

Exciting Opportunities for Southern Ohio



Southern Ohio Synod

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

We are called.



We are called to act with justice
We are called to love tenderly
We are called to serve one another
To walk humbly with God

"We are called" David Hass, ELW 720



Called to Cultivate.

In the Southern Ohio Synod we aim to cultivate Faith Communities for a changing culture, primarily for people who are not yet members of any church, either because they have never had any contact with a church or because they left the church long ago. We are convinced that such communities are most effective at reaching and including these new people when they are birthed through intentional practices of listening, service, mission to the communities where they are planted, and making disciples.

Our Vision.

We believe that the best worshipping communities are not powered by programs or models, but rather draw their strength from a strong community spirit drawn from shared contextual experience and common values among members as they align themselves with—and are aligned by—the Holy Spirit.

Why Now?

Only 48% of Americans describe themselves as a “member” of a church. 21% of Americans say they do not identify with any religion. 31% of millennials and 33% of Generation Z say they don’t affiliate with any religion. (1) 23% of Americans that don’t attend church say it’s because “They haven’t found a faith community they like.”

Of those who describe themselves as members, but don’t attend a church regularly 37% say it’s because they choose to practice their faith in “other ways”. Of those who don’t attend church regularly 7 in 10 still identify with a particular tradition, including 6 in 10 who say they are Christian. 54% of people that don’t attend church regularly say it’s because they don’t feel welcome. (2)

42% of those attending new faith communities have never attended church before or hadn’t in many years. (3)

(1) 2020 Gallup Poll, US Church Membership Falls Below Majority for First Time. (2) PEW Research Poll, Why Americans Go (and Don’t Go) to Religious Services (3) Lifeway Research: New Churches Outpace Dying Ones

Contact:

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What is an Emerging Lutheran Community (ELC)?

Emerging: Distinct and different from existing churches and institutions, Emerging Lutheran Communities (ELC) have entrepreneurial leadership, a pioneering and creative spirit and seek to bring into being a ministry that was not there before.

Lutheran: Grounded in faith, doctrine, and disciplines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCs are clearly and overtly Christian in character, approach, and identity. They can be small ministries or regional mission development areas or anything in between! While not all will have a worshipping aspect, ELCs operate out of and give opportunities to know Jesus’ love.

Community: Designed to be a place of encouragement, care, and accountability, ELCs commit themselves to love one another in relationships of mutual care and accountability. Patterned after the life and teachings of Jesus, ELCs seek to help people grow in faith and life.



Cultivate is supported by your contributions to the Thrive campaign!
Join us as - together - we answer this call.

thrive!
EQUIPPING A VIBRANT
CHURCH TOGETHER



Summer 2021 lineup

The Vibrant Church Conference aims to strengthen Southern Ohio Synod congregations by equipping lay people for ministry. Our monthly workshops are free and easily accessible online via Zoom. We strive for workshops to meet a variety of needs and to appeal to a variety of passions.

June 19

A Story Worth Telling

YOU Have a Story Worth Telling

We will explore how to discover and tell our unique faith story of how God has been present in our lives. We will explore our personal stories in relationship to God's story as captured in the pages of scripture.

Harold 'Jake' Jacobson is an ordained ELCA pastor who has served for the past 38 years at Grace Lutheran Church in Clarion, PA, and, for the past 13 years, as Assistant to the Bishop of the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod and as Director of Evangelical Mission for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

He is the author of *Front Porchin'*, a guide to faith-sharing in the Appalachian Context; *Building Missional Tables*, a guide to creating congregational mission strategies; and two books: *Holy Talk: An Introduction to Scripture for the Occasionally Biblically Embarrassed* (2018 Lulu Press), and *Rockin' the Front Porch*, (2020 Lulu Press), a guide to faith sharing in today's new normal.

July 10

Creation Care and Community

Participating in God's creative and sustaining work

Your congregation can experience first-hand the awesome power of God's ongoing creative force while healing the earth and engaging the community. Sound exciting? It is!

During this interactive workshop we will discuss one congregation's awakening to earthkeeping through monarch butterfly conservation and the how the Spirit spiraled on from there. We will learn how these actions engaged the surrounding community and why congregations should fearlessly embrace the numerous scriptural references to creation care.

The presenters are all members of Christ the King Lutheran Church in West Chester, Ohio. Donna Pellegrin is the founder of Youth for Monarchs and a certificated Permaculture Designer. Laura Zajac is the Ministry Coordinator at Christ the King, and the director of Monarch Fest. Susan Fox is the Elder of Outreach as well as gardener for the church and a registered landscape architect.

August 14th Plant a Community Garden

Hands-on Creation Cultivation as Evangelism

- Does your meeting place have outside space?
- Does the lawn at your meeting place mow down resources just to look handsome?
- Does the lawn at your meeting place have a “Keep Off” sign?

If you answered yes to any of the above, this workshop is for you!

We will explore the who, what, where, why and when of community gardening. But mostly we will connect with the who and why.

Explore how your handsome lawn can be leveraged into an outreach and evangelism pathway that will connect you to your neighbors, community, the hungry and more. Plant seeds so that your community will see your congregation as a growing, fruitful, welcoming and sharing neighbor.

We will not get our hands too dirty at this workshop, but be prepared to dig into your congregation, your neighborhood and your community. Basic tools will be provided to begin cultivating your garden. And there will be guidance for pathways to make more local connections and acquire more tools and resources.

The Rev. Michael D. Oakley (*he/him*) has been a pastor in the ELCA since ordination, in 1979, at Faith Lutheran, Finneytown (Cincinnati) OH. He has served ELCA Congregations in southern Wisconsin and northeast Ohio. In late 2017, Oakley retired from full time pastoring, gardening and pruning at Redeemer ELCA, Brook Park OH (RLCBP). RLCBP's gardens grew from a weed in 2008 to a center piece of the congregation's evangelism and outreach strategy. Oakley is a catalyst for groups and individuals; he has expertise in identifying issues and patterns, designing options, assembling resources, and building consensus for transformation. He is a member of First ELCA, Cincinnati. Oakley recently became a Reconciling Works Ambassador. Since last fall, he has been cultivating alongside Christ the King ELCA, West Chester OH, as they grow their garden in new directions.

*You can keep track of future Vibrant Church Conference workshops on our website:
SouthernOhioSynod.org/Vibrant*

STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL SEASONS

The resources of GSB's professional development services are being provided for this pilot program thanks to a special relationship with the Southern Ohio Synod.

The purpose of Stewardship For All Seasons (SAS) is to guide pastors and congregation leaders to learn tried and true basic principles and effective methodologies to carry out productive stewardship programs. Learn how to do year-round, on-going stewardship resulting in more money for ministry, more energized stewards, and a culture of generosity. **RELY ON MORE THAN THE ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL. THINK STEWARDSHIP DEVELOPMENT.**

BENEFITS OF STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL SEASONS

- › Prepare your congregation's story
- › Educate people to tell that story
- › Focus attention on your congregation's mission
- › Inspire people to give generously
- › Learn tools and methods that really work
- › Build a team that enjoys leading stewardship efforts
- › Become confident and skilled in stewardship development
- › Apply biblical principles to gain more resources for mission
- › Experience the joy of asking and giving
- › Avoid searching for the latest hot stewardship program
- › Increase annual giving by 10 – 20% or more each year

TIMETABLE

- › **By April 15, 2021** – Congregations approve participation and select teams
- › **May 2021** – First meeting with consultant
- › **June – July** – Electronic meeting with consultant, congregational council and SAS team to discuss process and goal setting
- › **August** – Second meeting of all Rostered Leaders and at least one member of SAS team from each congregation meet with consultant
- › **September** – Third gathering of teams with consultant
- › **August 30 – September 15** – Individual consultations by Zoom
- › **Oct 1– Nov 30** – Congregational appeals conducted
- › **January 2022** – Meeting to launch season of Evaluation and to review results from Fall drive
- › **March 2022** – Meeting to look at special giving options
- › **Fall 2022 – April 2023** – Calendar to be provided later

COVENANTS:

Congregations participating in SAS will sign a covenant that outlines responsibilities and expectations of the congregation and the synod.

INVESTMENT:

The fee is reduced to \$2,000 per year with a 2 year commitment because of the synod partnership. Congregations are also asked to contribute back to the synod 10% of the increased revenue generated to cover the costs associated with this program.



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Contact Katie Kerrigan or Kkerrigan@southernohiosynod.org by April 15 to apply.

STEWARDSHIP FOR ALL SEASONS

COVENANT

Between Southern Ohio Synod and

Congregation _____

City _____

Pastor _____

Email _____

Lay Leader _____

Email _____

For our participation in Stewardship for All Seasons from May, 2021 through April, 2023 our congregation agrees to:

_____ Remit \$2,000 each year (2021 & 2022)

Congregation _____ Date _____

Synod _____ Date _____

IN ADDITION TO OUR FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION, WE AGREE TO:

- › Faithfully attend all SAS meetings
- › Participate fully in implementing SAS strategies into our congregation.
- › Report results to the Synod Office and Consultants
- › Share stories as requested so that others may learn from our participation
- › Complete financial reports as requested by the Consultants and/or the Office of the Bishop
- › Tithe 10% of our net revenue increase to the Synod.

THE SYNOD PROMISES TO:

- › Pray for each congregation in this effort
- › Provide the resources of GSB Fundraising to guide you through this effort
- › Communicate regularly to keep you fully informed of what is taking place for SAS.

GSB PROMISES TO:

- › Be present for eight meetings (with up to 6 of these being virtual)
- › Offer a deep dive track into planned giving, strategic planning, council leadership, or other key topic in the 2nd year.
- › Provide unlimited responses by email and phone to stewardship teams as needed between each meeting
- › Provide up to two Zoom meeting sessions per congregation for thorough review of material and coaching
- › Provide graphic design for bulletin inserts, brochure and intent card both years



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BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Guiding you through your fall stewardship Appeal.

A Service of GSB in partnership with the Southern Ohio Synod.

A STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM FOR CONGREGATIONS SEEKING TO:

- Stabilize and grow financial giving
- Teach Biblical stewardship principles
- Help members discover generosity
- Build building a foundation for a generous culture

PARTICIPATING CONGREGATIONS WILL RECEIVE:

- An easily implemented program designed to stimulate generosity
 - ◆ Professionally designed, adaptable materials
 - ◆ Letter templates for the stewardship drive
- Six virtual, live training events with a GSB Consultant to guide congregations through a sound stewardship appeal
- Clear tactics for sharing information and inspiration about your congregation's ministry
- 1:1 guidance from your GSB Consultant
- At least 7 videos teaching the principles of this program
- The ability to achieve a strong financial response even in uncertain times
- 3 copies of Abundance: Creating a Culture of Generosity, by GSB Partner Michael Ward, published by Fortress Press.

2021 Schedule

July–August
REGISTRATION

Late August
VIRTUAL SESSION #1
Building Blocks for Generosity

Early September
VIRTUAL SESSION #2
*An Effective, Inspiring
Stewardship Appeal*

Late September
VIRTUAL SESSION #3
*Sharing Stories of Generosity,
Achieving a Strong Response
(Part 1)*

Mid-October
VIRTUAL SESSION #4
*Achieving a Strong Response
(Part 2)*

Early November
VIRTUAL SESSION #5
*Sharing Results and an
Effective Follow-Up*

Late November
VIRTUAL SESSION #6
Finishing the Year Strong



BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Guiding you through your fall stewardship Appeal.

A SERVICE OF GSB.

EXPECTED RESULTS AND PROGRAM COST

The program aims for participating congregations to see at least a 3-5% increase above 2021 projected revenue. At the same time, this program will assist in maximizing 2021 year-end giving.

Program Cost: The full cost of the program is \$450.

** This program may qualify for a Thrivent Action Team grant (up to \$250) as it is an educational opportunity. Contact Thrivent Financial for details.*

REGISTRATION FORM

[Please Print Clearly]

Yes, we accept your invitation to join *Building a Culture of Generosity*.

CONGREGATION NAME

CITY

CONTACT PERSON NAME

EMAIL

SEND BOOKS TO

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

Please enclose a check payable to GSB for \$450 to fully cover the cost of this program. Send checks and this completed form to:

**Rev. Katie Kerrigan/Southern Ohio Synod/9200 Worthington Road,
Suite 140/ Westerville, OH 43082**

ADDITIONAL STEWARDSHIP HELP

Across the country GSB works with congregations through *Stewardship for All Seasons (SAS)*, a comprehensive stewardship program designed to fully create a culture of generosity. Congregations in their first year of SAS normally increase revenue by 10-15% and often much more than that. A far more personalized program with congregations who commit for a full year or more, SAS provides a deep dive into growing generosity in the church. If you are interested in this program, new cohorts are being launched.

Here is what one stewardship leader had to say about participation in 2020:

"We can't thank you enough for the guidance and direction on supporting our 2021 Stewardship Drive. Our results well-exceeded our expectations and is a testament to the fantastic program you offered to us. To date, pledges are 44% higher than last year totaling an increase in estimated giving of close to \$61,000! As a way to give back, we are asking the synod to keep the \$450 investment, and as well, we have increased our estimated percentage for benevolence by a full percentage point."

This comes from stewardship leader Angie Haston at Advent Lutheran Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. This happened not just during the pandemic, but also with an interim pastor.



Congregational Vitality Survey

What is congregational “vitality”?

Vital congregations are full of life! God’s presence is tangible in their gatherings, and they bear witness to God’s transforming power, helping one another to connect to the source of that power and experience that transformation in their own lives, and serving as a conduit of that power into their communities.



What is the Congregational Vitality Survey?

The Congregational Vitality Survey is a short 15-question survey that allows participants the opportunity to express how they think their congregation is doing in serving members, visitors and their community through worship, faith formation, outreach, etc. The Survey is most helpful when everyone—members, active participants, and even visitors—participates.

What happens after the Survey is completed?

Completed surveys are submitted to the Southern Ohio Synod’s Director for Evangelical Mission, Pastor Katie Kerrigan, who will compile the results into a report for the congregation. She will then present the report, along with a short workshop on congregational health and vitality, to your congregational council and/or your congregation.



The results of the Congregational Vitality Survey are solely for the use of your congregation and its leadership in assessing your congregation's vitality and identifying congregational strengths, as well as those areas that are not currently promoting vitality.

How will the Congregational Vitality Survey benefit our congregation?



The Congregational Vitality Survey allows participants in the community's life to be heard and provides your congregational leadership valuable feedback on how your congregation is doing in key areas that have been proven indicators of overall health. This is particularly useful during times of congregational transition, such as a change in ministerial leadership, or at those times when your congregation seeks guidance on how and where best to invest resources and energy to move forward into the mission and ministry God has in mind for your community.

What does it cost?

While there is a more in-depth version of the Congregational Vitality Study available to congregations at a modest cost (\$100-\$500, depending on the number of surveys administered), the short version described here is a free resource made available to you by the Southern Ohio Synod.



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They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. 1 Timothy 6:18-19 NRSV

**God is calling your congregation to new life.
How are you going to respond?**



Southern Ohio Synod
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*Stronger and Better Together:
Joining Jesus in the Restoration of the World*

The Collaborative is an initiative by the **Southern Ohio Synod** to walk with your congregation to hear God's mission for your community, and help you determine how you will respond to that call. Our mission is to equip leaders and their communities of faith to identify God's call for their congregation, build relationships, deepen faith, grow community, and respond to God's call.

Stronger and Better together.

In this effort you are not alone. Joined by congregations from across the Synod we will journey together to discover what God has in store for your community and how your church can play a part.

**Change is hard.
But together we face that challenge.**

The Journey. Participating congregations will be placed in groups (Cohorts). Together these Cohorts will lead their congregations, through a 24-month journey of discovery, assesment and action, including four two-day training sessions facilitated by the Congregational Vitality Team, and accompanied by a congregational mentor as they work through a variety of developmental activities designed around God's plan for your community.

Cost: \$100 Per Training Session (Covers the cost of 4-5 person team for each training. Meals provided. Lodging is not included. Scholarships are available.)

Join Us.

Are you ready to respond to the mission that God has for your community? New cohorts will be signed up every 6-months.

Contact:

Rev. Katie Kerrigan, Director for Evangelical Mission
kkerrigan@southernohiosynod.org