



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

Volume 35, Issue 3 | July - August 2023

“Abide in me as I abide in you.
Just as the branch
cannot bear fruit by itself
unless it abides in the vine,
neither can you
unless you abide in me.”

~John 15:4

Dear Northern Great Lakes Synod,

In early December of 2017, I was out in our front yard wrapping Christmas lights around a limb of a tree. The limb was about 10 feet off the ground, and I was standing on a ladder, perhaps the third step down, in order to stretch the lights over and under the branch that extended horizontally. Finished with that particular section, I took one step down, but instead of the ladder remaining firmly stationary, it moved toward me. If I did nothing, I would fall to the ground from a painful height on my back. So I grabbed the limb of the tree and pulled toward it, thinking that this would stabilize the ladder and bring us both back upright.



No such luck. Instead of righting itself, the ladder fell away beneath me leaving me to cling briefly to the limb before falling to the ground. In my mind, in that slow motion moment, I felt like I could actually choose where I fell, like a kind of gymnastic dismount from the parallel bars. But in reality, I dropped like a bag of potatoes. And somewhere in the confusion of lights, ladder, and branch, the two fingers of my right hand were caught and pulled out, down, and around with a distinctive crunching sound that made me think of someone snacking on a mouthful of potato chips.



I had broken the bone in my hand that was connected to the ring finger and disrupted the surrounding bones and soft tissue. After several weeks in a splint and then cast, I was given my hand back, only to realize that in that brief time, my brain had decided that my hand no longer belonged to my body. It was still attached of course, but not in a way that gave it life and function. The physical

therapist called it Chronic Reactive Pain Disorder. In short, my hand could no longer work as a hand should. I could not write or type, play piano or grab hold of things. It was a swollen useless

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thing. My brain, and my hand, needed to be retrained and reconnected to meaningful communication with the body, so that the brain would tell the body to send healing and reconnect the signals to the muscles of my hand.

So, what about meaningful connection in the body...the BODY...of Christ? What needs to be retrained? What needs to be reawakened for life and increased function as we are Church together?

My hand was brought back to life as I watched the 2018 Winter Olympics. While watching gymnasts who actually knew how to land a dismount, I put my hand in hot water for two minutes and then in ice water for 30 seconds – back and forth, night after night. Then exercises, and physical therapy, and more tricks on the brain to get my hand to function in a way that was useful to the body.

Jesus, thankfully, does not suggest that we all dunk ourselves in tubs of hot and cold water to be reconnected as a body. Rather, Jesus talks about connectedness as abiding in him in order to bear fruit. And the way that we abide is by being in relationship with him. And that relationship is conveyed to us in at least two ways: through study of scripture and through relationship with each other as the body of Christ. Again...BODY.

When the Synod Council met in retreat June 9 -10, we agreed to initiate an effort for us to abide, as a whole Synod, as 79 congregations spanning hundreds of miles and in a variety of communities and contexts, by dwelling on the same passages of scripture over a 12-month period.

We will abide with Jesus by dwelling in the Word. Each congregation will receive 12 different passages of scripture, one for each month. And at each council meeting and quilter group, at each Sunday School and youth group meeting, at each and every gathering that month, people from across the synod will dwell with the same text. No preparation is needed. No theological degree is required. Very simply:

1. Invite one person to read the text aloud.
2. Consider silently the following:
 - a. What do you notice?
 - b. What questions do you have?
 - c. Where might the Holy Spirit be leading us?
3. Then have another person read the text aloud again.

4. Share your thoughts about the questions with each other.
 5. Close with prayer.
- That's it.

We shall abide. And in abiding, in dwelling with the presence of Christ in the word, and considering the work of the Spirit with each other, we will connect with the one who makes us one, who gathers us as a BODY to embody the love of Christ in the world and for the world.

In addition, all are invited to join the Synod Council as we dwell in the word, via Zoom, the **first Thursday of the month**, starting Thursday **September 7 at 7:30 pm ET / 6:30 pm CT**. The Zoom link will be available on our website and in E-Notes and you can add it to your online calendars.

The impact of being disconnected, of having the body forget who it is connected to and why, cannot be overestimated. We need each other to be the body of Christ, and we need the Holy Spirit of Christ to clarify our mission and purpose as that Body. By dwelling in the word together, we shall abide...in Christ, in the Word, in the presence of Christ in each other.

Yours in Christ,
Bishop Katherine Finegan

Transitions

We celebrate as **Pastor Tim Johnston** has been called to serve at **Bethel, Ishpeming**. An installation date will be determined soon. We welcome Pastor Tim and his family back to our synod!

We hold in prayer **Pastor Micah Cavaleri**, who resigned from **Grace, South Range** as of April 16, 2023 due to health issues. Thanks to retired **Pastor Bucky Beach**, who is serving as administrative interim.

We pray God's blessings on **Pastor David Murphy** and the congregations of **Our Savior's, Marinette** and **Good Shepherd, Peshtigo** as they begin a new partnership in ministry.

Pastor Bre Kinnunen has resigned as NMU Lutheran Campus Ministry Pastor and has accepted a call to serve **Immanuel, Negaunee** starting August 1. May God bless their ministry together!

Ordinary Time for Ordinary People



That's so boring! Look at this amazing thing that I can do! That's so awesome! You can be whatever you want to be! I didn't get anything out of that experience!

Much of life is peppered with hyperbole. Perhaps we humans have always been enticed by the "shining new object of the day." I enjoy posting a good "selfie" on Facebook as much as anyone. But, has this gotten out of hand? Has our hunger for newness, novelty, coolness rendered us a slave to vanity? Do we only notice the spectacular sunset? Do we only look up at the sky when the Northern Lights are dancing? Do we only feel we have worshipped God when the preacher has delivered a soul-turning sermon? Do we only praise the first-place winner? We generally don't like reading from Ecclesiastes, "Vanity of vanities. All is vanity."

In Western Christendom, the liturgical season, which is the longest, is considered Ordinary Time. Depending on how you count it—33 or 34 weeks. For us Lutherans, the long season of Pentecost can also be called Ordinary Time. The color of day is always Green.

Is there praise to be found in the "Ordinary?" So much of living is about the ordinary. We usually eat at the same time. We usually sleep at the same time. Our commuting routes usually are so routine that our smart phones tell us how far away we are from the office even before we start out.

But ordinary doesn't have to mean insignificant. Ordinary doesn't have to mean unimportant. Sleeping is a very ordinary thing to do, but it is crucial to our health and wellbeing. The ordinary, "Thank You," and "You are Welcome," exchanged between people might not solve world hunger, but it does matter.

So much of the ordinary in the world goes unnoticed. So much of the ordinary might not make the evening news. But ordinary matters.

Ordinary time doesn't have to leave us in a sedated stupor. Ordinary time doesn't have to leave us bored. Take a look around you. Notice all those people and things that "ordinarily" surround you! They all help make you who you are. Give thanks to God for the ordinary in your life.

Love, grace, mercy, spirit, death, resurrection, Jesus, rest, food, nature, music, gardens, pets, work, family, friends. These all make up my ordinary life. May we in all things give praise to the Lord who gives us everything!

In paraphrasing and expanding on I Corinthians 10:31, "Whether you are eating or drinking, laughing or daydreaming, sleeping or singing, cleaning or making messes, listening or speaking, fishing or dreaming about fishing, sewing or reaping, may we recognize God's presence in all aspects of our lives and give God praise for all things ordinary!"

Pastor Jim Duehring
Assistant to the Bishop and Director for Evangelical Mission

Reflections on Synod Assembly

written by Synod Vice President Chuck Thomas

After last meeting together in May 2019, it was great for our synod to again have an in-person Assembly in May 2023. The venue at NMU was good, the food was wonderful, and the technical support staff did a great job making sure all the audio-visual stuff worked seamlessly. I enjoyed gathering as a whole synod to worship and pray, to have good conversation, and to make decisions on budgets, governance, and actions. I believe God's spirit was with us and LOVE, this year's theme, was present throughout the three days.

And now faith, hope and
LOVE

love abide, these three.

While there were deliberations leading to decisions, the discussions were civil, and negativity was absent. Difficult budget issues were discussed and approved, constitutional amendments were ratified, and past year accomplishments were celebrated. And, in

grand fashion we re-elected Bishop Finegan to a second 6-year term on the first ballot! What a wondrous accomplishment!

I also was re-elected to a second term as your Synod Vice President. I am very grateful for your support and to be able to continue my service on your behalf. Reiterated here are three goals that were in my report to the Assembly and that I plan to work towards in my second term.

1. Strengthen the relationship and communication between congregations and your synod leadership.
2. Identify and develop more resources for congregation leaders.
3. Find and facilitate more ways for congregations to combine efforts to enhance local community ministry programs.

Our work on the first two goals has already begun. While the third goal may be a bit more difficult,

with God's guidance and your assistance, it can be achieved.

Let's hope and pray for a great 2023-2024 year for the Northern Great Lakes Synod!

Prayers of Remembrance

We give thanks to God for the life and ministry of **Pastor John Shallow** who died April 4, 2023. We pray for comfort for all who grieve the loss of Pastor John. May his memory be blessed.



2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

The next ELCA Youth Gathering will take place July 16-20, 2024 in New Orleans, LA. Youth completing 8th-12th grades in the 2023-2024 school year are eligible to participate in the Youth Gathering. A new Young Adult Gathering is also an option for young people who missed out on the last two Gathering cycles because of the pandemic. Priority registration takes place from September 15-November 15, so now is the time to start promoting, recruiting, and considering how your congregation can support this faith-forming event. Email youth-coordinator@nclsynod.org with questions or to get connected with other congregations from the NGLS who will be participating in the 2024 Gathering.

Youth Leadership Summit Nominations Being Accepted

Each fall the ELCA hosts a Youth Leadership Summit to help high school youth grow in their faith and practice leadership skills. This year's event will take place November 2-5 at Camp Lutherhaven in picturesque Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The NGLS is again committed to sending two



youth and one adult leader to this formative program, but due to increasing airline fees, we are also looking for congregational support to help offset travel expenses. If this sounds like an opportunity you or a high schooler you know would be interested in, please email youthcoordinator@nglsynod.org with the name of the high schooler you are nominating and a few words about why they are an emerging leader in our synod.



Upcoming Trainings

Pastor Kari Vadis, of Trinity Rhinelander, is an authorized facilitator with Darkness to Light: a leader in child sexual abuse prevention, education, research, and advocacy. Faith leaders (pastors, council members, Sunday School teachers, youth leaders, parents) and all who are interested in creating a safer community for our children are invited to participate in an upcoming training in our synod:

Tuesday, October 10
5:30-8:30 pm ET | Negaunee, MI

Saturday, October 14
9:30 am-noon ET | Chassell, MI

Saturday, October 21
9:30 am-noon CT | Crystal Falls, MI

Monday, October 23
10 am-12:30 pm CT | Eagle River, WI

Additional information and online registration can be found at <https://nglsynod.org/youth/#darknessToLight>. If you would like to coordinate a Darkness to Light training in your conference, please email youthcoordinator@nglsynd.org to start the scheduling process.

2023 Fall Class Preview

Join the fellowship and fun with people across the Northern Great Lakes Synod as you explore the Bible, church traditions, and issues central to the lives of Christians



today. Registration will be available on the synod website (nglsynod.org/lifelong-faith-formation) and opens in August. Online courses will begin in September and October. For more information or to receive the link to register in August, contact Deacon Lori Ward at (615) 519-1969 or lori.ward@nglsynd.org.

Christ's Kaleidoscope

A focus on resources that educate and deepen cultural competency regarding racial equity, our indigenous neighbors, and the LGBTQIA+ community.

with Pastor Bruce J. Thorsen and Samuel Brink, Fortune Lake Lutheran Bible Camp Intern

Embracing God's Future without Forgetting the Past:

A Conversation about Loss, Grief, and Nostalgia in Congregational Life

a study on the book by Michael Girlinghouse with Bishop Katherine Finegan of the Northern Great Lakes Synod

The Gospel of Mark: It's Story and Meaning

with Pastor Phil Johnson of Ascension, Minocqua

Stewards of Children:

The movement to make your faith community a safe space

with Pastor Kari Vadis of Trinity, Rhinelander

Take and Eat:

A study of food and spirituality from Holy Communion to potlucks

with Pastor Mike Markwell of Immanuel, Escanaba, meeting in person

That's Not in MY Bible: A Survey of the Apocrypha

with Pastor Tommy Richter of Zion, Manistique

Stewardship of Animals

with Cindy Sjoquist of First, Gladstone

Who are the Evangelicals?

A former evangelical pastor turns whistleblower (without being mean).

with Pastor Lon Hider of Christ the King, Escanaba and Faith, Rock



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

Answer the Call

Barbara Bach
Richard Cooke
Roger & Kay Knuth
Zion, Manistique
Bethany, Negaunee
Immanuel, Negaunee
Rev. Doug & Shirley Norquist
Emanuel, Skandia
Gary Wommer

Clergy Debt Relief

Kathy Bero

Companion Synod Support

Immanuel, Negaunee

ELCA Disaster Funds/Lutheran World Relief

Immanuel, Escanaba
Gloria Dei, Hancock
Salem, Ironwood
WELCA at Salem, Ironwood
St. Paul, Ironwood
Our Savior's, Marinette
Zion, Marinette
Prince of Peace, Marquette
Ascension, Minocqua
Immanuel, Negaunee
Mission United, Pelkie
Grace, Pembine
Calvary, Rapid River
St. James, Rudyard

Equipping the Saints Endowment

Rev. Terry & John Frankenstein

Fund for Leaders

Rev. Gerald & Susan Anderson
United, Crystal Falls
Zion, St. Ignace
Darlene Van Lishout

Habitat for Humanity

Community, Suomi

Indigenous Neighbors

Rev. Julie Belew

Lutheran Campus Ministry

Prince of Peace, Marquette
Immanuel, Negaunee
Good Shepherd, Peshtigo

Calvary, Rapid River
Rev. Kay Richter

Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service

First, Ewen

Lutheran Social Services

St. Paul, Ironwood
Emanuel, Skandia

Kemppainen Scholarship Fund

Rev. Dave & Arlene Van Kley in honor of Darley Kemppainen's 89th birthday

NGLS Mission Outreach

Immanuel, Escanaba

Skogman Scholarship Fund

Jane Christenson
Gisele Duehring
Barbara Hammerberg
Sandra Hueter
Karen Kolstad
Susan Shallow
Jo Skogman
Luanne Skrenes
Louise Spickerman
Arlene Van Kley
Ruth Warmanen

Skrenes Fund for Ministry

Rev. Bonny Kinnunen
Immanuel, Negaunee
Bishop Tom & Luanne Skrenes

Synod Restricted

Rev. Gerald & Susan Anderson
Donald & Joanne Schutt

Synod Youth Ministries

Rev. Terry & John Frankenstein

Tanzania Projects

Brian & Danielle Anderson
Zion, Ironwood
St. Paul's, Mass City

World Missionary Support

Immanuel, Negaunee
Mission United, Pelkie

Synod Calendar



- 4 Synod Office Closed
- 5 NGLS Staff Meeting, 10 am ET
- 11 Walking with Our Indigenous Neighbors Task Force meeting, 10 am ET via Zoom
- 11 Companion Synod Committee meeting, 7:30 pm via Zoom
- 19 NGLS Staff meeting, 10 am ET
- 21 KBIC Remembrance Walk
- 24-27 Journey Tri-Synod High School Youth Gathering



- 8 NGLS Staff Meeting, 10 am ET
- 16 Lifelong Faith Formation Committee meeting, 11 am ET at the Synod Office
- 17 Retired Pastors, Spouses & Widows Gathering, 11 am-2 pm CT at Fortune Lake
- 23 NGLS Staff meeting, 10 am ET

This is the **DAY**
the **LORD** has made;
Let us
REJOICE
and be **GLAD** in it.

Palm 118:24

Pastoral Vacancies and Interims

All Saints, Wakefield & Sharon, Bessemer—Rev. Lauri Maki

St. James, Rudyard—Rev. Melinda VanderSys

First, Iron River—Vicar Lance Crevier, Student

Bethany, Ishpeming—Rev. Dave & Rev. Christine Echelbarger

Faith & Trinity, Ishpeming—Rev. Steve & Rev. Evelyn Weston

Zion, Marinette—Rev. Doug Schoen

Immanuel, Rhinelander—Rev. John Kuziej

Good Shepherd, Houghton—Rev. Soren Schmidt

Porterfield, Porterfield & Beaver American, Pound—Rev. Ken Michaelis

United, L'Anse—Rev. Julie Belew

Ascension, Minocqua—Rev. Philip Johnson

Pioneer Lake, Conover—Rev. Kari Vadis

Emmanuel, Menominee—Rev. Christine Olson

Bethany, Perkins & Trinity, Stonington—Lisa Bouche

Grace, South Range—Rev. Bucky Beach

“Treasure, too, you have entrusted, gain through powe’rs your grace conferred;
Ours to use for home and kindred, and to spread the gospel word.
Open wide our hands in sharing, as we heed Christ’s ageless call,
Healing, teaching, and reclaiming, serving you by loving all.” (ELW #678)

Congregations have been timely in their remittances and generous in their giving for which we are deeply grateful as we strive to answer Christ’s call to serve in the Northern Great Lakes Synod. Mission support is up more than 4% over last year, while designated gifts were higher in 2022 due to the outpouring of gifts for Ukraine.

We give our thanks and praise to God for the abundant blessings we enjoy! May we continue to open wide our hearts and hands so that others may know of God’s love and grace.

- Betsy Koski, Bookkeeper

As of 5/31	2022	2023	\$ Change	% Change
Pledged Amount	779,995	759,513	-20,482	-2.6%
Amount Received	299,542	312,292	+12,750	+4.3%
Designated Gifts	87,446	67,805	-19,641	-22.5%



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Prayfaithfully

NGLS Daily Devotions Schedule July & August 2023

July 2-8	Melzee Jacobson
July 9-15	Dave & Mary Lou Blomquist
July 16-22	Pastor John Kuziej
July 23-29	Pastor Brenda Greenwald
July 30-August 5	Matthew Johnson
August 6-12	Nancy Heykes
August 13-19	Pastor Lloyd Luedeman
August 20-26	Ruth Warmanen
August 27-September 2	Fortune Lake Summer Staff



A Year of Prayer
A Lifetime of Praying!

prayfaithfully@nglsynod.org
www.nglsynod.org/prayfaithfully

Prayer Calendar - July 2023

1	Pray for pastors who celebrate the anniversary of their ordination this month: Bob Patrick (7/1), D.J. Rasner (7/2), Jared Howard (7/7), Tammy Barthels (7/11), Brenda Greenwald (7/14) and Gerald Anderson (7/20).
2	Pray for pastors who celebrate birthdays this month: Micah Cavaleri (7/2), Tera Kossow (7/5), Dean Peterson (7/6), Alex LaChapelle (7/6), and Jennie Johnson Wrege (7/7).
3	Pray for St. Paul, Frostburg, MD; St. Paul, Fulton, MD; St. Paul, Funkstown, MD; St. Paul - Harney, Gettysburg, PA; St. Paul, Lutherville, MD; St. Paul, Myersville, MD; St Paul, Newark, DE; St. Paul, Smithsburg, MD; St. Paul, Upperco, MD; St. Paul – Utica, Thurmont MD and St. Paul, Walkerville, MD.
4	Pray for our nation as we celebrate our independence. May God guide our hearts and minds to be open to all who seek freedom.
5	Pray for the NGLS Staff as they continue their work on behalf of our church leaders, our congregations, and our shared mission.
6	Pray for all people struggling with worry about finances, illness, relationships and/or work challenges. Remind them God is their refuge and strength. He is an ever-present help in times of trouble.
7	Pray for those who struggle with forgiveness. For those who have the power to forgive and for those seeking absolution. Ease the pain and burden of this heaviness.
8	Pray for those who are retiring. May the example of their commitment to their professions inspire those who follow. Bless their retirement years with good health and happiness.
9	Pray for pastors who celebrate birthdays this month: Ken Michaelis (7/9), Norm Peterson (7/9), Steven Anderson (7/9), Keith Kolstad (7/9), Joe Daiker (7/9), Nicole Hanson-Lynn (7/9), Ingmar Levin (7/10) and D.J. Rasner (7/10).
10	Pray that we are good stewards of our beautiful beaches, forests, trails, and waterways. May God teach us to respect these gifts and preserve them for future generations.
11	Pray for those participating in the Companion Synod Committee meeting as they nurture connections to the Lutheran Church in Tanzania with our congregations and the Synod.
12	Pray for all clergy in transition as they move to new calls, transition to new communities, and assume the responsibilities of leading their congregations.
13	Pray for members of Yombo Lutheran Church, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and their partner congregation Immanuel Lutheran Church, Negaunee, MI.
14	Pray we are grateful for each new day and the clean slate of starting fresh. May God teach us to live in the present and not hurry through these precious hours.
15	Pray for youth and families who struggle with hunger during the summer when schools are not providing meals. May God show them where resources are available. May God help us to be generous in our caring for them.
16	Pray for pastors who celebrate birthdays this month: Ron McCallum (7/16), Gerald Anderson (7/17), Lloyd Luedeman (7/17), Lily Brondyke (7/23), Devon Barrix (7/24), Tim Johnston (7/24) and Raymond Korry (7/27).

17	Pray for all attending the ELCA Rostered Ministers Gathering in Phoenix, AZ through July 20. Bless their travel and their participation. May the Holy Spirit fuel their enthusiasm and empower them to be courageous in their leadership.
18	Pray we all find a way to be better listeners. May everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak and in control of their emotions.
19	Pray for the NGLS Staff as they look ahead and make plans for the coming weeks and months.
20	Pray for educational administrators at elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, and seminaries as they make plans for the fall.
21	Pray for pastors who celebrate the anniversary of their ordination this month: Scott Ehle (7/21), Allan Johnson (7/25), David Tielbar (7/25), Jim Duehring (7/26), and Katherine Finegan (7/28).
22	On this day when we remember St. Mary Magdalene, pray for all those who boldly tell their stories of encountering our living Lord, Jesus Christ. May God bless them with the words they need so that those who listen hear the Good News of new life in Jesus.
23	Pray that in all that we do, it be done with love.
24	Pray for those attending the Journey Tri-Synod high school youth gathering through July 27. Pray the Spirit burns brightly through their words and their actions.
25	Pray that all leaders will do the right thing regardless of what others think, say or do.
26	Pray for those who struggle with gender orientation and identity. May God bless them with peace and confidence in who God has created them to be. May God fill their lives with people who understand and support them in all they do.
27	Pray for all who participate in county fairs, music festivals, and community events. Those who work the booths and concession stands, those who judge entries, those who care for the animals and those who perform. May God bless them all along the way.
28	Pray for those who care for a loved one. Guide them and equip them with wisdom, courage, strength, and patience. Grant them the support they need to allow for their own respite and well-being.
29	Pray for everyone receiving upsetting news today. Comfort them, guide them and grant them the time they need to process the information, the resources to navigate what comes next and the strength of family and friends.
30	On this International Day of Friendship, we pray friendship becomes the bridge that connects people, countries, communities, and cultures. Pray these friendships foster peace, respect and understanding.
31	Pray for those whose faith is wavering. Grant them peace and comfort. Help them to see, God is always there and fill them with his presence.

**“We pray for congregations in the Delaware-Maryland Synod
as part of our domestic partner synod relationship.”**



A Year of Prayer
A Lifetime of Praying!

prayfaithfully@nglsynod.org
www.nglsynod.org/prayfaithfully

Prayer Calendar - August 2023

1	Pray for pastors celebrating birthdays this month: Jared Howard (8/1), Paul Raappana (8/6), Diane Srutowski (8/6), Bucky Beach (8/11), Brahm Semmler Smith (8/11) and Cori Johnson (8/13).
2	Pray for rain and the transformation of our fields and pastures. Restore balance between the warmth of the sun and the life-giving waters in time of drought. Pray for those fleeing from and fighting wildfires.
3	Pray for pastors who celebrate the anniversary of their ordination this month: Molly Eversoll (8/3), Kelly Ylitalo (8/9), Steve Weston (8/15), Rell Spickerman (8/16), Lloyd Leo Luedeman (8/16), Diane Srutowski (8/17) and Bill Jacobson (8/19).
4	Pray all people find the strength to refuse evil and choose good. May the Holy Spirit keep them focused and resistant to tempting detours. When they fall off track, guide them back to the truth of God's word.
5	Pray for people longing for peace, shelter, food, and clean water. Keep the fires of hope burning and light the way to a better life.
6	Pray for those experiencing changes to their hearing and/or vision. Empower them to seek testing and give them the resources to receive adaptive equipment.
7	Pray for the young and old being baptized this month. As we welcome our new brothers and sisters into God's family may we shout "Blessed be the name of the LORD from this day forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun to the setting of the same, the Lord is to be praised!"
8	Pray for the NGLS Staff as they meet to discuss the present and future business of the Synod.
9	Pray for those who are afraid. May they heed these words, "Be not afraid. I go before you always. Come, follow me and I will give you rest."
10	Pray for the members of St. Paul's Clear Spring, MD; St. Paul's Cordova MD; St. Paul's Jefferson, MD; St. Peter, Clear Spring, MD; St. Peter – East Point – Baltimore, MD; St. Peter – Fullerton, Baltimore, MD; St. Peter, Hagerstown, MD; and St. Peter – Hampstead, Beckleysville, MD.
11	Pray for all seminary professors as they teach, form, and nurture women and men for public ministry in a context that is Christ-centered, faithfully Lutheran, and ecumenically committed. Bless the seminarians as they study and prepare to become called and ordained ministers.
12	Pray for those with difficulty sleeping. Grant them peace to quiet their hearts and minds to the troubles of their day so that they may obtain the restorative sleep their bodies need.
13	Pray we are mindful of what we say and how we say it. May our messages be clear and alleviate any misunderstanding in our intent.
14	Pray we stand up for what is right and have the courage to speak up against what is wrong.

15	Pray for all students, faculty and staff preparing to return to school later this month. Pray for safe schools and supportive environments as students engage in new learning experiences, new teachers, and the opportunity to make new friends.
16	Pray for the Lifelong Faith Formation committee as they meet to identify opportunities for individuals who participate in education programming designed to facilitate growth in spirituality and faith.
17	On this National Non-Profit Day, pray for all organizations who receive this status as they fulfill their mission and purpose for a stronger society and improved public health.
18	Pray for student athletes who are training for fall sports. Instill in them the spirit of competition and good sportsmanship. Pray for coaches, fans, and officials that they keep these events in perspective and treat each other with dignity and respect.
19	Pray for those encountering obstacles and roadblocks in pursuit of their goals. Grant them patience and persistence as they navigate these detours and keep them true to their path.
20	On this World Humanitarian Day, pray for humanitarian personnel and recognize their efforts as aid workers during world crises. Pray all countries come together in times of need.
21	Pray for pastors celebrating the anniversary of their ordination: Joe Daiker (8/21), Gene Wickman (8/23), Craig Mansur (8/28), Devon Barrix (8/28), Dave Christenson (8/29) and Doug Norquist (8/30).
22	Pray for those distracted by inner turmoil. Calm these internal storms and re-direct their focus and concentration.
23	Pray for the NGLS Staff as they meet to discuss the present and future business of the Synod.
24	Pray for members of Kinondoni Lutheran Church, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and their partner congregation Bethel Lutheran Church, Ishpeming, MI.
25	Pray for LLM Sharon Babbitt as she celebrates her birthday today.
26	On this Women's Equality Day, we pray for all women as we celebrate and commemorate the passage of the 19 th amendment giving women the right to vote.
27	Pray for those who are incarcerated, awaiting bail, court dates, and for those being considered for parole. Fill them with the Holy Spirit and open their eyes to you and your love.
28	Pray for Bishop Finegan as she attends the Region 5 Bishop's Retreat through August 30. Bless all participant's travel. May this experience bring renewal, revitalization, and refreshed energy for all those who attend.
29	Pray for families impacted by sports gambling. Restore stability to their lives.
30	Pray for all people grieving the loss of someone or something. Guide them through the emotional, physical, spiritual, and cultural dimensions of grief. Pray they find comfort in your love, the support of family and friends and the gift of their memories.
31	Prayers of thanksgiving for our wonderful summer. For freshly cut grass, for trips to the lake, for fireworks and fireflies. We give you thanks, dear Lord, for all this and more.

“We pray for congregations in the Delaware-Maryland Synod as part of our domestic partner synod relationship.”

Pilgrimage to the Abbey on the Isle of Iona, Scotland

Combined Campus Ministry at Northern Michigan University



From May 24 until June 3, 2023, a group of six mentors and seven NMU campus ministry participants lived in the Iona Abbey and participated fully in the life of the community. The mentors were three campus ministry pastors, a member of the Lutheran Synod staff, a volunteer from a supporting congregation, and a parent. The idea for this trip grew from a recognition that international study and immersion in community was formative and that it would be pivotal in the lives of twenty-somethings as they launched into adulthood. Indeed, this

assumption was validated when, at the end of our week on Iona one of the staff members took us aside and said, “The ripple effect of having brought these young adults here is going to be huge. You have all done such a good thing getting them here.”

The Iona community describes itself as “an international ecumenical Christian Movement working for justice and peace, the rebuilding of community and the renewal of worship.” Indeed, this was our experience. From the first moment of being greeted at the jetty and brought to the Abbey for tea, biscuits, and orientation to the last moment of a commitment service and being waved off from the jetty by the entire Abbey staff, we were immersed in a process of active listening, encouragement to participation and relationship, welcoming worship, and challenging embodied spirituality. We ate food that resonated with earth-friendly practices. We cleaned bathrooms, toasted bread, assisted in worship, mopped floors, set tables for meals. We talked with strangers who became friends, and we participated in programming that connected us to God, to each other, to the land, and to the work of peace and justice.

You have to want to get to Iona to journey there. The physical journey from the UP is perhaps a pilgrimage in and of itself. We traveled from here to Glasgow, Scotland, then via taxi to our Airbnb in Balloch (the home of Loch Lomond) and then across Scotland by train (with one transfer on train) to Oban, next a ferry to Mull, and finally, a one-lane bus ride across Mull to the final connecting ferry that delivers one to Iona and the Abbey. Yet the effort to get to Iona began months ahead of time with logistics hammered out, a budget created, multiple fundraisers executed, individuals raising their own support, outfitting ourselves with passports, hiking boots, rain gear, and prayers. We studied Celtic Christianity and began to get comfortable with not really knowing what was ahead.

The results of the pilgrimage, who we will become, what we will do, as a result of our time there are yet to be seen, but the effort of going away to live in community has already shown promise. One of the



participants, after the first worship service said that it was the first time in their lives that they felt loved and accepted in church. This, alone, was worth the effort.

To be honest, this pilgrimage to Iona was much bigger in impact than was imagined. Those of us who were mentors were amazed and touched by the whole-hearted participation of those with whom we journeyed. At every turn there was engagement: each in their own way. Thank you, friends, for your support of this pilgrimage, in big ways and small.

On the last night of the trip, the community had an open-mic night. Song, poetry, audience participation opportunities, and essays graced the stage. As a group, we sang to the community a love song for the love that they had given to us. Without us knowing it, one of our young adults wrote a poem and performed it at open mic night. It seems to summarize our experience:

Breath of the Isle

by Freddie Neufeld

Can you see it?

The green-covered hills as the craggy stones peek out, inviting you,
asking you to climb, to greet the morning sky.

The pink stones of mull, shining in the evening sun.

And the church walls of granite, lending refuge to the people within.

Let me look into your face and know you and see the reflection of
love in your eyes.

Can you hear it?

The warbling calls of sparrows and skylarks

merging with notes of singing as pilgrims chant the melodies of the land's memories.

The stones breathe on this island.

The lambs cry out, the oyster catchers shriek, and the jackdaws call.

Sitting in the hermit's ring of stones, I realized that it was not the stones but a reflection of my
own slow, deep breath.

A breath that steadies in contemplative silence or quakes when calling out injustices.

A breath that propels a voice.

Can you feel it?

The rumble in your core before a belly laugh, as we turn a solemn bible reading into louder-than-life
dramatics.

The smile spreading slowly as strangers being vulnerable turn to steadfast friends. And a sigh in
awe escaping your lips as tiny puffins fly.

There is magic in these hills, among the buttercups and daisies.

This beautiful place has changed us, and now we can cycle that change forward. But we already
knew that. We just had to relearn it.

Can you see it? Can you hear it? Can you feel it? Our souls are beginning to sing.

