

In the Name of Jesus



Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Good news. Our hands.

Stories from the Southeastern Iowa Synod

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Southeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA

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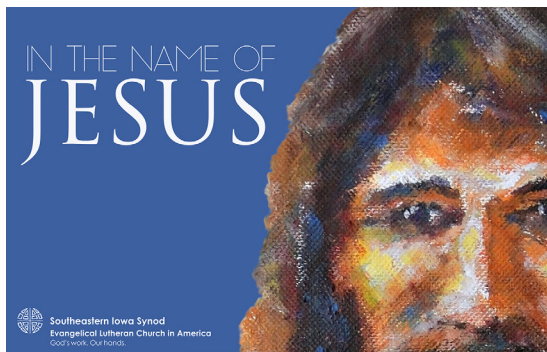
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Southeastern Iowa Synod
2635 Northgate Drive
Iowa City, IA 52245

Online: Make a gift using your credit card using our secure online donation form at www.seiasynod.org/online_donation or by calling 319-338-1273.



About the Theme

This newsletter is entitled *In the Name of Jesus*. This is part of our annual theme around which we focus ministry, prayers, and events in the Southeastern Iowa Synod. Bishop Burk talked about the theme and its implications at the annual Synod Assembly in May this year.

Bishop Burk reminded the assembly that what we do - is all about Jesus. "We are all about pointing to Jesus. Acting, living, feeding in the name of Jesus... We are called and we are privileged to live in the name of the One who saves the world."

Over the weeks and months ahead, consider what it means to live and serve in the name of Jesus. Talk to one another. Listen to each others' story. Reflect and pray about how your relationships, work and play point to Jesus.



Southeastern Iowa Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

The Southeastern Iowa Synod is a network of congregations and ministry partners who are called to share God's love in Jesus Christ.

Connect with us online at www.seiasynod.org

Mindful of the Planet

Environmental team changes hearts and practices at St. Paul

On Lenten Wednesday evenings, downstairs in Fellowship Hall at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Davenport, a dozen or so people scrape and wash plates during the congregational meal. On a few Saturday mornings each year, a crew combs the St. Paul neighborhood, picking up garbage, recyclables, and other debris – clearing the area of a truckload of trash.

On a couple of days each month, a small group visits the church's "Recycling Hub" to clean and sort the recycled materials collected in the day-to-day operations of the church.

These three initiatives – and more – are the work of the Environmental Team, a group of people devoted to exploring ways to help make St. Paul more environmentally friendly – and then doing the work to make it happen.

How did the team begin?

In 2010, Bill McKibben, world renowned environmentalist, came to speak at St. Paul. He spoke primarily on the impact of global warming. Following his talk, member Duane Haas approached Pastor Peter Marty and asked if he felt we should follow up on the excitement McKibben created in the congregation. After receiving an affirmative response to explore, a small group put together an informational meeting. Several church members attended and the Environmental Team was born.

What are some of the projects the crew has undertaken?

Lenten supper and special events dishes | Earth Weekend promotion | Alternative transportation weekends | Make It Yours neighborhood clean-up | Increased and improved recycling | Coffee cup initiative.



Members of St. Paul volunteer to scrape plates or sort recyclables to help the congregation be more environmentally friendly.

What is the philosophy of the team?

The team strives to be a part of the everyday workings of St. Paul to reduce, reuse, and recycle – a grassroots initiative. We look to help shape the thinking of the St. Paul people in areas of environmental concerns.

What has been your biggest challenge?

The biggest challenge remains broadening the scope of the Environmental Team. There is such

work to be done in areas as lowering the number of cars driven to church each week for activities and for services. Other ideas might include further reduction in the waste generated by single use cups and tableware.

What has been your greatest joy?

The greatest joy is the overwhelmingly positive response of the St. Paul people. Members and staff alike are willing to step up and help in many ways. In particular, with the involvement of staff

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Sharing the Weight

Ministry of making weighted blankets to help people with special needs goes global in a few short years.

The story of Sharing The Weight began a little over two years ago when Adam and Marci Proes's third child, David, was born. David had trouble sleeping and on most nights only slept for fifteen minutes at a time. On a good night David might sleep for an hour. "We knew something was different but we figured it was because of the other health issues David had," explains Marci.

After two years of constant screaming and little to no sleep Adam and Marci finally reached the point where they were in need of answers. "Our pediatrician referred us to the AEA where David started receiving therapy. Six months into therapy David's screaming was reduced but he still wasn't sleeping," said Marci. The Proes's occupational therapist gave them a weighted blanket to try and the first night David slept through the night for the first time ever.

Marci called the blanket the "miracle blanket" and wanted to purchase one for David. As she looked online she discovered that the size blanket David needed was \$100. Unable to



"We now have 3,000 people on the waiting list to receive a blanket, we try to make blankets as fast as we can..."



Recently there were 23 volunteers from at least nine different churches at a blanket making party.

afford to purchase a blanket for David right away, Marci's mother took matters into her own hands and learned how to make a weighted blanket for David.

Shortly before his third birthday David was diagnosed with autism. "It was a hard thing for me to go through," said Marci. "There were so many questions left unanswered but one thing we knew was that life was going to be hard for our child, for our family and for us. I started grieving for everything David was going to lose, for everything our other children were going to lose, and for how hard life was going to be for all of us."

Instead of wallowing in her grief Marci decided to set her mind to helping other families that had children who had autism and other special needs. With the goal to give the AEA three blankets in honor of David's third birthday, Marci asked her mother to teach her how to make a weighted blanket. In the first weekend Marci and her mom made twelve blankets. With her mission to help families and

children with special needs in motion, Marci and her mother decided that they would continue making blankets until they ran out of supplies. That was June of 2013 and they still haven't run out of supplies. "God has blessed our giving many times over; we started sending out blankets in December of 2013 to neighboring states, and to date we have made 530 blankets."

Sharing the Weight has given blankets out all across Iowa and has sent blankets to 44 different states and 4 other countries. "We now have 3,000 families on the waiting list to receive a blanket. We try to make the blankets as fast as we can, and we have many wonderful volunteer groups, like the group at Good Shepherd in Bloomfield, who help. We appreciate any donations of time because these blankets make a world of difference to children with special needs and their families," said Marci.

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church became connected with Sharing The Weight when another church in their community, Grace Point Church of the Nazarene, invited members of Good Shepherd to join them for a blanket making party. What grew from that event was an idea to get more people from the community involved by hosting monthly blanket making parties at different congregations each month. "So far we have three churches in Bloomfield hosting a blanket making party, Grace Point Church of the Nazarene, Bloomfield United Methodist and Good Shepherd Lutheran," explained Debbie Rasmussen a member of Good Shepherd. "In February Good Shepherd hosted the blanket making party and we had a

wonderful turn out. There were twenty-three ladies from at least nine different churches and ended up opening up the sanctuary to give us a bit more space."

"God has blessed our giving many times over...to date we have made 530 blankets."

Sharing the Weight is a ministry that Good Shepherd will continue to help and support by hosting blanket making parties. "Sharing The Weight is helping family's all over the United States and abroad find comfort and Good Shepherd will continue to help support Marci and Sharing The Weight. Occasionally Marci posts on Facebook thank you notes from people that have received a blanket. Once day I saw a picture from one of the southern states of a blanket I had made laying with a child that was sound asleep, it gave me such a good feeling inside to know that I had been a part in blessing that family with some well needed rest," concluded Debbie.

For more information on Sharing The Weight and if you'd like to donate, visit www.sharingtheweight.org

If they would like to host a blanket making party they can contact Marci Proes at sharingtheweight@gmail.com. •

Sewing by Cassie McKown from the Noun Project

Want more stories and information like this newsletter?

Subscribe to our weekly E-News. Get stories from around the synod, upcoming local and regional events, and news from the ELCA in your email inbox every Monday morning.

Sign up online at www.seiasynod.org/follow-us/ and select the weekly E-News option.

UPCOMING EVENTS

God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday

For everyone

Sunday, September 13
Nationwide-ELCA

Creating your Church Budget

For church finance committees and treasurers

Saturday, Sept. 19
Memorial Lutheran
Nevada, IA

Definitely-Abled Sunday

For everyone

Sunday September 20
Synod-wide

Creating your Church Budget

For church finance committees and treasurers

Tuesday, Sept. 22
Synod Center for Ministry
Iowa City, IA

Fall Theological Conference

For rostered leaders

Sunday, Sept. 27 - Tuesday, Sept. 29
Ames, IA

Children's Ministry Fall Resource Day

For anyone who works with children's ministry

Saturday Nov. 14, 2015
Zion Lutheran Church
Iowa City, IA

Administrator's Workshop

For church finance committees and treasurers

Preparing for Year-End
Tuesday, November 17
TBD

***For more information on any of these events go to
www.seiasynod.org
or call 319-338-1273***

Racial Justice in the 21st Century

For everyone

MLK Day Monday, Jan. 18, 2016
Synod Center for Ministry
Iowa City, IA

Confest

For confirmation students and adult leaders

Sunday January 24, 2016
Windsor Heights Lutheran Church
Des Moines, IA

Confest

For confirmation students and adult leaders

Sunday February 21, 2016
St. John's Lutheran Church
Ely, IA

Southeastern Iowa Synod Assembly



The 28th Assembly of the Southeastern Iowa Synod was held May 29 – May 30, 2015, at Lutheran Church of Hope in West Des Moines, Iowa. Over 450 voting members and guests gathered around the theme “In the Name of Jesus.”

Pastor Wyvetta Bullock served as the churchwide representative providing updates and stories of the work we do together as the ELCA and delivered a sermon during worship on Saturday Morning, May 30th.

The primary business of this year's assembly was election of synod council members and voting members the 2016 churchwide assembly as well as several resolutions.

Bishop Michael Burk presided over the assembly, including the Friday evening service of Holy Communion. In his report, Bishop Burk provided highlights of our shared ministry since we last gathered in

assembly, providing his assessment of the ways we are called to live and serve “In the Name of Jesus.”

Special guests, Pastor Paul Oman and the Heartland Youth Choir encouraged participants to use their unique gifts for ministry. Pastor Oman, did two live paintings during plenary sessions and worship which are now on public display at the Southeastern Iowa Synod Center for Ministry.

Resolutions adopted included: 1) Peace Not Walls: a resolution encouraging those in the Southeastern Iowa Synod to learn, pray, and act around issues of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; 2) Life of Faith initiative which encourages the priesthood of all believers, and life on ministry within churches; 3) Southeastern Iowa synod will support the Always Being Made New Campaign for the ELCA and will undertake a synod campaign; 4) A resolution of thanksgiving for the assembly and various ministries of the Southeastern Iowa Synod. Other business included the approval of the 2016 synod budget and minimum compensation guidelines for clergy. Congregations and rostered leaders celebrating anniversaries were celebrated and voting members took advantage of the many forums and organizational displays that were offered during assembly. The synod assembly offering was designated to synod hunger ministries \$3,019.37 was given by congregations and individuals.

Visit the 2015 Synod Assembly website (www.seiasynod.org/assembly) for more details about the assembly and to access recordings, videos, photos, and texts. The 2016 Assembly of the Southeastern Iowa Synod will be held May 6-7 2016, at Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Coralville, IA. •

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and volunteers, the waste from the Lenten dinners went from an overflowing dumpster to a few bags of compostable food scraps and one bag of trash.

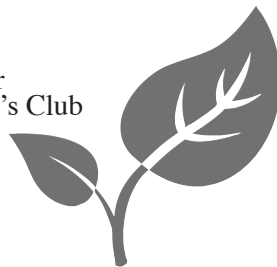
This, multiplied by the number of weeks of the Lenten suppers, resulted in a sizable reduction in waste. We are always searching for more ways to have such an impact.

What advice would you give to other churches who are interested in improving their environmental practices?

Any church should start small and engage the staff at the outset. Pick out one item and make a visible effort to make a difference. In doing so, educate the congregation about the mission. Always be a welcoming positive presence as you go about your work. Folks should see you as someone who will help them. As you strategize, keep in mind the congregation wants to be environmentally responsible. The best way to get them on board is to make it as easy as possible. For instance, place recycling containers in the most heavily used areas.

How much does it cost?

The initial cost could be virtually nothing to as much as you want to spend. For recycling, cardboard boxes are free. Small blue recycling trash cans from Sam's Club are \$6.78 each with free shipping. Stainless steel containers are breath-taking. Putting copy paper boxes out that have been decorated by volunteers to collect bulletins is hardly any money. Don't wait until you have a sizable sum in the budget to make a move. Just get started. •





God's work. Our hands.

"God's work. Our hands." Sunday is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. This year's day of service will take place nationwide Sunday September 13, 2015.

For more information visit
elca.org/dayofservice



Definitely-abled Sunday will be celebrated Synod-wide on Sunday September 20, 2015

Congregations across southeastern Iowa will encourage and support those with disabilities to serve in worship leadership positions and to participate in the life of the congregation, as fully as appropriate, throughout the year to witness to the unity we share in Christ.

For more information visit
seiasynod.org/definitely-abled-sunday-2015