



Synod E-news

April 13, 2026

News & Events from the Western North Dakota Synod



EVENTS CALENDAR



MINISTRIES



TRANSITIONS

Schweitzer Appointed Executive Director ELCA Christian Community & Leadership

The Rev. Craig Schweitzer has been appointed to a four-year, renewable term as executive director for the Christian Community and Leadership home area of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

"As I am preparing to step into this new role in the wider church, I know you will be with me," said Schweitzer in a letter addressed to his siblings in Christ across the Western North Dakota Synod. "Though my call is changing, our shared mission and ministry remain the same: to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ and to embody his welcome in a world that longs for belonging. Thank you for the gift of serving as your bishop. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life."

Schweitzer will begin his call with the churchwide organization on Sept. 8. The Rev. Sara Cutter has served as interim executive director for Christian Community and Leadership since September 2025.



[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER NOW](#)

2026 WND Synod Assembly

Rough Rider Center | Watford City, ND

May 29 - 31, 2026

Look for news and event updates posted on the [Synod Assembly page](#) as they become available.

"Jesus said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'" (Luke 10:2)

Grounded in Jesus' sending of the seventy in Luke 10:1-9, the 2026 Western North Dakota Synod Assembly gathers under the theme ***Walking Together***. The word "synod" literally means "walking together". As people of faith who call the congregations of this synod their faith home, we are called into relationship and sent into the world two by two. At this year's synod assembly, we will gather for worship, holy conversation, and faithful decision-making. As we listen for the Spirit's guidance, we will be invited

to deepen our connections, strengthen our common life, and recommit ourselves to God's mission of healing, hope, and peace in our congregations, communities, and across western North Dakota.



2026 Pre-Assembly Workshop

featuring Rev. Nathan Mugaas

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)



Equipping Storytellers: Practical Tools for Storytelling in Your Church

Friday, May 29, 2026 1:30 – 4:30 PM CDT

Stories build connection and bring faith to life. Join pastor, speaker, humorist, and award-winning storyteller Nathan Mugaas for a practical and engaging workshop designed for both preachers and lay leaders. Drawing on his roots in western North Dakota and early ministry in the synod, Nathan offers simple tools for discovering and sharing meaningful stories that strengthen connection and enrich congregational life.



Inn at Hunter's Run
3617 6th Ave NE
(701) 444-1100
\$99.00 + tax and fees
(Breakfast included in room price)



Little Missouri Inn & Suites
109 9th Ave SE
(701) 842-6262
\$99.00 + tax and fees
(Breakfast included in room price)

Reserve Your Room for Synod Assembly

Hotel room blocks have been made at the following places and are reserved under "Western North Dakota Synod".

Room blocks are reserved until April 29th, after which rooms will likely be unavailable.



Roosevelt Inn and Suites
600 2nd Ave SW
(701) 842-3686
\$99.95 + tax and fees
(Buffet breakfast available for a fee)



Teddy's Residential Suites
113 9th Ave SE
(701) 842-6480
\$109+ taxes and fees
(Breakfast can be purchased next door at Little Missouri Inn)

Walking Together to Make Sacred Connections



Bethel Lutheran, New Town, has made *Sacred Connections* by *Walking Together* with the indigenous community of the MHA Nation. They need to raise \$10,000 in matching funds in order to receive a \$10,000 grant from the ELCA for this ministry. Please come to Synod Assembly prepared to help this ministry by bidding for a chance to win a quilt or a handmade item. All proceeds will be used to meet the matching funds needed to maximize this grant's potential.

The most significant part of this ministry is gifting star quilts and other quilts for milestone life events such as funerals, weddings, and baptism.

Contact Pastor Tera at the [Western North Dakota Synod Office](#) to donate a star quilt or other type of quilt, or to make a monetary donation.



Collection Sites and Dates Set

Quilts and kits for Lutheran World Relief will be collected in several communities across the WND Synod, offering comfort and care to those who need it most.



Participating congregations may drop off their quilts/kits from **9AM - 4PM** at Midwest Motor Express in the following cities:

- **May 18-19 in Dickinson (77 9th Ave East)**
- **May 20-21 in Minot (1900 22nd Ave SE)**
- **May 20-21 in Bismarck (5015 Main Ave East)**
-

If you have questions, contact info@wndsynod.org.

BOUNDARIES WORKSHOP

APRIL 16TH
(in Burlington, ND)

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APRIL 17TH
(in Bismarck, ND)

ONE DAY ONLY
BOUNDARIES
workshop



Merriam-Webster defines a boundary as "something that shows where an area ends and another area begins." As a synod, we are committed to providing you with opportunities to explore the intersections of healthy boundaries and your core identity as a beloved child of God. We are also committed to providing a safe and supportive space in which we explore what this means together.

Join us from 9:00am-3:30pm on April 16th at Peace Lutheran Church in Burlington or April 17th at Bismarck Veterans Memorial Library in Bismarck for a one-day boundaries workshop, led by Pastor Emily Carson, Director for Evangelical Mission & Assistant to the Bishop for Generosity, Stewardship and Financial Administration, in the Southeastern Minnesota Synod. Pastor Carson

has been facilitating power and boundaries workshops for lay and rostered people across the country for the past 9 years.

Each session is limited to 35 participants.

[CLICK HERE to register for the Burlington workshop.](#)
[CLICK HERE to register for the Bismarck workshop.](#)

LCM Chili Cookoff

Leaders from area ELCA congregations will gather on:

**Sunday, April 26th
from 5-7PM
at Christ Lutheran Church in Minot**

for the annual Lutheran Campus Ministry Chili Cookoff. All are welcome to join the fun and are invited to bring a friend who might be interested in learning about how our congregations care for young adults at Minot State University.



To help satisfy a growing need, DEM Tera Kossow has arranged for pastors of the WND Synod to provide one video sermon and manuscript to share each month.

The next monthly sermon will be for **Sunday, May 31st**. When videos and manuscripts have been produced, the links are activated for download on the [Congregations](#) page of the WND Synod website. You can find the complete list of sermon videos and manuscripts on that page.

The list of available sermons will be updated on this page as they become available. Check back often.

WATCH THIS



2027 ELCA Youth Gathering

Minneapolis, MN will host the ELCA Youth Gathering in 2027! The Gathering's theme, **Imagine More**, is based on Ephesians 3:20 (Inclusive) and will be a space for young people to Imagine More - love, welcome, joy, courage, and grace.

SAVE THE DATE



2026 BISHOP'S CONVOCATION

When: September 20th, 21st & 22nd, 2026

Where: Metigoshe Ministries, Bottineau, ND

Accommodation Options:

On-site through Metigoshe Ministries - (701) 263-4788

Lake Metigoshe Quilt Inn - (701) 263-6500

Cobblestone Inn in Bottineau, ND (701) 534-2121



LED *by* FAITH

An academy for Lay Ministry, Enrichment, and Discernment.

About LED By Faith

LED By Faith is a Lay Ministry Training Academy in ELCA Region 3. It prepares lay leaders to serve faithfully in their congregations and communities through practical courses, spiritual growth, and mentorship. Courses are offered in a hybrid format (in-person and Zoom) to make participation accessible.

Why Join LED By Faith?

- Strengthen your leadership & ministry skills
- Deepen your spiritual growth
- Connect with peers across Region 3
- Experience a flexible hybrid format

2026 Courses

May 7-9, 2026

Leadership/Stewardship

Aug 27-29, 2026

Pastoral Care

Oct 1-3, 2026

Worship

Location

Luther Crest Bible Camp, Alexandria, MN

Format

In-person & Zoom

Schedule

Thurs 7-9 p.m.

Fri 9 a.m.-9 p.m.

Sat 9-11 a.m.

2027 Courses

- Lutheran Confessions
- Bible
- Preaching

Learn More & Register: <https://region3ledbyfaith.wixstudio.com/led-by-faith>

LED By Faith - Lay Ministry, Enrichment, & Discernment

Building Leaders, Growing Faith, Serving Communities



LWB-ZENTRUM
WITTENBERG
LUTHERISCHER
WELTBUND

31st LWF International Theological Seminar for Pastors

You may know about the international theological seminars that are organized at the LWF Center in Wittenberg

This year's seminar is entitled, "**Basics of Lutheran Theology – Preaching the Word of God and Celebrating the Sacraments**" and will be held November 7-21, 2026 at Colleg Wittenberg, Juedenstrasse 8, D-06886 Lutherstadt Wittenberg.

Bishops and church leaders are asked to nominate pastors for this fruitful, cross-cultural dialogue that will strengthen the communion of the LWF. Accepted participants will return to their respective home churches better equipped for the challenges in their ministry. And for the home churches, these seminars provide the opportunity to offer their pastors additional theological education and spiritual formation.

Nominations are being accepted through May 11, 2026.



Registration for the [2026 Rostered Ministers Gathering](#), happening July 6-9 at the JW Marriott in Indianapolis, Ind., is **now open**! All ELCA deacons, pastors and bishops (under call, on leave or disability, or retired) and candidates approved for call are invited to a time of intentional connection when we can renew our strength, enjoy camaraderie with colleagues and reflect on the Holy Spirit's work among us.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER TODAY](#)

Your registration fee includes access to sessions with keynote speakers, small-group discussions, affinity groups, workshops and more.

Regular Registration: April 1–June 5

Registration fee: \$400

A limited number of scholarships are available. For more information on how to apply, visit the [Rostered Ministers Gathering webpage](#). Gathering participants will be responsible for arranging their own travel and event accommodations. You can find more information about accommodation options on the [Rostered Ministers Gathering webpage](#).

Comfort & Renewal Spring Grief Session

Thursday April 16, 2026

In Person Option:

9:30-11:30am CST

at CHI St. Alexius Hospital, Bismarck



Online Option:

5:30-7:00pm CST

Online Only Via Zoom

To Register Call 701-530-4563 or email
angie.kutzer900@commonsprit.org

(Location and online link provided once registered)





Soul Shop: Ministering to Faith Communities Affected by Suicide

May 7th, 2026

8:30am - 4:30pm

It's estimated that one out of every two people in a given congregation has personally been affected by suicide. Soul Shop trains faith community leaders to offer support, hope and connection to those in their congregations.

Co-sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, Soul Shop equips participants with the resources and guidance they need to foster hope and healing in their community.



Program Details

Who should attend?

Faith-based leaders and anyone who feels CALLED to respond to suicidal desperation.

Location

Clarion Hotel Convention Center
2200 E Burdick Expy
Minot, ND 58701

Cost

\$25, includes all training materials, CEUs, breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

Register

afsp.org/SoulShopMinot

or use the QR code

Questions?

Barb Hanson

BarbHanson2309@gmail.com

Samantha Christopherson

SChristopherson@afsp.org

Access to Luther Seminary Archives Temporarily Paused for Inventory Work

Access to the Luther Seminary Archives will be temporarily paused for church partners and external researchers from April 1 through August 31, 2026.

During this period, archives staff will focus on inventory, processing, and preparation of the collections for the seminary's anticipated move to a new location in the Twin Cities following the 2026–27 academic year.

Archives staff will respond to individual research questions on a case-by-case basis throughout the spring and summer. Please contact archives@luthersem.edu for support.

To learn more visit [Luther Seminary online](https://www.luthersem.edu).



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



LUTHERAN FAITH COMMUNITY
NURSE ASSOCIATION

Lutheran Faith Nurses

A national search is on for Registered Nurses who are trained as Faith Community/Parish Nurses and who are interested in joining the Lutheran Faith Community Nurse Association. If you are or know a Faith Community/Parish Nurse, please consider joining this vital network. A search is also on for ELCA churches that are interested in beginning a Health Ministry Program.

[Learn more and join this association.](#)



DIALOG
WORKS

Conversations to shape
a congregation's future.

Conversations Shaping the Future

Here you will find practical tools to help leaders develop skills, confidence, and capacity for the future.

[Browse upcoming live courses.](#)



SPIRIT IN THE DESERT

Connect. Refresh. Renew.

Spirit in the Desert hosts programs and retreats for participants of all faiths to experience reconciliation, renewal and healing.

[Browse upcoming events.](#)



Suicide Prevention Skills for Rural Ministries

Together with a cohort of other faith leaders, you will learn approaches and skills that equip you for prevention, intervention, and postvention (bereavement) tasks so you can effectively care for people struggling with thoughts of suicide or those impacted by suicide.

[Learn More and Register for this course](#)



Global Refuge
Welcoming Newcomers Since 1939

Welcoming the Stranger

Guided by our call to welcome the stranger, Global Refuge (*formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service*) has developed resources especially for you and your congregation.

- [Welcome the Stranger Worship Order](#): Everything you need to lead worship highlighting scripture, prayers, liturgy and hymns about seeking and providing refuge.
- [Journey to Welcome Educational Simulation Exercise](#): An educational and service-based activity which is a great fit for students, church youth groups and even adults.
- [Disinformation Toolkit](#): a toolkit for countering disinformation through common myths and facts as well as talking points and stories to share with community.
- [Fresh Change Service Project Opportunity](#): Pack bags to welcome our neighbors at the border and throughout the country with care and dignity.
- [Bulletin Inserts](#): Download bulletin inserts about our new name and what we do to share in your community.



Our [most recent Mission Support memo](#) takes us into a two-day training on *Facilitation Fundamentals* by our ELCA innovation team. It's a room full of ELCA staff from across the country, across churchwide units, in all levels of positions. A few people know each other, but everyone will leave knowing each other. They wonder what the pile of Post-it notes is all about but quickly realize it's to collect each person's imaginings and ideas that then help the group surface insights quickly, ensure everyone is heard, and allow people across roles and hierarchy to contribute equally. Read to hear how valuable folks are finding this approach. Also a tool for our synods is included in the memo, the *Thank You Certificate*, to celebrate our congregations generosity.

In these times, staying connected through our stories seems vitally important, so please share your stories by contacting us at missionsupport@elca.org.

As always, you can get [the memo in pdf](#).

We cherish hearing about the inspiring stories in your synods, regions and congregations - feel free to reach out to Karen at karen.kretschmann@elca.org.



Lutheran
Disaster Response

Lutheran Disaster Response Training & Engagement Catalog

[Click to Download Your Copy, Now](#)



2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts (CWTA)

The 2026 Conference on Worship, Theology, and the Arts (CWTA) is a high-quality, affordable conference, full of practical ideas that you can adapt to your own setting, along with meaningful worship experiences...for ministry practitioners, by ministry practitioners. It will be held **July 20-22, 2026**, on the campus of St. Olaf College, Northfield, MN.

You are invited to participate!

CWTA attracts participants from many different roles, including experienced and first-call Pastors, Deacons, and other church professional leaders; Lay people including lay leaders; Church workers – volunteer and paid; Children youth and family ministers/leaders; Artists; Church musicians; Christian education professionals; Outdoor ministry professionals; Seminarians; Others interested in deepening theological understandings and spiritual practices; and Members of congregations that are reimagining their vocation. **We'll provide opportunities for you to find those people at the conference so you can connect and share experiences.**

More information about the exciting program and registration can be found on our website. We invite you to explore it and [register today!](#)

Holden Pilgrimage on the Prairie

A collaboration between Holden Village and Shalom Hill Farm will be hosted at the beautiful prairie setting of Shalom Hill Farm in Windom, Minnesota, August 2-7, 2026.



This five-day retreat will offer a wealth of opportunities to gather for communal worship, creative expression, and faith exploration. Following the program tradition of Holden Village, there will be five nights of Evening Vespers including the beloved Holden Evening Prayer and other music created at Holden Village. Newer liturgical compositions, written specifically for Shalom Hill Farm, will also be featured.

For more information [email SHF Farm and Program Manager Zach Davis](#) or call (507) 850-4549.

Space is limited! [CLICK HERE to sign up to receive announcements today!](#)



Will you host a baby shower? A diaper drive?

Heart River Bridges of Hope is inviting you to help us meet a need at the Heart River Correctional Center, a women's prison located on the same campus as the Youth Correctional Center. There are currently about 70 women incarcerated at that facility, and a much larger women's prison is under construction on the same campus.

Unfortunately, some of the inmates are pregnant and babies will be cared for by family members or friends during the mother's incarceration. HRCC staff have reached out and asked for help with baby items. Here's the message we received:

We are in need of some baby items as we continue to have pregnant women transferred to our care. We love to be able to send them off with some starter items to help ease the burden of families and to make their pregnancy time feel special. I don't know if the church can assist with any of these, but here are some of our current needs if you are able to help us out:

1. Newborn diapers (smaller packs are best)
2. Baby wipes
3. Baby hygiene items (lotion, baby wash, diaper cream, towels etc.)
4. Bibs/Burp cloths
5. Baby socks and onesies
6. Baby hats/glove sets
7. Footed snowsuits
8. Newborn or 0-3 month clothing (especially neutral or for girls).

We still have plenty of receiving blankets and washcloths. We are totally okay with gently used items.

Please contact Pastor Gail Hagerty with questions info requests – pastor.gail@heartriverlutheran.org.

Thank you for the ongoing gifts of quilts and fresh start kit supplies. Our ministry to youth and women who are incarcerated is truly a ministry of the synod and a ministry that touches lives.

WORSHIP RESOURCES AVAILABLE

On June 14, 2026, Trinity Lutheran of rural Kenmare, ND will its Holy Closure service. After that time, they will have items available for churches of the WND Synod. If you are interested in any of the following, please contact Jean Quigley, at 701-340-9026.

- 27 - "With One Voice" songbooks
- 26 - "Family of God" red hymnals
- 40ish - "Lutheran Book of Worship" green hymnals
- 1 - banner "I am the Way"
- 1 - piano and piano bench (tuned in 2025)
- 1 - Advent wreath
- 1 - 24" x 36" framed picture of Jesus
- 2 - silverplate candle sticks with candle caps (Sudbury)
- 1 - 24" tall stainless-steel cross (Sudbury)
- 1 - Silverplated communion cup with lid
- 1 - Metal liturgical bookstand (with Lutheran Book of Worship for altar)
- 1 - 4.5 foot candle lighter/snuffer
- 2 - brass plated metal altar vases
- 1 - Set of seasonal altar cloths



[Click to email Jean](#)



Employment Opportunities

If you or someone you know is being called to work as a congregational leader, [CLICK HERE](#) to check our website for job openings at some of our WND Synod Congregations.



Introducing: The New ELCA.org



If you've visited ELCA.org lately, you might have noticed the new look and feel. Updated and enhanced features include:

- **ELCA.org** provides a central location to nurture your faith and discover community.
- With [Enhanced search and guided exploration](#), **ELCA.org** including the ELCA's resource library, congregation profile information, Living Lutheran articles and the ELCA's seeker site to provide better search results. Navigate resources, learn about key topics and find communities of support.
- Easier navigation to find and connect with ministries and programs to help you act on your faith.
- The clean and modern feel allows you to enjoy an inviting, clutter-free design.
- It's made for everyone following accessibility best practices.

[Explore ELCA.org today](#) and discover more about who we are as a church.

Visit the WND Synod Website



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