

# WIDE – our relationship with the world (engaging and serving neighbor and world)

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## RESOURCES

### INTERNET

- **ChurchNext: Grow My Church** <http://churchnext.tv/> Pr. Christ Yaw's (ECUSA) goal is to introduce others to innovative church doers and thinkers whose ideas and stories are so powerful that just hearing them will change us. Video interviews spotlight a diversity of ministries that are flourishing today. The mission of ChurchNext is to help build healthier congregations and to act as a counter-weight to an increasingly secular society that is trying to convince us that the only option for the Christian church today is decline. Interviews cover a wide range of subjects...worship, evangelism, community outreach, and more.
- **CRG (Congregational Resource Guide)**, <http://congregationalresources.org/> A wonderful project of the [Alban Institute](#), and [Lilly Endowment Inc.](#) and a free gift to America's Congregations. The abundance of resources available for congregations and their leaders can be overwhelming. CRG constantly sifts and mines these materials for those that demonstrate a high likelihood for usefulness in congregational life. The site strives to point leaders to materials that can assist congregation's becoming healthy bodies of worship and agents of transformation in their communities. Categories include CARE (for neighbor, congregations, clergy); DISCOVER (education, spirituality, traditions); ENGAGE (congregation, community, future); MANAGE (facilities, technology, finances) WORSHIP (sermons, styles, music). Resources include books, podcasts, programs, links, blogs, etc.
- **ELCA Research and Evaluation**, <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Research-and-Evaluation.aspx> The site includes congregation trend reports, zip code reports, demographic reports and more.
- **FaithFormation2020**, "Connecting Your Church to Your Community: first steps to externally focused ministry;" "Six Catalytic Service Approaches: taking first steps through great days of service"; "Ten Paradigm Shifts Toward Community Transformation: how churches are impacting their communities with the good deeds and Good News of the gospel"; "99 Innovations: creative ideas and resources to engage 100 percent of your church in externally focused service." These articles about engaging the neighbor and the world and others are found on the FaithFormation2020 website. <http://www.faithformation2020.net/service--mission.html>
- **Inter-Faith Funders** <http://www.interfaithfunders.org/index.html> Interfaith Funders (IF) is a network of faith-based and secular grant-makers committed to social change and economic justice. IF works to advance institution-based, congregation-based, and faith-based community organizing. The website includes resources and links, book suggestions, studies and booklets.
- **One Body, Many Members**, <http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Ministry/Multicultural-Ministries/Multicultural-Education/One-Body.aspx> This ELCA web-based resource is designed to equip congregations to reach out and fully welcome persons whose race, culture and class is different than their own. It includes reproducible materials with reflections, Bible Study, and Actions Steps.
- **Talking together as Christians Cross Culturally: A Field Guide** <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Moral-Deliberation.aspx> An ELCA resource that is meant to help with some important dimensions of discussing issues among people of different cultural backgrounds. Used by the Southeastern Synod with clusters of congregations as a tool for outreach.
- **Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism** [www.GraceNet.info](http://www.GraceNet.info) New Faith-Sharing program grounded in a major Lilly Endowment Study used in in 15,000 congregations in 49 denominations. The website includes videos, testimonials, downloads, and best practices for beginning this studied and proven program.
- **Soul café** <http://www.soulcafe.org/home> Soul cafe is an online resource that enables communication and collaboration within the Church. It is a place to initiate ongoing and vital discussions after meetings and event, sharing what works and doesn't work in congregations and ministries, and breaking down "silos" of communication. Soul cafe offers an archive that can be mined to provide insight for solutions to current and future challenges. There is a "High, Deep, and Wide" group at: <http://www.soulcafe.org/group/high-deep-and-wide>

## BOOKS

- **Evangelism for “Normal” People: Good News for Those Looking for a Fresh Approach**, John Bowen, Aug/For. Evangelism is something that all Christians can do as a "normal" part of being a follower of Jesus. From a professor at an Anglican seminary in Toronto comes this witty, wise, and biblically grounded book that challenges in a gentle way. Includes study questions for congregational use.
- **A Story Worth Sharing: Engaging Evangelism**, Kelly Fryer, editor, Aug/For. Explores what God is doing in our lives, church, and communities – and how we can share this story as a natural part of daily life in every place with all people. Each chapter ends with questions for reflection, discussion, and implementation.
- **Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing**, Dennis Jacobsen. An introductory theology of congregation-based community organizing. The book weaves the theological and biblical warrants for community organizing into concrete strategies for achieving justice in the public arena. Designed to be used by congregations and church leaders, it seeks to open new vistas for community action in support of the poor, the disadvantaged, and the disenfranchised of our society.
- **Public Church: For the Life of the World**, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda. This book explores what it means for the ELCA to play a role in public life today. Sections focus on what it means to be a public church, obstacles to being a public church in public life, power for being public church, and providing public leadership.
- **The Company of Strangers: Christians and the Renewal of America’s Public Life**, Parker Palmer. The book offers a compelling vision of a disciplined inward search that strengthens commitment to our communities. A balanced vision of the renewal of public life and how the church can contribute to it.
- **Unbinding the Gospel: Real Life Evangelism**, Martha Grace Reese, Chalice Press. Based on extensive and authoritative research the *Real Life Evangelism Series* provides a helpful guide to mainline evangelism. Users have referred to this book/program as....realistic, clear and direct; but also hopeful, humble and genuinely spiritual. For individual, small group and all church use.

## OTHER

- **Conversation with Community Leaders.** Gain a better understanding of community perceptions and issues by engaging key figures in your community with key questions. A way to better understand community needs and opportunities as well as learn how the church is perceived by the community.
- **Community/Neighborhood Walkabout.** A way to listen to the perceptions of people concerning what is good and what needs exist in your congregation’s immediate context, and a way to demonstrate your church cares about community concerns. It’s only about asking four questions...
- **Easter Egg Tree – Northridge, Kalispell.** Often there are collections for persons in need during Christmas, but for many the needs continue throughout the year. Some Northridge Lutheran members were aware of critical needs for children and teens in the community. During Lent and Easter plastic eggs were placed on a tree along with the “wishes” of children removed from unsafe situations and/or placed in foster care. By Easter the tree was bare and people enjoyed shopping for these children. They were received with great joy and the Kalispell community was grateful.
- **Family Promise/Inter-faith Hospitality Network.** Forty percent of the homeless population in the United States consists of families, and one out of every four homeless persons is a child. In response to this devastating situation, Family Promise seeks "to help homeless and low income families achieve sustainable independence." It provides food, shelter and support services for homeless persons; advocacy on behalf of at-risk families; and education about poverty. This mission through independent affiliates in numerous states. A central part of each affiliate is a network which draws largely on the efforts of participating congregations. The five key elements of the network include hosts, a local day center, volunteers, social service agencies, and transportation. Volunteers may cook meals, help with resume writing, and attend to children. Congregations in Billings, Bozeman, Helena, and Missoula are involved.

- **First Fruits Bus – Malta Lutheran, Malta.** When the Greater Malta Lutheran Parish divided a parsonage was sold and everyone committed to sharing first fruits (10% of the proceeds) for a ministry to the community – a Sunday bus service for Phillips County that transports people to worship services at any local church. Lutherans fully funded this for two years. Now five other congregations have joined in support of this service. Ridership averages 16 elders and physically challenged people. This service is perceived as more than transportation, it is also viewed as care and honor to some of the most vulnerable in the community.
- **FLC offers TLC – First Lutheran, Havre.** Through the part-time assistance of a “Church Life Coordinator” the congregation keeps track of various volunteer opportunities in the community (Food Bank, Soup Kitchen, etc.) but they also track random requests for assistance (mowing lawns for elders, etc.). Contact info and volunteer job descriptions are communicated. A group of volunteers is dispatched monthly to a list of community needs and there are also “on call” opportunities. T-shirts with the FLC (First Lutheran Cares) logo helps communicate to the community that they really do care. The three goals for the Church Life Coordinator position are: to be a visible presence in the community; to introduce members to new opportunities; to create a time of fellowship.
- **Hospitality Teams – Immanuel, Missoula.** “Hospitality Teams” are groupings of congregation members who join forces with each other to accomplish a service of love and care for someone in need. This service is for members but also for people not associated with the congregation. Also involved with Family Promise, Habitat for Humanity and a “Giving Tree” in which we support 24 families with food, quilts (homemade) food vouchers, gifts and hold a Christmas party for them and for us to meet one another
- **Initiating Community Betterment – Zion, Lewistown.** Taking seriously Jesus command to “love your neighbor as yourself” Zion has been the initiator of several community service programs. They sponsored a community concert at the Center for the Performing arts raising several thousand dollars for a community outreach fund run by HRDC; they spearheaded an effort to establish a community health clinic that serves those in need; they were the chief supporter of Parkinson’s disease research funding called “Hands Around Montana”; they serve as the headquarters for the community “Blessings in a Backpack” program benefiting needy school kids; and invest themselves in things like the ELCA “Good Gifts” project, the Montana State Nursing Home, local foodbank, and more.
- **Lifelong Faith and Faith Formation 2020/Lorie Hughes, King of Glory/Billings, Secretary/Historian of LACE (Lutheran Association for Christian Educators.** <http://www.faithformation2020.net/> LifelongFaith Associates is committed to helping congregations develop lifelong faith formation for all ages and generations. Part of this includes the Faith Formation 2020 Initiative <http://www.faithformation2020.net/> This offers the vision, tools, and resources for designing new models, practices, strategies, and activities to address the spiritual and religious needs for today and into the future. Both websites are rich in materials for spiritual formation, discipleship, and outreach. Lots of good stuff on these sites from Roman Catholic educator and innovator John Roberto.
- **One-to-One Relational Meetings and Six Practical Applications,** Susan Engh, Dir. for Congregation-based Organizing, ELCA. This paper introduces congregations to 1-to-1 conversations that can assist them in listening deeply to one another and to their neighbors and context. (available soon on the ELCA website)
- **Shoeman Water Projects and more – Our Savior’s, Broadus.** The Shoeman Water Project <http://www.shoeman.org/> collects used and new shoes and gives them a second life by exporting them to the developing world. The resale of shoes provides jobs and affordable footwear (important protection from foot abrasions, parasites and mites). Funds generated from the export of shoes provides well drilling rigs, water purification systems, and hand pump repair. Our Savior’s/Broadus does this project with other local congregations. They value connecting to their community through supporting St. Vincent thrift store, providing food and gifts for youth at Pine Hills Correctional Facility, the local nursing home, assisting during the fire crisis, and more.
- **The Power of Invitation – Whitewater Lutheran, Whitewater.** The women's group of Whitewater Lutheran observed some younger farm wives around their community, and decided to reach out to them. They invited these women to a Bible-and-Faith-Related Book Study/Discussion. They thought only a few would come to their first gathering, but to their delight 22 younger women attended!
- **ELCA Good Gifts Catalog.** Available on the ELCA website. It offers more than 50 different giving options from chicks that help families escape poverty to scholarships to help young leaders attend seminary. Great for Sunday Schools, youth groups, individual members and small groups.