

Lenten Devotional

Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9

Lutheran Office for Public Policy

LOPPW

In Wisconsin



Welcome to the season of Lent 2012

This Lenten calendar was written by the Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin as a guide for you to learn and grow in your baptismal calling to work for justice and peace.

We are a ministry of advocacy for the ELCA congregations and synods in Wisconsin. LOPPW's work grows out of our baptismal calling as Lutheran Christians and takes shape through advocating for legislation and policies that address the root causes of hunger and poverty in Wisconsin.

You can use this calendar for your own Lenten journey by reading the Gospels, having weekly devotions, and learning about the witness of Lutherans in Wisconsin and around the world.

You may also be interested in gathering a group from your congregation to undertake a project during this season. We encourage you to quickly review the days ahead as some require advanced planning.

To make the most of this guide, you will need a New Revised Standard Version Bible, access to the internet, a copy of Luther's Small Catechism, and access to the Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal (ELW). The Small Catechism can be found on page 1160 of the ELW.

Blessings to you in your Lenten journey,

Amy M. Johnson

Director, Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin



Calendar Resources

Legislative Advocacy

Two of the activities in this calendar require that you write your United States Senators and Representative, as well as your state senator and state representative.

To find information on our US Senators, visit the Senate's website at: <http://www.senate.gov>

For the US House of Representatives:
<http://www.house.gov>

Finally, Wisconsin Legislature: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov>

Food Stamp Challenge

If you're interested in taking the week-long Food Stamp Challenge (see Feb. 23), here are the guidelines:

1. Each person should only spend a total of \$31.50 on food and beverages for the week.
2. All food purchased and eaten during the challenge week, including fast food and dining out, must be included in the total spending.
3. During the challenge, only eat food specifically purchased for the project. Do not eat food you already have, except for spices.
4. Avoid accepting free food from friends, family, or coworkers. When attending an event, bring your own food, and use this opportunity to tell others about the challenge!

Note: The Food Stamp Program is called FoodShare in Wisconsin.



Ash Wednesday

February 22nd

Our Lenten journey begins on Ash Wednesday when we receive a cross of ashes on our forehead. We experience the ashes as a sign of our frailty and mortality. We also die to sin that we may be given new life as we walk through this time toward Easter.

Today on Ash Wednesday and for Sundays to follow in this season, we will reference two Gospel readings. You should hear one of the two in worship. You may use the same lectionary as your congregation, or read the other for another perspective.

The first reading comes from the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL), which sets the readings from the Old Testament, Psalms, New Testament, and the Gospel each week for a three-year cycle. The second reading comes from the Narrative Lectionary (NL) from Luther Seminary. This alternative to the RCL is increasingly being used by our congregations in Wisconsin.

Ash Wednesday Readings

Isaiah 58:1-12

Revised Common Lectionary (RCL): Matthew 6:1-6;
16-21

Narrative Lectionary (NL): Mark 9:30-50

Prayer

Ever present God, this is the fast we choose; to walk with you in this season of Lent, and to be finally released from the bondage of our own mortality. Guide us, strengthen us, and be with us throughout these 40 days and nights. **Amen.**



Thursday February 23rd

Hopefully by now you've had a chance to look through the calendar and decide how you plan to use it. The daily entries will provide readings, research and advocacy activities. The weekly and season-long projects will require a little bit of creativity. Use this day to reflect on the method that works best for you individually or in a group.

Week-long projects include:

1. Take the Food Stamp Challenge. Visit: <http://www.hungertaskforce.org/take-action/take-the-food-stamp-challenge/>
2. Gather with others from your church to walk through the days and weeks in this Lenten calendar.
3. Using the information you have researched on Lutheran ministries, share your new-found knowledge with others by articles in your congregation's newsletters.

Season-long projects include:

1. Start a fundraising campaign for ELCA World Hunger.
2. Join in what your synod collects during its assemblies later in the spring, e.g. nurse wife kits, quilts, money for Malaria or ELCA World Hunger.
3. Food banks and food pantries need your help all year. Start a food drive with a focus on healthy food.
4. Plan and plant a community garden at your church.
5. Consider becoming a summer meal site for school age children.
6. Raise funds for your congregation's emergency fund to help neighbors in need.



Friday February 24th

ELCA Social Statements

The ELCA has adopted 11 Social Statements since its beginning in 1989. These social statements are intended to review pressing social issues and provide a Lutheran response that calls us to action.

One of the first Social Statements was “Church in Society.” Read the passages below, or read the entire statement at: <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Church-in-Society.aspx>

“In witnessing to Jesus Christ, the Church announces that the God who justifies expects all people to do justice. God’s good and just demands address people in the obligations of their relationships and the challenges of the world. Through the divine activity of the Law, God preserves creation, orders society, and promotes justice in a broken world.”

“This church must participate in social structures critically, for sin also is at work in the world. Social structures and processes combine life-giving and life-destroying dynamics in complex mixtures and in varying degrees. This church, therefore, must unite realism and vision, wisdom and courage, in its social responsibility. It needs constantly to discern when to support and when to confront society’s cultural patterns, values, and powers.”

Reflection: How does this Social Statement shape your perception of the work of the church today in the 21st Century?



Saturday February 25th

Affirming Our Baptism

Take time this day to read the "Affirmation of Baptism" statement. The statement may also be found on page 237 of Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and page 201 of the Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW).

**You have made a public profession of your faith.
Do you intend to continue in the covenant God
made with you in holy baptism:**

to live among God's faithful people,

to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's
supper,

to proclaim the good news of God in Christ
through word and deed,

to serve all people, following the example of
Jesus,

and to strive for justice and peace in all the
earth?

Each person then responds with the affirmation:

"I do, and I ask God to help and guide me."

Reflection: As you recommit to your baptismal calling during Lent, how do you expect to live a Godly life and work for justice and peace?



Week of February 26th

Sunday February 26th

With the words of the Affirmation of Baptism, we will highlight one of the five items each week as our theme and introduce a Lutheran ministry committed to serving all of God's people around the world and here in Wisconsin. This week we highlight the work of Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Office for World Community.

In the days ahead, you will read about Leymah Gbowee, the Liberian peace activist awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. This week will be the start of our Wednesday devotions, and you will learn about our global companion synods, as well as the ELCA Malaria Initiative. Continuing the theme of international human rights, you will write a letter to your federal lawmakers on an international issue important to you.

Gospel Readings

RCL: Mark 1:9-15

NL: Mark 10:17-31

Prayer

Creating, Redeeming, Sustaining God, we have fallen short in our commitment to the work of your church. Guide us in this time of searching and lead us to new life in you. Be with us now and forever. **Amen.**



Monday February 27th

Lutherans in Focus: The Lutheran World Federation and the Lutheran Office for World Community

Based in Geneva, Switzerland, the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a global communion of Christian churches in the Lutheran tradition. LWF currently has 145 member churches in 79 countries around the world representing over 70 million Christians.

Lutheran World Federation puts the Lutheran faith into action. Their powerful witness includes advocacy, humanitarian assistance, and ecumenical and interfaith relations to name a few. One of their four priorities is to bear witness in church and society to God's healing, reconciliation and justice.

Visit the LWF website to learn about their important work: <http://www.lutheranworld.org>.

The Lutheran Office for World Community serves LWF and the ELCA. The office monitors the work of the United Nations on issues such as refugees, children in need, environment and human rights. With this information, the LWF and the ELCA are better situated to determine their humanitarian aid and public policy statements.

Learn more about their work, visit <http://www.elca.org> and search for "Lutheran Office for World Community."



Tuesday Feb 28th

Leymah Gbowee – Nobel Peace Prize Winner

Leymah Roberta Gbowee, a Lutheran Liberian peace activist, was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize. Ms. Gbowee is responsible for organizing a nonviolent women's movement that brought an end to the bloody 14-year civil war in Liberia.

The Liberian women's movement led to the ousting of ex-President Charles Taylor and to the election of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as president of Liberia – the first African nation with a female president. President Sirleaf was also awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize.

Gbowee's story is chronicled in the documentary "Pray the Devil Back to Hell." She has completed her memoir, *Mighty Be Our Powers: How Sisterhood, Prayer, and Sex Changed a Nation at War* – a book that examines "the power of women and the power of faith in getting you (out) from the darkest place in your life," she wrote.

Leymah Gbowee was also the plenary speaker for the 2011 Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA.

Want to read more about Lutheran women mobilized to live out their faith boldly? Check out the website for the Women of the ELCA at <http://www.elca.org/womenoftheelca>.



Wednesday Feb 29th

Weekly Lenten Devotion

These outlines for a midweek worship service may be used individually, in groups, or by your congregation. They continue the "Lutherans in Focus" theme for each week. Feel free to adjust the outline to fit best for you.

Opening Dialogue (from Psalm 67):

**May God be merciful to us and bless us;
may the light of God's face shine upon us.**

Let your way be known upon the earth,
your saving health among all nations.

**Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.**

May God give us blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth stand in awe.

Gathering Hymn: *I'm Going on a Journey* (ELW #446)

Reading: Hebrews 10:19-25

Reflection Ideas: How are you supported and held accountable in faith by your faith community? By members of your town/city/county/state community?

What partners in ministry do you have? (Urban/suburban/rural parishes, schools, health centers, business establishments, synods, advocacy groups, international partners, companion synods, non-profits, etc). How do you experience God in these relationships?



What partners in ministry do you have outside of your congregation? How do you experience God in these relationships?

Hymn of the Day: Remember and Rejoice (ELW 454)

Prayers

Gracious Lord, you bind us together in one communion with all the saints on earth and all the saints in heaven. Encourage us to be faithful partners to our sisters and brothers as we journey together. Bless the work of your church, in all its expressions, and the work of all who seek to build and sustain global partnerships. We thank you for those with whom we are in relationship and ask that you bless them in their pursuit to follow you. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing: May the God who makes us sisters and brothers with one another lead us on our baptismal journey. May Christ draw us together as one as we serve God and one another. In the name of the Triune God. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: Blest Be the Tie That Binds (ELW 656)



Thursday March 1st

Companion Synods

The 65 synods of the ELCA participate in over 120 international companionships. The Companion Synod Program is a strong witness of the communion fellowship among the 140 member churches of the Lutheran World Federation. These partnerships also provide ELCA members with an opportunity to engage in global mission.

Here is a list of our Wisconsin ELCA synods and their companion synods:

East Central Synod of Wisconsin: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Southern Africa – Western Diocese

Greater Milwaukee Synod: Salvadoran Lutheran Church and Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – Meru Diocese

La Crosse Area Synod: Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus-Central Synod, and Peruvian Evangelical Lutheran Church

Northern Great Lakes Synod: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania – Eastern & Coastal Diocese

Northwest Synod of Wisconsin: Evangelical Church of the Lutheran Confession in Brazil – Sinodo Centro Companhia Sul & Evangelical Lutheran Church in Malawi

South-Central Synod of Wisconsin: Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church (India)



Friday March 2nd

Spend time today writing a letter on international issues to your United States Representative and Senator. Here's sample text:

I write to you as a person of faith, and as your constituent. This is the season of Lent in the Christian calendar, and this year I am living out my faith by working to bring peace and justice to all people around the world.

Fostering peace internationally begins with a commitment by Americans and our government to provide support to poverty-focused internal aid. By committing just 1% of our federal budget, people living in extreme poverty and disease receive the relief so badly needed.

It is difficult for us to comprehend living each day on \$1, or running for our lives from our war-torn country. Very simple programs provided through funding by the United States can make a tremendous difference in the lives of millions. By transforming lives and providing for programs that educate women and children, care for those living with HIV/AIDS, stopping the spread of Malaria, we can bring hope to the next generation, significantly reduce the likelihood of war in the future.

In your discernment of critical issues facing our country, I ask that you make a commitment to foreign assistance by our government. Throughout the season of Lent please know that I will be praying for you and your staff that the work you do brings peace and justice to all people.

Sincerely, (your name and address)



Saturday March 3rd

ELCA Malaria Initiative

Malaria kills 800,000 people each year, most of whom are children under five. That's a child dying every 45 seconds. The ELCA Malaria Campaign is committed to raise \$15 million to help prevent, treat and educate communities in Africa about malaria and to eliminate deaths from this disease—for good.

The ELCA Malaria Campaign funds programs of our companion churches that:

- provide life-saving health care—including medicine to treat malaria;
- train health care providers and church volunteers to diagnose and treat malaria;
- teach people how to protect themselves from the mosquitoes that spread malaria, recognize symptoms and seek treatment;
- distribute insecticide-treated mosquito nets and provide training on their use;
- provide preventative medication to protect pregnant women and their babies;
- encourage governments to provide adequate health care and malaria prevention activities;
- And support water treatment projects to control the environments where mosquitoes breed.

To learn more, visit <http://www.elca.org/malaria>.



Week of March 4th

Sunday March 4th

Our theme for the second week of Lent is "*Hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper.*" Our Lutheran ministry in the spotlight is ELCA World Hunger.

This week we will live out our baptismal calling by learning about the important work of ELCA World Hunger, checking out their worship resources, reading about Daily Bread in Wisconsin, volunteering with an anti-hunger organization, and taking time for our Wednesday devotion.

Gospel Readings

RCL: Mark 8:31-38

NL: Mark 12:1-12

Prayer

Most merciful and patient God, we have failed in following you. We have held onto our pride and our possessions. New in life and washed clean in baptism, may we love our neighbor in need, through your Son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Monday March 5th

Lutherans in Focus – ELCA World Hunger

ELCA World Hunger is a comprehensive and sustainable program that uses multiple strategies – relief, education, advocacy and development – to address the root causes of hunger and poverty. ELCA World Hunger responds to neighbors around the corner and around the world.

ELCA World Hunger is not just an international program of the ELCA. About 25% of the funding distributed by World Hunger is used for domestic anti-hunger and anti-poverty programs in Wisconsin and around the country. LOPPW is a proud partner of World Hunger in our work to support policies that make a significant difference for our neighbors in need. Another aspect of World Hunger's domestic presence is through ELCA Disaster Response.

The international work of ELCA World Hunger is carried out by trusted partners such as The Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief. These ministries operate international anti-poverty programs, and ELCA World Hunger supports these effective and important efforts to bring hope to thousands around the world.

Visit the ELCA World Hunger's website at <http://www.elca.org/hunger> to watch real life stories of transformation and to order resources for your congregation.



Tuesday March 6th

Hunger Resources for Lent

ELCA World Hunger has an entire webpage dedicated to Lenten resources at <http://www.elca.org/hunger/lent>. The site has suggestions for having international meals for your weekly suppers at your congregation. The meals include a recipe, fast facts on a featured country, table tents, placemats, table prayers, and a success story of ELCA World Hunger dollars in action.

If you are taking the Food Stamp Challenge, the ELCA World Hunger website includes information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), or FoodShare as it is called in Wisconsin. The site also includes an affordable recipe that will cost less than \$1 to prepare.

ELCA World Hunger provides resources for each church season. Included in these materials are outlines and suggestions for worship services focused on World Hunger and poverty. Visit the pages for resources and materials to help you plan and write a poverty and hunger awareness service.

Looking forward, you may consider making an Easter donation to ELCA World Hunger in honor or memory of a loved one.



Worship for Wednesday, March 7th

Opening Dialogue:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

**May we love the Lord
with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.**

Take to heart that the Lord is God;

There is no other in heaven and earth.

Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone

Bind these words in our hearts and souls.

Gathering Hymn: *Word of God, Come Down to Earth*
(ELW #510)

Reading: John 1: 1-14

Reflection Ideas: How is God's presence made know in the hearing of the Word? How do you experience God's presence in the bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ? How is God's presence shared in the Word and Sacrament?

Hymn of the Day: *O Living Bread from Heaven* (ELW #542,
LBW #197)

Prayer

Almighty God, you sent your Son Jesus Christ to reconcile the world to yourself. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world. We praise and bless you for those whom you have sent in the power of the Spirit to preach the gospel to all nations. We thank you that in all parts of the earth



a community of love has been gathered together by their prayers and labors, and that in every place your servants call upon your name; for the kingdom and the power and the glory are your forever. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength.

Keep these words in your heart

recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise.

Bind them as a sign on your hand,

fix them as an emblem on your forehead,

and write them on the doorpost of your house.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

from everlasting to everlasting.

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and minds in + Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: *Almighty God, Your Word is Cast* (ELW #516, LBW #234)



Thursday March 8th

Give Us Today Our Daily Bread

In the Small Catechism, Martin Luther wrote that when we ask for daily bread, we ask for “everything that belongs to the support and wants of the body, such as meat, drink, clothing, shoes, house, homestead, field, cattle, money, goods, a pious spouse, pious children, pious servants, pious and faithful magistrates, good government, good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors, and the like.”

LOPPW focuses its work on providing Daily Bread for all children in Wisconsin. Our kids need food to grow up healthy and strong, an education to strengthen their minds and prepare them for the future, access to health care providers and resources, and finally a safe home.

Today in Wisconsin:

- Over 400,000 children receive their health care through the state's BadgerCare Plus Program
- More than 12,000 children are known to be homeless.
- Over 350,000 children live in homes receiving food assistance through the FoodShare Program.
- More than 335,000 students, or 40% of all Wisconsin's K-12 students, receive a free or reduced price lunch at school.



Friday March 9th

Volunteer to End Hunger

Use your time today to schedule volunteering at a meal site or local food pantry. If you don't know of one, either contact your church for suggestions, or reach out to one of Wisconsin's Food Banks:

Milwaukee and Eastern Wisconsin

Hunger Task Force of Milwaukee:

<http://www.hungertaskforce.org>

Feeding America of Eastern Wisconsin:

<http://www.feedingamericawi.org/help/volunteer>

South Central Wisconsin

Community Action Coalition for South Central Wisconsin: <http://www.cacscw.org/food.php>

Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin:

<http://www.secondharvestmadison.org/>

Eau Claire and Western Wisconsin

Feed My People:

<http://www.fmpfoodbank.org/>

Statewide

SHARE Wisconsin:

<http://www.sharewi.org/>



Saturday March 10th

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper on hunger in your community. Here is sample text:

To the Editor:

Although the Great Recession was declared over by economists and elected officials, many adults and senior citizens continue to struggle each day to afford enough food for their children and themselves.

The hungry in our state do not live elsewhere, but rather live here in this community. As Christians we pray for our neighbors in need. Our neighbors now are the person next to us in church, down the street, and in our town. Our neighbor is often a loved one or even those in our own homes.

Our churches are active partners in the fight against hunger in our community, but the demand far outreaches the supply of food. The work to provide all Wisconsin residents with food cannot be met by bags of groceries alone. Ending hunger takes everyone working together to support statewide programs such as FoodShare and school meals to help each person break out of the trap of poverty.

The recession is far from over in Wisconsin, but there is hope when we prioritize the needs of the least fortunate.

(Your Name and Address)



Week of March 11th

Sunday March 11th

Our theme for the week is "*Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed.*" The Lutheran ministry spotlighted this week is Lutheran World Relief.

We will take time this week to learn of the important work of Lutheran World Relief, read about LWR partnership in one of our synods, and check out worship materials and watch videos about the combined work of ELCA World Hunger and LWR. The week will also include our Wednesday devotion and will wrap up with some fair trade treats!

Gospel Readings

RCL: John 2:13-22

NL: Mark 12:28-34

Prayer

God of light and of love, we confess that we have not kept your commandments to love you and each other. Be with us as we recommit ourselves to love and treat each other with respect and dignity. Through you everything is possible, no matter how great the challenge. Be with us as we join together to bring peace to your world. **Amen.**



Monday March 12th

Lutherans in Focus: Lutheran World Relief

The devastation of World War II left millions destitute. The war had an impact on the world's Lutherans as 20% found themselves homeless. Lutheran World Relief was formed by Lutheran churches in 20 states in response to the need in Europe.

Humanitarian crisis in the decades following World War II prompted LWR to respond beyond the original constituencies of European Lutherans to countries in the continents of Asia, Africa, Europe, and in the Middle East.

Today LWR is a ministry of the ELCA and the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. LWR's work is carried out through their 100 local partners around the world. Together their work improves farming and harvests, offers health care, restores the environment, and provides development programs to get to the root causes of hunger and poverty.

Chances are you too have partnered with LWR by purchasing a bar of Divine Chocolate at your church, waving your Eco-Palms during your Palm Sunday service, or sipping fair trade coffee. Even these little things add up!

To learn more, visit <http://www.lwr.org>.



Tuesday March 13th

Synods Respond

At their 2011 Synod Assembly, the people of the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin gathered over 2,000 Midwife and Hospice Kits for LWR. A kit makes a world of difference to a new mother or family in need of assistance, and is a sure sign of God's love to all people.

Lutheran World Relief also collects quilts and other types of kits that are made and collected in our states and then distributed around the world. Assembling kits are an easy and fun project for all ages in your congregation. Ask your pastor if your congregation has a project underway. If not, ask what your church can do to get involved!

Visit the "Get Involved" section on the LWR website at <http://www.lwr.org> for more information on the kits, including where to deliver your donations to ensure they will be sent out as soon as possible.



Wednesday March 14th

Opening Dialogue:

God is the healer of our every ill.

The Lord is the light in our darkness.

God is the refreshment for weary souls.

The Lord cares for those cast down.

God cleanses our hearts.

The Lord guides us in right paths.

Gathering Hymn: *Healer of Our Every Ill* (ELW #612)

Reading: Mark 1:40-45

Reflection Ideas: This may have been your reading (with 2 Kings 5) for February 12. How do you read it differently through the lens of Lutheran World Relief? Who is God healing close to you? Far away? How do our actions fit with Jesus' words, "I do choose!"?

Hymn of the Day: *O God, Whose Will is Life and Good* (LBW #435)

Prayer

God of all healing, we pray for all who need your touch. We pray for the ill of this community (*especially...*). We pray for those who work in hospitals and care facilities. We pray for those who suffer around the world from preventable diseases. We pray for the work of Lutheran World Relief to provide food and clean water, health and relief amid disaster, agriculture and improved livelihoods. We pray especially for the work of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative. May your choice for healing spread across this world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Lord's Prayer

Blessing (from ELW Healing service, page 278):

Almighty God, who is a strong tower to all,
to whom all things in heaven and on earth bow and obey,
be now and evermore your sure defense,
and help you to know that the name given to us
for health and salvation
is the name of our Lord and Savior,
+ Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: *The Church of Christ, in Every Age*
(LBW #433, ELW #729)



Thursday March 15th
Friday March 16th
Saturday March 17th

Thursday March 15th

If you are interested in deepening your understanding of LWR through worship, they have a website dedicated to worship resources such as bulletin inserts, blessings of quilts, eco-palms for Palm Sunday, and the importance of clean water.

The page can be found by visiting <http://www.lwr.org>, and clicking on "Get Involved," then "Faith in Action," and finally "Worship Resources."

Friday March 16th

It's important to know and remember that ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran World Federation and Lutheran World Relief work as partners committed to the fight to end hunger in our world. When you support World Hunger, you are supporting the important work of these ministries.

Take a few minutes today to watch a video. Visit ELCA World Hunger's web page at <http://www.elca.org/hunger> and find the World Hunger Video Series link on the right. Watch the video for the Lingson Family in Kaseleka, Malawi.

Saturday March 17th

In the Christian tradition, St. Patrick's Day is a religious holiday, and a brief span of time to lift any Lenten disciplines. This year celebrate by eating Fair Trade Chocolate and drinking Fair Trade Coffee.



Week of March 18th

Sunday March 18th

The theme for this week is “*Serve all people, following the example of Jesus.*” The Lutheran ministry in focus is Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS).

This week we will learn of the work of LSS in our state, read about ELCA Disaster Response, schedule time to volunteer at a local social service provider site, write a letter to your state leaders on critical programs, read the Small Catechism, and take time out for our Wednesday devotions.

Gospel Readings

RCL: John 3:14-21

NL: Mark 12:38-44

Prayer

God of abundance and unending grace, we fail to share, and we judge the values of others. We need to be reminded that your Son came into the world that it might be saved through him. Join our hands together that we may share in the abundance of your love and mercy.

Amen.



Monday March 19th

Lutheran Ministry in Focus: Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan

Lutheran Social Services (LSS) provides services across the lifespan and across a variety of conditions, offering a continuum of care for those served. LSS provides services at over 220 sites throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Visit the website at www.lsswis.org.

LSS Ministries include:

- Counseling Services for all ages, including addiction and recovery services. The programs work in partnership with most Wisconsin counties, the Department of Health and Family Services, and state and federal corrections departments.
- Children and Family Services that promote the well-being of children and families, including adoption, birthparent services, foster care, residential services, runaway and homeless youth services, and community wrap-around programs.
- Housing and Aging Services for older adults and their family caregivers, persons with developmental disabilities, persons with chronic mental illness, and persons with physical disabilities.
- Basic Need Services aimed at organizing communities to better provide individuals with their most basic needs of shelter, food, clothing, hope and connection.



Tuesday March 20th

Lutherans Responding to Disasters.

Lutherans are known for responding to natural and human-caused disasters both domestically and internationally. Wisconsin has experienced many weather-related disasters in recent years, including damage from tornados and flooding. Our disaster response partners have stepped in to provide badly needed long-term assistance.

ELCA Disaster Response brings comfort, healing and renewal to those affected by disasters. The ministry works with global and local church partners to brief relief and necessities to those here in Wisconsin and internationally. In 2010, ELCA raised \$12.5 million for the Haiti Earthquake Relief Fund. This financial support impacted the lives of tens of thousands in Haiti following the earthquake. This effort is ongoing as ELCA works with key partners to rebuild lives.

This important and powerful ministry has responded to disasters here in Wisconsin and domestically, as well as internationally in places such as Japan, the Horn of Africa, Sudan, Malawi, Columbia, Ivory Coast, Indonesia, Libya, Egypt, Nicaragua, and Pakistan.

To learn more about ELCA Disaster Response, visit the website at <http://www.elca.org/disaster>.



Wednesday March 21st

Opening Dialogue:

Jesus, you risk being found in the faces of the least of these—

Help us to risk serving you there.

Jesus, you risk being found in broken places—

Help us to risk serving you there.

Jesus, you risk being served as you have served us—

Help us to risk serving you here.

Jesus, you fill the world with your body broken and blood poured out—

Help us to risk knowing you here.

Gathering Hymn: *We Come to the Hungry Feast*
(ELW #479)

Reading: Matthew 25:31-46

Reflection Ideas: How is it good news to know that Jesus is present in the faces of the “least of these”? How is it scary news? Who are the “least of these” in your life? When have you been one of the “least of these”?

Lutheran Services in America (LSA), together with local affiliates like Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, served 1 out of every 50 Americans last year through all manner of acts of service, compassion, and support. Our privilege as members of this church is to work together to live out the promise to “serve all people, following the example of Jesus Christ.” But more than that, if Matthew 25 tells us anything, the privilege is not just to serve, but to actually come into the presence of the living Christ, borne on the faces of any who are in need.



Hymn of the Day: *Jesu, Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love*
(ELW #708)

Prayer:

God of the poor, the lonely, the hungry: You come to us each day in the bodies of all who suffer. Help us to rejoice in your presence among us as we respond to the needs of your hungry world with mercy, compassion, and love. Send servants to love and accompany us when we are lost, lonely, or grieving. Strengthen the work of LSA and LSS to live and serve among all those whom you have called your own, and strengthen us to risk joining them in their work. In Jesus' name: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

May you be blessed by the One who created you and continues to recreate you each day;
the One who died so that we might truly live;
the One who breathes in us a holy breath,
that we might be a holy people. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: *To Be Your Presence* (ELW #546)



Thursday March 22nd

In this Wednesday's devotion, we read the text from Matthew 25:31-46. This Gospel reading is a call to action.

Jesus says, "I was hungry and you fed me; thirsty and you gave me something to drink; a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you gave me clothing, sick and in prison and you visited me."

This Lenten advocacy calendar asks us to learn of the witness of God's love around the world and here in Wisconsin. We take time to reflect on the needs of our neighbors. Through our devotions, we pray for God's guidance, and we respond by speaking out through letters and direct service.

To get at the root causes of poverty, we must open our eyes to the struggles of our neighbors and meet their need for daily bread. We must also provide hope for the future that all will be able to live as God intends.

Use your time today to volunteer or to schedule time at a local senior center or to connect with a prison ministry. Offer an invitation to Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan to speak to your congregation.



Friday March 23rd

Today, write a letter on behalf of the work of Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Here is sample text:

Dear Senator / Representative,

As a person of faith, I am called to minister to all people and to ensure the well-being of my neighbors and my community. Each day, there are thousands of Wisconsinites who find themselves in grave danger and in great need of supportive social services.

Lutherans across our state respond to the immediate needs of those in need. The needs of many individuals and communities continue to grow, and the alleviation is well beyond our means as individual congregations. We are blessed to work with our social ministry partners like Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin (LSS) to address the struggles of our neighbors and our community.

LSS serves our communities through counseling services for people of all ages including addiction and recovery services; children and family services to promote the well-being of children and families; housing and aging services for older adults and persons with developmental disabilities; and basic need services aimed at providing communities the tools to better assist individuals with their most basic needs of shelter, food, clothing, hope and connection. Many of these services are done in partnership with the State of Wisconsin. Last year, LSS served more than 100,000 individuals and families across Wisconsin and Upper Michigan.

Through no fault of their own, many Wisconsin residents are in great need. Funding for critical programs, which work in and through trusted ministry partners to meet these needs will bring dignity and hope to our brothers and sisters.

Sincerely, (Your name and address)



Saturday March 24th

Back to the basics... Luther's Small Catechism

When was the last time you read through the Small Catechism? In confirmation? When you joined your congregation? Never?

On an earlier version of the ELCA website, the Small Catechism was described this way:

In 1529, Martin Luther published a series of articles explaining the statements that define the Christian faith. In his conversation with people in the towns around his home, he learned that the storms of life had left them "in the dark." They needed some guidance to navigate daily living. This series of articles was soon gathered into a booklet and given the name "Luther's Small Catechism." It was designed to help families learn and understand the life-giving truths found in the Ten Commandments, the Apostles Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Sacraments. It provided direction as they made their journey of faith with God.

The Small Catechism can be found on page 1160 of the ELW. You can also ask your pastor if printed booklets are available from the congregation. Printed booklets may be marked up with your notes and easily referenced for the future.



Week of March 25

Sunday March 25th

Our theme this week is "*Strive for Justice and Peace*," and the Lutheran ministry in focus this week is ELCA Advocacy.

For these last few days before the start of Holy Week, we will explore what it means to be a public church through the witness of our advocacy offices in Washington, DC and here in Wisconsin. We will also take time to read the social statement called "Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope and Justice." After reading the statement, take time to discern how you are being called to live out your faith in the state legislative process. The Saturday activity will be cooking with local foods from Wisconsin farmers, and we will take time mid-week for our Wednesday devotions.

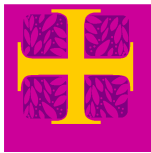
Gospel Readings

RCL: John 12:20-33

NL: Mark 13:1-12 [14-31] 32-37

Prayer

God of peace and justice, we witness division and we choose to turn away. Without you, we are nothing. With all of your people, we can bring hope and promise. Return our hearts to you and strengthen us to speak out for all of your children. **Amen.**



Monday March 26th

Lutherans in Focus: ELCA Advocacy

The ELCA is unique among individual Protestant faiths in our deep commitment to having a public voice in the federal government and in states. Our work is framed by ELCA social policy, and we engage Lutherans in a national network for policy change. As Lutherans, we have a powerful story to tell of the realities of families living in poverty. Through your messages to lawmakers, you are able to bring about change domestically and internationally.

The Washington, DC Office directs the ELCA's public witness for just policies in our Federal Government, either internationally or domestically. They focus on biblical values: peacemaking, hospitality to strangers, care for creation, and concern for people living in poverty and struggling with hunger and disease. Please pray for all who attended the Ecumenical Advocacy Day for Global Peace with Justice in Washington, DC this past week.

To engage in the network of Lutheran Christians speaking out on federal and international policy issues, visit their website at: <http://www.elca.org/advocacy>.

While you're there, make sure to sign up for their e-Advocacy network to receive updates on key legislation and contact your elected officials to speak out on issues impacting our brothers and sisters in Christ.



Tuesday March 27th

LOPPW

The Lutheran Office for Public Policy in Wisconsin (LOPPW) is one of a number of ELCA State Public Policy Offices around the country. Our work takes place in the state capitol engaging with state elected leaders and government officials.

The purpose of LOPPW is to advocate for justice, protect human rights, to ensure the responsible stewardship of God's creation with a special emphasis on hunger and poverty, and to reconcile the estranged by speaking for those who have little or no power.

In even-numbered years (such as 2012), our work is focused on policy issues that get at the root causes of hunger and poverty. Our policy work in the past has included new regulations for payday lending and strict penalties for human trafficking.

In odd-numbered years (like 2013), we engage in budget issues that determine funding levels for programs such as school meals, 4-Year-Old Kindergarten, and the Earned Income Tax Credit.

LOPPW is supported by several critical partners such as our ELCA synods with congregations in Wisconsin, ELCA World Hunger, and ELCA churches around our state. Without these valued partners we would not be able to carry out the work of advocacy in our state. Thank you! To learn more, visit our website at <http://www.lopep.org>.



Wednesday March 28th

Opening Dialogue:

Show us your mercy, O Lord,

and grant us your salvation.

Clothe your people with righteousness.

Let your people sing with joy.

Give Peace, O Lord, in all the world;

for only in you can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under your care,

and guide us in the way of justice and truth;

Let your way be known upon earth:

your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten,

nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God,

and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Gathering Hymn: *Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service*
(ELW #712, LBW #423)

Reading: Amos 5:14-15, 21-24

Reflection Ideas: How do we define and identify justice?
How can we, in our daily lives, show peace and justice to
our family, friend and neighbors, community and world?

Hymn of the Day: *Let Justice Flow Like Streams*
(ELW #717)



Prayer (of Saint Francis of Assisi):

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you
with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor
and + give you peace. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: *Lord of Glory, You Have Brought Us* (ELW
#707, LBW #424)



Thursday March 29th
Friday March 30th
Saturday March 31st

Thursday March 29th

As a public church, we Lutheran Christians are called to address significant and pressing social issues that affect the common good. Through these statements, we seek to bring God's justice not only in the world but also in the church.

For your Lenten reflection today, take time to read the social statement on the environment called "*Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice.*"

The statement can be found at <http://www.elca.org/socialstatements/environment>

Friday March 30th

Our ELCA Social Statements call us to act and engage in pressing issues and speak out as people of faith. Take time today or this weekend to reflect on your faith convictions and the issues where that would lead you to take a stand. From that, talk with a friend or family member about legislation or issues facing our state lawmakers and how you are feeling called to respond.

Saturday March 31st

As the last day before the start of Holy Week, fix a meal for yourself using local foods. While picking your ingredients think about the origin of the food and pray for a successful growing season for our farmers in Wisconsin.



Sunday April 1st Palm Sunday

Hosanna! We mark this day as our passage into the passion of our Lord. In our readings, our shouts of joy will turn toward days of sorrow.

The Wisconsin primary falls on Tuesday and we will spend the first half of the week in prayerful consideration of our elected leaders and of the vision of God's promise for all people.

The second half of the week will be time for prayer and devotion for the days leading to Easter. Spend time this week gathered with others in the presence of God.

Gospel Readings

RCL: Mark 14:1 – 15:47 or Mark 15:1-39 [40-47]

NL: Mark 11:1-10

Prayer

Always present God, on this day of Jesus' journey, be with us in the joyful procession so that we may gather at the cross and witness the resurrection of your son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**



Monday April 2nd
Tuesday April 3rd

Monday April 2nd

Gospel Reading: John 12:1-11

Tomorrow will be the Spring Primary for Wisconsin. Use your time today to learn about the candidates for office and their positions on policies that will impact our neighbors in need of daily bread.

If you are searching for more information on the issues, and the location of your polling places, visit the website for Wisconsin Public Radio and Television at <http://www.wisconsinvote.org>.

Tuesday April 3rd - Vote!

Gospel Reading: John 12:20-36

In 2008, the ELCA published a voting and civic participation guide titled "*Called to be a Public Church.*" ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson wrote in the foreword:

Scripture reveals God's presence in all realms of life, including political life. This church understands government as a means through which God can work to preserve creation and build a more peaceful and just social order in a sinful world. The electoral process is one way in which we live out our affirmation of baptism to "serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus," and "to strive for justice and peace in all the earth."



Wednesday April 4th

Gospel Reading

John 13:21-32

Prayer

God of comfort and strength, give us today the strength to live in ministry to you and with others. May we come to the meal set before us with honest and open hearts.

Amen.



April 5th

Gospel Readings

RCL: John 13:1-17, 31b-35

NL: Mark 14:12-25

Prayer

God of tenderness, wash us anew so that we may love others as you love us. Anoint us for the journey to come.

Amen.



April 6th

Gospel Readings

RCL: John 18:1 – 19:42

NL: Mark 15:16-47

Prayer

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears, thou who has brought us thus far on the way; thou who has by thy might led us into the light, keep us forever in the path, we pray. **Amen.**



Saturday April 7th

The Vigil of Easter begins after sunset and concludes with the resurrection of Jesus at night.

Gospel Reading

John 20:1-18

The New Testament reading assigned for this day is Romans 6:3-11 in which Paul makes the case that through baptism we die to sin and are raised to newness of life.

Today, as you reflect upon Christ's death on the cross, and anticipate Christ's resurrection, consider too your baptism into Christ's death and resurrection. As you have journeyed these forty days of Lent, immersed in your baptismal calling, what has given you life? What has surprised you? What was your favorite experience? What have you learned about yourself as a baptized child of God?

Consider ways in which you can continue to deepen your baptismal life as we enter into the Easter season, celebrating Christ's new life for us all.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, thank you for making me your own child in baptism and freeing me from sin and death. Continue to deepen my baptismal calling in all the ways I encounter the world. **Amen.**



Sunday, April 8th

Christ is Risen!

Thank you for walking with us in this Lenten journey. It is our hope that by taking steps big and small you now feel confident as an advocate to live out your baptismal calling to work for justice and peace.

This calendar was made possible through the gifts and dedication of the LOPPW Policy Council, a fellowship of lay leaders and pastors from each of our synods. We also give thanks to our six ELCA Synods with congregations in Wisconsin who were vital partners in spreading the word and reaching out to you and your church. Finally the work of this office would not be possible without the support of ELCA World Hunger, and their commitment to advocacy in our church.

He is Risen Indeed!

Lutheran Office for Public Policy

LOPPW

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Printed booklets can be ordered for \$2 plus postage.