

# Embrace the gift of a smaller Christmas

“For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” — Isaiah 9:6

I don't think this will be much of a Christmas. At least not for me because many of the things I love best about Christmas — big family gatherings, feasts of meatballs and lefse, Christmas hymns, shopping for gifts — will all be greatly curtailed. I am afraid it might just be a Christmas via

Zoom for us.

It is so disappointing that traditions we have had for generations will not be practiced this year. On the other hand, a smaller and simpler celebration may be a gift. This year, liberated from all the expectations, maybe I can concentrate more on Christ and less on cooking.

Maybe with a COVID Christmas I can make more gifts to those in need and less on those who don't need one more thing. Perhaps my soul will find rest in a smaller Christmas and I

can spend more time praying about what is in the cradle and less time hoping for what's under the tree. I think I'll call it “stewardship of attention.”



Merry Christmas.

— *Pastor Mark A. Anderson*  
Assistant to the Bishop

## INSPIRED GIVING

### An IRA distribution gift can save on taxes

A qualified charitable distribution from your IRA (Individual Retirement Account) allows you to support the ELCA, your congregation and/or the ministries you specify — and save on your taxes.

If you are 70½ or older, you may instruct your retirement plan administrator to make a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 to the ELCA or any of its ministries.

**MINIMUM GIFT AMOUNT: NONE**

Advantages:

- Distribution will count toward your Required Minimum Distribution.
- Funds are not included in your adjusted gross income, minimizing your tax liability. (Please note: No income-tax deduction is allowed for the transfer.)

Ready to take the next step?  
Contact Pastor. Mark Anderson 319-352-1414.

### Grant money for Little Free Pantries



The Northeastern Iowa Synod was awarded a grant of \$7,500 from the ELCA's COVID-19 Fund to help families experiencing unemployment, poverty or other hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds were distributed to the 17 congregations that host “Little Free Pantries” to help keep the pantries supplied.

It was suggested that the grant funds be used to purchase personal hygiene products to be placed in the pantries, since those types of items are more expensive and less often donated than canned goods. For example, a recent study suggests that nearly one in five American girls have either left school early or missed school entirely because they did not have access to period products.

## HOW TO GIVE TO SYNOD MINISTRIES

Gifts to the Northeastern Iowa Synod Annual Fund or Fund for Leaders support ministry together, in ways that could not be done alone.

**MAIL CHECKS** payable to the Northeastern Iowa Synod, with the memo indicating which fund you would like your gift to support, to:

Northeastern Iowa Synod, 201 20th St. SW, PO Box 804, Waverly, IA 50677-0804.

**DONATE ONLINE** at [www.neiasynod.org/ministries/generosity](http://www.neiasynod.org/ministries/generosity) or use the QR Code.

