

Dear Faith Shapers,

Are you looking forward to the approaching holidays or are you overwhelmed like me? Weren't we just enjoying summer vacation? And now, already, we're looking at Thanksgiving and Christmas just around the corner? Crazy! Long shopping lists and even longer to-do lists challenge our patience and our priorities. Our calendars are full. Our days are a sprint from start to finish. It's hard enough to simply keep up with life, let alone try to add meaningful, faith-shaping practices to our list of good intentions. So above all else this month, I invite you to be gentle with yourself. The ideas shared in this resource are not intended to burden you. Rather, they are an invitation to rest in God's unconditional love and grace. They are an invitation to trust that you and those you love are held in God's embrace. They are an invitation to stop, in the midst of so much worry and work, to simply breathe in God's peace. The world does not rest on our shoulders. It rests on God's. Lay down the burden of holding it all together and experience instead God holding you. You are loved.

Peace,

Stacey Nalean-Carlson  
Pastor, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge  
Lutheran Churches, Decorah

## Stop, Drop, Roll: Extinguishing Holiday Stress



### Stop

—Take several deep breaths. Inhale God's peace. Exhale worry.

—Name one thing you're grateful for. Tell God thank you.

—Follow Weavings Journal on Twitter. They offer short prayers that you may stop and pray throughout the day #weavingsdailyoffice.

### Drop

Drop a donation in the offering plate at church or in the Salvation Army red kettle or anywhere else you and your household can make a difference with a monetary donation. Giving generously turns the focus from ourselves to others, and our trust in God grows.

### Roll

**Roll** down a hill. Turn on some music and have a **dance** party in the kitchen. Gather around the piano to **sing** and play your favorite hymns. Go for a **walk** in God's good creation. **Moving our bodies** helps us roll with the challenges that confront us, going with the flow of God's grace instead of holding rigidly to our own plans and expectations.

This information is prepared for you by the  
Northeastern Iowa Synod-Home Life Network  
for use by families and local congregations.



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# Happy New (Church) Year!

The last Sunday of the church year is Christ the King Sunday on November 22. The first Sunday of the new church year is November 29, the first Sunday of Advent. On Saturday, November 28, celebrate New (Church) Year's Eve with fun snacks, party hats, noise makers, and conversation about where you saw God during the past year.



Order a 2016 Calendar of Word & Season from Augsburg Fortress (<http://store.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/20577/Calendar-of-Word-and-Season-Year-C-2016?c=285662>). Be intentional about recognizing the changing seasons of the church year and pay attention to how this practice impacts your faith.

*Great Thanksgiving and Advent ideas from past Living Faith @ Home pages:*

- Take a blank November calendar and write one thing a day to thank God for.
- Decorate your sanctuary and home in steps to create a sense of anticipation during Advent.
- Help your family gather, clean and collect toys and clothes that they have outgrown to donate to those in need. Share your blessings!

*These ideas and MANY MORE are available at*

*<http://www.neiasynod.org/youth-ministry/home-life/>.*

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER...

Thanks to a presentation by  
Dr. Mark Allan Powell at our synod's  
Fall Theological Conference

**When your child asks for something, how do you respond?** If we tell children that "we can't afford it," we are leading them to believe that we could be happier if only we had more money.



Instead, tell children that buying the thing they're asking for "isn't the best use of the resources God has entrusted to us." Then be open to conversation. Your children may be able to offer a compelling argument for why the item they wish to purchase would be a good use of your family's resources!



Dr. Powell also offered this quote that really has me thinking: **Entitlement is a particularly prevalent attitude in our current culture, and it provides a sure prescription for joyless living.** Instead, let us view all of life as a wonderfully generous and completely unmerited gift of God.