



# News *and* Events

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

March 17, 2025

Centered in Christ Jesus, we welcome you to the Saint Paul Area Synod (ELCA), a network of congregations and other ministries.

We are committed to the community around us and around the world.

We support, empower and advocate for all, believing God's love embraces all persons equally, no matter their age, ethnicity, race, abilities, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, citizen status, political leanings, religious expression, or any other boundaries the world uses to decide who is worthy and who is not.

We are striving to be open and inclusive.

We commit to loving YOU and caring for YOU by showing YOU the love of Jesus that we have been taught through the Great Commandment to love God wholeheartedly and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

Saint Paul Area Synod Welcome Statement | approved at 2021 Synod Assembly

***Registration closes at 5 p.m. on Wednesday!***

**Worship in an Inviting Church**

**Saturday, March 22 - 9 a.m.-3 p.m. | Trinity, Stillwater**

Ponder, practice and experience worship for a new day! All congregations across the synod are encouraged to send rostered ministers, musicians, tech teams and others involved with worship planning to attend this event.



We'll talk about how to welcome new faces, what makes for vibrant worship in today's world, and how to balance remaining true to our Lutheran identity with experimentation and other traditions. It's a great opportunity to reflect on your current congregation's worship context...and imagine what it could be.

Bishop Patricia Lull will kick off the day with a deep dive on worship and its importance for congregational vitality and inviting others into life in Christ. The day includes workshops (see below), lunch and a closing worship. The cost is \$25 per person, which includes lunch.

**REGISTER**

**Choose Two Workshops:**

## Embodied Hospitality: Sacred Spaces & Faces of Welcome

Our church buildings and body of Christ convey messages of welcome. Learn simple strategies to foster an environment, both architectural and relational, that create a positive lasting impression.

Embodied Hospitality comes in many forms: prayer, food, follow-up, faces and spaces. At this workshop, you'll discover practical tips to enhance your welcoming presence to both visitors and members. **Presenters:** *The Rev. Dr. Karna Moskalik (Our Savior's, Stillwater), Church Building Consultant Anne Gerrietts (Langer Construction)*



## Can Technology Be An Open Invitation Into Worship?

Participants will be asked to reflect on existing opportunities in their congregation's worship and consider if technology might be part of their next steps. We will share an overview of creative ways to use screens, videos and other technology to invite people into renewed worship experiences. How might technology be an opportunity to expand ministries, invite outsiders, and help worshippers engage more fully in vibrant worship? **Presenters:** *Deacon Nina Joygaard and Tech Team Leader Daniel Diemer (Faith, Forest Lake)*



## Contemporary Worship in a Lutheran Key

Just starting a contemporary worship service or want to improve the one you have? This workshop will equip you with the basics for structuring a service using a contemporary musical and liturgical form, while staying consistent with Lutheran theology.

Participants will learn skills for leading worship that engages the congregation, explore resources for music and liturgical texts, and gain an overview of what makes a worship service "Lutheran." **Presenters:** *Sara Renner (St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi), Nate Crary (Christ the King, New Brighton)*



*Applications Now Accepted!*

### **Young Adult Travel Grants**

Thanks to funding through the synod's Planting Hope Campaign, grants are now available for young adults who are planning trips with their congregations to visit companions in Guatemala and Tanzania. Applicants ages 16-35 are invited to apply for funds of up to half the total cost of their travel.



Global partnerships have provided life-changing experiences for many in our synod and the grants are a way to make those experiences more accessible to young people. This ties into one of the Planting Hope Campaign goals of raising up the next generations of leaders. Please help us spread the news to potential young travelers in your congregation! [Learn more.](#)

### **Who Can Vote at Synod Assembly?**

Synod Assembly voting members include both rostered ministers serving under call (in congregations or in specialized ministry) and lay voters elected by their congregations, typically during the congregation's annual meeting. At Synod Assembly, voting members may make decisions about governance, mission and finances, as well as



elect members of Synod Council or other committees. These voters are not designated “representatives” of a congregation (like elected officials), but they are asked to take seriously the responsibility of voting with their conscience for the well-being of the synod. [Click here for the 2025 Voter Allocation Chart](#), which shows how many voting members each congregation in the synod may bring.

Besides voting members, assembly registrations may also include:

- **Retired Rostered Ministers** – These participants are allowed to address the assembly during proceedings, but may not cast a vote. [Unless they are one of the retirees elected at the 2025 Retired Minister Caucus, retired rostered ministers have “voice” but no “vote.”]
- **Advisors** – These participants are allowed to address the assembly during proceedings, but may not cast a vote. They include rostered ministers not under call (ie. on leave, retired or in study) except for those selected as voting members, lay synod staff, lay members of synod assembly committees, representatives of synod partners in ministry, representatives from the ELCA synod and churchwide offices. [Advisors have “voice” but no “vote”]
- **Visitors** – These participants are attending assembly as observers due to a personal interest in a topic or as participants in the mission fair. [Visitors have neither “voice” nor “vote.”]

**Assembly business takes place on two days this year!** The business of the assembly begins on Friday, May 16, at 7 p.m. and will include elections and deliberations on resolutions and memorials, as well as the Churchwide representative's presentation. The assembly reconvenes on Saturday, May 17, at 8:30 a.m. for more business, festive worship and Dr. Lois Malcolm's keynote address. A mission fair featuring work groups, ministry partners and affiliated organizations is open on Friday from 5-7 p.m. and on Saturday through the lunch break. Under this year's assembly theme of "Called to Invite," we'll be exploring what it means for each of us to be a witness to life in Christ. Online registration is open through May 2; at-the-door registration begins at 5 p.m. on May 16.



[LEARN MORE](#)

## **2026 Bishop's Election Committee**

At its March 13 meeting, the Synod Council appointed the following persons to serve on the Bishop's Election Committee:

- Pastor Marty Ericson - Como Park Lutheran, St. Paul (chair)
- Pastor Cindy Bullock - Immanuel, St. Paul
- Pastor Sarah-Friesen-Carper - Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Roseville
- Pastor Joy Knoppel - Christiania, Lakeville
- Deacon Brad Mills - Crossroads Parish, New Brighton and Mounds View
- Melissa Taphorn - Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley (member of synod council)
- Mark Jackson - St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi
- Annie Morgan - Amazing Grace, Inver Grove Heights
- James Her - Eternal Flame, Vadnais Heights
- Sue Fairchild - Shepherd of the Hills, Shoreview
- Jeff Garretson - Elim, Scandia

The timeline for the Bishop's Election Committee's work will be shared at the Synod Assembly this May. The Saint Paul Area Synod will be electing a new bishop in May 2026.

*Application deadline extended!*

### **Summer Internships**

We know there are some additional promising young adults out there so we're extending the application deadline to March 24 for the synod's summer internship program. Applications are still being reviewed as they are submitted so the sooner the better to apply!

**Young adult summer internships  
for ages 17-21**

Application deadline extended to March 24  
but they're reviewed as received...so act fast!

Generous \$4,000 stipend  
for 20-24 hours/week

Up to 10 interns selected  
to learn & serve

Variety of non-profit  
sites & positions

[spas-elca.org/summer-internships](https://spas-elca.org/summer-internships)

Up to 10 interns will serve at sites that focus on feeding the hungry, working with refugee/immigrant populations, social work, working with children, community gardening or working with the elderly. The interns will receive a \$4,000 stipend, funded by the synod's Planting Hope Campaign, while working 20-24 hours per week, June 9-Aug. 22. The interns will also meet weekly as a group for learning, conversation and worship. Please share the news about this great program that provides young people a meaningful summer work experience, along with an opportunity to learn, serve and reflect. Pastor Bristol Reading, who serves as the pastor at St. Luke in St. Paul, will again coordinate this program. [Learn more.](#)

[Download a flyer you can share with young adults in your life!](#)



**PRAYER SERVICE FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS**

Thursday, March 27 at 9 a.m. | St. James Lutheran, Burnsville

Scripture, music & prayers with other pastors and deacons in the synod



## **Cultivating Good Soil Through Prayer Ministry in Your Congregation**

**Saturday, April 5 - 9 a.m.-12 noon | Gustavus Adolphus, St. Paul**

As people of God, we are rooted and connected in prayer. Our congregations are fertile places for uniting in prayer and deepening our spiritual practices. Join us as individuals and/or teams to experience and learn spiritual practices.

Participants will:

- reflect on why prayer matters
- learn about different models of prayer ministries
- experience a variety of spiritual practices

You'll leave transformed and motivated to do something powerful with prayer in your home church! Your presenters are Pastor Justin Grimm (assistant to the bishop for congregational vitality) and Deacon Nina Joygaard (Faith, Forest Lake). Registration is \$10 per person.

**REGISTER**





## **Guatemala Friends Gathering**

**Saturday, April 5 - 9:30-11 a.m. | King of Kings, Woodbury**

The Saint Paul Area Synod has a companionship with the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG), the Lutheran church of Guatemala. Join supporters of the companionship to learn about the elementary school that the ILAG runs:

the Colegio Luterano Agustino de Guatemala (CLAG). Pastor Esther (the founder), Pastor Beatrice (the administrator), and one of the dynamic teachers will be on Zoom to share the successes and challenges of this 25-year-old ministry with children from marginalized neighborhoods. Opportunities for supporting the school will be shared. No registration is necessary; just show up!



## **Spring Ministerium**

**Tuesday, April 8 - 9 a.m.-12 noon | Beaver Lake Lutheran, Maplewood**

Rostered ministers of the synod are invited to gather for a meaningful worship service with the renewal of vocation and Holy Communion. Bishop Patricia Lull will preach. Following fellowship and refreshments, we will hear from Peg Carlson-Hoffman and Chuck Hoffman, who create space for community, spirituality and social change through their art and workshops.



Chuck and Peg are former executive directors of Holden Village in Washington State. Peg is a painter, lettering artist and designer and formerly served as creative director and product developer for Hallmark Cards. Chuck is a painter and designer, formerly employed as a creative director for the Walt Disney Company. He received the Art & Innovation Fellowship and the St Paul Interfaith Scholarship Award from Luther Seminary, where he completed his M.A. in art and theology. There's no registration fee, but please let us know if you plan to attend!

[REGISTER](#)

## Keeping Kids Safe From Guns

**Tuesday, April 8 - 7-8:30 p.m. | Online**

Guns are a leading cause of death for American children and youth. This program will help you learn how to help keep kids safe from guns and to practice communication strategies around gun safety.

ENGAGE: Lutherans for Gun Violence Prevention is hosting this program, which will be led by representatives from Be SMART, an organization that reaches out to all community members, gun owners and non-gun owners. The Be SMART approach is endorsed by the Minnesota Department of Public Safety, the National Parent Teacher Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and many other agencies. [Register to receive the Zoom link.](#)



## The Everflowing Stream Webinar Series

**Tuesdays Through March 25 - 7 p.m. | Online**

Lutheran Advocacy-MN invites you to a new webinar series featuring non-partisan presentations from LA-MN/ELCA staff and partner organizations with the goal of

providing information, rekindling hope and taking meaningful action toward a more just future. Dates and topics include:

- March 18 - International Disruption (USAID, poverty-focused assistance and the Palestinian crisis)
- March 25 - Poverty and Hunger (housing, nutrition programs, Medicaid, safety net cuts)

Sessions will include a review of the ELCA's theological stance (Why do Lutherans care about this topic?) and Q&A with panelists. [Learn more.](#)



### **Deletion of Facebook Live Videos**



If your congregation streams its worship services or other activities as live videos on Facebook and uses that platform as your sole archive, take note! Facebook will soon begin deleting live videos older than 30 days. If you want to keep those past recordings, you will need to download them and find an alternate storage system. You can download videos one by one in your activity log on your profile or you can download them all at once. [Click here for details about the new policy and download instructions from Facebook.](#)

Facebook says they will notify you via email and on your Facebook page about when this change will take place for your account. Once you're notified, you'll have 90 days to download your live videos or transfer them to cloud storage. Two common options for video hosting are YouTube and Vimeo. [Click here for an article that compares the two services.](#)



## **Mental Health Faith Forum**

**Saturday, May 3 - 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. | Trinity,  
Stillwater**



This event helps empower communities to support addiction and mental health recovery. You'll hear inspiring talks from experts and advocates and updates from state policymakers, visit informative exhibits, and be part of the launch of a new *Our Stigma* podcast. (The podcast will offer an informational and emotional exploration of mental health and addiction stigma across various faith communities and cultures. An accompanying study resource will also be launched and copies will be available at this event.)

The Mental Health Faith Forum features faith community leaders, Minnesota state policymakers and mental health/addiction experts sharing their expertise in an educational setting. The event includes cultural programming, speakers, and a large Q&A session. Indigenous, Hmong, East African, and African American presenters will all contribute to the discussion. The keynote speaker is social media influencer Kody Green, who has overcome challenges that include addiction, incarceration and serious mental health struggles. Registration is \$15 per person. [Learn more and register.](#)



## **Healthy Boundaries Training for Those in CYF Ministry**

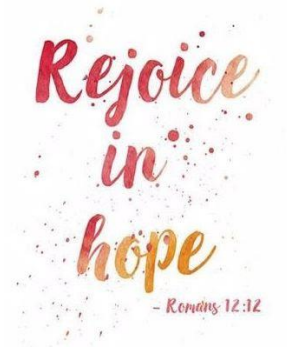
**Tuesday, May 6 - 6-7:30 p.m. | Online**

For professionals and volunteers who work with children, youth and family ministry in ELCA Region 3 (which includes Minnesota, South Dakota and North Dakota). Participants will explore their own relationship to power, boundaries and authority, gaining insights into how these dynamics shape their leadership. Beyond personal reflection, the workshop will equip leaders to actively foster wise boundary-setting skills in the young people they serve. Through discussion and practical strategies, attendees will be empowered to nurture healthy, trust-filled ministry spaces. Cost: \$10 donation to benefit Global Refuge. [Register here.](#)

## Synodical Women's Convention

**Saturday, May 3 | Holy Cross, Oakdale**

This year's synodical women's organization (SWO) convention has the theme of "Rejoice in Hope" from Romans 12:12. Featured speakers are Deb Hadley from TK Humble Hearts Foundation (keynote), Bishop Lull (Bible study) and Pastor Meredith McGrath (worship leader). The day will also include workshops by Amy Perron (MN STAR Program), Sally Harris (Radio Furaha) and Deanna Thompson (Joy, Patience & Perseverance in Christian Life Today), as well as a business meeting to elect officers and board members, consider resolutions, approve the budget and set future direction. It's also a time for community. The cost is \$45. [Learn more.](#)



## ELCA Young Adult Network Facilitators

The ELCA is looking for seven young adults to support the developing network of young adult leaders as Young Adult Network Facilitators. They will collaboratively work with other regional and synodical support systems for young adults as well as the many expressions of young adult ministry. For those of you who love to connect others and are passionate about building communities of leaders, this is for you! The monthly stipend is \$450. [Read the job description.](#) The application deadline is March 31; [click here to apply.](#)

## Exploring God's Call to Lead

Do you ever get a sense that God is tapping you on the shoulder? Are you wanting to learn more about church leadership and wondering whether it might be for you? Have you ever thought about enrolling in seminary, or even just wondered what seminary study is like today? You are not alone! The ELCA, in partnership with all our



seminaries, is once again offering online groups where you can share your curiosity with others across the church. Over three sessions, explore how God might be calling you to lead in the ELCA. Sign up by visiting [elcaseminaries.org](http://elcaseminaries.org) and filling out the contact form, or by emailing [recruitment@elca.org](mailto:recruitment@elca.org).

***Are you a rostered minister interested in leading such a group?*** Email [rick.summy@elca.org](mailto:rick.summy@elca.org) to learn more.

## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### **Recovery Café Frogtown's Reaching for the Stars**

**Thursday, April 10 - 5-8 p.m. | Faith, St. Paul**

Together, we shine brighter! Recovery Café Frogtown nurtures recovery, wellness and wholeness through connection, advocacy, hope and healing. You are invited to its spring fundraiser, which features a catered dinner, inspiring speakers, a live band and silent auction. The cost is \$50. [Learn more.](#)

### **Better Together: Jason Gray Live Recording Tour**

**Friday, April 25 - 7 p.m. | Faith, St. Paul**

Jason Gray is a contemporary Christian singer-songwriter who has toured with such performers as Jeremy Camp, Sanctus Real, Matthew West and many others. He won the ASCAP Performance Awards for *More Like Falling in Love* and *Good to Be Alive*. He has shared the stage with many major artists such as Michael W. Smith, Steven Curtis Chapman and Lauren Daigle. Admission is \$20 or \$40 for VIP access. [Learn more.](#)

### Other Events:

- [National Faith + Climate Forum](#) - March 27 | Incarnation, Shoreview
- [EcoFaith Summit](#) - April 5 | First Lutheran, Duluth & Livestream
- [All Hands on Hope MobilePack](#) - April 30-May 4 | Incarnation, Shoreview
- [2025 Synod Assembly](#) - May 16-17 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi
- [Seminar on Lutheran Liturgy](#) - Aug. 13-15 | Minneapolis
- [God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday](#) - Sept. 7

## SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

### Bishop Patricia Lull

- March 22 - Worship in an Inviting Church - Trinity, Stillwater (presenting)

### The Rev. Justin Grimm

- March 23 - Lutheran Church of Peace, Maplewood (preaching)
- March 30 - Tri-United, Harris/North Branch/Stanchfield

### Deacon Krista Lind

- March 30 - Tri-United, Harris/North Branch/Stanchfield

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

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*The Saint Paul Area Synod, which includes 106 congregations and new mission starts,*

*is one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*



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