



Making a DIFFERENCE
NORTHEASTERN IOWA SYNOD, EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

THE CHURCH'S FUTURE

Youth leaders ready, willing, able

You encounter youth—

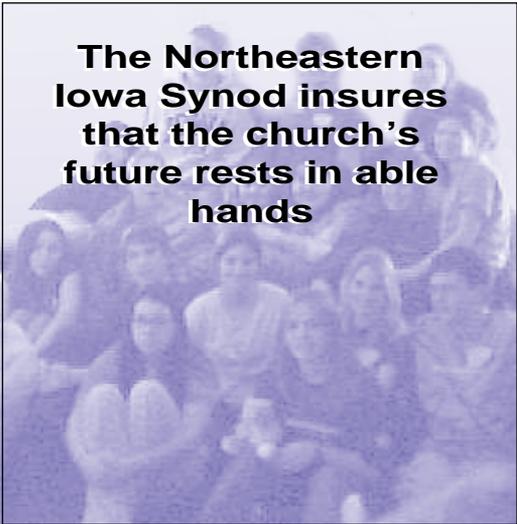
- Zooming past on a motorbike
- Serving fast food with a big smile
- Making news in the church newsletter, sports page, and school paper.

Youth will direct the future. Are you comfortable leaving the church in their hands?

Yes!

The North-eastern Iowa Synod works hard to equip youth. Synod programs and projects insure that youth in its congregations

THE NORTHEASTERN Iowa Synod insures that youth, such as Lutheran Youth Organization board members, are equipped to lead the church.



The Northeastern Iowa Synod insures that the church's future rests in able hands

CAN lead and want to. The synod's vision for youth is ambitious. It helps youth grow spiritually, recognize God's gifts to them, experience leading, and feel open to the Spirit's call to rostered ministry.

It serves as a youth ministry hub for cooperation among congregations, outdoor ministries, church colleges, seminary, and campus ministry.

Here are six examples.

WIYLDE with a Y and an E

WIYLDE truly is a *wild* event. It is a week when high school youth develop skills for church leadership and consider what their vocation might be.

The acronym, WIYLDE, stands for Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership and Discipling Event. From July 26-30, it brings to Luther College, Decorah, 30 ninth through twelfth graders from the three Iowa synods.

The agenda is leadership, which means that participants have opportunities to grow in faith, then share that growth by leading in their home congregations' youth programs. Participants learn to—

- Plan and lead worship
- Lead Bible study
- Find appropriate materials
- Organize youth events.

During the week, each participant creates with his or her home



WIYLDE is in its fourth year of attracting high school students to Luther College, Decorah, for a summer week of leadership training. When youth take these leadership skills back to their home congregations, they experience what it is like to lead in the church.

congregation a personal covenant that contains three things—

- What I've learned
- What I could apply in my church next week
- The first thing I will do when I get home.

Each covenant is duplicated, so the youth, parents, pastor, and church council president get a copy. To encourage follow-up, each youth receives another copy six months later with a nudge—How are you coming toward your goals?

WIYLDE workshops and conversations point youth toward rostered ministry—becoming a pastor, associate in ministry, or diaconal minister. Lunch hour conversations this year center on vocation, with one noon dedicated to church vocations and conversation with Rev. Darrel Gerriets, assistant to the bishop.

Rev. Mike Blair, Luther College campus pastor, chairs WIYLDE's steering committee. He said, "WIYLDE is grounded in renewing our baptismal vocation and encouraging young people to consider how God is calling them to ministry in their home

congregations and communities. It encourages youth to consider rostered ministry as a life calling. Participants are eager to explore questions of faith, experience community, and practice leadership skills. When all these events are put together with a group of

Northeastern Iowa WIYLDE planners

Rev. Mark Anderson,
ministry specialist,
Northeastern Iowa
Synod

Connie Barclay, vocation
grants, Luther College,
Decorah

Rev. Mike Blair, campus
pastor, Luther College,
Decorah

Anna Johnson, St. John,
Charles City

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Sumner

Rev. Bryan Robertson,
Decorah Lutheran,
Decorah



BLAIR

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energetic high school youth and leaders, it makes a WIYLDE week.”

WIYLDE is affordable, this year down to \$99, thanks to a Lilly Endowment grant that funds the *Sense of Vocation* program at Luther College.

In addition, the synod’s Lutheran Youth Organization is contributing \$49 WIYLDE grants to the first 20 families who apply. Anderson wrote pastors last January announcing these grants.



Pastor camp

The synod’s newest event encourages high school students to consider the ministry and carries a financial incentive. It is a retreat June 20-23 called *A Taste of Ministry*. Anderson nicknames it *pastor camp*.

“The registration fee for the four days is \$50,” he said, “and \$25 will be refunded when the participant arrives.”

The retreat takes place in modern facilities at Stone Center, EWALU’s Retreat Center in Strawberry Point. Participants will visit Wartburg Theological Seminary in Dubuque, learn what local clergy do, and shadow a pastor.

The retreat includes swimming, campfires, and EWALU’s ropes course. Leaders are synod staff, camp personnel, and local clergy.

Pastors received a letter last February

PASTOR CAMP
includes a seminary
visit, an opportunity to
shadow a pastor, and
traditional camp
highlights, such as
EWALU’s ropes course.



announcing the event, which is sponsored by the Northeastern and Southeastern Iowa Synods, Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago, Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, and EWALU.



Vocation days

The synod's junior high vocation day, held the first time last October, expands to two sites this fall—Luther College, Decorah, on Tuesday, October 12 and Wartburg College, Waverly, Wednesday, October 13.

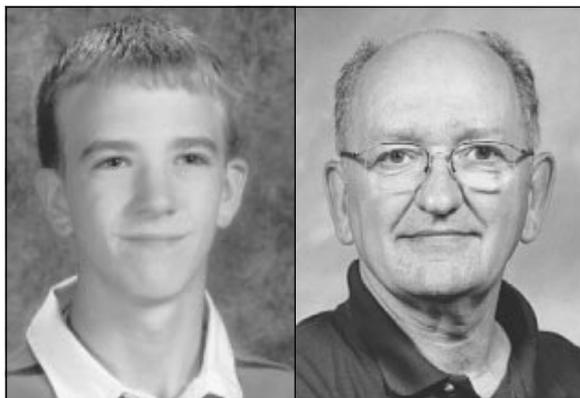
Parish pastors choose the participants, selecting the two junior high students whom they think are most qualified and likely to become pastors. Each parish pastor invites, then personally brings, the students.

Junior high vocation days plant seeds that could develop into a mentoring relationship between the students and parish pastor. They share time traveling to and from the event. Then, as part of the day, pastors verbally affirm the students they bring.

Anderson said, "In a workshop, pastors explain why each student was chosen to attend, and the students are right there listening to the compliments. It's affirming."

Tyler Berry attended the junior high vocation day last October with Rev. Roger McKinstry, Unity of the Cross Parish, Ryan. The parish includes St. John, Dundee, where Berry ushers, acolytes, and lectors. "Pastor McKinstry has told me several times I'd be a good pastor," Berry said. "He spent the day with me in Wav-

erly, and he's shared his story of becoming a pastor." Berry is a freshman at West Delaware High School,



BERRY

McKINSTRY

Manchester.

The synod studies what influences a youth to consider a call to rostered ministry.

“Crucial to the development of the call is a relationship with a pastor during the junior high years,” said Gerrietts, assistant to the bishop. “Lutheran congregations create this relationship through their confirmation programs. How many other places in our society do youth gain knowledge from an adult leader on a weekly basis? After confirmation, this close relationship hopefully slides into participation in a high school youth program.”

Vocation day sessions are supported by congregations at \$5 per participant.

Sessions ask *What is a pastor? What does a pastor do all day?* and *Why me?* The small-group *Why me?* sessions are led by pre-seminary students.

And more...

Youth are confronted with the idea of leadership and rostered ministry three additional ways—at the synod youth assembly, through a CD-ROM, and on the synod's web site.



At the **synod youth assembly**, youth leaders shine. The event is youth planned and youth led. In addition, Gerrietts talks to the assembly about leadership and rostered ministry. He describes what pastors do, shares what happens in seminary, then interacts with students individually at a display that pictures the synod's 32 people on the route to rostered ministry.

**Northeastern
Iowa Lutheran
Youth
Organization
assembly**

**Waterloo
March 2005**



On computers in their homes, youth can explore an **interactive CD-ROM** titled *Is It Your Time to Lead the Church?* In it, the prophet Joshua

learns that church leaders are needed, and two pastors describe the joys of ministry. The CD was produced by Wisconsin synods, after seeing the Northeastern Iowa Synod's interactive CD-ROM that introduced its LYO leaders.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and the ELCA also contributed.



A valuable resource for youth and their leaders is the synod's youth **web page** at <www.neiasynod.org/youth>. It describes events, such as those mentioned on these pages, shares creative writing, displays photos, offers a 12-month calendar, and links to web sites that

review films, give fund-raising tips, and provide inspiration. In March, the web page had 32,000 hits with the youth page most popular.

Synod staff hope these six things encourage talented and promising youth to lead in the church, perhaps through rostered ministry.

—Elaine Main, editor



THE YOUTH PAGE on the Northeastern Iowa Synod's web site is frequently hit during evening and late night hours.

To access synod resources...



WYLDDE, Wholly Iowa Youth Leadership and Discipling Event, grades 9-12, *Luther College, Decorah*, Monday-Friday, July 26-30, \$99 (with LYO grant, \$49), deadline July 5, web site <vocations.luther.edu/retreats_and_workshops/wyilde/wyilde2004.html>. Contact Rev. Michael Blair, e-mail <blairmic@luther.edu>, phone 563/387-1327.



A Taste of Ministry, retreat sharing the role of a pastor and the flavor of seminary education, grades 9-12, Stone Center, *EWALU Retreat Center, Strawberry Point*, Monday-Wednesday, June 20-23, \$50 (\$25 refunded), web site <www.ewalu.org./taste.html>.



Vocation Day, event that confronts junior high students with rostered ministry and provides mentoring with their pastor, *Luther College, Decorah*, Tuesday, October 12, or *Wartburg College, Waverly*, Wednesday, October 13, \$5 paid by congregations, deadline October 5.



Youth Assembly, Northeastern Iowa Lutheran Youth Organization, annual weekend gathering, grades 9-12, *Waterloo*, March 2005.



CD-ROM, *Is It Your Time to Lead the Church?*, interactive computer method of exploring ministry, free.



Web site, calendar, resources, photos, inspiration, <www.neiasynod.org>.

Youth ministry contacts



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GERRIETTS