**Calendar at-a-glance**

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**How to use this resource**

Congregation Connections is published twice a year and distributed to congregational leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Each issue is specially designed to help leaders integrate hunger themes throughout worship and congregational life. This issue is specifically designed with ideas, resources and activities to help you plan from September 2013 through January 2014. All lectionary references are taken from the Revised Common Lectionary.

**Download** the electronic version of this resource at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources).

**Order** more copies of this resource by visiting [www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) or calling 800-638-3522.

**Sign-up** to receive monthly email updates with new ideas and resources by visiting [www.ELCA.org/hunger/enews](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/enews).

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Let us pray.

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. You breathed life into humanity, and taught us to care for this world and each other. You taught Joseph to lead Egypt through the famine. You taught Moses to speak. You guided the prophets, and you sent your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh, to preach and to teach and to give us salvation.

We give you thanks, God, as we set apart these backpacks and school supplies to your glory. Bless the learners that they might be open to know all that you desire for them. Bless those who teach. Guide their words and actions, give them patience and hope. Bless all school administrators, counselors, maintenance staff, cafeteria workers and all other school staff in creating a safe learning environment.

O God, even as we celebrate, we know that many lack the supplies needed for education. And so we ask, O Lord, that you would bless these school supplies to those who need them. May these supplies be a witness to your love.

All this we ask in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Adapted from “General Order for Blessing,” ELW Pastoral Care
Ideas for Sunday school

• Sing songs from other cultures during your Sunday school opening (many great hymns from around the world are available in “Evangelical Lutheran Worship”). Talk about the other cultures where these songs came from and about the lives of the children who sing them.

• Try out the ELCA World Hunger curriculum, “Taking Root: Hunger Causes, Hunger Hopes” (www.ELCA.org/hunger/resources) in Sunday school to help children learn about hunger and how they play a role in fighting it. Four age-level courses are available and offer five sessions each of coordinated content to custom-fit the curriculum to your congregation.

• Discover practical ways to teach children, youth and adults alike about hunger and related issues by downloading free ideas and activities from Hunger Education Toolkits (www.ELCA.org/hunger/toolkits).

• Invite the children to put on an “animal parade” through the church to teach about God’s Global Barnyard — the animal projects supported by ELCA World Hunger. The children can either dress up as animals or carry stuffed animals as they parade through the church. Older children can make an announcement and explain what God’s Global Barnyard is and how it helps people living with hunger. Sing a hymn about God’s creation of animals such as “God, Whose Farm Is All Creation” (ELW #734) or “God of the Sparrow” (ELW #740).
New ELCA Malaria Campaign video

The ELCA Malaria Campaign is impacting lives throughout Africa. This two-minute video gives you a glimpse of the work being done on-the-ground through our Lutheran brothers and sisters in Zambia. This short video is perfect for temple talks, adult forums or youth group gatherings to show the impact of your gifts.

Download and watch this video online at www.ELCA.org/malaria.

MALARIA FACTS

- Every year, up to 650,000 people die of malaria — a disease that’s preventable and treatable
- 90 percent of all malaria deaths occur in Africa
- Those most vulnerable to dying from malaria are children under 5, pregnant women, people living in poverty, and those living with HIV and AIDS
- Every 60 seconds, a child in Africa dies of malaria

Malaria country profiles

Are you or your congregation involved with the ELCA Malaria Campaign? Share with your congregation and educate members about the ELCA Malaria Campaign with new country profiles. These country profiles give an in depth look at specific countries where the ELCA Malaria Campaign is present and helping put a stop to malaria.

More ELCA Malaria Campaign resources

CONGREGATION ACTION KIT

Are you looking for an easy tool that will help introduce your congregation to the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign? The ELCA Malaria Campaign Congregation Action Kit is organized into four steps (Gather, Educate, Activate and Celebrate) to help manage your efforts.

BULLETIN INSERTS

Use the bulletin inserts to highlight the work made possible through your gifts to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Find them at www.ELCA.org/malaria under resources.

MALARIA COLORING PAGES

Coloring pages are a fun and creative way to involve the children in your congregation in the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign. These pages emphasize the prevention of malaria along with ways the ELCA Malaria Campaign is helping combat this disease.

MALARIA STICKERS

Stickers are a visual symbol of your support to the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Order these stickers and share them with your congregation. Visit www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources to order the malaria stickers for your congregation.
Sermon starter | SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17

2 THESSALONIANS 3:6–13 Blunt Warning Against Idleness

Believers who have chosen idleness instead of work are taken to task here. Those criticized are likely the ones who heard about the coming “day of the Lord” and decided to stop contributing to community life. Unfortunately phrases like “anyone unwilling to work should not eat,” sound like a politically charged declaration about limits of government benefits and in some cases may too readily be used as such. But a strictly political application is missing the point. Instead these words are a reminder that people of faith need to be engaged in their communities here and now. The epistles show a deep concern for community life; both how the body of believers treat one another and how they should live amongst their neighbors. Perhaps those who are hungry or in poverty have a valuable perspective about whether our congregations are idle or engaged when it comes to living “according to the tradition” that we have received.

Hunger in the United States

For many families, November means sitting around a table filled with the abundance of the fall harvest. But for the 48 million Americans (including 16.2 million children) who struggle with food insecurity, November, like the rest of the year, is about worrying where their next meal will come from.

ELCA World Hunger works not only globally, but also locally, to help those in need. Through partnerships with ELCA congregations and organizations, ELCA World Hunger supports soup kitchens, food pantries, homeless shelters and other ministries that work with people around the country to get them back on their feet. Learn more about how your gifts are at work in your community by visiting www.ELCA.org/domestichunger. Find reproducible stories for your bulletin, including several about our church’s work in the United States, at www.ELCA.org/hunger/stories.

As a part of giving thanks this Thanksgiving, share with others through your gifts to ELCA World Hunger. Consider a special offering to support this work on Sunday, Nov. 27. Order offering envelopes at www.ELCA.org/resources.
ELCA World Hunger Toolkits

**ANIMALS AND HUNGER TOOLKIT**
The Animals and Hunger toolkit is available to help children learn about the ways that animals can support and improve the standard of living for individuals, families and communities. This toolkit has a special track geared toward kids aged 3–10 but also provides activities for multiple age groups.

**DISASTER AND HUNGER TOOLKIT**
The Disaster and Hunger toolkit raises awareness on how the ELCA responds to disasters and works together with our partners to reduce peoples’ vulnerability to the impact of disasters, climate change and hunger in the world.

**ELCA WORLD HUNGER DISEASE AND HUNGER TOOLKIT**
Hunger and disease go hand in hand in many places around the world. Those experiencing poverty and hunger are malnutritioned making them susceptible to diseases. This toolkit explores the connections between hunger and disease by including real life stories of those affected by disease and how the disease affects their entire body.

Find more ELCA World Hunger Education Toolkits at [www.ELCA.org/hunger/toolkit](http://www.ELCA.org/hunger/toolkit).

**Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning**
ELCA World Hunger is committed to helping individuals and congregations make a lasting impact in communities both near and far as they offer their gifts through service. To help group leaders plan meaningful experiences, ELCA World Hunger has developed “Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning.” In this guide you will walk through the service learning process, engaging in the cycle of Preparation, Action, Reflection and Celebration.

Using this guide will help all group members to be intentional about what they seek to learn, both about themselves and the host community they will be working alongside. In addition to the leader’s guide, placemat resources have been developed that summarize the work of ELCA World Hunger. This resource acts as a worksheet for participants, helping to summarize engagement in service learning. Learn about your community and share your gifts! To order this guide visit [www.ELCA.org/resources](http://www.ELCA.org/resources), referencing ELCAMA1199.

**Lutheran Disaster Response**
Lutheran Disaster Response brings God’s hope, healing and renewal to those whose lives have been disrupted, in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need. Lutheran Disaster Response makes sure that each community receives the physical, mental and emotional care needed to recover from a disaster. To learn more about Lutheran Disaster Response, find resources or volunteer opportunities, visit [www.ELCA.org/disaster](http://www.ELCA.org/disaster).
Host an ELCA Good Gifts fair

Challenge your congregation to re-think traditional gift giving and host an ELCA Good Gifts fair this Christmas. An ELCA Good Gifts fair allows people to honor their loved ones by choosing from over 50 life-changing gifts — everything from oxen to water wells that support people in need all over the world.

Among many resources, the ELCA Good Gifts catalog provides 24 pages worth of different giving opportunities. These gifts are perfect for honoring your friends or loved ones in a way that will truly make a difference.

If you're looking to get your congregation involved, the ELCA Good Gifts Fair Planning Guide is a perfect resource providing step-by-step instructions on how to get started planning your own ELCA Good Gifts Fair.

Order or download your free ELCA Good Gifts Fair Planning Guide by visiting www.ELCA.org/resources.
World AIDS Day is December 1: join together

All People’s Church in Milwaukee, Wisc. promotes HIV AIDS awareness during their Sunday worship service.

Over 30 million people live with HIV worldwide. Whether it is caring for orphans in Malawi or educating people throughout the United States—ELCA World Hunger is committed to accompanying people living with HIV/AIDS.

Join with the global community by organizing a World AIDS Day event in your congregation.

- **Pray.** Commemorate World AIDS Day using litanies, sermon starters, liturgies and other resources from the Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (www.e-alliance.ch).

- **Learn.** Host a screening of “The Lazarus Effect,” a 30-minute documentary that follows the life of four people living with HIV.

- **Serve.** Host a testing event in your community.

- **Advocate.** Hold a “Light for Rights” event by dimming your lights in memory of the effect of AIDS worldwide and turning them back on to illuminate the rights we share.

- **Donate.** Gifts to ELCA World Hunger, designated for “HIV and AIDS,” will be used to support ministries around the world that provide HIV and AIDS care, treatment and prevention. Mail gifts to ELCA World Hunger, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago IL 60694-1764.

A Litany for World AIDS Day

We gather in your name,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We center ourselves in you,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We wait for your coming again,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We give thanks for your promises,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We long for compassion for the sick and needy.
**Let us walk in your light.**

We mourn with the orphaned and the widowed.
**Let us walk in your light.**

We yearn for wholeness for our bodies, hearts and minds,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We grieve for those who have died,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We seek your healing from all disease,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We beg for wisdom for doctors, generosity from corporations, inspiration for scientists, and endurance for care-givers,
**Let us walk in your light.**

We place our lives in your hands; shape us with your purpose,
**Let us walk in your light.**

Download the full litany at www.ELCA.org/aids/worldaidsday.
Resources for January

Order a supply of these resources to pass out and make available throughout the year. These resources are available for free with free shipping. Visit www.ELCA.org/resources or call 800-638-3522.

ELCA WATER BROCHURE

The 100 Wells Challenge may be over but the need for clean water is ongoing. This trifold takes a “next step” approach to addressing the need for clean water around the world. It highlights stories of those whose lives have been impacted by your gifts as well as ways your congregation can get involved.

ELCA WORLD HUNGER BULLETIN INSERT

This double-sided, colorful bulletin insert provides general information about ELCA World Hunger and how gifts are used. It's a perfect, multi-purpose piece to share with your congregation.

Sermon starter | SUNDAY, JANUARY 19

JOHN 1:29-42 The Testimony of John the Baptist

John the Baptist's recognition of Jesus as “the Lamb of God” illustrates a way of seeing and acknowledging that is beyond regular human wisdom. Twice John declares, “I myself did not know him.” But the voice confirms the sign, and John becomes an eye-witness to the identity of Christ. His mission is to point away from himself and toward Christ. We should continually test whether we believe similarly, that the work of God is what we proclaim rather than our own deeds.

Jesus’ first words in this gospel communicate his desire for a way of learning that is not easily distilled in quick lessons or bits of knowledge. His invitation to “come and see” initiates a path to explore discipleship and to gain first-hand knowledge of what God is doing in the world. This invitation addresses a spiritual hunger or poverty we may experience that is no less real than the physical counterpart.

Posters

Three new posters are available to display in a prominent place to show your support for our work through the ELCA Malaria Campaign, Lutheran Disaster Response and ELCA World Hunger. These free posters are available online at www.ELCA.org/resources.
Looking ahead for 2014

Start planning now for how you and your congregation can join with others in the coming year to make a difference in the lives of those struggling with hunger.

STAY INFORMED

• Email hunger@elca.org to sign up for ELCA World Hunger e-news and get access to the latest resources, ideas and stories of our church's work in the world.

EDUCATE

• Show a short video — one or all eight of the ELCA World Hunger Video Series — during a temple talk or adult forum. Visit www.ELCA.org/hunger/video.

ADVOCATE

• ELCA e-Advocacy Alerts. Sign up to receive email alerts about current actions and issues. Visit www.ELCA.org/advocacy.

GIVE

• Make sure you have a good supply of ELCA World Hunger pew offering envelopes available to members. Find envelopes and stories at www.ELCA.org/hunger/stories and www.ELCA.org/resources.

LIVE

• Serve fair-trade tea and coffee for fellowship hour. Instead of disposable cups, consider using reusable mugs or asking people to bring their own.

More information

HOW TO GIVE

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<td><strong>By mail</strong></td>
<td>Make check payable to “ELCA World Hunger,” “Lutheran Disaster Response” or “ELCA Malaria Campaign” and mail to: ELCA, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago IL 60694-1764.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>With a credit card</strong></td>
<td>Make a secure credit card donation by visiting <a href="http://www.ELCA.org/donate">www.ELCA.org/donate</a> or calling 800-638-3522.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>In your will or estate plan</strong></td>
<td>For more information on how you can make a lasting difference by remembering the hungry in your will and estate plan, call the ELCA Foundation at 800-638-3522 or visit <a href="http://www.ELCA.org/foundation">www.ELCA.org/foundation</a>.</td>
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Resources for January (continued)

BECOME A MONTHLY PARTNER

Help provide ongoing support by becoming a Monthly Partner. Your monthly contribution will help provide consistent, ongoing support for the ELCA churchwide ministries that mean the most to you. It’s convenient, it’s simple and it makes a big impact on the mission and ministry of our church. A complimentary calendar highlighting the ELCA’s work will be sent to all of those who sign up to be a Monthly Partner. Visit ELCA.org/monthlypartners to learn more!

REPRODUCIBLE STORIES

Use these real stories in your Sunday bulletins and newsletters to highlight the life-saving work made possible by gifts to ELCA World Hunger, Lutheran Disaster Response and the ELCA Malaria Campaign.
Leading a service project?

Digging In: A Leader’s Guide to Service Learning will guide you through how to make the most of your service learning experience.

Download or order this resource at www.ELCA.org/resources.

ON THE WEB
ELCA World Hunger
www.ELCA.org/hunger
Lutheran Disaster Response
www.ELCA.org/disaster

ELCA Malaria Campaign
www.ELCA.org/malaria
Resources and publications
ELCA.org/resources

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