

Synod E-news

October 13, 2025

News & Events from the Western North Dakota Synod









"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".

<u>Please use this resource any way you like</u>, feel free to edit to 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



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 on **October 20th in Minot** or **October 21st 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 8 years.

If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, more will be offered in the spring of 2026.

Each session is limited to 35 participants.

Register for the MINOT workshop

Register for the BISMARCK workshop

Quilting Needs Persist

First, we want to send a big thank you to all who participated in making the quilts donated to Heart River. It was heart-warming to see the response.

Recently, we became aware of an on-going need for **STAR QUILTS** for the indigenous ministries of Bethel Lutheran in New Town.

If you google "native american star quilt," you will notice these are made with triangles, not square blocks. Alternatively native prints or bear paw patterns may be culturally sensitive.



If you, or members of your congregation, are interested in participating in this ministry, star quilts may be left at the synod office.

Lutheran World Relief Collection Sites and Dates Announced

Offering comfort and care to those who need it most, congregations participating in creating quilts and kits for Lutheran World Relief can bring their items to the following drop sites.



Dickinson

• Midwest Motor Express - 9AM-5PM, October 20 & 21

Bismarck

• Midwest Motor Express - 9AM-5PM, October 23 & 24

Minot

• Midwest Motor Express - 9AM-5PM, October 23 & 24

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



Gather your group and get to the event of the year! LYO 2025: Wanted will be held October 16 & 17 (high school) and October 17 & 18 (middle school) in Dickinson, ND. CLICK HERE to find the details and to register online.

The Adult Leader Guide is downloadable here.

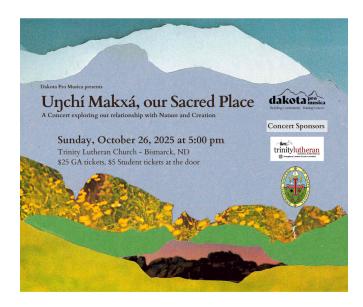
Also, we are taking youth nominations for the LYO Board. Fill them out, along with an Adult Recommendation form, and get them to <a href="https://www.www.nominations.com/www.nominations.

Rural Cemetery and Church Photos

Synod Attorney Murray Sagsveen has taken hundreds of photos of rural cemeteries and church buildings in the Synod counties and has posted over 540 photos on www.findagrave.com.

If you would like high quality photos, email the cemetery/church name, county, and legal description to Murray@wndsynod.org. If he has photos, he will email them; if he doesn't, it will be on his "to do" list.





Dakota Pro Musica presents: *Uŋchí Makxá*, *Our Sacred Place*

Dakota Pro Musica presents their first concert of their "Celebrating America!" season, titled "Uŋchí Makxá, our Sacred Place" which will explore our relationship with Nature and Creation from Native and non-Native perspectives. "Uŋchí Makxá" is Lakota for *Grandmother Earth* which is not just the physical place we live, but our sacred and spiritual home and provider.

Dakota Pro Musica's "Celebrate America!" season opener will feature

the professional choral ensemble of Dakota Pro Musica accompanied by strings and piano, directed by Dr. Jason Thoms, Founder and Artistic Director.

The concert will also include a youth drum ensemble led by Cedric Goodhouse Jr. from WOZU in Cannon Ball, students from Sitting Bull College reciting Lakota poetry, and flute songs and a retelling of a Lakota Creation Story by Dakota Goodhouse a professor at United Tribes Technical College.

The Bismarck concert will be on Sunday, October 26th at 5:00 pm at Trinity Lutheran Church in Bismarck. Tickets for the concert will be \$25 for adults, \$5 for students, or \$60 for families (2 adults and their children under 18). Season tickets for all the Dakota Pro Musica "Celebrating America!" concerts are currently available at www.dakotapromusica.org or on their Facebook page.

There will also be a free concert presented on Saturday, October 25th at 7:00 pm at St. James Episcopal Church in Cannon Ball, ND. Donations will be accepted at this concert.

WATCH THIS



Justice Ministry with ELCA Partners

You are invited you to watch "Intersections: Justice Ministry with ELCA Partners," a short documentary presented by ELCA World Hunger. "Intersections" explores stories from three ELCA companion ministries, responding to the overlapping root causes of hunger in the United States and around the world.



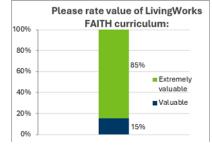
To help satisfy a growing need, DEM Tera Kossow has arranged for pastors of the WND Synod to provide one video sermon and manuscript to share each month.

When the next monthly sermon is prepared, it will be uploaded, and you will find it on the **Congregations** page of the WND Synod website. You can find the complete list of sermon videos and manuscripts on that page. When the next video and manuscript have been produced, the links will be activated and can be downloaded for use.

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

LivingWorks FAITH Curriculum

Last year, the MN Department of Agriculture and partners in Wisconsin and South Dakota offered a Suicide Prevention for Rural Ministry course, which paired the online LivingWorks FAITH course with four virtual discussion sections.



This program reached 75 faith leaders in MN, ND, SD, and WI and received strong positive reviews from participants.

We have 40 additional enrollments for LivingWorks FAITH available, and we want them to be used! The course typically costs \$150 per person, but we're making it available to rural clergy and ministry leaders from any denomination or faith tradition at no charge. The simple online application form is here.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Farm and rural suicides happen more frequently than in urban areas and are frequently shrouded with stigma. People may turn to clergy and other ministry leaders for help, but you may have little training in knowing how to ask someone about thoughts of suicide, how to connect them to help, or how to provide ministry after a suicide attempt or death.

ABOUT LIVINGWORKS FAITH

The course is interactive, online, and asynchronous (at your own pace). It takes approximately 6 hours to complete and teaches approaches and skills that will equip you for suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention (bereavement) tasks so you can effectively care for people who are struggling with thoughts of suicide or who have been impacted by suicide.

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Applicants must be clergy or other ministry leaders who work in a rural area of Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota, or North Dakota.

HOW TO APPLY

Visit https://forms.gle/jq9hcY5EHmcJ9r5t7 (this is a MN Dept. of Agriculture Google Form).

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER



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.



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.



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,



Global Refuge
Welcoming Newcomers Since 1939

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.
- <u>Disinformation Toolkit</u>: 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.
- <u>Bulletin Inserts</u>: Download bulletin inserts about our new name and what we do to share in your community.



Discernment Weekend

Are you wondering if seminary might be right for you? Consider joining Signs Along the Way at PLTS in Berkeley, California to connect with others in discernment, get to know PLTS faculty, and explore what it's like to be an online student in the MDiv, MA in Spirituality and Social Change, or Lutheran Year programs. PLTS is transitioning to only offer online study with in-person intensives, so this weekend is designed for those interested in online learning. PLTS covers lodging and meals during the event and can offer travel assistance for those who need it.

Visit plts.edu/signs to learn more and sign up.

Greetings from Kumamoto, Japan

Katie Narum Miyamoto, is an ELCA missionary to Kumamoto, Japan. Katie is originally from Minot, ND and grew up in the Minot area. She finished her Bachelors at Minot State in Music Ed and El Ed. She has been in Japan since September of 2000.

Get caught up on what has been happening in Katie's world by reading $\underline{\text{Katie's Newsletter}}$





The most recent <u>Mission Support Memo</u> offers a glimpse into Mary's path from accompaniment to advocacy as a Young Adults in Global Mission in Mexico City. Mary had her sights set on YAGM from early on and was eager to engage in this ministry. She was introduced to the core values of mutuality, inclusivity, vulnerability, empowerment and sustainability, allowing her and all YAGMs to explore what it means to join ongoing ministries — to serve, to learn and to share. Learn how, through her YAGM year, Mary grew in her passion to work for justice and give dignity to all God's children. We encourage you to also check out a new initiative of the ELCA, the <u>Church Property Resource Hub</u>, developed in response to requests from synod and congregational leaders for support in navigating the challenges and opportunities that buildings and land present for both congregational vitality and the broader mission of the Church.

You can even get the memo in pdf too!

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.



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.

Youth Musicians Invited to LSM 2026

Enrollment is now open for Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) 2026 at St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN! LSM is a faith-based residential music academy for high school students who come together to immerse themselves in musical excellence and build a supportive and fun community. Musical experiences include large ensembles (band, choir, orchestra), chamber music, private lessons, and electives like handbells, jazz, musical theatre, composition, conducting, church music, and more.

Priority enrollment deadline: December 1 Standard enrollment deadline: March 1 Learn more at LSMacademy.org/program







Join Bishop Craig A. Schweitzer and the Western North Dakota Synod on an unforgettable journey to Egypt—a land where ancient wonders and vibrant culture come to life.

Stand in awe before the Pyramids of Giza, sail along the majestic Nile River, and wander through temples that have stood for thousands of years. Feel the pulse of Cairo's bustling bazaars, marvel at sweeping desert landscapes, and, if you wish, unwind along the pristine shores of the Red Sea. Discover Egypt's deep Christian heritage as you visit historic Coptic churches, including the Hanging Church and the Church of Saints Sergius and Bacchus—believed to have sheltered the Holy Family during their time in Egypt—as well as the sacred St. Catherine's Monastery at the foot of Mount Sinai. From exploring its pharaonic treasures to savoring the bold flavors of Egyptian cuisine, every moment in this captivating country will leave you with memories to treasure for a lifetime.

DETAILS:

• Trip departs on January 22, 2027, and returns on January 31, 2027

PRICING:

- \$3,790.00 per person based on double occupancy (Land Only)
- Single room supplement \$790.00

PAYMENT PLAN:

• \$300.00 deposit per person with registration to secure space

• Balance due on or before September 26, 2026

REGISTRATION:

- Registering online? <u>CLICK HERE</u> and fill out the online form; you can pay by check or with a credit card (a nonrefundable 4% platform fee applies)
- Registering by mail? Please download and complete the registration form (both the personal
 information page and the terms and conditions page signed at the bottom) with a copy of
 your passport and a deposit of \$300.00 per person made payable to Elias Tours and mailed to
 4941 Chalden Ln NE, Marietta, GA 30066

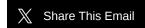


Employment Opportunities

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







Western North Dakota Synod-ELCA | 1000 Tacoma Ave, Suite 300 PO Box 370 | Bismarck, ND 58502 US

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