



Northern Great Lakes Synod

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

E-Notes for February 1, 2022

The Season of Epiphany

A Message from Bishop Finegan

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

Do you remember the children's book from Dr. Suess, "Green Eggs and Ham?" In an effort to get the uninitiated culinary adventurer to consider tasting unfamiliar food, the book's author presents the story of the ultimate picky eater who will not eat green eggs and ham...nope, will not even try it. After several pages of badgering the hapless eater who may or may not take a bite, the presenter of this delectable dish asks, "Would you? Could you? In the dark?" and then comes the answer, "I would not, could not in

for what will be even as we reluctantly let go of what was. A day will come when we will lose ourselves into what is becoming, and what has been will be re-shaped into what is next. It took three days in a dark tomb for Jesus to emerge, transformed, made new, a light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Our transformation is going to take a little longer.

In these pandemic days that refuse to die, remember that the darkness cannot last. Spring follows winter, dawn follows night, and God

the dark...I do not like them Sam I am. I do not like green eggs and ham." Even the darkness cannot entice the would be culinary connoisseur to try green eggs and ham.

What kind of impact does the darkness have on you?

Here we are, it's not even mid-winter by U.P. standards. And there is more than short days that weigh heavy and offer limited light. The Omicron variant is burning through the vulnerable population. The future of the church, society, our political divisions, even our health, remains...in the dark. As patience wears thin, as we continue to worry for loved ones, as we try to navigate online school and discern risk factors and find effective masks, the dark encroaches, enfolds, obscures, envelops.

We are in the dark.

But the thing about dark, that is where growth happens. Think about the seed in dark soil. Add water, add warmth, and a miracle occurs. Seeds lose themselves in sprouts of new growth. Some things need darkness in order to grow, to transform, and maybe you and I, and the church, and the larger society can count ourselves among those things. So even in days of blinding winter brightness, let us embrace the dark, this season of stillness and of growth, of reaching

promises new life from death. And remember, there is value and purpose in the darkness. That's where growth happens. That's where the miracles are made. From dark earth, new shoots reach heavenward; for strength, for growth, to fulfill their purpose, to bear fruit and make for a harvest. It is in that dark grainy and warm stillness that new life is born.

I share with you a poem I came across the other day, from author Marilyn McEntyre:

"What to Do in the Darkness"

Go slowly
Consent to it
But don't wallow in it
Know it as a place of germination
And growth
Remember the light
Take an outstretched hand if you find one
Exercise unused senses
Find the path by walking it
Practice trust
Watch for dawn

Hold on. You can do this. The light is coming. We can move forward, one step at a time, together.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan



Spotlight Information



Award Nominations Are Open

The NGLS World Hunger Committee is accepting nominations for exemplary effort in the area of hunger ministry! The Big Bear Award is given to a group (committee, task force, team, etc.) of a Northern Great Lakes Synod congregation and the Bread Basket Award is given to an individual of the NGLS. For complete details, [please download the forms on our website](#). Nominations must be submitted by **March 1, 2022**. No effort is too small or too big to be nominated!

Annual Reports

Important Dates
and **INFORMATION**

As the Synod fiscal year comes to a close, please note this important date and documents that need to be sent to the Synod Office:

- **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. Please remember that mail can take up to a week to arrive at the Synod Office from your location. *Reminder: be sure to update your pastor and lay employee compensation with Portico.*

- **Statements of Intent**

- **Congregation Annual Reports**



Annual Congregational A & C Reports Due February 15, 2022

Let's get an item checked off of your to-do list! Your congregation should have received your annual A&C Reports from the ELCA in the mail. [This is what they look like.](#)

Your ELCA Church ID# and this year's password are printed on the report in the upper right hand section of the "A" side of the report. You will need these numbers if you want to fill out the forms online. Please click the [green](#) button below to access the A & C forms online.

If you cannot find your paper copy of the report, please contact Heather or Betsy at the Synod Office (906) 228-2300 for your congregation's ID and password.

[Link to A & C Reports](#)

Rostered Leader Reports to the Bishop Due March 15, 2022

Below you will find links for filling out your Report to the Bishop online. Please use the following instructions:

1. Click the appropriate button below to access your report. Please note that LLM's should use the link for Minister of Word and Sacrament--Under Call from a Congregation.
2. Save the report to your computer.
3. Fill out the report and save it again.
4. Attach the report file to an email to Heather (hoysti@nglsynod.org) OR print out your report and mail to the Synod Office.

The reports can also be filled out by hand and mailed to the Synod Office if you prefer to do that. Please note: the deadline for getting your report to the Bishop is **Monday, March 15, 2022!**

Ministers of Word and Sacrament

[Under Call from a Congregation](#)

[On Leave or Disability](#)

[Retired](#)

[Under Call from Synod Council or ELCA Church Council](#)

Ministers of Word and Service

[Under Call from a Congregation](#)

[On Leave or Disability](#)

[Retired](#)

[Under Call from Synod Council or ELCA Church Council](#)

News & Information



Franciscan Spirituality Center

Dedicated to anyone seeking God, meaning and wholeness.

Spiritual Directors Preparation Program

A mixed virtual and in person experience from the Franciscan Spirituality Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin

In Spiritual Directors Preparation Program (SDPP), we use training, individual supervision, and real-life experiences to prepare individuals to move into their communities and jobs as trained spiritual directors. In addition to developing the important skills of holy listening, the program provides guidance and support as participants embark upon a powerful experience of personal transformation.

SDPP is a wonderful 3 year continuing education opportunity that will help enhance your pastoral care and listening skills that will benefit your congregations and your communities as well as help you examine your own hearts. Our next cohort begins September 2022. For more information, please visit the [Franciscan Spirituality Center website](#) or [download the brochure here](#).



Downloadable Vanco Resources

Vanco provides online payment processing solutions, as well as software that enables educational and nonprofit organizations to operate more efficiently. Check out their resources, tips and guides for virtual ministry [here](#).



Be sure to check out the latest edition of the Lutheran Men in Mission newsletter *Ambassador-Gram*, which is available for viewing [here on our website](#).

Upcoming Events



UP Wild

Deep within the Christian tradition there hides a wealth of wisdom on how to cultivate a culture of compassion through the way of love. It is time to bring this authenticity forward especially in the wild setting of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. UP Wild Church creates opportunities to foster a deeper spiritual connection with God outdoors. Find out more information and event details on [their website](#).



Upcoming Events at

Fortune Lake Lutheran Camp

[stay up-to-date with Fortune Lake on their website](#)

Building on Faith

Youth Retreat (Grades 3-6), February 25-26

This exciting retreat features a building theme, including snow fort building, group building challenges, and the faith building that will occur during Bible Study. Kids will have the opportunity to play in the snow, make friends, and sing favorite camp songs around a campfire. **Registration closes February 17.** [Find more details here.](#)

Summer Camp 2022 Registration is OPEN!!!

This summer brings back classic youth camp programs: Mighty Ones, Minis, Villager, Vagabonds, Venturers, and High School Week. Intergenerational Camps allow families of all types to come to camp together. Additionally, specialty programs like Art Camp and Night Owls make a return. We are especially excited to welcome back Victory Camp for adults with developmental disabilities. And new this year: LEGO Camp and Musical Theatre Week! Programs are filling quickly, so don't wait to register! Visit the [Fortune Lake website](#) for details.

We are still mindful of COVID-19 and will continue to respond appropriately by leaning into our cabin groups and beautiful outdoor space and implementing best practices for mitigation.



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, 2022** 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](#).



Lament Singing Workshop Online

Finlandia University will offer an online workshop with [Emmi Kuittinen](#) on **Saturday and Sunday, February 12-13, 2022** from 11 am-2 pm ET.

In this workshop you will get to know the lament tradition of Karelia and Ingria. Laments were sung in parting situations and in the most important rites of human life, like marriage and death. This two-day workshop will include a lecture on the lament tradition and the opportunity to learn to lament yourself with exercises. You will also write a small lament of your own that can be written in English. No experience with lamenting, singing, or Finnish or Karelian language is required. The cost is \$50, advanced registration required. Full event details are available [here](#). [Click here to register](#) or call 906-487-7549. Zoom link provided to registered students by email before the workshop.

Northland Annual Meeting

Northland Lutheran Retirement Community will hold its annual corporation meeting on **Tuesday, February 22 at 5:30 pm ET / 4:30 pm CT.**



Due to current circumstances with the pandemic, Northland will again conduct this meeting virtually via Go-To-Meeting. Please remember that each member congregation can be represented by two delegates and the Pastor of the congregation. A complete packet of materials will be sent in early February.



Quarterly Workshop for Congregation Leaders

The quarterly workshops are now being offered to all elected leaders of the 79 congregations of the NGLS. The next workshop is set for **Thursday, February 24 at 7 pm ET / 6 pm CT** with guest presenter and Assistant to the Bishop, Pastor Jim Duehring. The topic is "The Value of a Vibrant Mutual Ministry." An invitation and Zoom link has been sent to each congregation and pastor. If you do not receive the forwarded email, please contact Heather at the Synod Office hoysti@nglsynod.org.



Stewardship's Flip Side Event

Join us on **Sunday, February 27 from 3-5 pm ET** at Messiah, Marquette for "Stewardship's Flip Side: Recognizing and Removing Obstacles to Generosity." This workshop will be presented by Rev. Richard Wehrs, ELCA Regional Manager for Mission Investment Fund and will focus on the 12 "donor confidence" factors, which can either bolster or undermine your congregation's stewardship efforts. Learn what you can do throughout the year to reduce the gap between your contributors' financial capacity and their financial will by learning from the non-profit fundraising industry. For more details and to register, please see the [flyer on our website](#).

NGLS Youth Ministry Updates



An update Regarding the 2022 Gathering Official Statement from the ELCA

After much prayer, conversation and tears, we have made the difficult decision to cancel the 2022 Gathering, MYLE and the tAble due to the ongoing pandemic, the recent COVID-19 surge and safety considerations.

We know there are thousands of young people who will not get to experience the Gathering, and our hearts break for them. This was not an easy decision, and we ask for your prayers and your grace. We understand the impact this decision will have on our youth, volunteers and planning teams, and we hope to return to Minneapolis for a future Gathering.

Registered congregations can visit their registration accounts starting Monday, February 7, to select their desired refund option. For more information and FAQs, please visit elca.org/Gathering.

With God's power at work in and through us, we can do far more than we dare ask or imagine! The ELCA is fully committed to supporting the young people of our church and to seeing that the ministry of the Gathering, MYLE and the tAble continue for years to come. With that assurance, we are turning our attention toward 2024 for the next Gathering. Stay tuned to Gathering communications for a location announcement this summer.

Grace and peace,
The ELCA Youth Gathering Team



Another Youth Gathering Possibility

The Northern Great Lakes Synod, along with the LaCrosse Area Synod and the Northwest Wisconsin Synod are working on a plan B; a smaller, Tri-Synodical Gathering for July 22-24, 2022. More info to follow.

Free College Readiness Webinar Series in February

Dedicated to providing students with the best education possible, ELCA colleges and universities are kicking off 2022 with a **free College Readiness Webinar Series**, which answers questions students may have about applying to or preparing for college. The series, to be offered throughout February, consists of four different webinars focusing on important topics to help prepare for college, plus an overview offered in Spanish. Each session will be led by representatives from the ELCA Network of Colleges and Universities. [Click here to register](#).



[Facebook](#)



[Instagram](#)



[Website](#)

Keeping in Prayer

February Prayfaithfully Calendar



Prayfaithfully Devotions

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

January 30-February 5 by Pastor Dave Van Kley

February 6-12 by Jon & Sharon Babbit, LLM's

February 13-19 by Pastor Elisabeth Daniels

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

Lifting Up to God in Prayer

We hold in prayer...

- The Ukraine, Russia, and all those impacted by war and violence.
- Those congregations in pastoral transition, may God raise up pastoral leaders for such a time as this.
- Those weary of pandemic changes. Give us patience. Give us strength. Nurture our growth.
- The Church, as we adapt, pivot, make decisions, and find a way forward.

Quick Links

- [Check out resources on the NGLS website](#)
- [COVID-19 Event Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [Stewardship Toolkit](#)
- [UP Wild Events](#)



E-Notes is a twice monthly electronic newsletter from the Northern Great Lakes Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

+ Bishop Katherine Finegan

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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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Northern Great Lakes Synod · 1029 N. Third Street, Suite A · Marquette, MI 49855 · USA

