjere
- Rev. Jim Knudson
- Rev. Melinda McVey

October 8-14, 2026

- Lutheran Services in America, Washington, D.C.
- First Lutheran Church, Dows
- St. John's Lutheran Church, Dubuque
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Dubuque
- Rev. Jeni Bohls
- St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Dubuque
- St. Peter Lutheran Church, Dubuque

October 15-21, 2026

- Middle East Peace
- Ms. Carol Hasvold
- Rev. Mark Walker
- St. John Lutheran Church, Dundee
- Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Dysart
- St. Peter Lutheran Church, Eldorado
- Rev. Mark Anderson

October 22-31, 2026

- Rev. Victoria Shepherd
- Rev. Beth Olson
- Rev. Greg Bjornstad
- Elgin Lutheran Church, Elgin
- Rev. Larry Trachte
- Highland Lutheran Church, Elgin
- Rev. Dena Gable
- Zion Lutheran Church (Clayton Center), Elkader
- Rev. Bill Peters
- Rev. Dennis Hugdahl

September 2026

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President's Sparks

Greetings and Joy to all as we start a new season. We have a new theme for the next couple of years. **Be Brave**. We will be exploring different ways to Be Brave. Check out our calendar. We have updated event and meeting dates.

Our new Board just met for the first time, but there is plenty of room for more voices. We have 3 vacant board seats and we still **need** a Vice President. I am more than happy to appoint people. Let me know if you have questions or are interested in helping plan our fun events.

Our first fun event is our field trip to Black Hawk County on Oct 17. In the Waterloo/Cedar Falls area, we will be visiting the Grout Museum, Barn Happy and the campus ministries on the UNI campus. Please contact Chris VanDeventer before October 1st. (optional: go back and visit the John Deere Museum)

I hope to see many people there. It is fun to learn and grow together.

Jesus and all his Jazz!
Christine Schmitt

CALENDAR

Sep 26 *Cluster D Gathering, Springfield, Decorah

Oct 10 ***LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls**

Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County

Nov 7 ***LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah**

Nov 14 *Board meeting @ synod office

2027

Feb 19-20 Retreat @ Stone Center Strawberry Point (snow date Feb. 26-27)

Mar 6 *Board Meeting @ synod office

Apr 17 *Cluster G Gathering, Salem in Lake Mills

May 1 *Board Meeting @ synod office

Jun 25 *Board meeting/ party set up, St. Peter's Garnavillo

Jun 26 *Sharing party, St. Peter's, Garnavillo

2028:

Jun 28 *Convention, tentative Zion in West Union

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_____, Vice President

Chris VanDeventer, Secretary
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Contact NEIA Women of the ELCA: NEIA Women of the ELCA | Northeastern Iowa Sy

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

Travel Fun Fall field trip with NE IA Women of ELCA

Saturday October 17, 2026

Come Join us on an Adventure.

Exploring Waterloo/ Cedar Falls in Black Hawk County

WHO: Anyone can come. Bring a friend, spouse, Children and grandchildren

RSVP by Oct. 1 *(for reservations at Barn Happy)*

10am Sullivan Brothers Iowa Veterans Museum & Grout Museum of History & Science

(enter top of the hill)

Museum Only Cost: $15 Adults, $8 Veterans & Children 4-13, 3 & Under & Museum Members Free

Or add the planetarium show

Museum & Norris Corson Family Planetarium Cost: $20 Adults, $13 Veterans & Children 4-13, 3 & Under & Museum Members Free

1 pm

Lunch at **Barn Happy** 11310 Univ. Ave. Cedar Falls, IA

They have a gift shop of antiques and Iowa made products (pay your own way)

2:30 pm

ThreeHouse Collaborative Campus Ministries 2422 College St, Cedar Falls, IA (free learning about campus ministries at UNI)

We end our day *together* here.

Optional on your own:

John Deere Tractor & Engine Museum

500 Westfield Ave, Waterloo, IA 50701

(free admittance) They are open until 5pm.

RSVP by Oct. 1 *so we can put reservations in at Barn Happy*

RSVP TO: Chris VanDeventer cdvandeven@gmail.com 515-320-2877

Note all activities are pay as you go.

If you have a carpool location, let us know so we can share with others.

October 2026

As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society and the world.

President's Sparks

I must share a small but mind blowing event in my life. The church I grew up in, St. John Buck Creek rural Sumner, has a tradition that I have not found in other churches. They stand around the altar making "tables" for communion. (there is no rail). After communion they return to their pews and stand in their spot for a few seconds in silence. I do this still, take a moment to breathe and reflect. In August of 2026, I returned to my pew and prayed. Dear God Help Me… Relax in your Grace. The words blew my mind. I went home and wrote this:

Dear God,

Help me:

- Be Brave in small things
  - Just a Touch, A word, A smile, Food, Clothing, Service to others
- See You in all things
  - Inside our lives, Outside in nature, In the community, In conversation with others
- Relax In Your Grace
  - We are not responsible for everything, Its ok to rest, You love us, I am worthy: In all things, To all people, everywhere

Thank you for all you give us. You are Wondrous and Mighty. AMEN

Jesus and all his Jazz!
Christine Schmitt

Justice Committee

Advocating for justice includes many actions. One very timely justice action involves voting in the election of our governmental officials. They deal directly with so many justice issues that can have more than one solution: socially, economically, racially, climatologically, and more. Here is what our church says regarding the election process.

"Healthy civic engagement depends on clear distinctions between fact and all forms of falsehood, ranging from partial misstatements to intentional disinformation to outright lies. … Our church, then, encourages us all to ask, in every personal interaction and on social media, whether our words or those we repeat represent the best possible understanding of our neighbor."

— ELCA social statement "Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All" (p. 62)

I invite you to take faithful steps this election year:

• Register to vote if you have not already done so and check your registration to make sure it is current.

• Learn about the issues, ballot measures, and candidates that will shape your community. Participate in respectful conversations.

• *Check sources of information before sharing it in conversations or online.*

• Pray for those who serve in public office, for election workers and for all who will exercise the right of voting. Create spaces for faithful, open conversation with voters, candidates or neighbors in your community.

• Encourage your family members, friends and neighbors to take part in the democratic process.

"Be faithful, informed and engaged as disciples of Jesus seeking the well-being of our neighbors and the common good of the communities God has entrusted to our care. Every act of informed participation, every conversation marked by grace and every vote cast with prayerful discernment is an opportunity to bear witness to God's love in the world." -Bishop Curry.

Submitted by Chris VanDeventer

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

Thank Offering Time

Thanksgiving is coming and so is Thankoffering time. You can celebrate with thankoffering in many ways. Some say a prayer, some hold a full service and some receive offerings during a church service. Share how you celebrate thanksgiving and Thank offerings so we can share with others. Resources are available at https://www.womenoftheelca.org/thankofferings .

You can watch the 2026 Thankoffering Service livestream on October 15 at 9:50 am. (CDT) *from Concordia College Campus Ministry, Moorehead, Minn.* You can also download a copy of the service for your congregation:
https://www.womenoftheelca.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/08/2026-thankoffering-service.pdf

CALENDAR

Oct 10 ***LWR ingathering Nazareth Lutheran, Cedar Falls**
Oct 15 *Thank Offering Service from Concordia
Oct 17 *Fall Field Trip, Black Hawk County
Nov 7 ***LWR In-Gathering @ Olson's Explosives, Decorah**
Nov 14 *Board meeting @ synod office

2027

Feb 19-20*Retreat @ Stone Center Strawberry Point (snow date Feb. 26-27)
Mar 6 *Board Meeting @ synod office
Apr 10 ***LWR In-Gathering @ Nazareth, Cedar Falls**
Apr 17 *Cluster G Gathering, Salem in Lake Mills
May 1 *Board Meeting @ synod office
Jun 25 *Board meeting/ party set up, St. Peter's Garnavillo
Jun 26 *Sharing party, St. Peter's, Garnavillo
Oct 9 *LWR In-Gathering @ Nazareth, Cedar Falls

2028:
Jun 28 *Convention, Zion in West Union

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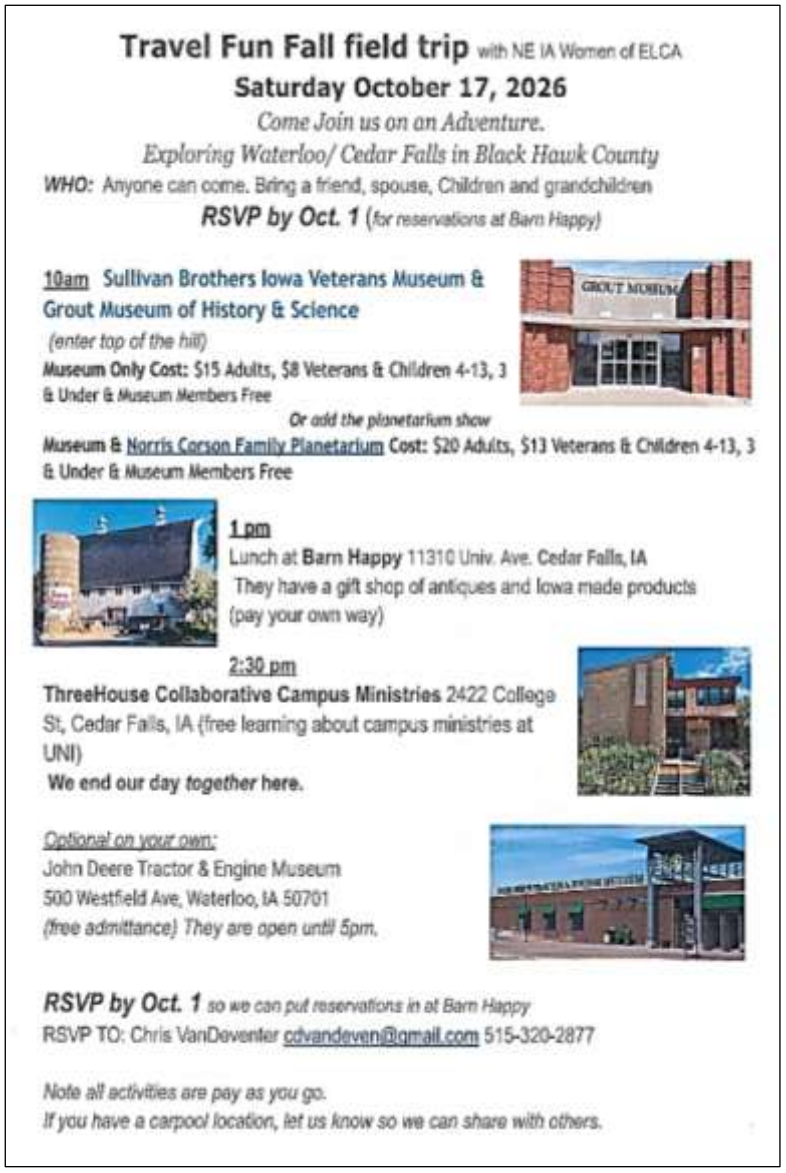
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