2026 Fall Lifelong Faith Formation
Schedule for Six Classes
Register via the link or QR Code

Class Registration for the Fall 2026 Lifelong Faith Formation Session – Fill out form
https://nglsynod.org/lifelong-faith-formation/

The Church's Role in a Divided Society: Public Deliberative Dialog

Instructor: Rev. Sharolyn Swenson, Assistant to the Bishop, Director of Evangelical Missions, Northern Great Lakes Synod
Zoom curated space with Rev. J. Michael Mills, Faith-Bethany Lutheran Partnership, Ishpeming, MI
One Session
Thursday, September 24, 2026
6:30-8:30 pm Eastern / 5:30-7:30 pm Central

The class is BOTH a conversation around the roles of the church as refuge, mediator, or prophetic voice in times of political and cultural discontent, as well as honing our skills for speaking the truth in love through the practice of "Public Deliberative Dialog."
This structured process can help individuals better understand one another's point of view, without moving farther apart, into corners of division. This practice is most effective in-person, but we will also offer a Zoom curated space for those unable to be together in-person. This work is from the early work of the Public Deliberation Initiative.

Hybrid Class: The class will be in-person at Bethany Lutheran Church, Ishpeming, MI with Zoom curated space also available.
Materials: Handouts will be provided

Encountering God in the Modern Middle East

Instructor: Todd Holmstrom
Retired diplomat who served a number of tours in the Middle East
Four Classes
Mondays - September 21, 28, and October 5, 12
7:00-8:00 pm Eastern / 6:00-7:00 pm Central

Many Americans find the Middle East incomprehensible. Why is the area that we Christians refer to as the Holy Lands seemingly forever held captive to violence, oppression, and war? This is the region of the world where God chose to directly engage his people. Why does there seem to be today so much human suffering and hate emanating from it? As Christians we can choose to detach the Gospel from the setting where it occurred but we lose something meaningful when we do so. If conversely, we choose to engage more deeply the region, its people, its culture, and its practice of religion, we may gain a new, rich perspective on the Bible and the Gospel message. The course will focus on exploring these and other questions, including how our Christian faith applies to current events in the Middle East.

Materials: NA

Lutheranism 101: Lens, God's Grace, and Essentials

Instructors: Bishop Katherine Finegan, Northern Great Lakes Synod
Rev. J. Michael Mills ,Faith-Bethany Lutheran Partnership, Ishpeming, MI
Rev. Tim Johnston, Bethel-Trinity Lutheran Partnership, Ishpeming, MI

Three Classes held at 7:00-8:00 pm Eastern / 6:00-7:00 pm Central
Thursday, October 29, Wednesdays, November 4 and 11

Thursday, October 29 – led by Bishop Katherine Finegan
The lens through which ELCA Lutherans consider scripture acknowledges the realities of interpretation challenges. Drawing from the insights of David Lose's, "Making Sense of Scripture," we will unpack what it means to take the Bible seriously while considering the layers of meaning that can be found in cultural influences, authorship, genre, audience, ancient worldviews, and personal experience.

Wednesday, November 4 – led by Rev. J. Michael Mills
We are not loved because we are worthy —
we are worthy because we are loved. In Lutheran teaching, justification means God declares us righteous not because of anything we've done, but purely through grace, received by faith in Christ.

Wednesday, November 11
Led by Rev. Tim Johnston
Essential Lutheran tidbits:
Why is the pastor always talking about baptism? Do Lutherans take the bible seriously? Is God at work in my life outside of the church walls?

Materials: In the first class, references will be drawn from Dr. David Lose's book, *Making Sense of Scripture.* The book is not required reading for the class. It is available through a variety of online resources – thriftbooks.com, augsburgfortress.org, goodreads.com, barnesandnoble.com…

The Pollinator Garden

One Session
Thursday, September 17
7:00 – 8:30 pm Eastern / 6:00 – 7:30 pm Central

Recognizing pollinators are endangered by a loss of habitat, join our class as we explore the purpose and process of creating a pollinator plot at church or your own yard.

WE NEED THEM – THEY NEED US – WE CAN HELP!

The class will be led by members of the NE MN Synod Pollinator Plot Steering Committee and Good Shepherd, Peshtigo, WI

Materials: Resource information will be provided during class.

The Prophets: Their Voice, Context, and Significance

Instructor: Rev. Philip Johnson
Four Classes
Tuesdays, October 20, 27, and November 3, 10
7:00-8:15 pm Eastern, 6:00-7:15 pm Central

The prophets of the Old Testament were a peculiar lot. During this 4-week course students will gain a deeper appreciation for their experiences, their contexts, and their message. The four sessions will provide an overview of the prophetic tradition as well as a deeper dive into selected texts. Time will be given for exploring how these ancient voices may continue to address present-day realities.

Materials: A Study Bible. The Harper-Collins Study Bible NRSV will be used by the instructor. Participants may use the Bible of their choice.

Walking through Mark: Preparing for Year B

Instructor: Rev. Nicole Hanson-Lynn
Nine Classes
Sundays, September 20 – November 15
7:00-8:00 pm Eastern, 6:00-7:00 pm Central

Our common lectionary rotates between Matthew, Mark, and Luke as our primary structure for the church year. In Advent, we begin our year in Mark, so in this class, we will look ahead at the gospel of Mark as a story, the themes, ideas, and structure of Mark, and the unique witness Mark brings to our faith.

Materials: A Bible – Participants may use the translation of their choice. The class will explore different translations.