

## Concurrent Sessions A: Friday from 10:45 AM-12:00 PM



### **A1 If God Calls, Why Not the Church? - The Rev. Dr. Jean Bozeman**

Travel with Pastor Jean through her journey of how the spirit has enlightened, equipped, and empowered her to love the church deeply, while sometimes discovering that the church was still learning what in the world to do with someone like her. This November 14, 2026, will mark the date that, 50 years ago, Jean became the first woman to be ordained by the Virginia Synod. What began as a simple “yes” to God’s call became a lifelong journey of ministry filled with unexpected turns, highs, moments of doubt, and countless experiences of joy and grace.



### **A2 Born of Water and the Spirit - The Rev. Susan Briehl**

Explore the multi-faceted meaning of the Sacrament as proclaimed by baptismal fonts, both ancient and new.



### **A3 Vocation in the Real World: Serving God in Secular Spaces - Marty Holliday, CLM, Zion, Floyd**

This workshop explores how our baptism sends us not only into congregational life but also into offices, farms, classrooms, hospitals, homes, and communities as bearers of Christ’s presence. Together, we will reflect on the spiritual challenges of modern work and reclaim our daily roles as holy callings. Whether you are employed, retired, caregiving, volunteering, or discerning what’s next, discover how the Spirit is already at work through you for the sake of the world.



### **A4 From Hurts to Heeding: How the Church Helps Souls Heal from Moral Injury, so They Can Heed the Spirit’s Call - The Rev. Chris Bowen, Roanoke College**

An introduction to moral injury and its impact on our ability to hear and heed the call of the Spirit. This will be a space for church leaders to explore the practices and rituals that free the baptized to live into their vocations anew.



### **A5 Ministry in Transition and Beyond - The Rev. John Wertz Jr., Virginia Synod**

Congregations across the Virginia Synod are experiencing a time of transition. In this workshop, we will explore tools for managing transition, opportunities for collaboration and partnership, and ideas for strengthening ministry during a pastoral transition.



### **A6 Bible Rhymes for Spirit Times - The Rev. Joel Neubuer, St. Mark, Yorktown**

How might poetry and song help our modern analytical minds listen for the Holy Spirit’s creative power? Relish gospel passages from our liturgical cycle with Pastor Joel Neubauer, using music and meter to explore an artistic approach to Bible study.



## Concurrent Sessions B: Friday from 1:30-2:45 PM

### **B1 Rostered Ministers and SAMs Conversation with Presiding Bishop Curry, ELCA**

Reflecting on one of the ELCA's priority areas - a connected, sustainable church - Presiding Bishop Curry's focus for this year is to emphasize a connected church. Come and have a conversation about what that would mean for rostered ministers and appointed SAMs.



### **B2 It's Time for You to Act: Your Purpose and Your Self in the 21st Century Church - The Rev. Tucker**

While Lutherans rightly emphasize the Triune God as the primary actor in history, too often this becomes justification for Christian inaction in the face of injustice. In this workshop, Drew Tucker will make the case that Christ is calling Christians in this era to specific actions. While these activities vary from one person to another, everyone has a role in bearing God's good news. Tucker will draw upon scripture and Luther's Freedom of a Christian, along with his own work on vocation and identity, to emphasize the Spirit's role in our own activity and catalyze participants to choose new ways to live out the Gospel that make a tangible difference in both the church and the world.



### **B3 Exploring Essential Oils of the Bible - Jamie Serafin, Wellness Advocate**

Come explore the history and spiritual significance of essential oils in Scripture (referenced over 600 times), as well as aromatic plants and oils like frankincense, myrrh, cedarwood, and more. The session will cover their ancient uses, medicinal properties, and modern applications for physical, spiritual, and emotional wellness. Attendees will experience several oils firsthand and receive a sacred anointing roller blend, connecting biblical tradition with contemporary natural living.



### **B4 Braver Conversations, Bolder Witness...for such a time as THIS! - The Rev. Paul Pingel**

In October 2025, the ELCA gathered representatives from each of the 64 Synods of our denomination in Chicago to talk about racial justice in our nation and in our denomination. We'll review the information presented on Critical Race Theory (CRT) - a legal theory whose primary author was a devout Christian - as well as talk about racial justice in the ELCA. Then, we'll discuss a very practical three-step method that any of us can use to create a "safe space" and challenge ignorance and racism in our daily lives.



### **B5 The Spirit at work in Synod Youth Ministry - The Rev. Dr. Delaney, Virginia Synod**

A review of the most important ministry commitments of Virginia Synod's Youth Ministry and a look ahead at some ministry possibilities for the next chapter.



### **B6 Helping without Hurting - A Practical Guide to Walking with Low-income People - The Rev. Terrie Sternberg**

How do we define "poverty?" How we see poverty shapes how we serve our neighbors who seek financial assistance from our church. Drawing from the work of Brian Fikkert and Steve Corbett (*When Helping Hurts*), we will explore where we fall short in addressing poverty alleviation by responding to symptoms rather than holistically addressing the complex roots of our neighbors' poverty. In the process, we will discover our own sort of poverty.



## Concurrent Sessions C: Friday from 3:15-4:30 PM



### **C1 Laity Invited to a Conversation with Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry, ELCA**

Reflecting on one of the ELCA's priority areas - a connected, sustainable church - Presiding Bishop Curry's focus for this year is to emphasize a connected church. Come and have a conversation about what that would mean for the laity. Commissioned lay ministers who are not appointed as SAMs are invited to this session.



### **C2 God is Neurodivergent: Theology and Practice to Include All Brains - Nathaniel Porter, CLM, Our Saviour, Christiansburg**

This session includes an overview of neurodiversity and a range of neurodivergent types (such as autism, ADHD, bipolar, and many learning disabilities), an introduction to disability theology with specific consideration of how the Bible reflects and addresses neurodiversity, and practical ideas for more fully integrating neurodivergent folk into the lives of congregations.



### **C3 Exploring Essential Oils for Emotions & Support - Jamie Serafin, Wellness Advocate**

Discover a hands-on way to understand how stress and emotions affect daily life, relationships, and faith. You'll learn how scent influences the brain and explore gentle practices with essential oils that support calmness, emotional balance, and resilience. Each person will make a custom roller blend to take home.



### **C4 Compassionate Community through the Enneagram - Christina Nelson, St. Stephen, Williamsburg**

The enneagram is a powerful tool for increasing self-awareness, spiritual receptivity, and collective liberation. As we wrestle with the gifts, challenges, and wisdom of our type, radical acceptance and compassion are essential. In this workshop, we will dive deeper not only into the unique aspects of each enneagram type but also into how we can resonate with and understand one another. There will be opportunities for small-group discussions designed to foster self-reflection and community care. You do not need to know your type to participate. The goal of this workshop is to give participants a taste of how powerful a tool for transformation the enneagram can be in their lives.



### **C5 Crafting Crystal Seashell Wonders - Maribeth Ocock, St. Mark, Yorktown**

Dive into the enchanting world of crystal crafts this workshop. Discover the magic of transforming ordinary seashells into sparkling ornaments using simple, everyday ingredients. Perfect for all ages, this hands-on experience will ignite your creativity and leave you with stunning, handcrafted treasures to cherish or gift. Join us for a journey of discovery and creativity by the sea!