

Synod Educational Gatherings

"Who is My Neighbor and To Whom Am I Being a Good Neighbor?"

In lieu of the Synod Assembly this year, we're hosting Educational Gatherings to bring people and conversations together. Join fellow ELCA members in our Synod! All are Welcome! Our faith and our community living experiences in particular, train us to look beyond borders and see all people as our neighbors. We understand that our well-being is hinged on their well-being. "Who is my neighbor" is probably not a question we often ask ourselves. However, lately we've noticed that many of us can relate to the man who asks Jesus "Who is My Neighbor?" because we have learned to think globally. We may know the correct answer to the question, but we may not actually know who our neighbors really are or how to relate with them. In these three regional Synod Educational Gatherings lay members, rostered ministers and you will have opportunities to expand your horizons and learn about many different people, and how we, as individuals and as God's church in the ELCA, can support, welcome and connect with those in our global and immediate neighborhoods. Register here: <https://lconta.cc/2u7tWCE>

WORKSHOPS

Session #1: (10:20am-11:20am)

- **Caring for our Neighbor -a Bible Study**

What does the Bible say about who our neighbors are and how we are to treat them? We are called to be people who see those who are suffering as their neighbors, and have the courage to cross the street and cross the world to be of help to others. Bible Study Leader: Bishop Rick Jaech

- **Tell Your Congregation's Story**

Jonathan is back to help congregations learn to tell their stories. In this hyper-connected, highly distracted world we live in, how do you get your unique ministry on the radar of the people who need you? You are not defined by what you do or believe, but are defined by what you are perceived to do or believe. Often misconceptions are stronger than the truth. Learn to build new, clearer perceptions of our faith and ministry together. Speaker: Jonathan McClung, Perceptico

- **PSALM Workshop ("Program for Strengthening Active Lay Ministry")**

The Synod's new lay education "Program for Strengthening Active Lay Ministry" (PSALM) is a two-year course of study that includes 4 study series, 4 retreats and 4 ministry projects undertaken with a Mentor Pastor aimed to strengthen congregational lay ministry. The program begins this Fall. Speakers: Members of our Synod PSALM Guiding Coalition

- **Helping Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness (Session 1 AND Session 2)**

Learn the many options congregations can engage in for those experiencing homelessness- from prayer to community meals to affordable housing. This workshop is two sessions long- first session looks at ministry opportunities and 2nd session will look further into an affordable

housing ministry case study. Speakers: Mike Yoder, Executive Director of Associate Ministries of Pierce County, and housing advocate Chris Ferguson

- **Conversations About Race**

Talking about race and racism is often difficult. In this updated WELCA training, discover tools to help with such conversations, and focus on the context and connections we need to begin them. Examine scripture and define the terms we use to understanding race issues. Learn a variety of ways to continue this important work, including available resources, and ways to walk beside God's beloved children of color as allies. Speakers: Members of Synod WELCA Racial Justice Team

- **Circle of Welcome for Refugees**

The Circle of Welcome program pairs up a team of 5-10 individuals from a church or organization with an incoming refugee family. Teams offer friendship, financial support, social connections and more to ease a family into their new life in western Washington. With 500 refugees scheduled to arrive in 2018 through LCSNW, there has never been a better time to show hospitality to our neighbors who have overcome so much to make it to the US. Speaker: John Forseth of Lutheran Community Services NW

- **How Brain Friendly is the Lutheran Church?**

What can Neuroscience tell us about how people learn? As we learn this new information, how can we connect it to our work as communities of Christ? What does such knowledge mean for our Lutheran traditions? How could it impact the future of our work? Come and find out answers to these compelling questions in this informative and engaging session. Speaker: Sandra Gessner-Crabtree, Olympic Educational Service District

Session #2 (11:30am-12:30pm)

- **Faith Formation for the 1st Third of Life!**

Bring your questions, hopes and prayers for ministry with children, youth and young adults. Members of the Synod Youth Committee will provide some resources as well as walk alongside you in your search for what ministry with and for the 1st Third of Life might become in your context. Speakers: Members of the Synod Youth Committee

- **Battling Islamophobia**

Each year the Islamophobia industry spends over \$30 million dollars to make people afraid of Islam and American Muslims. The websites, YouTube videos, books, white papers, lobbying, and media stars of the Islamophobia industry turn the hearts and minds of people against one another, paving the way for a more divided, fearful future. Rev. Terry Kylo of Neighbors in Faith, and members of the Muslim community, will help you see how together we can build a future based on our shared values and vision for America. Speakers: Rev. Terry Kylo of Neighbors in Faith, and members of the Muslim community

- **Helping Neighbors Experiencing Homelessness (part 2)- *See description above in session 1***

- **Repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery**

The Doctrine of Discovery was written to give colonial powers claim to lands belonging to foreign sovereign nations during the Age of Discovery, especially allowing them to occupy a territory whose inhabitants were not subjects of a European Christian monarch. Learn more about the Doctrine of Discovery and the search for healing in our indigenous communities. The ELCA took a stand to repudiate the Doctrine of Discovery, including an offer of a statement of repentance and reconciliation to native nations in our country for damage done in the name of Christianity. Speakers: Members of the Synod Native American Task Force

- **Engaging Generations through Generosity**

Learn to understand how Christians really feel about generosity. *Hint: It may not be what you think!* Learn what generosity means to different generations – And why it matters. Speaker: Jeremy L. Dawson, Community Engagement Leader for Thrivent Northwest Region

- **How to Speak to Public Officials (pt 1)**

Do you ever feel you are ignored by those you've elected? Have your emails been ignored or have been replied to with boilerplate? You can change that. Essentially all elected decision-making bodies such as city councils, county commissions, school boards, etc take public testimony at almost all their meetings. Learn to make an oral presentation that can change minds. The morning session will be primarily theory and the afternoon will devoted to presentations. Speakers: Larry Smith, Vancouver City Council member and John Jablonski, college communications faculty.

Session #3 (2:30-3:30pm) (*note new earlier start time for this session only)

- **Gender Diversity Conversation: A Parent Panel**

A panel of parents who are directly involved with gender awareness issues will be discussing their own journeys of growth in relation to being a part of the LGBTQIA community. Gender awareness is on the forefront of community and national conversations. Communication and education in regards to the gender spectrum within the faith community is essential in understanding how to faithfully recognize and support all of God's children. Speakers: Rev. Kim Latterell, Rick and Mary Ann Nelson, Erin Burk, Kyle Franklin

- **Decolonizing Lutheranism**

Christ has justified everyone and everything before God. And hence, if this is so, then no one is to be excluded - indeed, cannot be excluded - from the love and power of God: As Lutherans, we cannot be defined solely by northern European, cultural identity markers. Therefore, as a movement, #decolonizeLutheranism seeks to raise-up alternative historical and theological narratives to take center stage in our church's culture - its liturgies, hymns, polity, worship, food, poetry, art - even ways of life together and pastoral care. Learn what you and your congregation can do to open our faith to all. Speaker: Rev. Pricilla Austin

- **Together We Can Do More - What is Advocacy?**

As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. God uses our hands, through our direct service work and our voices, through our advocacy efforts, to restore and reconcile the world. In this workshop, you'll receive information to

educate and equip you to be a more effective advocate in whatever areas and with whomever you and/or your congregation seek to support. Speakers: Members of Synod Hunger Committee and Bread for the World

- **How to Speak to Public Officials (Vancouver site only) (part 2).** *See description above in session #2*

- **Women and Justice: Our shared voice as a Church**

This workshop is designed to facilitate conversation about the ELCA's new Women and Justice Social Statement draft. The ELCA is seeking input from its members on the current draft through September 2018. Learn about how ELCA Social Statements are created and how your own voice contributes to our church's shared voice. Participants will discover tools available for leading conversation in their own congregations. The Draft Social Statement on Women and Justice is at: www.elca.org/womenandjustice

Speaker: Rev. Melanie Wallschlaeger, Dir for Evangelical Mission

- **Planned Giving to Help Your Neighbor**

Learn how the financial needs and wants of your congregation can be met by your congregational members as they are invited to make a plan that will leave a legacy. Speaker: Beth Adams, ELCA Foundation

- **Dementia-Friendly Worship and Church Spaces**

As our congregations age, we notice that serious memory loss is a reality for more and more aged members. People with dementia and their care partners often become "homebound" and isolated just when they need the embrace of their church family the most. However, full participation in worship, activities and special events by people with dementia requires special allowances by their churches. Learn to be a Dementia Friendly Church to recognize the signs of dementia and caregiver stress, learn communication skills and identify some dementia friendly environment modifications. Speakers: Linda McCone, Caregiver Support Program Director, LCSNW and Deb Dennison, Caregiver Support Program Coordinator, LCSNW