



News and Events

SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

January 22, 2024

A Renewed Commitment to Work Together to End Hunger

As ELCA World Hunger celebrates its 50th anniversary and we consider the food insecurity challenges many people face in their daily life, the Saint Paul Area Synod and the Minneapolis Area Synod are engaging in conversation about how to work together toward ending hunger.



Would you like to be part of the process as we organize to talk about congregational efforts to end hunger, about community efforts around the Twin Cities and how we can work together to multiply efforts? Educational events, hands-on opportunities, and ways to connect regionally, churchwide and globally are all being considered. Please join us! Email justin.grimm@spas-elca.org if you'd like to be part of this effort.

PRAYER SERVICE FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS

Tuesday, January 23 at 9 a.m. | St. Luke, St. Paul

A brief time of scripture and prayers with other pastors and deacons in the synod



Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders & Conference Assemblies

Saturday, Feb. 24 | Faith, Forest Lake

Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders brings together lay leaders, ministry volunteers and church staff from across 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. This year's workshops include church partnerships and hosting groups, tools for creation care, asset-based community development, understanding mental health in congregations, global mission in this day and age, and more. [See descriptions of the workshops here.](#)



SCHEDULE FOR THE DAY:

8:00 a.m. – Check-In
8:30 a.m. – Conference Assembly Meetings
9:45 a.m. – Worship
10:30 a.m. – Tool Kit Session One
11:45 a.m. – Lunch
12:45 p.m. – Tool Kit Session Two
2:00 p.m. – Conclusion

The registration fee is \$20 per person and includes lunch.

Conference Assemblies

Tool Kit is 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. This year, the elections include a dean in North and South conferences; a member of Synod Council from East Central Conference; members for the Nominating Committee in East Central and City conferences; and the election of one lay person and one rostered minister (pastor or deacon) from all six conferences to be a voting member at the next ELCA Churchwide Assembly (CWA). The 2025 CWA will be held in Phoenix July 28–Aug. 2. Additional elections will occur at the Synod Assembly on May 11 at St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Mahtomedi. More details for the elections will be shared in early March.

[Check the voter allocation chart](#) for the number of lay voters your congregation is allowed at conference assemblies. Besides caucusing, the conference gathering is a great way for both lay and rostered leaders to learn more about what is going on around the synod. Lay leaders who are not voting members for their congregation are welcome to participate but may not vote. There is no charge for those attending only a conference assembly.

Use the button below to register for Tool Kit, Conference Assemblies or both!

REGISTER

Tool Kit Workshop Spotlight:

Revisioning Church Spaces

Has your ministry changed over the last 50 years? How about your building? As ministry needs change, your building can become a roadblock if it doesn't change too. We will discuss different church spaces, how to look at them through the lens of welcoming and ministry for your congregation today, and how to get started on projects.



About the Presenter: Anne Gerrietts is a church building consultant with Vanman Architects and Builders. Watch her workshop preview below:



Tools for the Church: Beginnings & Endings Saturday, Feb. 3 - 9 a.m.-3 p.m. | Gustavus Adolphus, St. Paul

For everything there is a season. Sometimes the most difficult step in moving into a new time is knowing when and what to let go. It takes courage to set a ministry or a program aside, even for a time, so that there might be room for something new to bloom.



Join us for a day of listening for where God is making room in your context, practice letting go, get comfortable with failure, and reconnect with the Spirit's gift of experimenting in the Body of Christ. Worship, share some great food (including communion), and build relationships with other congregations wrestling with the same questions you are.

The synod's Vitality Team invites congregational pastors, deacons and lay leaders for a day that will empower you to lead in your ministry setting toward the future to which is God is calling you to. Receive practical, contemplative, embodied, and liturgical tools to help you feel at peace with God's direction for you (and your faith community) and for the whole church today.

This is intended for groups from congregations (councils, outreach teams, leadership teams, etc.) but you are also welcome to come alone; you will be able to fully participate as an individual! The cost is \$15 per person, which includes lunch. Questions? Email justin.grimm@spas-elca.org.

REGISTER

A banner for a Children's Ministry Gathering. On the left is a circular inset photo of five diverse children smiling. The background is blue with white and yellow text. The title "CHILDREN'S MINISTRY GATHERING" is in white and yellow. Below it, the date and time "Monday, February 12 - 1 p.m." and location "St. Stephen, Bloomington" are in white. The topic "TOPIC: Keeping Our Kids Safe" is also in white.

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY
GATHERING**

Monday, February 12 - 1 p.m.
St. Stephen, Bloomington

TOPIC: Keeping Our Kids Safe

Spiritual Gifts Retreat

**Saturday, March 2 - 9 a.m.-4 p.m. | Zion,
Chisago City**

"Who has God created me to be?" This retreat will provide you with an opportunity to look deeply at who you are and how God has uniquely blessed you with certain gifts. Using spiritual gift inventories, conversation and other tools, you'll go home with a better sense of who you are and how you might best serve your faith community and the world! Retreat leaders include Pastor Justin Grimm (Saint Paul Area Synod), Pastor Kirsten Fryer (Bethlehem in the Midway, St. Paul) and Pastor Wendy Steger (All Saints, Eagan). The cost is \$30 per person and includes lunch.



REGISTER

Voices of Faith in Climate Action: COP28 and Beyond

Wednesday, Jan. 24 - 2-3 p.m. | Online

Hear from six leaders from the ELCA who were part of the UN Conference of Parties (COP28) when it met in Dubai last month, including our own Tammy Walhof, director of Lutheran Advocacy-Minnesota. They participated in dialogue with world leaders, debating strategies and ambitions to effectively tackle the climate crisis. Other presenters include the ELCA program director for World Hunger initiatives, ELCA program director for Lutheran Disaster Response initiatives, ELCA program director for environment and energy policy, the ELCA Hunger Advocacy fellow and others. [Register for the link.](https://bit.ly/ELCACOP28webinar)

A poster for a webinar titled "Voices of Faith in Climate Action: COP28 and Beyond". It features a QR code, a calendar icon, and a globe graphic with the text "COP 28" and "2023". The text "Lutheran Attendees after COP28" is also present. A green "REGISTER" button is at the bottom.

Webinar
**Voices of Faith in
Climate Action:**
COP28 and Beyond

Wed. Jan. 24, 2024
3-4 pm ET

REGISTER
<https://bit.ly/ELCACOP28webinar>

Presenters
Lutheran Attendees
after COP28

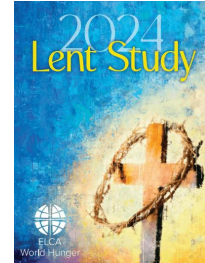
COP 28
2023

Last Call: Draft Social Message on Gun Violence

You're running out of time to give feedback on the ELCA's draft social message on gun-related violence and trauma! Responses are due by Jan. 31. The draft focuses on trauma, public health and an ethic of shared responsibility for peacemaking, seeking to move beyond the strict polarization of gun rights versus gun control. To participate in the public feedback period, [read the draft and use the response form](#).

Lent Resources From ELCA World Hunger

New resources for Lent are now available from ELCA World Hunger. The theme for these seasonal materials is "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed." Where and how do you encounter God? Through the prophet Isaiah, God urges us to take comfort, trusting that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:5). Resources are free to download and include: an action guide for congregations, a daily devotional Lent calendar, a five-session Lent study, and previews of the six Vacation Bible School programs. [Learn more](#).



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](#).

Funding Forward Webinar

Tuesday, Jan. 23 - 1 p.m. OR Monday, Jan. 29 - 7 p.m.

Faith+Lead invites you to an inspiring discussion on faith, financial stewardship and the future of ministry funding. The webinar will share findings from a research project that surveyed 100 congregations that have moved "beyond the offering plate" for income sources, which also expands their partnerships in their communities. Registration is free. [Learn more](#).



Women's Ministry for Small Churches Conference

Saturday, Jan. 27 | Online

Great women's ministry in a small church doesn't just happen. This free online conference is geared for smaller churches with smaller budgets, smaller numbers and volunteers spread over multiple ministry areas. The 25 speakers will address topics related to health leadership, deeper faith, authentic community and effective outreach. Registration is free. [Learn more](#).



Addiction & Practical Solutions for Faith Communities

Wednesday, Jan. 31 - 12-1 p.m. | Online

Author Keaton Douglas joins host George A. Wood for a discussion of Keaton's latest book, *The Road to Hope: Responding to the Crisis of Addiction*. Substance use disorder claims more than 175,000 lives every year in the U.S., making it the third leading cause of death in this country. During the COVID-19 pandemic and since, the crisis has accelerated dramatically. Addiction isn't just a physical and psychological illness; it's also a spiritual disease that requires a spiritual remedy. *The Road to Hope* addresses the deep need in our Church to respond to the addiction crisis. Author Keaton Douglas draws on her years of ministry in this field to educate and equip the body of Christ — clergy and laity alike — to understand and minister to our suffering brothers and sisters. [Register for the Zoom link.](#)



Women's Retreat: ReFresh, ReNew, ReLax

Saturday, Feb. 17 - 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. | Bethesda, Inver Grove Heights

The women's ministry of Bethesda Lutheran welcomes all women in the synod to join them for breakfast, music, worship, small groups, fellowship and lunch. The featured speaker is Tasha Jones, host of the [Mangled Spaces](#) podcast. She is a minister who is passionate about educating and supporting other parents and supporters of the LGBTQ+ community. The cost is \$30 per person. [Learn more.](#)

National Lutheran Choir Winter Concert

Sunday, Feb. 25 - 4 p.m. | St. Philip the Deacon, Plymouth

The National Lutheran Choir's winter concert features music from the Lutheran canon and works that explore the common struggle through life's journeys, both those chosen and those forced upon us. The works are by composers such as Heinrich Schutz, Knut Nystedt, F. Melius Christiansen as well as others who highlight the stories of enslaved Africans, immigrants and refugees in the U.S. [Learn more.](#)



Fosdick Lecture on Preaching

Thursday, Feb. 29 - 10 a.m. | Augsburg University's Hoversten Chapel & Online

One of Harry Emerson Fosdick's most well-known sermons is "Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" He preached that sermon in 1922: would he preach it today? Now, over 100 years later, The Rev. Barbara Lundblad will help us think about how to preach against the growing, contemporary problem of Christian Nationalism in church and society. Rev. Lundblad is the Joe R. Engle Professor of Preaching Emerita at Union Theological Seminary in New York City. An ELCA pastor, she is the author of two books: *Transforming the Stone: Preaching Through Resistance to Change* (2001) and *Marking Time: Preaching Biblical Stories in Present Tense* (2007), which grew out of the Beecher Lectures she delivered at Yale Divinity School. [Register here](#) whether you plan to attend in person or via Zoom.



Festival of Homiletics

May 13-16 | Pittsburgh & Online

What preacher has not wondered, "How will I keep going?" We need our faith tended and our passion for preaching the Gospel nurtured and sustained, now more than ever. Let's give the Holy Spirit plenty to work with, by committing time to focus on renewal and sustainability, especially in the ways we proclaim the Word. This weeklong conference will be a little different from previous years. There will still be powerful preachers and valuable networking, but there will also be spaces—in-person and online—for spiritual practices related to listening to the Word in new ways, connecting with one another in healing community, and claiming the rest we deserve in God's embrace. Early bird discounts apply through Feb. 15. [Learn more.](#)



Other Event Reminders:

- [Mental Wellness Day](#) - Jan. 27 | Zion, Chisago City
- [ICONS in Transformation](#) - Jan. 28-March 31 | Augustana, West St. Paul
- [Cultivate Confidence: Lead Powerfully as a Woman in Ministry](#) - Jan. 29-Feb. 2 | Online
- [Caregivers in a Care-less Society](#) - Jan. 31 | United Theological Seminary & Online
- [Discerning God's Call Retreat](#) - Feb. 28-March 1 | Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria
- [Communicators Retreat](#) - March 7 | Mt. Olivet Retreat Center, Farmington
- [Synod Assembly](#) - May 10-11 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi
- [Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts](#) - July 29-31 | St. Olaf College, Northfield

SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

Bishop Patricia Lull

- Feb. 4 - All Saints, Cottage Grove (installing Pastor Wes Kimball)

Pastor Justin Grimm

- Feb. 4 - Tri United Parish [Harris, Spring Lake, Stanchfield] (preaching)

Deacon Krista Lind

- Feb. 4 - St. James, Burnsville (preaching and installing Pastor Jenny McLellan)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

[ELCA](#)

[Living Lutheran](#)

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 | 651-224-4313

