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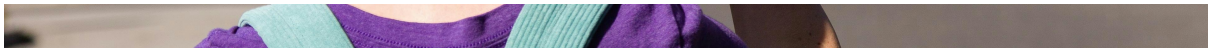
Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

CONNECTIONS

*A Network of Christ-Centered, Outwardly-Focused, Faith-Growing
Communities for the Sake of the World*

July 2026





Welcome One Another: Immigration and the Gulf Coast Synod

by Bishop Tracey Breashears Schultz

For the last few months, I have been attending meetings of our synod's Immigration Task Force. Our time together has included two goals: first, to learn about immigration policies and statistics and to hear real stories, thereby debunking myths, and secondly, to receive recommendations about what we, as people of faith and members of synod congregations, can do to help our neighbors in need.

My interest in this topic is grounded in scripture, and particularly in Paul's admonition, "Welcome one another, just as Christ has welcomed you, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7)." When it comes to our reading of the Bible, Lutherans contend "scripture interprets scripture," which means, if something occurs in the Bible as an obscure passage and can't be found anywhere else in the whole of scripture, then it doesn't have the same weight for us as something that is reiterated or a theme that comes up time and again. One of these repeated themes in scripture is welcoming the stranger. See Leviticus 19, 23; Malachai 3:5, Matthew 25, for a sampling.

[Read more...](#)





High Notes of the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast Assembly 2026

by Lee Matthews, voting member from Christ the King-Kenner, LA

There were many “high notes” for me during the Synod Assembly. I have only touched on a few.

The theme this year was “How Can We Keep from Singing?” The emphasis was on building “Connection, Communication, Compassion.” Multiple examples of how these missions were carried out were given over the course of the weekend. Given the theme, there was a songbook with 16 hymns, many of which were sung over the course of the synod assembly, as well as descriptions of some of the hymns from the new supplement "All Creation Sings."

The opening worship service was awe inspiring . Of course, with my love of music, the band leading us was wonderful.

[Read more...](#)





Curious Christian Children: Nurturing Wonder, Belonging, and Participation

by Sara Ray and Jackie Hanson

[Kinsmen Lutheran Church](#) is honored to participate in the Curious Christian Children (CCC) initiative, a nine-month cohort that brings together ELCA leaders committed to creating more inclusive worship experiences for children, especially children with disabilities.

At its heart, the CCC initiative invites congregations to reimagine how children experience worship and congregational life. Through practices rooted in Universal Design, leaders are encouraged to move beyond accommodation toward creating environments where all children can engage, participate, and belong from the very beginning.

[Read more...](#)





Serving Others: Where to Start?

by Pr. Sandra Barnes, Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Chalmette, LA

At a recent gathering, a question stopped me in my tracks: "How do you get people to move out of the pews and into serving others in the world?" For many congregations, this question sits at the heart of discipleship and mission. Is this a question with which you or your faith community struggles?

In mid-June, members of the Gulf Coast Synod—Dcn. Aimee Elles, Pr. John Perez, members from Our Savior in Baton Rouge and Gethsemane in Chalmette, and myself—attended a gathering sponsored by the [Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana](#) titled 'Serving Others: Multifaith Perspectives on Compassion in Action.' During our time together, we heard from leaders representing different faith traditions, all of whom are deeply engaged in social ministry.

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One of the goals and hopes of the Connections Team at a synodical level is to highlight some of the food and feeding ministries that are happening around the synod. The purpose of this is to connect other communities and congregations that have feeding ministries so that there can be shared resources, opportunities for questions, and conversations. The team is asking for you to [share your feeding ministries](#) so that we can connect our synod more closely with other congregations either doing similar ministries or interested in sharing the work with one another.



Connection: Building Community One Sandwich, One Relationship, One Disciple at a Time

by The Rev. Barbara L. Bartling

One of the themes Bishop Tracey Breashears Schultz has lifted up for our synod is **Connection**. At Holy Comforter Lutheran Church in Kingwood, we believe that connection is not simply a strategy for ministry—it is at the heart of what God is doing among us.

Jesus connected with people around tables, on roads, in homes, and in communities. He gathered people into relationships with God and with one another. In a world marked by loneliness, isolation, and division, the church has a unique opportunity to embody that same ministry of connection.

One of the ways we experience this at Holy Comforter is through **Sandwich Sunday**, part of our Live God's Mission pathway to discipleship. The first Sunday of each month, members and friends of all ages gather to make lunches that are distributed through Star of Hope Mission serving people experiencing food and shelter insecurity.

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Lisa's Pieces: Creation Care Tips from the Synod Lutherans Restoring Creation Team

by Lisa Brenskelle

The mission of [Lutherans Restoring Creation](#) is to promote incorporation of care for creation into the full life and mission of the church, working in five areas: worship, education, discipleship, building & grounds, and public ministry/advocacy.

[Read more...](#)

July Creation Care Events

- [Living the Change](#) – ongoing thru August, dates/times individually scheduled, online
- [Building Resilient, Sustainable Health Systems](#) - Sunday, July 26, 6 p.m., online

Contact gcs.lrc@gmail.com for details on any of these events.



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