

NW Washington Synod Gathering

Workshop Options

During our event there will be opportunity to attend two workshops. We have a wide variety of options from which to choose! Read about them below and begin discerning which ones you will select during registration.



SESSION ONE OPTIONS – 1:00pm-2:15pm

Bloom and Grow Together: How Coaching Can Help Us Flourish

Presenter: Rev. Sara Funkhouser (Coach Northwest, the Coaching Ministry of the NWWA Synod)

During this workshop, you're invited to learn more about ELCA Coaching and how our coaches are here to accompany you in your growth! Whether it is working with congregational generosity teams on specific projects or partnering with individual leaders, our coaches are here to help support the flourishing of our communities.

Cultivating Community: Garden of Giving

Presenter: Lynn Riley (Garden of Giving/Advent, Mill Creek)

The Garden of Giving at Advent Lutheran Church in Mill Creek produces some 6,000 pounds of produce annually for our neighbors in need. As a verdant hub in an urban setting, the garden also plays a significant role in fostering social connectedness, both internally among our church members and externally with our nearby neighbors. This presentation explores ways in which a vegetable garden can serve as the focal point for cultivating community.

Cultivating Stories of Generosity

Presenter: Rev. Shannyn Fuerst (Pastor at Faith, Seattle)

Throughout the generations storytelling has been a way of sharing wisdom, celebration, and knowledge. Storytelling takes many forms. Written, spoken, and visual storytelling requires finesse to effectively share about acts of generosity. This workshop will offer tips and tricks to sharing your narratives in ways that are engaging online, in person, via sermons, written and visual formats, and social media.

From Seed to Sweetness: A Recipe for Generous Space

Presenters Rev. Cara Tanis & Cindy Shultz (Emmaus Table @ 7400 Woodlawn, Seattle)

Join us for an interactive presentation exploring how churches can cultivate generosity through shared space — welcoming, seeding, baking, sharing, releasing, and enjoying the abundance already among us. As you hear the story of Emmaus Table @ 7400 Woodlawn, you'll bake together, tasting firsthand the joy of creating something meant to be given away. Come ready to stir, imagine, and discover what might rise through partnership in your community.

Gather-Transform-Send: Rooting, Growing, and Bearing Fruit

Rev. Ivar Hillesland (Dir. of the College for Congregational Development & Canon for Congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia)

Explore how the "Gather-Transform-Send" model can help your congregation foster a profoundly welcoming environment, nurture space and awareness for God's transformative work, and better equip people for the many facets of their lives in the world. This workshop will help us recenter on the church's core purpose: being local expressions of the Body of Christ. We'll learn the model together and apply it to discern practical and meaningful steps for your own congregational setting.

Session ONE Options, continued

Greening Our Churches: Energy & Water Usage

Presenter: Rev. Tormod Svensson (Pastor at Kent Lutheran)

With aging church buildings, increasing utility costs, and a growing awareness of our environmental impact - it is important to consider better and more efficient ways to heat and cool our buildings, using less and greener energy, and implementing ways to conserve water. Pastor Svensson, with 20 years in the plumbing/HVAC field before being ordained, will share ideas and approaches to do just that, all grounded in a theological framework of faithful stewardship of creation.

Growing Your Endowment to Its Fullest Potential

Presenter: Lisa Higginbotham, CFRE (ELCA Foundation)

A down and dirty (because gardens are) on reconnecting to your existing endowment, and how to fertilize existing roots! Don't have an endowment? This could also help amend your endowment thoughts and get ready to plant one!

Growth Through a Narrative Spending Plan

Presenter: Rev. Tim Brown (Director of Congregational Stewardship, ELCA)

This workshop will go step by step through how to create a narrative budget. Bring your current budget (2026) and pieces of your projected budget (2027) and get ready to do some work in real time to start the narrative budget process. This workshop will prepare you to present a narrative budget for your next annual meeting.

The Society We Want: Where Everyone Belongs and Everyone Can Thrive

Presenter: Rev. Terry Kylo (Paths to Understanding)

Many of us feel it — division, exhaustion, and distrust are pulling us apart. Rev. Terry Kylo explores what is happening beneath our political and cultural conflicts and why people are feeling vulnerable. Drawing from social research, Scripture, and years of bridge-building work, he offers a hopeful and practical path forward with how the church can contribute to the renewal of society with the strategies of Bridging, Blocking, and Building.

Sowing, Growing, Sharing: An Ask (Almost) Anything Panel

Panel: Deacon Dustin Hamren (Gloria Dei, Lynnwood); Becky Cole (Holy Spirit, Kirkland); Kendyll Mathiason (Our Savior's, Everett); Bryant Williams (Advent, Mill Creek) Julia Glassy (Holy Trinity, Mercer Island)

Join ministry leaders from across our synod for an open and encouraging conversation about children, youth, and family ministry. Whether you're wondering about engaging families, supporting volunteers, navigating cultural challenges, building intergenerational connections, or trying something new in your context, this is a time for real talk and shared wisdom. We hope to reflect on how we proclaim Christ, cultivate belonging, and empower young leaders for service in the world. Come curious. Leave encouraged.

Sowing Seeds in Housing Ministry

Panel of folks immersed in housing neighbors — facilitated by Rev. Marc Hander (Lutheran Community Services)

How is God calling us to cultivate generosity in response to today's housing needs? Together we will explore how congregations and partners across the synod are responding to housing needs—from cold weather shelters to low-income housing initiatives. Panelists will share stories, challenges, and practical insights on how congregations can steward land, buildings, and relationships to plant seeds of hope and stability in their communities

SESSION TWO OPTIONS – 2:30pm – 3:45pm

Cultivating a Year-Round Stewardship Plan

Presenter: Rev. Tim Brown (Director of Congregational Stewardship, ELCA)

Ever wonder how you can take something as intimidating as the calendar year and slowly break it up into manageable pieces around which a year-round stewardship initiative can form? Curious about possible ways to talk about more than just finances when it comes to stewardship? Come and find out some of the framework and possibilities.

Cultivating Food Ministries

Panel facilitated by Synod Hunger Team members: Chris Davis (Hope, Lake Stevens) and Carol Wall (Peace, Silvana)

Our panel of guests will highlight how synod ministries are feeding faith through food, how to support these efforts, and how to start a service ministry of your own.

Cultivating Generosity in Every Generation

Presenter: Rev. Judy Brennan (Director for Evangelical Mission, Northwest Washington Synod)

This presentation explores the evolving landscape of generosity—tracing charitable giving across historical eras and examining how each generation expresses generosity today. From traditional philanthropy to modern patterns shaped by values, technology, and social change, we'll look at the motivations that inspire people to give and the diverse ways generosity shows up in contemporary life. Participants will gain insight into connecting across generations to nurture a culture of meaningful, sustainable giving.

Neurodiversity Training and Inclusion

Presenter: Lindsey Snyder (Our Savior's, Everett)

Join us to learn more about what Neurodiversity is and how you can embrace and include neurodivergent youth and their families in your congregation. Being welcome and inclusive is a way to empower families to grow in their faith journey.

Potluck Project: Gathering Neighbors, Growing Trust, Healing Communities

Presenter: Hannah Hochkeppel (Paths to Understanding)

We'll explore *The Potluck Project*, a toolkit designed to gather around food and intentional conversations. When people of diverse cultures, traditions, and identities gather in public, people in the larger community breathe a sigh of relief. They begin to hope that we are not as divided as we feared and that we can relate to each other as human beings. We'll share our pedagogy and explore supportive resources as you consider who and where you might gather.

The Primal Pulse: Why We Move the Way We Pray

Presenter: David Horton (Minister of Music and Worship at Trinity, Lynnwood)

Is worship a pipe organ or a power chord? Silence or dance? Move beyond "worship wars" to discover your Primal Patterns. Explore how your biological wiring—your "Primal Pulse"—shapes how you connect with the Divine. Stop judging styles and start celebrating the soul of our movement. Whether you bring dancing shoes or a contemplative sweater, come learn to make room for every rhythm. It's not just preference; it's your pulse.

Responding to Palestinian Hospitality and Needs with Generosity, Advocacy and Accompaniment

Presenters: Dr. Rod Schofield and Rev. Dr. Erik Wilson Weiberg

This workshop will provide participants with an understanding of the ELCA's engagement in supporting the steadfast hope of the Palestinian people, especially our siblings in Christ in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan and the Holy Land (ELCJHL). We will hear voices from Palestine and ELCA church leaders that highlight the resilience and faith of those in the Holy Land who cry out for understanding and as they work to cultivate a hopeful future.

Session TWO Options, continued

Rooted in Faith: Advocacy as a Spiritual Practice

Presenters: Dr. Joyce del Rosario and Elizabeth Dickinson (Faith Action Network)

How do we ground political advocacy in our faith? Spend time with us reflecting on how Scripture, our faith experiences, and the 2024 ELCA Social Statement on Civic Life and Faith might inform how we protect others and make social change by influencing political, economic and social institutions. We define advocacy as speaking up for and with individuals, causes, or groups through truth-telling, storytelling, public presence, solidarity, and engaging the arts.

Sharing and Renting Your Fallow Field

Jay Edgerton, Director of Properties, NWWA Synod

A presentation about renting or leasing your church's underutilized real estate: determining an appropriate rent; the difference between use agreements and lease agreements; characteristics of sufficiently comprehensive agreements; taxation, including Federal UBIT, the Washington State real property tax exemption, and segregating real estate used for ineligible rentals. There will be time at the end for general real estate questions.

Tools For Your Planned Giving Garden

Presenter: Lisa Higginbotham, CFRE (ELCA Foundation)

A donor-centric conversation around best practices for giving, and up to date information that could impact your planned giving garden's growth and yield!

The Trust Triangle: Tending the Soil of Congregational Trust

Rev. Ivar Hillesland (Dir. of the College for Congregational Development & Canon for Congregations in the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia)

Explore how trust takes root and grows within communities. Based on the work of Frances Frei and Anne Morriss, this workshop offers practical ways to prepare the soil for honest connection, clear communication, and shared purpose, helping relationships strengthen and generosity flourish. Together we'll look at how leaders can cultivate the conditions that nurture a resilient, grace-filled congregational life built on trust.