

Equipping Congregations Day 2018

Keynote and Workshop Descriptions

Keynote Presentations

Everyday Reformers The Presiding Bishop Elizabeth A. Eaton
Story & Song Bishop Jon Anderson and local musicians

Choose 1 workshop from each group to attend.

Group A:

Insurance Issues Facing Today's Church

Presenters: Timothy Marks & Dan Shultz, Church Mutual Insurance Company

Have questions about insurance for your church? Some of the things I would like to cover are: Questions about appropriate coverage. What is too much or too little? Some country rural churches may wonder about rebuilding, if there was to be a great loss of building and therefore maybe dropping replacement cost. How would congregation leaders make these kinds of decisions? Also what should leaders know about programs of safety in their church, background checks and cemetery coverage? Sexual Misconduct coverage and the issues facing the church in this area in today's culture. What are liability issues for congregations who want to open their space to community ministry opportunities? Does your Church need a Facilities Use Agreement, and if so, what do you include in it? I would also like to open things up for questions, if we have time, about any topics churches may be struggling with when it comes to insurance.

Taking a Group to Houston - ELCA Youth Gathering

Presenter: Ashley Gilbertson, SW MN ELCA Youth Gathering Synod Coordinator

Are you registered to bring a group to Houston in 2018 for the ELCA Youth Gathering and wondering about the logistics? Join me for some discussions on things like: daily schedule, feeding your group, getting around, things to do, and whatever other questions you bring with you! My goal is for you to leave this workshop feeling more confident about leading your group, as well as acquainted with some other leaders from our synod who will also be attending.

Whose Job is it Anyway?

Presenter: Pastor Don McKee, Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Montevideo

Considerations about the work of funerals in a world moving toward more and more cremations. What is the Church's job and responsibilities when a Funeral home is not used for a funeral at your church? There are lots of things to think about.

And Who is My Neighbor?

Presenter: Jodi Harpstead, Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota

This workshop is another LSS of MN congregational discussion guide in the format of *My Neighbor is Muslim*. This one addresses the questions of race and racial equity with Biblical readings from theologians and pastors of color and rich video material drawn from LSS's own Anti-Racism work. Come think about how you might use this in your congregation.

Music that Makes Community

Presenters: John Jahr, Minister of Worship & Music for Vinje Lutheran Church, Willmar and Conie Borchardt, Music Director for St. Mary's Episcopal Church, St. Paul.

Music that Makes Community is an organization that seeks to promote healing, building peace and reconciliation, and revitalizing worshiping bodies through singing. The concept of MMC is teaching simple, easy to repeat melodies, using the human voice instead of paper. This workshop will explore the basics of MMC singing, including how to teach echo songs, call and response, and rounds. Music the Makes Community encourages participation in singing, and is another way to engage people of all ages and backgrounds. Come prepared to sing!!

Coping with Unexpected Grief

Presenter: Dr. Katie Wojtalewicz, Licensed Psychologist, southern Minnesota

It's hard enough to lose a loved one when we have time to prepare, but what happens when we're completely blindsided? We'll go beyond the well-known stages of grief to explore some of the nuanced ways death affects us all, and more importantly, learn how to take care of ourselves and one another in times of suffering and loss

Millennials and Generation Z "take on" Jesus

Presenter: Maddie Gray, Program Director, Luther Crest Bible Camp

The next generations challenge and question the church. Are we listening as they "take on" Jesus? What is their "take on" Jesus? And are they "taking on" Jesus. Let's discuss faith formation in the upcoming generation. We'll explore what the Millennials and Gen Z'ers are all about, where are they interacting with and in the church, and what are our next steps as the whole body of Christ?

The Women and Justice Social Statement: Your Voice in the Process

Presenter: Pastor Bruce Berg, ELCA Task Force for the Women and Justice Social Statement

The Draft of a Social Statement on Women and Justice is available for your review. All ELCA Social Statements are considered a work of the church (meaning you) therefore, your voice and comments are important and need to be heard. Come learn about the Social Statement process and how you can be part of the vetting process of this draft document before it goes to the ELCA Church Council and Church-wide Assembly for adoption.

Group B:

Becoming an Effective Treasurer

Presenter: David Anfinson, CPA, Former SW MN Synod Treasurer

Whether you are new to church finances or a veteran, equip yourself with the best practices to help your congregation manage its financial resources. It may not be the most popular job but it certainly is important.

Smart Practices for Everyday Well-being

Presenter: Pastor Mari Thorkelson, Spiritual Coach

Supported by upgraded scientific research, we will practice prayer forms, mindfulness, awareness and other learnable skills for improving our mind-body-spirit connection and life skills we can teach our children. Facing a fractured world, growing anxiety and depression, we can learn the latest altered traits for improving working memory, fostering human betterment, goodness, compassion and a broader view of our human potential.

Living With Your Best Intentions in Your 60s, 70s, 80s and Beyond

Presenter: Bev Werder, Founder of Compassionate Care, an in-home care service and Compassionate Cottage

The one thing certain about life is change. How can we embrace the blessings and challenges that arise in our second half of life?

Providing care, receiving care...Is one more difficult than the other?

Using your gifts on purpose. How can you help?

Digital Engagement for Ministry

Presenters: Lindy Kaden & Christina Nelson

How do you connect with your faith community during the week? Ready to get your church out there on social media but not sure where to start? Come discuss some tips and tricks for making the most of the free and easy options out there. Learn some of the best ways to utilize Facebook, find out ways to build a free website, a free email newsletter, and more!

Cultivating Healthy Church Leaders

Presenter: The Rev. Jeff Thiemann, President and CEO, Portico Benefit Services

What does it mean to cultivate and support healthy leaders and congregations in a constantly changing landscape? The ELCA has named Leadership and Congregational Vitality as the two lenses through which we work together as one church. There is abundant research that shows that healthy leaders enhance lives and congregations, but developing healthy leaders needs to happen in community, not in isolation. This workshop takes a reforming look at ideas such as “self-care” in light of programs and evidence from Portico and other researchers. Using Ezekiel’s vision of the dry bones coming to life, we will explore ancient wisdom and faithful trust in God’s guidance as we develop practical approaches to inviting members of your congregation to become everyday reformers in cultivating healthy leadership in the 21st century faith communities of which you are a part.

Fandoms: A Model for the Future Church?

Presenter: Pastor Courtney Young, Lutheran Campus Ministry, St. Cloud State University

There is a lot of talk about the church changing but not a lot of talk of what a renewed and reformed church in the 21st century and beyond could actually look like. In this session, Pastor Courtney Young (LuMin in St. Cloud) will lift up fandoms, the communities of people who gather online and in person around stories like Harry Potter, Star Trek, or The Lord of the Rings, as a potential model for the future church. In a playful conversation, we will take a look at the defining characteristics of fandoms and consider what the church can learn about gathering together and being shaped by our story from these groups. In the end, we may realize that those people who get dressed up in costumes and go to conventions are not so weird after all.

Love Thy Neighbor

Presenter: Pastor Mandy France, Our Savior’s Lutheran Church, Bird Island

Jesus calls us to love our neighbors. Unfortunately, we live in a time and place where preaching about loving our neighbors has become controversial and even scary at times. In this workshop Reverend Amanda France will share her efforts and experiences of shedding light on Islamophobia and xenophobia. (Intense or irrational fear of people from other countries) Learn about erroneous and hurtful theological claims she has come up against from other Christian denominations. Here you will gain tools to help you respond to and end the hurtful and harmful theology you might encounter.

Developing a Congregational Culture of Generosity

Presenters: Rev. Larry Strenge, Director for Evangelical Mission, SW MN Synod & Amy Bigot, ELCA Regional Gift Planner

What stories, practices and processes are needed in today’s congregation to create enthusiasm for generosity? What can lay leaders and pastors do to help create new pathways to fund ministries, ones that your congregation’s people care about? This workshop includes a brief overview of a “Ministry Funding Plan” (Amy) as well as other practices to encourage a culture of generosity (Larry). In the face of a changing world of giving participants will leave with an introduction toward ways to meet congregational funding dreams as well as ideas to support ministries for which people are passionate about.

Group C:

Top 10 Conversations Every 21st Century Church Must Have

Presenter: Pastor Chad Peterson, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, St. Cloud

No matter if your faith community is rural, urban, small, or large there is no getting around that the 21st century church is different. While many will acknowledge this 'change,' few know what to do about it. Some want to do nothing. Others know that 'nothing' is NOT AN OPTION but also have no idea what 'something' else is. There is NO clear-cut, or one size fits all solution to this question but there are important conversations every church MUST have to continue to minister in the 21st century.

Bethlehem Lutheran Church in Saint Cloud is currently having these 21st century church conversations. We are not experts but we are trying to be very intentional in our conversations that will lead us to change HOW we do things for the sake of God's mission, passion, and love for the world in the 21st century. Are you having these conversations...should you? With your context in mind, come and join the discussion.

Death and Dying: Ministry at the End of Life

Presenter: Judie Dunlop, LSW, CHP-SW, Social Work Coordinator, Rice Hospice

We will be discussing "The Four Things That Matter Most, A Book About Living" by Ira Byok, MD, and discuss how we can help others die with dignity. We will have an experiential presentation of "The Game of Life...and Death". Judie has been practicing in the field of Social Work for over 37 years and with Rice Hospice for the past 20 years. She is a certified Hospice and Palliative Care Social Worker with the NASW and currently oversees Social Work Services, Bereavement programming, Camp GK Bear and facilitates the Healing Hearts Bereavement Support Groups for the Willmar area.

From Somalia to Snow

Presenter: Hudda Ibrahim, St. Cloud, MN

Hudda Ibrahim is a faculty member at St Cloud Technical and Community College and president of Filsan Consulting LLC, a company founded on the principles of cultural integration. She is a community bridge builder, mentor, proponent of women's empowerment, peace activist, author, aspiring entrepreneur, and source of inspiration to many.

At a time when United States citizens are being told to fear their Muslim neighbors, where does the truth lie? Hudda Ibrahim unpacks the immigration narrative of Somali Americans gives an invaluable insider's look into the lives and culture of our Somali neighbors. This presentation will draw from her book of the same name and will give an introduction to Somali culture, Islamic beliefs and the roles these beliefs play in Somalis' lives.

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences: Building Resiliency and Self-Healing Communities

Presenters: Rick Loeth, PACT for Families Collaborative, Willmar & Tari Niemeyer, Southwest Initiative Foundation

What are ACE's (Adverse Childhood Experiences) and why does it matter to our Congregation? Conversations are taking place all across Minnesota on ACE's, Resilience and how to support individuals, families and kids who might be dealing with the impact of high stress and adverse life experiences. The ACE study is the largest study of its kind and has led to a deeper understanding of the impact of stress on our health and well-being. Time will be spent hearing about the ACE study and how we might use the knowledge to build resiliency in our congregation and community.

The New Rules of Money

Presenter: Cherrish Holland, LSS Financial Counselor

Reform your ideas about money and reduce financial stress.

Things have changed from even 10 years ago. Learn the “new rules” of the post-recession economy -- the old guidelines that your parents used may no longer apply. Make financial decisions about money management, debt, credit, savings, and consumer protection in a new light. Navigate the new economy like a pro, by knowing what’s changed.

Online Safety for Kids in Rural MN

Presenters: Becki Jordan, Safe Harbor Regional Navigator for Someplace Safe & Kasey Baker, Director of Community Outreach for Safe Avenues

While the benefits of technology abound, so do the ways that it can be used to victimize the most vulnerable among us. Community members play a critical role in the identification and intervention of exploitation and sex trafficking. Join us as we look at this phenomenon in rural Minnesota. You’ll learn how it happens, what it looks like, and how to keep those around you safe, especially in the age of technology.

Spirituality and the Old Testament

Presenter: Professor Cameron B. R. Howard, Assistant Professor of Old Testament, Luther Seminary, St. Paul

We will explore the many ways spirituality is alive in the Old Testament. We will listen for the ways Old Testament voices, including the characters in it and the writers behind it, conceive of spirit and interact with the divine. We will consider how Christians can engage the Old Testament as a resource for a life of faith, especially by observing the encounters with God described in scripture. Our study will investigate various forms of divine-human interaction in the Old Testament, including covenant, sacrificial worship, prophecy, and wisdom.

Is the Camp Experience Limited to One Week?

Presenter: Marv Nysetvold, Shetek Lutheran Ministries, Slayton

The Effective Camp Research Project is a multi-year study examining the impact of the Christian summer camp experience on campers, families, and church communities. Evidence is building that camp experiences continue affecting young people long after the last tearful goodbye, and we can build on the success of these experiences in our ministry contexts by knowing the potential impacts and forging connections between camp, congregation, and home. Learn about the findings and implications of this exciting project, which has involved more than 2000 campers and 600 parents at camps across the country.

Continuing Education Opportunity

If you need proof of attendance for continuing education, certificates will be available for 5 hours of continuing education. Sign up for the printed certificate at the registration table.