



# News and Events

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

**November 27, 2023**



## Faith Journeys With Older Friends

*by Pastor Courtney Steitz - Good Shepherd, Inver Grove Heights*

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Inver Grove Heights started a “Meet an Older Friend” event about eight years ago. The goal has always been to help connect young Confirmation students with older members of the congregation—to hear their wisdom, learn about their faith journeys together and share stories. This program was paused during COVID, and we brought it back for the first time this year. Five older adults from Good Shepherd were invited to share an hour of their time with 25 of our Confirmation students.

We know that cross-generational relationships are so important to the faith formation of young people. Through the “Meet an Older Friend” event, we also want our older adults to have an opportunity to share their wisdom and stories. We want our older adults to be recognized and honored for their faithfulness and life experience. And we want our students to hear affirmation and love from the adults. Both students and adults

**stories**  
of the **SYNOD**



have so much to offer and receive from one another.

[Read Pastor Courtney's full Story of the Synod post.](#)

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## *Addressing Hunger:* **Givers, Giving and Gifts**

*by Vernita Kennen - Incarnation, Shoreview*

Christmas is approaching and it would be well for us to focus always on the giver rather than the gift. God is the giver of all gifts and we the unworthy but blessed recipients. God has given us the gift of prayer that keeps us in relationship with our Creator. God sent us Jesus, our Savior, who became incarnate at Christmas. And God has given us each other.



God has given us both the call and the ability to share these gifts. We in the ELCA see ourselves doing God's work through our hands. We also have the ability to share God's gifts through the ELCA World Hunger program—the Good Gifts efforts are a way to share twice this season. We can “gift” a family member by sharing a real gift with a person who has less both here and abroad. Look for information about ELCA Good Gifts at your church or at [goodgifts.elca.org](http://goodgifts.elca.org).

[Read Vernita's full Addressing Hunger post.](#)

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## **ENGAGE: Our Opinions Matter** **Tuesday, Dec. 12 - 7-8:30 p.m. | Online**

The Faith and Society mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is developing a Social Message on Gun Related Violence and Trauma. The initial draft is now complete and public commentary is invited. Following this period of seeking public comment, the final draft will be submitted to the ELCA Church Council in consideration for final adoption as an official ELCA statement for about 9,000 congregations.



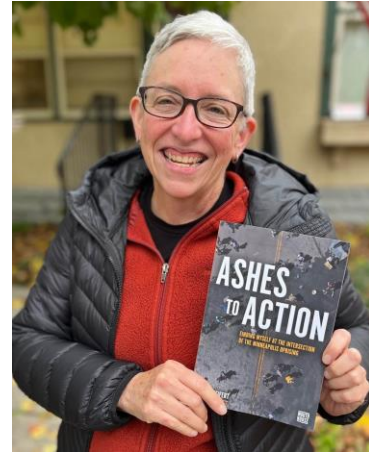
ENGAGE: Lutherans for Gun Violence Prevention, is hosting an Zoom conversation to invite public opinions in consideration for the final social message. Dr. Per Anderson, who wrote the social message draft, will guide us through the discussion. Would you consider joining the conversation and offering your opinions?

- [Review the draft statement here.](#)
  - [Register here to receive the Zoom link.](#)
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## Ashes to Action Book Discussion

**Thursday, Dec. 14 - 6:30 p.m. | Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, St. Paul**

The synod's Advocates for Racial Equity work group invites you to a discussion with author Shari Seifert about her book, *Ashes to Action: Finding Myself at the Intersection of the Minneapolis Uprising*. After the world witnessed the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, a passionate uprising erupted, with the intersection of 38th and Chicago at its epicenter. One block away stood Calvary Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation whose members had engaged in racial justice work for years.



In *Ashes to Action*, Shari provides her first-person account of the events following May 25, 2020. She joined others in the Calvary community to show up, listen, and ask what was needed in the moment. As the lines between her congregation and neighborhood blurred, the way toward a faithful response became clearer. This personal narrative stays rooted in the context of community, immersing readers in the days, weeks, and months following the uprising. Books will be available for sale for \$13. [Learn more.](#)

## Children's Ministry Gathering

**Monday, Dec. 11 - 1 p.m. | Online**

Children's ministry staff and key volunteers are invited to gather on Zoom for a discussion on how we can make faith memories for the families we serve, birth to grandparents. What fun events have you done or are thinking about in the next six months? Bring examples to spark some new ideas! The hosts are Rachelle Gill (Easter, Eagan) and Julie Vagle (Trinity, Long Lake). Questions?

Email [rgill@easter.org](mailto:rgill@easter.org).



[Join the Zoom Meeting.](#)

Meeting ID: 882 8497 1186

Passcode: 505383

**2023**  
**YOUTH MIN**  
**GATHERINGS**  
**2ND TUESDAY @ 3PM**

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK [Twin Cities CYF ELCA](#)

Meet other youth ministry folks to share ideas,  
learn from one another and be supported.

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**THIS MONTH:**  
**SOCIAL TIME**  
INSIGHT BREWING &  
TAPROOM, MINNEAPOLIS

**DEC 12**

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For youth ministry staff and key volunteers  
in the Minneapolis and Saint Paul Area Synods  
No registration required; just show up!

## 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 new topics and presenters. [Learn more.](#)

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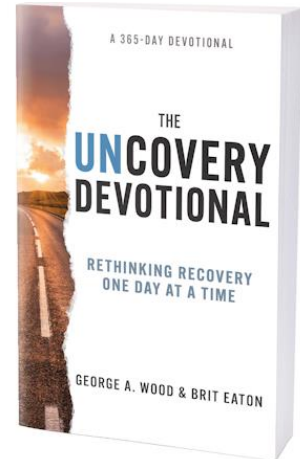
### The Uncovery Devotional: Rethinking Recovery One Day at a Time

**Wednesday, Nov. 29 - 12 noon-1 p.m. | Online**

The Center for Addiction & Faith invites you to a discussion with author George A. Wood around his new book, *The Uncovery Devotional: Rethinking Recovery One Day at a Time*, co-authored with Brit Eaton. All of us are recovering from something, whether it's an addiction, a painful incident from our past, or a daily challenge. Real recovery isn't a one-time event or a process that fits into 12 steps or a preset length of time. Uncovering how to live free of what holds you back is a lifelong journey and one that is best traveled with others.

Having come through the darkest depths of addiction, mental health struggles, suicide attempts, and the haunting shadows of trauma, George Wood has dedicated his life to changing the way the world looks at recovery, educating, equipping and empowering all who are struggling and those that lead them. [Register here.](#)

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### 2023 National Lutheran Choir's Christmas Festival Friday, Dec. 8 & Saturday, Dec. 9 | Basilica of Saint Mary, Minneapolis

Join the National Lutheran Choir for its beloved Christmas Festival tradition. This year's festival, titled "New Hope," will take place at 4:30 p.m. on Dec. 8, and 1:30 and 8:00 p.m. on Dec. 9. The program includes carols, readings and music from brass, oboe, harp and organ. The Dec. 9 performance at 1:30 p.m. will be livestreamed for free. For tickets and more information, visit [NLCA.com](https://nlca.com).



### Poor People's Campaign Statewide Committee Meeting Sunday, Dec. 10 - 4 p.m. | St. Anthony Park, St. Paul

The synod's Advocates for Racial Equity work group invites you to join people of faith throughout Minnesota to work to mobilize the vote in 2024 with the Poor People's Campaign. A stateside committee meeting will be held on Dec. 10. Learn about and sign up for statewide actions in March of 2024 and the Moral March on Washington, D.C., on June 15, 2024. [Download the flier](#) and indicate your attendance plans at [minnesota@poorpeoplescampaign.org](mailto:minnesota@poorpeoplescampaign.org).

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## 2024 Fretheim Lecture in Biblical Theology

**Tuesday, Jan. 9 | Luther Seminary, St. Paul**

Renowned biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine will deliver the 2024 Fretheim Lecture in Biblical Theology. She is the Rabbi Stanley M. Kessler Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies at Hartford International University for Religion and Peace as well as the University Professor of New Testament and Jewish Studies Emerita and the Mary Jane Werthan Professor of Jewish Studies Emerita at Vanderbilt University. The annual public lecture honors the legacy of the late Professor Terry Fretheim in making biblical-theological scholarship available to Luther Seminary students and surrounding communities.



At 3:30 p.m., Professor Levine will offer a free workshop for area clergy and seminary students that discusses why anti-Jewish preaching and teaching continue, details the popular misconceptions about the Jewish context of Jesus and Paul found in sermons and church-based curricula, and offers alternatives for reading the texts on which they are based. During the public lecture at 7 p.m., Professor Levine will present "The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector: Why Knowledge of Jewish History Matters for Christian Preaching and Teaching." Both events are free; no registration is required. The lecture will be [livestreamed](#) for those unable to attend in person. [Learn more.](#)

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### Other Event Reminders:

- [Learn to Construct a Narrative Budget](#) - Nov. 27 - 6:30 p.m. | Online
- [Conference Assemblies/Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders](#) - Feb. 24 | Faith, Forest Lake
- [Synod Assembly](#) - May 10-11 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi

## SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

### The Rev. Justin Grimm

- Dec. 2-3 - Foundation of Life, Mahtomedi (ministry review + preaching)
- Dec. 10 - Eternal Flame, Vadnais Heights (preaching)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

[ELCA](#)

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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