

# MIDWINTER POWER IN THE SPIRIT 2023

## Blessed Are

JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 1

Our third annual Midwinter Power in the Spirit online gathering will be held on January 30-February 1! Blessed are . . . Come, and explore how you can bring the Beatitudes into the modern world with a fresh look at Jesus' words for you today through the morning devotions, digital workshops, and worship. Explore how God's people can reach out to all with the love of God.

The Rev. Brenda Smith, from 1517 Media, retired director of the ELCA Book of Faith initiative, joins us as our keynote speaker!

To participate in the event you will need to register at [vasynod.org/power-in-the-spirit](https://vasynod.org/power-in-the-spirit). There is no cost to participate.

The deadline to register is January 26.

## OUR SCHEDULE

5:30 PM	Zoom Rooms Open
5:45-6:45	Keynote on Monday; Workshops on Tuesday and Wednesday
6:45-6:55	Q & A and Announcements
7:00	Evening Prayer

## DAILY EMAIL

Each morning, you will receive an e-devotional. Pray and study on your own time. Hear reflections from leaders near and far.

## SUPPORT GRACEINSIDE

The Power in the Spirit theme, "Blessed are . . ." reminds us that God's love and presence extend to all people, especially the outcast and the oppressed. GraceInside provides chaplain services to inmates in prisons across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Your gift to GraceInside will support this critical ministry that brings God's Word into the prisons.

## ABOUT EVENING PRAYER

Bring each day to a close with time for prayer. We will use a call and response with some of Edith Blake's poetry interspersed with words from hymns. We will provide an opportunity for you to lift up prayer concerns and general prayers.

## MIDWINTER



# Blessed Are

## MIDWINTER POWER IN THE SPIRIT 2023

### ALL OUR SPEAKERS

### ABOUT OUR WORKSHOPS

#### MONDAY KEYNOTE PRESENTATION



**THE REV. BRENDA SMITH**

1517 MEDIA, BOOK OF FAITH

#### KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

As we know from the Beatitudes and other teachings of Jesus, the words of Jesus help to teach us how to live out our faith in daily life. Our keynote speaker, Rev. Brenda Smith will discuss how striving to live out our baptismal promises can also offer us a framework for reflecting our faith in all areas of our lives.

#### TUESDAY WORKSHOPS



**THE REV. SUZANNE STIERWALT**

HOLY COMMUNION LUTHERAN  
CHURCH, PORTSMOUTH

#### BLESSED ARE THE CHILDREN

Whitney Houston sang a song with the lyrics "I believe that children are our future..." I disagree. Children are our NOW. How are you expressing this in your worship space? How do we welcome families with Littles, Middles, and Bigs into the community faith? Together, let's explore the whys and the hows of Children in the Worship Space.



**THE REV. JOSHUA COPELAND**

OUR SAVIOUR LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
CHRISTIANSBURG

#### BLESSED ARE THE PURE OF HEART - SYNOD ELECTION PROCESS

Discernment: a process of prayer and looking forward to where God is calling us. If you were not aware, we, as the Virginia Synod, are going to be electing a new Bishop in June 2023. As a part of this process, the Bishop Election Committee, is looking to lead the Synod in discernment conversations as we look forward to where God is calling us as the Virginia Synod. Join other members of the synod and Pastor Joshua Copeland (Our Saviour, Christiansburg) as we dream and listen to God in a fun and exciting workshop. May God be with us all as we listen to the guidance of the Holy Spirit!



**THE REV. PAUL PINGEL**

GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN  
CHURCH, WAYNESBORO

#### BLESSED ARE THE RIGHTEOUS - THE ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP IN RACIAL EQUITY AND JUSTICE

We all know the importance of relationships in our lives. We love one another in relationships, we bear with one another in relationships, we identify with one another in relationships, we remember one another when we are in relationship. It should be no surprise that relationship is also at the heart of racial equity and justice. If we are in relationship with someone, we will care about what they care about. Grace, Waynesboro has been involved for the past three years in a developing relationships with Christ Tabernacle Church of God in Christ, a predominantly black congregation in Waynesboro. In addition, my sabbatical involved many conversations with black pastors and lay people, as well as trips to Montgomery and Selma, Alabama, and visits to Civil Rights sites in those places, as well as conversation with Pr. Tiffany Chaney, a black Lutheran pastor in Montgomery. These experiences have underscored how central being in relationship is, to further Racial Equity and Justice in the communities our congregations are a part of.

#### WEDNESDAY WORKSHOPS



**DEANNA RENNON**

EASTERN DIVISION OPERATIONS  
OFFICER, WALL RESIDENCES

#### BLESSED ARE THE MEEK

We are all Children of God. Therefore, we should welcome all to the table. How do we cherish and support those within our communities and congregations to feel connected and a part of what we are creating? Are you interested in widening your understanding and experience with those with differing abilities within your congregations? Are you hoping to learn how to be a support to someone that is interested in being a part of your church community? This session will focus on ways to welcome and support those of differing abilities to all aspects of worship and community. Those with differing abilities are often seen as meek, but when we welcome them, we give them a voice at God's table. When we welcome the meek, we are all blessed.



**THE REV. LOU FLORIO**

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH,  
FREDERICKSBURG

#### BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS

We will look through the lens of modern policing to examine the inherent tension which comes with trying to live as a peacemaker in a fallen world. A former police officer and current law enforcement chaplain, Pastor Lou Florio, will provide some very brief context regarding modern police culture and then draw upon scripture, Lutheran theology, and sociology to help us identify where we might find hope and encouragement to become peacemakers ourselves. Pastor Florio is currently Associate Pastor at Christ (Fredericksburg) and serves as a volunteer chaplain with the City of Fredericksburg Police and Hanover County Sheriff's Office. Along with his divinity education, he has an MS in Criminal Justice from Virginia Commonwealth University and is a credentialed chaplain through the International Conference of Police Chaplains.



**THE REV. KELLY BAYER DERRICK**

ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP,  
VIRGINIA SYNOD, ELCA

#### BLESSED ARE - BIBLE STUDY ON THE BEATITUDES

The Beatitudes (Matthew 5.1-12) are perhaps some of Jesus' best-known and most-beloved words in scripture. The Beatitudes serve as a preamble and manifesto for the entirety of Jesus' ministry of transformational love and grace. Blessed Are... these words serve as comfort and hope for people who are oppressed and distressed - and their lived implications for community may surprise and challenge us. Let's explore these words of Jesus together!