



Lutheran Association of Christian Educators

TIPS IN EDUCATION

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1 — WINTER 2011

Effective Christian Education

This issue of *TIPS in Education* focuses on effective faith formation and provides some discussion documents created by the LACE Executive Board and others.

Faith Formation or lifelong Christian education sits at the core of congregational life. Christian education has the potential to renew congregational life and reverse downward membership trends, but many congregations do not use the wide range of tools available for effective Christian education.

Recently, Lifelong Faith Associates, led by John Roberto, has published a report called "Faith Formation 2020." The document, a result of research and ecumenical consultations, summarizes major trends in faith formation for the next decade. In the introduction Roberto states, "The last two decades have seen dramatic political, economic, social, and cultural changes affecting virtually every dimension of American Christianity. The new environment in which Christian faith formation will operate in the decade from 2010-2020 will demand new thinking and new models, practices, resources, and technologies to address the spiritual needs of all generations." With many Christian educators already struggling to provide quality ministry because of deficiencies in training, underfunding, and lack of support, Roberto's study is a wake-up call to action. Christian education needs to be revitalized in our congregations in order to carry out our call to discipleship.

In response, the Lutheran Association of Christian Educators National Board created standards, guidelines, and assessment tools for congregations to use in evaluating their programs. We are asking for your feedback by going to the LACE web site and posting your comments in a forum section or you may email your comments to lanceordinator@faithfulteaching.org. The leadership team is eager to receive input from our members!

Mission:

To support Christian Educators

Vision:

To create a community for energizing and inspiring ELCA Christian Educators for their work through:

- ♦ Providing resources and Education Opportunities
- ♦ Facilitating Communication
- ♦ Offering venues for idea sharing and support
- ♦ Nurturing Spiritual Growth

In This Issue:

Thoughts From Our President	2
Standards and Guidelines: Rationale and Definition	3
Characteristics of Effective Faith Formation Ministries	4
Outcomes of Effective Faith	6
LACE National Board	8
2010 Report from the President	9
Resource Review: The Teaching Church	10
A Devotion from our Chaplain	11

LACE Executive Board

Dr. Diane Shallue, AiM President

Univ. Lutheran Church of Hope
Minneapolis, MN
deshallue@msn.com

Char Leone VP for Membership

St. Marks by the Narrows
Tacoma, Washington
charleneleone1@aol.com

Debbie Streicher VP for Communications

Abiding Presence Lutheran Church
Burke, VA
dstreicher@faithink.com

Lorie Hughes Secretary-Historian

King of Glory Lutheran Church
Billings, MT
l.hughes@montana.net

Teresa Kaldor Acting Financial Secretary & Past President

Calvary Lutheran Church
San Diego, CA
tkkaldor@yahoo.com

Catherine Puisto Coordinator

McFarland, WI
lanceordinator@faithfulteaching.org

Lutheran Association of Christian Educators

P.O. Box 345
McFarland WI 53558
Phone: 608.514.8441





**Lutheran Association
of Christian Educators**

“By providing some concrete guidelines and resources, LACE will be able to help congregations and Christian educators”



Diane Shallue serves as the Director

of Christian Education and Small Group Ministries at University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is also an adjunct instructor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, and is just beginning her term as LACE President.

PAGE 2

Thoughts From Our President

While standing in line to register at a Synod Assembly, I chatted with a younger woman behind me. She had recently been recruited by the pastor to run the Sunday School program but felt like she really did not know what she was doing. She was happy to get my name and number and we had lunch that summer to discuss tasks and issues around choosing curriculum; recruiting and training teachers; working on budgets; and guiding the faith formation of children and families. She telephoned me a couple of times during the next program year for advice and suggestions. I was glad that I could provide support and resources and mentor her in this important task of faith formation.

One of the current realities in many ELCA congregations is that a member of the congregation is often hired for a part-time position of 10 to 20 hours a week to coordinate Sunday School or children’s ministry. Over time, the hours and responsibilities of these staff persons are increased but no training is provided. They learn “on-the-job” in order to keep the Sunday School and other educational programs in the congregation functional. They do not have foundational, theological, or pedagogical training. They do not know the most effective methods for teaching the faith nor for organizing and administering an educational program in a congregation.

Another challenge is that more and more adults are biblically illiterate, making it even more difficult to support parents in teaching the faith at home. In addition, working with adults to help them grow in faith or develop their own faith practices takes special skills and intentionality.

Therefore, LACE is working to promote effective faith formation ministries in congregations through a two-step approach. The initial thrust will be to create a description of effective faith formation practices. In addition, standards for excellence will be developed for the vocation of Christian educator. While there may be documents of this type existing in local situations, there are no national guidelines that have been proposed within the ELCA. By providing some concrete guidelines and resources, LACE will be able to help congregations and Christian educators better identify their needs, evaluate their programs, and make appropriate changes.

The second step is to design and implement a peer coaching system which can be replicated across the country, to identify and nurture effective leadership skills in Christian educators. Again, no systematic program like this is in place within the ELCA. However, peer coaching programs have been shown to be successful in many other areas.

This will be an evolving ongoing process with feedback being used to improve the documents in a continuous fashion for a period of time. We invite you to join LACE in creating these documents to help those working in the field.

Diane E Shallue

Diane Shallue, Ed.D., AiM
LACE President

LACE Communications Team and TIPS Editorial Board

Justin Kosec—Editor

Char Leone—Associate Editor

Editorial Board: Natalie Bloomquist, Edie Eickmeyer, Kathye Hamm, Lorie Hughes, Debbie Streicher, and Diana Welty Zapf

Debbie Streicher, LACE Vice-President for Communications

Visit the LACE website:

<http://www.faithfulteaching.org>

Now with new resources for members, online membership renewal, past issues of the Tips in Education newsletter, and much more.

Standards and Guidelines: Rationale & Definitions

Rationale

The purpose of establishing a list of standards and guidelines is to improve educational ministries in congregations in the ELCA in order that faith formation of all ages is effective at transforming minds and hearts so that more members of our congregations will have a mature, vital faith.

The Lutheran Association of Christian Educators hopes that congregational leaders in all roles can stretch and improve their skills and foundational knowledge by implementing these standards and guidelines. We hope to build a supportive network among these leaders and to recognize the training and skills of persons serving as educational leaders in congregations—whether or not these leaders are paid staff in their congregations.

Definitions

Christian education is at the very heart of lifelong faith formation. In the educational process, the Spirit of God encounters people of all ages so that they are nurtured in faith; grow in knowledge and experience; and are inspired and empowered to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. This call to discipleship compels us to share our faith and serve others in the home, the community, and in God's world.

Christian education has a learning component and a practice component. Christian education can be formal or informal, explicit or implicit.

Faith formation occurs wherever Christians are gathered and whenever people talk about God and God's activity in the world.

Key Assumptions

(Adapted from *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage*, by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain)

- ◆ Christian education is for all ages and is a lifelong process.
- ◆ Christian education engages and transforms the whole person.
- ◆ Christian education is not just transferring information to another person.
- ◆ Good teachers need training.
- ◆ Christian education needs to be integrated with the home, the whole life of the congregation, the community, and God's world.
- ◆ God shapes disciples through worship, service, relationships, and learning

Key Scriptures:

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28: 19-20

The gifts he (Jesus) gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelist, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 11-14

The Definition of Christian Education is taken from the ELCA website and adapted for use by LACE.

The Key Assumptions are adapted with permission from Eugene C. Roehlkepartain.

The LACE Executive Board met in October 2010 in Minneapolis to create the initial documents on Standards and Guidelines. Jodi Hanson from SELECT Learning Resources along with Dr. Dawn Alitz, adjunct instructor of Christian Education and Children, Youth, and Family courses were also present.

Characteristics of Effective Faith Formation Ministries



As we evaluate the effectiveness of our Christian education ministry, we should ask ourselves if our programs have the following characteristics:

1. **Invitational:** Do we reach out to all types of people, including the stranger? Do we foster a spirit of hospitality within our classrooms and activities which welcome and encourage all to participate?
2. **Grounded:** Is our ministry solidly based in Scripture? In Lutheran theology? In current faith formation theories? Do we connect biblical knowledge with major milestones in people's lives?
3. **Reflective:** Do we link experiences with reflection—why are we involved in faith formation? Who are we in that journey? What is God saying to us in this time and place? How does what we do matter? Do we spend time reflecting on the purpose, goals, and objectives of our ministry?
4. **Spiritual:** Is the Trinity invited into the process from the beginning? Do we recognize that we are only the tools through which God works? Do we actively seek God's direction and vision for our ministry? Do our teachers have a sense of calling or vocation? Do they have a high faith maturity? Do we provide them with ways to deepen their spiritual lives?
5. **Educational:** Do we know and use the most innovative learning practices available rather than rely on outdated models? Do we train our teachers in educational theory and practices? Does the pastor understand and support current trends in education?
6. **Intergenerational or "cross generational":** The church continues to be one of the few areas in our society where all ages come together. Do we provide opportunities for generations to gather together and learn from each other? Do we engage parents in meaningful ways and provide them with tools to nurture faith in the home?
7. **Integrative:** Is faith formation intentionally woven throughout the life of the church? Do people see it as something practiced outside of church? Do the pastor and church leadership understand the importance of Christian Education to the life of the church and support its growth?
8. **Lifelong:** Are programs in place to nurture faith from prenatal through death? Are there entry points for new Christians all along the way?
9. **Transformational:** Are ministry programs focused on changing the way people live out their lives or on rote memorization and head knowledge? Do we encourage independent, critical thinking and questioning?
10. **Relational:** How do we encourage and support people seeking a deeper relationship with Christ? How do we foster the development of relationships among God's people within our programs? Do our teachers care about their students?

Characteristics continued from previous page

Do we build a spirit of cooperation and teamwork among our volunteers?

11. **Represents diversity:** Do we take into consideration the social, cultural, ethnic, age, and gender differences in our communities? How do we meet diverse needs? How do we lift up and celebrate the blessings that each group brings to the greater whole?
12. **Explores current technology:** Do we actively seek out how to use the latest innovations to reach out to others and share the Good News?
13. **Focuses outward for the sake of the world:** Do we encourage God's people and provide opportunities to put their faith into action in their community, work, school, country, and world? Do we develop meaningful service learning opportunities that include time for feedback and reflection?
14. **Empowering:** Are we forming disciples who in turn will teach others? Are we helping people to identify their gifts to use in their vocations? Do we recognize and show our appreciation for those who serve in our ministry?
15. **Intentionality:** Do we have an established planning process in place with learning objectives, goals, and purpose? Do we take the time to evaluate and assess needs, execution, and outcomes? Understanding that the Holy Spirit may work in every situation, do we take the time to structure activities that promote faith conversations, both formal and informal?

Room for Further Conversation

We encourage you to think about Christian education programming using these fifteen characteristics as starting points. But these are by no means definitive. Honestly consider the strengths and weaknesses of these guidelines in your context: Do these cover the main aspects of effective Christian Education? How should these ideas be expanded? Is there one of these that particularly resonates with you? Do you have examples or experiences that you would like to share? If these are the characteristics of an effective faith formation program, how do you think a person might be best prepared to be a leader in Christian Education? Share your thoughts with us at <http://www.faithfulteaching.org>



These characteristics were identified at a LACE Executive Board meeting in October 2010. We invite you to comment on the characteristics listed.

The Executive Board met in October 2010. Pictured above: Diane Shallue, Catherine Puisto, Carolyn Steinfeldt, Debbie Streicher, Teresa Kaldor, and Lorie Hughes

Writers Needed!

Each of these 15 characteristics will have a one page description. The Executive Board is looking for 15 LACE members to each write a draft description for each characteristics to be reviewed and revised at the National Board meeting on April 27.

If you are interested in writing about one of these characteristics, please contact Catherine Puisto at

[lacecoordinator@faithfulteaching.org](mailto:lancecoordinator@faithfulteaching.org)



Outcomes of Effective Faith Formation

This provides a tool for congregations to use to evaluate their program. A checklist will be created to help educational leaders assess their programs.

When we see an effective program, we see that:

1. All ages can name and claim God's activity within their lives. People can connect their personal story to God's story and see God working in their lives.
2. People have an ongoing journey with God that is life-giving and invitational.
3. People know God's story and the story of their Lutheran heritage.
4. People have a strong sense of community and belonging.
5. People build a relationship with God and others.
6. People feel passion, joy, & enthusiasm for their faith life.
7. Christian Education grows disciples.



Timetable for the Standards/ Guidelines Initial Process

- ◆ Creation of Winter TIPS in Education Newsletter with draft copies of documents: February 2011
- ◆ Solicitation of LACE members input: February: March 2011
- ◆ Documents and input discussed at LACE National Board Meeting on April 26-28, 2011 in Minneapolis, MN.
- ◆ Revised draft mailed out to interested parties and posted for comments: May 2011
- ◆ Identification of training components to develop effective leaders: Fall 2011
- ◆ Begin three pilot projects: Winter 2012

Comments are requested!

Your input is needed!

Please email comments to



lacecoordinator@faithfulteaching.org

OR

Go to www.faithfulteaching.org and click the tab at the top titled "Key Topics" to join the forum and add feedback.

Book of Faith Jubilee April 29-May 1

Don't miss the Book of Faith Jubilee from April 29 – May 1. Gather with other LACE members and Christian educators from around the country to explore the theme of **“Inspiring Everyday People to Engage the Bible.”**

The four dynamic keynote speakers are :

Nadia Bolz-Weber, pastor, House for All Sinners and Saints, Denver, CO.

Craig Koester, Professor of New Testament, Luther Seminary

John Roberto, President and Founder, Lifelong Faith Associates

Jessica Duckworth, Associate Professor of Christian Formation and Teaching, Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C.

Additionally conference attendees will choose from many great additional workshops. For more information and a full list of sessions, see the Luther Seminary website at www.luthersem.edu/judilee.

Registration is online. Registration fees are \$225 per person (includes three lunches) and \$175 per person for groups of two or more from a congregation who register together (includes three lunches per person). This is for over two days of knowledge and inspiration.

Contact your Synodical Book of Faith Advocate to see if there is money available for you to attend. Invite two or more other leaders from your congregation to go with you for the discounted rate or find other LACE members to register with you for the discounted rate.

The LACE National Board will be meeting before this event from April 26-28 and many of them will be attending this Book of



book of faith

Open Scripture. Join the Conversation.

Faith Jubilee. LACE will also be hosting a table in the display area. Please stop at the table and greet other LACE members who are gathered there.

A couple of bonus LACE events are connected to this event:

- ◆ A LACE dinner on Friday night to honor the 2010 recipient of the LACE Educator of the Year award. Each person will pay for their own meal.
- ◆ A second presentation by John Roberto, free for LACE members, on Sunday night, May 1, after the conference at University Lutheran Church of Hope near Luther Seminary. Car pools can be arranged to attend this event.

Please make reservations for the dinner and the second presentation by John Roberto with Catherine Puisto, LACE Coordinator, by calling 608-514-8441 or email her at lanceoordinator@faithfulteaching.org

Breaking News!

You will be able to register for one day only for \$100 which includes lunch. This is at the door.

Also if you register in advance with two or more people **even if you are not from the same congregation**, you can get the discounted rate. This is a great deal for LACE members.

What participants had to say about the 2009 Jubilee:

"I want to come away from a conference being inspired and excited to lead. This is what happened at the Book of Faith Jubilee. The combination of qualities in the main presenters (gifted theologians, engaging, love people, love God and humility) are what I hope to inspire me as a leader. Being in the atmosphere of those same qualities shared by presenters and participants alike made it an excellent experience. Thank you!"

"Thanks for the opportunity and the inspiration. We came back fired up to make a difference, to try some new things and we were affirmed in many of the things that we are already doing."

"I was equipped in ways I am only beginning to realize. The event in its entirety was life-changing and affirming of what truly matters, of whose we are and the importance of sharing that good news."

"It was a great learning experience! As a lay person, I felt privileged and humbled to be around so many seminary professors and pastors."

LACE National Board 2011

Executive Board

President	Diane Shallue, AiM Blaine, MN	deshallue@msn.com
VP for Membership	Char Leone Fircrest, WA	charleneleone1@aol.com
VP for Communications	Debbie Streicher Springfield, VA	dstreicher@faithink.com
Acting Financial Secretary & Past President	Teresa Kaldor San Diego, CA	tkkaldor@yahoo.com
Secretary-Historian	Lorie Hughes Billings, MT	l.hughes@montana.net
Coordinator	Catherine Puisto McFarland, WI	Office Phone: 608-514-8441 lacecoordinator@faithfulteaching.org

Representatives

Region 1	Ingelaurie Lisher, AiM Tacoma, WI	ingelaurie@smlutheran.org
Region 2	Kathye Hamm Roseville, CA	kathye@surwest.net
Region 3	Kara Larson Brooklyn Center, MN	klarson@prairielutheran.org
Region 4	Rev. Cynthia Schnaath Kansas City, KS	cschnaath@css-elca.org
Region 5	Cheryl Holloway De Forest, WI	cherylholloway@charter.net
Region 6	Ed Seykowski Valparaiso, IN	edseykow@juno.com
Region 7	Rev. Paul Lutz Princeton Junction, NJ	paullutz@popnj.org
Region 8	TBD	
Region 9	Andrew More, AiM Columbia, SC	andrewdad65@aol.com
Chaplain	Carolyn Steinfeldt, AiM Huron, OH	csteinfeldt@zionsandusky.org
Augsburg Fortress Liaison	Kay Neubauer Mitchell, SD	kay.neubauer@augzburgfortress.org

2010 Report from the President

The Lutheran Association of Christian Educators has worked to energize, inspire, and nurture those involved in faith formation across the life span. LACE is now seven years old, having officially incorporated in September of 2003. Here are some of the accomplishments of 2010.

In 2010, we launched a whole new website with the help of Trout Technologies in White Bear, Minnesota. Our new website, www.faithfulteaching.org, has information about upcoming events and resources, a place to discuss topics of interest, and access to a LACE membership directory. Thanks to the Communications Committee chaired by Debbie Streicher for this great resource for LACE members.

In the past year, the quality of the monthly E-news has improved with more resources divided into categories such as children, youth and adult. The quarterly printed resource, *TIPS In Education*, just keeps getting better and better thanks to the editorial direction of Char Leone in Tacoma, Washington, and Justin Kosec in New Haven, Connecticut. The last issue of the year with a focus on the special needs of children was outstanding.

Catherine Puisto, our LACE Coordinator, began her work for LACE in March of 2010 after a national search. We had over 16 applicants for this 15-hour-a-week position. Catherine maintains the membership database, handles LACE mailings and answers questions. She is a great asset to the work of LACE.

Karen Seykowski of Valparaiso, Indiana, was chosen as the 2009 LACE Educator of the Year in early 2010 and received her award of \$300 and a lovely plaque. Karen is currently serving as a volunteer at Christ Lutheran Church in Valparaiso where she has been instrumental in bringing a fresh approach to Christian education for students of all ages. She also served on the Christian Education team for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod where she and her team developed the *Faith Formation Handbook* for parish educators who work in the trenches.

A draft statement of Standards and Guidelines for Effective Faith Formation was created at the Executive Board meeting in October in Minneapolis. The goal of this document is to help congregations assess their programs so that they can build on their strengths and encourage leaders to improve their skills. You will hear more about this in 2011.

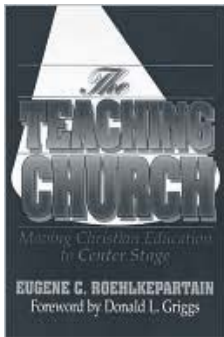
Financial stability is a challenge for a newer organization like LACE. The National Board awarded grant money to help support our ministry. We are thankful to these Synods who provided grants to LACE: Montana Synod, Pacifica Synod, Southeastern Minnesota Synod, Central States Synod, Metropolitan Washington DC Synod, and the Sierra Pacific Synod. In addition we received a grant from Zion Lutheran in Sandusky, Ohio, and from the ELCA to support the work of LACE.

In 2011, LACE will continue to provide resources, networking opportunities, training, and encouragement for Christian educators across the ELCA. Contact your regional representative to find out how you can be more involved.

Submitted respectfully by Dr. Diane E. Shallue, president

“In 2011, LACE will continue to provide resources, networking opportunities, training, and encouragement for Christian educators across the ELCA.”





**Review written by
Teresa Kaldor**



Teresa Kaldor is a volunteer Christian Education Team Leader involved in lifelong learning for all ages at Calvary Lutheran Church in Solana Beach (San Diego), California. Teresa is LACE's Christian Educator of the Year for 2008. She serves as Acting Financial Secretary for LACE and serves on the LACE Executive Board as Past-President.

Resource Review: The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage

The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage (Abingdon Press, 1993), by Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, is a must read for congregational leaders working in faith formation. Based on the Effective Christian Education study completed by the Search Institute in the late 1980's, the conclusions drawn by the author are as valid today as they were almost 20 years ago. *And that is a scary thing.*

In an introductory foreword, Donald Griggs, a well-respected educator out of the Presbyterian Church, writes, "Christian education for mainline Protestant congregations is at a crossroads. At this moment in history, it is not clear which path churches will choose. Will they continue with 'business as usual'? Or will they decide to raise Christian education to a higher priority?" (9). Unfortunately, for a variety of reasons, it seems that most of us have chosen "business as usual" or are still sitting at the crossroads, wondering which way to go.

The premise for the study was that a congregation's primary goal was to nurture in people "a vibrant, life-changing faith – the kind of faith that shapes a person's way of being, thinking, and acting" (19). Research with over 11,000 people in mainline denominations led to four main conclusions. First, Christians in the U.S. have, for the most part, a passive faith. Second, Christian education is "*the most important vehicle within congregational life*" for growing people's faith (*emphasis mine*). Third, most churches do not have an effective Christian education ministry. Fourth, changes can be made to improve the situation in most churches. Interestingly, researchers also discovered that an individual's faith maturity had a strong correlation with commitment to a local church and denomination.

Roehlkepartain cautions that his book is not really a one-size how-to-book; its purpose is to help congregations reflect on their ministry and take steps to make it more effective in its particular setting. In fact, he states, "The study found no correlation between numerous programs and effective Christian education" (72). In other words, what matters is not what program you run, but that the program you run is well-designed and executed.

The book is full of relevant information. In the first section of the book, Roehlkepartain discusses myths that get in the way of effective Christian education and then describes a mature faith. Successive chapters focus on characteristics of congregations that promote faith development (warm climate, quality of worship, etc.); managing and evaluating Christian education ministry; training leaders; nurturing faith in families; and improving involvement in programs. Worksheets and checklists are provided for congregational evaluation and charts and study statistics are provided throughout.

While a great book to read for personal growth, I highly encourage Christian education team members, lay, and rostered staff to read the book together, discuss its relevancy to their church, and work together to move Christian Education "to center stage."

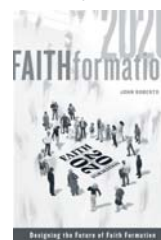
Used in combination with the LACE standards and guidelines, this book remains a valuable resource for Christian education leaders.

Other resources to check out:

The Church As Learning Community: A Comprehensive Guide to Christian Education, by Norma Cook Everist, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press (2002).

Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education by Charles R. Foster, Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press (1994).

Faith Formation 2020: Designing the Future of Faith Formation by John Roberto (2010)



LACE-Sponsored Events

“A Little Child Shall Lead Them: The Advent and Event of Parenting as Spiritual Journey”

Presenter: Dr. Dawn Alitz.

Region 3: St. Paul, MN

Time and Place: March 10, 10:00-11:30 a.m., Luther Seminary Campus Center Auxiliary Dining Room

This presentation will explore the theological implications of becoming a parent by listening to the faith expressions and desires of adults who are experiencing this life stage. The study looked at expectant and/or new parents in six different Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) congregations to explore how they experience parenthood in terms of religious relationships can flourish and creating the opportunity for vital and relevant faith practices. Dawn received her Master’s and PhD from Luther Seminary, where she has also served as an adjunct instructor of Christian Education and Children, Youth and Family courses.

“Envisioning the Future of Faith Formation”

Presenter: John Roberto, Lifelong

Region 3: St. Paul, MN

Time and Place: May 1, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m., University Lutheran Church of Hope, 601 13th Avenue SE, Minneapolis, MN

Cost: free for LACE members; others, \$10 at door

What could congregational faith formation look like in 2020? How can congregations prepare for the future of faith formation and address peoples’ diverse spiritual and religious needs? What are hopeful signs and promising innovations that can guide faith formation for all ages and generations?

We know the first decade of the 21st century has brought dramatic political, economic, social and cultural changes that affect virtually every dimension of American religious life. Faith formation in 2020 will require new principles, models, approaches, and technologies. First, this presentation will review eight driving forces influencing faith formation (social, cultural, religious, demographic, economic, technological) and the diversity of spiritual and religious needs of people and communities today. Second, it presents four scenarios for envisioning the future of faith formation in churches. Third, the presentation suggests practical strategies, ideas, innovations, and resources for targeting the spiritual and religious needs of people in all four scenarios.



Carolyn Steinfeldt, AiM, serves as LACE Chaplain. She is Director of Faith Formation at Zion Lutheran Church in Sandusky, Ohio.

Devotion: by Carolyn Steinfeldt

... for truly I (Jesus) tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, “Move from here to there,” and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you.

—Matthew 17:20

I recently came across the following statement: “Faith may move mountains, but don’t be surprised if God hands you the shovel.” As Christian educators, how often do we feel we’ve been handed a shovel? Our to-do lists are long and soon we are so busy meeting day-to-day demands that we lose sight of why we do what we do. We pick up the shovel and dig away at VBS, Rally Day, Christmas programs, Sunday School... all important ministries. But do we share our shovels with others? It is sometimes easier to dig holes ourselves than it is to find others to join us in the

trenches. But, in doing so, we are denying others the joy of finding their own gifts of service in God’s community. As we look at standards and guidelines for Christian educators and as your congregational ministries plan for the future, keep in mind that sharing our shovels is an important part of our ministries. And, if we take seriously Jesus’ promise that even a tiny amount of faith can move mountains, then we can know that the work we do will not be in vain! Blessings for the work you do.

Lord, help us remember you are in the trenches with us, and that your shovel is never too big or heavy, because you are there to hold the handle with us. Give us insight, energy, and courage to do what you will us to do. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen





Lutheran Association of Christian Educators

P.O. Box 345

McFarland WI

Phone: (608) 514-8441

Email:

lacecoordinator@faithfulteaching.org

*Invite someone
serving as a
Christian educator
to join LACE*

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
McFARLAND WI
PERMIT # 6

Who are we? The role of a Christian educator

Christian educators have many roles in a congregation, many different job titles, and many different job descriptions. Yet we all have one thing in common: we share the calling to be leaders. We may work with children or youth or adults or groups of many ages. We may serve part time or full time, but we truly become a leader when we realize that the heart of leadership in the church is a response to God's call to serve.

In *The Teaching Church: Moving Christian Education to Center Stage*, Eugene Roehlkepartain states, "Whether they're teachers or pastors or Christian education directors, leaders play a critical role in restructuring Christian education. And for significant change to occur, leaders must do away with common assumptions about their own roles" (191).

Roehlkepartain goes on to say, "There appears to be a widespread assumption that Christian education is about new knowledge and children. And until we shift our thinking to understand Christian education as 'discovering what it means to be Christian in this time and place,' it is unlikely that Christian education will be central to the life of the church." His research shows that our most important role is to develop life long learners who are continually rediscovering what it means to be a Christian. That is a challenging task and will take leaders who not only pray, plan, and prepare but who know where to find resources and have a supportive network of Christian educators.