



connections

June 2010

Index of Articles



Synod World Hunger Team is Launching

Can someone from your congregation join us? Our first synod-wide world hunger meeting will be on June 15 at 7 PM. This will be an webinar, so no travel is needed. If you, or someone from your congregation, is interested, please have them contact [Peggy Hahn](#) for more information.

Links

Synod Web Site:
www.gulfcoastsynod.org

Children, Youth & Family Ministry:
www.soggyshoes.org

Disaster Relief:
www.futurewithhope.org

ELCA Churchwide Web Site:
www.elca.org



Bishop Mike Rinehart: [Time for Work - Time for Play](#)

Peggy Hahn: [Family Checklist for Disaster Preparedness](#)

[Synod World Hunger Team is Launching](#)

Pastor Kerry Nelson: [Evangelical Imagination](#)

[Dedication Ceremony at Lutherhill](#)

Cindy Lyles (Zion Lutheran, Brenham): [STRIVE](#)

[Wellness Retreat for Ministry Couples](#)

TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod [Revenue & Expense Report Feb/Apr 2010](#)

[\\$32,065 in Grants Awarded by Mission Endowment Fund](#)

[Interfaith Prayer Service and Call to Action for Immigration Reform](#)

[Record Number of Health Kits Received at Lord of Life, The Woodlands](#)

["Take Along Devotions" The Latest Publication from the Children's Ministry Re-defined Team](#)

[Join the Fight Against Malaria](#)

[LSTC Graduate Makes Lutheran Church History](#)

[Safe Families and Domestic Violence Training this Fall](#)

[ELCA Genetics Social Statement Available for Study and Discussion](#)

[ELCA Global Mission](#)

Dedication Ceremony Lutherhill

Dedication Ceremony
for the new building facilities

- Water Plant
- Sewer Plant
- 6 Cabins
- Retreat House/Health Center



Lutherhill Board of Directors invites you to attend Saturday, June 5, 2010 from 12 p.m. - 3 p.m. Lutherhill, La Grange Texas

12 - 1 p.m.

- Pre-dedication Concurrent Events
- Building Tours
- Camper Presentations

1 - 2 p.m.

- Dedication Ceremony

2 - 3 p.m.

- Reception

Wellness Retreat for

Time for Work - Time for Play

By Bishop Mike Rinehart

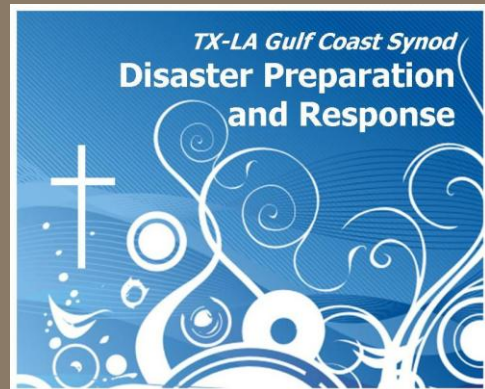


It's been a hard year. Unemployment is at 9.9%. Several states are facing bankruptcy. The economy is really struggling, and congregations have felt the pinch. Pastors and lay leaders of the denomination made a controversial decision around human sexuality. We are several decades into an attendance and giving slide that has marginalized the influence of the mainline churches. [Read more....](#)

Family Checklist for Disaster Preparedness

By Peggy Hahn

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. And when disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond. A highway spill or hazardous material could mean evacuation. A hurricane could confine your family at home due to fallen trees or make it impossible to be in your home due to flooding. Many disasters cut water, electricity, and telephones for days or even weeks. [Read more....](#)



Evangelical Imagination

By Pastor Kerry Nelson



There is a reason why the order is "Ready...Aim...Fire!" rather than "Ready...Fire...Aim!" And that reason is the value of thinking on purpose.

Thinking ahead of time about the purpose, the end, the target, the reason for being, increases the possibility that what we DO will accomplish what we HOPE to do. This is true for virtually everything we do in life and it is certainly true for what we hope to be doing in

Ministry Couples

Grace Place Lutheran Retreats (an affiliated social ministry organization of ELCA) is making a final call for ELCA and LCMS rostered pastors, teachers and spouses to participate in the [Wellness Retreat at Heartwood](#), in the beautiful northern Wisconsin woods, July 26-30, 2010.

This 5-day, 4-night health and wholeness program is aimed at ministry couples who desire to remain well and healthy in service to Christ. Led by John D. Eckrich, M.D., well-known St. Louis Lutheran physician, his wife Kathy Eckrich, RN, and Lenore Rhyne Psychology Professor and Practitioner, Rev. Dr. David and Kathy Ludwig or Hickory, NC, the retreat will focus on four pillars of healthy relationships ... physical, emotional, relational and spiritual...plus fiscal wellness, done with vigor, humor and sensitivity.

There's lots of time, as well, for rest and fellowship. The cost is so reasonable at \$225 per couple for the whole week if Thrivent members. Heartwood has just been noted as the number one resort and conference center in Wisconsin...so this is truly an affordable treat. Please register at www.graceplaceretreats.org or contact Annette at (314)842-3077. The last day for internet registration is June 25, 2010.

.....

Record Number of

church.

When it comes to evangelism, that is, to "helping people move from a wishy washy unhelpful kind of uninformed spirituality to a new place in their life where they are connected to God as active participants in Christian community", **we need to pay careful attention to our imagination, to what we think and how that guides how we act.**

For example...

In your morning prayers, consider the lives of the people you will meet each day, the people with whom you share your life, the people who potentially will make their way to a Lutheran church for the first time in a long time. Think about the pressures they live under - working hard for just enough money to pay the bills, many living under crushing burdens of debt, trying to make it through life in and out of relationships, trying to be a good husband/wife, parent, student, friend. Physical problems are a daily reality for many and a fear for many more. Worries about government that feels more like theatrical cage-fighting. An ecological disaster seeping oil into the ocean but knowing that we can't imagine life without oil...and many people in our synod make their living finding, processing and selling the very oil that threatens to choke us.

Think about all of the mixed messages they have heard about religion all of their lives, the mixed messages they saw lived out in the lives of the people of faith they loved. Think about how so many connect church buildings only to weddings, funerals and hypocrisy.

Think about how much they need to know they are loved with a love more powerful than the negativity and the fears of the world around them, even in the pastures of Blue Bell country. Think about the depth and passion of God's creative love in their lives...if they only knew. What word of hope can set them free?

And realize, to the depth of your being, that God has chosen to incarnate God's love in God's people. Which means, whether you are a 2nd grader, a Sunday School teacher, a pastor or a banker, the only way that the true goodness of God is going to get under the skin of people today is when it comes through your touch, your words, your presence, your faith. That isn't about you, it is about how God has chosen to continually reveal himself to us.

Take this evangelical imagination into your life every day. And take it with you when you prepare to attend or lead worship. Let it open your eyes, direct your planning, inspire your leadership and your participation.

We all drive up to our church property with some regularity. But what do we see when we get there? Evangelical imagination means that we look at our property through the eyes of a first time visitor or someone who has been dipping their toe into the life of your congregation. How does it look to them? Does it look well maintained? Is your sign attractive and helpful, does it change regularly? Are there banners in the parking lot or something else that flutters and catches the eye

Health Kits Received at Lord of Life, The Woodlands

Lord of life Lutheran Church received a record number of donations of health kits-111, as well as 77 school kits, 52 sewing and 109 handmade quilts made by church members to go to Lutheran World Relief.



Items were initially on display outside the Fellowship Hall and then quilts were placed on the pews and kits around the altar on Palm Sunday. Many churches already do this, but if you would like help starting this at your church do not hesitate to contact Anne at Lord of Life 281-367-7016.

Tree of Life, Conroe and Lord of Life, The Woodlands are taking a "Leap of Faith" to continue a ministry initially offered by Montgomery County Youth Services- Outreach to Homeless Teens (did you know 81% of the homeless teens continue to go to school?). It was discontinued, due to a lost grant. Many in the community felt this was a critical need, so they are endeavoring to continue this ministry. There is a small amount of seed money for this venture, but if this is valued by you and you would

rather than litter and blowing leaves? Is it easy to find the entrance door? How many parking spots do you set aside for visitors?

We all enter the building for Sunday worship. Evangelical imagination means we pay attention to things like signage (Bathrooms?Nursery?Worship? Sunday School?).Are people smiling, is conversation happening, does someone greet you at the door with a real greeting? Does the place smell alive or musty?Is there food/drink available?

Worship begins. Evangelical imagination in both planning and leading worship means that you account for the needs of those newest among you. Is the lighting good? Is it as easy as possible to follow the worship service? Does the service have flow, have soul, start somewhere and take a person on a journey through God's presence, propelling them into a new place in their faith and another week in their lives?

Do your ushers act like smiling gracious hosts? Do you have a voice in a microphone leading the music? Do you avoid the "in house chatter" of boring announcements, the "dead air" of lack of preparation (waiting for a reader to walk up from the last row of the church is not meditative silence)? Does the preaching communicate the life and death nature of faith? Is there both holiness and joy alive in the room?

Do we expect something wonderful to happen in worship? Do we expect God to show up? It begins, I believe, in our imagination, an evangelical imagination, and that begins in our prayers every day.

The local church is God's hope for the world. Millions of people outside of the church don't believe that. All the more reason for those of us on the inside to believe it all the more fervently.

.....

STRIVE

By Cindy Lyles

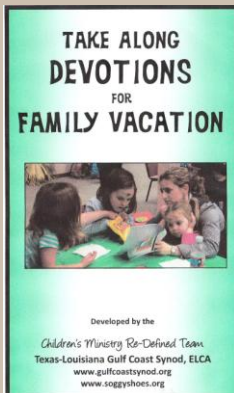
Zion Lutheran - Brenham

STRIVE - Students Turning Responsibility Into Valuable Experiences was held on April 10 in Washington County. Third through 12th graders, along with their parents, gathered together to give back to the community as well as help those in need.

like to help, contact Rev Chris Lake at Tree of Life at 936-539-9530 or Anne at Lord of Life at 281-367-7016.

Take Along Devotions

The latest publication from the Children's Ministry Re-Defined Team



We know that summer is a busy time with visiting relatives, weekend trips, summer camp and family vacations

. Don't let nurturing your child's faith get lost in the shuffle. Check out the [Take Along Devotions](http://www.soggyshoes.org) available on www.soggyshoes.org "Resources" page. The purpose of this little booklet is to help families do devotions while they are out and about traveling during the summer. Each devotion should take less than 10 minutes and can be done anywhere! We hope that families can invite God into their time away from home through reading Scripture, reflection, prayer and action. Blessings during your travels!

.....
Join the Fight



We had seven churches involved - Zion Lutheran, St. Paul's Lutheran, St. Mary's Catholic, Brenham First Baptist, Brenham Mission, St. Peter's Episcopal and Brenham Church of Christ with 47 youth along with their parents participating.

We had the younger group play bingo with two of our local nursing homes, two groups went to downtown Brenham to clean up trash bins and wipe off all the benches in the pocket parks with another group picking trash up at Fireman's Park and Henderson Park.



The older groups, joined by the younger groups, traveled to six homes in the county that were in need. The yards at these homes were filled with trash. They picked up bottles and brought them to the recycling place, while other trash went to the Brenham dump. We hauled away

Against Malaria

Malaria is a preventable and treatable disease that kills more than one million people a year, the majority of them children. Lutheran World Relief is a partner in the Lutheran Malaria Initiative (LMI), a collaborative project among LWR, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to engage nearly 8 million U.S. Lutherans in the fight against malaria. LMI is made possible in part through a partnership with the United Nations Foundation.

Want to join the fight? Here are several ways to get involved:

- Buy Bed Nets: It's as simple as making a \$10 donation to purchase an insecticide-treated bed net, deliver it to someone in Africa, and educate the recipient on its use. Buy a net today, make a donation or learn more at lutheranmalaria.org/nets.
- Raise your voice: Ask your members of Congress to support the fight against malaria with proper funding in the 2011 budgeting and appropriations process. Sign LWR's petition at lwr.org/malaria.
- Make a gift: Your support of LWR's ongoing anti-malaria work helps educate communities on the signs and symptoms of malaria, provide rural communities with access to healthcare, and ensure that health workers have the training and supplies they need to properly diagnose and treat malaria.

trailers and trailers of trash.

Some of the lessons learned were:

1. The importance of maintaining a premises, so that it does not create an unsanitary condition attracting mosquitoes, rodents, vermin, or disease-carrying pests and (SNAKES!)
2. The potential negative influences of alcohol (most of the glass that was recycled were beer bottles and liquor bottles)
3. How easy it is to recycle
4. The importance of the TX burn laws
5. Learning to love and help neighbors and, most importantly...
6. Through God anything is possible, even moving mountains (like the trash piles at some of the homes)

We hope God's love showed through us as we worked.



We got our jobs through the Environmental Specialist from Washington County. He selected the most important jobs - those in which people were being fined for not cleaning up their property. We felt that if they could not clean it up themselves because they did not have the money, how could they even afford to pay the fine?

We are meeting again to evaluate and decide whether we will continue to STRIVE.

I sure do hope so!

.....

Donate now at
lwr.org/malaria.

LSTC graduate makes Lutheran church history with Ph.D. in biblical studies

On May 16, the Rev. Cheryl Stewart Pero made history when she received her doctorate at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago' 150th commencement ceremony. She is the first African American Lutheran woman to earn the doctor of philosophy degree in New Testament studies.

Stewart Pero's advisor, the Rev. Dr. David Rhoads, said, "There have been students from Africa who have earned a Ph.D. in biblical studies, and there are African Americans in the ELCA who have earned Ph.D.s in other areas, but what Cheryl has done is unique."

"At the end of the second millennium, Randall Bailey documented the fact that African American scholars working in Biblical Studies at colleges, universities and seminaries were just reaching critical mass. In the late 1990s we were fewer than 300; I do not believe that we have yet surpassed that benchmark. For this reason, and many others, we welcome our newest 'first African American' to the challenges and joys of making the vision plain," wrote Dr. Peter T. Nash,

TX/LA Gulf Coast Synod - ELCA Revenue & Expenses February to April 2010

TX/LA Gulf Coast Synod - ELCA Revenue & Expenses February to April 2010

	Feb - April 2010 Actual	Feb - April 2010 Budget	2010/11 Budget
Revenues			
Mission Support	\$315,137.18	\$380,000.00	\$1,500,000.00
Other Income	\$5,443.37	\$9,800.01	\$39,200.00
Total Revenues	\$320,580.55	\$389,800.01	\$1,539,200.00
Expenses			
Benevolence	\$169,554.86	\$209,399.94	\$837,600.00
Word & Sacrament	\$36,511.68	\$38,799.99	\$155,200.00
Administration/Finance	\$99,756.18	\$63,675.00	\$254,700.00
Leadership	\$26,391.26	\$36,725.01	\$146,900.00
Children, Youth & Family Ministries	\$16,086.44	\$11,125.02	\$44,500.00
Justice Ministries	\$20,384.07	\$20,050.05	\$80,200.00
Mission/Stewardship	\$4,802.73	\$5,025.03	\$20,100.00
Assistant to Bishop/Disaster	\$3,366.07	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Expenses	\$376,853.29	\$384,800.04	\$1,539,200.00
Net Total	(\$56,272.74)	\$4,999.97	

*Over budget due to severances given for layoffs this year.

\$32,065 in Grants Awarded by Mission Endowment Fund



Campus Ministry: \$6,000 was awarded to Lutheran Campus Ministry - Houston. The Fund is pleased to continue ongoing support of the ministry led by Pr. Brad Fuerst. This ministry is sponsored by Christ the King - Houston in conjunction with the synod and other congregations in the synod.

\$9,065 was awarded to help launch Brazos Valley Campus Ministry. This is a new program intended to support students at Texas A&M and Blinn College on Bryan and Brenham campuses. It is sponsored by Peace - College Station and Our Savior's - College Station in conjunction with the synod and other interested congregations.

Franklin and Irene List Saemann Professor in World Communities, professor of religion and liberal studies, and assistant to the president for equity and compliance at Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa.

Stewart Pero credits the African American Lutheran community, especially the Conference of International Black Lutherans, with encouraging her and supporting her as she pursued a doctorate. "Others told me that I had the gifts and talents to do this. I did this as much for the community as for myself," she says.

"I also had the support of an amazing group of scholars in my Ph.D. study group - other LSTC students from around the world who were working on degrees in biblical studies."

Stewart Pero was the second African American woman ordained in the Lutheran Church in America (LCA). After briefly serving on the churchwide staff of the LCA, Stewart Pero served parishes in Chicago and worked in campus ministry for 12 years.

During the 2009-2010 academic year Stewart Pero has been LSTC's Pastor to the Community. She has recently been appointed as Director of LSTC's Multicultural Center.

Safe Families and Domestic Violence

Support for a second campus ministry program was made possible in part by the Park Place Fund.

Seminary Scholarships: \$15,000 was awarded from the Park Place Fund for scholarships in Fall 2010. These scholarships support candidates for Master of Divinity and TEEM candidates

TEEM stands for "Theological Education for Emerging Ministries". It provides a route to ordination for those who do not find the Master of Divinity an option. TEEM candidates are usually a bit older and they are living and serving in a faith community where they are seen as a spiritual leader. It takes about three years to complete the program and then they can then be licensed for ordination.

Extending scholarships to include TEEM candidates was made possible by the Park Place Fund.

First Taiwanese: \$2,000 was awarded to Pr. Jeremy Shih and the First Taiwanese congregation in recognition of their organization in April 2009. This grant continues a tradition established by the Wahlberg Fund to recognize each new congregation in the synod as it organizes. Worship services are held at 6875 Synott Road, Houston.

If you would like to know more about the Mission Endowment Fund, the work it does, or make a contribution, please call the synod office at 281-873-5665, send an email to MEF@gulfcoastsynod.org, or visit the synod's website and look under Stewardship.

Interfaith Prayer Service and Call to Action for Immigration Reform



Date: June 6, 2010

Time: 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Location: Catholic Charismatic Center, 1949 Cullen Blvd., Houston, TX 77023

On Sunday afternoon, June 6th 2010, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo (Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston), Bishop Janice Riggle Huie (Texas Annual Conference United Methodist Church), Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle (Episcopal Diocese of Texas) rabbis and other religious leaders will lead an interfaith prayer service and action meeting for comprehensive immigration reform.

"As people of faith, we see in the faces and hear in the voices of the

Training

Is your congregation interested in making your church and community safer places for families by ending domestic violence?

You are invited to apply for a three-day "Lutheran Advocates for Safe Families" training session.

Choose from one of two dates:

- Monday, September 13 through Wednesday, September 15, 2010
- Thursday, October 7 through Saturday, October 9, 2010

The locations are forthcoming. In an effort to keep costs low, the location of the training events will be determined after applications have been received by finding the most central location for those interested.

[Applications are available online.](#)

Applications are due June 15, 2010, to Susan Hayes at the Lutheran Community Foundation.

Domestic violence has long been a concern for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) as a church body.

Several years ago, the Lutheran Community Foundation heard from its donors that domestic violence was a top concern in their communities. Since then, the Lutheran Community

immigrants in our midst, the image of God. The dignity inherent in us all is clouded, diminished, every time one of God's own suffers from poverty and want, from oppression of any kind. We pray for, and commit to continue to act toward, a comprehensive immigration policy that protects families, provides an avenue for the undocumented to come out of the shadows, that punishes those who exploit the immigrant and, yes, secures our borders from those who would do us harm. Even though we come from many and varied faith communities, we are united in our belief that this is great nation is big enough, generous enough and good enough to welcome strangers in our shores-those who come here for a better life."

The service will inspire the faithful from these major religious denominations to take action. The denominational leaders and laity are urging members of the U.S. House and Senate to work together in a bi-partisan manner on legislation that upholds family unity, respects due process and human rights and is practical and workable for Americans long term economic prosperity and security. The event, organized by The Metropolitan Organization,* will be aimed at generating support from the major religious groups to build the constituency for a humane overhaul of our broken immigration system and prevent repressive measures by state and local government.

The prayer service, the largest interfaith gathering on this issue in recent memory, is part of the Houston Area Interfaith Campaign for Humane Immigration Reform which began January 11th, 2010 at St. Paul United Methodist Church in Houston. The campaign has collected over 10,000 postcards, held over 50 trainings in over 40 congregations area wide. The event will include information on trainings in local congregations as well as a schedule of future events planned including a common preaching day for all major religious groups to be held Independence Day weekend July 3-4, 2010.

**The Metropolitan Organization (TMO) is an organization of congregations, schools and other institutions dedicated to developing power and leadership among ordinary citizens to transform democracy in the City of Houston. TMO's mission is to develop leaders in institutions who act on their faith and democratic values in the public sphere. TMO is a member of the Texas Industrial Areas Foundations (IAF), a network of community-based organizations in 12 Texas cities that work together on statewide issues.*

To register for this Action please register at your congregation or call TMO at: 713-807-1429 or Email at: tmo@tmohouston.net

.....

Time for Work - Time for Play

...continued from top

Foundation has contracted with Faith Trust Institute, a leader in faith-based domestic violence resources and training, to provide education and materials to Lutheran congregational leaders like you.

The Lutheran Community Foundation is making the training session and materials available at no cost, and they also are able to provide some financial assistance for travel and lodging, upon acceptance to the training via the application.

The ELCA Justice for Women program has collaborated with and supported the work by connecting the Lutheran Community Foundation with ELCA congregations and providing Lutheran-specific resources to accompany the faith-based training materials. If you have questions, please contact Susan at Susan.Hayes@thelcf.org or Mikka McCracken with the ELCA Justice for Women program at Mikka.McCracken@elca.org.

Community of Hope Provides Opportunity for Lay Ministry

The Community of Hope International is made up of individuals who serve as loving and willing vessels to carry God's care to a broken world. Volunteers serve through a variety of outlets, such as hospice care and Lay Eucharistic Ministry, as well as hospital lay



It's been a hard year. Perhaps the best thing to do is take a break. Sabbath is far from a new idea. God has wired us to need breaks. All work and no play...

Sometimes, when working a crossword puzzle and stuck, walking away for a while is the answer. Come back, and the answers seem obvious. It's amazing how many times the solution emerges the minute we walk away from a problem. The subconscious needs time to work on things without the conscious meddling. In the early morning dawn a clarity emerges that can be startlingly simple.

Staff have observed that our congregations seem tired, perhaps suffering from a low-grade depression. Non-profits often hover at the point of viability, bringing in about what they spend. An economic downturn, controversial denominational decision, internal conflict, or natural disaster can be the tipping point, and we're struggling to pay the bills.

Peggy Hahn mentioned Friedman's book to me this week, A Failure of Nerve. Crises can lead to several things:

1. An unending treadmill of trying harder - working like crazy at systems that are no longer effective. We keep working them for lack of other ideas (habit) or out of fear (comfort).
2. Looking for answers rather than reframing questions -the quick fix mentality - the next program, curriculum, new pastor, etc. rather than a fresh approach. As Peter Drucker said constantly, the problem is usually 90% the system, not the personnel.
3. Either/or thinking that creates false dichotomies - young/old, right/ left, etc. Not helpful.

I recently watched a documentary on a cruise ship that sank off the coast of South Africa. The captain was so unnerved by the reality that the ship was actually going to sink (along, probably, with his career), that he was immobilized. He couldn't make a decision. He was terrified to make the wrong decision. He suffered from what Friedman would call a failure of nerve.

How do leaders avoid a failure of nerve? Luther would say, "Sin boldly, but believe more boldly still." We need to trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in the church, stirring things up. Friedman would offer the following advice:

1. Think systematically.

Embrace the interconnectedness of the whole network of relationships in your congregation. The functioning of any member, including the leader, plays a significant role in the functioning of the other members of the organization. This is Paul's point when he talks about the church as a body. When one part suffers, the other parts suffer too. When one part rejoices, the rest of the body rejoices. Then, Friedman says, how the leader is present in the system is crucial. A system will either benefit or suffer from the way the leader is present, because the functioning of the leader (or leaders) affects the emotional processes inherent in all relational systems.

chaplains. The keystone of the Community of Hope is Benedictine spirituality, a devotion to the care of the whole person: mind, body and spirit. Such spirituality inspires individuals to seek balance, simplicity, and harmony between the inner work of Christian meditation, sacred reading, and prayer and the outer work of corporate worship, pastoral ministry, and serving others.

The next training class will be on **Monday evenings, August 16 through November 15, at Christ the King Lutheran Church, Houston.** For more information, check out the Community of Hope International website at www.coh-international.org; or to register, contact@ctkelc.org

.....

Genetics Social Statement Released

The ELCA released a [draft social statement on genetics](#) on March 18. Individuals and congregations are invited to study and discuss the draft, and provide feedback to the task force by Oct. 15.

The draft will be revised based on feedback, and a proposed social statement is to be released in February 2011.

2. Acknowledge the role of emotional processes within the system

Because we're all interconnected, how emotionally mature people are, their emotional reaction to anxiety and one another, and how we manage or self-regulate our emotions will make a difference in the health of the system. I marvel at how Churchill and Roosevelt functioned in WWII. They had to maintain hope at the darkest hours, because leaders are part of an emotional system. If they have hope, the system will have hope. If they lose hope, the system loses hope. So keep your joy up. Take a couple weeks of vacation and a week of continuing ed this summer. Fill your tank. Let your joy be restored, because how you lead, who you are, is at least as important as what you do.

3. Recognize that emotional processes tend toward imaginative gridlock

Emotional systems often become conceptually stuck. Imaginatively gridlocked systems will not change on their own by getting new or more learning. There must be a shift in the emotional processes of that institution. In order to imagine the unimaginable, people must be able to separate themselves from surrounding emotional processes before they can even begin to see (or hear) things differently. Most organizational systems tend toward homeostasis - they favor stability and balance over adventurous exploration. For congregations this means we need to continue to innovate, imagine and risk, even when that seems the least safe thing to do.

4. Understand that emotional processes tend toward chronic anxiety

Herds are anxious. A congregation is a herd. Friedman argues that relationship systems tend toward chronic, systemic anxiety-in families, institutions, and society- and that anxiety not only hinders the development of the system, but also operates at the same time to derail leadership. The presence of chronic anxiety affects all systemic relationships, and all of life itself. Friedman describes five elements of chronic anxiety as: reactivity, herding, blame displacement, a quick-fix mentality, and lacking in well-differentiated leaders. One can recognize chronic anxiety by the absence of playfulness. Without it, organizations lose perspective, everything becomes dire, and the repertoire of responses to problems is thin. When a leader tries something creative - maybe it works; maybe it doesn't - and either way, the system jumps all over her, the system is so anxious, it cannot innovate, and move to the conceptually new reality that will lead to a preferable future.

5. Lead through Self-differentiation

Self-differentiation means defining who you are in a way that does not depend on who everyone else is. It means you try (it's hard) to not allow others' anxiety to define you. If another person or group is angry, you don't allow that to make you angry. Your responses are not based on how they come at you, but rather on who you are. This is the only way to turn the other cheek. You can be angry and violent. I



choose not to be. I act out of my moral center, not out of your anxiety.

Self-define. Know who you are. What you believe. You cannot control what others believe and do. Only what you believe and do.

Self-regulate. This means acknowledging your own anxiety, and constantly training yourself to not let it control your responses. Know your hot buttons. Know how to dial it back. Your non-reactive presence will have a calming effect on the system, and it will foster better choices in many of the crags and corners over which you have no control.

Stay connected. You cannot affect an emotional system of which you are not a part. Don't run away. Stay in the game. Keep contact. Show your friends you will not abandon them. Show your enemies that you will neither attack or retreat.

Expect resistance. Even Jesus got resistance. Mature leaders expect this. Self-differentiated leadership creates a disturbance in the force, if you will. It upsets homeostasis. The unbalance unsettles those who were benefitting from the system. Love them, but stay the course.

Avoid peac mongering. A leader who loses his or her nerve can do more damage than good. If you prefer false harmony to progress or integrity, you will undermine the system from naturally self-correcting.

Max Dupree says the first job of a leader is to define reality. Perhaps we as leaders need to start by identifying the pain. Name it. "We are feeling stuck and have chronic anxiety." Once you say it, everyone breathes a sigh of relief and relaxes. A little. Say it: "We are over-reacting to the world around us."

When the system relaxes, and people start having fun, creative things start to happen. Leaders don't have to have all the answers, they just need to create an atmosphere where delightfully stupendous and unimaginably wonderful things happen. I'm drawn to Duprees' image of the jazz band director, who chooses the chart (with melody, key signature and chord progressions) then the tempo. From there on, the group improvises within those parameters. If band members leave the key or time signatures chaos occurs, but as long as they stay in bounds, anything goes, and wonderful things happen.

So go, take a break. Take vacation. Do some continuing education. Play with your family. Have good food and good wine with good friends. Play on the floor with children at VBS or Camp Hope. Go hiking with confirmands at Lutherhill. And when you feel human again, come back joyfully, and play.

All shall be well,
and all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well.

- Julian of Norwich

.....

Family Checklist for Disaster Preparedness

By Peggy Hahn

Disasters happen anytime and anywhere. And when disaster strikes, you may not have much time to respond. A highway spill or hazardous material could mean evacuation. A hurricane could confine your family at home due to fallen trees or make it impossible to be in your home due to flooding. Many disasters cut water, electricity, and telephones for days or even weeks.

After a disaster, local officials and relief workers will be on the scene, but they cannot reach everyone immediately. You could get help in hours, or it may take days. Would your family be prepared to cope with the emergency until help arrives?

Your family will cope best by preparing for disaster before it strikes. One way to prepare is by assembling a Disaster Supplies Kit. Once disaster hits, you won't have time to shop or search for supplies. But if you've gathered supplies in advance, your family can endure an evacuation or home confinement.

The bonus of preparation for your family is two-fold: you will be positioned to care for yourself and you will be positioned to care for others. A time of disaster can bring a community together. It is a great time to put our faith in Jesus in to action by serving those in need.

Things to Do Now

Evacuation Plan-

If you must relocate, have a predetermined destination, route and alternate route -- whether out of the area or to the nearest shelter. To identify the nearest shelter, contact the local Red Cross. If you need transportation assistance, contact them now to learn about options. Alert your congregation about your need for assistance now.

Communication Plan-

Phone numbers - make a paper copy of cell and home phone numbers for family and friends so you are not limited to electronic versions of this information. Text messaging and blogs often work when phone service does not. Congregations in the TLGC Synod can use Futurewithhope.org as a meeting place for electronic communication.

Identify a local contact person and someone outside of your area as a contact person. In case of a disaster, local phones may have limited or no use. Someone outside of the area can be contacted and have responsibility to contacting others. They can serve as your primary communication tool.

[Build a Disaster Kit](#)- This is a great intergenerational activity. Check

out this [video on the FEMA Website:](#)

- Review the checklist below.
- Gather the supplies that are listed. You may need them if your family is confined at home.
- Place the supplies you'd most likely need for an evacuation in an easy-to-carry container. These supplies are listed with an asterisk (*).
- There are six basics you should stock for your home: water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items.
- Possible Containers Include- A large, covered trash container or a plastic box with a lid, a camping backpack or a duffle bag.
- Water- Even professionally bottled water has a shelf life. If you use tap water, it is best to refill water bottles monthly to maintain a fresh supply. Old water can be used for food preparation, sanitation or on plants.

- Store water in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles. Avoid using containers that will decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles. A normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. Hot environments and intense physical activity can double that amount. Children, nursing mothers, and ill people will need more.

- Store one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation).*

- Keep at least a three-day supply of water per person.

Food - When electricity is off, many people use their outdoor grill or sometimes a gas stove to cook the food that is thawing in their refrigerator or freezer. In addition to this, in case of evacuation, you will want the following:

- A three-day supply of non-perishable food. Select foods that require no refrigeration, preparation or cooking, and little or no water. If you must heat food, pack a can of sterno. Select food items that are compact and lightweight.

- Include a selection of the following foods in your Disaster Supplies Kit: ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables

First Aid Kit - Assemble a first aid kit for your home and one for each car. First aid supplies have an expiration date so check existing kits.

A first aid kit* should include:

- Sterile adhesive bandages in assorted sizes
- Assorted sizes of safety pins
- Cleansing agent/soap
- Latex gloves (2 pairs)
- Sunscreen
- 2-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- 4-inch sterile gauze pads (4-6)
- Triangular bandages (3)
- Non-prescription drugs

- 2-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- 3-inch sterile roller bandages (3 rolls)
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Needle
- Moistened towelettes
- Antiseptic
- Thermometer
- Tongue blades (2)
- Tube of petroleum jelly or other lubricant

*Non-Prescription Drugs- Again, check expiration dates on existing non-prescription medication.

- Aspirin or nonaspirin pain reliever
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacid (for stomach upset)
- Syrup of Ipecac (use to induce vomiting if advised by the Poison Control Center)
- Laxative
- Activated charcoal (use if advised by the Poison Control Center)

*Important Family Documents

- Keep these records in a waterproof, portable container:
 - o Will, insurance policies, contracts deeds, stocks and bonds
 - o Passports, social security cards, immunization records
 - o Bank account numbers
 - o Credit card account numbers and companies
- Inventory of valuable household goods, important telephone numbers
 - o Digital photos or a video of each room and the exterior of your home can be very helpful
- Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)

Tools and Supplies- Ziploc bags work great for storing some of the supplies listed below.

- Mess kits, or paper cups, plates, and plastic utensils*
- Emergency preparedness manual*
- Battery-operated radio and extra batteries*(Double check batteries each year)
- Flashlight and extra batteries*
- Cash or traveler's checks, change*
- Non-electric can opener, utility knife*
- Fire extinguisher: small canister ABC type
- Tube tent
- Pliers
- Tape
- Compass
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic storage containers
- Signal flare
- Paper, pencil
- Needles, thread
- Medicine dropper
- Shut-off wrench, to turn off household gas and water

- Whistle
- Plastic sheeting
- Map of the area (for locating shelters)
- Toilet paper, towelettes*
- Soap, liquid detergent*
- Personal hygiene items* and feminine hygiene supplies*
- Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)
- Plastic bucket with tight lid
- Disinfectant
- Household chlorine bleach
- Twinkle lights (usually used for Christmas) are great for lighting your home with low voltage if you have a generator.

Clothing and Bedding- *Include at least one complete change of clothing and footwear per person.

- Sturdy shoes or work boots*
- Rain gear*
- Blankets or sleeping bags*
- Sunglasses

Special Items* - Remember family members with special requirements, such as infants and elderly or disabled persons. Consider those with transportation limitations.

For Baby

- Formula
- Diapers
- Bottles
- Powdered milk
- Medications

For Adults: Ask your pharmacist about storing prescription medication.

- Heart and high blood pressure medication
- Insulin
- Prescription drugs
- Denture needs
- Contact lenses and supplies
- Extra eye glasses

Pet Kits

- Secure enough food and water for pets
 - Leash & collars for dogs and cats are critical
 - A pet carrier or crate for each animal
 - Name, address and phone number of veterinarian, animal control agency and shelters
 - Identify people who may assist you with animal care if needed
- Entertainment (optional) Games, deck of cards and books

Forward email

✉ **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to synod@gulfcoastsynod.org by synod@gulfcoastsynod.org.
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Email Marketing by



Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod | 12941 1-45 North Freeway, Suite #210 | Houston | TX | 77060