

### 4. ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR

- Make plans to organize an Alternative Gift Fair in the fall. Make it easy and inviting to make gift donations (ELCA Good Gifts) to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal and other churchwide, congregation, and local ministries. Sell items from LWR Fair Trade Coffee, Chocolate, and Handcrafts Projects. Mount displays about the ministries.

### 5. SIMPLE LIVING

- Hold a book discussion about *Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal*. Visit [www.elca.org/hunger/simple](http://www.elca.org/hunger/simple) to find a leader guide, activity ideas, and helpful links.
- Visit [www.simpleliving.org](http://www.simpleliving.org) and explore the resources offered by Alternatives for Simple Living, including their annual booklet, "Whose birthday is it, anyway?"
- Perhaps the Sunday school and youth group could hold a fellowship-hall version of a garage sale featuring toys, CDs and DVDs, games, dress-up clothes, and athletic equipment.

### 6. UNWRAP YOUR PRESENT THINKING

Help participants initiate conversations about Christmas giving and share their plans with family and friends.

- Think about Christmas-present giving. What do participants feel is "expected" of them? What was their all-time favorite gift? What gifting strategies have they employed in their family (e.g., drawing names)?
- Brainstorm alternatives to store-bought presents. Strategize antidotes to "too much."
- Make a pact to give up mall and mega-mart shopping during Advent.
- Encourage participants to let family and friends know what they are giving this Christmas (e.g., prayer, gift-donations, gifts of time or food). It is also respectful to share ideas about what you'd like to receive. "Don't give me anything," for example, is not as helpful as "Please don't give me a *thing*...I'd much rather receive a gift-donation, the gift of your time, or a hand-written letter." Consider sending an ELCA Good Gifts catalog to folks who want to remember you at Christmas.

*Tell us about your alternative giving and "unwrap your present thinking" events. Send an e-mail to [hunger@elca.org](mailto:hunger@elca.org)*

This edition of **CONGREGATION CONNECTIONS** focuses on the Sundays after Pentecost, June–November 2008. The lectionary readings are from the Revised Common Lectionary (Cycle A). Find **CONGREGATION CONNECTIONS** online at [www.elca.org/hunger/connections](http://www.elca.org/hunger/connections)



### "I WANT SOMETHING TO WRAP\*" GIFT IDEAS

- Light a candle and say a prayer for your gift recipient(s), then wrap up the candle and a copy of the prayer.
- For ELCA Good Gifts, wrap up a representative stuffed animal for the youngest member of the family to receive your gift donation to God's Global Barnyard. Likewise, wrap small-and-useful representations of other gift donations (e.g., a dust pan for a gift donation to ELCA Disaster Response).
- Box and wrap a card or hand-written letter to announce your gift donation.
- Wrap up consumables, something that can be readily eaten or used (e.g., Fair Trade chocolate and coffee, homemade treats, postage stamps).
- Give pre-owned or no-buy gifts: share a gift from your home (e.g., dish, photo, ornament); personalize free calendars with important dates; wrap up garage-sale finds.

\*Using eco-friendly wrap and packing, of course...

### HOW TO ORDER

To request resources with Augsburg Fortress (AF) order numbers:

- call 800/328-4648
- go online at [www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger](http://www.augsburgfortress.org/elcahunger)