



# News and Events

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

February 17, 2025

## **Synod Assembly Keynote Speaker: Dr. Lois Malcolm**

We are pleased to announce that Dr. Lois Malcolm will be the keynote speaker for our 2025 Synod Assembly on May 16-17 at St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi. As one of the leading theologians on a Lutheran understanding of the Holy Spirit and evangelism, Dr. Malcolm will help us explore what it means for each of us to be a witness to life in Christ.



Dr. Malcolm is The Olin and Amanda Fjelstad Reigstad Chair of Systematic Theology at Luther Seminary, where she has taught since 1994. She grew up in the Philippines as the daughter of missionaries. Before becoming a theologian, she received an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Minnesota and taught linguistics and English as a second language courses in the U. S. and overseas. Her Ph.D. is from the University of Chicago.

Dr. Malcolm is the author of several books, including *Holy Spirit: Creative Power in Our Lives* (Fortress, 2009); *God*, an edited volume for *The Westminster Collection of Sources of Christian Theology* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2012), and two forthcoming books: *A Theological Commentary on Second Corinthians for the Belief series* (Westminster John Knox); and *Sophia Cries Out in the Street: Wisdom in Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press).

**An important note about the 2025 Synod Assembly:** The business of the assembly begins on Friday, May 16, at 7 p.m. and will include elections and deliberations on resolutions and memorials, as well as a presentation by the ELCA churchwide representative. The assembly reconvenes on Saturday, May 17, at 8:30 a.m. for more business, festive worship and Dr. Malcolm's keynote address. A mission fair featuring work groups, ministry partners and affiliated organizations is open to all on Friday from 5-7 p.m. Synod Assembly registration will open in early March.

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*Join Us This Saturday!*

### **Tool Kit & Conference Assemblies**

**Saturday, Feb. 22 | Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley**

Online registration is open through Wednesday for Tool Kit for Congregational Leaders and/or Conference Assemblies. While on-site registration is available starting at 8 a.m. on Saturday, we encourage you to register in advance so we have accurate counts for food and materials.



Tool Kit features these nine workshops:

- **Presidents & Vice Presidents: Leading a Church Council** – Jim Buckley & Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer
- **Decision or Discernment?** – Deacon Krista Lind
- **Understanding the Opioid Crisis** – Pastor Seth Perry, Sean Young-Stephens, Josephine Igwacho & Russ Hanes
- **Embodied Practices for Social Justice** – Rachel Svanoe Moynihan
- **Grief in the Church System** – Pastor Jules Erickson
- **The Joys and Challenges of Shared Ministry** – Pastor Cassie Nault
- **Becoming an Effective Treasurer** – David Laden
- **Healing Nature Trails** – Steven Yahr
- **Introduction to Centering Prayer** – Pastor John Keller

[See workshop descriptions.](#) The day also includes worship and lunch with an opportunity to connect with folks from other congregations. The registration fee is \$20 per person and includes lunch.

### Conference Assemblies

Tool Kit is held in conjunction with the synod's conference assemblies. The six conferences of the synod will meet separately and the agenda may include elections, proposed resolutions or other matters. These gatherings are open to anyone from the synod who wishes to attend, along with designated voting members selected by each congregation. [Click here for the list of congregations' voting member allocations.](#)

[LEARN MORE & REGISTER](#)

*Tool Kit Session Spotlights:*

#### **Decision or Discernment?**

We each make countless decisions every day. Most we make without even realizing we are engaging in a process of decision making. Some decisions, however, weigh heavier and take longer to make. Discernment is the fancy word the church uses to describe an intentional process of inviting the Spirit to join you in making decisions. Join us in learning hands-on tools for listening to the Spirit as you make personal choices or decisions together as a faith community.

**Deacon Krista Lind** serves as the assistant to the bishop for vocational formation, She oversees the synod's candidacy process and assists leaders as they mature in their understanding of vocation. Watch her workshop preview video [here](#):



### **Embodied Practices for Social Justice**

Whether or not we are consciously aware of it, our nervous systems carry the effects of systems of supremacy, often manifesting as deeply ingrained patterns of protection and disconnection. These patterns show up differently depending on where we are situated within those systems, but none of us is immune to their impact. By becoming curious about these patterns, we can develop practices that help our bodies find a greater sense of safety during moments of stress and overwhelm. This, in turn, allows us to reconnect with our capacity for connection and live more in alignment with our values. As we deepen our awareness of and connection to our bodies, we also cultivate a stronger sense of connection to spirit, creation, our power, and our humanity. Join us for a brief exploration of how an awareness of our stress responses and a few somatic (or embodied) practices can support a more faithful embodiment of our commitment to liberation.



***Rachel Svanoe Moynihan*** is a somatic coach and embodied antiracism leader. She formerly worked with the Center for Leadership & Neighborhood Engagement.



## Worship in an Inviting Church

**Saturday, March 22 - 9 a.m.-3 p.m. | Trinity,  
Stillwater**

For many of us, worship is a top source of joy in our congregations. Yet worries and questions abound around worship. Where are the children? How do we welcome new faces? What makes for vibrant worship in today's world? How do we remain true to our Lutheran identity while incorporating those new to the faith?



Please join us to reflect on your current congregation's worship context as well as imagine what it could be. Participants will ponder, practice and experience worship for a new day. Bishop Patricia Lull will kick off the day with a deep dive on worship and its importance for congregational vitality and inviting others into life in Christ. Workshop topics include *Embodied Hospitality: Sacred Spaces and Faces of Welcome*, *Can Technology Be an Open Invitation into Worship?* and *Contemporary Worship in a Lutheran Key*.

Congregations are encouraged to send a worship renewal team to this workshop...pastors and deacons, musicians, tech teams, and others who plan the weekly services. Other interested individuals may also attend for their own enrichment.

The cost is \$25 per person, which includes lunch. Registration is open!

[LEARN MORE](#)

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## Annual Ministry Reports

Last Wednesday, all rostered ministers including retirees should have received an email about completing an Annual Ministry Report to submit to Bishop Lull. The forms may be downloaded from the [Forms & Reports page of the synod website](#); click on the first purple bar to see the various versions of the form and find the one most suitable to your call status. If you have any issues with the functionality of the form, check to see if you have the latest version of Adobe Reader. Questions? Contact the synod office at 651-224-4313 or [admin@spas-elca.org](mailto:admin@spas-elca.org).

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*Applications Now Accepted!*

### **Summer Internships**

The synod is now accepting applications for the third summer of its internship program for young adults ages 17-21. Up to 10 interns will serve at sites that focus on feeding the hungry, working with refugee/immigrant populations, social work, working with children, community gardening or working with the elderly. The interns will receive a \$4,000 stipend, funded by the synod's Planting Hope Campaign, while working 20-24 hours per week, June 9-Aug. 22. The interns will also meet weekly as a group for learning, conversation and worship. Applications will be reviewed as they are received so early applications provide the best opportunity for selection.



Please share the news about this great program that provides young people a meaningful summer work experience, along with an opportunity to learn, serve and reflect. Pastor Bristol Reading, who serves as the pastor at St. Luke in St. Paul, will again coordinate this program. [Learn more.](#)

*Photo: Gideon was a social work intern last summer.*

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A horizontal banner with a blurred background of a person holding a book. The text is centered and reads: **PRAYER SERVICE FOR ROSTERED MINISTERS**  
Tuesday, February 18 at 9 a.m. | Lyngblomsten, St. Paul  
Scripture, music & prayers with other pastors and deacons in the synod

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### **Stewardship for All Seasons Information Session**

**Tuesday, March 4 - 11 a.m. | Gustavus Adolphus, St. Paul**

Stewardship for All Seasons offers proven principles and methodologies for carrying out productive stewardship programs. Participating congregations learn how to practice year-round, ongoing stewardship, which results in more money for ministry, more energized stewards and a culture of generosity. Pete Reuss from GSB Fundraising is the program's

coordinator and presenter. He'll be starting a new cohort in May; the time to sign-up is now! [Click here](#) for a flyer and/or watch the video below.



## EVENTS OF INTEREST

### Last Call for Lutheran Summer Music 2025

Enrollment for this summer is over 80% full, but there's still time for young musicians to apply to Lutheran Summer Music (LSM) and for you to nominate students. LSM is the nation's premier faith-based music academy for high school musicians grades 8-12. Students come together from around the country for a joyful summer of music-making through large ensembles (band, choir, orchestra), chamber music, private lessons, elective classes (conducting, composition, jazz, musical theatre, handbells, pipe organ) and use their musical gifts in performance, and in worship. The dates are June 22-July 20 at Valparaiso University. [Learn more.](#)

### Nominate music students for LSM 2025



[LSMacademy.org/nominate](https://LSMacademy.org/nominate)

## Recovery Cafe Frogtown Open House

**Tuesday, Feb. 18 - 5-7 p.m. | Faith, St. Paul**

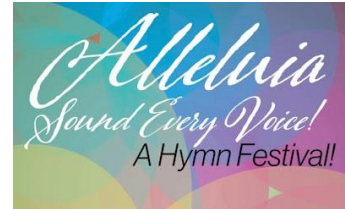
Come experience firsthand the transformative work taking place at Recovery Cafe Frogtown, a mission partner of Faith Lutheran in St. Paul. All are welcome to learn more about its programs, impact and community. Dinner and snacks will be provided.

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## Hymn Festival

**Sunday, Feb. 23 - 4 p.m. | Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, Roseville**

In the cold of winter we gather to warm our hearts with Word and Song. The festival features David Cherwien on the organ, with reflections by Jennifer Baker-Trinity. The LCR choir and instrumentalists round out the musical talent. There's no cost to attend; a free will offering will be taken. A reception follows. [Learn more.](#)



## Substance Use Recovery: How Your Church Can Be Part of the Solution

**Wednesday, Feb. 26 - 12-1 p.m. | Online**

This free webinar presented by the Center of Addiction & Faith features Mark Sanders, LCSW, CADC, from the ATTC Network, a multidisciplinary resource for professionals in the addictions treatment and recovery services fields. He will present church-based initiatives which have been effective in addressing substance use challenges, and share multiple ways churches can support recovery for individuals, families and communities impacted by addiction. The webinar host is the Rev. George A. Wood. [Register.](#)



## National Lutheran Choir Concert

**Sunday, March 2 - 4 p.m. | Chapel of St. Thomas, St. Paul**

Join the National Lutheran Choir, under the leadership of Jennaya Robison, for Healing Body, Mind, Spirit. This performance will include a premiere of a new three-movement composition called "Three Songs for Healing" by Hans Bridger Heruth with text by Brian Newhouse. The concert





will also include works by Karen E. Black, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Eric Whitacre, Moses Hogan, and more. Another offering of this concert will be held Saturday, March 1, at 7:30 p.m. at St. Mary's Cathedral in St. Cloud. [Learn more.](#)

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## Spirituality for Times Like This

**Mondays March 3-April 7, 7 p.m. | Online**

Spirituality and the inner life have heightened importance in trying times. Knowing oneself – who we are inside and out – directly impacts how we respond and choose to live. Pastor Wendy Vie Tritten leads these sessions on topics that include spirituality and mysticism, suffering, inner life, co-creation and transformation. The suggested donation is \$120 for the six sessions. [Learn more.](#)

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## World Day of Prayer

**Friday, March 7 - 2 p.m. | St. Anthony Park Lutheran, St. Anthony Park**

St. Anthony Park Lutheran Church invites you to its local observance of World Day of Prayer. There is no charge and all are welcome. World Day of Prayer dates back to the 19th century and is held annually around the world on the first Friday of March. Each year Christian women from a different country write the service; this year, it has been prepared by the women of the Cook Islands. Questions? Email [mary.mergenthal@gmail.com](mailto:mary.mergenthal@gmail.com).



## Movie Night: A Case for Love

**Monday, March 10 - 6-8:30 p.m. | Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley**

*Is unselfish love the antidote to what ails us?* That's the central question of the movie, *A Case for Love*. The teachings of Episcopal Bishop Michael Curry, most well known for his passionate sermon about "The Power of Love" at the wedding of Prince Harry & Meghan Markle, inspired *A Case for Love*. The documentary examines the question of whether or not love, specifically—unselfish—love, is the solution to the extreme societal & political divide facing the world. The film team travels the U.S. searching for people living their lives selflessly & interviews them about how that way of living affects others and



themselves. They also interview people on the street, discussing where they've witnessed unselfish love & where they've seen its absence. Subjects explored include: racial justice, sexual identity, military service, foster care, politics, sexual trafficking, disability, loss of loved ones, refugees, volunteering, food justice and more. [Learn more and register.](#)

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### **Taking Heart Ramadan Iftars**

For more than two decades, the Minnesota Council of Churches and the Muslim American Society of Minnesota have partnered with Minnesota Muslims for relationship-building events during Ramadan, a holy month on the Islamic Lunar calendar. Iftars are an opportunity to observe an evening prayer, learn about the Muslim faith and break fast with your Muslim neighbors over a delicious meal. They are offered at a variety of sites, including Minneapolis, Maplewood, Afton, Fridley, Plymouth and many others. [Learn more.](#)



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### **Other Events:**

- [Navigating Anxiety With Mind, Body & Spirit](#) - Feb. 20 | Online
- [Susan Draper White Lecture](#) - Feb. 24 | United Theological Seminary
- [Fosdick Lecture on Preaching](#) - March 6 | Augsburg University, Minneapolis
- [Children's Ministry Gathering](#) - March 10 | House of Prayer, Richfield
- [Youth Ministry Gathering](#) - March 11 | Urban Growler, St. Paul
- [Concordia Choir Concert](#) - March 15 | Trinity, Stillwater
- [EcoFaith Summit](#) - April 5 | First Lutheran, Duluth & Livestream
- [Spring Ministerium](#) - April 8 | Beaver Lake, Maplewood
- [2025 Synod Assembly](#) - May 16-17 | St. Andrew's, Mahtomedi
- [Seminar on Lutheran Liturgy](#) - Aug. 13-15 | Minneapolis

**SYNOD STAFF IN CONGREGATIONS**

## **Bishop Patricia Lull**

- Feb. 22 - Conference Assemblies/Tool Kit | Shepherd of the Valley, Apple Valley (preaching)

[Blogs](#)

[Calendar](#)

[News About Calls](#)

[Job Openings](#)

[ELCA](#)

[Living Lutheran](#)

*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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