

BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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(716)-933-6699

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Websites: (congregation)www.bethelportvilleny.org; (synod)www.upstatenysynod.org;
(ELCA)www.elca.org

Worship Service - Sundays at 9:00am; Sunday School at 10:30am

The Rev. Ivy Gauvin, Pastor

God's work. Our hands.

APRIL 2014



The sun is shining nearly every day now and according to the calendar, spring has officially begun. I hope that by the time you read this, the weather is acting like spring.

April is a very full month. We will be doing something new on April 6, a blessing of those who like to fish. Fishing is not only a sport, but also a means of feeding our families. We will pray together for success and safety for all those fishing.

On Passion/Palm Sunday, we will have to opportunity to share God's love with the residents of The Pines in Olean. We will have a service of Holy Communion. This is a wonderful time to reach out to those who are unable to come to church. The residents especially appreciate the confirmation students when they participate as well.

Just as our seasons have changed from winter to spring, liturgically we will be moving from Lent to Easter. I hope you have had a meaningful Lenten journey this year. Please join us for Holy Week, as we walk with Jesus as he ate with his disciples and gave them the new commandment to "love one another" on Maundy Thursday. The journey continues on Good Friday, when we will have a Tenebrae (Latin for darkness or shadows) service. It will consist of a series of readings, prayers and hymns, marked by the extinguishing of a candle at the end of each section. Our reading concludes with Jesus being laid in the tomb. Join us as we are the first service of Easter, on Saturday

night at 7 for the Easter Vigil service. It begins outside around a fire and continues inside until we enter the sanctuary, which will be prepared for Easter. The alleluias will return and we will give thanks together for Jesus' resurrection. The service will be followed by fellowship. In addition, of course Easter Sunday will be a joyous day of song and celebration for all ages.

I am grateful for each of you—your faith, fellowship and faithfulness to Christ and the gospel. May God continually bless each of us as we journey toward the cross and resurrection. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

In Christ, our life,

Pastor Ivy

If you are interested in becoming a member of Bethel, please talk with Pastor Ivy.

You are in my prayers. Each week I will be focusing on a different member and their family. I will let you know when you are especially being prayed for. Pastor Ivy

Going on a trip? Let Pastor Ivy know so we can bless you on your way.

Just What is the Easter Vigil?

Perhaps you are unfamiliar with the Easter Vigil service since it has not previously been celebrated at Bethel. If you belonged to another church in the past, it may be very familiar to you. It is not something new, but we have records of Christians gathering for Easter Vigil services as early as the third century A. D., around the year 250. These believers came together to read the Bible, baptize new converts to the faith, and celebrate Jesus Christ's victory over the powers of sin, death, and hell. There was only one church then. It was neither Orthodox, Protestant or Roman Catholic. It was just the church. Many churches with roots in the Reformation of the 16th century (such as Anglicans, Lutherans, and some Reformed denominations) have embraced the Great Vigil because it is so deeply rooted in the Christian antiquity that shaped the Reformers.

Over the years the service has taken on a four-part shape:

The Service of Light

The Vigil begins after sundown outside of the church. A new fire is kindled symbolizing the risen Lord Jesus' victory over the darkness of sin and death. The Paschal (i.e. Easter) Candle is lighted from this fire and carried into the church building. This candle symbolizes the presence of the victorious Christ among his disciples. The congregation then lights their candles from the Paschal Candle.

As the Paschal Candle is processed into the church the assisting minister chants the phrase: "The Light of Christ!" The congregation chants in response: "Thanks be to God!" As we do this it's amazing to think that we are participating in an act our Christian family has done every Easter for the last one thousand, seven hundred years!

Once the candle has been placed in its stand the cantor chants the "Exsultet" (The Easter Proclamation) which is an ancient hymn declaring the whole story of God's work of salvation culminating in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Liturgy of the Word

Following the Exsultet there are a series of four readings from the Old Testament that tell the story of God's plan of salvation from the Garden of Eden to the

prophecies of the coming Messiah. There are hymns, psalms, and short prayers that are interspersed between these readings. As the readings continue, the sense of joy and excitement build and our faith is renewed via the reminder of God's great works in salvation history.

The Renewal of Baptismal Vows

At this point in the service new believers in Jesus Christ are baptized. When there are no baptisms, we recommit our lives to Jesus Christ through a formal renewal of their baptismal covenant using the Affirmation of Baptism

Holy Eucharist

We celebrate the Lord's Supper which we have not partaken of since Maundy Thursday.

In the course of this service, we have gone from the darkness of Christ's tomb to the light of resurrection. The alleluias return and we joyfully (and noisily) celebrate Jesus' triumph over sin, death and the power of the devil.

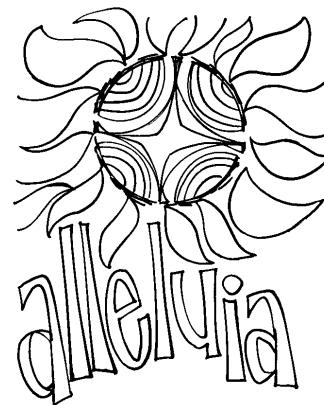
After the service, the celebration continues with fellowship together. Christ is risen, alleluia. Alleluia, Christ is risen. Please join us for this moving service.

Resources referenced:

<http://www.christchurchws.org/pastors-blog/165-easter-vigil-explained>

Presbyterian Mission Agency

<http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/easter-vigil/>





Giving is an adventure that makes one feel good about life. So why wouldn't every one choose to be givers? Giving our energy, talent, time and financial resources to serve as God directs us can provide untold happiness!

A Phoenix newspaper recently carried the story of a successful businessman named Jim Pierce. He was born to a couple who were both alcoholics. During his youth, he was abused in too many ways to mention. Yet, he said, "When you're beaten, a lot of times you have an out-of-body experience." In his pain, he called upon God and one day he made a vow, saying "God, if you send help, I promise when I grow up, I will help others." Over time help came. Good stewards like caring teachers, concerned relatives, and church people ministered to him.

It seems unbelievable how his life evolved. He became a sensible, well-balanced person and went to one of the finest business schools in America, became an accountant, and eventually became a leading executive of a successful business.

He also fulfilled his pledge to help prevent child abuse and was honored by being given the Heart of Compassion Award by Childhelp, an organization dedicated to the prevention and treatment of child abuse. He said, "I felt the award was God's way of telling me that I held up my end of the bargain I made many years ago." As a dedicated steward, Jim has participated in an adventure that made him feel good about life and he has experienced happiness in good measure.

Prayer: Loving God, prevent us from failing to be good stewards in our time on earth. Stir us up to be ready at all times to say, "Gracious Lord, use me in whatever way you choose. May I always serve you well." In Christ's name. **Amen**



Pray First!

- For all service men and women, and their families, especially *Juan Frausto, Andrew Wright, Casey McCarthy, Mike Copponi, Lee Walden, Josh Canaan, Zachary Russell and Kendra Linn*. For Christ to be made known in our companion synods - *Zimbabwe and Zambia*, and our partner synod - *Central/Southern Illinois Synod*. For the Franciscan community at *Mt. Irenaeus* and the *Burkhart Retreat Center for Life-retreats* in our local area. For our Bishops, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (ELCA) and Marie Jerge Upstate New York Synod), Assistants to the Bishop Dave Preisinger, Mary Johnson, and Dean Daniel Rumfelt. For the mission congregations in our synod—*Organic Faith* in Amherst and *Todos los Hijos de Dios* in Amsterdam. For the pastors and congregations in our Southwestern Conference and for our congregation council leaders - President *Gary Murray*, Secretary *Jo Kile*, Treasurer *Doug Ploetz*, and members *Ruth Brewer, Rick Giberson, Linda Scott, Jerry Maerten and Bryan Hatch*. For our sister congregation, *Peace Lutheran* and their ministry in Slidell, LA for the ministry of *ELCMA* - Evangelical Lutheran Coalition for Mission in Appalachia. For area ministries: *Genesis House, Portville Community Food Pantry, and Interfaith Caregivers*.



**PLEASE SEE BULLETIN BOARD outside the sanctuary
for a COMPLETE SECRETARY'S REPORT.**

Council Member

Gary Murray
Ruth Brewer
Pastor Ivy
Jo Kile
Doug Ploetz
Jerry Maerten
Linda Scott
Bryan Hatch
Rick Giberson
Gary Murray

Committee Assignment

Council President
Vice President
Worship and Music
Stewardship
Treasurer
Outreach/Evangelism
Advertising
Education
Property
Fellowship



Bethel Lutheran Church

February 2014 Financial Summary

Beginning Checkbook balance	\$0
Beginning Savings balance	\$110
General offering	\$4,715
Designated giving	\$436
Fund raisers- for Bethel	\$0
Total Income	\$5,151
Total Expenses	\$6,184
Net Income	-\$1,033
Ending checkbook balance	\$1,532
Ending Savings Balance	\$110

Bills due

2013 Synod Benevolence	\$513
Pastor Retirement/disability	\$1,344
Fire Ins	\$387
National fuel	\$311
National Grid	\$94
Kings Greenhouse	\$180
Food pantry/genesis house	\$398
Total Bills Due	\$3,227

An Additional \$2,000 was drawn from the Church Improvement fund in February to meet expenses. We began the year with the bills paid in full, and have had to draw \$2,600 from the church improvement fun to meet expenses and still have over \$3,227 due or past due.

Year to date income is down \$779 from last year.

The winter months are particularly high expense months for the church as we not only have higher heating bills, but we also have fire insurance and workers compensation insurance due in January and February. Based on our budget we need income of \$8134/month. As you can see February income was just over half of that. All of our expenses this time of year are high with heating bills, and taxes, but I ask that you remember the church with your generosity and help us to catch up on the bills that are past due.

Peace

Doug Ploetz

Bethel Lutheran Treasurer



Choir practice is held Sunday mornings at 7:45am. All are welcome to join. **No audition necessary.**

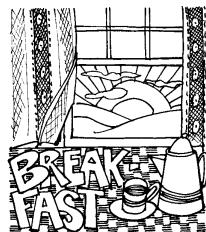


We NEED people to sign up as worship servants. We are in need of Lectors, Prayer Leaders, Ushers, Communion assistants and Altar Guild. There are sign-up sheets on the table in Fellowship Hall. Please sign up for one or more of these positions as you feel led. Thank you.



If you are new to our church or if you noticed that your anniversary or birthday never appeared, please let Nannette, June or Pastor Ivy know your information so we can start the new year off with an updated birthday and anniversary list. We sure don't want to miss wishing anyone a Happy Birthday. Thanks.

Notice: Deadline for newsletter articles is the third Sunday of each month. Please send them to me at my home e-mail at Junebug44@frontiernet.net or you can leave written ones in the top basket on the secretary's desk in the office. If you ave questions you can call me at 814-698-2648



The Church council members are sponsoring an Easter breakfast following our worship service and the Stewardship committee Easter candy hunt on Easter Sunday morning. Please plan to attend if you can.

Dear Bethel Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your recent give of \$232.00 to Flooding-United States. Your gift means that our church can continue its effective response and can be ready for the next phase in the long line of recovery Thank you.

The Rev. Daniel Rift ,Director

ELCA World Hunger and Disaster Appeal

Dear Bethel Lutheran Church

Please accept our warmest thanks for your generous contribution of \$275.00. Your gift will help us to continue our mission in providing service to those in need.

Sincerely

Megan Taylor, Executive Director
Interfaith Caregivers.



MEMORIALS

Two Banners and the Fair Linen have been purchased by the Memorial Fund. We will have a new Banner for the Lenten Season and a new one for Psalm Sunday. The Banners are in memory of Linda Giberson. The Fair Linen for the Altar is in memory of Kay Linn. The Fair Linen will be used for the first time on Easter Sunday. These will be dedicated on the April 27th Sunday morning service.

A Report from the Director

Part 2: Finances

Changes Congregations Are Facing Today

A Tenth Anniversary Series

The appropriate question is, “How can we continue to fulfill our mission in light of our new circumstances?”

When I wrote a book entitled *Focus* regarding denominational trends and challenges, I anticipated an audience of active denominational leaders. To my surprise, some of the most vigorous engagement with the book is coming from congregational lay leadership across denominations who are apprehensive about financial challenges. “You are describing our congregation,” is the way they begin many messages. What the book describes as denominational trends, they are seeing mirrored in their congregations.

What Has Changed?

The expectation that fewer people will give more money each year is increasingly unworkable. Countless churches have fewer worshipers today than they did ten or twenty years ago. Most of them, however, have budgets as large as, or larger than, they did when they had more constituents, even after adjusting for inflation. This has worked up to a point, particularly as church members increased in age and assets. But depending on fewer people to provide more money is unsustainable in the face of demographic realities.

Churches and church members are more cautious about money. This concern is not hard to understand given recent economic events. Even people who are still in good economic circumstances are more cautious. The

result is often reluctance by members to commit and a fear of debt by churches.

How churches receive money is increasingly different from how people typically make financial transactions.

Every year fewer church members use cash and checks in their personal finances while the vast majority of churches still receive 90 percent or more of their income in cash and checks.

It takes four or five new members (if not more) to make up for the annual giving lost when a church member dies. Persons entering churches today often have not grown up in the church and may be relatively spiritually immature, even if they have a church background. In addition, they are likely to be younger and have fewer assets than members lost through death.

What Congregations Are Doing

Reestablishing the spiritual foundation for giving. If talk of money is tied to nothing more than the church’s needs, people have no spiritual reason for giving. Churches do well when they connect every mention of money to God’s vision and our own discipleship journeys. The spiritual need for people to give is far greater than the church’s need to receive.

Teaching without ceasing. The reason most people do not give is not that they have been taught biblical concepts of giving and rejected those teachings. Most never learned them in the first place. Teaching on stewardship is tied to the larger issue of providing basic biblical and theological grounding for the Christian life.

Practicing stewardship education as year-round, not seasonal, work. Isolating an emphasis on financial stewardship to one week or one month is as unfruitful as a farmer coming to the harvest time having done nothing all year and expecting a bountiful harvest.

Providing help to people with their financial challenges. People have legitimate competing claims for their resources, and many have no training in working through how one uses limited resources to accomplish goals and maintain values. Such personal financial education is a good reminder that the church is as interested in their financial well-being as it is in its own.

Expanding options for giving. Recognizing that the use of checks peaked in 1995 and more and more church members use a variety of methods, particularly electronic, for financial transactions, churches are moving to offer options people can use to make their church contributions. They are learning from other churches that have introduced new methods for giving that fit for each church. These options are particularly important as even devoted church members are attending worship less frequently.

Introducing legacy giving. Many people are able to be far more generous through their estates than they can be in their lifetimes. Most churches have a large cohort of older members that is currently expanding as thousands of Baby Boomers turn 65 every day. God calls us to steward all that we have, including our estates; therefore, the church has a marvelous opportunity to help people view stewardship in a more inclusive manner, inviting members to make provisions in their

estate plans to continue the values that have shaped their lives of faith.

Reevaluating their financial assumptions. For some churches, long-held assumptions may need questioning if, year after year, short-term solutions do not address their financial dilemma. These are hard considerations. Some may be in an historic and much-loved building they no longer can maintain. Others may face the prospect of a less than full-time pastor. Another church may need to explore merger. If the circumstances of a congregation's resources have changed dramatically over the years, then the appropriate question is, "How can we continue to fulfill our mission in light of our new circumstances?"

Survival is Not a Worthy Goal

Even in times of seeming scarcity, we serve a God of abundance who desires the abundant life for all. But our choices do shape our lives. Just as we encourage individuals to seek freedom from their possessions, so we must manage church finances so that money is not a preoccupation that takes energy from our need to reach more people, younger people, and more diverse people for Christ.

The survival of any congregation is not a worthy goal. However, every congregation is called always to do their ministry in such a way as to sustain its mission over time. If your church has a faith to proclaim and a task from God in your community, then it would be irresponsible not to put a high priority on finding ways for such a ministry to continue.

[Lovett H. Weems, Jr.](#)

BASKETS OF PROMISE

Donate items for Lutheran World Relief Kits to help people in need.

This Lenten season, our congregation is taking part in LWR's Baskets of Promise appeal. Each week in Lent, we'll collect items to form LWR Personal Care Kits that help impoverished people stay healthy in life's most challenging situations.

Here is our collection schedule:

April 6th – Nail Clippers (metal, attached file optional)
April 13th (PALM SUNDAY) Bars of soap

If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Ivy

STOP, CARE, ACT FOR THE HUNGRY

The 2014 Synod Hunger Campaign invites our congregations to follow the example of the Good Samaritan.

STOP: Consider hunger needs at home, across the country and around the world. Use the ELCA Hunger Packets.

CARE: Raise awareness in your congregation of the needs of your local food banks and pantries. Learn about the many places our Hunger Dollars make a difference.

ACT: Each congregation in the Synod is challenged to raise at least \$400 for the Hunger Campaign and bring it to the assembly.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY PROJECT - ALUMINUM CAN TAB COLLECTION

At our June 2013 Synod Assembly, the aluminum can tab collection project was very successful. At a recent meeting of the Synod Assembly Planning Team, it was decided that we would again conduct this collection at the 2014 Synod Assembly. This is a project that every congregation in the Synod can participate in. As we did last year, the collection point will be in the area of the registration table. The proceeds from the collection will benefit two (2) established, Synod supported charities, which have yet to be determined. The Synod Assembly Planning Team will make an announcement as to the charities chosen in the near future.

Start your collection project now and bring the collected tabs to Synod Assembly.



Women of the ELCA

Southwestern Conference

presents

"PRAISE GOD IN THE DANCE"

Spring Assembly Gathering

at

Zion Lutheran Church

45 Falconer Street, Frewsburg, New York 14738

Saturday, May 31, 2014

Program Presentation

The Rev. Rebecca Ehrlich

Pastor, Zion Lutheran Church, Frewsburg

Registration & Fellowship – 9:00 AM

Brunch – 9:30 AM

Cost: \$5.00

RSVP Deadline: Friday, May 23, 2014

Call the Zion Church Office: 569-5495

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## **COLLECTING BABY CARE KITS FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF**

**- ITEMS INCLUDE -**

2 lightweight cotton T-shirts (no Onesies<sup>®</sup>); 2 long or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (no feet)

2 receiving blankets - medium weight; 1 sweater or sweatshirt with hood or include cap

2 pairs of socks; one dark-colored hand towel; 2 bath-sized bars of gentle soap in original wrappers

4 cloth diapers (flat-fold preferred); 2 diaper pins or large safety pins

**\*\*\*Wrap items in one of the receiving blankets and secure with diaper pins\*\*\***

# April 2014

Worship Assistants



## Happy Birthday to:

2—Shirley Levernier  
2—Chloe Dunn  
3—Isaac Williams  
7—Laurie Dunn  
14—Allison Doty  
19—Dietrich Williams  
20—Judy Graves  
22—Jimmy Baughman  
24—Gretchen Fitzsimmons  
24—Connor Dunn  
28—Dan Parr  
29—Nannette Giberson



## Happy Anniversary to:

### Lectors:

April 6<sup>th</sup> ..... *Judy Graves*  
April 13<sup>th</sup> ..... *Felicia Kile*  
April 20<sup>th</sup> ..... *Doug Ploetz*  
April 27<sup>th</sup> ..... *Lisa Andrus*

### Prayer Leaders

April 6<sup>th</sup> ..... *Connie Smith-Matteson*  
April 13<sup>th</sup> ..... *Bev. Robinson*  
April 20<sup>th</sup> ..... *Judy Graves*  
April 27<sup>th</sup> ..... *Bev. Robinson*

### Assistants for entire month!

Acolyte ..... *Kassie Lopes, Carly Keenan*  
..... ..... *Dakota Brewer...*

### Communion Assistants

April 6<sup>th</sup> ..... *Jo Kile &... Felicia Kile*  
April 13<sup>th</sup> ..... *Jo Kile &... Hunter Kile*  
April 20<sup>th</sup> ..... *Jo Kile &... Ariel Kile*  
April 27<sup>th</sup> ..... *Jo Kile &... Hunter Kile*

Ushers ..... *Caroline Miller*

Altar Guild ..... *Ron and Jo Kile*

Bread Bakers ..... *Ron Kile*

## **BETHEL LUTHERAN CHURCH CALENDAR - APRIL 2014**

|                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wednesday, April 2  | 7:00pm-Soup and Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Sunday, April 6     | <b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b><br>7:45am-Choir rehearsal<br>9:00am- Worship with Fellowship following<br>Blessing of those fishing<br>10:30am- Sunday school and Confirmation class<br>11:00am-Adult Bible study                                |
| Monday, April 7     | Pastor Ivy's Day Off                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tuesday, April 8    | 3:00pm - Worship and Music Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Wednesday, April 9  | 6:00pm - Soup and Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Thursday, April 10  | 7:00pm - Council meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Sunday, April 13    | <b>PASSION SUNDAY</b><br>7:45am- Choir rehearsal<br>9:00am - Worship with Fellowship following<br>10:30am - Sunday school and Confirmation Class<br>11:00am -Adult study<br>2:30pm-Holy Communion at the Pines - Olean                       |
| Monday, April 14    | Pastor Ivy's Day Off                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Thursday, April 17  | 7:00pm - Maundy Thursday Service                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Friday, April 18    | 7:00pm - Good Friday Service                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Saturday, April 19  | 7:00pm - Easter Vigil w/Bethany at Bethel                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Sunday, April 20    | <b>EASTER SUNDAY</b><br>7:45am-Choir rehearsal<br>9:00am- Worship with Stewardship Easter Candy Hunt and Council<br>Easter breakfast following.<br>10:30am - Sunday school and Confirmation class<br>11:00am- Bible Study                    |
| Monday, April 21    | Pastor Ivy's Day Off                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tuesday, April 22   | 3:00pm - Christian Education Committee                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Wednesday, April 23 | 6:00pm - Bible Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Thursday, April 24  | 4:00-7:00pm- Annual Spaghetti Dinner                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Sunday, April 27    | <b>EARTH DAY SUNDAY</b><br>7:45am - Choir rehearsal<br>9:00am - Worship with Fellowship time following.<br>10:30 am- Sunday school and Confirmation Class<br>11:00 am- Adult Bible study<br>3:00pm-SW conference Spring Assembly - Jamestown |
| Monday, April 28    | Pastor Ivy's Day Off                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Tuesday, April 29   | 3:00- Christian Education Team Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Wednesday, April 30 | 6:00pm -Bible Study                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

# Rosie, Dog of Hope

By Claire Guthrie, Manassas Park, Virginia

"We're getting a dog! We're getting a dog!" the kids chanted from the back of our car on the way to Pennsylvania to pick up Rosie, our new Lab, from her foster home.

I glanced back at my teenager, Aaron; his younger sister, Rachael, seven; and brother Joshua, five, who hadn't stopped talking about Rosie since we'd pulled out of our driveway in Virginia an hour before. Only my two-year-old, Michael, was silent.

He was just as excited, but he couldn't join in with the chatter of his siblings. I felt a familiar ache in my chest, knowing how badly Michael wanted to join in, and knowing it was impossible. It was a pain I felt often, ever since we found out about Michael's condition.

I knew something was different about Michael at six months old. Josh and Rachael walked and talked early. But our otherwise healthy-looking baby boy had trouble even crawling; Michael couldn't roll over and he couldn't sit up without toppling.

Even more troubling, he never developed baby talk. I wondered if he'd ever speak. His brother Aaron has cerebral palsy, and I feared Michael might have a disability too. In fact, Michael was diagnosed with dyspraxia, a developmental disorder that makes it difficult to perform complex movements.

Michael's trouble with speaking was part of that disorder, called Childhood Apraxia of Speech. He wanted to speak, but his mind just wouldn't let him.

Even now, at two years and three months, he still couldn't say much more than "mama" or "dada" when he wanted us for something. And often, we couldn't understand what he wanted.

His speech therapist helped us teach him some basic sign language. Even that was hard for him. A few days earlier, Michael tried to ask me for something, but he couldn't form the signs. Instead, he began gesturing wildly.

"I'm sorry, Michael. I don't understand," I told him. His face turned a deep shade of red; he went into a tantrum, letting out a high-pitched scream. I felt so helpless. My baby was hurting—and I couldn't do anything for him.

I looked in the rearview mirror back at Michael, who was staring out the window. This dog, I hoped, would be something he could enjoy. My husband, Doug, and I had done our research. We looked for a Labrador, a breed known to be good with kids. A young dog, so it could grow up with our children.

We found Rosie on the website for a Lab rescue agency. She was a 14-month-old chocolate Lab, with experience around babies, children and cats, all of our "dream dog" qualities. But would she be right for our family? Was I wrong to hope? Finally we pulled up to Rosie's foster home.

I silently prayed, *Please, God, let Rosie be right for our kids...especially Michael, but don't let me hope for too much.*

Doug lifted Michael out of his car seat while I went to the door with the other kids. "You must be here to see Rosie," the woman said. And there Rosie was, standing in the foyer, tongue hanging out, her tail wagging wildly. Aaron, Rachael and Joshua ran up to her.

"Rosie, you're so beautiful," Rachael said, ruffling her smooth fur.

"Hi, Rosie," said Aaron, scratching her behind the ears. *Love at first sight*, I thought.

But what about my two-year-old? Michael ambled over. He patted her gently on the head. Rosie nuzzled against him. I breathed a sigh of relief.

I was about to follow the woman into the other room to talk to her about the dog when I heard a voice, an unfamiliar voice. "Rosie," the voice said, strong and clear. "Rosie!"

It was Michael.

I looked at Doug, my mouth agape. "Rosie!" he said again, nuzzling against the dog. Now, Doug and I were the speechless ones.

Rosie sat in the back with the kids on the way home. "You're going to love our house, Rosie Pops," I said. The kids loved the nickname. The whole ride back, that's what we called her. We were about halfway home when Michael spoke again. "Rosie Pops," he said.





# ELCA GLOBAL LINKS

Stay informed. Be inspired. Get involved.

## **South Sudan: ELCA aid targets refugees**

The ELCA is providing \$700,000 in aid for those who have fled their homes due to the violence in South Sudan. The United Nations estimates more than 860,000 people have been displaced as a result of the fighting that began in December between government forces and rebels. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/7645](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/7645) and [www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/South-Sudan-Conflict](http://www.ELCA.org/Our-Work/Relief-and-Development/Lutheran-Disaster-Response/Our-Impact/South-Sudan-Conflict).

## **Holy Land: Palestinian debt endangers hospital's mission**

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton, presiding bishop of the ELCA, has requested that the U.S. use a portion of its funds that support the Palestinian National Authority to pay the group's debt to Augusta Victoria Hospital in Jerusalem, which would help ensure that Palestinians continue to receive the health care they need. See [www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/7644](http://www.ELCA.org/News-and-Events/7644).

## **Kenya: Warm sweaters and valuable skills**

Read and share the inspiring story of a knitting school in Nairobi which provides 25 young women the opportunity both to serve others and support their families. Download or order the winter Hand in Hand bulletin insert or newsletter at [www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-Global-Church-Sponsorship](http://www.ELCA.org/Resources/ELCA-Global-Church-Sponsorship).

## **Cameroon: You need to know the unwritten rules**

"Life in Cameroon is very much like driving in Ngaoundere," say Phillip and June Nelson, ELCA missionaries. The unwritten rules, they say, also help navigate the subtleties of life in a new culture. See [www.ELCA.org/news-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/412](http://www.ELCA.org/news-and-Events/blogs/HandInHand/412).

## **South Africa: What it means to walk and serve 'hand in hand'**

"The job of the 60 YAGM scattered across the globe is to accompany — to walk with the people in our new communities, to share their sorrows, their victories, their lives for the short time we cross paths," says Rachel Swenson, who is serving for a year in South Africa with the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program. See [www.ELCA.org/Living-Lutheran/Blogs/2014/02/140220b-On-accompaniment](http://www.ELCA.org/Living-Lutheran/Blogs/2014/02/140220b-On-accompaniment).

## **Chile: Community health training**

ELCA missionary Karen Anderson works with an award-winning program that trains community leaders to improve health services. Request a profile of her at [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org) or make an online gift and learn more about ELCA engagement in Chile at <http://search.ELCA.org/Pages/OurWork/Chile.aspx>.

## **World Malaria Sunday is April 27**

Save the date! World Malaria Day is April 25, and the ELCA Malaria Campaign is turning this day into a special week — observing World Malaria Sunday on April 27. For special World Malaria Day resources to help activate your congregation, see [www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources).

## **Interactive e-book enhances learning about world religions**

Fortress Press offers "Introduction to World Religions: Second Edition" as an e-book featuring all the text of the print edition plus more than 25 audio and video clips, expanded information through links and call-out boxes, guided tours, slide shows, interactive self-tests, searchable text and social note-taking to optimize group study. See <http://fortresspress.com/inkling/>.

## **Madagascar: Support and follow Young Adults in Global Mission!**

Seven young adults are serving for a year in education, medicine, agriculture, outdoor ministry, social outreach and with youth, women, and the deaf and blind. Learn more and make a gift to support them at <https://community.ELCA.org/madagascar>. Or email [globalchurch@elca.org](mailto:globalchurch@elca.org) to request a profile and list of

their blogs.

### **Senegal: Seeking Young Adults in Global Mission coordinator at new site**

The ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission program is expanding to Senegal in 2015 and a country coordinator is needed to support the participants. For application details, see [https://rn11.ulipro.com/EVA1000/jobboard/JobDetails.aspx?\\_ID=EF61337625948CAE](https://rn11.ulipro.com/EVA1000/jobboard/JobDetails.aspx?_ID=EF61337625948CAE).

### **Mexico: Help reforest Chiapas**

During International Volunteer Week, July 27-Aug. 3, join an intercultural service trip to restore the Lacandon jungle in Palenque, Chiapas. You'll be working alongside the native Mayan people and other service-oriented individuals. See [www.Facebook.com/GlobalLinks](http://www.Facebook.com/GlobalLinks).

### **A global need for health care workers**

Lutheran Global Health Volunteers, a program of the ELCA, seeks active or retired health care personnel for short-term volunteer service with Lutheran partner health ministries in Liberia, Tanzania and India. For information, contact Ruth Reko at 800-638-3522, ext. 2655, or email [LutheranHealth@elca.org](mailto:LutheranHealth@elca.org) or go to [www.ELCA.org/LutheranGlobalHealthVolunteers](http://www.ELCA.org/LutheranGlobalHealthVolunteers).

### **Global Links on Twitter**

Stay informed, inspired and involved with daily tweets from @ELCAGlobalLinks.

### **In our prayers**

Remember in your prayers the Rev. David and Alicia Brondos, ELCA missionaries in Mexico City, and their work in theological education. (This prayer suggestion for April 23 is available in April along with daily prayers for the global, social and outreach ministries of the ELCA at [www.ELCA.org/prayerventures](http://www.ELCA.org/prayerventures).)

### **Correction:**

In the February issue of Global Links, the anniversary listing for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hong Kong was incorrect. Hong Kong Lutherans are celebrating their 60th anniversary.

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### **Contact us**

Please [reply](#) to this email with your ideas and comments.

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**God knows all about you, knows your name, and has set His claim upon you.**

*I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

You Can be Certain, Part 1 of 2  
-Roy Lessin,  
[meetmeinthemeadow.com](http://meetmeinthemeadow.com)



**God created you, shaped you, and brought you into this world...**

*But now, thus says the Lord, who created you, O Jacob, And He who formed you, O Israel:*

**God wants you to live without fear because the ownership of your life is in His hands, His care, and His keeping...**

*Fear not, for I have redeemed you;*

**God knows all about you, knows your name, and has set His claim upon you...**

*I have called you by your name; You are Mine.*

**God is with you and will bring you through every difficult circumstance and trial...**

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; And through the rivers, they shall not overflow you. When you walk through the fire, you shall not be burned, Nor shall the flame scorch you.*

**God is your salvation and the Lord of your life...**

*For I am the Lord your God, The Holy One of Israel, your Savior*

**Scriptures from Isaiah 43:1-13**



# A Devotion for God's Guidance

**A prayer to help you through life's tough decisions.**

*By Erin Keeley Marshall, Rogers, Arkansas.*

*There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. Luke 12:2 (NIV)*

Back in my twenties I was facing a difficult decision and didn't know if I was approaching it with all the wisdom I needed. I wanted to do the right thing for my future, but did I know all I needed to know to make such a life-changing decision?

I wished I was as clear on the answer as I was about my feelings of inadequacy. I felt myself drawn in one direction but hesitating for one reason or another. I needed more security than my fallible human reasoning offered.

When I turned to a trusted friend for advice, she said something that has stuck with me to this day. She prayed with me and asked God to "let nothing remain hidden that needs to come out." How free I felt with those simple words!

Our futures are in the Lord's hands. Yes, it's our part to give our all, but the final result is up to Jesus, Who is abundantly capable to guide us on the best path. He wants us to rely on Him. Like a Shepherd leading His sheep, Jesus promises to guide us; He even says we'll hear His voice (see John 10:27).

This news ought to be revitalizing and confidence building. He will reveal all that needs to be revealed in time for us to take the steps He knows are best. Put the responsibility back on Him where it belongs; your job is to listen for Him and trust Him to be Himself, your Leader.

*Faith step: If you're confused by circumstances, ask Jesus to open your mind and heart to the facts you need to know to follow Him.*

## **CHERISH ALL CHILDREN**

**By: Dianne Klafeln**

We have changed our name. The Board of Directors made the decision to change our name. They wanted a name that would encourage congregations to think more broadly about the children they serve and expand their prevention efforts beyond their own children. We also want to provide greater clarity to the public about our identity as an organization. A vote was taken across the participating congregations and it was decided that Cherish ALL Children fit that need.

It's a good thing, every now and then, to look again and be reminded of our mission: **Cherish All Children is a national Lutheran ministry of prayer, education, relationship-building, and action to prevent child sexual exploitation.**

As an organization, we empower, equip, and encourage congregations and leaders to get more deeply involved in prevention. We invite congregations to:

- **Pray for children**, ages birth to 25, within their congregation and beyond;
- **Educate members** about preventing child sexual abuse and exploitation;
- **Build relationships** with others in the community who also work on prevention;
- **Be in action** on behalf of children.

On our website [www.children.org](http://www.children.org)

you can add your name to the **Wednesday Prayer**. This offers thoughts and prayers around one of the upcoming Sunday's lessons. Use them as you speak with God quietly and/or share them with your congregations during worship.

Also on our website is the **E-Quipped for Prevention** newsletter, you can find stories, resources, and ideas for moving this ministry forward in your congregation. You may also add your name to our E-Quipped mailing list, if you are not already on it.

For those who have not begun or are considering participation in this ministry and would like more information contact Dianne Klafeln, Cherish All Children Synod Leader for the Upstate New York Synod Women of the ELCA @315.216.4416 or [madmim4@gmail.com](mailto:madmim4@gmail.com).

Thank you for being a partner in this ministry!

Dear Bethel Church Members,

As I begin my term as your Council President I have some important issues that I would like to address and some goals which, with the help of the other council members and you, I would like to see our church achieve.

I was quite concerned at the recent Congregational meeting to discover that we have 181 members listed on our books and only 20 people in attendance at the meeting. This would indicate to me that we have a serious problem. My number one goal will be to get our attendance back up.

***Hebrews 10:25 –“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching”.***

Due to the lack of active members, we are going through a tough financial battle that I'm afraid we may lose if something does not soon change. We have lost several members through death. We have also lost members, who for one reason or another, never return after their children have been confirmed. We have also lost members due to changes that have been made within the church.

Change is inevitable and is needed to keep the church alive. Change is also difficult to understand and accept at times and no one knows that better than I do. I have not always agreed with the changes, but as long as they are kept within the bounds of sound Christian doctrine, I believe we owe it to ourselves, our pastor and other congregational members to try and accept them and move on. I also feel it is important that we do not let other people influence our reasoning but rather search our own hearts and pray that God will guide us in the right direction when making decisions that affect our attendance, our giving and therefore our church as a whole.

We have had an extremely challenging winter and our finances show it. Our bills are up and our giving has been down. Although my wife and I have only been a part of Bethel Lutheran for a short period of time, I am very concerned that if we cannot find a way to increase our resources we will have to make some serious decisions about what we need to do to keep our doors open. We have always been known as a "welcoming congregation" that is dedicated to serving the cause of Christ through the many ministries we have. I would like to be able to keep this tradition going strong and increase our ministries rather than have to decrease them. I would appreciate any help that you can give us during this time. Please attend our services if possible and support us in any way that you can that will let us continue to let our light shine in the community and the world. ***Matthew 5: 16 “In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven”.***

If you have questions please feel free to contact me or any council member.

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*Gary Murray*

Gary Murray, Council President

