

Synod networks strengthen youth ministries
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better understand my own relationship with God and how to share that with others.”

The St. John Youth Board and congregation have been supportive of the mission trips, WIYLDE participation and other youth ministry activities by helping with expenses and volunteering as leaders. Heidebrink makes a point to share with parents and the congregation about the youth activities through emails and posts on Facebook.

“We can reach a whole lot of people better on Facebook than when we send a note home,” she said.

St. John’s youth ministry opportunities are having an impact on the youth and their renewed interest in church. “Parents have told me that their kids are asking, ‘Are we going to go to church this week?’ instead of ‘Do we have to go to church?’” Heidebrink said.

Register for Leadership Event

Saturday, Sept. 12, 2015

9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Redeemer Lutheran, Waverly

Those planning to attend the Fall Leadership Event should register by Friday, Sept. 4 by calling the synod office, 319-352-1414 or sending an email to boltec@neiasynod.org.

This annual event is an opportunity for lay and rostered members to join a synod network and connect with other network members in person. There is no cost to attend, and lunch is included. To learn more, visit www.neiasynod.org/event/#service.

Practice Being Grateful

by Pastor Mark Anderson, Assistant to the Bishop



Mr. A. J. Jacobs, a well known author and lecturer, tried to reconnect with his Jewish heritage by living one year following every commandment in the Old Testament, including even stoning an adulterer (using very small stones). He has written a book about his project titled *The Year of Living Biblically: One Man’s Humble Quest to Follow the Bible as Literally as Possible*.

I just listened to a “TED Talk” that Jacobs offered on his experience, and I was surprised by his statement that of all the rules in the Old Testament, including, of course, Leviticus, the rule he found the most difficult to follow was the rule to be “thankful.”

For example, he tried to be thankful at work when the elevator answered his call, thankful when the elevator did not plummet to the basement. Thankful for friends and family, for everything in his life large and small. He reports that living in gratitude changed the way he spoke about people and events. When the way he spoke changed, the way he thought changed and,

finally, he changed as a person — for the better.

After an entire year of trying to live by every rule in the Old Testament, Jacobs found that learning to be grateful has had the most impact on his life.

Maybe being more grateful would change not just the heart of a New York author, but even small town lowans. What if we practiced being grateful for each and every gift God has given us? What if we were grateful for each and every person God has put in our lives? What if we were grateful for every mouth of food, breath of air, drink of water, dollar in our bank, friend on the street? Would the realization of all that we have received make us more generous with others? Would it make us more generous with our wealth? I am not sure, let’s give it a try and find out.

To download this article or other stewardship resources, visit www.neiasynod.org/stewardship.

Share about your Service Day activities

Sunday, Sept. 13, 2015

Pastors, lay leaders and volunteers are invited to email photos and summaries of the activities their congregations will be doing for the ELCA Service Day on Sept. 13.

The “God’s work. Our hands.” service

day is designated as a time for ELCA congregations to do service projects in their communities as a witness to others.

Photos from the day will be posted online and in the *Star* newsletter and can be emailed to Marcia Hahn at hahn@neiasynod.org.