



**OUR MISSION:** Empower, equip and encourage the people of God to make Christ known

## ***Spirit filled. Spirit sent.***

*(Theme, 2016 IN-KY Synod Assembly)*

Among other things, the month of May is graduation season. Our little family experienced it's power and joy when our son, Nathan, graduated from Valparaiso University on Pentecost Sunday. Spending the day with him and watching him walk across that stage to receive his diploma folder and shake hands with VU's president, Mark Heckler, was emotional, heart-swelling, and joyous. We are so grateful for and proud of Nathan. And grateful for the ways in which the Valpo community embraced him, equipped him, and formed him and, in that moment, sent him out for the next stage of his baptismal journey.

A few days after graduation day, I saw a fairly close-up photo of Nathan's handshake with President Heckler, snapped by a friend of Nathan's. I could see the joyful gleam in President Heckler's eyes and the happy determination in Nathan's. Powerful emotions rose again for me as I gazed at the look between the two.

And then, later, my brain made a weird connection, perhaps because Nathan's commencement occurred on the day of Pentecost. Apart from the fact that both Nathan and President Heckler were wearing robes, that photo triggered memories of all those times that, bedecked in my own liturgical robes, I have stood at the door at the end of worship to shake the hands of every worshipper as they head out the door.

I am sure you know or have experienced this time-honored tradition. Often this moment in the doorway or narthex includes some version of "Good sermon" or "How are you doing?" It might also include a prayer request or an update on someone's situation or the introduction of a visitor.

This is all good, of course. Yet, I wonder, how might that moment at the door be different if it were a little more like the moment between Nathan and his university president on the commencement stage? What if that liturgical handshake were actually understood to be part of the sending rite?

After all, in worship God's Spirit embraces, equips, forms, and sends us for the next steps in our baptismal journey with Jesus. We carry our diplomas in the mark of the cross on our brow and we don't just leave worship, we are sent. That moment is it's own form of commencement, another beginning in living the new life of Jesus in the world.

Looking carefully, as I shake the hands of worshippers across this territory I can see in their – in your – eyes both a sense of readiness and confidence that you have received what you need and a little nervousness at the challenge of the task ahead. But, thanks be to God, you are energized and ready to go. So stride across the stage and go! Use the gifts you've been given through water and Word, bread and wine, and the fellowship of the body of Christ to share the new, abundant, and lasting life of Jesus with the world that is looking desperately for what you have been given.

Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

+ Bishop Bill Gafkjen



### **Great News from Portico Benefit Services**

For the second year in a row, more than 65% (76% to be exact) of eligible plan members and spouses across the ELCA took the Mayo Clinic health assessment by April 30. That means every ELCA congregation, synod office, campus ministry, conference center, camp, seminary, and churchwide ministry again earned Portico's health discount, saving 1% on their ELCA health contributions for the entire year, which totals \$1.25 million collectively across the ELCA. In addition, 22% have already completed the GO! Challenge and earned an additional \$250. That brings the total value of Portico's wellness incentive program so far this year to \$3.43 million.

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## 2016 I-K Synod Assembly Information

We will soon gather together at the Indiana-Kentucky Synod Assembly in South Bend, IN. Here is some information that will assist you as you prepare to join us at the Century Center, June 9-11, 2016.

The list of Friday Spark Talks and Breakout sessions has now been posted on the I-K Synod website. You can view the list ahead of time by [clicking here](#). A printed copy will also be included in the registration packets.

You do not need to download or print off your Eventbrite ticket to bring with you to the I-K Synod Assembly. Any pre-purchased box lunch tickets will be included with your name tag when you check-in at the Synod Assembly.

If you are bringing donated items for the LWR Personal Care Kits service project, those items can be dropped off in the main lobby of the Century Center when you come to check-in at the Synod Assembly. We will need all of the items dropped off by Friday morning, in order to prepare for the service project that will assemble each kit on Friday afternoon (see Breakout list for more information).

Calling All Singers. The Assembly Choir at the June Synod Assembly in South Bend will sing two anthems at the Gathering Eucharist. "The Old Hundreth Psalm Tune", arranged by R Vaughn Williams is published by Oxford University Press, and can be found on [this website](#). "Gracious Spirit Swell with Me", arranged by K Lee Scott is part of the Augsburg Choral Library, and can be found [here](#). If you would like to sing with the Assembly Choir, please purchase a copy of the music and bring it with you to the Assembly. Also, please let Karen Russell, the choir director (at [Lutheranpenguin@att.net](mailto:Lutheranpenguin@att.net)) know of your desire to be part of the choir and whether you are SATorB.

If you have not yet checked out the Bulletin of Reports, it is your guide to the 2016 I-K Synod Assembly. All documents can be [found here](#), and you can also download the entire file to save to your computer, tablet, etc. Limited wifi will be available at the Century Center, but it will be helpful to download and save it ahead of time, or print the documents you will want to have on hand.

We look forward to seeing you on June 9th at the Century Center!

*In Peace,  
Rev. Heather Apel*



October 31, 2017, will mark the 500th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation, which is an opportunity for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) to bear witness to the hope and joy we have through Jesus Christ. Many people will be asking about the significance of what happened 500 years ago when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses. This action started a dialogue that changed the way we receive and share the gospel which continues today. This anniversary is an opportunity to communicate the Lutheran Reformation's significance for faith and life in the 21st Century and the freedom we have in Christ that liberates us to joyfully serve our neighbors.

Leading up to 2017, all ELCA members are encouraged to plan and participate in activities that prepare for this milestone anniversary. These activities will allow us to give thanks for the word's power to free, renew and unite all creation in Christ. At the same time it will provide an opportunity to emphasize the continuing work of reconciliation in the Christian church with our ecumenical partners.

### FEATURED EVENT - 2016 GRACE GATHERING

An event held in conjunction with the 2016 ELCA Churchwide Assembly to inspire and equip leaders for local Reformation anniversary observances held in New Orleans, LA, August 10-13, 2016. [ELCA500.org/grace-gathering](http://ELCA500.org/grace-gathering)

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## Children's Day at LOMIK

Children's Day happens at each camp (Lutheran Hills, Lutherwald and Lake Luther) on SATURDAY, JUNE 11 from 10 am-2 pm. It our annual OPEN HOUSE for campers and families who are registered for summer camp--and those considering registering for summer camp--where you can meet your counselor, see the cabin you'll be staying in, and see what camp is about. For more information on this camp and all the Lutheran Outdoor Ministry camps, Please [click here!](#)



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## Report Deadline

Parochial Reports forms A and C must be submitted by May 31 in order to be included in the annual summary. If you have not submitted your report please do so, if you need your password to submit on line or a hard copy of the reports please contact April Lynch ([alynch@iksynod.org](mailto:alynch@iksynod.org)) This report will no longer be available after June 6, 2016.