



Notes from the Bishop



Our recent Synod Assembly focused on the fourth of our synod's core values, collaboration. As I shared in my report to the assembly, one of the things I have learned over the years is that, while collaboration may sound simple, it's really quite complex. I did some work with the Wilder Research Institute when I lived in St. Paul, and their former director, Dr. Paul Mattessich, spent much of his adult life researching the factors that contributed to effective organizational collaboration. I learned from him that one of the first steps in collaborating effectively is to make sure you're talking about the same thing. Sometimes, when folks use the word collaboration, they really mean cooperation. He defines cooperation as a set of informal relationships, in which you basically agree to

keep each other informed about what you're up to.

Other times, folks are really talking about coordination, which Dr. Mattessich describes as a bit more formal of a relationship, in which you not only share information, but you recognize that you have a shared mission and you begin to plan some things together and figure out how to divide the work among you. To fully collaborate with another organization, however, requires a commitment to sharing your plans and your resources, establishing well-defined communication channels, and reorganizing your structures to establish an enduring partnership. It's not that one of these is better than the others, as each of these three levels, cooperation, coordination, and collaboration, may be the right one, depending on the organizations and circumstances involved. It's just that you need to make sure that you're on the same page and talking about the same thing. Another obstacle to effective and lasting collaboration is rooted in one of the values of white supremacy culture, the belief that there is only one right way to do something. We've all seen it, haven't we? When two ideas conflict, there is all too often a battle about which idea is going to win, and the two sides duke it out, firmly believing that their way is the right way. Now, the antidote to this kind of destructive conflict is not to avoid all conflict and just go along to get along, no; it's to embrace the truth that there can be more than one right way to do almost anything. We can embrace what some call "creative abrasion," which is when we allow two conflicting ideas to rub up against one another and to recognize that friction, abrasion, conflict, is normal. When we approach this tension with curiosity and courage, we just might discover a new way, a different path, one that is better than either of the two ideas that were originally presented. In the end, if we truly want to collaborate, we need to set aside our fear of losing and embrace the truth that winning means getting where we need to go together.

As we continue to navigate the many challenges and conflicts in our congregations, communities, and country, I pray that we can continue to explore ways to deepen and expand our collaborative efforts. We need to work together, and we need to incorporate the views and experiences of diverse voices not because it's easy, quick, or efficient, but because it's how the Holy Spirit chooses to work in our midst. Together, we are the body of Christ, and together, we can all play a part in building communities of justice, love, and mercy.

In Christ,

Bishop Paul Erickson



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All In Relational Ministry

Sat. Oct. 3, 9 am - 3 pm | RELATIONAL SKILLS for CROSSGEN groups! | Cost: \$15

On behalf of the newly formed Synod Youth Team, we're inviting you to join us on Oct. 3 for training in building relationships across generations. We especially encourage anyone who currently works with youth – staff or volunteers – and teens who have a passion for their faith – to join us for this event. We are bringing in the renowned Lyle Griner to help us as we begin a new season of youth and community ministry in the Greater Milwaukee Synod.



Location: Holy Cross Lutheran Church, Menomonee Falls (W156N8131 Pilgrim Road)

Learn more and register at milwaukee-synod.org/events.

Saturday
Sept. 26
8:00 am -
12:00 pm



Milwaukee
Waukesha
Grafton
Kenosha

The Outreach for Hope Family Ride Run Walk is a fun and meaningful way to support ELCA Lutheran congregations and ministries in neighborhoods of income insecurity. Prepare for a fun and exciting morning of biking, running, walking, volunteering, and enjoying fellowship at lunch.



Thanks to the generosity of sponsors, this event remains FREE for everyone to participate — because hope is for all, not just for some.

Your donations, and those which you raise, make possible important grants to these ministries which provide resources for daily living. Join us to help ensure that our Synod remains a powerful presence of the Gospel in our communities. See you there!

Learn more and register at ofhrrw.org.



Pride Worship Service

Thursday, Oct. 8, 6 pm

“Celebrating Our Diversity as God’s Children,” the 2026 Pride worship service, is being hosted by the Greater Milwaukee Synod Reconciling in Christ (RIC) Ministry Team at Ascension in Milwaukee, 1236 S. Layton Blvd. It was originally scheduled to take place in June, but was rescheduled due to severe weather concerns. Please join us for this joyous worship celebrating our unity and diversity as God’s children!

If you wish to sing in the choir for this service, please contact Chuck Ellingson at chuck.gmsric@gmail.com. If you have any questions, please contact the RIC team at RIC@gmselca.org.

There are lots of LGBTQIA+ national celebration days in October that make this an especially great time to celebrate Pride. We hope to see you there!



Fall Leadership Conference

Mon. Oct. 19 - Wed. Oct. 21 @ Lutherdale Camp & Conference Center (Elkhorn, WI)



Pr. Tim Brown

The theme for this year's Fall Leadership Conference is "stewardship and generosity". Stewardship and generosity work has evolved as the church has evolved. Traditional and emerging paradigms struggle to speak to one another, and a fresh conversation is waiting to be had. Delving into the discipleship roots of generosity, we'll explore the theological and practical ways that stewardship enlivens followers of Christ and the whole church, and we'll reimagine together how that can be lived out in the local congregation.

The guest speaker, Tim Brown, is a pastor in the ELCA serving parishes in Chicago, IL and Raleigh, NC. He currently serves in the Office of the Presiding Bishop as Director for Congregational Stewardship Support where he creates and curates relationships and resources to help Synods and Congregations fuel their ministries. He lives in Raleigh, North Carolina with his wife and two sons, and he can usually be found at a coffee shop or brewery reading or writing something he thinks is interesting.

The Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry will be preaching at worship on Monday 10/19 at 7 pm. This worship service is open to all! We hope you can join us.



Bishop Yehiel Curry

REGISTRATION OPENS AUGUST 1 | PRICING: \$150 + 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
milwaukee-synod.org/event/fall-leadership-conference



2027 Save the Dates!

Feb. 6

Together in Mission
8 am - 3 pm

Mar. 18

Chrism Service
10:00 am

June 4 - 5

2027 Synod Assembly
Brookfield Conference Center

Where to Find Mobility Updates

A detailed list of transitions is available at milwaukee-synod.org/congregations-in-transition

Spotlight on Youth Volunteer: Lacee Justman



A member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in West Bend, Lacee Justman, is travelling to Cambodia in August to participate in ministry through the ELCA Young Adults in Global Mission (YAGM) program. She is the only member of the Greater Milwaukee Synod to do so this year. The YAGM program leads youth volunteers, ages 21-35, in a year of international service where they walk alongside global companions, aid in projects, and partake in fellowship. Whether they help the community in ministry, education, human rights, or health, YAGM members approach their ministry with a spirit of accompaniment. This means tackling challenges with mutuality and solidarity, and approaching differences with respect and open-mindedness. This program not only provides aid to global partners, but an opportunity for young individuals to experience other cultures, "confront privilege, poverty and inequality through the lens of faith" (elca.org), and partake in deep reflection.

The Greater Milwaukee Synod office wanted to hear about Lacee's experience and share her story so other young adults from our synod might be encouraged to participate in the future. Below are her answers to the corresponding questions.

Q: How did you hear about YAGM as an opportunity?

A: I first learned about YAGM through my pastor. At the time, I was working closely with people in hospice care as a massage therapist, and that experience sparked a desire to explore a deeper sense of service and accompaniment.

Q: What made you want to participate in the YAGM program?

A: One of the things that attracted me most to YAGM was its emphasis on accompaniment. I appreciate that the program is not about going somewhere to "fix" people or tell them how to live, but rather about walking alongside others, learning from them, and building meaningful relationships.

Q: What was the application and acceptance process like?

A: The process was surprisingly straightforward. I submitted my application last summer and was invited to interview in March. After a few interviews and conversations, I was accepted into the program. Throughout the process, everyone was welcoming and supportive, and it felt like a good opportunity for discernment.

Q: What are you most excited about for your trip to Cambodia?

A: Cambodia is very different from anything I have experienced before, and I am looking forward to immersing myself in a new culture, building relationships, and gaining a broader perspective of the world.

Q: What are some challenges you anticipate?

A: I think the language barrier will be one of the biggest challenges for me. I know there will be a learning curve. At the same time, I think it will be an opportunity for growth and connection.

Q: In what ways has the YAGM program and leaders prepared you for your ministry trip?

A: YAGM has already provided a great deal of preparation. I attended the orientation weekend in Chicago, where we learned about the history of the program, YAGM's values, and our global partners. I have also had conversations with the country coordinator in Cambodia and several YAGM alumni, which has helped me better understand what to expect.

Q: What does it mean to you to live out your faith when integrating into a new society and culture?

A: For me, living out my faith in a new culture means leading with humility, curiosity, and respect...I hope to listen, learn, build relationships, and accompany people in their communities. My faith teaches me that every person is created in God's image, and I believe I can learn from the people I meet just as much as they may learn from me. I hope to remain grounded in my faith while being open to new perspectives, traditions, and ways of understanding the world.

Keep Lacee and the other volunteers in your prayers as they embark on a transformative, year-long journey and engage in fellowship with global partners. Hopefully her story will embolden other young adults in our synod to take part in this program and all that it offers. YAGM volunteers are expected to raise financial support before serving overseas, which helps cover things like training, travel, housing, language learning, and other expenses. If anyone would like to support Lacee's ministry, they can do so here: tinyurl.com/give-YAGM-Lacee Learn more about YAGM at elca.org/how-we-serve. Read the blog post about this story on our website at milwaukee-synod.org/about-us/synod-stories-blog/.