

# faith formation resources

## study - 1 John 4:7-21

The message of God's love is universal. God loves you and calls us to love others. Love is faith in action as it keeps Jesus' commandment that we should love one another as he has loved us. 1 John insists that we cannot believe in Jesus Christ without feeling the love of God and in turn, sharing that same love of God.

*\*This Bible study could be used during Sunday school, small group, opening devotions, council or committee meetings, youth groups. Read the passage through once aloud to the group and then have folks read through it a second time silently. Discuss any or all of the following questions.*

- What catches your attention from the reading?
- What does the passage say about God?
- What does it say about the people of God?
- What questions does it raise for you?
- What good news do you hear?
- How do you respond to God's love for you?
- How does your faith community show love to your sisters and brothers?
- How does your faith community show love to your neighbors and strangers?
- What does this passage say about relationship?
- How does this passage connect with being the church for the sake of the world?

## interact

Set up an interactive prayer station in your Narthex, Fellowship Hall, or Sanctuary.

Find or draw a map of your community. It could be the area surrounding your church or your whole town. Make sure key places that all ages will know are included in the map (i.e. schools, parks, the library, nursing homes, social services, etc.).

Invite participants to stop by the table to offer prayers for your community. This could be done through placing a battery-powered tea light candle on the place when the person offers a prayer or it could be done by writing prayers on post-it notes. Colored circle stickers could also be used by placing on the map when prayers are offered.

Throughout the coming weeks add a map of Nebraska. A week or two later add a map of the USA. A few weeks later add a map of the world. Invite people to think about what being the church for the sake of the world means.

## engage

Be sure to check out the organizations or ideas below to engage in church for the sake of the world:

CROP Hunger Walk:  
<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/>

"God's Work.Our Hands." Sunday  
<https://www.elca.org/dayofservice>

ELCA Good Gifts  
<https://community.elca.org/elcagoodgifts>

## reflect

- +What words or phrases come to mind when you see the photograph below?
- +What do you think of first when hearing the word relationship?
- +What feelings do those relationships evoke?
- +What is easy about relationships? What is hard?
- +How do you reflect relationships out into the world? What is the importance of relationships?
- +What would it look like for you to be in relationships for the sake of the world?



## relationship for the sake of the world

This is the first of our quarterly newsletters this year that we pray will inspire your congregation and community to reflect on this year's theme in the Nebraska Synod: "We are Church for the Sake of the World." Based on Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's four emphases launched in 2014, we in the Nebraska Synod reach our fourth and final year of discovering what these themes mean for our Nebraskan landscape.

In this final year, we hope you use these quarterly offerings to enrich your congregation and community's life of faith. This quarter's focus is on *relationships and gathering together around our Lord's table* as Fall festivities lend a new energy to our congregations very soon.

Our working group for "We are Church for the Sake of the World" discovered early on that we're called to speak to the need for making lasting relationships with our neighbors of differing views, backgrounds, and traditions in a changing world. The world that the church exists for the sake of, is changing! What does that mean for our witness to the Gospel in the 21st century, and how we invite others to hear and experience the good news of Jesus Christ? How are we called to accompany and live among all God's people (as is proclaimed and promised in our baptism)? How are we called to step into our neighbors' shoes and honor the image of God in each of us, from all corners of the earth?

These are the tough and relevant questions we invite you to ponder this year with your countless sisters and brothers in Christ—and your neighbors—in our fair state. Please consider using these faith-growing, faith-forming, and liturgical resources this quarter in your church life and rhythms, as we consider our identity as a church for the sake of the world.



## Check out the We Are Church for the Sake of the World Podcast!

This quarter's episode features *the Rev. Robin Brown from ELCA World Hunger and the Rev. Omar Vila from San Andres, a Mission Field Nebraska Ministry.*

**AVAILABLE JUNE 21, 2019**

**RELATIONSHIP:** /rē'lāSH(ə)n,SHIp/ | *noun* | The way in which two or more concepts, objects, or people are connected, or the state of being connected.

# Liturgical resources

Please use this Communion Liturgy as you see fit this quarter in your congregation, adapted from the Leaders Desk Edition of the Evangelical Lutheran Worship, 2006.

## Eucharistic Prayer

**Leader:** God of creation,  
God of mercy and grace,  
God of our very breath.

You brought us through the floods  
And they did not overwhelm.  
You brought us through the fire  
And they did not consume.  
You guided us through the wilderness  
And promised an everlasting covenant.  
As David fought  
As Sarah laughed  
As Job wept  
As Jonah wandered  
You have remained steadfast  
Wherever we have wandered  
And wherever we have planted.

You have named and claimed your people  
As your own,  
And have called us  
From every tribe and nation  
To live in your Spirit  
Through the life and death of your Son  
Jesus Christ.

In the night in which he was handed over  
Our Lord Jesus took bread  
And gave thanks; broke it  
And gave it to his disciples  
Saying: Take and eat,  
This is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper,  
He took the cup, gave thanks,  
And gave it for all to drink,  
Saying: This cup  
Is the new covenant in my blood,  
Shed for you and for all people  
For the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink  
from this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until  
he comes,

**All:** Christ has died,  
**All:** Christ has risen,  
**All:** Christ will come again.

**Leader:** Send now your Holy Spirit, we pray  
To fill our gathering  
Sustain us through this meal  
Unite us with our neighbors throughout the  
world  
And bind us together in love as your people.

As you show us a vision of a tree of life  
With fruits for all  
Give us strength and good courage  
to welcome the stranger  
as your leaves heal the nations.

Grant us such life,  
The life of the Father to the Son,  
The life of the Spirit of our Risen Savior,  
New life in you,  
without end.  
**Amen.**



## Post-Communion Prayer

**Leader:** God of the nations,

**All:** In your great love, you have gathered us together around your table and fed us with your grace and mercy. Strengthen and encourage us to extend your welcome to the friend and the stranger; the rich and the poor; the weak and the strong as you did; so that all may know your great love, poured out for all in the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

# worship wonderings & considerations

**For Rostered Ministers and lay leaders on the practical theology of Communion**  
**This could be used in a worship committee or for small group discussion.**

What are the practical ways that you introduce Communion into your community? To newcomers? How do you utilize the space? In what ways do you make it accessible to all? In what ways are your congregation or community still growing?

Welcoming all to the Table to partake in the Meal is a pillar of our faithful lives. Use these tips to be more welcoming to others:

- + Offer gluten-free options for everyone so it doesn't feel like you're an inconvenience to ask for a gluten-free option.
- + If having Common Cup, make sure to have a plan for attendees who have medical conditions that affect their immune systems. The easiest way to do this is to offer the Cup to those individuals first, should they choose to self identify as such. This is so they do not have to be exposed to a larger volume of germs from other members of the congregation which may have adverse effects on their health. The Cup via intinction or in individual cups also reduces the spread of germs. In particular, consider these types of Communion during cold and flu season. It is important to be respectful of individuals and their privacy when making these considerations, as they are often dealing with serious medical conditions such as cancer, autoimmune conditions, HIV/AIDS, and others.
- + If someone is unable to participate in the meal, consider how else you may welcome them. Is it a physical accessibility issue (walking, standing, kneeling), or perhaps a nutrient issue (food allergy, supplemental/parenteral nutrition, or other illness), or maybe even a theological difference? Are you including those with physical accessibility issues after all others have received The Meal or before others? Can you alter The Meal components to be more inclusive for dietary restrictions or those on parenteral nutrition? How are you offering a blessing to those who self-select into not receiving The Meal?