Virginia Synod

EPIC

Effective Practices for Innovative Congregations

Virginia Synod Leadership Development Conference

Effective Practices for Innovative Congregations (EPIC) is a one-day leadership development conference that is designed to strengthen congregational leaders for their ministry in the congregation and in the world. There will be four separate opportunities to attend the event at four locations spread throughout the Synod.

During EPIC we will explore what it means to have Strong Connections with topics that explore how to have:

Strong Connections in the Congregation
Strong Connections in the Community
Strong Connections in the Synod
Strong Connections in the Wider Lutheran Expression
Strong Connections in God

The event will feature times of worship and large-group presentations as well as small-group breakout sessions covering a variety of topics led by members of the Synod staff as well as local leaders from each hosting area. We are hopeful that attendees will also share ideas and resources with one another for some holy cross-pollinating!

Registration includes lunch for in-person attendees and the cost is $10 per person; or if you have 8 or more from you congregation we offer a flat fee of $75. To receive the discount you must register everyone during the same transaction. Registration cost for digital attendees is $5 per person.

Event Check will open at 8:30 AM with the event starting at 9:00 AM and ending at 2:00 PM.

Dates and Locations Offered

September 14 - Hampton

St. Paul's Lutheran Church
807 W Mercury Blvd.
Hampton, VA 23666

November 2 - *Richmond

St. Luke Lutheran Church
7757 Chippenham Parkway
Richmond, VA 23225

October 19 - Harrisonburg

Muhlenberg Lutheran Church
281 E Market Street
Harrisonburg, VA 22801

November 16 - Blacksburg

St. Michael Lutheran Church
2308 Merrimac Road
Blacksburg, VA 24060

**Offered as an hybrid event that allows attendees to register as digital attendees or in-person.*

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Workshop Descriptions

Session 1 - Strong Connections in the Congregation

- ***A1 - Anxiety and Restoring Trust** - Whether it's from concern about the present or the future, or from some type of conflict that wasn't fully resolved, anxiety can take root in a congregation. This workshop will explore how to healthily respond to anxiety and begin the process of restoring trust. (**We highly recommend that you when you sign up for this workshop you also attend "Evangelism for Introverts" for Session 2)

- ***A2 - Fellowship: More than just Doughnuts** - Food is a hallmark of many congregational events. However, fellowship can be about so much more than planning, serving, and cleaning up after meals. This workshop is about creating well-rounded and intentional fellowship ministries that can strengthen a congregation's bonds with one another and invite more neighbors in.

- **A3 - Supporting your Rostered Minister** - Rostered ministers give a lot of themselves for the ministries and people they serve. This workshop explores how to support them in a variety of ways: from maintaining healthy boundaries, to building effective mutual ministry teams, to finding ways to show them love and care.

- ***A4 - Call to Allyship** - Bishop Phyllis Milton and Assistant to the Bishop Pr. Kelly Bayer Derrick will provide an introduction to the book "Call to Allyship" and the important gospel work of racial justice. Join them in learning practical steps you and your congregation can take to grow in this area. As author and editor Pr. Angela !Khabeb says, "There are only two ways to do this justice work: Imperfectly or not at all."

- **A5 - Ecclesiastical Art** - God created us to be creative - to be co-creators in this life. This workshop will explore various ways to use and discover your gifts in the arts to enhance your individual prayer life, your worship spaces, and other aspects of your congregation to help others engage their senses and experience the gospel in new ways.

- **A6 - Strengthening Connections through Mission Support** - In this workshop, we will talk about how mission support (financial gifts from people to congregations, congregations to the synod, and the synod to the churchwide expression) can help to strengthen connections with God, within God's church, and with all of God's creation. We will provide congregation leaders with some tools to educate their congregations about mission support and model those by educating about the impact that congregational giving has on the ministry of the VA Synod.

**Offered for digital attendees*

Contact Us

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www.vasynod.org/EPIC

Register Now

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Workshop Descriptions

Session 2 - Strong Connections in the Community

- **B1 - Evangelism for Introverts -** If you find comfort sitting in the back row of the sanctuary; if talking to new people that you don't know makes your blood pressure rise; if the word "Evangelism" causes you to nearly faint - then this workshop is for you. Learn how to share the good news in words and deeds in ways that are true to the introvert God made you to be! (**We highly recommend that you when you sign up for this workshop you also attend "Anxiety and Restoring Trust" for Session 1)

- **B2 - Building a Community Ministry** - How do you move from idea to action? This workshop will be an opportunity to discuss how you listen to the community and then collaborate to create ministries that engage in and respond to the needs of the community.

- ***B3 - Digital Ministry: Meeting You from a Distance** - Online outreach is a powerful way to start new connections with people in your local community and beyond. Join Director of Digital Ministries Pastor Colleen to learn about contextualizing digital ministry to God's vision for your congregation and your available resources. Bring your questions and your creativity!

- ***B4 - When there are more Cows than People: Rural Evangelism** - The Virginia Synod is made up of many local communities in a variety of sizes and settings, each with its own physical environment, distinctive make-up, beginnings, and particular problems and challenges. The same was true in Jesus's time and place, and so he articulated the Reign of God in a way that communicated with people according to their contexts. In this workshop we will explore contextual evangelism for the vibrant ministries of our rural communities: that is, how to speak God's truth and love to a specific people in this time and place.

- ***B5 - Flipping Tables: Radical Teachings of Jesus in a Divisive Political Environment -** Congregations are called on to be places of welcome and mutual care, where people feel safe and free to be fully themselves and active members of the body of Christ. Yet, we are living in an increasingly polarized and divisive society. There are legitimate dangers that need to be talked about - like Christian nationalism - and various concerns that churches should respond to - like hunger and addiction - that will elicit strong opinions and disagreement. This workshop will look to Jesus's example of being prophetic and public in his ministry and holding public figures accountable, while still offering his teaching and healing - and salvation - to all.

Offered for digital attendees

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