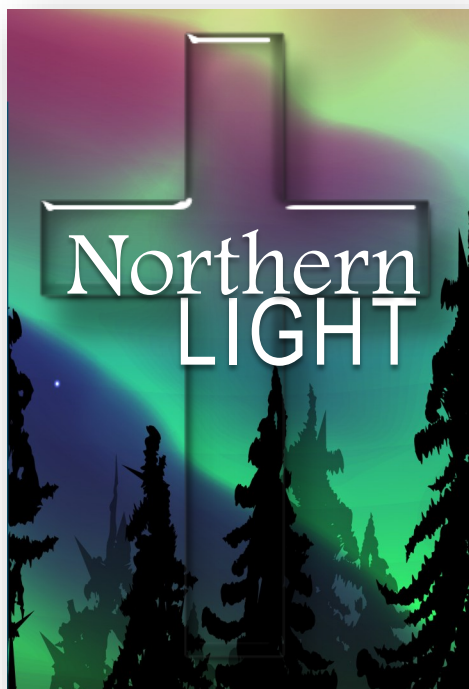


Shining with the Light of Christ in the Northern Great Lakes Synod

Volume 37, Issue 3 | May-June 2025



In This Issue

Bishop Finegan	1-2
Assistant to the Bishop	2-3
Vice President	3
Announcements/Transitions	4-5
Thank You/Calendar	6
Vacancies/Synod Finance	7
Prayfaithfully Devotions	8



Northern Great Lakes Synod
1029 N. Third St., Ste. A
Marquette, MI 49855

Office: (906) 228-2300 | Fax: (906) 228-2527
www.nglsynod.org

Bishop Katherine Finegan
kfinegan@nglsynod.org

Pastor Sharolyn Swenson
sswenson@nglsynod.org

NGLS | ngls@nglsynod.org

*“Jesus answered them,
24Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat
falls into the earth and dies,
it remains just a single grain;
but if it dies, it bears much fruit.
25Those who love their life lose it,
and those who hate their life in this world
will keep it for eternal life.”*

~John 12: 24-25

Dear People of the Northern Great Lakes Synod,

As I write this, we are in the midst of spring in the U.P. I daresay that even spring in northern Wisconsin cannot compare as the residents at the southern edge of our Synod will welcome tulips and daffodils weeks, *weeks!* before their northern siblings.

Spring in the U.P. is characterized by heavy, wet, snow – frozen mud - dirty snowbanks – sap buckets hanging off of dead looking trees – and weather whiplash as temperatures vacillate between the arctic cold of January and the tease of sunshine warmth that has the power to thaw.

But just as Easter follows Good Friday, so also will spring eventually make a solid appearance (by summer☺). The sleeping earth will awaken. And what had been dormant and quiet within the darkness of snow and frozen dirt will once again grow and be green in the longer light of summer days.

I do love it that the light lingers longer. But let us not forget the value and blessing of darkness. In darkness, there is rest. When we finally get to plant seeds in warm soil, there is anticipation and hope for new life. It is in darkness that a seed gathers what it takes to grow. It is in darkness that its energy coalesces in preparation for change. Plant a seed in rested, thawed, and warm dirt....add water and Ta Da! In due time, the seed sends forth a shoot which grows exponentially - to become a potato plant or a tomato bush or a watermelon vine – something incredibly larger than the seed itself. It is miraculous even as it is ordinary.

When we plant seeds in our gardens, we have an expected timetable. We generally know how long a seed will lie in dark earth before we can predict when we will see the first signs of growth. Knowing the length of time helps us be patient even as we are expectant.

However, the germination of seeds of faith or the expectant

hope of when some effort of ministry will bear fruit is a complete unknown. There is no timetable to which we can refer to bolster our patience. We cannot predict the future. We cannot even know for certain whether the seeds that have been planted will grow. It may well be that given the uncertainty of these days – both in and out of the Church, that it feels like we are “in the dark”.

But again, let us not forget the value and blessing of darkness. What if the darkness, or this time of expectant hope, need not be a time of anxiety or fear but rather a time of coalescing our energy in preparation for future change? What if we are receiving now, when we cannot see the future, all that we need for the challenges ahead? The value of darkness can be in the waiting, in the hopefulness, in the preparation, in the being watered so that we have what we need for future growth. As we focus this year on “Apollos watered”, we think of what seeds of faith and ministry need in order for growth and new life to happen, not only for what we contribute to nurture seeds, but also in what we receive for new life to grow in and through us.

Jesus was planted in the darkness of a tomb for three days. While in that darkness, perhaps he rested, or perhaps God gave him what he needed to prepare him for transformation, or perhaps something coalesced in him so that he could burst forth from the tomb with light and life. Whatever his time in darkness looked like and felt like, it gives us hope that darkness and waiting, death and dormancy, are not the enemy.

In the pattern of the Christian life, we loose our grip on what we love: familiarity, certainty, what we think we need - and instead open our hand to receive what is good from God – even if it is only, at least for now, the gathering energy in preparation for change, for transformation, for the new life that will come... unexpectedly... from darkness.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan



“Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They (the other disciples) said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.”

-John 21:3

The ice-fishers have disappeared from Teal Lake, awaiting the ice melt-down. Gone are the tents, and snow mobiles. Surely by the time you read this, the Lion’s Club replica mine shaft head-frame, will have finally fallen through the ice, with joyful anticipation of many folks making predictions of the hour and day. The fishers have surely gone back to a more ordinary life or onto the next adventure.

In this time of the Easter season, we hear the story of the disciples returning briefly to their beloved fishing in Galilee, as they longed for some semblance of normalcy. After the purpose-filled months of discipleship, the trauma of that Friday, and the dizzying hope of Easter...of course they wanted to return to normal. Here they sit, with no fish in their nets. Their hands, once practiced and calloused for this work, now slip and fumble with empty nets. They are no longer those fishermen.



They’ve changed.

How are we like disciples...longing to get back to normal? And what normal? The 1950s? The 1990s? When the mine brought new families to the town? When tourist-dollars flowed for the whole community? When Vacation Bible School required a waiting list? When was being church ever easy? Or was it ever?

Perhaps we join our ancestors before us...Adam

and Eve looking back at the flaming sword guarding Eden's gate; Lot's wife, looking back and crying so much she becomes a pillar of salt; the priest along the road to Jericho, ignoring the one in the ditch, to look over his shoulder in fear. And here, these disciples... 'if we just go fishing, all will be well.'

Easter brings a joyful promise of God's forever-ness. It doesn't promise that there will be no more change or struggle. Perhaps, maybe the resurrection hope of Easter is *even more* change. It promises infinite steps forward...and Christ goes before, with and through us. If you squint hard, you can see the fire on the beach, and Jesus preparing breakfast.

Discipleship is not about preserving the nostalgia of the past. When we linger there too long, we might get stuck. We can honor our inheritance of what we have loved, while holding it both reverently and lightly. And in heeding the call from Christ on the shore to try a new way, perhaps we will be like the disciples who have been invited down new vocational paths... shepherding, feeding, gardening, healing, following, leading.

How are you and your congregation being activated so more people know the way of Jesus and discover community, justice, and love? What are you leaving behind? How are you discerning what to carry forward and what new path to take, to be the hands and feet of Christ in your community?

In Christ,

Pr. Sharolyn



GOD'S CALL TO CARE FOR CREATION: ADVOCACY

By: Chuck Thomas, NGLS Vice President

It says in Genesis 2:15 *The Lord God took the*

man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. God gave us this wonderful earth and made us its stewards. Are we adequately responding to the call to keep or nurture creation for future generations?

I had the privilege of attending the 8th EcoFaith Summit at First Lutheran Church in Duluth, Minnesota on April 5, 2025. I was honored to be a co-presenter at one of the Summit's break-out sessions. During the break-out session I highlighted the Marquette-based InterFaith Water Stewards' actions to increase awareness of drinking water issues. And I talked about humankind's failure to answer God's call to care for creation and provided some real-world examples of neglect, especially regarding water resources. Finally, I provided examples of actions people can do to nurture the environment both individually and as a congregation.

Advocacy was a main theme throughout the day. After hearing the Summit's eloquent, inspirational, and informative keynote speakers, I quickly realized that I have not been adequately answering God's call and have not been an active enough advocate. Did you know that our Church, the ELCA encourages advocacy on a variety of social issues, including the environment? Information about environmental advocacy endeavors and what you can do is available at: <https://www.elca.org/our-work/publicly-engaged-church/advocacy/environment>. There is no better time than now to stand up and advocate for creation care!

Our Church also has strong social teachings about our need to answer God's call. The Social Statement ***Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice***, established in 1993, is as relevant today as it was 32 years ago. You can download it from: <https://resources.elca.org/faith-and-society/environment/>. I plan to lead a deep-dive study of this still relevant ELCA Social Teaching. I am not sure during which upcoming Life Long Faith Formation session this class will be offered but watch for it either in the upcoming fall or winter class schedules and sign up to join the discussion and learn more about what you can do to answer God's call.



2025 Northern Great Lakes Synod Synod Assembly

The Northern Great Lakes **Synod Assembly** will be held Thursday-Saturday, **May 15-17, 2025**. Check in opens at 3:00pm on May 15 at Bethel Lutheran Church, 333 E Ridge St., Ishpeming. Opening worship will begin at 7:00pm. Parking at Bethel is limited; additional parking will be available at Trinity Lutheran Church, across the street. All are invited to opening worship. For all those registered, Friday and Saturday sessions will be held at Northern Michigan University at the University Center, 1401 Presque Isle Ave, Marquette.

As the synod gathers, we invite you to consider how your church, your congregation, and the Synod together, nurtures seeds of faith. 1 Corinthians 3:6, ***"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth"***, speaks to an arc of growth where the Apostle Paul planted seeds of faith and that is all. It was Apollos who watered them, nurtured those seeds, and witnessed some growth, and of course, he only witnessed the growth, he did not cause the growth. That is the work of the Holy Spirit. We invite you to find ways to nurture and provide opportunities, space, and encouragement for faith to grow.

THEME:

Apollos Watered

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Rev. Jon Anderson

Head of Rural Ministry at Luther Seminary and
Retired Bishop of the Southwest Minnesota Synod

ELCA REPRESENTATIVE:

Deacon John Weit
Executive for Worship

Introducing Eva Hautamaki

The Synod's new Office Administrator

Eva grew up in UP and has globetrotted enough to know this is a good home. She graduated from MSHS in 2019 and finished an associate in humanities at Michigan Tech in 2023. She has three younger brothers that she keeps very close. In the summer, she catches frogs, gardens, and absorbs as much of the lake as she can. In the winter, she takes the weather as it comes, and turns to indoor activities like painting, knitting, and reading. She is very appreciative of the PEIF pool, so she can swim all year. She recently got pet ducks that she's very excited about.



Introducing Sister Noreen Stevens!

Deaconess & Minister of Word and Service in the ELCA

After graduating from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago in 1986, Sister Noreen Stevens' calls have moved her from institutions to congregations and on the Saint Paul Area Synod staff before beginning to serve as Directing Deaconess with the Deaconess Community of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) 2016-2024. As a deacon in the ELCA, since 1987, her ministries have focused on education, spiritual and vocational discernment, systems, leadership, as well as partnership development, and advocacy. Her ministry experiences have provided opportunities to integrate practical and academic learning, which has created a toolbox of resources she draws from daily. She feeds her soul by exploring museums, and, with her spouse, the woods surrounding their home in Ishpeming Township, and connecting with artists as their work breaks open her heart to listen to the Spirit's stirrings.



~An Invitation to Generosity~

Four offerings will be received at Synod Assembly:

1. Opening Worship:

The Synod Ministry Fund



2. Friday Morning World Hunger Report:

World Hunger Offering received.

3. Saturday Morning Prayer:

The Equipping the Saints Endowment Fund



4. Saturday Loose Offering:

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and the U.P.

Envelopes for offerings #1 and #3 will be included in your assembly packet.
For more information or if you wish to donate electronically, go to www.nglsynod.org.



2025

Equipping the Saints Distribution

\$2,000 - Website

\$2,000 - Lifelong Faith Formation

\$3,000 - Bay College Campus Ministry

\$3,000 - Synod Council Retreat

\$14,000 - Leadership Support

\$2,000 - Synod Youth Coordinator

\$2,500 - U.P. Wild Church

\$2,000 - Justice Advocacy

\$2,000 - Endowment Ministry

Projects

\$1,500 - Future Tanzania Visits

**Total 2025 Distribution: \$34,000
(7% distribution of assets)**

*Thank you for your
support of ministry
in and through the
Northern Great
Lakes Synod!*



2024 Grants given to support:

1. Ishpeming Community Good Friday Cantata
2. Feed My Sheep Lutheran Campus Ministry at MTU
3. U.P. Wild Church Convocation
4. Dinner Church at Trinity, Rhinelander
5. Scholarships for Youth Extravaganza

Grant applications for 2025 available at
www.nglsynod.org

Thank You

FOR YOUR SUPPORT

**Thank you to the
following donors for their generous
support of the work of Christ in and through our Synod.**

Disaster Relief

Zion, Marinette
First, Ewen
Ascension, Minocqua
Trinity, Ishpeming
Mission United, Pelkie
Faith, Calumet

Lutheran World Relief

Zion, Marinette
Bethany, Mohawk
Calvary, Minocqua
Prince of Peace, Marquette

Answer the call

Thrivent Choice-
Kay & Roger Knuth
Zion, Manistique
Bethany, Negaunee

Global Refuge

First, Ewen

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Prince of Peace, Marquette
Good Shepard, Peshtigo
Larry Pagel
Gary & Chris Ebert

Synod Ministry Fund

Chuck & Lynn Thomas
First, Gladstone

Mission Outreach

Immanuel, Escanaba
Elisabeth & Wes Daniels

Seminarian Support

Trinity, Ishpeming

Skrenes Fund for Ministry

Thrivent Choice-
Luanne & Thomas Skrenes
Thrivent Charitable Foundation

Youth Ministries

First, Gladstone

Synod Ministry Fund

Jim Duehring- in memory of
Ruth Van Kley
First, Gladstone
Companion Synod Support
St. Paul's, Mass City
Salem, Ironwood
First, Gladstone
Zion, Ironwood

Leadership Support

Zion, Marinette

Restricted General

Thrivent Choice-
Donald & Joanne Schutt
Dave & Arlene Van Kley - In
memory of Clara Ruth Van Kley
First, Gladstone

UP Wild- Keweenaw

Keweenaw Unitarian Universalist
Fellowship

Equipping the Saints

Elisabeth & Wes Daniels

• Synod Calendar •

MAY 2025

5 - Lifelong Faith Formation Zoom

6 - Northern Great Lakes Synod
Staff Meeting

13 - E-Notes Deadline

15-17 - Synod Assembly

17- Seed Sower Lunch

20 - Northern Great Lakes
Synod Staff Meeting

26 - Office closed for
Memorial day

29 - E-Notes Deadline

JUNE 2025

3 - Finance Committee zoom
Endowment Committee zoom

6-7 - Synod Council Retreat

9 - Northern Light article Deadline

12 - E-Notes Deadline

20-21 - Youth Committee
Retreat

26 - E-Notes Deadline

Pastoral Vacancies and Interims

Ready to Receive Potential Candidates

Immanuel, Rhinelander – Rev. John Kuziej
 United, L'Anse – Rev. Julie Belew
 Northern Lights Parish – Rev. Bill Jacobson
 First, Iron River – Student Vicar Lance Crevier

In Discernment Regarding Next Steps

Faith & Trinity, Ishpeming – Rev. Jim Duehring
 Zion, St. Ignace & Trinity, Brevort – Rev. Melinda VanderSys

Engaged in Transitional Process

Bethlehem, Florence - Rev. David Johnson
 Pioneer Lake, Conover – Rev. Peggy Rose
 Emmanuel, Menominee – Rev. Christine Olson
 Emanuel, Skandia & Bethany, Negaunee – Rev. Lloyd Luedeman
 Grace, Pembine – Rev. Gene Wickman

Not Actively in Call Process

Christ the King, Escanaba and Faith, Rock – Student Vicar Sarah Sleeter
 Porterfield, Porterfield & Beaver American, Pound – Student Vicar Dan Moschea
 Eden, Munising – Student Vicar Elaine Robbins
 Bethany, Ishpeming - Rev. J. Mills

It has been an exceptionally poor first quarter for Synod finances, with congregational pledges for 2025 down 4.7% and actual receipts down over 20%. Congregations are encouraged to make every effort to remit their mission support on a timely basis. In this season of Easter, we are all reminded that we give because of what God has first given us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Our mission support is not a bill! It is an offering of our thanks for the priceless gift of God's grace as we support God's mission in the Synod and the wider Church. Thanks be to God for this marvelous gift!

-Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper

As of 3/31/25	2024	2025	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	729,507	695,080	-34,427	-4.7%
Amount	196,609	156,692	-39,917	-20.3%



Northern Great Lakes Synod

1029 N. Third Street, Suite A
Marquette, MI 49855

Phone: (906) 228-2300
Fax: (906) 228-2527
Email: ngls@nglsynod.org

Synod Website:
www.nglsynod.org

Find us on Facebook & YouTube



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Marquette, MI 49855
Permit No. 22

Mail Label

Prayfaithfully

NGLS Daily Devotions Schedule May & June 2025

April 28 - May 4	SWO Board
May 5 - 11	JoAnne Barrix
May 12 - 18	Various Assembly Week Writers
May 19 - 25	Hayley Smith
May 26 - June 1	Pastor Dave Johnson
June 2 - 8	Ken Raisanen
June 9 - 15	Pastor Lloyd Luedeman
June 16 - 22	Pastor Pete Warmanen
June 23- 29	Melzee Jacobson