

Agenda

9-9:30 AM	Coffee and fellowship
9:30-10 AM	Bishop's Welcome
10:10-11:10 AM	Workshop Session One
11:10-11:30 AM	Break & Resource Fair
11:30 AM-12:30 PM	Workshop Session Two
12:30-1:30 PM	Lunch & Resource Fair
1:30-2:30 PM	Affinity Groups
2:40-3:10 PM	Congregation Recap Time
3:10-3:30 PM	Closing Commissioning

*View this
handout online:*



Saturday, March 14, 2026

9 AM to 3:30 PM

St. Olaf Lutheran Church in Austin

Stay connected with RC Weekly!

The Southeastern Minnesota Synod's weekly email newsletter—the RC Weekly—keeps readers in the know with the latest stories, announcements, celebrations, and more. This news is essential to the ministry and people in the congregations and worshipping communities. We hope you will join us! **Learn more and join at: [SEMNSynod.org/RCW](https://semnsynod.org/RCW)**



Councils as Leaders equips and empowers the people of the synod with practical tools and collegial connections to support them as they participate in God's mission within their congregations and communities.



418 Sumner Street E, Suite 200
Northfield, MN 55057
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Session 1 Workshops:

Bringing the ELCA Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith to your Congregation

with Dr. Stewart Herman — Downstairs Auditorium

The ELCA Churchwide Assembly 2025 has adopted a social statement on faith and civic life, the relationship of religious organizations and political authority, and related matters. Social statements are the ELCA's primary documents to address significant social issues. They are intended to aid reflection, shape conscience and set forth the ELCA's teaching and policy on the major social issues and questions of contemporary life. Join Dr. Stuart Herman to learn about this social statement and how you might engage with it in your congregation for meaningful dialogue about this topic.

Conversation with Council Presidents

with Chris Cordes (First, Kenyon); Lisa Queen (Our Savior's, Owatonna); Karen Kleinwort (Faith, Dodge Center); Brian Ehlert (Good Shepherd, Wells); Kathy Chatelaine, facilitating — Meeting Room 247

Church council leaders serve with faithfulness, creativity and courage. The role of president can be particularly challenging – and rewarding! Led by current and past council presidents, this workshop will provide you with an overview of best practices for presidents. Come to learn and share ideas!

Disability & Ministry with Deacon Amanda Sabelko — Sanctuary (main level)

Ministry with people living with disabilities is essential work, but too often treated as optional. One in four people experience a disability at any given moment, and almost everyone will experience disability during their lifetime. In this workshop, you learn about the importance of this work and leave with practical action steps.

Reaching the Goldfish with Ashley Corbett — Room 133 (downstairs)

In case you didn't know, the attention span of a goldfish is 9 seconds. The average human attention span is shorter. (And getting shorter.) Which makes it really hard to reach our people. (And getting harder.) We will look at what we know about human nature and explore different ways to share effectively. You won't walk away with all the answers, but with new ideas and strategies to reach the goldfish (I mean people!).

Taking Excellent Care: Faithful Finances for Courageous Councils

with Rev. Emily Carson — Chapel Room 248

A steward is one who takes excellent care of what has been entrusted to them. In this workshop, council leaders and treasurers (and any interested pastors, deacons and lay leaders) will explore financial best practices and stewardship strategies. Participants will gain tools, language, and confidence to lead congregational financial ministries with integrity, transparency, and hope - ensuring that resources are aligned with ministry, mission & values.

Session 2 Workshops:

Bringing the ELCA Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith to your Congregation

with Dr. Stewart Herman — Downstairs Auditorium

(See description on previous page.)

Vibrant Communication Through Stories

with Rev. Dr. Scott Olson — Meeting Room 247

Help your communications come alive through the power of story. This workshop will demonstrate how congregational communications can have a greater impact when we share ways God has shown up in our lives. We believe that God continues to work in, with, and through us to accomplish God's mission to love and bless the world. The stories must be told. See how temple talks, newsletters, annual reports, and even ministry spending plans (aka: budgets) communicate God's powerful presence.

Providing a Quality Call for Rostered Ministers

with Rev. Cole McCormick, Rev. Lisa Meshke, and Rev. Alison Bondy — Room 133 (downstairs)

We will give you statistics, background, and strategies to help your congregations provide a quality call for your rostered minister(s) and insight into allyship.

Discerning Your Congregation's Call: How a Clear Mission, Vision, and Values Help Shape Faith Communities

with Rev. Tim Bowman and Rev. Todd Buegler — Chapel Room 248

Vital, dynamic, and mission-focused congregations are clear about their "why" and "how." In our time together, we will reflect on practices that help leaders hear where God may be calling their congregation now and into the future. Then, we will focus on how to live out that vision in everyday ministry through a thoughtful and integrated strategic planning process.... It will be both reflective and practical, offering tools and perspectives that help congregations lead with purpose, remain rooted in their identity, and serve their communities with clarity, collaboration, and hope.

Reimagining Youth Ministry

with Rev. Sam Mailleue and Rev. Brittany Mailleue — Sanctuary (main level)

This will be a conversation that engages in an authentic approach to meet our youth where they are in ways that they function in the world. The demands on our youth are high, so we must reimagine how we, as the church, can support them in a fast-paced, over-scheduled life. How can we help them reclaim sabbath?