



News and Events

SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

July 28, 2025

We Are Church Together:

Synod Staff

Thank you for your congregation's faithful and generous sharing of mission support with the synod and churchwide expressions of the ELCA during June 2025. One of the ways we are church together is through the work of the synod staff.



Did you know the word “synod” means “walking together”? That’s just what your Saint Paul Area Synod does with its 106 congregations and mission starts. The line item in our budget for “staff” is significant (about 41% of our annual expenses), and

that's because it takes staff to coordinate the important work of support and accompaniment.

Synod staff regularly field calls from congregation members and council leaders seeking information and resources related to finance, governance and other areas. Some resources we maintain right on our website for easy access, such as annual compensation guidelines, misconduct policy guidelines and model constitutions. Speaking of our website...do you know that one of the most visited pages of our site is the [job postings](#) page? Synod staff maintain an active job board, posting job openings at congregations and affiliated organizations in and near our synod. This is an important service for our congregations and congregants!

Call processes – the process by which a congregation calls a pastor or deacon – take up a significant portion of staff time. At any given time, the Bishop and her assistants may be accompanying 20-30 congregations in pastoral transition. Throughout this time they work closely with councils, interim pastors and call committees through in-person meetings, Zoom calls and phone calls.

Synod staff also make being present with congregations in worship and conversation a priority. The staff receive invitations to serve as guest preachers, celebrate congregational anniversaries, lead conversations about the synod's work or join with a congregation in installing a new pastor or deacon. It is a joy to walk with congregations in their local ministries.

Some synod programming is geared particularly at lay leaders, such as the annual Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders. Other events for congregations include congregational vitality, stewardship, vision/mission/value retreats. Occasionally the synod hosts in-person or online gatherings for niche segments, such as council presidents, congregational communicators or financial folks. Our staff also support affiliated ministries gatherings for children, youth & families activities and women of the ELCA and the programming of our public witness work groups.

Your mission support helps us be church together as synod staff accompany congregations in their work and mission. Thank you!



Draw your church together, O God, into one great company of disciples, together following our teacher Jesus Christ into every walk of life, together serving in Christ's mission to the world, and together witnessing to your love wherever you will send us; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

A prayer for the mission of the church (ELW p. 75)

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly meets this week in Phoenix, Ariz.

Please keep the wider church and its voting members in your prayers.

[Click here for the livestream and updates.](#)

Registration is Open!

Bishop's Theological Conference

**Sunday, Oct. 12-Tuesday, Oct. 14 |
Arrowwood Resort, Alexandria**

This event is for rostered ministers for pastors and deacons in the Saint Paul Area Synod, including those who are retired. The Bishop's Theological Conference is a time for study, worship, unstructured time and abundant conversations.



This year's featured speaker is the Rev. Heidi Neumark, recently retired pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan. She was a founding member of South Bronx

Churches, an ecumenical community organizing group that trained local leaders, built hundreds of low-cost homes, and established a top-ranked public high school. Rev. Neumark is the author of three books, including *Sanctuary: Being Christian in the Wake of Trump*.

Members of the Bishop Election Committee will also be present at the conference for a listening session as we prepare for a new synod bishop in 2026. The conference registration is \$525 for a single room and \$475 for a double (additional fees when paying by credit card).

REGISTER

Mission Support Dinner

Monday, Aug. 18 - 6-8 p.m. | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi

In celebration and gratitude for generous giving to the Saint Paul Area Synod, we want to say **thank you!** This dinner is an opportunity to hear stories of how programs and ministries are making a difference to the people and congregations of our synod. We invite each of our congregations to send up to three representatives...

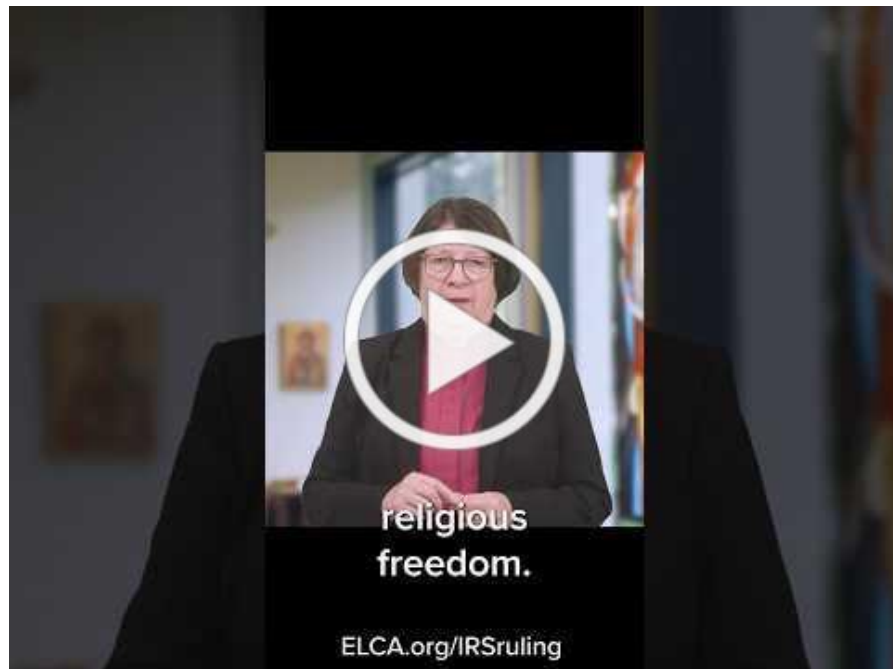
preferably a mix of rostered ministers and lay leaders involved with your congregation's financial decisions. There's no charge to attend. We'll eat together, celebrate ministries that make a difference, and express our gratitude for our congregations, who make it all possible. You may sign up your three representatives on the same registration.



REGISTER

A Message From the Presiding Bishop

In a recent video message, ELCA Bishop Elizabeth Eaton addresses the recent IRS ruling that suggests the agency may interpret the Johnson Amendment in ways that would allow churches and other religious organizations to engage in partisan activity. Emphasizing the importance of safeguarding the Johnson Amendment, Eaton says, “theologically, it keeps partisanship out of religious organizations and, for our church, protects the proclamation of the gospel and the right administration of the sacraments as the unique purpose and calling of God's church and our congregations. At the same time, it allows appropriate avenues for advocating for God’s justice and concern for good social order.” Watch her message here:



Addressing Hunger:

Praying With Your Feet

*by Vernita Kennen - Incarnation,
Shoreview*



Are you praying with your feet? Or at least with your hands? We in the ELCA talk about doing God's work with our hands and each year many of us celebrate a September Sunday as "God's Work, Our Hands" Sunday by being visible in our communities and reaching out to our neighbors.

During this year, which has been a difficult one for those of us who work to end hunger both here and around the world, we have often been discouraged. It's hard to persist with energy when cuts are being made to foreign aid, to Medicaid, and to SNAP, just to name a few. We know that so many social justice issues are interrelated and watching the dismantling of many programs makes us fear for prospects ahead.

Now is not the time for us to give up! This is the time for us to remember that God never promised us results every time we asked, nor for quick answers to our prayers. But God does promise care for all, both people and the planet. We are not continuing with our hunger work for a short sprint and then victory. We are in this for what has turned out to be an even longer marathon than we had hoped.

[Read Vernita' full message.](#)



CYF Healthy Boundaries Training

Tuesday, Sept. 16 - 6-7:30 p.m. | Online

ELCA Region 3 is offering another Healthy Boundaries Training for professionals and volunteers who work with children, youth and family ministry. 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 also 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. The presenters are Pastor Emily Carson of the Southeastern Minnesota Synod and Cherish All Children's Joy McElroy. The cost is a \$10 donation to benefit Lutheran Social Service's Camp Noah. [Learn more and register.](#)



EVENTS OF INTEREST

Mental Health First Aid Certifications

ADULT - Mental Health Connect is offering ADULT Mental Health First Aid Training on Saturday, Aug. 16!

This is a skills-based training that teaches people how to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of a mental health or substance use challenge in adults ages 18 and over. This course will teach you to see signs of mental health struggles and prepare you to have a conversation with people you see struggling. [Register here.](#)



YOUTH - Mental Health Connect is offering YOUTH Mental Health First Aid Training on Saturday, Aug. 23. This training teaches parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and

any other adult how to identify, understand and respond to an adolescent (ages 12-18) who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. This course will teach you to see signs of mental health struggles and prepare you to have a conversation with youth who you see struggling. This session is a blended course: some material will need to be completed online prior to the in-person training. **[Register here.](#)**

Both trainings will be held at 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Minneapolis. Registration for either course is \$30 per person and includes lunch plus snacks. Scholarships are available; contact the Rev. Hannah Campbell-Gustafson at hannah@mhconnect.org.

Creating a Dementia-Friendly Congregation

Thursday, Aug. 21 - 6-8 p.m. | Online

Learn strategies to create a congregation that is knowledgeable, understanding, and compassionate towards people and families affected by dementia.

Going beyond the basics of dementia, faith community nurses will learn how best to support both persons with dementia and their families through evidence-based practice related to daily care, improved communication, maintaining mobility, increased accessibility and safety, and how the love of Christ can be shown in everyday life. Presenter Dr. Kristin Mauk is professor of nursing and associate dean of graduate studies and research at the School of Nursing and Health Professions at Colorado Christian University. This training from the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association is designed for faith community nurses and open to other nurses and non-nurses alike. The cost is \$30 for LFCNA members and \$50 for nonmembers. **[Learn more.](#)**



Celebration for Changing Lives Gala

**Saturday Sept. 20 - 5:30 p.m. | The Depot,
Minneapolis**



Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota invites you to its gala, which celebrates 160 years of sharing Christ's love for all people through service that inspires hope, changes lives and builds community. Join them in honoring the lives we've touched and the communities we've strengthened together...and help create even more life-changing moments in the future. Individual tickets are \$175; a table of 10 is \$1,750. **Learn more and register.** (Tables tend to fill quickly so register soon!)



From Scratch: One Table

**Thursday, Sept. 25 - 4:30 p.m. | Gustavus Adolphus, St.
Paul**



You are invited to Shobi's Table annual fundraiser! Come and gather to support our pay-as-you-can food truck, one of the Synod's mission development sites. Together we will celebrate how the Shobi's Table community invites everyone around one table to experience God's Love. The social hour begins at 4:30 p.m.; dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. with a program to follow. Registration opens Aug. 1. **Learn more.**



Other Events:

- **Who's Addressing Addiction in the Church?** - July 30 | Online
- **Gather Twin Cities Lakeside** - Aug. 10 | Diamond Lake Lutheran, Minneapolis
- **Summer Music Clinic** - Aug. 11-12 | Gloria Dei, St. Paul
- **Seminar on Lutheran Liturgy** - Aug. 13-15 | Minneapolis
- **Lutheran Night at Target Field** - Aug. 14 | Target Field, Minneapolis

- **Habari [News] From Iringa** - Aug. 14 | St. Mark, North St. Paul
- **Discerning Your Call: Exploring the Next Faithful Step** - Aug. 17 | Our Savior's, Faribault
- **Guatemala Friends Summer Picnic** - Aug. 19 | Central Park, Roseville
- **God's Work. Our Hands. Sunday** - Sept. 7
- **Peace of the Prairie Retreat for Church Musicians** - Sept. 11-13 | Shalom Hill Farm, Windom
- **Becoming a Health Promoter** - Sept. 16 & 30, Oct. 14 & 29, Nov. 11 | Online
- **Global Health Ministries' 2025 Symposium** - Sept. 27 | Normandale Lutheran, Edina
- **Guatemala Gala** - Sept. 28 | Midland Hills, Country Club, Roseville
- **Lutheran Campus Ministry-Twin Cities Fall Gathering & Fundraiser** - Oct. 9 | University of Minnesota, Minneapolis
- **The Word in an Inviting Church** - Oct. 25 | Prince of Peace, Burnsville
- **Joint Fall Ministerium** - Oct. 30 | Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Roseville
- **Bega Kwa Bega Fall Festival** - Nov. 8 | Incarnation, Shoreview

SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

The Rev. Justin Grimm

- Aug. 3 - Mt. Calvary, Eagan (preaching)
- Aug. 10 - Faith, Forest Lake (preaching)

Deacon Krista Lind

- Aug. 10 - Eternal Flame, Vadnais Heights (preaching)

Blogs

Calendar

News About Calls

Job Openings

ELCA

Living Lutheran

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.



spas-elca.org | 651-224-4313