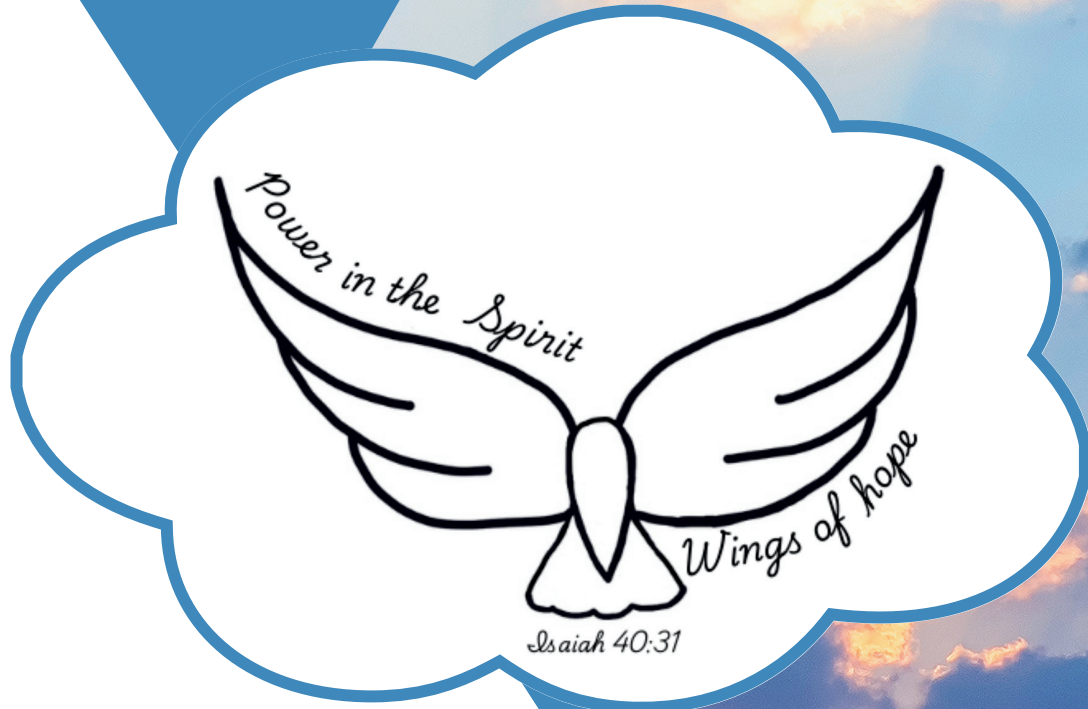


POWER IN THE SPIRIT



July 17-19, 2025
at Roanoke College

Special Guests

Maryn Olson, Keynote Speaker

Maryn Olson (she/her) serves as the Director for [Lutheran Disaster Response](#), the humanitarian and crisis response ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). In this role, she oversees the LDR's global (international and domestic) grants and programs. Internationally, she collaborates closely with the ELCA area desks in responding to disasters; domestically, Maryn works with synods, social ministry organizations, community-based groups, and tribal nations. She also represents the ELCA in various settings with ecumenical partners.



Maryn has always had a strong sense of justice, and this passion motivates her work. She has 20 years of nonprofit experience and has served in a variety of disaster related roles. Maryn holds a Bachelor of Arts from Valparaiso University and a Master of Science (MSc) in Public Health in Developing Countries from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Maryn and her wife, Angela, live in St. Louis, MO.

The Rev. Bobby Morris, Bible Study Leader

Bobby Morris serves as pastor of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church (ELCA) in Pomaria, S.C. and teaches Old Testament and Hebrew at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir Rhyne University. He frequently contributes commentary to [workingpreacher.org](#) of Luther Seminary and has published technical work in Hebrew and Greek for the New Interpreter's Bible Commentary. He is also an adjunct faculty member with the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies and has travelled and taught in the Middle East since 1998. Bobby does some of his best theological reflection when on one of his many antique Allis Chalmers tractors, which he uses to tend the farm that has been in his family for nearly one-hundred years.



Michael Benshish, Musician

Michael Benshish (music leader) has been performing on the piano, organ, and synthesizer, primarily throughout the Chicago area and Southeast Virginia, as well as throughout the U.S. and internationally, since 1988. Currently, he is active as the Director of Worship and Music at Lutheran Church of the Master in Carol Stream, IL, a musician at St. Andrew Lutheran in Portsmouth, Virginia, a freelance collaborative pianist, band member/leader, and recording artist. Utilizing this rich variety of musical diversity, along with the blessing of gifted musicians, is Michael's favorite thing to incorporate into worship, with offerings ranging from Bach chorales to modern praise music and everything in between.



The Schedule

Thursday, July 17

11:00 am-1:30 pm	Event Check-in at Colket Center
12:00 pm-1:00 pm	Lunch in Colket Center
1:30 pm	Gathering and Welcome in Antrim Chapel
1:50 pm	Worship in Antrim Chapel
2:35 pm	Keynote Presentation in Antrim Chapel
3:50 pm	Break
4:10-5:40 pm	Bible Study in Antrim Chapel
5:45-7:00 pm	Dinner in Colket Center
7:00-7:45 pm	Evening Worship in Antrim Chapel
7:45 pm	Beer and Hymns

Friday, July 18

7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast in Colket Center
8:30 am	Morning Prayer in Antrim Chapel
9:00 am	Bible Study in Antrim Chapel
10:20 am	Break
10:45 am-12:00 pm	Concurrent Session A
12:00-1:00 pm	Lunch in Colket Center
1:30-2:45 pm	Concurrent Session B
2:45 pm	Break
3:15-4:30 pm	Concurrent Session C
5:00-6:30 pm	Dinner in Colket Center
7:00 pm	Worship with Eucharist in Antrim Chapel
8:45 pm	Reception



Sponsored by Roanoke College Advancement Office

Saturday, July 19



7:30-8:30 am	Breakfast in Colket Center
8:30 am	Morning Prayer in Antrim Chapel
9:15 am	Keynote in Antrim Chapel
10:20 am	Break
10:50 am	Sending Service in Antrim Chapel

Thank you to Virginia Lutheran Homes for sponsoring the Golf Carts!

Concurrent Sessions A: Friday, July 18, 10:45AM-12:00PM



A1 Lutheran Theology and Confessions: A Review for SAMs and an Intro for Everyone- Rev. Dr. Wesley Smith, Zion Waynesboro (3-part series) Olin: 231

As Christians, we confess Jesus Christ, we proclaim the Good News, and, as the church, we act on behalf of our neighbor. As Lutherans, we teach and preach these convictions in light of the cross. Over the course of three workshops, we will explore these foundations of Lutheran preaching and teaching. (If you wish to take this course, you need to take all three sessions). Session A looks at how Law and Gospel inform how we stand before God; how we read the Bible; how we preach; how we live simultaneously as saint and sinner; and the necessity of self-critique.

A2 Building a Suicide Safer Community through Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK) - Cancelled



A3 Can the "Unspeakable" Psalms Speak for Us? The Intercessory Power of the Spirit When Our Sighs Are Too Deep for Words - Rev. Bobby Morris Colket Center: Pickle

John Calvin described the Psalms as "An Anatomy of the Soul" because of their ability to connect with all manner of the human experience. Yet, we rarely, if ever, hear some of the most poignant texts of this ancient collection in the church. In this workshop, discover the Spiritual power of St. Athanasius' statement: "Most of Scripture speaks to us; the Psalms speak for us."



A4 Connecting with ELCA Advocacy & Coordinating a Letter Campaign - Alex Parker, Advocacy Coordinator for ELCA Advocacy, Washington DC Colket Center: Kime

In this workshop, you will learn about the work of ELCA Advocacy, where we operate, how we operate, and how you can create change beginning in your congregation. After a brief presentation, participants will be guided through one impactful and easy form of advocacy that begins at home with your fellow congregants - coordinating on issues and writing letters to your members of Congress.



A5 REVIVE! - Opioid Overdose and Narcan Education- Katherine Bays, Elizabeth Leap, and Adam Neal from Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare Olin: 232

Since 2016, there have been over 1,000 fatalities per year due to an Opioid Overdose. Do you want to learn how to identify and respond? Learn how to save a life from an Opioid Overdose. Join Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare's REVIVE trainers to learn what you can do! After completing the training, participants will receive a complimentary REVIVE! Kit and Naloxone [Narcan].



A6 Climate change: What it is, Why it is, and What Small Things Can We Do to Make a Difference? - Sister Phyllis Cox & Dr. Bill Franz, Christ, Richmond Olin: 240

This workshop proposes to address in layman's terms how we have gotten to today's situation and what are some actions we can take as people, families, congregations, communities and Synods to make a difference. Dr. Bill will use his vast knowledge to help us as individuals to better understand how we got into the place we find ourselves. Sister Phyllis will explore ways that help us feel less like throwing our hands into the air and giving up.



A7 Establishing Small but Mighty Congregations - Rev. Jessica Darty, Trinity, Pulaski Olin: 230

The size of a congregation does not determine its health, vitality, or the strength of its ministry. However, smaller congregations must be more intentional about how they do these things to ensure longevity of their mission. We will examine some actions small congregations can take to work towards vitality and mighty ministry.



Concurrent Sessions B: Friday, July 18, 1:30-2:45 PM



B1 Lutheran Theology and Confessions: A Review for SAMs and an Intro for Everyone- Rev. Dr. Wesley Smith, Zion Waynesboro (3-part series) Olin: 231

Session B takes a closer look at God's law and human sinfulness in the first two articles of the creed and the Ten Commandments. Because of human waywardness, Jesus Christ became flesh "for us and for our salvation." The reality of sin leads us to a discussion of Christ's person and work and the salvation he accomplished for all people on the cross.

B2 Building a Suicide Safer Community through Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK) - Cancelled



B3 From Crisis to Community - Maryn Olson, Director, Lutheran Disaster Response; Keynote Presenter Colket Center: Pickle

Being prepared for disasters helps prevent casualties, reduces damage, builds community support, and expedites recovery. Yet, according to FEMA's annual preparedness survey, only 51% of Americans believe they are prepared for a disaster. Are YOU prepared? Find out how disaster impacts families and communities through this interactive simulation journey, and learn how you can equip your household, congregation, and community.



B4 Women's Voices: Lives and Words that Embody Gospel Faith - Rev. Judy Cobb, Serving St. Timothy, Norfolk Olin: 230

Learn about women in American history whom have embodied love of neighbor, willingness to risk self for the good of another, a vision of what could be. Share conversation about them and be inspired by the actions of faith.



B5 Exploring Dinner Church - Rev. John Wertz Jr., Assistant to the Bishop and Director of Evangelical Mission, Virginia Synod Olin: 240

Christians have often gathered for worship and learning over meals. In the last few years, a Dinner Church movement has emerged as a fresh expression of Christian worship and life. Come learn about this fresh expression and discover if it might be a good fit for your context.



B6 ELCA Sumud and WiS MENA: Advocacy, Awareness, and Accompaniment for Justice in Palestine and Israel and the wider MENA region- Maddi Froiland, Program Director for ELCA Sumud and Sasha Ghosh-Siminoff, Program Director for Middle East and North Africa Policy for ELCA Witness in Society Olin: 232

Learn about two parallel initiatives within churchwide:

1. The Sumud program, which is an initiative of the ELCA committed to working for justice and peace in Palestine and Israel and;
2. The ELCA Witness in Society MENA policy work helps mobilize and empower advocacy in the ELCA on behalf of justice in the Middle East and North Africa region, including the Holy Land. Together, these ministries bring you and your ELCA community tools and resources to fulfill our calling as followers of Jesus to disrupt oppression and injustice and amplify partners on the ground in their lived experiences.



Concurrent Sessions C: Friday, July 18, 3:15-4:30 PM



C1 Lutheran Theology and Confessions: A Review for SAMs and an Intro for Everyone- The Rev. Dr. Wesley Smith, Zion Waynesboro (3-part series)

Olin: 231

Session C examines how the Holy Spirit brings Christ's salvation to us and to the world through the sacraments and the life of the church. The church, as the body of Christ, exists on behalf of all people and gives concrete expression to how we love our neighbor. This session will examine Luther's explanation of the third article of the creed and his treatise, *The Freedom of a Christian*.

C2 Building a Suicide Safer Community through Suicide Alertness for Everyone (safeTALK) - Cancelled



C3 Retirement with God ~ Some of the Best Days of Your Life -

Colket Center: Kime

Cathy D. Dudley, St. Phillip, Roanoke (Author of Christian books: *Toddler Theology ~ Childlike Faith for Everyone; Faith, Family, & Fun ~ Monthly Lessons to Color and Connect with God's Love*)

What's your mindset about retirement? . . . Are you over the hill like that greeting card says? Come discover how to attain God's certain hope associated with retirement. This workshop will leave you inspired to live with purpose in this beautiful season of your life.



C4 Create an Oyster Shell Beaded Necklace- Maribeth Ocock, St. Mark, Yorktown

Olin: 232

Using oyster shells, you will create an amazing necklace that will look beautiful and remind you of the beauty of God's creation and Power in the Spirit.



C5 So What Do We Do Now? Conversations about Anti-Racism - Rev. Kelly Bayer Derrick, Assistant to the Bishop for Ministries of Leadership, Formation, Belonging, & Justice, VA Synod; Rev. Paul Pingel, Grace, Waynesboro; and Rev. Terrie Sternberg, Pulaski

Colket Center: Pickle

You are invited to join Pastors Kelly Bayer Derrick, Paul Pingel, and Terrie Sternberg for a time of conversation and education around the ongoing, gospel-centered work of anti-racism. We will not have all the answers, so come ready to ask questions, rest in discomfort, and learn about resources for your ongoing journey of anti-racism pro-reconciliation.



C6 Tomorrow's Church: How Congregations and our Neighbors are Changing - Dr. Nathaniel Porter, Virginia Tech Social Science Data Consultant (Our Saviour, Christiansburg)

Olin: 230

Our congregations are changing, but so is the world around us! Learn and discuss overall trends in US and Virginia religion: who's staying, leaving, and joining, and what the growth of religious "Nones" means. You'll also learn how to easily create and interpret custom reports for your congregation's area with religious and demographic statistics.



C7 Luther Trivial Pursuit - Rev. Dr. James G. Cobb

Olin: 240

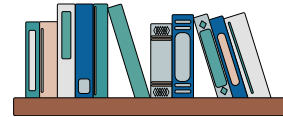
Game Show: "Luther Trivial Pursuit," teams of three (no more than one pastor on a team). There is much to know about Luther, Reformation, History, and worship. Let's make the topic fun and learn something along the way.

Pick up your Power in the Spirit T-Shirt

The 2025 Power in the Spirit shirt features this year's event logo. When you check in for the event, you will be able to pick up your t-shirt if you ordered one during registration. A few extras will be available for sale on a first-come, first-served basis during the event. The cost is \$10 each.



The Little Free Library: Take a Book, Share a Book



We will have space available for you to share books that touch on matters of faith, and to pick up a book or two for yourself. This is a good way to get a new home for the books you have finished. And, you may find something new to read. Our Little Free Library will be for all ages, so think about picture books, novels, and non-fiction works that address matters of faith and spirituality. All books will be available to Power in the Spirit participants even if you don't bring a book to exchange. Questions? Contact Patty Franz at pdsfranz@gmail.com.

Service Project



ROANOKE COLLEGE

Food Pantry at Roanoke College

The Food Pantry at Roanoke College is a resource for students who need food or basic personal hygiene items. The pantry was started in January of 2023 and is available to any student at Roanoke College who might be experiencing a need. Your gift will allow the pantry to purchase much needed supplies.

Consider collecting hygiene products, laundry supplies, school supplies and nonperishable food items. When making your selections please keep in mind for all hair types and genders.

We will collect donations to support the RC Food Pantry.

Their supply needs are:



- Body Soap
- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Lotion
- Laundry Supplies
- Nonperishable Food Items
- Spiral notebooks
- Loose leaf notebook paper
- Ink pens
- #2 pencils
- Canned Food Items



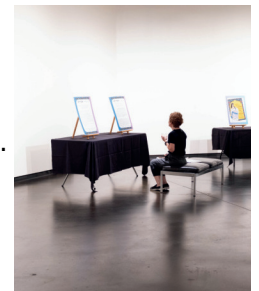
Biblical Storytellers



The Shenandoah Valley Biblical Storytelling Guild is an ecumenical group of individuals who learn scriptures BY heart and tell them to others FROM the heart. Our goal is to share the stories as was done in the early oral tradition, and have listeners experience the stories/scriptures in a new way, with an emphasis on the emotions evoked in the passages. During Power in the Spirit, you will hear from biblical storytellers, Judy Wilfong and Kathy Thompson who will be presenting on these texts from Isaiah 11:1-16 and Isaiah 61:1-11.

Meditation Chapel

This year's Meditation Chapel is dedicated to quiet reflection, prayer, and art engagement, helping individuals delve deeper into the theme, "Wings of Hope." Features of the chapel include a large walking labyrinth, scripture and art, the assembly of a stained glass depiction of Isaiah's eagle in flight, and prayer expression. It is located in the lower gallery of Olin Hall, just outside the theater. You are invited to engage with this special space during workshop sessions and in your free time. It is located in the gallery in the Olin Hall Building. Thank you to Pastor Terrie Sternberg for helping to create this year's meditation opportunity.



Worship Planning

Special thanks to worship planners Rev. Heidi Moore, Rev. Paul Toelke and Michael Benshish.

Offering Designation



Support Lutheran Disaster Response, the offerings will be split equally between:

- **Lutheran Disaster Response (LDR)** brings God's hope, healing, and renewal to people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. When the dust settles and the headlines change, we stay to provide ongoing assistance to those in need.
- **Virginia Synod Disaster Response Fund** is a designated fund to created to provide support for disaster relief through the Virginia Synod, ELCA. It allows the people of the Virginia Synod to respond locally to disasters by making gifts that will provide grants and support to congregations and affiliated organizations undertaking disaster response.



**TO SEND
OFFERING ONLINE**

Thank you for sharing your musical gifts!



We continue to offer new opportunities for involvement in music at Power in the Spirit with a goal of connecting musicians from around our synod.

Beer & Hymns Pickup Band! A fun fellowship opportunity is our Beer & Hymns gathering. We will sing a variety of hymns and songs - it's a true "all y'all sing"! There's no rehearsal. There's no order. We just get together, sing songs of faith and joy, and share Jesus in a unique way! **If you brought your guitar or other instrument, feel free to join in for this exciting gathering!**



Event Choir and Chimechoir!

The Power in the Spirit Conference Choir, directed by Michael Benshish, will share messages in song for the Thursday evening Taize Worship, Friday night worship, and Saturday closing worship gatherings. The Power in the Spirit Chimechoir, directed by Michael Benshish, will add to the music during the Friday Worship Service. Thank you to all who signed up to participate.

Learn More



Living Lutheran is a source for news, reflections, and stories from the ELCA and its local and global companions. It covers religious news and social issues, congregational life, global and domestic mission, family matters, spiritual practices and resources, and more. For more information: livinglutheran.org/ Or to subscribe: livinglutheran.org/subscribe/



Continuing Education Credits

Rostered Ministers, Lay Preachers, and SAMS who attend will receive 10 CEUs. If a certificate is needed, you can contact Lenae Osmondson at osmondson@vasynod.org.

SAMs (Synod Authorized Ministers)

Congratulations to Edith Blake and Kimberly Good. To learn more about the Lay Ministry Academy, go to vasynod.org/lma.

Synod Store

Be the first to order your Virginia Synod gear at the Virginia Synod store. You can order t-shirts, coffee mugs, stickers and more by going to: virginia-synod.printify.me



Sponsors

Thank you to **Roanoke College** for your support by sponsoring the reception on Friday night.

Thank you to **Virginia Lutheran Homes** for sponsoring golf carts. The golf carts will be available to help participants get around the Roanoke College campus. If you need a ride, call Skip Zubrod at 540-266-0357 or Bob Yates at 540-309-1566. Thank you to Skip and Bob for helping organize the volunteers for the event.



Meal Cards

All participants must return their meal cards (and room keys for resident attendees) to the Virginia Synod Staff or designated baskets. Please do not return these to Dining Service in Colket. **Power in the Spirit will be charged for any room keys and or meal cards not returned.**

Resident Attendees (Staying in the dorm on campus)

The dorm this year is Marion. It is #33 on the event map. If you have any issues with your room, please contact Roanoke College staff at 540-375-2075 for assistance.

When you leave, please make sure that all trash has been placed in the designated trash can, remove all personal items, and if you moved any furniture, return it to its original position.

The room keys and meal card need to be turned into Virginia Synod Staff or designated containers.

Event Evaluation Survey

Please remember to complete our event evaluation survey. The committee uses the information for planning future events. Scan the QR code or go to surveymonkey.com/r/VASynodPower25. **The survey will close on August 1.**





POWER
IN THE
SPIRIT

Thank you!
Save the Dates: July 16-18, 2026!



Questions Call
540-389-1000

More Information
vasynod.org/power-in-the-spirit/

