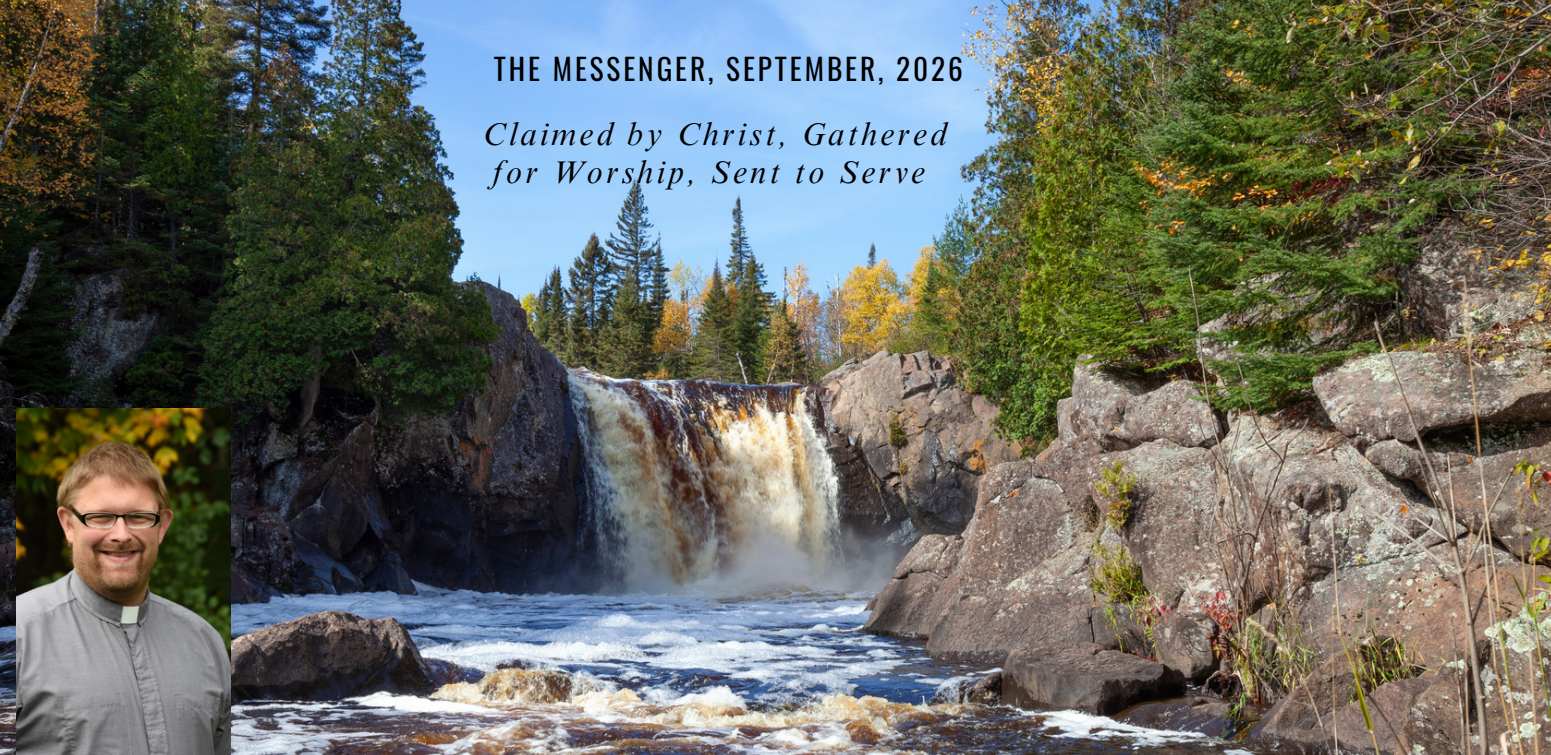




THE MESSENGER, SEPTEMBER, 2026

*Claimed by Christ, Gathered
for Worship, Sent to Serve*



Pastor's Ponderings

Claimed by Christ, Gathered for Worship, Sent to Serve

These words express our mission statement as a congregation. They help to shape who we are, what we do, and who we wish to be for the sake of our world, community, and each other. From time to time, however, it is necessary to re-evaluate just what a congregation's mission is, to explore who God is calling us to be for this moment. Over a decade ago, a team from Concordia put together a mission plan which hashed out our mission statement by naming our core values and setting goals that align with our mission. Along the course of the last decade, however, Concordia has experienced many changes. We are not who we once were! Our world, as well, is not the same. Who are we called to be today for the sake of our neighbors?

Over the next year, the congregation council will be exploring this question. We will be spending intentional time revisiting our mission plan to see if its values, goals, and aspirations have been fulfilled or no longer apply, as well as seeing if they are still needed for our contemporary ministry. We will consider our membership and financial trends and see what is needed for short and long term sustainability. We will imagine new ideas for ministry and for partnership with other congregations. Every once in a while, we will invite you into the discussion, as well, asking what initiatives you would like to be a part of, hearing what community needs you are experiencing in our neighborhood and wider community. We have already been in conversation with our Synod staff around strategic planning and financial sustainability resources.

As we do this work together, it will be important to center ourselves in the truth that Concordia is not deficient in any way. No matter the size or resources of the congregation, we are still a community called by God to serve our neighbors. This is not a process aimed at saving the church or staving off closure or merger. Only God saves and ministries come and go as God leads. This is not and cannot be about attracting new members. That only happens as the Spirit works through the good news we are and share in the community. This is about discerning who we are, who we want to be, and who our world needs us to be. I am excited for the journey of self-discovery and God's call!

Upcoming opportunities:

Sunday School—Family Activity after worship September 27th: Exploring our heritage, collecting school supplies for Juarez, connecting with neighbors across the border

Deeper Things— A study of *A People's History of Christianity* to begin in October

Sandwich and Scripture— A study of *Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for neighbors and All Creation* beginning at 11:30 AM on October 7th and 21st.

Pastor Jeff



Worship Schedule

Sunday, September 6 Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Ezekiel 33:7-11
 Psalm 119:33-40
 Second Lesson: Romans 13:8-14
 Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:15-20

Sunday, September 13 Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Genesis 50:15-21
 Psalm 103:1-13
 Second Lesson: Romans 14:1-12
 Holy Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

Sunday, September 20 Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Jonah 3:10-4:11
 Psalm 145:1-8
 Second Lesson: Philippians 1:21-30
 Holy Gospel: Matthew 20:1-16

Sunday, September 27 Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost

First Lesson: Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32
 Psalm 25:1-9
 Second Lesson: Philippians 2:1-13
 Holy Gospel: Matthew 21:23-32



Joyful Voices Rehearsals:
 Tuesday, September 9 and Tuesday,
 September 29@ 6 p.m.



Worship Matters: “Ordinary Time - Autumn”

The ELCA divides the long season of Time after Pentecost into three segments: Summer, Autumn (September and October) and November. Throughout the summer, we have focused on Jesus’ teachings and the evangelical mission of the church to bring the Gospel to all people. As we move into this next segment of Ordinary Time, we explore life in community, as Jesus speaks to the challenges and joys of our life together.

September 6 and September 13 – Jesus’ Community Discourse (Matthew 18)

Jesus teaches the disciples how to deal with conflict and reminds us that our church/community is a witness to our faith in the care we show for each other. There is teaching on forgiveness and we reflect on God’s love and reconciling power and our life as forgiven and forgiving people.

September 20 – “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

God’s amazing grace and love to all of us is illustrated in Jesus’ parable today. Perhaps our journey begins with us being as surprisingly generous to others as God is with us.

Welcome! This month we welcome our new pianist/organist, **Nicole Burdick**. Nicole and her husband moved to Duluth this summer from Ripon, Wisconsin, where Nicole taught school and was the pianist/organist at Our Savior’s United Church of Christ. We are thrilled to have this talented and experienced musician and teacher with us. Please introduce yourself and welcome her.

Thank You! We are very grateful to two musicians in our midst, **Sara Dungan** and **Mary Johnson**, for sharing their time and talents and leading worship during our long search process.

September is a great time for regathering and reconnecting after our summer holidays. Please join us for worship each Sunday at 10:00 as we begin our journey through the second half of Ordinary Time and consider our life together as followers of Christ.

Interested in making more of a connection? Joyful Voices would welcome your voice on a regular or occasional basis, and we would love to have additional cantors for our ELW services. Can you arrive a little early and welcome worshipers, pass out bulletins, and collect the offering? Consider ushering. Is your gift reading aloud? Lectors proclaim the first and second readings and lead the Prayers of Intercession. Or what about helping with our hospitality ministry and serving coffee? More information on all of these ministries is available from the office or Worship and Music Committee.

JULY,2026 FINANCIAL REPORT

<u>JULY,2026 FINANCIALS</u>	<u>ACTUAL</u>	<u>BUDGETED</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE 2026</u>
INCOME	\$16,208.00	\$13,683.67	\$100,619.05
EXPENSES	\$13,490.56	\$14,761.83	\$96,915.63
NET	\$2,717.44	(\$1,078.17)	\$3,703.42

Concordia Announcements

Bridges To Christ will begin meeting for the year on Monday, Sept 14th @ 6:45 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall.

Day Time Quilters will be meeting on Thursday, Sept 10th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Come see what we can do with material, thread & a sewing machine. Bring your lunch & dessert is provided.

Eventide Quilters will be meeting on Thursday, Sept 10th from 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. This is for those people who have daytime jobs. Learn piecing, sewing & tying of quilts. Light refreshments provided.

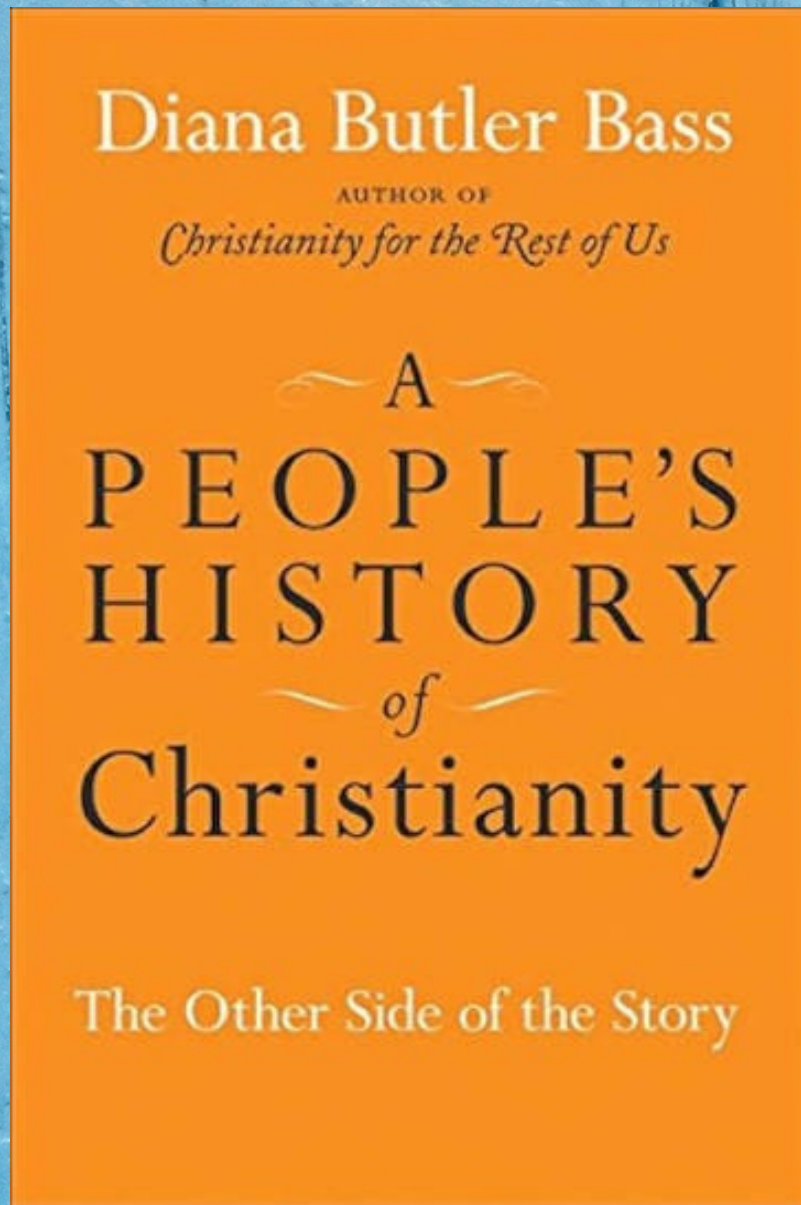
Concordia families will begin building a new relationship in the coming year. This opportunity is an outcome from the synod trip Pastor Jeff, Greg Grunwald, and Bryan Anderson participated in at the southern border last winter. While on this journey, the group visited Manos Amigas De Anapra Mission, located on the Mexican side of the border. Manos Amigas is a registered non-profit. The mission provides a free library, school scholarships, after school programming, child care, three weeks of vacation Bible school, medical assistance for families, resources for elderly, and a bean/rice project. Each of the programs delivers hands-on support to impoverished families. During a recent phone conversation with a delightful woman named Estela, a major driving force at the mission for over 20 years, a list of the mission's needs was shared. These needs are many and meeting them is vital to the program. This is where Concordia has the opportunity to make a connection.

Throughout the coming school year, Sunday School, family activities and parts of congregational life will focus on recognizing our own diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as, exploring Mexican culture, with the goal to better know and understand our neighbors, all while celebrating our kinship as members of God's family! Concordia's younger members will be given the chance to become an ongoing "Pal" to a group of students at the mission. It is similar to becoming pen pals.

Estela shared three specific areas of need: school supplies, Spanish or bilingual books for grades K-6, and medical supplies. Starting in August, there will be a donation box for school supplies in the narthex. Supplies requested are: folders, wide ruled paper and spiral notebooks, pencils, pens, erasers, pencil sharpeners, scissors, glue/glue sticks, markers, colored pencils, and pencil bags. Please NO crayons—they melt. The school drive will end September 20. Information and collection of medical supplies will begin after the first of the year. Book donations will be welcomed August through May 3, in the narthex.

It is the hope that members from Concordia will be able to drive to the border, deliver the donations, see the mission, and connect with the people. Ideas for the timing and how this trip might look are being explored. It would most likely be a minimum 10 day commitment. Watch for more information later this year..

Deeper Things



Starting this Fall!

*Join a book discussion of A People's
History of Christianity by Diana Butler
Bass*

Let Pastor Jeff know if interested!

Let the Prayer Chain members join with you in your prayers and supplications. They are just a phone call away. All prayers are confidential and names or details are not needed. God is aware of all circumstances and waits to hear from you.

Please contact Reba Almquist at 525-6968.

For hospital or other visitations, please contact the office at 728-4229.

Remember in Your Prayers

Please remember the following people who have been hospitalized, under a doctor's care, struggling, or those grieving since our last newsletter: The family of Kevin Clouthier, Tom Nelson, Those affected by natural disasters (*especially the flooding in Nepal and the earthquakes in Colombia and Indonesia*), Max, David and Jen Norlien, Jordan Sauter, Tim Bell, Migrant families, The people of Palestine, Iran, Lebanon, and Ukraine, Rory and Greg Raymond, Those unlawfully detained, Carrie Birdseye-Erickson, Kathleen Murphy Edwards, Baby Finn, The families, the survivors, and communities where mass shootings have occurred, Patti Pearson, Max, and Those marginalized for their sexual or gender identity, race, or ability.

Prayer and Visitation Ministry

Please remember those in our congregation who are in nursing homes or are homebound. Please pray for them and consider stopping by for a visit.

Prayer and visitation are important ministries of our congregation.

Benedictine:

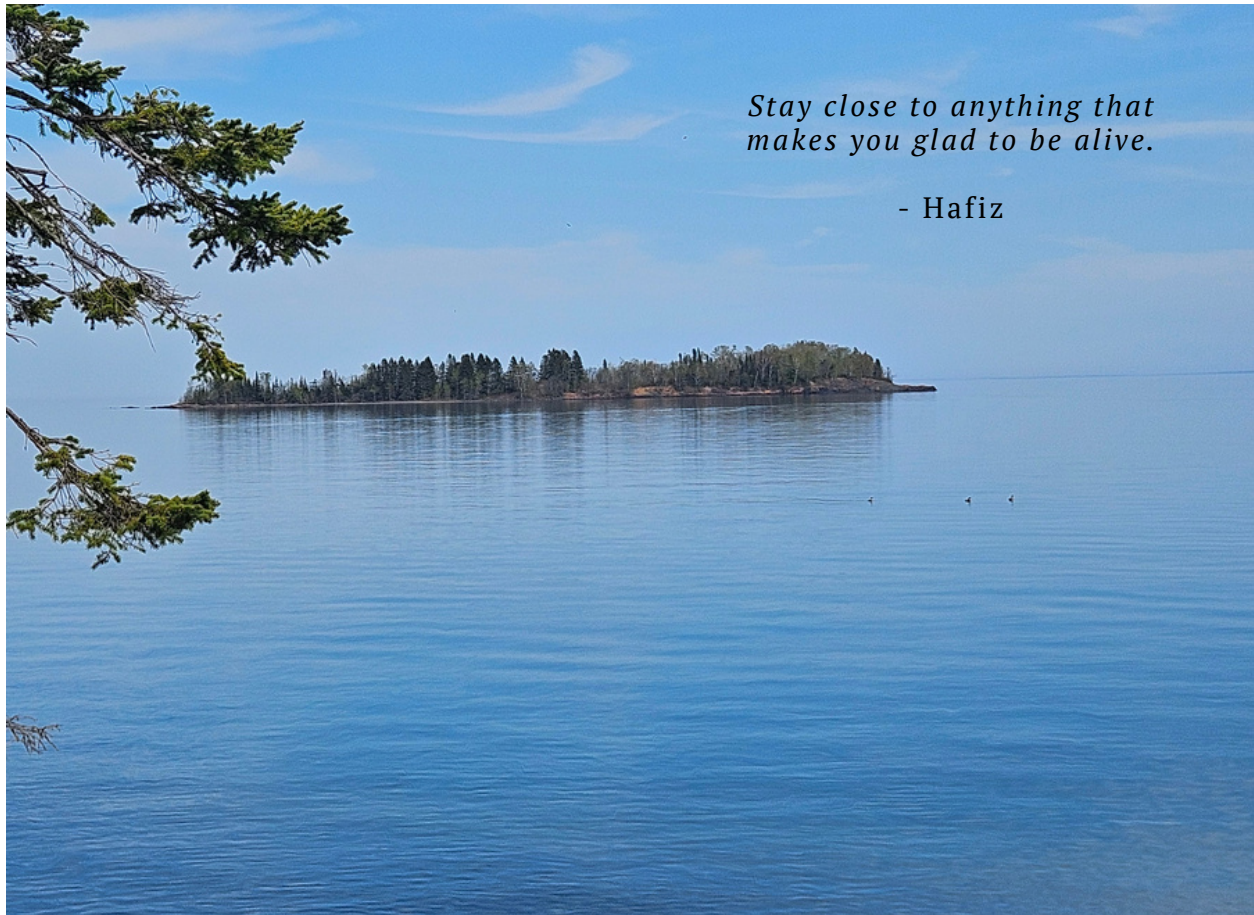
Lorraine Brayden

Sylvia Jamar

Edgewood:

Ethel O' Leary

Pat Tessier



September Birthdays

- 1 Bridget Bohn
- 6 Bob Williams
- 9 Pat Isaacson
- 15 Craig Witchall
- 18 Richard Carlson
- 19 Lorraine Brayden
- 26 Charles Bischoff, Jr.
Isaac Bohn
- 27 Jacqueline Hoppe
Matthew Voltzke
- 28 Toni Roberts
- 29 Pat Tessier

If your birthday isn't listed or has the wrong date, please let the office know.



Flower and Sanctuary Candle Sign-up

A nice way to remember a loved one or celebrate a special occasion is to have altar flowers or the sanctuary candle on Sunday morning. The sign-up sheet is in the Narthex for both. Cost for flowers is \$40 and the candle is \$8. Contact the office with any questions.

Please note that when you have altar flowers for worship, you may take them home following worship. The glass vases must stay at church, however.



Equal Exchange Coffee Donations

Equal Exchange coffee donations needed for church coffee supply. Coffee funds are running low. Donation envelopes are available in the narthex information rack. Place an envelope with any donation amount in the offering plate with note "Equal Exchange coffee fund."





Wish List

The Chum Wish List is where we keep what we need most for each program.

For non-food, in-kind donation drop-offs:

21 W 1st Street, Duluth, MN 55802
Monday-Friday, 8AM-4PM

For food, in-kind donation drop-offs:
120 N 1st Avenue W (Chum Food Shelf),
Duluth, MN 55802

Monday-Friday, 7AM-3PM
(Door in the alley is labeled for food
drop offs with a door bell)

For mailing (except for Amazon
deliveries), address to:
102 W 2nd Street, Duluth, MN 55802

For Amazon deliveries, address to:
21 W 1st Street, Duluth, MN 55802

We do not accept miscellaneous
clothing items; kindly take
miscellaneous clothing items to the
Damiano Center

or the Salvation Army. Thank you so
much for partnering with us and
supporting our mission!

Check out our **Amazon Wishlist** to
have items sent straight to those in
need.

**There are copies of the wishlist in
the narthex, on the table where the
newsletters are.**

A Pathway Forward

Pathway Forward is an initiative by Chum, Damiano and Union Gospel Mission (UGM) to commit to closer collaboration, eliminate duplication of services, improve service delivery for people experiencing homelessness, and alleviate pressure on the downtown community. Concerned with creating an optimal environment for all, this new arrangement will see some realignment of programs across the three organizations over several years.

The planned changes to Chum, as well as Damiano and UGM, will be seen in various ways. The type of shelter currently under construction at Chum's 2nd street location will shift, blending the best of emergency shelter and transitional housing operations. Damiano will absorb Chum's current drop-in and overnight shelter on their third floor. UGM will construct a new Mission Engagement Center and Housing project. Together, these three agencies will ensure a clear path to stable housing for those experiencing homelessness. Needed resources in the community will be added in addition to location shifts, such as mental health services, employment navigation, amongst many others.

Chum will, now and always, remain true to its mission of providing basic necessities, fostering stable lives and organizing for a just and compassionate community.



Dear Friends of Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry,

When we first shared with you the financial challenges facing Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry and the emergency planning process now underway, your Board of Directors made two commitments: we would be transparent with you and we would listen.

The VLM Board of Directors is inviting you to help shape the future of VLM. After much thought and prayer, the Board has identified several potential paths forward and is seeking your feedback as we discern how VLM can become sustainable, continue our mission and ministry, and transform lives for Christ's service. Your voice matters in this process.

Whether you have been involved with VLM for decades or only recently connected with the ministry, we hope you will join us in prayerfully seeking God's guidance for the future of Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry. We are inviting congregations, campers, parents, donors, volunteers, alumni, supporters, and others who care about this ministry to share your experiences, hopes, concerns, and ideas.

The Board of Directors is hosting a series of Listening Sessions where we will share potential paths forward, listen to your feedback, and seek God's guidance together. At each gathering, representatives of the Board will share an update on VLM's current financial and operational realities, the emergency measures already underway, and the process we are following to develop a long-term plan. Because we want to ensure that every voice is heard, we will be sending out a follow-up survey after the listening sessions have concluded. If you are unable to attend one of the sessions, you can share your input through that survey once it is distributed.

But we especially hope you will consider joining us for a listening session. A survey can tell us what people think. A conversation can help us understand why. Listening together gives us the opportunity to hear the stories behind the answers, ask questions, clarify what we hear, recognize areas of both agreement and disagreement, and perhaps discover ideas that we would never uncover through a survey alone. Just as importantly, we believe that trust and transparency are built through relationships and conversation. We want this process to be more than collecting data. We want it to be an opportunity for VLM's community to come together, listen to one another, and participate in discerning the future of this ministry.

You Are Invited: VLM Listening Sessions

We will host five listening sessions. You are welcome to attend whichever gathering is most convenient for you. [Click here to register](#). If you register for one of the online options, a Zoom link will be sent to you ahead of the meeting.

- September 8 --6:00-7:30pm Virtual Listening Session (Zoom Meeting)
- September 9 – 7:00-8:30 - St. Andrews Lutheran Church, Grand Rapids, MN
- September 13 - 6:00-7:30pm Virtual Listening Session (Zoom Meeting)
- September 15 - 6:00-7:30pm - Our Savior's Lutheran Church, Virginia, MN
- September 19 - 1:00-3:00pm - St James Lutheran Church, Crystal, MN

These are listening sessions, not voting meetings. No final decisions about VLM's future have been made. The feedback we receive will be compiled and shared with the Board as it moves into the next phase of emergency planning.



EcoFaith Action! September 2026

Practical ideas and inspiration for how you and your faith community can take action for Creation! Prepared by members of the NEMN EcoFaith Network. This EcoFaith Action is by Sue Lyback, Isle, MN.

It's September. Summer's over, school's up and running, and work schedules are filling up. Gardeners and country folk are busy with harvesting, canning etc. There's plenty of work to be done everywhere. Who has time for another "EcoFaith" project or activity? Seems like just one more thing to do.

Sometimes, another "project to do" is simply not what we need.

The first "Earth Day" was held April 22, 1970. It became an annual event to honor the Earth on that day. Unfortunately, like many "special projects" it became a "thing to do" once a year with lots of fanfare, posters, bling, swag, etc., and then the next day people went back to their regular routines, overusing fossil fuels, plastics, etc.

Instead of more things on our "to do list", maybe the "Eco Action" we need to consider this month is to slow down for a moment. What if we each took a deep breath, took stock of what we already have and savored the gifts that are around us? What if we each simply looked at our own lives and asked the questions, "How can I personally tend to the health and well being of the place in which I live, the life that is around me? How can I make choices in my daily life that minimize negative impacts to the earth and all my family members, including those who are furred, feathered, finned or foliated?" The answers to these questions will be unique to each person and situation. For example, maybe we'll discover we don't need so many "new things." Maybe we can repurpose older, existing items to meet our needs. Maybe we can wash plates and cups instead of using plastic disposables for a special event?

What does this have to do with the church, you might be asking? Well, it has something to do with the balance of body and soul, action and contemplation. We are the Body of Christ, right? And in Paul's letter to the Philippians (Philippians 2:1-5) we are urged to let Christ's mind be in us as we are called to live compassionately and with humility.

Taking time to slow down can help us open up to the Spirit's guidance, fostering a deeper, more sustainable commitment to care for creation. Contemplation into Christ leads us into compassionate, caring action. Actions that emanate from within can lead to long-term change. And isn't that what we really need?

Rev. Beth Pottratz

EcoFaith Network Communication Coordinator

Subscribe to the [Green Blades Rising Newsletter](#)

Learn more at ecofaithnetwork.org

Find us on [Facebook](#)

opening borders ABRIENDO FRONTERAS

El Paso, Texas - Juarez, Mexico
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2026

Sponsored by Northeastern MN Synod

Hunger and Justice Team

Facilitator: Vicki Schmidt

You are invited to join this delegation to explore issues of immigration and hear the stories of those who live the daily struggle for survival along the border of Texas and Mexico.

\$750 plus airfare

Contact Vicki Schmidt for information and application forms:
Veschmidt45@msn.com

Learn more: openingborders.com



ADVOCACY IN ACTION

August - December 2026

Joining our Voices for Neighbors and Nature

Join us this Fall to learn and practice faith-based civic engagement from a Lutheran perspective.

PREPARE

Explore resources for faith-based civic action
Examine issues facing our governmental leaders
Learn about our election process and its protections

CONNECT

Find strength among many voices
Engage with others in your congregation
Live out your baptismal calling

ACT

Write letters to elected officials
Speak out about issues
Encourage informed voting

Please scan QR code or visit ecofaithnetwork.org for more information and to register for webinars. Registration Link: <https://forms.gle/2fZ2fac7rCz6BNyg8>
(More dates and topics coming soon.)

Stretching our Civic Engagement Muscles

8/25 • 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm

An introductory webinar for rostered and congregational leaders.*

Share ideas and available resources.

(*Anyone interested in seeing something happen in your church)

The Biblical Basis for Civic Engagement

9/22 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

What are Christians called to do (or not to do) for right relationship in our communities?

Email: ecofaith@nemnsynod.org (Pastor Beth Pottratz, EcoFaith Network)

Advocacy in Action: is a new initiative from The EcoFaith Network, with Lutheran Advocacy-MN, and Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light

A Call to be Trusted Messengers in this Election Season

Dear church,

In an interview after I was elected, I reflected on my experience as a mission developer, saying, “It is not about what you think you’re bringing into the community. It’s who you are in the community. The minute we showed that we cared is really when the community adopted us. People don’t care about what you know till they know that you care, and that was the biggest learning for me.”

Faithful. Informed. Engaged. This refrain captures a vision for Lutheran Christians living out their baptismal calling in the election season and beyond. Faith grounds us in God’s promises, and Christ sends us forth to love our neighbors and serve the world. Being informed equips us to address complex issues with wisdom, discernment and integrity. Being engaged reminds us that our participation in civic life is a key way we love and serve our neighbors. Our public witness is rooted in faith, guided by honesty and expressed through active citizenship.

ELCA ministries and leaders already play vital roles during election seasons. You register voters, provide rides to the polls, open your buildings as polling places and advocate for voting rights. Thank you! This year, I invite you to embrace an additional role to help strengthen our democracy: serving as trusted messengers in your communities.

Our church can be “all together in one place” as a powerful witness for truth, love of neighbor and honesty. False information remains a persistent challenge during elections. It can spread rapidly, undermining confidence in the electoral process and discouraging participation. Grounded in the commandment not to bear false witness, our churches and faith leaders are uniquely positioned to help address this challenge by seeking out and sharing accurate information and correcting misinformation when it arises. In a time when trust is often in short supply, serving as trusted sources of wisdom and guidance is a meaningful form of Christian witness. By helping our neighbors access accurate information and engage confidently in the democratic process, we live out our faith through responsible civic engagement and service to the common good.

“Healthy civic engagement depends on clear distinctions between fact and all forms of falsehood, ranging from partial misstatements to intentional disinformation to outright lies. ... Our church, then, encourages us all to ask, in every personal interaction and on social media, whether our words or those we repeat represent the best possible understanding of our neighbor.”

— ELCA social statement Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All (p. 62)

The ELCA offers a variety of resources to help congregations and individuals be trusted messengers.

The new “ELCA Election Engagement Toolkit” provides guidance on topics that include serving as trusted messengers, engaging in election protection and modeling love of neighbor in polarized communities. (A tool kit launch webinar on Thursday, Sept. 3, at 12:30 p.m. Central time will provide an introduction to action steps and themes grounded in our Lutheran tradition.)

Through the “ELCA Civic Engagement Guide,” you can access materials on voter education, voter registration, candidate forums, legal guidelines for congregations, voting rights and ways to encourage participation in local communities.

I invite you to take faithful steps this election year:

- Register to vote if you have not already done so and check your registration to make sure it is up-to-date. Use the “Prepared to Vote Checklist” to think through local voting requirements.
- Learn about the issues, ballot measures and candidates that will shape your community. Participate in respectful conversations.
- Check sources of information before sharing it in conversations or online.
- Pray for those who serve in public office, for election workers and for all who will exercise the privilege of voting. Create spaces for faithful, open conversation with voters, candidates or neighbors in your community.
- Encourage your family members, friends and neighbors to take part in the democratic process.

Be faithful, informed and engaged as disciples of Jesus seeking the well-being of our neighbors and the common good of the communities God has entrusted to our care. Every act of informed participation, every conversation marked by grace and every vote cast with prayerful discernment is an opportunity to bear witness to God’s love in the world.

In Christ,

The Rev. Yehiel Curry

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Pastor: Rev. Jeffery Davis
Cantor: Jennifer Dums
Joyful Voices Pianist: Patti Martenson
Organist/Pianist: Nicole Burdick
Sunday School Teachers: Rachelle Anderson,
Bryan Anderson, Bridget Bohn, and Marcia
DeMeo-Morse.
Office Duties: Carmen Norlien
Custodial Duties: David Haavik
Treasurer: Mark Morse

Church Council Members

Trevor Christensen, President
Delores Grunwald
Ashley Hoppe
Makenzie Morse
Mark Morse, Treasurer
Dan Norlien

Committees

Building & Grounds: Trevor Christensen
Social Justice: Pastor Jeff
Stewardship: Pastor Jeff
Worship & Music: Lynne Erickson, Mary Johnson,
and Patti Martenson

Ministries

Altar Guild: Reba Almquist
Bridges To Christ: Ann Edwards
Caring Ministry: Jane Wedin
Quilters: Lynn Carlson and Ann Edwards

Contact information

Email: duluthconcordia@gmail.com
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Website: www.duluthconcordia.org
Facebook: Concordia Lutheran Church of
Duluth
Address: 2501 Woodland Avenue
Duluth, MN 55803

Office Hours: Please call first, as circumstances
vary from week to week.

CHUM

David and Jane Wedin

Conference and Synod Assemblies

Carmen Norlien

Lutheran Campus Ministry Duluth Board

Patti Martenson

NE Minnesota Synod Youth Board

Margaret Roeser

Union Gospel Mission

Lois Witchall

Voyageurs Lutheran Ministry

Bridget Bohn



The Messenger is a monthly publication of
Concordia Lutheran Church. Items for the
September newsletter are due by Tuesday,
August 18th. Please email your items,
corrections, questions, or comments to
duluthconcordia@gmail.com

We reserve the right to edit your items.
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