Together in Mission: Register Today!

February 15, 2020
St. Matthew’s Lutheran Church, Wauwatosa
1615 N. Wauwatosa Ave. | Wauwatosa, WI 53213

Together in Mission is a one-day educational event that brings together over 200 rostered and lay leaders from around our Greater Milwaukee Synod to learn together about a variety of ministry topics: from everyday church operations, to social issues and inclusion efforts, to churchwide issues and our partner churches in El Salvador & Tanzania.

“I really loved this event, both last year and this year,” said a 2019 event participant. “I came with several first time lay attendees whose eyes were opened to what it can mean to be Church together as a synod. It was exciting!”

On our online registration page, select your morning and afternoon sessions from the full list of workshops offered throughout the day.

Cost for the day is $12/person and includes lunch. Registration will close on Friday, February 7th.

Visit milwaukeesynod.org/event/together-in-mission
to register and download our promotional bulletin insert and slide!

More information: milwaukeesynod.org/events

Stay Connected
milwaukeesynod.org
/MilwaukeeSynod
414.671.1212
1212 S. Layton Blvd.
Milwaukee, WI 53215

SAVE THE DATE:
2020 Synod Assembly
Fri. May 29, 4 p.m. - Sat. May 30, 4 p.m.
Italian Community Center, Milwaukee

FEATURED SPEAKERS:
Rev. Patricia Davenport
Bishop, Southeast Pennsylvania Synod

Diakonia Graduation
June 6, 2020
Lord of Life, Kenosha

Notes from the Bishop

I often say that one of my greatest joys in my work as bishop is the opportunity I have to visit and worship in a different congregation each weekend. I have a goal of worshipping in each of our synod’s 126 communities, and I’ve reached the 3/4 mark thus far. I also enjoy the chance I get each year at this time to read through the annual reports submitted by our rostered ministers as they share updates, joys, and concerns. We have close to 300 pastors and deacons in our synod, active, retired, on leave from call, and disabled, and reading these reports is one small way I can take stock of things and hear how it’s going in life and ministry with these leaders. A third way that we have sought to connect with the congregations and leaders of our synod is by sending out around 40 trained listeners to visit with the council or leadership team of every congregation or ministry in recent months. We weren’t able to connect with every ministry for a variety of reasons, but the conversations that did happen were vibrant and helpful.

As I take stock of what I’ve learned through these various connections, there seem to be several themes emerging:

1. The future is unclear. It is clear that the world is changing and our congregations are changing, and feelings are mixed about whether these changes are positive or negative. There are congregations who are wondering if the ways they have organized their lives and engaged in God’s mission are as effective as they once were, and they are wondering how they could and should move forward.

2. God isn’t done with us yet. In the midst of change and uncertainty, I continue to hear and see signs of folks who are taking risks, reaching out in new ways, and exploring new partnerships. All of this innovation and experimentation is fueled by a belief that God shows up and walks with us when we step out in faith.

3. We are better together. Even as folks wrestle with change and uncertainty, it seems that one clear way that God shows up in the gift of relationship. When we are hurting, when we are lost, when we are curious, when we are hopeful, we are stronger through the gift of relationship. When we are hurting, when we are lost, when we are curious, when we are hopeful, we are stronger when we remember that we are not alone, that others are going through many of the same things, and we’re all on the same team, striving for the same things: strong and vibrant communities, rooted in the promises of Jesus and shaped by our love for our neighbors near and far.

All of this leaves me filled with hope. In the midst of all of the ups and downs and ins and outs of life and ministry, I am more hopeful now than ever, and I look forward to continuing to discover with you all of the future that God has in store for us.

In Christ,

Bishop Paul D. Erickson
Last week at Grace Welcome Center Pantry in Kenosha, approximately 50 people quietly stood in line, waiting for the doors to open for the weekly food pantry. I imagined those standing toward the end of the line were wondering how many people are ahead of me? Will I be allowed to shop for my weekly groceries? Will I be told that there is not enough food for me and my family?

Pastor Jonathan Barker related that many of the guests have already waited in line before arriving at Grace. There is the line for the shuttle bus that goes to a job, the line to meet with a social worker, doctor, or job counselor, just a few of the lines people face. For pantry guests that take the bus to Grace the whole process can easily take 4-5 hours to obtain food for their families.

How many times have we arrived somewhere, and the line was too long, and we chose to leave and come back or go to an alternate location?

Our brothers and sisters impacted by poverty that are struggling day to day do not have these options. They stand in line uncertain of the outcome. They stand in lines knowing that this process will be repeated many times in the days and weeks ahead. No matter the weather conditions, they have no choice but to stand in line.

The next you are standing in line for a movie or sporting event feeling sorry for yourself for a few minutes of inconvenience, remember our brothers and sisters who have no choice but to stand in countless lines that we would not tolerate.

I saw something else that day at Grace that gave me Hope. Smiling friendly volunteers who patiently helped to register guests, bag their groceries, and help them carry their groceries up the steps. At the end of this line dignity and respect.

Respect, dignity and sustenance for our brothers and sisters in Christ being shared on behalf of the volunteers at Grace Welcome Center.

Grace Welcome Center Food Pantry in Kenosha shares approximately 2000 pounds of food each week. Every Tuesday volunteers stock the shelves, greet approximately forty families with smiles making suggestions on food choices and helping to bag the groceries.

If you would like more information on volunteer opportunities at Grace Welcome Center or other Outreach for Hope supported ministries, contact Michael Groh – mike@outreachforhope.org

— Michael Groh, Interim Director of Outreach for Hope