

students, including three from outside the congregation.

- **Pastor Matt Muters, Our Saviour's, Mason City**, expressed his thankfulness for being part of the Northeastern Iowa Synod after serving five years as a mission pastor in an isolated area of Utah. He described the culture here as "rare and so precious" to him. He noted the collegiality shown when nearby Trinity offered its sanctuary to make room for a large funeral for a deceased member of Our Saviour's.
- **Pastor Jeff Hansen, Ridgeway Parish, Ridgeway**, shared about a member of their congregation who had a dream to raise money for the ELCA Malaria Campaign. She made a quilt and raised more than a thousand dollars for malaria. Another member wanted to bring the church into the community, so she and her elementary students planted seeds and started a free community farmers market, with any donations going to World Hunger.
- **Pastor Corey Smith, St. John (Maxfield), Denver**, told how the Maxfield church burned down in 1963 when lightning struck. The church was rebuilt and has continued to serve the rural area for 50 years. He invited everyone to join a celebration marking this occasion during the week following Assembly.
- **Les Peterson, Bethany, Elkader**, thanked the Assembly for adopting a resolution last year to support organ donation. He told how the heart of a young man from Minnesota was donated to a Vietnam veteran and how the two

Money Leadership classes offer strategies for grateful giving

by Pastor Mark Anderson, Assistant to the Bishop

This issue of the *Star* newsletter focuses on "grateful giving." Often Christians give to causes, such as a building fund, or give to get something back, like a fundraiser auction, or give so that the recipient has "earned" the gift, like the youth offering a car wash. However, true giving comes not to purchase something, not to get something, not to make someone earn our gift, but out of nothing other than gratitude for all that God has done for us, including our creation and salvation.

For those who believe that they just can't afford to be gratefully generous, it may be time to look not only at what you give as an offering, but at your whole family budget. Of course, the first question is do you have a family budget? Does your monthly financial plan include a strategy to get out of debt? A strategy for a

comfortable retirement? A strategy for becoming a grateful steward?

The program "Money Leadership" can help a family develop all these strategies. Several pastors in our synod have been trained to be coaches who can work with small groups of adults to develop a family budget with Biblical priorities.

If you or your congregation would like to offer classes for members of your church and community in money leadership, contact me.

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



families now share a bond with one another. "The goal should be that nobody dies waiting for an organ."

- **Kathy Jones, Zion, Waterloo**, shared how it was Zion's 75th anniversary and the roof needed to be repaired. Congregation members worked together to have a rummage sale and wear their "God's Work. Our Hands." t-shirts to show the community. The sale raised more than \$3,000 in two days.
- **Stacey Nalean-Carlson, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge, Decorah**, recognized the bold leadership of the renovation committee of Glenwood. The 40-year-old carpet was being held together by camouflage duct tape, so the committee looked into new carpeting and accessibility for all people. A ramp was built to the chancel and the pulpit lowered. A child who uses a wheelchair tried it out and declared he was ready to preach.