



Northern Great Lakes Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Marquette, Michigan
npls@nglsynod.org

E-Notes for December 30, 2021

The Season of Christmas

Thought of the Day

"You cannot judge people's level of maturity from how many problems they have...you can only judge it by their response to crisis."

~Rabbi Ed Friedman

Bishop Finegan's Annual Report Letter

Available [here on our website](#) for inclusion in your congregation's annual report.



"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."

~Hebrews 11:1

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

As this Year of Hope 2021 comes to a close, we shift our focus to Faith for the year 2022. Faith is, of course, connected to Hope as our Faith in the Spirit of the Living Christ is the source of our faith and our hope.

While each generation has been marked by its own challenges, it's hard not to feel like our time in history is somehow exceptional, perhaps because we are the ones who are living it. The past couple of years have certainly been distinctive. We are living in a time of contrasts and simultaneous opposites:

- Weariness and opportunity
- Grief and creativity
- Loss of traditions and forging something new
- Polarization and common mission
- Apart but together

Living in the tension of seemingly opposing forces is exhausting. And yet, perhaps it is only in that in-between space that we are able to move forward, like walking a ridge line, carefully balancing between two valleys that drop steeply to either side. Every step must be calculated and considered to avoid careening down a slippery slope.

I do believe we entered this pandemic thinking that somehow it would end and we would all go back to the way things were. Now, I am thinking that it is not about looking for an end, but rather shifting into a new way of being.

Included in the charges given to a pastor at an ordination is this exhortation:

“So discipline yourselves in life and teaching that you preserve the truth, giving no occasion for false security or illusory hope.”

I do not wish to give illusory hope, encouraging you to hold on for some near or distant day when the pandemic will be over and things will get back to “normal”. The shifting and adapting we are doing now may well be permanent and not just a temporary adjustment for extraordinary circumstances.

As we travel the ridgeline of 2022, I encourage you to join me and the whole synod in a focus on Faith. The whole point of being church, the whole reason God created the church in the first place, was to share the good news of Jesus. When so much of the future remains uncertain, we have this core mission to guide our steps.

For 2022, I believe we will find blessing as we dig into what we believe, why we believe it, and what difference that belief makes to who we are as people trying to follow Jesus, and what it means for how we live in the world. Whether you join a Synod-wide Lifelong Faith Formation class or participate in a small group Bible Study in your congregation or with a group of friends, I ask you engage in a new effort, a new discipline, to deepen your faith, and I promise to do the same. Together, we will walk this narrow path through the tension that 2022 brings and find our way into becoming the future church that God is bringing into being.



Yours in Christ,

Spotlight Information

Important Dates and INFORMATION

As 2021 comes to a close and our fiscal year ends in January, please note two important dates and documents that need to be sent to the Synod Office:

January 10, 2022

Last day for checks to arrive in the Synod office so that 2021 benevolence gifts can be credited to 2021 giving.

February 11, 2022

Last day for checks to arrive in the Synod office so that January 2022 giving can be credited to the Synod fiscal year.

Statements of Intent Congregation Annual Reports

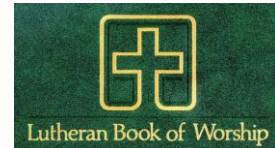
News & Information



In case you missed it, the Synod-Wide Christmas Worship that aired on WLUC TV6 and ABC 10 is available for viewing on our YouTube channel!

Hymnals Available for Donation

First, Grand Marais has about 40 of the green LBW hymnals that they would like to gift to another congregation. If you have interest, please contact Sharon or Jon Babbitt at (906) 494-3030.



Guidance for Boy Scouts of America Bankruptcy Plan

The ELCA has posted guidance for congregations who received ballots or who are otherwise entitled to vote on the Boy Scouts of America bankruptcy plan. Please note that this is not legal advice and that, due to the nature of our polity, we cannot dictate what congregations do. The document is available [here](#).

Annual Report Cover Now Available

The 2021 ELCA Annual Report cover is ready and available for download! The file is available for use [here on our website](#).



Boundaries & Implicit Bias Training

All NGLS rostered leaders, LLMs and pulpit supply leaders are expected to complete an online boundaries training module through Safe Gatherings at least once every three years. This training should be completed by **January 1**. If you haven't done so yet, please complete these online trainings as soon as possible. Details available [here on our website](#).

Upcoming Events

[Click Here for Upcoming UP Wild Events](#)



Lifelong Faith Formation Registration Deadline Coming Up Soon

The registration deadline for the new schedule of Lifelong Faith Formation classes is **5 pm ET on Friday, January 7**. For more information and to sign up for one or more of these diverse offerings, visit the Northern Great Lakes Synod [website](#). Upcoming classes include:

- Introduction to Biblical Hebrew - 8 Sunday evening sessions
- The Samuel Series: Prayer and the Spiritual Life - 7 Monday morning sessions
- The Big Picture Bible Discussion - 4 Tuesday evening sessions
- The Book of Ezekiel, Part II - 10 Wednesday evening sessions
- Anishinaabe Culture - up to 3 Thursday evening sessions
- Dialogue with the Islamic Resource Group - 2 sessions on a Thursday and Friday evening.

While the offerings are free of charge, some classes recommend or require the purchase of materials. Instructors will provide links to the online Zoom discussions. If you have questions or concerns, contact Deacon Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynod.org.



New Faithful Innovations Cohort

These learning communities of Jesus are designed for For Laity, Pastors, Deacons and Licensed Lay Ministers of the Northern Great Lakes Synod. The next cohort begins in the new year and the **registration deadline is January 13**. Check out [this flyer](#) for details!



Ignite The Church CONFERENCE

2022 Ignite the Church Conference

A new Hybrid version of the grassroots Ignite the Church Conference will gather **February 8-10** in-person and online to reflect on the theme, "Seismic Shifts: Where Do We Go From Here?" For all the details and registration, please visit the [Ignite the Church website](#).



2022 Professional Leader's Retreat

an event for Pastors, Deacons & LLMs

Join us at the Ramada Inn in Marquette, MI **February 27-28, 2022!** We will welcome the Rev. Dr. Leah Schade from Lexington Theological Seminary as she presents, "Ministry in the Red-Blue Divide: Preaching and Teaching in the 'Purple Zone.'" For complete details, please see the [event flyer](#). Registration is now available [here on our website](#).

NGLS Youth Ministry Updates



Update from the ELCA Young Adult Team

Jenna Leazott, Young Adult Networks and Alumni Engagement Manager, has shared updates on some of the ways that the ELCA is working on Young Adult Ministry opportunities. Information on the Young Adult Steering Committee, Young Adults in Global Mission applications, Sacred Saturdays and more are [available in detail here](#).

Growing Younger Forum

The ELCA's Growing Younger team will be hosting a discussion on **Thursday, January 13 at 8 pm ET / 7 pm CT** to follow up on ways your congregation is Growing Younger. It is a time to hear about successes and challenges within congregations and connect with other people who share a passion for youth ministry. Please contact Stefanie Ehle at youthcoordinator@nglsynod.org to receive a link to the meeting invitation.



Youth Core Leadership Team Applications Deadline is January 15!

The Youth Core Leadership Team exists to provide leadership development and faith formation opportunities for ELCA high school youth. Accepted team members will learn and improve on skills such as worship planning, collaboration, peer ministry, and small group training as they plan and lead the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit. This group of leaders also serves as a focus group for ELCA Churchwide Ministries and are often interviewed and asked to serve on other committees and teams as the church strives to do ministry with youth more effectively. This past year, Sean Korpela of St. Paul Lutheran Church in Ironwood, was selected to serve as one of the team members. Thank you, Sean for representing the NGLS!

If you know of a high schooler between 9th and 11th grades who would excel at an opportunity like this, please encourage them to apply for one of the open positions. [Click here](#) for the application and additional information about the program. The deadline to apply is **January 15, 2022**.



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Portico Updates

PORTICO[®]

Benefit Services | A Ministry of the ELCA



Your Portico Regional Representative, Jennifer Prinz, has a few important updates and wishes you a blessed Advent and a joyous Christmas. Please reach out to her if you have any questions at jprinz@porticobenefits.org.

Being Here Podcast – New Episodes

Being Here, a podcast that explores real world issues and topics important to professionals in the faith community, has added three new episodes. Join host the Rev. Melissa Pohlman, as she welcomes three new guests to share their experiences and points of view on navigating retirement; Christian conversations about racial justice; and creative approaches to innovative ministry. Being Here invites us to learn together, listen to each other, grow together, and move forward together — stronger, more resilient as a unique community. [Here is a link to the podcast.](#)

ELCA Medicare-Primary Transition to Humana Prescription Drug Program

Steps members should take now:

- Refill current prescriptions
- Watch the mail for a new Humana ID card
- Look up medication with Humana
- Set up Humana Pharmacy mail-delivery account by calling **1-800-379-0092**
- Ensure local pharmacy is in network

Virtual Workshop Series on Retirement Readiness

Look for more information about 4 new webinars coming in January!

Important Self-Care after the Holidays

After the holidays when you have time to catch your breath it will provide an opportunity for you to focus on your own self-care. Now is the time to block out some time on your calendar in January to schedule your wellness exam, review your retirement account, schedule an appointment with a Portico financial planner ([here on Portico's website](#)), and refamiliarize yourself with all that your benefits plan has available to you to help you be well in order that you can serve others.

Keeping in Prayer

January Prayfaithfully Calendar



Prayfaithfully Devotions

Check out upcoming [Prayfaithfully](#) on our Synod website!

December 26-January 1 by Pastor Kelly Ylitalo

January 2-8 by David & Mary Lou Blomquist

January 9-15 by Judy Quirk

If you are interested in writing a week's worth of devotions, contact Betsy Koski at (906) 228-2300 or bakoski@nglsynod.org.





Transitions

- **Pastor Catie Ford's** Installation has been rescheduled for Sunday, January 9 at 2 pm CT at **Faith, Three Lakes**. Clergy are invited to vest and the color of the day is red. Masks are expected. We pray blessings upon Pastor Catie and the people of Faith, Three Lakes.
- **Vicar Melissa Salminen** continues her contextual education ministry at **First, Gladstone** in February. She remains an MDiv Collaborative Learning student at Wartburg Seminary.
- In January, **Pastor Steve Gauger of Calvary, Rapid River**, begins serving as the Administrative Interim Pastor for **First, Trenary and Faith, Rock**.
- In January, **Pastor Paul Heykes** begins serving as a ½ time Interim Pastor at **Prince of Peace, Eagle River**.

Lifting Up to God in Prayer

- For those workers wearied by COVID.
- For faith to reignite in those who have lost their way.
- For healing of the nations.
- For wise stewardship of our natural world.

Quick Links

-  [Check out resources on the NGLS website](#)
 -  [COVID-19 Event Risk Assessment Tool](#)
 -  [Stewardship Toolkit](#)
 -  [UP Wild Events](#)
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E-Notes is a twice monthly electronic newsletter from the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Pastor Jim Duehring

Assistant to the Bishop/DEM

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E-Notes from Northern Great Lakes Synod*

Our mailing address is:

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

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