

Dear Faith Shapers,

Maybe you like a good roller-coaster, but I sure don't—especially when it's a roller-coaster of highs and lows in real life, and not just the artificial highs and lows of a thrill-seeking ride at an amusement park. This year, in many ways, has felt like a roller-coaster. Joys and challenges have faced our families, our nation, and our world. How do we hang on?

For me, it's important to remember that the hanging on is not up to us. You don't have to hang on for dear life on this roller-coaster called life. God is hanging on tightly to you, and God's grip is secure.

One of my favorite Scripture verses is recorded in Jeremiah: "Surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope" (Jeremiah 29:11).

A future with hope is what I'm counting on, for all God's beloved. We may not be able to see it now, but God has promised it, and God's promises can be trusted.

Peace,

Stacey Nalean-Carlson

Pastor, Glenwood & Canoe Ridge  
Lutheran Churches, Decorah



## Planting Perennials

In the midst of challenging times, it can help to dig in the dirt and plant some new life.

Every year, I tell myself that I will plant some spring-blooming bulbs in the fall (tulips, daffodils, crocuses, hyacinths),  
BUT I NEVER GET IT DONE!

Well, this is the year! Will you join me?



I've been reading about daffodils, and they are described as dependable perennials. I love that! When so much feels uncertain, I want a flower that I can depend upon to bloom and bring beauty to the world.

Moreover, daffodils apparently symbolize rebirth and new beginnings. Even better! We need some new beginnings, right!?!

So, let's do this together.

The best time to plant daffodils in Iowa is October. Let's gather ourselves, our families, our congregations and plant some daffodil bulbs together. Let's dig in the dirt and pray for new beginnings. Let's wait, expectantly, for the beauty God has in store for us.

If you're looking for some great conversation and inspiration regarding faith development, check out past Living Faith @ Home pages.  
<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 questions to invite reflection on the summer:

- \* For what moment this summer are you most grateful? What was the best thing about this summer?
- \* For what moment this summer are you least grateful? What was the hardest thing about this summer?
- \* When this summer did you feel most alive? What excited you? What challenged you? What inspired you?
- \* When this summer did you feel life draining out of you? What exhausted you? What angered you? What worried you?
- \* Where did you see God this summer? What was God up to in your life this summer? What is God's invitation to you now?

## Global Church Sunday

Consider hosting a Global Church Sunday in your congregation this October. Celebrate and support our church's missionaries:

- \* Include music from the global church in worship
- \* Offer treats from around the world at coffee hour
- \* Collect a special offering to support our missionaries

Consider teaching hymn number 869 in Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW): *Nimemwona Bwana/We Have Seen the Lord*. This Tanzanian piece is rhythmic, fun, and repetitive! Where have you seen the Lord lately?

Learn more at <http://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-Global-Church-Sponsorship#GCS>.



## Your Turn

*The Home Life Network supports congregations in the care of each baptized child of God, both children and adults, who seek to live out their faith in their daily lives.*

How can we best support you, our reader?  
What topics would you like to see us address?  
What questions are you pondering right now when it comes to living faith at home?  
Anything else you care to share?

Please e-mail your response to [staceyjnc@gmail.com](mailto:staceyjnc@gmail.com). Your feedback will be considered at our September 16 meeting and throughout the year to come. Thank you!

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

Like our page on Facebook and our posted resources will appear in your newsfeed.

Our page is [Northeastern Iowa Synod Home Life Network ELCA](#)