

2025 Southeast Michigan Synod Assembly Workshops

Workshop Schedule

Session #1 – Friday, May 16, 2025 – 3:00pm

What's Next for the Diversity Task Force on Sexual Orientation & Gender Expression

Location: Chapel ***This workshop will take place during sessions #1 & #2***

Food Justice as a source of Hope and Healing

Location: Sanctuary

Long Bridging to Build Community

Location: Great Hall 1

Shift Your Lens: Healing Your Stories™

Location: Great Hall 2

Inspiring Generosity: Moving from Scarcity to Abundance

Location: Sunday School Rooms

Session #2 – Friday, May 16, 2025 – 4:00pm

What's Next for the Diversity Task Force on Sexual Orientation & Gender Expression

Location: Chapel ***This workshop will take place during sessions #1 & #2***

Long Bridging to Build Community

Location: Great Hall 1

Financial Best Practices: Council Policies on Gift Acceptance, Discretionary Funds, and Endowments

Location: Sanctuary

Immigration Task Force

Location: Sunday School Rooms

Providing Refuge During Seismic Transitions

Location: Great Hall 2

Session #3 – Saturday, May 17, 2025 – 1:15pm

Encouragement for the Journey: Supportive Spaces Conversations and ELCA Coaching Ministry

Location: Chapel

Food Justice as a Source of Hope and Healing

Location: Sanctuary

Providing Refuge During Seismic Transitions

Location: Great Hall 1

Shift Your Lens: Healing Your Stories™

Location: Great Hall 2

Financial Best Practices: Council Policies on Gift Acceptance, Discretionary Funds, and Endowments

Location: Sunday School Rooms

Workshop Descriptions

What's Next for the Diversity Task Force on Sexual Orientation & Gender Expression

Since January 20, the U.S. has faced numerous executive orders and policy changes that attack the rights of our LGBTQIA+ siblings and launched fearmongering and disdain for our marginalized communities. The Southeast Michigan Synod's Diversity Task Force on Sexual Orientation & Gender Expression is seeking input from our workshop participants as to how to best position the Task Force and its work to address current and future needs. We also want to know how you might want to be involved. Laura Huth-Rhoades of *do good Consulting* will facilitate an action-oriented discussion to help us discover together "what's next" and how to prioritize what arises.

This conversation will take place during both workshop sessions on Friday, May 16th

Financial Best Practices: Council Policies on Gift Acceptance, Discretionary Funds, and Endowments

One of the top three reasons people give to nonprofits in the United States is trust in the organization's responsible financial management. Does your church council have basic financial policies in place to strengthen this confidence? We will examine three policies church councils can enact or improve: 1) Gift Acceptance Policy, 2) Pastor Discretionary Fund Policy, and 3) Endowment Policy.

Pastor Niklaus Schillack, who holds a B.B.A. in Accounting, will lead the session as well as offer tangible take-home examples for implementing improvements in your congregation.

Long Bridging to Build Community

This session will dive into Bridging for Democracy (B4D), a project that is developing strategies through which U.S. power-building organizations meaningfully bridge across racial, ideological, and urban-rural divides to strengthen democratic norms at a time of deep social fragmentation and dehumanization. Over the past decade, movement groups in the US have invested heavily in voter outreach and significantly increased civic engagement. However, our democracy has still weakened and fragmentation is hardening. Dehumanization is driving right wing, anti-democratic action in our country, and we are working to counter this through bridging. B4D canvasses focus on deep listening and humanization as a way to transform our work and strengthen our democracy. This session will feature an overview of the project, a panel with organizations leading the pilots, and participatory components for attendees to practice deep listening and think about bridging in their own communities.

Led by Pastor Sara Freudenburg, Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Livonia and Vicar Alysa Offman, Holy Trinity, Livonia

Shift Your Lens: Healing Your Stories™

A one-of-a-kind trauma healing program designed to support mental and emotional well-being. Through a powerful blend of faith and energy medicine techniques, participants will learn to name their hurt points, process emotions, and reauthor past narratives with love and compassion. Love is the thread that weaves through every wound, and when we open our hearts to God's presence, we find restoration and peace. As we transform our own wounds, we create space to help carry the burdens of others with grace and authenticity. Come discover how Living RED can join you and your congregation on your healing journey. Led by Pastor Vicky Lovell and Danielle Growth, Living Red Ministries, Dexter

Inspiring Generosity: Moving from Scarcity to Abundance

We're out of money. We can't afford that. How will we pay for that?

Too often churches respond to financial challenges by either ignoring or sending anxious letters out demanding everyone give more. Those letters might work once, but ultimately, they are self-defeating.

There is a better path. In this workshop learn ways to lift up inspiring ministries to create generosity in your community. Learn ways to talk about money. Discover and celebrate the abundance in your midst.

Led by Pr. Paul Walters, Lutheran Church of the Master, Troy, MI, and Stewardship Consultant

Food Justice as a Source of Hope and Healing

In this workshop we will explore the powerful role of food justice ministries in journeying alongside communities in need while bearing the burdens of those whom God has called us to love. Through shared life stories and community collaboration, we will learn how these ministries embody justice by meeting immediate needs and addressing the underlying systemic issues that contribute to hunger, poverty, trauma, and inequity. Participants will be inspired and encouraged to engage in their own ways, understanding

how serving with compassion, solidarity, and mutual care can create a positive lasting impact for communities. Together, we'll examine practical ways we can be a presence of hope and healing in our neighborhoods.

Led by Pastor Anna Taylor-McCants, FedUp Ministries

Immigration Advocacy and Church Responsibility

What is happening to refugees and immigrants in the United States under current Executive Orders? How am I called to journey alongside and advocate for refugees and asylum seekers? What is my role (and rights) within my church building and beyond its doors? What should I be sharing about immigration with my church community? Join members of the Immigration and Refugee Task Force to learn empowering steps you can take today to support the journeys of some of the most vulnerable people in our country.

Led by Pastor Jack Eggleston

Providing Refuge During Seismic Transitions

It's no secret that youth and young adults are struggling right now, and widespread loneliness is a huge factor. The transition into adolescence involves major shifts: In friend groups, in family relationships, in how youth see the world, and in how youth see God. How does the church show up for teens who have reached confirmation age, or perhaps have been confirmed? How do we provide a source of strength and refuge for our teens when the earth feels like it's shaking underneath their feet? How do we help connect them to a more adult faith life as they transition into adulthood?

In this workshop, we will explore the reasons why a faith life is so important for pre- and post-confirmation teenagers, and how for teens who absorb constant messaging that there is something wrong with them, our Lutheran theology of grace is life-giving and essential.

Led by Pastor Elizabeth Friedman, Lord of Light Lutheran Church and Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Michigan

Encouragement for the Journey: Supportive Spaces Conversations and ELCA Coaching Ministry

Join Director of ELCA Coaching Ministries Jill Beverlin for a conversation that will help you understand what coaching is and how it can be a support tool for you on the journey of faith and life. In our time together you learn about:

- What is Coaching/How It is Helpful for Leaders
- How to Sign Up for 1-1 Coach Support
- How to Train As a Coach
- Supportive Spaces Coaching Conversations - explanation & experience with these cohorts that our ministry is supporting in 2025 - free of charge for leaders across the country.