



Synod E-news

May 25, 2026

News & Events from the Western North Dakota Synod



EVENTS CALENDAR



MINISTRIES



TRANSITIONS

ALL THINGS ASSEMBLY



"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)

May 29th-31st, at the Rough Rider Center in Watford City, ND, leaders of the Western North Dakota Synod will gather for the 2026 Synod Assembly under the theme of ***Walking Together*** which is grounded in Jesus' sending of the seventy in Luke 10:1-9. Did you know, 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.

When it comes to the assembly, the thing on everyone's mind is, **WHAT DOES THE AGENDA LOOK LIKE?**

Because the synod will be electing a new bishop, there is no easy answer to that question. A tentative schedule has been [posted on the synod website](#). Just know that this schedule is subject to change based on the various ballot results of the bishop election.

Clear as mud, right? Hopefully the lack of a definitive agenda does not cause too much angst in your planning. We look forward to seeing you at the Rough Rider Center May 29-31!



SYNOD ASSEMBLY WORKSHOPS

PRE-ASSEMBLY WORKSHOP
Equipping Storytellers:
Practical Tools for

Storytelling in Your Church

Friday, May 29th 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.

Having grown up in a small rural church and serving his first call at Zion Lutheran in Minot, Nathan brings a deep appreciation for the strengths, relationships, and real-life challenges shared by congregations across our synod. This workshop is designed to encourage and equip both preachers and lay leaders, offering tools that strengthen communication, deepen connection, and bring fresh energy to ministry in congregations of any size.

Through live examples and a clear storytelling framework, participants will learn how to:

- Identify and “mine” meaningful stories already present in their congregation
- Shape stories for sermons, ministry moments, and seasonal services
- Tell stories with clarity, authenticity, and confidence
- Highlight the impact of ministry and shared life together
- Cultivate a congregational culture that celebrates the stories of faith and everyday life

Participants will receive materials to support reflection and continued storytelling beyond the workshop. Together we will explore how stories can bring warmth, humor, and renewed connection as we walk together in faith.



SATURDAY WORKSHOPS

Our lone breakout session on Saturday, May 30th will feature a variety of topics and presenters; ranging from light-hearted conversations to addressing pressing social concerns. There is bound to be a workshop that speaks to where the Lord is calling you.

- **Risk Management - Best Practices** with Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen
- **Suicide Stigma in the Christian Tradition** with Rev. Sylvia Bull
- **The Faith-Filled Magic of Camp** featuring our synod camp staffs
- **A Border Immersion Witness** from Rev. Natasha Woitzel-Kolles, Bruce and Cindy Carlson.
- **Best Stewardship Practices and Are You Ready for a Capitol Campaign?** with GSB rep. Paul Marsh.

SUNDAY WORKSHOPS

Sunday, May 31st, you will find an opportunity to catch a workshop you may have missed on Saturday or expand your learning with a few new and exciting topics. Sunday's featured workshops include:

- **The Ins and Outs of Cemeteries** with Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen
- **Christian Public Witness in the Age of Partisanship** with Rev. Sylvia Bull
- **The Work of Being a Neighbor** led by WND Synod Disaster Capacity Builder, Jen Engquist
- **Portico Benefits Tips & Tricks** with Regional Rep. Rev. Tim Schroeder
- **A Border Immersion Witness** from Rev. Natasha Woitzel-Kolles, Bruce and Cindy Carlson.

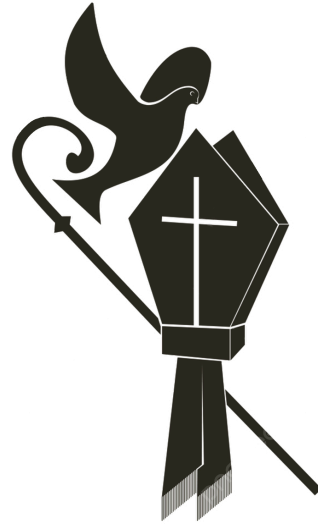
Additional sessions may be added as details become available.

WHO WILL BE OUR NEXT WND SYNOD BISHOP?

An ecclesiastical ballot and election of a new synod bishop will be held during the upcoming WND Synod Assembly. Throughout this discernment process, it may be helpful to know how an ecclesiastical ballot works and what is expected of our synod bishop.

[CLICK THIS LINK](#) to view a document explaining how the ecclesiastical ballot process will work when selecting the new bishop for the Western North Dakota Synod of the ELCA.

[CLICK THIS LINK](#) to view a document listing the job description for the Bishop of the Western North Dakota Synod of the ELCA.



RESOLUTIONS & MEMORIALS

There are 4 resolutions and 2 memorials being debated and voted on at this year's Synod Assembly. Take some time to familiarize yourself with these important items.

Resolution #1

**2027 WND Ministry
Financial Plan**

Resolution #2

**Rostered Minister
Compensation Guidelines**

Resolution #3

**Proposed Amendments to the
WND Synod Constitution**

Resolution #4

**On Forgoing Churchwide
Assembly Approval
of Social Statements**

Memorial #1

**To Authorize the
Presiding Bishop's Foreword
to Social Statements and
Social Messages**

Memorial #2

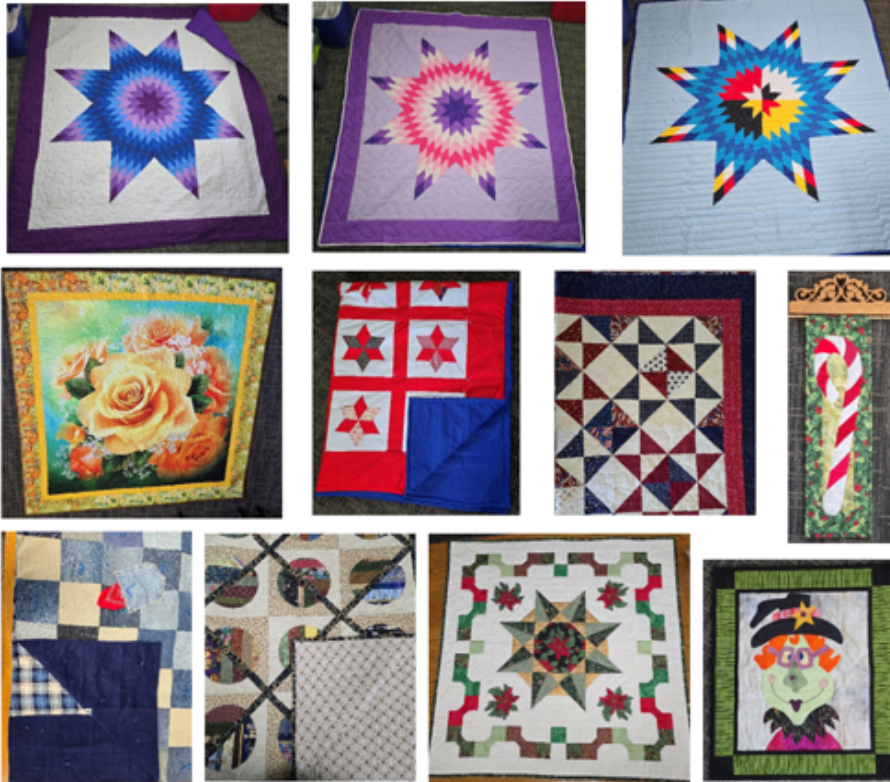
Superimposed Quotas

Preview Of Items Up for Bid During Synod Assembly



**Walking Together To Make
Sacred Connections Silent
Auction**

**Opens at 8am Saturday
Closes at 11am Sunday**





Paul Marsh - GSB Fundraising
WND Synod Stewardship Specialist
[Email questions to Paul Marsh](#)

Recruiting Volunteers

Today we find that recruiting volunteers is harder in many cases than inviting a major financial gift. So how do we go about inviting volunteer service?

Here's the GSB process:

- Create a list of every volunteer role needed at your church;
- Write a one-page job description for each role, that includes 3 to 5 tasks, a section describing the positive impact, the timeframe, contact information for a congregational leader in case of problems, and a couple of quotes from members who have served in this capacity before;
- Meet in person with the prospective volunteer, go over the job description and then ask them to serve;
- Provide a thorough half-day training and orientation.

Is this laborious? It is. But if you incorporate this process over a 3-to-4-year time period, you will see growth in dedicated volunteers and deeper engagement throughout your ministry.



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



A Long Legacy of Boldness & Hope

Starting in 1988, LMM has encouraged men to grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus Christ. Helping them become the men, husbands, fathers, sons, brothers and leaders God has called them to be.

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

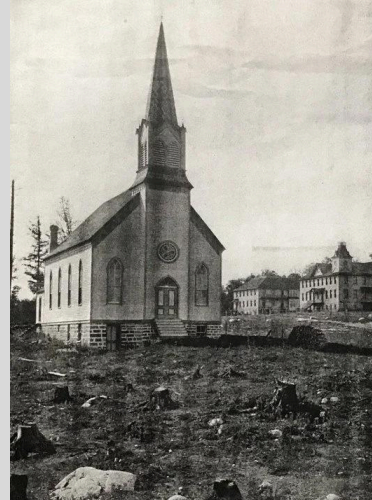
Lake Metigoshe Quilt Inn - (701) 263-6500

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

Indian Boarding Schools: ELCA Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative – Join the work

The Truth-Seeking and Truth-Telling Initiative is leading a coordinated effort to research Lutheran involvement in Indian boarding and day schools dating back to the 1820s. We are seeking both clergy and lay volunteers who want to be part of this initiative. All are welcome, including those with skills in research, data collection, organizing, education, and leadership. The goals are to find and gather information in order to share it with impacted Indigenous individuals, families, and communities; for our church members to know our history of church-sponsored Indian boarding schools and their devastating impacts on Native communities; all as part of an ongoing truth and healing process.

The work started in 2022 with 15 synods across four states. In May 2023, it expanded to 27 synods across ten states. We are now expanding to all synods across all states. We welcome you! To learn more and to get involved, click [HERE](#).



LSM Choral Gathering

A Day of Singing in Community

LSM LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC ACADEMY & FESTIVAL *at* St. Olaf College

Wednesday, July 1, 2026

St. Olaf College • Northfield, MN

Featuring Dr. David Cherwien
Lutheran Summer Music, faculty
National Lutheran Choir, former Artistic Director

Sing works by Abbington • Cherwien
Krentz Organ • Palestrina • Rizza

Learn More & Register

LSMacademy.org/choral-gathering

You are invited to join fellow singers for a day of inspiring, community-centered music-making at the LSM Choral Gathering. Led by Dr. David Cherwien, LSM faculty member and former Artistic Director of the National Lutheran Choir, this event offers a welcoming introduction to the music, people, and artistic life of Lutheran Summer Music at St. Olaf College.

Invite your choir members and join us! Register today: LSMacademy.org/choral-gathering

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](#).



EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER

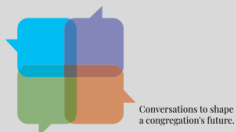


**LUTHERAN FAITH COMMUNITY
NURSE ASSOCIATION**

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.](#)

m DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

m DEPARTMENT
OF HEALTH

farmwell
wisconsin



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](#) immerses us in the story of Concordia Lutheran Church in Worcester, Mass. Founded to serve the needs of non-English-speaking immigrant families, the church has come full circle today, once again serving a diverse neighborhood of immigrants and refugees. This congregation is deeply committed to remaining an inner-city ministry that accompanies the community as it changes. Read the memo to learn about their journey and discover their incredible ministry for kids and teens. You will also find registration information for the Stewardship Kaleidoscope Conference, taking place September 21–23 in Baltimore, MD. Download the memo as

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.



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.

Visit the WND Synod Website



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