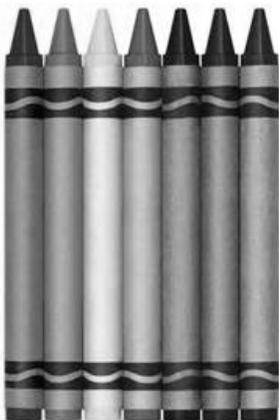


Dear Faith Shapers,

I confess. I'm one of those people who, although no longer in school, still gets excited when school supplies start showing up in the stores. There's something so wonderful about a brand new box of crayons, all those perfectly sharpened colors just waiting to be used. There's something about a brand new notebook, so many blank pages awaiting inspiration. There's something about everything—pens, pencils, folders, glue sticks—standing at attention, neat and orderly.



Because it won't be long, of course, before the pens begin to run out of ink, the crayons become dull, the notebook is a mess...and my dream of perfec-

tion is dashed. Neat and orderly stacks become disorderly piles, inspiration dries up, and I am left longing for another first day of school so that I can start all over again.

(continued on back)

## School Kit Supply List

Whether you're back-to-school shopping with your children or grandchildren—or purchasing your own new supplies—now is the perfect time to pick up all that is needed for a Lutheran World Relief School Kit!

*Imagine having to choose between a meal or purchasing a notebook. Project Promise School Kits are sent to places where even the few required school supplies may be more than a family can afford. Pencils and paper can help write a positive future.*

*Make a difference today!*

### INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN EACH KIT

FOUR 70-sheet notebooks of wide- or college-ruled paper, approximately 8" x 10 1/2"; no loose leaf paper  
ONE 30-centimeter ruler, or a ruler with centimeters on one side and inches on the other  
ONE pencil sharpener  
ONE pair of blunt scissors (safety scissors with embedded steel blades work well)  
FIVE unsharpened #2 pencils with erasers; secure together with a rubber band  
FIVE black or blue ballpoint pens (no gel ink); secure together with a rubber band  
ONE box of 16 or 24 crayons  
ONE 2 1/2" eraser  
ONE sturdy drawstring backpack-style cloth bag, approximately 14" x 17" with shoulder straps (no standard backpacks)

**Learn more at [lwr.org](http://lwr.org).**

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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If you're looking for some great ideas for Rally Sunday, Blessing of the Backpacks, or God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday, check out past Living Faith @ Home pages.  
<http://www.neliasynod.org/youth-ministry/home-life/>.

(continued from front)

Isn't this life? We begin a year, or a day, or an hour with good intentions. We will get it right this time. We will do what we know God is calling us to do. We will befriend our neighbors. We will spend quality time with our kids. We will start each day with prayer. We will volunteer our time. We will keep the house in order. We will call the friend who has been on our mind. We will let go of the anger that's wounding us. We will put the card in the mail...on time! Oh my. The list goes on and on. I grow weary just writing it.

I grow weary, not because the list is so long, but because it never takes long for my good intentions to go awry. No matter how hard I try, I can not live up to the expectations I set for myself. And, in fact, I often do the very things I am determined not to do.

I appreciate Paul, who in his letter to the Romans writes, "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate" (Romans 7:15).

Thankfully, we do not have to wait until the start of a new school year to get that fresh start that we so desire. Every day is a new beginning. Martin Luther put it this way, "Daily...the Holy Spirit abundantly forgives all sins..." (Luther's Small Catechism, 3rd Article of the Apostles' Creed). We worship a God who freely forgives us and inspires us to try again.



So take one of those new, perfectly sharpened crayons and put it somewhere where you will see it each morning. Let it be a reminder to you that, with God, every day is a new beginning. Thanks be to God!

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



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[Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](http://www.neliasynod.org/youth-ministry/home-life/)

## CONVERSATION STARTERS...

Around the table or in the car, any time and any where you've got a few minutes to spend with a friend or a family member, try these:

- \* For you, what in life takes courage?
- \* Describe a time when you experienced forgiveness.
- \* Describe a time when God seemed very near. Far away.
- \* Who has named for you the gifts you have? What are those gifts?

## AND SPEAKING OF GIFTS...

How is God calling you to use your gifts for the sake of the world? Might God be calling you to explore using your gifts as a pastor or other church leader?

It's never too late, or too early, to begin thinking about the possibility of serving as a leader in the church.

**If you see gifts in others, name them. If others see gifts in you, listen. God is calling.**

*What Shall I Say? Discerning God's Call to Ministry* invites you into a process to discover your gifts and to discern the ministry to which God calls you. Order here:

[http://resources.elca.org/Candidacy-What\\_Shall\\_I\\_Say\\_Book.html](http://resources.elca.org/Candidacy-What_Shall_I_Say_Book.html)