



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

Synod E-news

News & Events from the Western North Dakota Synod

November 10, 2025



EVENTS CALENDAR



MINISTRIES



TRANSITIONS



The **WND Synod SAM Summit** is scheduled for Saturday, November 22nd from 9:30 to 3:30 at Faith Lutheran Church in Bismarck. This day is intended for the Synod Authorized Ministers of the WND Synod to gather together to talk about your successes and struggles in ministry, as well as receive some helpful information for your ministry. This is an event that is a part of your SAM covenant, and, we hope, a priority for you and your ministry.

With it being winter in North Dakota, who knows what the weather/roads might be like! If you need a hotel room in Bismarck the night before the summit, please [contact Lesley](#) at the WND Synod office.

Register Now for the 2025 SAM Summit



Many of our neighbors are worried about how they are going to put food on the table. If you or someone you know are worried about food, there is help - you are not alone. There are local pantries and caring neighbors ready to lend a hand.

FIND FOOD for yourself or a neighbor at <https://greatplainsfoodbank.org/get-help/>

Click on the "Food Pantries, Soup Kitchens and Shelters" button.

Users can search by county and city using the interactive statewide map or clicking on county links below the map.

WAYS YOU CAN HELP

- Check-in with family and neighbors, ask "How are you?".
- If you can, offer a ride to the pantry or go to the pantry for them.
- Invite them to dinner.
- Bring them some extra groceries.

- Print them a list of pantries.

WAYS YOUR CONGREGATION OR COMMUNITY CAN HELP

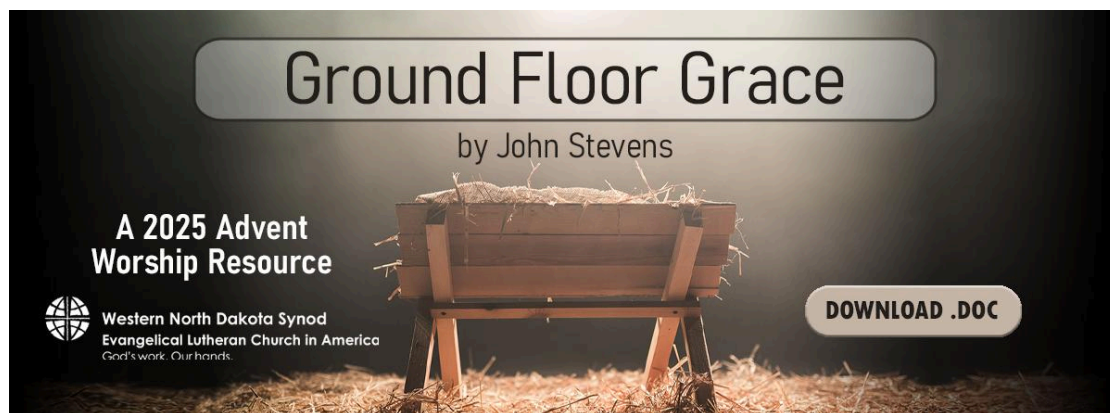
- Donate to your local food pantry. Did you know that \$1 donated to *Great Plains Food Bank* helps provide \$4 worth of groceries to neighbors in need!
- Host a food drive for your local pantry.
- If you have extra, unopened, shelf stable, nonperishable, not expired food, drop it off at your local pantry.

This is an extremely stressful time for many of us. Talking about our worries and fears can really help. Sometimes it's easier to open up to someone you don't know. If that's true for you, **CALL or TEXT 211** anonymously.

SEEKING STORIES! - Hunger/SNAP/Food Security

While we continue through this government shutdown and eventually its aftermath, we are seeking to highlight actions taken by our area churches. If you know of a hunger ministry or collaboration that is upping its game in this season, please notify our Synod Disaster Capacity Builder, [Jen Engquist](#)

This is intended to be a celebratory way of lifting up our congregations while we walk through these difficult times together. Thank you!



"To encourage and equip the ministries of the Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA, so that the Good News of Jesus Christ is proclaimed, and all God's children feel welcomed and included in the ministries to which God calls us."

It is our hope that this resource will equip clergy, synod authorized ministers, worship leaders, councils, etc., to share the Good News of Jesus Christ during the season of Advent.

A special thanks to the contributors for this resource, who helped experiment with the possibility of creating a gift to the Western North Dakota Synod:

Rev. Brad Dokken, Rev. Tera Kossow, Rev. Kim Gifford, Rev. Russell Lambert, Rev. Kathi Nygaard, Rev. Katie Rodriguez, Rev. Emmy Swedlund, Rev. Mary Wiggins, and of course, to Rev. John Stevens, Pastor, Zion Lutheran, Oregon City, OR, author of the book, "Ground Floor Grace".

[Please use this resource any way you like](#), feel free to edit it for your needs, and if possible, send a message to the Western North Dakota Synod - ELCA if you use it! We'd love to see how far it reaches

Cemeteries



Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen has authored a [memorandum](#) for congregations that care for rural cemeteries. The memorandum offers guidance for sextons, as well as guidance on risk management, legal requirements, and other issues. The memorandum can be found on the synod website under the ["Legal Resources"](#) tab.



Nominate Students for LSM

You're invited to [nominate a student](#) for LSM 2026! Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) is a faith-based residential music academy for high school students (grades 8-12) who come together from all over the country to immerse themselves in musical excellence and build an intentional, supportive, and FUN community. LSM 2026 takes place at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN from June 21-July 19 (Full Session) or June 21-July 3 (Half Session). Priority Enrollment is open now through December 1.

Nominate students at LSMacademy.org/nominate, and watch and share this [LSM Experience Video](#) to learn more!

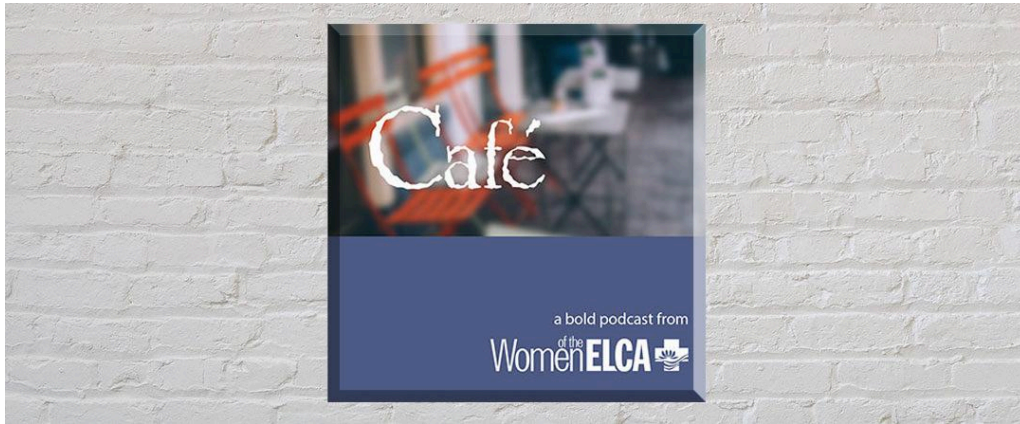
WATCH THIS



Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry Installation Highlights

View the highlights of the Installation of the Rev. Yehiel Curry as Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, October 4, 2025 at Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis.

LISTEN TO THIS



What Scripture Tells Us About God's Love

In the latest release from the collection of Podcasts for young adult women who want to build **Community**, participate in **Advocacy**, strengthen **Faith**, and strive toward **Enlightenment**, [CLICK HERE to join the Bold Café' podcast](#) from the Women of the ELCA.



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, November 23rd. When the next video and manuscript have been produced, the links will be 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.



Join Bishop Craig and Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen, Thursday, November 13th at 12:00pm CT for a brief introduction to changes to the 2025 model constitution for congregations. This informative Zoominar will highlight updates to congregational constitutions that were approved by the 2025 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. Bishop Craig and Mr. Sagsveen will provide information to congregational leaders about the updates and the best ways to implement them into your congregation's constitution.

[Follow this link to register.](#) Join the Zoominar on Thursday, November 13th.

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BRING GENEROSITY TO LIFE

Have you directed your **THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS** to a charitable organization yet?

Eligible members can recommend where Thrivent distributes a portion of its charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars®.

Your WND Synod and all three synod endowment funds are participating organizations (Ministry Endowment, Mission Endowment, Accompaniment Endowment).

It's an easy way to support the ministries of our church.

HURRICANE MELISSA

Your gift to Lutheran World Relief will deliver urgently needed support and care to neighbors affected by Hurricane Melissa.

lwr.org/melissa-relief

Thank you for sharing God's love with your neighbors when and where they need it most.



CONCORDIA COLLEGE
MOORHEAD, MINNESOTA

The Parish Nurse Ministry Program of Concordia College in Moorhead, MN will be offering the Foundations of Faith Community Nursing course March 5, 12, and 19 (on-line via ZOOM) and April 9, 10, and 11 (in-person at First Lutheran Church, 619 N. Broadway, Fargo, ND, 58102). The deadline to register is February 5, 2026. The program is open to licensed RNs who are interested in personal growth and/or starting a health and healing ministry within a faith community.

The program cost of **\$450** includes the participant workbook, current practice standards for FCNs, and a binder of program specific materials. We are working on the application to offer 36.5 contact hours (ANCC).

Please visit the [Concordia Parish Nurse Ministry website](#) for detailed information, program resources and to complete your registration. For additional information, please email Dr. Jean Bokinskie, PhD, RN, PNM Program Director, at bokinski@cord.edu or call/text 701-866-3063.

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 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](#)



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](#) allows us to feel a part of St John's Lutheran Church's Table Grace Ministries, where folks are fed in body with homemade meals, and fed in spirit through fellowship and alternative worship and prayer. Check it out to learn more about how Pastor Jennifer believes "we start with worship, so we can do the second worship of being Christ in the world."

We are excited to share the updated 2024 ["What Does My Offering Do?" poster](#). This poster shows how Mission Support impacts three major funding areas of the churchwide organization: "Building Christian Communities in the United States," "Growing the Global Lutheran Church" and "Strengthening and Sustaining the Ministry and Mission of the Whole Church."

Our gratitude this month is in celebration for the installation of our new presiding bishop, the Rev. Yehiel Curry, and the work of the Rev. Lucille "CeCee" Mills beginning as the ELCA's new secretary in November. They are looking forward to making connections!

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

If you want to access the memo in other ways, attached is both a .pdf and in Word .doc. 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.



Please join us for a virtual informational session:

SUPPORTING CHILDREN THROUGH HANDLE WITH CARE (HWC)

Handle With Care (HWC) is a powerful, community-based initiative that ensures children exposed to trauma receive the support they need, right when they need it most. It's built on a simple but profound idea: when a child experiences a traumatic event, the adults in their lives should be alerted to respond with empathy, not discipline.

Join this session to learn more about why it matters, how it works, & how to bring it to your community.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND?

First Responders, Law Enforcement, EMS, Educators, Parents, Mental Health Providers, Community Leaders—anyone who supports children.

JOIN

on NOVEMBER 13TH, 2025

12 – 1 PM (CT)

VIA ZOOM

Secure your spot today!

[REGISTER HERE](#)



You're invited to a one-hour free webinar titled **"Rethinking Addiction: A Faith Leader's Guide"** hosted by the Center of Addiction & Faith. Guest presenter will be Rachel Bowling, Director of SAFE Communities at SAFE Project, a national nonprofit working to end the addiction epidemic. Faith leaders are often called upon to support individuals and families navigating the complexities of substance use, addiction, and recovery. This session invites you to examine how we understand and respond to substance use and share insights from professionals and recovery advocates.

[CLICK HERE to register](#)



SAVE THE DATE

Called to One Another

CULTIVATING GOD'S KIN-DOM TOGETHER

A leadership summit for female-identifying and non-binary
Rostered Ministers in Region 3 - ELCA

Monday - Wednesday

Jan 12-14, 2026

Holiday Inn, Alexandria MN

Gather for a time of honest conversation and exploration of what makes a “quality call” experience. Our time together will be shared in scripture study, small groups, experiential learning, and the belief that “the wisdom is already in the room.”

Eight leaders will be selected from each of the 9 synods in Region 3 to participate.
Application and more information coming soon!

Funded in part by the Quality of Call Initiative for Women in Ministry of the ELCA.



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 our Website



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