



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

October 27, 2025



EVENTS CALENDAR



MINISTRIES



TRANSITIONS

Ground Floor Grace

by John Stevens

A 2025 Advent
Worship Resource



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DOWNLOAD .DOC

"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



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.

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.



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.

WND SYNOD PRESENTS

SUNDAY SERMONS

To help satisfy a growing need, DEM Tera Kossov 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.

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.](#)



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.

Signs Along the Way

Oct 31st -
Nov 2nd
BERKELEY, CA

Discernment Weekend
4:00 pm Friday - 2:30 pm Sunday

plts

PACIFIC LUTHERAN
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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 EI Ed. She has been in Japan since September of 2000.

Get caught up on what has been happening in Katie's world by reading [Katie's Newsletter](#)



The most recent [Mission Support Memo](#) 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 [Church Property Resource Hub](#), 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.



- Supported
- Empowered
- Resilient

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](#)





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.



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? [CLICK HERE](#) 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](#)



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