



# News and Events

**SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD**  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

January 30, 2023

## New ELCA Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith

How are we called to civic engagement, including in the arenas of government and political life? What is the proper relationship of the church with government? What does religious liberty actually include? Your congregation can explore these questions and more by using *A Study Curriculum on Civic Life and Faith*. Just released by the ELCA Task Force for Studies on Civic Life and Faith, the curriculum includes six sessions and is a critical step on the way to the social statement called for by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.



Each session includes prayers, hymn suggestions, scriptures, a teaching video, group discussion questions, suggested resources and case studies taken from everyday life. Session topics include:

- How Is God's Invitation to Discipleship Lived Out in a Democracy?
- How Do Christians Address Controversial Civic Issues?
- What Are Lutheran Views on Civic Life?
- What Are the Objectives of Democracy in the United States?
- What's Faith-Based Living Got to Do With Civic Life?
- How Do We Go in Peace to Love and Serve the Lord in Civic Life?

There is also a response form after each session for participants to communicate with the task force on the material covered. This feedback is key in helping the task force as it moves to the next phase of drafting a social statement. The study response period is open until Oct. 15. [Download the study and learn more about the task force's work.](#)

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## Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders & Conference Assemblies

Saturday, Feb. 25 - Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley

This annual event brings together lay leaders, ministry volunteers and church staff from all of the congregations in the synod for learning and networking! It's a wonderful opportunity to hear from experts in a variety of areas related to congregational life and to hear experiences and perspectives from people in other congregations.



+ Conference Assemblies

This year's Tool Kit features 10 workshops that cover a variety of areas related to congregational life: bystander training, implicit bias, hybrid ministry, faith-based advocacy, peer ministry skills and worship with children. There are even special sessions for congregational presidents/vice presidents and treasurers. The registration fee is \$20 per person. Tool Kit will be held in conjunction with conference assemblies, when the synod's six conferences meet separately for pre-synod assembly business which may include elections, proposed resolutions or other matters. [Learn more.](#)

### WORKSHOP SPOTLIGHT:

#### The Power of Calling

How would our lives and our congregations be different if more of us lived out of a deep sense of our meaning and purpose in life? This is what would happen if we discovered and embraced God's "callings," both individual and corporate. While calling or vocation is central to Lutheran theology, it is an oft neglected gift to empower our individual lives and our life together. Come and discover how creating a culture of calling changed one congregation, and how it can empower yours.



*Jeff Marian has served as lead pastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Burnsville for over 14 years. He and his wife, Nancy, have three grown boys and live in Lakeville. Originally from Philadelphia, Jeff has served congregations in Rockford and Gurnee, Ill., and Columbus, Ohio. He is an avid cyclist, a voracious reader and a bourbon enthusiast. He is also a certified leadership coach for both the church and business communities and owner of Marian Coaching, LLC.*

**Click below to hear Pastor Jeff preview his upcoming Tool Kit workshop:**



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## Children's Ministry Gathering

**Monday, Feb. 13 - 1 p.m. | St. Stephen, Bloomington**

This month, the children's ministry gathering is in person! Children's ministry staff and key volunteers are invited join the conversation about milestones. Let's share new ideas and new ways to incorporate milestones in worship. Please bring examples for all to see! Questions? Email Rachelle Gill from Easter at [rgill@easter.org](mailto:rgill@easter.org).



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## ENGAGE: Save our Veterans

**Wednesday, Feb. 22 - 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Online**

Each year more than 6,000 veterans die by suicide in the United States at a rate 1.5 times that of the general public. The lethal means most commonly used is a firearm. There is no single cause of suicide and it is often the result of a complex interaction of risk and protective factors at the individual, interpersonal, community and societal levels.



ENGAGE, the synod's gun violence prevention work group, is committed to addressing and lessening suicide by firearm for veterans. Andrea Perry of the Minneapolis VA Suicide Prevention Team will lead a conversation on S.A.V.E. (Signs, Ask, Validate and Encourage/Expedite) and share some general knowledge and data about suicide in the U.S. and specifically in the veteran population. This conversation will give you tools to identify someone who is thinking of suicide and show you what you can do to keep them safe and get immediate help. [Learn more and register.](#)

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## Form A and C Reports

Each congregation in the ELCA is required to turn in the Form A and C report to the churchwide organization. These forms provide essential information, including data on numbers of congregants, languages spoken in worship and more. Here's what to do, in case you missed the instructions from ELCA: Go to the [ELCA landing page](#) and select "Form A and C Parochial Reports" on the right hand side. Click "update now." Enter your Congregation ID and Password and fill out both Form A and C. (Once logged in, you will find instructions of how to fill out the form and a financial worksheet.) Congregations unsure of their ID or password will be able to request them through the landing page or you may reach out to Rachel Holsten at the synod office at 651-224-4313 or [rachel.holsten@spas-elca.org](mailto:rachel.holsten@spas-elca.org). Congregations are asked to submit completed forms by March 1.

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## BKB Program Coordinator Applications

The Saint Paul Area Synod is accepting applications for a two-year volunteer position based in Iringa, Tanzania, to support our Bega Kwa Bega partnership. This position provides support in four key areas: administration, relationship building, hospitality and project monitoring. This is an entry-level volunteer position for a globally aware, mission-minded individual (or couple) interested in a hands-on, immersive experience in a cross-cultural setting. A living allowance and in-kind support are provided. [Click here for the full job description.](#) Applicants may send a cover letter and resume to BKB Director Kirsten Levorson at [kirsten.levorson@spas-elca.org](mailto:kirsten.levorson@spas-elca.org). Please share this opportunity with anyone you



know who might be interested!

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## Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church



Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America

In August 2022, the ELCA Churchwide Assembly passed a memorial to create a Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) with the mandate to explore the current governance structures of the ELCA. In November, the ELCA Church Council authorized the establishment of the CRLC to consist of no more than 35 voting members and directed the Executive Committee of the Church Council to initiate the process of forming the commission.

This process calls for each synod to nominate two people to be considered for appointment. Earlier this month the Saint Paul Area Synod Council nominated Pastor Chris Bellefeuille and Pastor Patrick Shebeck. They will be considered alongside the nominees from the other eight synods in Region 3 (Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota) for appointment to the commission.

In addition, a third individual from each region and up to eight at-large members will be appointed from among the synod nominations and the open nomination process. The open nominations process is now active, allowing any individual to be self-nominated or beckoned into nomination by others. You can find the nomination form and more information on the work of the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church at [ELCA.org/CRLC](https://elca.org/CRLC).

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Courageous Leadership Series

**Wednesdays - 1 p.m. | Online**

ELCA Coaching offers a weekly online gathering for ministry leaders. Each week this series features a new topic and presenters. [Learn more.](#)

### Addiction & Lent: A Conversation With Author

**Timothy McMahan King**

**Thursday, Feb. 9 - 11 a.m.-12 noon | Online**

Lent is a time we feel the pain of loss and the promise of new life to come. It is a season that calls us to reflect on many of the same themes we see in stories of addiction and recovery. Churches and pastors across the country have found Lent a helpful time to engage their congregations and communities in reflection on the challenges of addiction in our society and the hope the Church can bring for healing. Join CAF board member and author Timothy McMahan King to talk about how you can engage your church around addiction issues this upcoming Lenten season. He will provide insights from his book, *Addiction Nation: What the Opioid Crisis Reveals About Us* and an accompanying six-part study guide. Participants will receive a free study guide and have the opportunity to sign up for the author to join your book group for a virtual Q&A for free. [Learn more and register.](#)



## Spring Convocation at United Theological Seminary Thursday, Feb. 9 - 12:15 p.m. | United Chapel & Online

United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities invites you join them in recognizing and installing Dr. Munjed M. Murad as the Johnson-Fry Endowed Chair in World Religions and Intercultural Studies. Dr. Murad also makes institutional history as United's first full-time Muslim scholar and faculty member, as well as project director for the school's Eco-Justice program. Dr. Murad will deliver a message title "Loving God and the Neighbor." A light lunch will follow the ceremony. [Learn more.](#)



## Trauma and Its Healing Tuesday, Feb. 21 - 6-8 p.m. | Online

Although we might think only of major crises when we hear the word "trauma," the term includes any disturbing experience that elicits a highly negative emotional response. Trauma is characterized in three ways: acute, chronic and complex. This presentation will offer information as to the types of trauma (and examples thereof); how they present/how they can be recognized; what damage they can do to those experiencing them; strategies for beginning the healing process; and vicarious trauma (the trauma suffered by those witnessing trauma suffered by others, including caregivers). The Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association is offering this educational event; nonmembers and non-nurses are welcome. The cost is \$20 for LFCNA members and \$30 for nonmembers. [Learn more.](#)



### Other Event Reminders:

- **Singing in Wonder - A Hymn Festival** - Feb. 5 | Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Roseville
- **Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders & Conference Assemblies** - Feb. 25 | Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley
- **2023 Synod Assembly** - May 12-13 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi
- **Festival of Homiletics** - May 15-19 | Central Lutheran & Westminster Presbyterian, Minneapolis

## SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

### Bishop Patricia Lull

- Feb. 12 - Gustavus Adolphus, St. Paul (preaching)

### Pastor Justin Grimm

- Feb. 12 - Eternal Flame, Vadnais Heights (preaching)

### Deacon Krista Lind

- Feb. 12 - St. Mark's, North St. Paul (preaching and installing Pastor David Bjorklund)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

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*The Saint Paul Area Synod, which includes 107 congregations and new mission starts, is one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*



[spas-elca.org](https://spas-elca.org) | 651-224-4313