

## Script for Northeastern Iowa Power Point

1. Warm Greetings to each of you. As the slide says, I am Rev. Brenda K. Smith and I am the Program Director for Faith Practices and Book of Faith at the Churchwide Office in Chicago. I go around and talk about how there should be something different about us as Christians, not perfect, but different. Let me give you an example of what I mean...There was a young man in San Francisco who woke up one morning and decided he did not want to live anymore. As he headed towards the Golden Gate bridge to jump, he was visibly crying, but no one stopped to ask him, "Are you o.k.?" This young man gets to the bridge and jumps and miraculously his life is spared. He now does public speaking about his life and says that if one person had asked if he was o.k., he would not have jumped. I would have expected a Christian to stop and ask him how he was doing.
  
2. The framework I use when speaking about how we live out our faith everyday, as children of God, NOT perfect, but different is our baptismal covenant. These are the promises we make at baptism. 1. To live among God's faithful people; 2. To hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper; 3. To proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed; 4. To serve all people following the example of Jesus and 5. To strive for justice and peace in all the earth. There are abundant resources related to these Five Gifts of Discipleship on the ELCA website. I hope you will review them and consider using them in your ministry.
  
3. I think Mrs. Katherine Von Bora Luther would be proud of the focus on a framework for practicing our faith. We practice our faith not because we have to, but in response to God's unconditional love. We need to focus on faith in the home because growing in faith is a life-long journey. Martin Luther wrote; "A Christian is never in a state of completion, but always in a state of becoming."

4. I LOVE music and I have asked that a brief portion of this powerful, spiritual song, be played for about 30 seconds. The song has it incorrectly. In the ELCA, it takes 3 to make a thing go right: congregations, synods and the Churchwide Organization. The interface of these three expressions of the Church are a powerful joint force, as we spread the Gospel and strive to make the world a better place through our shared ministries.
5. Throughout this presentation we will celebrate all that is happening in congregations, this synod and the Churchwide Organization by periodically saying together, "Amen." So when I say Amen, you say "Amen" as loudly as you can. Let's practice... Amen.....(Assembly participants respond.
6. Mission Support is the money that congregations give to the larger church to support the ministries beyond the congregation. For example, mission support helps to support campus ministries, social service agencies and our advocacy offices for example. The Northeastern Iowa Synod gave \$430,035 in mission support in 2018. Thank you so much for your generosity.
7. Not only did you offer financial resources to Mission Support, but you also gave over \$94,000 to support those affected by disasters in 2018. Again, thank you for your giving and thank you for your support of those affected by disasters in 2018
8. As I mentioned earlier, through our three expressions of the church: congregations, synods and the Churchwide Organization, we help to ease the suffering in the world. One major way we do that is the partnership the three expressions of the church have related to Domestic Hunger Grants. One of the ministries in your synod that has received a Domestic Hunger Grant is St. John's Lutheran Church in Dubuque. St. John's has a ministry called, "Almost Home Ministries" that not only offers shelter to homeless men, but also provides other needs for these men, including clothes. The Domestic Hunger Grant they received will support case management for services offered in this ministry.

9. **As we reflect on the outstanding financial giving of this synod and your outreach to those in need, we say.....Amen!**
10. **We often hear doom and gloom about no one is coming to church any more. Well, they have not been to the Northeastern Iowa because you have a new start ministry.**
11. **The name of this new ministries is Peace Lutheran Fellowship in Parkersburg, Iowa. If there are any persons from this new ministry, can you please stand.**
12. **Your Companion Synods are Hungary and Namibia. I marvel at how much you and these two synods have learned from each as you accompany each other in ministry.**
13. **The ELCA is blessed by the fact that you have several young adults participating in the Young Adults in Global Mission ministry. You have young adults serving in Jerusalem /West Bank; Argentina; Uruguay; East and South Africa; Australia; and Hungary. You have missionaries serving in Tanzania; Japan; Hungary and Namibia.**
14. **The Mission Investment Fund (MIF) is the lending ministry of the ELCA. MIF makes low-interest loans to ELCA congregations and ELCA related ministries for building and renovation projects. This synod has actively used the resources possible in the Mission Investment Loan organization. The Northeastern Iowa Synod has 2 Mission Investment Loans, with a balance of 1,127,534.**
15. **In addition to these Mission Investment Fund loans, your synod has \$8,845,278 in Mission Investment Fund investments. Now I will move on to some of the highlights from the Churchwide Organization and as we move on, I think we should say Amen to the many ways that God has blessed the Northeastern Iowa Synod. ....Amen!**

- 16. At the Churchwide Assembly in August there will be a vote on the social statement that focuses on gender justice in the church and the United States. The link listed can give you additional information about this social statement.**
- 17. In 2013 the United Nations General Assembly decided to develop a proclamation declaring 2015 to 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent. In response to this proclamation the ELCA at this year's Churchwide Assembly will issue an apology to people of African Descent regarding the church's complicity in slavery and the legacy of racism still present in the ELCA, the United States and globally.**
- 18. The document, "A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment" was approved unanimously by the ELCA Church Council and will be voted on at the CWA in August. This document focuses on the ELCA continuing its commitment to enter into conversations with people of other faiths to reach a deeper understanding of various faith traditions.**
- 19. Congregational Vitality has been defined as, "Communities of Jesus where there are life-changing relationships with God, one another and the world." So if you have any ideas on how we can create these communities of Jesus, speak to your Director for Evangelical Mission or your bishop, pray for the new start that is happening and the mission developer that is creating this vital congregation and consider giving a gift on-line to support creating these vital communities of Jesus. Thank you!**
- 20. The ELCA has been in a capital campaign to raise money for various ministries. The slide indicates the amount that has been raised as of February 28, 2019. (Brief pause to read slide)**
- 21. The campaign supported a Global Leadership Academy for women from 12 ELCA companion synods.**

22. **The Fund for Leaders provided scholarship assistance to 254 seminarians in the 2018-2019 year. You have 14, I repeat, 14, scholarship recipients. If any of these recipients are present, can they please stand. We look forward to all of the ways the world will be changed thanks to your leadership.**
23. **Thanks to your generosity, in 2018 the ELCA World Hunger raised a record \$23.5 million dollars. We MUST say Amen to that. Amen!**
24. **This slide highlights the number of international as well as domestic disasters our Lutheran Disaster Response responded to. Amazing!**
25. **THE Acronym AMMPARO stands for A-Accompanying, M-Migrant, M-Minors, (with) P-Protection, A-Advocacy, R-Representation, O-Opportunities. The slide indicates the number of sanctuary congregations we have. The slide also highlights the Guardian Angel Program and its volunteers who go to court to accompany migrant families.**
26. **Our Churchwide Assembly will be August 5<sup>th</sup> thru 10<sup>th</sup> in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. An election for Presiding Bishop will take place.**
27. **I hear of wonderful activities congregations do on "God's Work-Our Hands" Sundays. This year it will be September 8<sup>th</sup>.**
28. **If you have never been to a Women of the ELCA Triennial, you have missed out on a great experience. It will be held next year July 16-19 in Phoenix, AZ. The theme is "Just Love."**
29. **Next year we will also have our second Rostered Ministers Gathering July 20<sup>th</sup> to the 23<sup>rd</sup>, also in Phoenix. If you missed the last one you MUST come to this one. The theme is "Rekindle the gift within you."**

30. **And finally, you can receive GREAT information from the Living Lutheran magazine. You will be amazed at all of the exciting things happening in our church. Please consider subscribing today.**
  
31. **Now, one of my favorite songs will be played. It is not a rap song. The title is "Say Amen." I have comments after the song is completed. Thank you!**