



# News and Events

**SAINT PAUL AREA SYNOD**  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

November 25, 2024



## **Joy in the Presence**

*by Bishop Patricia Lull*

A week ago I was in Guatemala City for a visit to the Iglesia Luterana Agustina de Guatemala (ILAG), one of our global companions. I was accompanied by Pastor Justin Grimm, assistant to the bishop, and joined by Bishop Kevin Strickland and Pastor Justin Eller from the

Southeastern Synod. These few days together offered an opportunity to encourage our common work in the Gospel and to deepen the historic ties that bind us together....

The four of us from ELCA synods reaffirmed our concrete commitments to ILAG. Our engagement in Guatemala is most well known by those in a congregation-to-congregation partnership but I invite all of us in the Saint Paul Area Synod to step more deeply into this global partnership. How might you do that? Every congregation can pray for our global partners in Guatemala (and in Tanzania) each week in worship. Secondly, sign up for the partner newsletter [here](#), which highlights our common work, or attend an event or the fall gala, sponsored by the synod's Guatemala Committee. Know that it is not too late to become a partnership congregation, a process you can start by talking to me.

At the end of the journey, what sticks with me most is the incredible joy I felt in the presence of those who love and lead the church, as I do in this place. It was my privilege to preach during Sunday worship, exploring the words of Psalm 16 – *Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you.'* These days that's the kind of promise we all need to cling to. Then, like families everywhere, I sat at the table with my fellow travelers and hosts for lunch. Long after the dishes were cleared, we lingered, telling stories and laughing together with a trust that goes to the heart of all we do.

[Read Bishop Lull's full message.](#)



## ELCA Youth Gathering Input

The 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering is coming to the Twin Cities and Gathering staff would love to get some input from us locals! They are coming to the area in early December to hold two different listening opportunities: one for youth directors on Dec. 5 and one for middle/high schoolers on Dec. 7. [Learn more and RSVP.](#)



## Youth Ministry Gathering

**Tuesday, Dec. 10 - 3 p.m. | Insight Brewing, Minneapolis**

We're celebrating the holidays with a social hour this month! All youth ministry staff and key leaders are invited to this informal networking time. No registration is necessary; just show up!

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## ELCA Coaching



### Supportive Spaces: Support Group for Faith Leaders

As we process changes and transitions, we are often grappling with complex emotions and concerns for ourselves and our communities. In response, ELCA Coaching is hosting conversation opportunities for lay and rostered leaders to come together as people of faith, share experiences, and find healing and strength in community. Supportive Spaces is a cohort-based program designed to enhance the holistic well-being and effectiveness of church leaders. Registration is required, but there is no cost to participate. The next Supportive Spaces opportunity will be Dec. 5, 2-3 p.m. [Learn more.](#)

### Free Coaching Sessions

ELCA Coaching is offering three free coaching sessions for rostered and congregational leaders who are navigating troubled times and difficult spaces. These sessions will help leaders reflect on what happened, break through feelings of isolation/helplessness, process grief and develop a plan for moving forward. [Learn more.](#)

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**PRAYER SERVICE FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS**  
Tuesday, December 17 at 9 a.m. | St. Timothy, St. Paul  
Scripture, music & prayers with other pastors and deacons in the synod

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### Community Organizing for Climate Justice Course

Applications are now open for the 2025 Community Organizing for Climate Justice Program through the Center for Climate Justice and Faith at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. The program is fully online and meets weekly January-April 2025. The program is ideal for community leaders, faith-based organization staff, recent seminary graduates, congregation representatives passionate about climate justice, and more. Application deadline: Dec. 1. [Apply here.](#)

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## Musical Advent Calendar

Experience the anticipation and hope of the Advent season with Lutheran Summer Music's fourth annual Musical Advent Calendar. From Dec. 1-24, immerse yourself in a daily moment of music and reflection shared on LSM's Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube pages and archived on its [website](#). To have these daily videos delivered straight to your inbox, [sign up here](#).



## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival

**Friday, Dec. 13- 4:30 p.m.; Saturday, Dec. 14 - 1:30 & 8 p.m. |  
Basilica of Saint Mary, Minneapolis**

The National Lutheran Choir's 2024 Christmas Festival, "Healing of the Nations," seeks to bring a beacon of hope to all who open their hearts and listen. The concert includes the premiere of a new Christmas Suite by Taylor Scott Davis as well as works by James MacMillan, Galina Grigorjeva, Nancy Grundahl, Roland Carter, Anne Krentz Organ, and more. A new Children's Christmas Choir will sing alongside NLC. The 1:30 performance on Dec. 14 will be available to all via livestream. [Learn more.](#)



### Discerning God's Call Retreat

**Sunday, Jan. 12-Tuesday, Jan. 14 | Shores of St. Andrew,  
New London**

Are you wondering how God is calling you to serve? This three-day retreat by Luther Seminary will explore the theological concepts of vocation, the priesthood of all believers and the multiple callings that followers of Jesus live. Participants can carpool from the Luther Seminary campus or meet at the retreat center in New London. The cost is \$200 for double occupancy or \$240 for a single. Partial scholarships are available for prospective students. [Learn more and register by Dec. 16.](#)



## JUSTMove Lock-In

**Sunday, Jan. 19-Monday, Jan. 20 | Woodlake, Richfield**

Richfield Area Lutheran Youth and other partnering churches in the Twin Cities are putting together the second JUSTMove Lock-in for MLK, Jr. weekend. This justice-themed event is for students in 6th-9th grades, with community leadership roles for 10th-12th graders. There will be inflatables, games, a JUSTmove presentation by Joe Davis and David Scherer with music, poetry, storytelling, dance and conversation.

Registration is free (suggested donation of \$10 which will be given for 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering MYLE scholarships). [Learn more.](#)



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## NLC Choral Tune-Up

**Friday, Jan. 31-Saturday, Feb. 1 | Roseville Lutheran, Roseville**

The National Lutheran Choir invites musicians from your congregation to join them to connect with other church singers, learn new music and work with internationally renowned clinicians. Dr. Andre J. Thomas and Dr. Brandon Boyd will guide participants through the richness of Black sacred music. A master class on conducting kicks things off on Friday evening while a Tune-Up Festival & Concert is offered on Saturday for adult and youth singers, music directors and future educators. [Learn more.](#)



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## Faith Community Nursing Foundations Course

**Five Sessions in February-March**

The Faith Community Nurse Network of the Greater Twin Cities is offering the Foundations Course for RNs who want to become Faith Community Nurses (also known as parish nurses). Others may enroll but will not receive FCN certification. The course includes five sessions in February and March with content that covers:

- how to blend nursing knowledge and skills with the spiritual dimension of FCN practice



- steps for beginning FCN ministry including professionalism, communication, teamwork, legal and ethical issues
- how to promote whole-person health
- how healing, health, prayer and spirituality are integral aspects of FCN
- how to care for yourself as you care for others

[Learn more about the course.](#) Faith Community Nursing may include education, advocacy, resources and intentional care of the spirit as it relates to health. Want to learn more? [Watch a video](#) to hear a Twin Cities pastor discuss how a FCN is impacting ministry.

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### Contemplative Renewal Immersion

The Center for Clergy Renewal at Holy Wisdom Monastery is accepting applications for its cohort for Contemplative Renewal Immersions. This is an opportunity for early to mid-career (loosely three to 15 years past ordination) to walk in community with an ecumenical cohort of pastors for two years. The summer immersion will be held June 23-30, 2025. This will be followed by a winter immersion Jan. 22-28, 2026 and small group online gatherings running through the summer of 2027. [Learn more.](#)



The Center for Clergy Renewal at Holy Wisdom Monastery near Madison, Wisc., invites clergy to find rest at a Deep Breath self-guided retreat. Stays including food are covered by grants for up to six nights. [Learn more.](#)

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### A Sparked Imagination Writing Workshop

**June 23-27 | Collegeville Institute, Collegeville**

The last few years have been taxing for pastors and other faith leaders. This workshop aims to nourish and restore the imaginations of those who are responsible for nourishing the imaginations of their communities. Participants will engage in poetry, visual art, writing about visual art; delve into the histories of words; practice thinking and writing metaphorically. There will also be silence and space for reading and writing (or walking or breathing). The Rev. Dr. Lauren Winner is Associate Professor of Christian Spirituality at Duke Divinity School and

Vicar of St. Joseph's Episcopal Church in Durham, N.C. Her books include *Girl Meets God*, *Mudhouse Sabbath*, *A Cheerful and Comfortable Faith*, *Still: Notes on a Mid-Faith Crisis*, and *Wearing God*. [Learn more.](#)

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#### Other Events:

- [Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders & Conference Assemblies](#) - Feb. 22 | Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley
- 2025 Synod Assembly - May 16-17 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi

## SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS

#### Bishop Patricia Lull

- December 8 - St. James, Burnsville (preaching)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

[ELCA](#)

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*The Saint Paul Area Synod, which includes 106 congregations and new mission starts, is one of 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.*



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