

NORTHERN ILLINOIS SYNOD – MUTUAL MINISTRY COMMITTEE IDEAS FOR CONGREGATIONAL STAFF APPRECIATION

Our ELCA Division for Ministry in its booklet on Mutual Ministry reminds us that God has chosen earthen vessels to be his vehicles for salvation...Earthen vessels make good carriers because they can be emptied and filled again and again, but they do need some special care. They need to be cleansed, repaired and refilled. One of the ways that we can help care for the earthen vessels that are our congregational staff people is to take the time and energy to show our appreciation for their efforts. October is recognized as Staff Appreciation Month within the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA and congregations/institutions are encouraged to lift up staff through one of these means during this month.

- ❖ Make one day (or week) of the year “Pastor” or “Associate in Ministry” or “Musician” or “Custodian” Appreciation Day. Sent notes, e-mails, give cookies, have kids draw pictures, etc.
- ❖ Recognize significant anniversaries – ordination, installation in your congregation, years of service in your congregation. This could be done at a special gathering or at a worship service. The bishop or other members of the synod staff could be invited to participate. (This could even be a surprise!)
- ❖ Welcome new staff people by giving them gift certificates to some of your favorite local businesses so they can get to know their new community.
- ❖ If your staff people have young children, offer free babysitting if they would like to participate in an event at church – or better yet, just so they could go out to dinner or a movie.
- ❖ Cook a meal a week for a staff family who has a particularly demanding schedule. There is one congregation in our synod that supplies dinner every Wednesday night to their pastor and spouse because the spouse is in seminary.
- ❖ During October, or any month chosen by the congregation/institution, have someone send a card every day to the pastor/choir director/secretary, etc., saying how this person has impacted his or her life.
- ❖ Give tickets for favorite events such as baseball or basketball games, symphony concerts, plays, etc.
- ❖ Give a pass to the YMCA, local exercise club, or golf course.
- ❖ Give a dinner certificate or even a gift certificate to a local meat processing plant.
- ❖ Give certificates for which members do various projects at the staff person’s home, such as raking leaves, washing windows, washing cars. (For a fifth anniversary, something could be done on each of 5 days.)
- ❖ Have a “Roast” or “This Is Your Life” for your staff person.
- ❖ Give a getaway weekend or a family weekend.
- ❖ Give an extra Sunday off – for instance, a pastor who has been with you for 5 years might receive a 5th Sunday off that year.
- ❖ Spontaneous prayers for the pastor/staff, etc.