



# Just one more thing

By Bishop Wayne N. Miller

*Another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home." Jesus said to him, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God"* (Luke 9:61-62).

I knew it was going to be one of those days. I had to get out of the office on time for an evening appointment, so I decided to be disciplined, for once, about checking off the things on my "to-do" list. But pretty soon I started adding things to the list faster than I was checking them off ... and time was running out ... and there was just one more thing ... and then one more ... and then ... just as soon as I finish this article ....

Maybe it's just an odd quirk in my personality, but judging from the number of preprinted "things-to-do" pads in stationery stores and the "to-do" lists on our computer calendars, and the rapid growth of the Post-it note industry, my guess is that quite a few of us have learned to order our lives responsibly by neatly completing the last task before we get on to the next one—to the point that I have even suggested to my wife, Pam, that my tombstone should be engraved with the epitaph: "Just one more thing!"

The "one more thing" that pops up on your list might be a quick stop for a few gallons of gas, which you're sure you have time for but always seems to end up making you five minutes late for work.

Or maybe for you the "one more thing" is just that little bit of snow to shovel off the front step before you stop to call the doctor and ask about the pain in your chest.

For still others it might be that "one more" office party to get past before you follow through on your promise to quit drinking for good.

And so your list of "just-one-more-things" grows and grows like Pinocchio's nose, always giving you a bottomless pool of accomplishments, but somehow always leaving you exactly where you



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were—a list that begins to cast a shadow of doubt about whether these just-one-more-things are really designed to organize your progress toward a new life or simply to postpone it.

The words from the Gospel of Luke, referenced above, show Jesus engaged in the work of calling people away from the familiar, well-organized patterns of their lives in order to follow an unexpected call to a radically new way of life. And I will admit to feeling a bit sympathetic toward these "almost-disciples" asking for a little slack to finish what they had begun, to get some "closure" before they went on to the next thing.

But even though the choice to finish their list was one they made freely, it doesn't exactly seem to have made them free. And it may be good for each of us, as we begin today's fresh list of things to do, to listen and hear the promise that you are being called today by the living God to be someone, to go somewhere and to do something—perhaps something that was not exactly part of the original plan.

Because it might just be that by responding to God's call to step out in a new direction, you will discover the power of the Son to make you free. ✠

## Fostering community across Illinois

Until you have a comfortable place for your possessions and to lay your head at night, it's difficult to have health or happiness. Nowhere is this philosophy more apt than at the 20 affordable housing developments across Illinois owned and managed by Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI). From Rockford, to Chicago, to Danville, LSSI last year provided affordable housing to 1,315 older adults and people over the age of 18 with disabilities.

LSSI has been providing low-income senior housing in Illinois since 1976. Not only does the apartment-style housing provide a comfortable place to lay one's head at night, LSSI's senior housing fosters community and a satisfying quality of life.

"It's like our own little neighborhood," said Jesse Hilton, who lives at Spring Ridge Senior Housing, Rockford. She was attracted to the affordable rent and an active community of residents who are involved with their local churches, communities and families.

At Kingston Place in Chicago's South Shore neighborhood, residents support the community by organizing a monthly food pantry in conjunction with the Greater Chicago Food Depository. "For me, it is instant gratification knowing we are helping someone who just may be less fortunate," said resident Katherine Lewis.

Photo: Michael Watson



LSSI's apartment-style housing for older adults includes various amenities like this lending library at Joshua Arms in Joliet.



Photo: Michael Watson

Lutheran Social Services of Illinois' Affordable Housing Services foster a sense of community among residents.

Jesse Hilton and her dog, Ginger, enjoy the neighborly atmosphere at LSSI's Spring Ridge Senior Housing, Rockford.



Most apartments feature an open floor plan with a full kitchen, large bathroom, carpeting, cable access and emergency call system. Although it varies by location, the buildings offer an array of activities and outings planned by both staff and residents. A social service coordinator is available at every site to help with federal, state and local benefits, along with assistance in accessing community resources.

Rent at most sites is 30 percent of one's annual adjusted income (taking into account medical expenses and other deductions). Residents' annual incomes are generally between \$5,000 and \$25,000.

Joshua Arms in Joliet houses 242 apartments, which include such living options as 24-hour staffing for certified nursing assistants; medication reminders; personal services (assistance with bathing, dressing and grooming); and on-site preferred health care providers.

At all locations, staff work with residents to make them feel at home and meet their needs. Sue DeMoss, property manager at Deer Creek and Immanuel Manor senior residences in Danville, said these accommodations help residents age in place. "We help residents live in their own apartments with comfort and dignity," she said. "We try to provide all the comforts of home."

LSSI provides affordable housing developments in Aurora, Batavia, Chicago, Crystal Lake, Danville, Decatur, DeKalb, Dolton, Elmwood Park, Freeport, Joliet, Lansing, Rochelle, Rockford, Taylorville and Wilmette. To learn more, visit [LSSI.org](http://LSSI.org). ☒

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# LSTC responds to food insecurity among students

By Julie B. Sevig

Kelsey Kresse came from full-time employment when she arrived at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) last fall. But with moving expenses, buying textbooks and an unexpected cash flow problem, within weeks of starting classes she experienced food insecurity for the first time in her life.

Kresse knows other students who have also struggled to buy food. A recent LSTC survey asked whether students knew someone in the community who was deprived of food. It found that 34 percent of students (or someone in their household) felt such deprivation. When staff and faculty were included, the number jumped to 58 percent. Some 30 percent of students indicated that in the past year they've had to choose between buying groceries or school supplies.

Food insecurity is defined as being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food. It has to do with money, but also logistics. In Hyde Park, Whole Foods and Treasure Island are the nearest large grocery stores—neither is within walking distance or, for some, affordable.

The concern about food insecurity among seminarians surfaced as a new advisory panel for the Refectory cafeteria met. But chef Jennifer Powell says it started before that with LSTC's strategic plan. As the panel, made up of staff and faculty, looked at the strategic plan through the lens of food, insecurity became a recurring theme.

"We teach seminarians about being financially secure, about having good boundaries, but what about food security?" Powell asked. "If our future church leaders don't have food security, how can they lead in the communities they will serve?"

That is the thesis of LSTC's strategic plan: "A community to form leaders to form community." Powell looks at the emergence of a food co-op as an ideal learning experience for future pastors, many of



Photo: Frantisek Janak

The Refectory hosts occasional dinners to address food insecurity and promote community. They are Second Sunday dinners and for special occasions, such as the Feb. 15 Chinese New Year celebration. In addition to traditional Chinese food (free for students and children), there was an opportunity to write good wishes to one another in red envelopes.

whom will be called to congregations that provide special ministries, such as a day care or food program (pantries, shelters, community meals).

## Student-led

The idea for a co-op formed quickly, with students establishing a board of directors. They describe the co-op as a "choice model," which is different from a pantry where clients make a meal from a bag of groceries they're given. Students say the choice model creates food security and keeps dignity intact, while providing support and a sense of community. In a co-op, participating members work together to address their needs.

At press time, the board was planning a soft launch before the school year ends, which would support those living on campus during the summer. Its name, location and membership requirements were under discussion. An online ordering platform seemed a most likely start. The Refectory's Second Sunday community meals were a first step in addressing food insecurities among individuals and families.

The Refectory's connections to bulk and fresh food will prove vital to the co-op. A Pathway to Financial Success grant has supplied seed money, and grad students from the University of Chicago business school may offer nonprofit consulting, including how to write grants to sustain

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## Consider attending anti-racism workshops

The synod's Antiracism Team offers workshops throughout the year that offer an in-depth look at race and racism in the United States. The workshops are designed to reveal how systemic racism creates barriers to true multicultural diversity and racial justice. They will help participants struggle with the tough questions and begin to equip them with the skills to dismantle racism and transform institutions.

Participants will:

- Explore the historical development of systemic racism and its continuing effects in our society.
- Examine the ongoing realities of racism, including the identity-shaping power it has on people of color and white people.
- Consider the link between racism and other forms of oppression.

There are two remaining workshops in 2018. One will be held July 26-28 at Loyola University, Chicago (Lake Shore Campus), Damen Student Center (6511 N. Sheridan Rd.). The other will be Oct. 18-20



at Catholic Theological Union (5416 S. Cornell Ave.). ELCA members receive a reduced rate, and further discounts are available for registering early. Find out more and register at [anotherpebble.org/index.php/workshop-descriptions](http://anotherpebble.org/index.php/workshop-descriptions).

For more information about the Antiracism Team, visit its website at [anotherpebble.org](http://anotherpebble.org) or email the group at [info@anotherpebble.org](mailto:info@anotherpebble.org). ☒

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the co-op, what sort of technology is needed, and how others (in the synod and beyond) might replicate this model.

Kresse and Stephani Shumaker are just two of the students at the helm. Shumaker is the Refectory's first Public Church Fellow, which enables students to work in an area of community service while studying. She was a public health major in college, so this intersection of public church and public health and nutrition is perfect for her and advantageous for the seminary.

"We eat not only to feed our body and minds but spirit as well," Shumaker said, adding that the co-op will "not only be providing students with necessary resources but sustainable habits they'll carry into their careers."

"I see huge potential in the co-op," she continued. "The limits are endless. In terms of educating and

paracurriculum, the co-op model will be the best avenue at spreading literacy of food insecurity. Those who use our model will be able to look at their own microcommunity and change the model to address the food insecurity in their community. Most students in seminary fear their first call due to the lack of experience in running a business. The co-op will be able to provide resources for how one can sustain their body and thus be able to sustain a congregation."

Powell added, "This is a huge opportunity to model, to invite others in and to creatively work toward addressing the needs of the community. Many co-ops are born out of protest, and this was born out of a need, with the largest stakeholder group, the students, working toward the solution for themselves and the entire community." ☒

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