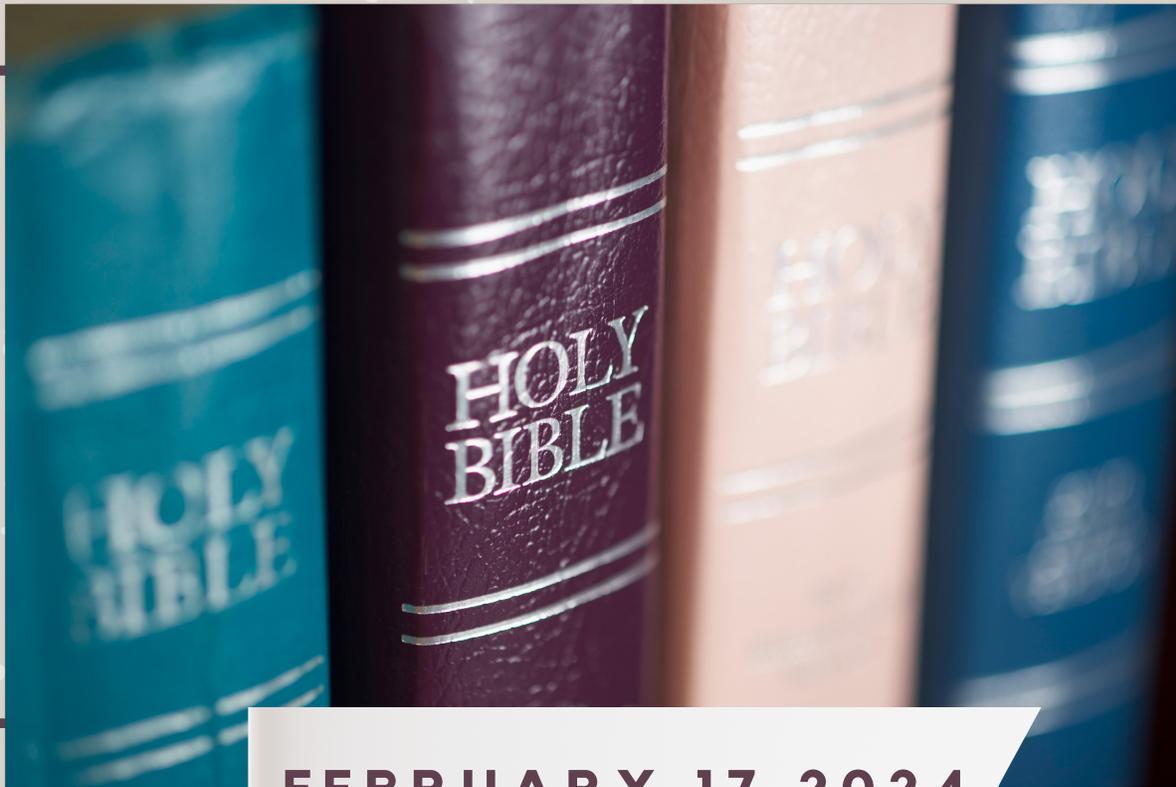


WALKING TOGETHER

"I Love to Tell the Story"



FEBRUARY 17, 2024

**Bethany Lutheran
Rice Lake**



Northwest Synod of Wisconsin
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Schedule

8:00 Registration & Fellowship

Narthex

9:00 Opening Worship

Sanctuary

10:00 Workshop 1

See Workshop Grid

11:00 Workshop 2

12:00 Lunch

1:00 Workshop 3

2:00 Workshop 4

3:00 Workshop 5

4:00 Departure

Thank You!

We are grateful for all the people who made this event possible:

Bethany Lutheran Church Staff for the facility use and assistance before, during, and after the event.

Workshop Presenters for their time, wisdom, and important conversations.

Participants who attended today.

Adventures Restaurant for catering our midday meal.

Synod Information

Synod Office



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Synod Staff

Rev. Laurie Skow-Anderson

Bishop

Liz Bartsch

Synod Minister - Administration,
Events, Leadership Support

Rev. Randy Olson

Synod Minister - Leadership,
Candidacy & Call Process

Rev. Diane House

Director for Evangelical Mission

Synod Staff

Deacon Laura Ramlow

Synod Minister - Faith Formation,
Communication, Malawi

Deacon Lidixe Montoya

Mission Developer - Neighbor to
Neighbor Ministry;

Rev. Sara Villarreal Bishop

Synod Advocate for
Right Relationships

Welcome!

Welcome to Walking Together 2024!

This year the theme is "I Love to Tell the Story!" I bet many of you are familiar with that hymn. Over time it has become a favorite one to sing in worship. Today in our worship service we will sing this beloved hymn but only the first verse will be recognized. Pastor Phil Ruge-Jones who is our preacher this morning, shared a version of this familiar song containing three new verses by songwriter, Dennis Dewey. The fact that we will sing a traditional hymn containing a newer verses emphasizes the theme for this years Walking Together Event.

We are in a time of reformation in the Church. Building on the traditional or inherited church we are being led out of the doors of this institution into the world. God is already ahead of us, at work bringing God's will into reality. We enter into that work as we tell the story of how this new calling builds on the tradition of the church. Reaching new people in new ways.

So, today you will participate in workshops where other leaders will share the story of the way this work is being done in their contexts. It is our hope and prayer that these stories will inspire you to think about ways you can start or continue to tell the "old, old story of Jesus and his love" in new ways to new people who are seeking to have a relationship with the living God.

With Great Faithfulness!

Rev. Diane House

Director for Evangelical Mission

Worship

Prelude

*Truth Be Told
Good, Good Neighbor*

Breaking Chains

Words of Welcome

Land Acknowledgement

As we worship together, we at the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin acknowledge that we worship on the ancestral lands of the people of the council of Three Fires, including the Ho-Chunk, Dakota, Menomonee, and the Ojibwe. A people that are still here, continuing to honor and bring to light their ancient heritage.

Opening Prayer

By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly tell the story of his good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Opening Song

Open Up the Heavens

Breaking Chains

Scripture

Acts 8:26-40

Rev. Lori Ruge-Jones, Storyteller

Sermon

Rev. Phil Ruge-Jones, Storyteller

Song

I Love to Tell the Story.

Breaking Chains

I love to tell the story of unseen things above, Of Jesus and his glory, of Jesus and his love.
I love to tell the story because I know 'tis true; it satisfies my longings as nothing else can do
I love to tell the story, 'Twill be my theme in glory to tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.

I love to tell the story; the story changes things; it challenges the powers; it whispers, thunders, sings!
It births the holy presence in moments of surprise; it heals, empowers and strengthens, and opens ears and eyes.

I love to tell the story of Jesus and his glory, Because it is God's story of justice, peace and love.

The church that lies before us is not the church of old; the changes in our culture demand new vision bold.
One path for being Christian in this post-modern age, lies through our storytelling - our ancient heritage!
Rejected from the quarry, this cornerstone of glory; To tell the new old story from ages yet to come

I love to tell the story of God's amazing grace. The Gospel gives us courage for all the tasks we face:
To bind the brokenhearted, to give hope to the poor, to free all those held captive, to help the weak endure.
I love to tell the story; it is our crowning glory to live and tell the story - the Word of God alive!

Worship

Communion

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and untie the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever. Amen

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed by your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us for our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, the glory are yours, now and forever.
Amen.

Communion Distribution

Amazing Grace, My Chains Are Gone

Breaking Chains

Blessing

Let us pray; We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in strong love for one another. Amen

Closing Songs

The Blessing
Child of Love

Breaking Chains

WALKING TOGETHER

I Love to Tell the Story

10:00 WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room
The Door Way Effect or The Sankofa Bird	Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson	Sanctuary
FX Round 1 - Fresh Expressions of Church	Diane House Brad Peterson Christine Emerson	Gathering Room
I Love to Hear the Story Told	Lori and Phil Ruge-Jones	Room 108

11:00 WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room
Synodically Authorized Ministers (SAMs)	Randy Olson Bob Giese	Sanctuary
FX Round 2: Fresh Expressions of Church	Diane House Bethany Walker Donna Rutten John Sutherland	Gathering Room
Installing a Solar Panel Array in Your Church	Sandy Tauferner John Skoug	Room 108

1:00 WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room
How Can Lutherans Respond to the Climate Crisis?	Dr. Jim Boulter	Sanctuary
Mission Tellers: Telling the Story of Our Hands Doing God's Work in the World	Michelle Pride Jed Reiten	Gathering Room
Quilt of Justice	Sara Villarreal Bishop	Room 108

2:00 WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room
Reconciling in Christ Journey	David Behling	Sanctuary
A Community Church – Walking With Our Neighbors	Jenny Hatleli	Gathering Room
Divine Ecology	Sara Villarreal Bishop	Room 108

3:00 WORKSHOPS

Workshop Title	Facilitator	Room
How to be an Ally for 2SLGBTQIA+ People: Ministry. Learning. Action.	David Behling	Sanctuary
Until All Are Fed	Michelle Pride	Gathering Room
Bishop Election Q & A	Sara Villarreal Bishop	Room 108

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

The Door Way Effect or The Sankofa Bird, Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

Do you walk into a room and forget why? It is very common and there is a scientific name for it, The Door Way Effect. In this workshop we will discuss what the church forgot when it walk through the doorway into the Christian Era and why now in the post Christian era we need to go back before Christendom to find what we have lost. The Sankofa Bird is a Ghanaian symbol. The bird's head is turned backward while its feet are facing forward carrying an egg in its mouth. The Sankofa proverb states: "It is not wrong to go back for that which you have forgotten." This going back to reclaim and bring into the present may be the way we can discern our next most faithful courageous steps as a church and a synod.

FX Round 1: Fresh Expressions of the Church

Fresh Expressions of Church: Reaching new people in new places in new ways.

Come and hear about fresh expressions of church that invite us to join in with what God is already up to in our communities. Hear how Lagers with the Lord and Wildchurch are reaching new people in new places in new ways.

I Love to Hear the Story Told

In the early church, most people encountered the Scriptures not through reading them, but through hearing them. Come and experience the liveliness of God's Word when it is performed from memory. Pastors Lori and Phil Ruge-Jones will engage you with a passage of God's Word through Biblical Storytelling and invite you into this way of interpreting Scriptures.

Synodically Authorized Ministers SAMs

SAMs are authorized by the Bishop to serve specific congregations or ministries with full ministry duties including presiding at Communion, weddings, and funerals. In this workshop you'll hear about how the now over 30 SAMs in our Synod are serving their congregations and communities, and you'll learn how you or someone in your congregation(s) who feels a call to ministry but not ordained ministry can become a SAM. This is relevant for any congregation struggling to find a new pastor or in need of additional professional ministry but without the means to call another pastor. This workshop will be led by The Rev. Dr. Bob Giese, who has been teaching pastoral care to and mentoring our SAMs for over four years and The Rev. Randy Olson, whose Synod Staff duties include working with congregations seeking to have a member become a SAM. Current SAMs will be present to share their stories.

FX Round 2: Fresh Expressions of the Church

Fresh Expressions of Church: Reaching new people in new places in new ways.

Come and hear about fresh expressions of church that invite us to join in with what God is already up to in our communities. Hear how the people of Faith Lutheran church and Rock Creek Lutheran Church are on the look out for Mustard Seed Reports. Hear how creative dinner church in Poplar is reaching out to new people in new places in that community. "John Sutherland will tell the story of how Cross Lutheran in Roberts has reached out to the recovery community with Recovery Church."

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Installing a Solar Panel Array in Your Church: Benefits and Challenges

Solar panels producing clean energy is a great example of living God's Call to Care for Creation. They can reduce the church's carbon footprint and the cost of electricity. It can be a challenge to help church leaders and the congregation support the project. What design will work and how will we fund it? Bring your questions and join us for a workshop that will outline how two Synod congregations completed solar panel array projects.

How Can Lutherans Respond to the Climate Crisis?

"Twenty years ago, the Lutheran Church responded to growing ecological concerns with the social statement, *Caring for Creation: Vision, Hope, and Justice*. Since then, our perception of climate change has shifted from a distant threat to future generations to an existential menace that haunts weekly news cycles. In response, ELCA leadership has released a new social message on Earth's Climate Crisis. While it is significant that our church join the countless other faith communities in officially recognizing this reality, more important is how it informs how we can respond faithfully. In this workshop, we'll glance through this exciting new document, briefly considering its context, then skip to the end so that we can discuss meaningful actions that individual congregations can pursue."

Mission Tellers: Telling the Story of Our Hands Doing God's Work in the World

Each of us has a unique story and we are all part of a much larger story - God's story. When we understand our baptismal identity we share our stories of how God works in our lives and in the lives around us. Learn to bring your stories to life and to tell the stories of God's work through our hands throughout the world.

Quilt of Justice

We have opportunities to address injustice in our synod, in our communities and across communities. Knitting them together into the Kingdom of Heaven seems impossible. A series of stories, of various opportunities and challenges in our small area of the world, and things large and small that we can do to love our neighbors.

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Reconciling in Christ Journey

Join Deacon David Behling at a workshop that provides an overview of the Reconciling in Christ [RIC] journey for ministries. Since 1974, ReconcilingWorks: Lutherans for Full Participation has advocated for the full welcome, inclusion, and equity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) Lutherans in all aspects of the life of their Church, congregations, and community; and since 1983 has hosted the RIC journey as a public way for faith communities to see, name, celebrate, and advocate for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions in the Lutheran church. As the Program Coordinator for ReconcilingWorks, Deacon David will be walking participants through some history and values of the organization, context around why welcome matters in the life of your faith community and larger world, an overview of the Building an Inclusive Community workshop, and how you can get started in your own faith community by building and strengthening relationships.

A Community Church – Walking With Our Neighbors

What might happen if a faith community shifted its focus from trying to stay alive to that of simply loving God + People? Might we find a deeper purpose than simply surviving? Join us in this open panel discussion workshop as we cover a few key things that have worked for us.

ELC, like many churches, has been through some major changes post covid. One of them is the way we engage with each other and our neighbors. We made a shift from focusing on ourselves and how we will get people to “come back to church” so that we can have enough offering to pay our bills, to that of taking the church to the people by simply loving God and loving People. Because of this, we have tapped into one of our core values: community. Through this we continue to get to know our Ho-Chunk neighbors more deeply, we show up time and time again in the community where there are needs, and we do all of this without the expectation of people needing to “join” or do something to experience God’s love. We do it because we are called to simply love.

Because of this, people are coming to church, the Holy Spirit is gifting us a season of growth and depth. While numbers are not our measuring tool for success, it helps people to see growth: our Sunday School has grown from 10 kiddos to 60, and our weekly worship has gone from 50 to 175 average in just two years. We found ourselves in the position of needing to build leaders and multiply as God’s love has outgrown our current leadership compacity. More importantly, lives are being changed and people are hearing about the love of God and the transformative power that can only come from Jesus!

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTIONS

Until All Are Fed

More than 820 million people in the world are hungry, even as we live in a world of abundance. Learn how ELCA World Hunger, Feed My People Food Bank, and other emergency food organizations work globally and locally to make it possible for everyone to have enough to eat. And learn what you can do to be part of the solution

How to be an Ally for 2SLGBTQIA+ people: Ministry. Learning. Action.

This workshop will start from a shared understanding of God's welcome and unconditional love for all people. We will explore ways to deepen and expand ministry to and with 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals and families. We will learn how to support people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions while recognizing how sexuality and gender intersect with other identities that also marginalize many of God's children. We will integrate what we learn into our lives and work on building relationships with other people , both allies and Queer folk.

Divine Ecology

We are never EVER alone. It doesn't matter which system we look at, all the relationships are interconnected, from the utterly microscopic to the vastly cosmic – we are in relationship, whether we want to or can acknowledge it or not. This is a divine ecology of which we are privileged to be part of, which we have the delight to discuss, and can wonder and worry at. I'm sure the crows and octopodes do too, but I'm not privy to those conversations. Divine Ecology asks some basic questions Where do I fit? Where do I fit NOW? Who are you? Where do you fit? And how is the Spirit at work in these relationships.

Bishop Election Q & A

Upcoming Events

Book Club; *The Sparrow*, by Mary Doria Russell

February 22, 2024 - 7:00 pm - Conversation via Zoom

<https://nswi.org/faith-formation/synod-book-club>

Book Club; *Abuelita Faith*, by Kat Armas

March 21, 2024 - 7:00 pm - Conversation via Zoom

<https://nswi.org/faith-formation/synod-book-club>

EcoFaith Summit

April 6, 2024 + Duluth, MN & Online

<https://www.ecofaithnetwork.org/ecofaith-summit-2024>

enCOURAGE, Middle School Youth Gathering

April 13, 2024, Bethany Lutheran - Rice Lake

<https://nswi.org/synod-youth-board/christ-jam-2024>

Pre-Assembly Forums

April 28, May 2, May 7 - Via Zoom

<https://nswi.org/synod-assembly-2024>

Synod Assembly 2024: *Water is Life*

June 7-8, 2024 + UW Eau Claire

<https://nswi.org/synod-assembly-2024>

ELCA Youth Gathering: Created to Be

July 16-20, 2024 + New Orleans, LA

Bishop Installation

September 15, 2024



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