

## Current Mobility List | Updated July 10, 2025

A detailed list of transitions is available at [milwaukee-synod.org/congregations-in-transition](http://milwaukee-synod.org/congregations-in-transition)

### In Leadership Transition

Bethania, Racine  
Church of the Resurrection, Pewaukee  
Cross, Ixonia  
Emaus ELCA, Racine  
Faith/Santa Fe, Milwaukee  
Peace, Burlington  
Reformation, Milwaukee  
St. John's, Brookfield  
Zion, Ashippun

### Ministry Exploration Team

Adoration, Greenfield  
Atonement, Muskego  
First United, Sheboygan  
Incarnation, Milwaukee  
Luther Memorial, West Allis  
Martin Luther, Milwaukee  
Our Savior's, Hartland  
St. John, Grafton  
St. Luke, Waukesha

### MSP Posted

Living Faith, Racine  
North Cape, Franksville  
Our Savior, Oconomowoc  
Redeemer, Hartford  
St. Luke, Sheboygan Falls  
Unity, Brookfield  
Vernon, Mukwonago

### Names Submitted

Good Shepherd Trinity, Milwaukee  
Lutheran Campus Ministry at UW-Milwaukee

### Call Extended

First United, Sheboygan  
Mount Carmel, Milwaukee  
St. Mary's, Kenosha  
St. Paul's, Milwaukee

### Rostered Ministers in Transition

**Rev. Douglas Andersen** – shared pastor at Cross, Ixonia and Zion, Ashippun, transferred to the Northwest Washington Synod  
**Rev. Brian Halverson** – from St. John's, Brookfield to retired  
**Rev. Larry Harpster** – from synod call to interim ministry at Mount Carmel, Milwaukee to on leave from call  
**Rev. Kerstin Hedlund** – on leave from call, transferred to the Southern Ohio Synod  
**Rev. Juniper Linberry** – from on leave from call to called pastor at St. Paul's, Milwaukee  
**Rev. Jordan Miller-Stubbendick** – from bridge pastor at St. Mary's, Kenosha to called pastor at St. Mary's, Kenosha  
**Rev. Thomas Smith** – retired, transferred to the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin  
**Rev. Richard Suero** – resigned from the roster  
**Rev. Steve Smart** – ordained on 7/12/2025, called to Mount Carmel, Milwaukee  
**Rev. Andrew Suhr** – resigned from the roster  
**Rev. Travis Kern** – from the Metropolitan Washington DC Synod to called pastor at First United, Sheboygan

### Remembering Rostered Ministers Who Have Died

**Deacon Elaine Klitz** died on Monday, September 16, 2024. She was 91 years old. Deacon Klitz served at St. Luke's, Greendale from 1956 to 1991. She became an Associate in Ministry in 1965 and continued her work at St. Luke's as the church secretary.

**Deacon Alice M. Zweifel** died on Monday, February 10, 2025. Through her church involvement, Alice completed a two-year Mini-Seminary and became an Associate in Ministry in 1986, serving as the Director of Education at Mt. Zion Lutheran Church in Wauwatosa. Following a move to Sun Prairie in 1990, she served interims as Associate in Ministry at Luther Memorial in Madison, Our Savior's in Sun Prairie, and St. James in Verona. She retired in 1994.



**18th Annual Outreach for Hope**  
**Ride Run Walk**  
**Saturday, Sept. 27 @ Four Event Sites:**  
Grafton • Kenosha • Milwaukee  
Waukesha (**NEW LOCATION: Fox River Sanctuary**)

Together, let's raise \$165K for grants to ministries serving communities experiencing material poverty in the Greater Milwaukee Synod, ELCA.

- Bike rides, a walk and 5K fun run (route options vary by site)
- Picnic lunch and fellowship with friends from other churches
- Celebrate progress towards our \$165K fundraising goal
- Hear stories of impact from OFH Ministry Partner leaders



Register at  
**OFHRRW.org**

Questions? Contact us at 414-671-1212  
or penny@outreachforhope.org



## Life Together | Summer 2025

### Notes from the Bishop

*“Kathy, I’m lost”, I said, though I knew she was sleeping  
I’m empty and aching and I don’t know why  
Counting the cars on the New Jersey Turnpike  
They’ve all come to look for America”*  
- Paul Simon, 1968



I realize that I’m dating myself by opening this reflection with a quote from the song “America” by Simon and Garfunkel, but I heard this song referenced over the Fourth of July weekend, and it seems particularly appropriate for this time in our common life. For me, it expresses the notion that America is not so much a place or a reality, but an idea, or even an ideal. Our holiday celebrations included many references to “the land of the free and the home of the brave,” and we are currently embroiled in a national debate about whether the fullness of the “American Dream” is available to all, regardless of race, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, citizenship status, etc. The gap between the promise of America and the painful reality we currently experience is likely to leave many, if not most of us, disillusioned, empty and aching.

Much the same could also be said of the state of the Church. Christians of all ages have recognized that there is a significant gulf between the reign of justice, love, and mercy described in Scripture and the painful and broken realities of our church and our world. We are called to live in this tension between the dusty and the divine, the pain and the promise. We need to acknowledge that we will never close this gap, that we will never experience the fullness of either of these ideals, the American Dream or the Reign of God, and that no political party or movement and no religious leader or ecclesiastical reform will ever be able to fulfill the deepest longings of our hearts and our communities.

So, what are we to do? While some religious traditions have found comfort in turning away from the pain and suffering of this world as we patiently wait for God’s promised reign to be fulfilled, I believe we are called to simply roll up our sleeves and engage in the hard and holy work of closing the gap between where we are and where we believe God wants us to go. We will not always agree on what that work looks like, and we may often wonder if we are making any progress at all, but the Holy Spirit will give us what we need to keep moving forward.

I find comfort and strength in these words of Martin Luther, *“This life therefore is not righteousness, but growth in righteousness, not health, but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified.”*

Keep moving, dear church,

Bishop Paul Erickson

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@MilwaukeeSynod

# Register Now for our Fall Leadership Conference

Monday Sep. 29 - Wednesday Oct. 1 @ Lutherdale Bible Camp (Elkhorn, WI)



**The Rev. Dr. Yolanda Denson-Byers** will join us for our Fall Leadership Conference. For the last 30 years, she has served as a pastor, preaching and teaching the good news in multiple arenas such as parish, campus, hospice, hospital, and prison ministries.

Her Master of Divinity was earned at Harvard University with specialty in preaching and worship, religious education and pastoral care and counseling. Her Doctor of Ministry is from Luther Seminary in Congregational Mission and Leadership. She currently serves as the senior pastor of Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church in Edina, MN.

During Fall Leadership Conference, Pastor Yolanda will be teaching three 90-minute sessions focused on the theme: **Costly Compassion: The Holy Work of Becoming an Ally in Your Neighborhood.**

The word “compassion” means to be with someone in their suffering. Especially in this time of deep division, rancor, and polarization in our nation’s history, what does Jesus have to say to our most marginalized and oppressed neighbors? What divine mischief is the Holy Spirit instigating in our particular contexts? What does it mean to be an ally with the Holy Spirit, and God’s beloved children, dwelling in our neighborhoods?

Utilizing Pastor Yolanda’s book, *See Me, Believe Me: A Guide to Deepen Allyship with Congregational Leaders of Color*, as a case study, we will Dwell in the Word, invite courageous conversation during our book study, and leave with specific action items meant to better prepare us to enter into the holy work of God’s costly compassion toward all of our neighbors.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Monday, September 8 at 11:59 pm

PRICING: \$150 (includes copy of *See Me, Believe Me*) + lodging

## LODGING

Our Fall Leadership Conference will offer several housing options during the registration process. On-site lodging fees will be added to the basic registration fee. All registration options include meals. You are welcome to find a roommate(s) on your own and note this during registration. Lodging is available on a first come/first served basis.

Learn More & Register at [milwaukeesynod.org/event/fall-leadership-conference-2025](https://milwaukeesynod.org/event/fall-leadership-conference-2025)

## Welcome, Rev. Becky Erb Strang!



We are excited to announce the hiring of a new Assistant to the Bishop for Evangelical Mission, the Rev. Becky Erb Strang, who will begin her work with us on August 4. Becky is excited to be part of the Greater Milwaukee Synod and looks forward to getting to know everyone!

The Rev. Becky Erb Strang is a 1993 graduate of Eden Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Ordained in 1994 within the United Church of Christ, Becky has been married to Jim Strang for 35 years. They have two adult sons: Jim (Carina) and Ben.

Raised in College Station, Texas, Becky is the oldest of six Erb children. Her mother, the Rev. Jean Erb, is a retired UCC clergyperson. Becky has served local congregations in Lewisville, Texas, Kettering, Ohio, and New Bremen, Ohio. For the past 18 months, she has served as the part time

Support Pastor for St. John Lutheran Church in Celina, Ohio.

Becky loves to read, take walks, travel, wheel pottery, garden, can/preserve food, and feed people.

## Gender Justice Training

Thursday, November 6 | Location TBA

Save the date! ELCA Region 5 (the synods of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan) will gather in satellite locations for a combined education day for all rostered ministers. Lunch will be provided. Details and registration to come.

## Greater Milwaukee Synod Women’s Organization Convention & Retreat

Saturday, September 13 @ 9 am - 2pm | St. John’s, Brookfield

All women in our synod are invited to gather for this convention and retreat, whether or not you have a women’s organization in your congregation.

During our time together we will participate in Mending Our Souls, a workshop led by Emma Mock that is centered on the healing power of creativity and community. The workshop includes a presentation on the significance of textiles in relation to grief across cultures and history. The hands-on portion will explore how textiles can help us engage with our personal narratives of loss and healing. This space invites us to reflect on loss, memory, legacy, and healing through the transformative act of making. Together, we will create keepsakes that honor our personal experiences with loss. Inspired by the goal to promote grief awareness, reflection, and expression, this workshop emphasizes the powerful and healing nature of combining creativity with community.

After lunch we will hear about the initiatives and strategic plan for Women of the ELCA. We will hold elections for all positions on the SWO board and for voting members for Churchwide Convention in July 2026.

Emma Marie Mock is the Bereavement Care Coordinator at Sharon S. Richardson Community Hospice in Sheboygan Falls,

WI. She holds a Master of Thanatology from Marian University and is a Certified Grief Counselor. In addition to her hospice work, Emma is an artist, educator, facilitator, and speaker on topics related to the healing qualities of creating in relation to grief. Her art and workshops emphasize that creative and collective spaces often serve as healing spaces. Drawing inspiration from the intricate relationships between objects, sentimentality, and memory, Emma designs her professional work, art, and workshops to encourage the exploration of personal narratives and meaningful connections.

A full agenda is available at [womenoftheelca.org/event/greater-milwaukee-swo-convention-4](https://womenoftheelca.org/event/greater-milwaukee-swo-convention-4).



Credit: Emma Mock (mendingoursouls.com)

## Upcoming Events

**Thursday, July 24, 5 - 7:30 pm**

**Adventures in Renewal CO-LAB: Fresh Learning Edition**  
Bucyrus Commons Farmers Market, South Milwaukee

**Sunday, September 7**

**“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday**

**Saturday, September 13, 9 am - 2 pm**

**Greater Milwaukee Synod Women’s Organization Retreat and Convention** | St. John’s, Brookfield

**Saturday, September 27**

**2025 Outreach for Hope Ride Run Walk Fundraiser**

**Monday, September 29 - Wednesday, October 1**

**Fall Leadership Conference** | Lutherdale (Elkhorn, WI)

**Thursday, November 6**

**ELCA Region 5 Gender Justice Training** | Location TBA

Learn more at [milwaukeesynod.org/events](https://milwaukeesynod.org/events)