

Additions to Mobility List | Dec. 29, 2023 - Mar. 30, 2024

full list at milwaukee-synod.org/congregations-in-transition

New Change of Status for Congregations in Transition

- Christ, Paddock Lake** (solo pastor) – MSP posted
- St. Luke, Sheboygan Falls** (PT or FT solo pastor) – MSP posted
- St Mary's, Kenosha** (FT lead pastor) – MSP posted
- Bethlehem, Muskego** (PT solo pastor) – call extended
- Christ Our Savior, Sussex** (FT lead pastor) – call extended
- Lakeside, Kenosha** (PT solo pastor) – covenant extended
- Trinity, Kenosha** (PT solo pastor) – call extended

New Change of Status for Rostered Ministers

- Rev. Michael Anderson** – from interim pastor at Christ our Savior, Sussex to the New England Synod
- Rev. Jennifer Arnold** – from interim pastor at Galilee, Pewaukee to retired
- Rev. Kevin Beebe** – from Spirit Alive!, Kenosha to the Northwest Washington Synod
- Rev. Sandy Chrostowski** – from interim pastor at Mt. Olive, Mukwonago to interim pastor at Vernon, Mukwonago
- Rev. Jim Greear** – from Mount Carmel, Milwaukee to retired
- Rev. Kevin Kretzmann Farrar** – from Atonement, Muskego to called pastor at St. Matthew's, Wauwatosa
- Rev. Steve Kuhl** – from disability to retired
- Rev. Marcus Kunz** – from ELCA Executive for Discernment of Contextual and Theological Issues to retired
- Rev. Becca Laabs** – ordained on March 9, 2024; called by congregation to Trinity, Kenosha; covenant with Lakeside, Kenosha
- Rev. Michael McAllister** – from Spirit of Peace and Wayfarer's Faith Collective to on leave from call
- Rev. Paul Nuechterlein** – from on leave from call to interim pastor at Bethania, Racine
- Rev. Matthew Rose** – from Our Savior's, Hartland to called pastor at Christ Our Savior, Sussex

Rev. Delaney Schlake-Kruse – from St. Paul's, Milwaukee to the Central States Synod

Rev. Matthew Schlake-Kruse – from Adoration, Greenfield to on leave from call

Rev. Kelly Taylor-Schaus – from on leave from call to called pastor at Bethlehem, Muskego

Remembering Rostered Ministers Who Have Died

Rev. Ned Dorau died on Tuesday, January 23, 2024. Pastor Dorau served at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Random Lake.

Rev. John Gugel died on Monday, February 19, 2024. Pastor Gugel served at Atonement Lutheran Church, Muskego as well as congregations in Iowa.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, April 28 (1 - 4 pm)

Adventures in Renewal Co-Lab Day
Schuetze Recreation Center, Waukesha

Friday, May 17 - Saturday, May 18

2024 Synod Assembly
Italian Community Center, Milwaukee

Tuesday, July 16 - Saturday, July 20

ELCA Youth & Young Adult Gathering
New Orleans, LA | elca.church/gathering

Monday, Oct. 14 - Wednesday, Oct. 16

Fall Leadership Conference
Lutherdale, Elkhorn

Thursday, Nov. 7 (9 am - 3 pm)

Boundaries Workshop for Rostered Ministers | Location TBD

Learn more + register for events at
www.milwaukee-synod.org/events



Life Together | Spring 2024



Notes from the Bishop

One of the things that I enjoy most about serving in my current role as bishop is the opportunity I regularly have to travel. We have global companion relationships with Lutherans in Tanzania and El Salvador, and I have visited each of these beautiful countries several times. In January, I was able to spend a week in El Salvador, and in February, I had the chance to travel to Guatemala as part of my service on the board of directors for Global Refuge, the organization formerly known as Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services. In both El Salvador and Guatemala, I was able to learn about the migration ministries in these countries that are providing emotional, psychological, and financial support to returning migrants, folks who have tried to immigrate to the United States but have been returned to their homeland.

I recognize that the topic of immigration is highly charged in today's environment, but regardless of what one thinks or feels about the politics of it all, I simply want to share how powerful it was to sit and listen to the stories of individual people who are caught up in this global, political turmoil. Yes, numbers and statistics and policies are important, but we should never forget that, beneath each of the statistics we read in the news, there are human beings, many of whom are children, and they have names, and hopes, and fears, and dreams, just like you and me.

Another politically charged arena these days is related to the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the Middle East. Again, I am not addressing the various proposals for funding and negotiations to end this war, I am simply asking us to remember that human lives are at stake. I recently received an olive wood heart, carved by artisans in Palestine and blessed at a worship service in Bethlehem on December 28, the day to commemorate the Feast of the Holy Innocents, recalling the children killed by King Herod in the wake of Jesus' birth. They blessed 8,000 hearts that day, each heart representing the life of a child who had been killed in the conflict between Israel and Hamas. If they were to hold the service today, they would need to bless thousands more.

Whenever I see or take hold of this heart, I try to remember that, behind all of the policies and statistics and numbers that fill our minds and our news feeds, there are human lives that are hanging in the balance. Human beings, each one created in the image and likeness of God, each one worthy of respect, and dignity, and love. Let us pray: Holy God, you have created each and every one of us in your image, and you call us to treat one another with care, respect, and reverence. Teach us to listen to each other, teach us to find common ground when the world seeks to drive us apart, break open our hearts to receive what each person has to offer to us, that we might grow into what it means to be created in your image, walking forward with humility, compassion, and courage. In your holy name we pray, amen.

In Christ,

Bishop Paul Erickson



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2024 Synod Assembly Preview



Art: "Advent" by Robyn Sand Anderson. Learn more at robysandanderson.com.

Friday, May 17 - Saturday, May 18
Italian Community Center, Milwaukee (In-Person Only)

Join pastors, deacons and lay leaders from across our synod for our annual Assembly as we meet to worship, enjoy fellowship, and vote on business including our budget and elected positions.

Our theme for this year's Assembly is "Courage: May Courage Be Our Daily Breath." This name and our selection of artwork by Robyn Sand Anderson was inspired by our core value of courage and the hymn, *Rise, O Church like Christ Arisen*.

Keynote Dinner Tickets Now Available

Did you know that our Synod Assembly dinner and worship on Friday, May 17 are open to the public? Join friends from your congregation and meet new ones from across our synod!

5 pm - Dinner & Keynote by Vance Blackfox
Dinner tickets are included for all registered Synod Assembly voting members or may be purchased individually by the general public for \$50 each at tinyurl.com/GMSAssembly2024-DinnerTickets.

7 pm - Worship
Worship is open to all; you do not need to register or be a member of the assembly to attend.

Vance Blackfox, an Indigenous Theologian and citizen of the Cherokee Nation, is the founder and director of Other+Wise, a multi-site cultural education and cultural immersion program for youth and student groups from across the country. He serves the ELCA churchwide organization as Director of Indigenous Ministries & Tribal Relations and Interim Senior Director of Ministries of Diverse Cultures and Communities.



Learn More and Register at tinyurl.com/GMSAssembly2024

Information for Voting Members

- Add gmsoffice@milwaukeeesyndod.org to your email contacts to help ensure that you receive confirmations and important detailed emails prior to Synod Assembly.
- Materials and information will be shared directly with voting members at the email address you provided. If you neglected to include the voting members' personal information or if your email address changes, please contact us immediately so we can edit that person's form with the correct information.
- **This year's assembly is in-person only, and all voting will be voice or paper ballot.** No electronic voting.
- Synod Assembly work includes being informed about the resolutions, constitutional amendments, and elected positions that will be presented. We strongly encourage you to take the time to read through the information and be prepared for discussion and voting during assembly. Resolutions and nominations can be found at tinyurl.com/GMSAssembly2024.
- Floor nominations for open positions will be accepted by the Assembly Manager or virtually at milwaukeeesyndod.org/nominations until 10:15 am Saturday Morning, May 18. Anyone wishing to nominate an individual other than themselves must have the nominee's consent to run and serve if elected.

Assembly Agenda

Tuesday, May 14

6:30 pm – Authentic Diversity Strategic Plan Overview, via Zoom*

Wednesday, May 15

6:30 pm – New to the Assembly Orientation, via Zoom*

7:30 pm – Budget Hearing, via Zoom*

Friday, May 17

Lunch is "on your own"

2 pm – Registration opens

3 pm – Synod Assembly Hearing, Social Statement on Civic Life & Faith

5 pm – Dinner and Keynote Speaker

7 pm – Worship

Saturday, May 18

8:30 am – Plenary 1

10 am – Break

12 pm – Lunch

1:15 pm – Plenary 2

4:30 pm – Closing of Assembly

The full agenda will be adopted by the assembly.

**** Zoom links will be emailed to voting members.***

March 2024 Authentic Diversity Update

Greetings Siblings in Christ,

I want to begin this update by saying "thank you!" Thanks to each person who has sown seeds of love and justice in such a turbulent time in the world. Whether you joined the Reconciling In Christ (RIC) or Anti-Racism (ART) teams, gave gifts to Equipping the Saints (ETS) or Outreach for Hope (OFH), celebrated diversity in your worship, or even stood in the gap in prayer - it has been a benefit to the whole community. It has been essential as we lay the groundwork of creating an authentically diverse synod. In fact, all of what we're doing requires our investment, so I encourage and invite you to continue this important journey or to begin! The time is ripe! Just as all creation is preparing for a new season of planting and growing, so too are we.

The heart for an authentically diverse synod and community, nation, and world has been a stated desire of the Greater Milwaukee Synod. And now after much planning, conversation, and legwork we begin to see how all that work has helped prepare our soil. Now we plant!

- Our ART and RIC teams have been providing training and opportunities for growth, and building solid and safe relationships in our faith communities throughout the synod.
- The Strategic Planning Task Force was formed to create a plan to direct us as we go, and it has been meeting since October 2023. (You may remember this group was recently commissioned at our Together in Mission event.) Using the six themes from our audit with Gold Enterprises, we are working in collaboration with the ART and RIC teams, Synod Council, and synod staff to identify SMART goals towards becoming an authentically diverse synod. The strategic plan will then go to the Synod Council and Synod Assembly this spring for approval.

We can see that the ground is ready for planting, and we can see that some of the hard work has already paid off. Many congregations are taking first steps or are already engaged in authentic diversity work. For example, some have formed teams to lead and engage their congregations to be aware of racial, gender and class injustice. Others have had adult forums to begin initial conversations with the help of synod staff.

We need your continued prayers, donations, and most importantly, your participation in this work. I am here to help in any way I can. So, please contact me at afi@milwaukeeesyndod.org or 414-671-1212:

- If you or your congregation would like to have beginning conversations on anti-racism.
- If you or your congregation would like to expand the work you're doing to create authentic diversity.
- If you'd like to join the ART or get involved with the authentic diversity work the synod is doing.

Peace, Blessings, & Light,
Pr. Afi Dobbins-Mays - Assistant to the Bishop for Authentic Diversity and Leadership