



Western North Dakota Synod
 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
 God's work. Our hands.

Synod E-news

March 16, 2026

News & Events from the Western North Dakota Synod



EVENTS CALENDAR



MINISTRIES



TRANSITIONS



[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.

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.



Worship News

Copyright Guidelines for Worshipping Communities

Do you have questions about copyright and permissions when using worship materials? [“Guidelines for Worship Use of Material Under Copyright”](#) is a resource on the Augsburg Fortress website. This document contains information to help you navigate and report resources. It includes a handy chart based on the kinds of permission you are seeking.



The Palm Sunday Path is a growing, ecumenical movement of church leaders that recognize now is the time for Christians to publicly witness to our Christian values as laid out for us by Jesus in Matthew 25. We will publicly and visibly discuss and advocate for these values of feeding the hungry, healing the sick, and

welcoming the stranger. We will stand up to violations of these values by our elected leaders and we will call on every elected leader at every level - regardless of party - to work with us on policies that promote these values.

Together, we will join in with those in other upper Midwest states and across the country in a non-partisan path of action with multiple points of entry, roles, and room for everyone who holds these values.

The Palm Sunday Processional Worship taking place on Sunday, March 29th, 2026 will begin at Trinity Lutheran Church (502 N 4th St, Bismarck) at 3:00pm. We will process to the steps of the ND State Capitol Building. An ecumenical worship service highlighting our values of feeding the hungry, caring for the sick, and welcoming the stranger will start at 4pm on the Capitol Steps. While an RSVP is not required, RSVPs help our core team prepare for the event.

[CLICK HERE to be taken to the website where you can RSVP to this event.](#) You can also download the Palm Sunday Path Toolkit to help share this movement with others in your circles and communities.

BOUNDARIES WORKSHOP

APRIL 16TH
(in Burlington, ND)

APRIL 17TH
(in Bismarck, ND)

ONE DAY ONLY
BOUNDARIES
workshop

Western North Dakota Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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.

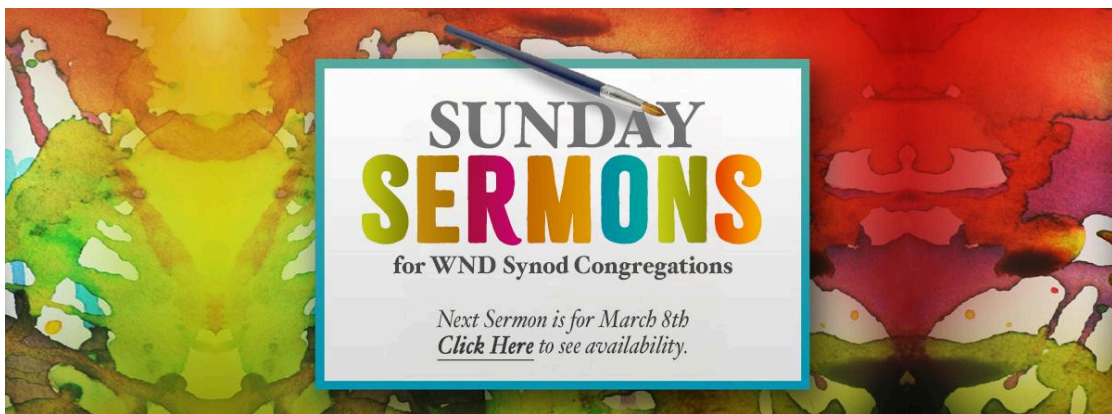
Each session is limited to 35 participants.

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

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

WE HAVE MOVED!

As of February 23, 2026, the offices of the Western North Dakota Synod of the ELCA are located at **1830 North 11th Street in Bismarck**. We invite you to stop by and check out our new digs!!



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, March 8th**. 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.



Rejoicing  Spirirts



502 N 4th St.
Bismarck, ND 58501

Rejoicing WORSHIP Spirirts

2ND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
AT TRINITY LUTHERAN @ 2 PM

This innovative ministry is an inclusive worship service that provides people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (and people who love and support them) with an opportunity to worship and to be themselves while actively participating in an inclusive faith community.

All are welcome

WATCH THIS



WE WILL NOT GROW WEARY

A joint pastoral video message from Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and all Minnesota synod bishops

We Will Not Grow Weary

Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry and ELCA synod bishops from Minnesota offer a joint pastoral video message addressing immigration activity. The bishops acknowledge the uncertainty being experienced by many in Minnesota and in other parts of God's kingdom, and they remind this church that in our lament we still hold fast to the promises of Christ and the assurance that we are not alone.

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



Lutheran
Disaster Response

2026 Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care Academy

The 2026 Disaster Emotional and Spiritual Care Academy is a six-week program offering live, free online webinars to help faith and community leaders address needs emerging from disaster and other crises. The program is scheduled for March 24 through April 28, 2026, from 10:00am to 11:30am Central time. Participants can register for all sessions in one registration, which will include links and reminder emails for all programs in this series. The academy is a collaboration of various organizations and is designed to provide pragmatic and informative sessions for all levels of experience and expertise.

- **March 24, 2026** - *Calm in Crisis*
- **March 31, 2026** - *Talk Saves Lives* (suicide prevention)
- **April 7, 2026** - *Responding with Care: A Trauma-Informed Approach...*
- **April 14, 2026** - *Risk and Protective Factors*
- **April 21, 2026** - *Tools for Building Resilience*
- **April 28, 2026** - *Emotional and Spiritual Care in Human-Caused Disasters*

Webinars will not be recorded.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER NOW.](#)

For more information, contact Kathy Riley at Presbyterian Disaster Assistance.

This series is brought to you by collaborative organizations including: Church World Service, Crisis Care Ministries, International Orthodox Christian Charities, Lutheran Disaster Response, Oklahoma Conference of the United Methodist Church, Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Prevention Division, Presbyterian Disaster Assistance - PC (USA), United Church of Christ, Week of Compassion, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with additional support from the Center for Disaster Philanthropy



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

Woven Together

ROSTERED MINISTERS GATHERING

JULY 6-9, 2026

INDIANAPOLIS,
INDIANA

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.

Early Registration: Jan. 9–March 31
Registration fee: \$325

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](#).

CHURCH PROPERTY RESOURCE HUB

You are invited to learn more about the [Church Property Resource Hub](#), a new project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), at one of three **upcoming town halls**.

These webinars are an introduction to the project for congregations and all people connected to the management of church property. Join to explore support available to congregation leaders as they seek to steward property in faithful and practical ways.

Tuesday, March 17, 1 p.m. Central time
[Register now for this event.](#)

Thursday, March 19, 4 p.m. Central time
[Register now for this event.](#)

Tuesday, March 24, 1 p.m. Central time
[Register now for this event.](#)

Developed in response to requests from synod and congregational leaders, the Church Property Resource Hub offers support in navigating the **opportunities and challenges that buildings and land represent** for congregational vitality and the wider mission of the church.



COURSES &
RESOURCES

Find **resources** and expand your knowledge of church property management through templates, guides, explainers; and **courses**.



SUPPORT
FORUM

Share advice and get support from colleagues with experience answering property management questions, all on our digital **forum** (forthcoming).



SUCCESS
STORIES

Be inspired by **success stories** of faith communities using underutilized space in exciting new ways to fulfill their missions.



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

You want *me* to donate? *Why?*

**Virtual Stewardship Workshop
Thursday, March 19 at 6pm**

The Western North Dakota Synod invites you to an hour with Rev. Pete Reuss, our partner at GSB Fundraising. In this virtual workshop for leaders in our synod, Rev. Peter Reuss of GSB Fundraising will help congregations consider:

- Why would people want to give to your church?
- The ways that congregations in the Stewardship for All Seasons process utilize this approach to grow their giving by 10-15% in the first year

Contact Pete at reuss@gsbfr.com to receive the Zoom link.

On the theme, Pete shares:

A few years ago, as a congregation struggled with finances, a pastor shared, "Our congregation has three millionaires, but none of them will bail us out!" Of course they wouldn't! Our invitations to give can sound like financial transactions. "You have money. We need money. Can we have some please?" This approach quickly leads to diminished giving, donor fatigue, and a feeling of scarcity. It doesn't have to be this way. As Henri Nouwen reminds us, "Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we congregation conveys a clear, mission-based reason for giving, it's actually quite easy to invite people to make significant gifts to make that mission possible. Even things as unexciting as a parking lot or debt reduction can have a clear missional purpose!



REV. PETER REUSS
CFRE, PARTNER

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@GSBfundraising

www.GSBFundRaising.com



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](#) persuades us to realize how closing a congregation can develop a new ministry, just as Memorial Lutheran let go to become Riverside Commons in Nashville, TN. Explore how Riverside Commons will be a "neighborhood space for the sake of the world," aiming to serve as a spiritual, artistic and social hub for East Nashville. Also learn how to join an important ELCA Town Hall: "Introducing The Church Property Resource Hub" with three days and times in March.

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.

opening borders
ABRIENDO FRONTERAS

El Paso, Texas - Juarez, Mexico
April 10-17, 2026

Sponsored by the
Western North Dakota Synod

Facilitator: Vicki Schmidt

You are invited to join this delegation to explore issues of immigration and hear the stories of those who live the daily struggle for survival along the border of Texas and Mexico.



\$600 plus airfare
Contact Vicki Schmidt for information and application forms:
Veschmidt45@msn.com

Learn more: openingborders.com

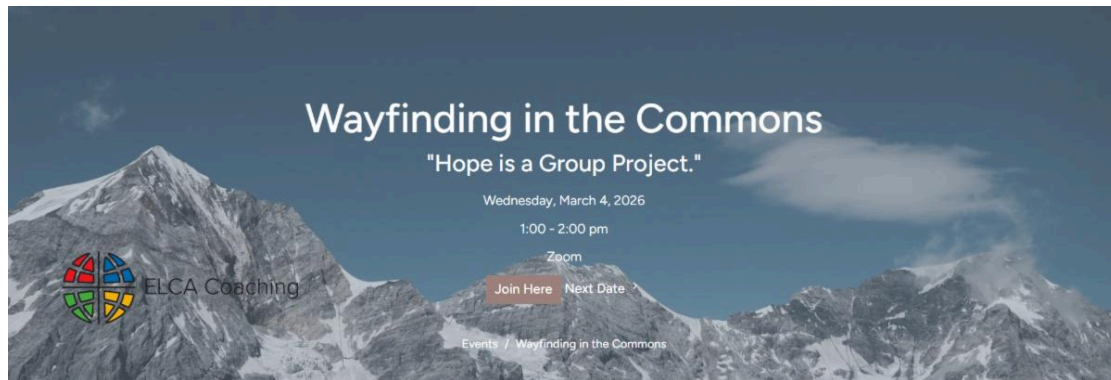
Rostered leaders and congregational members are invited to join an upcoming delegation to the U.S. border **April 10-17, 2026** to learn firsthand the realities of immigration and how our policies affect those seeking safety and a new life in the United States.

This will be a challenging and meaningful experience, inviting honest questions and deep listening as we hear stories of trauma, resilience, and hope.

We will meet people of faith and organizations who accompany the most vulnerable and live out the Gospel's call to compassion and justice. If you feel drawn to learn, listen, and be transformed, we invite you to consider being part of this delegation.

Please [contact Vicki Schmidt, Border Immersion Facilitator](#) if you are interested in attending: [\(701\) 361-4517](tel:7013614517), or veschmidt45@msn.com.

If you'd like to ask questions of a past delegate regarding prior experiences, contact Pastor Natasha Woitzel-Kolles: natasha@gslcbismarck.com



“You ever notice how the inner voice that says we're powerless, and that this will never work, is louder when you feel alone? Loneliness and isolation amplify despair, but community, partnership, and action are the anecdotes. Hope is a group project.” – Jemar Tisby

You are invited to join us Wednesday, March 4, as we explore [Wayfinding in the Commons](#).

What to Expect: We will be gathering together online the first Wednesday of each month for Community, Learning, Clarity (which creates Agency), and at least one Actionable Step. We will be meeting for about 45 minutes, starting at 11am Pacific | 12noon Mountain | 1pm Central | 2pm Eastern.



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!](#)



Dakota Pro Musica presents

MUSIC OF AMERICAN FAITH

A concert of sacred music for choir and organ

The professional choir of Dakota Pro Musica
with guest organist, Christopher Wells

Saturday, March 21, 2026 at 6:00 pm

St. George's Episcopal Memorial Church in Bismarck

\$60/ family, \$25/ adult, \$5/ student at the door

Presale tickets available at a discount before March 18th

PHISHING ALERT
SPAM - SCAM - SPWARE - MALWARE

PHISHING SCAMS PERSIST

Congregations of the WND Synod
are not immune to
these malicious attacks!

PROTECT YOURSELF
CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

Email phishing is one of the most frequent forms of cybercrime, but despite how much we think we know about these scams, they still catch us far too often. According to Proofpoint's State of the Phish Report, 83% of organizations fell victim to a phishing attack last year.

Meanwhile, a Verizon Data Breach Investigations Report found that 25% of all data breaches involve phishing. These figures help explain why phishing is considered to be among the biggest cyber security risks that organizations face. With a single email, criminal hackers can steal our personal information or infect our devices with malware.

Fortunately, preventing these attacks can be as simple as knowing how to identify phishing emails. But how do you spot a scam email? [CLICK HERE](#) to read about five real-life examples demonstrating the common signs that someone is trying to scam you.



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.



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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